



Multidimensionale Risks in the XXI Century

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Risk and risk perception: the metropolitan imaginary of catastrophe at the time of the Covid-19

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Abstract

When “grand narratives” (Lyotard, 2008) end up in crisis, the “universes of all-ecompassing meaning” (Berger and Luckmann, 1997) by which the modern man organized individual and collective experiences into rational structures, gets weaker (Camorrino, 2016). The state of uncertainty is fueled by a widespread anguish which characterize the contemporary “world risk society” (Beck, 2011). This state of affairs faces with the urgent request of sense, due to the unprecedented scenario of the coronavirus pandemic emergency. The tools of sociology of risk together with the categories of understanding afforded by the sociology of imaginary allow to reflect about the relationship between imaginary and the sanitary catastrophe. The global shock caused by coronavirus emergency – such as climate change did – could be considered – in the terms of Ulrich Beck (2011; 2015) – a “side effect” or in other words “destroying” and “confusing” event that unsettle habits and the way of living the city in everyday life (Sennet, 2020).

The proposed analysis aims to investigate the effects on reality that the symbolic and the imaginative dimension of coronavirus produced on experiences and social practices. The analysis of the perception of risk and the transformative potential of the imaginary of the catastrophe conveyed by mass media, in which visible and invisible seem to merge, will be the aim of this contribution.