

*English summaries**

(in alphabetical order)

Damiano Abbatini, Manlio Maggi, Serena Rugiero (a c. di), *Introduzione. I venti anni della sociologia dell'ambiente in Italia (Introduction: Twenty Years of Environmental Sociology in Italy)*

Environmental sociology is one of the youngest sub-disciplines within the field of sociology. This paper examines the development of this new area of study in our country, in occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the first departments of environmental sociology in Italy. In the first part of the article we give an overview of its historical development. In the second part, we focus on the debates, key questions and issues that the young discipline deals with. We conclude reflecting on essays by Italian environmental sociologists who, through their theoretical and empirical work, have contributed to the development of environmental sociology in our country.

Damiano Abbatini, Manlio Maggi, Serena Rugiero, *La sociologia dell'ambiente oggi. Intervista a Fulvio Beato (Environmental Sociology Today: Interview with Fulvio Beato)*

In this interview, Fulvio Beato talks about the state and prospects of environmental sociology. He places the beginning of the environmental focus in the Anglo-Saxon culture of the 60s and 70s, which lead to a consequent need of a new sociological specialization in order to understand the deep links between environment and social systems. Today, the environment is a subject recognized by different aspects of cultural and scientific areas and plays an important role in economies and in public policies in both advanced societies and newly industrialized ones. Knowledge and competency in environmental sociology offers a valuable contribution to better understand and handle these dynamics.

* A cura di Melina Rosenberg.

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Gian-Luigi Bulsei, *Ambiente, salute, comunità locali. Partecipazione sociale e politiche pubbliche in una regione italiana (Environment, Health, and Local Communities. Social Participation and Public Policies in an Italian Region)*

The aim of this article is to discuss the possibility of political institutions taking steps to participatory model of governance of environmental issues. Starting with three exemplary cases of serious risks for the environment and health in Piedmont (asbestos pollution caused by the Ethernet plant at Casale Monferrato, the rehabilitation of the Bormida Valley, urban mobility and traffic pollution) the paper analyzes the social and political vitality of local communities and the impact of the process of social mobilization on public policies. Particular focus is given to the demand for health and environmental quality from local communities involved and to the possibility that citizens' participation can help activate a process of social and institutional innovation.

Silvano D'Alto, *Un habitat coevolutivo ed equilibrato: ovvero costruire l'unità del rapporto sistema-ambiente (System and Environment; Thermodynamic Paradigm; Cities)*

The «Sociology of the environment and thermodynamics of dissipative structures» developed by Ilya Prigogine presents important factors, both cognitive and functional, for the analysis and design of cities and territory. The article focuses on the processes of entropy = order/disorder, fluctuation, self-organization, self-locking, developing analogies between urban and territorial systems and thermodynamic processes. The article identifies precise dynamics of dissipative structure moments of creative originality that are useful in understanding and intervening in the space and time processes. This also explains the in-depth the causes of structural inequalities that characterize our social systems.

Enrico Ercole, *Società e natura. Il ruolo delle trasformazioni sociali nella percezione e nella risposta ai disastri naturali (Society and Nature. The Role of Social Change in the Perception and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters)*

In the last few decades the attention given to planning for disasters, both natural and man-made, has increased as a result of numerous causes, such as the proclamation by the United Nations of the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the occurrence of a series of man-made disasters that have greatly affected public opinion, and the growing expectation of citizens on governments for greater information and participation. The text analyzes the change in public opinion related to natural disasters in recent decades, with reference to empirical cases. It is also emphasizes the role this type of study can play in the relationship, so far considered unsatisfactory, between sociology and sociological disaster.

Alfredo Mela, *Verso una sociologia dell'ambiente costruito (Towards a Sociology of Built Environment)*

The article aims to define theoretical references and topics for sociology of built environment, with particular attention to the artificial environment of the urban and metropolitan areas. A co-evolutionary paradigm of the relationships between social and bio-physical systems, states that both are characterized by internal evolutionary dynamics, and at the same time are influenced by those of the other system. Stemming from this paradigm, the article suggests that the specific objects of focus of sociology of built environment, are the interfaces (both material and intangible) through which this influence is exercised. However, the purpose is not to propose a further specialized sub-discipline, but rather to build a bridge between environmental sociology and urban studies.

Giorgio Osti, *Dalla campagna all'ambiente e ritorno: il pendolo sociologico rispetto al bene terra (From Countryside to the Environment and Back: the Sociological Pendulum on Land Use Analysis)*

There is a branch of environment sociology that started from agriculture and the rural world. Various sociologists that focused on the rural aspects gained interest in environmental issues, being that both areas shared the same object of study. Agriculture remains the main point of mediation between human activity and the environment. In this paper, such mediation is first developed historically, identifying three phases in the relationship between rural and socio-environmental studies (indifference, contestation, cooperation). A typology of social groups involved in land use (users, residents, landowners and farmers) is then proposed, and their more or less virtuous actions towards the environment are outlined.

Sonia Paone, *Città dissipative: crisi ecologica e crisi dell'urbano («Dissipative cities»: Ecological Crisis and Urban Crisis)*

The essay describes the relationship between ecological crisis and urban development, as analyzed by studies that describe urban systems using a thermodynamic perspective. The concept of city will be analyzed as a «dissipative structure» – an open system that discharges disorder outside in order to maintain internal order – and as an «incomplete ecosystem» – a system that can only function correctly over time if it draws on natural resources from external territories, which are therefore dominated and exploited. This perspective allows us to highlight the complex links between environmental issues and the organization and functioning of cities in a global context.

Luigi Pellizzoni, *Governo dell'ambiente e razionalità neoliberale (Government of the Environment and Neoliberal Rationality)*

In the environmental field the traditional opposition between state and market has been gradually sidestepped by complex forms of intervention, where both terms change their meaning. A governmental perspective, rather than a

governance one, is more useful in providing indications to understand the stakes of what appears to be a profound transformation in the way humans conceive the biophysical world and their relations with it, in which the hegemony of neoliberalism and its rationality of government play a crucial role. This process challenges the conceptual equipment of the social sciences. The current «return» to material reality does not necessarily lead to an adequately critical perspective.

Enrico Maria Tacchi, *Itinerari di sociologia dell'ambiente (Pathways of Environmental Sociology)*

In Italy, Strassoldo publishes a study on human ecology in 1977, and a conference on environmental sociology is held in 1988. The period 1993-2013 begins with Beato's essay on environmental risks, and continues with the 1st National Congress of Italian Environmental Sociologists (1966). In 1998, Mela et al. publishes a book on the advances in this field. Since 2000, a large number of empirical studies have been written, as well as university textbooks, such as those authored by Pieroni (2002) or Pellizzoni & Osti (2003). Today's literature is incredibly vast, with several theoretical currents (Tacchi, 2011a); usually, the sociologists criticize the big public works, often seen as sources of social conflict and of threat to the environment (Pellizzoni, 2011).