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Etnografie sindemiche

A cura di

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Sulla gestione culturale della pandemia da Covid 19. Una introduzione

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On the cultural management of the COVID-19 pandemic. An introduction

Abstract

This introduction to the ethnographic studies comprising this special issue has two main objectives. On the one hand, it provides a clarification of the conceptual tools (the distinction between a pandemic and a syndemic); a contextualisation of the structural conditions (the underfunding of the healthcare sector in Italy); and a critical perspective (pandemic management is not regarded as a neutral act but as revealing the prevailing political and economic logics). On the other hand, it highlights the common threads running through the ethnographic studies comprising this special issue: a grassroots perspective on pandemic management from the peripheries; epistemological divergences regarding notions of illness and care; a focus on the gap between the institutional representation of events and the lived experiences of individuals and communities; a critique of how the measures adopted have, in certain cases, exacerbated the precariousness of vulnerable groups; community strategies for sharing risk internally and closing off from the outside world; the search for self-managed 'natural' or 'traditional' therapeutic solutions.

Keywords: pandemic, syndemic, Covid-19, medical anthropology, political anthropology

Pandemia, didattica e ricerca. L'esperienza del VII Laboratorio di Antropologia Sociale e Visuale

Antonio Aresta

p. 35

Pandemic, teaching and research. The experience of the 7th Laboratory of Social and Visual Anthropology

Abstract

This article aims to explore the dynamics put in place by the pandemic in relation to the reflections expressed by a heterogeneous group of students from secondary schools and universities. The first part of the article describes the context in which these reflections matured – i.e. the VII Laboratory of Social and Visual Anthropology, carried out during the academic year 2019/2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic – and the conceptual tools that were carefully selected and used in order to investigate the following aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic: the causes that generated the pandemic, the relationship between nature and culture, the similarities and differences between the pandemics that have occurred throughout history, the repercussions that COVID-19 has had on social relations and institutions, the conflictual dynamics triggered between different social groups, the crisis of the health system and the possible paths to take in the future.

The second part of the article describes the results achieved at the end of the VII Laboratory of Social and Visual Anthropology, i.e. the publication of the collective booklet 'First Study on the COVID-19 Pandemic (Edited by Aresta V. A., July 2020) containing the students' analyses and reflections, and a brief report of the public meetings to return the work carried out, carried out remotely and in presence.

Keywords: epidemic, pandemic, syndemic, school, COVID-19, zoonoses

Razzismo istituzionale e gestione pandemica nei sistemi di accoglienza territoriali. Una prospettiva etnografica

Asia Beatrice Cosma

p. 55

Institutional racism and pandemic management in territorial migrant reception systems. An ethnographic perspective

Abstract

In the structural violence that characterizes contemporary migrations, bureaucracy, authoritarian and repressive policies enacted by Italian legislation intersect with bodies and lives of migrants, to the point of opposing them and the fundamental rights that should enable their full realization. In this context, the "green pass" materializes yet another dehumanizing practice, prioritizing the regularization of individuals based on a document, in this case on a code, rather than considering the well-being of the person in their entirety.

In this contribution, drawing on field experience as a migrant support worker during the 2021-2022 period, I aim to address, from multiple perspectives, the intersection between institutional racism and the necropolitical dynamics of pandemic management in the daily practices of reception within our territory. Specifically, I will focus on the additional marginalization produced by the "green pass" as it operates on the bodies of migrants. Moreover, I will discuss the practices of control and the so-called "bullshit jobs" in migrant reception during the pandemic (and beyond). Furthermore, I will examine the overlap between the rhetoric of the two emergencies, establishing a parallel between the absence of critical debate on pandemic management and the lack of constructive critique of the Italian reception model. Finally, I will explore the fluid resistance practices enacted by migrant subjectivities both as individuals and as collectives during the period of pandemic restrictions, as well as the reflections and opportunities for grassroots autonomy that emerged during the pandemic period.

Keywords: migrants, necropolitics, Green Pass, racism, resistance

Addomesticare il negativo

Biopolitica, coscienza politica migrante e pandemia: alcune note antropologiche

Mariaelena De Stefano

p. 75

Domesticating the negative

Biopolitics, migrant political consciousness and the pandemic: some anthropological notes

Abstract

The pandemic disrupted the foundations of the liberal narrative and, as a crisis, has introduced new temporal and social perspectives that challenge dominant views. The Covid-19 temporality has brought to light the fragility of numerous societal sectors, necessitating prompt and radical measures to address issues of inequality and social justice. In this context, the political movement known as "the Migrant and Refugee Movement in Naples" has emerged. It provides a compelling illustration of a counter-narrative and resistance to the misguided promises of liberal policies, which often prioritize superficial reforms without adequately addressing the underlying causes of social injustice. This movement is in opposition to the temporality of liberalism, proposing instead a radical break with the oppressive structures that are characteristic of the neoliberal system. In the context of the post-pandemic era, the contribution of this movement is of particular significance, given the heightened visibility of the precariousness of many lives. The pandemic has revealed the profound inequalities inherent in neoliberal capitalism, demonstrating the inadequacy of liberal democracies in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population, such as migrants. In this sense, the movement directly challenges the dominant pandemic narrative by opposing the technocratic and specialised management of the crisis, which has resulted in the marginalisation and precarity of many lives. The Migrant and Refugee Movement of Naples is therefore positioned in opposition to this perspective, seeking to redefine the times and modes of political resistance in a context of emergency. Through its political and social action, the movement claims a revolutionary temporality that does not simply respond to the health crisis but seeks to address the oppressive structures that the crisis has made even more evident.

Keywords: biopolitics, migrants governance, neoliberalism critique, Covid-19 studies, migrant political subjectivity

L'autonomia e la cura: le strategie delle comunità di Oaxaca durante la pandemia

Elena Fusar Poli - Laura Montesi Altamirano

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Autonomy and care: the pandemic strategies of Oaxacan communities

Abstract

Community-based autonomy is a key political and identitarian organizational principle among several Oaxacan villages. When Covid-19 reached this southern Mexican state, many villages implemented collective care strategies based on this capacity to make autonomous choices. Based on an intensive nine month-long fieldwork research in a Oaxacan community during 2021 and complemented with data from an online questionnaire on indigenous responses to Covid-19 in 2020, this article describes some of the ways in which community-based autonomy helped Oaxacan villages to deal with the pandemic while exerting their sovereignty in a Mexican context characterized by historical inequalities and healthcare shortcomings. Border-control, food autonomy and traditional medicine are just some of the strategies that Oaxacan villages resorted to. We argue that the Oaxacan response to the pandemic is token of a profound indigenous autonomic legacy. This autonomy is the necessary condition for the overall social movement that Raul Zibechi has named '*viraje hacia adentro*' ('turning inwards'): a strategy consciously implemented by many rural and urban communities of Central and South America that is clearly discernible in the choices and trends taking place in the *pueblos* of Oaxaca. The '*viraje hacia adentro*' is a turning point characterized by renewed attention and care for the territory and the community.

Keywords: community-based autonomy, Covid-19, Oaxaca, collective care, *comunalidad*

Esperienze di maternità durante e oltre la pandemia. Quali possibilità di ripensamento della salute e quali forme di resistenza emergono? Uno sguardo antropologico

Chiara Quagliariello - Annalisa Garzonio

p. 129

Maternity experiences during and beyond the pandemic. What possibilities for rethinking healthcare and what forms of resistance emerge? An anthropological perspective

Abstract

Starting from two parallel research works, carried out during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic phase, our intervention will focus on reproductive policies and 'actions' implemented in Italy during the pandemic, and the forms of resistance that arose against the security paradigm promoted by health professionals and the social-health system, mapping this space of dissent. In this perspective, we will show how childbirth, a socio-cultural artefact through which it is possible to investigate the mechanisms through which political power is exercised, become a privileged experience to subvert dominant cultures and knowledge.

Some of the questions we will explore are: how has the Italian maternity care system been impacted by the pandemic? To what extent the discursive rhetoric about the role of science and technology as indispensable tools to fight against risks has had an impact on sexual and reproductive rights? How have the governmental measures proposed during the pandemic been supported, incorporated and welcomed by some of parents according to a mechanism of delegated biopolitics? On the contrary, how much have the forms of resistance and the search for alternatives to the technocratic and medical-centered model of care made the pandemic a key moment to critically reflect and challenge state interventionism on individual and collective lives? We hope, with our contribution, to enrich the anthropological reflection around the need to rethinking childbirth assistance as well as reproductive healthcare more broadly.

Keywords: pregnancy, childbirth, Coronavirus, medical knowledge, obstetric technologies, hospital institution

"Un poquito más nos ha unido el Covid". Pratiche di auto-governo durante la pandemia in una comunità indigena dell'Amazzonia peruviana

Silvia Romio - Emmanuelle Piccoli

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"Un poquito más el Covid nos ha unido". Self-government practices during the pandemic in an indigenous community of the Peruvian amazon

Abstract

This article explores the social and political transformations that occurred during the pandemic period within an indigenous community in the Peruvian Amazon, located in the heart of the Madre de Dios region. This ethnographic study will allow us to reflect on the capacities of coordination and self-government put in place to respond to a health and social crisis by a usually fragmented and conflictive community. Situated in the heart of both a focal point of the international timber trade and the backbone of the region's road system, the Shintuya community, of predominantly Arakmbut ethnicity, presents itself as an extremely complex socio-cultural reality, dominated by a spirit of

individualism, privatisation and accumulation of economic capital. As an emblematic testimony of the main phenomena of social and economic transformation present in the last fifty years in the indigenous societies of the extractive frontiers, Shintuya becomes in 2020 an exceptional observatory on the collective capacities to respond to the crisis starting from a rethinking of the concepts of modernity, economic well-being and ‘buen vivir’.

Keywords: community, pandemic, self-government, indigenous politics, indigenous memory

Scienza e disobbedienza. Sentirsi “corpi vili”

Corinna Santullo

p. 183

Science and disobedience. Feeling like “vile bodies”

Abstract

During the state of emergency over Covid-19, thousands of people felt stuck in suspended time and excluded from public debate on health issues. Moreover, due to growing socio-economic inequalities, some existing fractures have widened: those between science and citizenship and between citizenship and intellectuals. Disenchantment and distrust of science and the state have also expressed themselves through various forms of social organisation. Among these, new dissidents against vaccines emerged during the pandemic, as well as dissidents against the government and health regulations. At the same time, there was the emergence of subjectivities seeking a ‘different’ way of being in the world, with the construction of territorial micro-communities based on sharing and autonomy. Over the course of three years, dozens of qualitative and semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of anti-vaccination movements and with vaccination hesitators (pre- and post-Covid-19), as well as with opponents of the green-pass. Many informants experimented with different forms of organisation to act or to react in a context in which the body (arena of social and medical conflicts, deprivations and freedom claims) is placed at the centre of a complex web of political forces and symbolic projections.

Keywords: COVID-19 syndemic emergency, intellectuals, science, micro-communities, vaccinations

Il corpo è mio e me lo gestisco io!

Resistenze, forme e immaginari di un movimento No-Covid-vax

Domenico Maria Sparaco

p. 211

“The body is mine and I take care of it myself”. Resistances, forms and imaginaries of a ‘no-Green Pass’ and ‘No-Covid-vax’ movement

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly impacted our lives, particularly in Italy, where emergency measures and subsequent confinement have been implemented. This has given rise to resistance movements, notably in response to the vaccination campaign and the introduction of the controversial “Green Pass” system. In the forthcoming text, the author will delve into the (bio)political dynamics surrounding the Covid-19 vaccine and its associated movements. This exploration will draw from an ethnography on a vaccine freedom movement in Italy, and its political and cosmological intersections. Additionally, the author will critically examine the theory of new social movements in light of this research to evaluate its heuristic validity and applicability. Through this analysis, he will underscore the distinct aspects of this movement against the Covid-19 vaccine and its varying forms of expression. While it may be challenging to categorize this as a singular “social movement”, all forms of dissent related to the pandemic governmentality seem to share a common theme of discord with governmental, medical, or ‘informational’ authorities. This discord is active and can manifest in diverse ways.

Keywords: counter-conduct, social movement, pandemic governmentality, Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy, risk