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Culture of Sustainability *Culture della Sostenibilità*

International Journal of Political Ecology

ISSN 1972-5817 (print) 1972-2511 (online) web: culturesostenibilita.it

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To cite this article: Fassi Casagrande Junior E., Vieira Franzolin D., Oliveira Wehrmeister J. (2021). A Post-Pandemic Socio-Ecological Economy: Another world is possible. *Culture della Sostenibilità*, 27. DOI 10.7402/CDS.27.002



2021 · Istituto per l'Ambiente e l'Educazione Scholé Futuro Onlus



Published on line: Giugno 2021



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A Post-Pandemic Socio-Ecological Economy: Another world is possible

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Abstract

SARS-CoV-2 is the newly identified coronavirus that caused the COVID-19 pandemic. It has spread across the world to more than 150 countries, killed thousands of people, and infected millions. So far, one of the most effective measures to control contagion has been social isolation and the reduction of economic activities, placing a dilemma between the disease and the stagnant economy that causes loss of income and unemployment. In this scenario, some people were able to stay in their isolated houses and, at the same time, a large part of the population of low-income, self-employed, unemployed, homeless, and immigrant workers, among others living in subhuman housing conditions, were exposed to COVID-19. If, on the one hand, the reduction of mobility and consumption brought environmental benefits to the Planet, on the other hand, this scenario only exposed even more the social inequality caused by an exclusive economic model that needs to be globally revised. This article analyses how the Solidarity Economy, Creative, Circular, Shared, Collaborative, Cooperative, and Social Currencies models work—aiming at a more sustainable development, which can be a post-crisis response to COVID-19. A change of the current model, Globalized and based on the Free Market, towards a more local economy and conscious consumption, with a focus on “Glocalization”, accompanied by low carbon consumption (propitiated by the New Green Deal) points us to a way out, including to combat climate change.

Keywords: COVID-19, Coronavirus, Social Inequality, Climate Change, Green Economy, Sustainable Development

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Riassunto

SARS-CoV-2 è il coronavirus che ha causato la pandemia chiamata COVID-19. Si è diffuso in tutto il mondo in più di 150 paesi, ha ucciso migliaia di persone e ne ha infettate milioni. Finora, una delle misure più efficaci per controllare il contagio è stata l'isolamento sociale e la riduzione delle attività economiche, ponendo un dilemma tra la malattia e l'economia, ormai stagnante, causando perdita di reddito e disoccupazione. In questo scenario, alcune persone sono state in grado di restare isolate nelle loro case, ma gran parte della popolazione di lavoratori a basso reddito, lavoratori autonomi, disoccupati, senz'attec, immigrati, tra gli altri, sono stati costretti a vivere in condizioni abitative inumane, ed esposte al COVID-19. Se da un lato la riduzione della mobilità e dei consumi ha portato benefici ambientali al Pianeta, dall'altro questo scenario ha messo a nudo, ancor di più, la disuguaglianza sociale causata da un modello economico esclusivo, che necessita di essere rivisto a livello globale. Questo articolo analizza il funzionamento dei modelli di economia solidale, delle valute creative, circolari, condivise, collaborative, cooperative e sociali, propone uno sviluppo più sostenibile, che può essere una risposta post-crisi COVID-19. Un cambiamento del modello finora globalizzato e basato sul mercato libero, verso un'economia più locale e un consumo consapevole, con un focus sulla "Glocalizzazione", accompagnato da basse emissioni di carbonio (New Green Deal), in cerca di una via d'uscita, anche per risolvere il problema del cambiamento climatico.

Parole chiave: COVID-19, Coronavirus, Disuguaglianza sociale, Cambiamenti climatici, Economia verde, Sviluppo sostenibile

■ The world before COVID-19

The traditional economic model has several components that call into question its viability and sustainability. Prevailing economic common sense is more concerned with consumption than with its consumers, where material assets are less and less durable and easier to replace. Accelerated economic growth does not take into account the increasingly present poverty. This economic growth generates positive effects only for a small portion of the population, disregarding its majority, increasingly marginalized.

In addition to poverty, which persists in the traditional economic model, there is still its environmental depletion. Accelerated consumption, the predatory system of natural resource exploitation, and the rampant generation of waste are crucial points of the economy's infeasibility in the current parameters. There are several tools in order to verify and evaluate the interaction between human life and the environment. The Ecological Footprint is one of these tools, one that creates a sustainability index based on this interaction. The Ecological Footprint demonstrates the pressure exerted by human con-