

# 7th ETHNOGRAPHY AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Bergamo (Italy) – June 6-9, 2018

University of Bergamo

## Call for Papers – Panel Session:

### UN/SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN A SCARCITY-DRIVEN WORLD

**Convenors: Elena Bougleux (University of Bergamo) & Sara Bonfanti (University of Trento)**

The issue of sustainability in a global and yet localized sense cannot be postponed nor ignored any longer. Emergencies tied to humanitarian crisis, to unpredictable and unstable climate changes and to a systematically receding economic phase characterize the present scenario, drawing visions of crisis that affect both the material and the immaterial dimensions of existence. Scarcity appears as a keyword that connects heterogeneous elements of instability and determines the modification of life strategies for increasingly large and diverse groups of people and that eventually connotes the main character of the era of the Anthropocene. Presumed shortage of resources vis-à-vis a steady global population rise are depicted as the ubiquitous threat to (not only human) life on the planet, questioning any pre-determined scalable approach (Tsing 2012).

In the first place, we want to discuss whether the issue of scarcity is rather tied to material dimensions, or socio-economically constructed across multiple relations, or even perceived at subjective level, considering its diffracted implications into environment, resources and human capital sides. In particular, we wish to assess which power stakes define abundance or lack and what impact these grand narratives have over the life chances of different social groups and individuals, and over the capabilities of projecting one's existence into fragile futures.

As a consequence to this induced circle of factual and fictional hazards, adaptation practices emerge as spontaneous responses to condition of unsustainability, in forms of organized resistance, development of good practices, critical thought and even forms of mobility. These adaptive strategies are also being promoted and supported (or at times limited) at an institutional level (UN agencies included). We would like to draw attention to a great contradiction that emergencies embeds, and to the hypothetical agency assigned to the different actors at stake, which instead often covers concrete situations of marginality or lack of power.

As a point in case, we intend to critically debate the 'blue alert' of south Asian climate migrants (Chaturvedi, Sakhuja 2016): global warming, rise of sea level, shrinking of water supplies, all have contributed to ongoing displacements in one of the most populous, and possibly most unequal, area worldwide. This appears a context where the broad concepts of adaptation and agency need to be substantially questioned. This reference will serve as exemplary framework to discuss and reflect on the many global, and yet localized, cases of overheating (Eriksen 2016). All in-depth ethnographic researches on the mixed outcomes of this accelerated pace in environmental, economic and cultural change are welcome.

#### ***Essential References***

Chaturvedi S. e Sakhuja V. 2016, *Climate Change and the Bay of Bengal: Evolving Geographies of Fear and Hope*, Pentagon, New Delhi.

Eriksen T.H. 2016, *Overheating*, Pluto Press, London.

Tsing A. L. 2012, 'On non-scalability: the living world is not amenable to precision-nested scales', *Common Knowledge* 18 (3): 505-524.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

To submit your proposal please send an e-mail to the conference committee (erq.conference@unibg.it) - indicating the title of the chosen session - and to the panel convenors:

[elena.bogleux@unibg.it](mailto:elena.bogleux@unibg.it)

[sara.bonfanti@unitn.it](mailto:sara.bonfanti@unitn.it)

Please send:

- the **title** of your talk and an **abstract** of a maximum 1,000 words (.doc, .docx, .odt, .txt, .rtf);
- your **contact details** (full name, e-mail, post address and affiliation) and those of your co-author/s, if any;
- if you like (and we would be very happy!), a **short video talk** (2 min. max.), not necessarily on your proposed talk but a sort of teaser trailer for it (by sending the video, you thereby allow the organizing committee to upload the video at its discretion, in full or cut form, on the youtube channel of *Etnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa* :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTAnycGjE5KzDCr-AnFJwow/feed>

Abstracts (and video talks) must be submitted in English. The official languages of the conference, however, are Italian, English, and French. For each session, languages will be used on the basis of the composition of participants.

**Proposals must be submitted by 15 January 2018.**