



LV CONVEGNO DI STUDI

METAMORFOSI VERDE **AGRICOLTURA, CIBO, ECOLOGIA**

Complesso monumentale di San Pietro
Dipartimento di Scienze agrarie, alimentari e ambientali
PERUGIA 13-15 settembre 2018

Climate Change and Loria's Thought

Francesco Musotti, Rosa Pietroiusti, Università di Perugia

Abstract

Today world population is growing in the face of resources that appear to be ever more scarce (and polluted) and is challenged by the dangerous threats posed by climate change. In spite of technical change, we are witnessing a situation in which, according to the points of view of various scholars, a return to the principle of cooperation seems indispensable, in the form of a planetary governance of natural resources. The study of such difficulties, and of possible ways to cope with them, can draw important suggestions from the work of scholars of the 19th-20th centuries, such as Achille Loria, as well as scholars of the 20th-21st centuries, such as Kenneth Boulding and Elinor Ostrom.

The paper we propose focuses mainly on the thought of Achille Loria, and specifically on his conceptualization of the century-long evolutionary process that has characterised the property and use rights of land, and which can be extended to all natural resources (including climate characteristics). In the second part of the paper our considerations will make clear the connections between the recent ideas of Ostrom and Boulding, and those of Achille Loria.

Loria outlines the historical evolution of land (natural resources) property, from its dawn until the end of the 19th century, on the basis of two principles of allocation: competition and cooperation. The prevalence of one over the other, in different epochs and regions of the world, allows us to explain the characteristics of agricultural institutions in a systematic way, according to what we might call a spiral law.

If natural resources are abundant when compared to the size of the population that draws its material sustenance from them, and if they are associated with favourable climate, the most efficient principle of allocation is competition. By abundant natural resources we mean that they are available in large quantities and/or that, because of the introduction of technical change, they allow a substantial increase in productivity (per unit of surface and/or labour).

On the other hand, in conditions of a relatively scarce amount of natural resources in relation to the sustenance of the population, especially if associated with a degradation of climate characteristics, the only principle capable to maximise material wellbeing for that population without mortifying a minimal distributive equilibrium, is cooperation.

In Loria's lifetime, he observed conditions that were favourable for individual-private property, due to technical changes (and also because property was now guaranteed by legal rights, and was no longer precarious as it was at the dawn of humanity). In our lifetime, we observe conditions in which it is indispensable for the survival of humanity on our planet to apply the principle of cooperation, particularly in the use of natural resources like climate.

Keywords: Loria, Boulding, Ostrom, Natural Resources, Climate Change, commons, historical conceptualization of property rights, principle of competition, principle of cooperation, cooperative governance of commons, cooperative governance of climate