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Sommario/riassunto

This open access book is about causal thinking and the use of causal language, with a focus on introducing philosophical ideas about causation to students and researchers of Social-Ecological Systems (SES). It takes a systematic approach to three central topics: the meanings of different causal expressions, sufficiency of evidence for inferences from observations to causal relations, and how to handle the complexity of causal relations in social-ecological systems.

Consequently, the book is divided into three parts. In the first part the authors analyse and discuss the use of causal idiom in ordinary language, and in the second part they scrutinise the use of causal concepts and causal inference in science. Finally, the authors discuss causal reasoning about social-ecological systems in multi- and interdisciplinary contexts. This book provides an analysis of the concept of causation useful in the empirical sciences, where causal notions and idioms often are used without sufficient reflection.

Empirical sciences often use causal idiom drawn from ordinary language, and similarly there is little formalisation of causal language and technical concepts in the humanities and social sciences. This book is a valuable resource for the application of current philosophical discussions about the concept of causation, in particular when applied to the analysis of social-ecological systems, but also when applied to research in the sciences and humanities.
