Diaries from Isolation.
Digital Testimonials' Analysis During COVID-19 Emergency

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Culture e Studi del Sociale

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Abstract
The research investigates the social effects of the atypical domestic containment situation during the Covid-19 emergency in Italy. The survey, which is placed in a phenomenological perspective, shows how individuals and the community have been able to develop an adaptation or resilience process to the lockdown in order to conform their life to the "new ordinary", making it real and purposeful. The research process, which was entirely conducted digitally through specific software for qualitative analysis, has developed dynamically, following the Grounded Theory approach. Facebook posts and Instagram audio tracks combined with newspaper articles represent the cases of the research. While on one hand, digitality has allowed an individual the perception of normality by feeling part of a community, on the other it has revealed various forms of digital divide, characterized by different levels of literacy at school, at work and domestically. The social disadvantage does not exclusively concern the digital world but rather on the lockdown that has heightened the systematic exclusion of the most fragile sections of the population.

Keywords: Covid-19, Lockdown, Phenomenological perspective, Digital methods.

Introduction

The break-in of the Covid-19 emergency has imposed restrictive security measures by the governments around the world. The SARS-Cov-2 infection was declared a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020, shortly after the closure of the entire national territory by the Italian government, that was the first in the provision of nationwide lockdown among democratic countries in Europe. The first infections from Covid-19 were detected already in February, specifically in the northern regions of Italy, but their increase in the entire national territory led to the total closure on 9 March 2020 (D.P.C.M. 55/2020).

The Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has taken a completely new form compared to any other historical social phenomenon, so much that it prevents its classification into predefined schemes. The atypical nature of the phenomenon is characterized not only by the global spread of the disease, but also by a generalized use of digital technology. The rapid global spread of the virus, that took place within a few months, is an expression of an increasingly, interdependent and interconnected contemporary society. At the same time domestic confinement has increased the already present digitalization of communicative and social processes. In this context, both individuals and economic, social and political activities have had to redefine the strongly changed everyday life, in search of the tools to deal with it.

The research project presented here aims to investigate the social effects of the atypical situation of domestic confinement in Italy. Following a phenomenological

perspective, it was found how individuals and the community were able to develop a process of adaptation or, again, of resilience by defining the lockdown situation in order to conform their lives to the "new normality", making it real and objective. For this reason direct testimonies of individuals were selected not only within social media platforms, "digital diaries" or daily reports that some users publish regularly, but also from newspaper articles, which have opened up numerous points for reflection, strictly linked to objective issues for society and its individuals. The contribution therefore proposes an analysis of individual experiences, related to habits, behaviours, thoughts, life perspectives, and collective experiences, liked to new problems and unprecedented challenges for society.

The article continues with the methodological part, divided into three sections: method theory, research design and research structure. Then the analysis of the results is presented in two separate paragraphs based on individual and collective impact. The last section concludes with some remarks about the undertaken work.

2 Methodology

2.1 Method's theory

This research, which was carried out completely digitally, was conducted in March 2020, characterized by the first outbreak of the Covid-19 in Italy and the consequent lockdown. Digital research is essential in this historical context in which the border between online and offline, already faint, becomes increasingly invisible. In the digital age, therefore, it becomes fundamental that sociology focuses on understanding the uses and ways in which technologies enter into everyday practices (Lupton, 2018). In this process of incorporating new technologies into everyday world, the identities and bodies of individuals merge with the same digital objects, transforming them into "territories of the self" (Nippert-Eng, 1996). In this perspective, the digital context is a privileged point of observation of daily practices. The lockdown has in fact increased the creation of content by users of social platforms, which is the only place, this time virtual, to share and express thoughts and criticality.

A qualitative approach has been chosen to tackle the survey, which allows to represent social phenomena as procedural and contingent, and to give an account of *how* a social transformation can take place (Hughes, 2010; Becker, 2007). The qualitative research design, as well as the digital one, has a flexible structure that means that construction phases of empirical material are circular. This flexibility has allowed us to adapt the method to the research context and to represent the phenomenon as a process that restores "moving images, not only instantaneous ones" (Cardano, 2008, p. 256).

A phenomenological approach has been adopted to understand the attribution of meaning to the emergency situation by subject. Realities and daily life routine are, according to phenomenology, socially constructed and taken for granted. These show themselves as self-evident in order to guarantee ontological security (Giddens, 1991) necessary to maintain a sense of order and continuity, such as the stability of the individual personality and thus guarantee the minimization of sources of anxiety. Broken by domestic confinement, the daily life of both individuals and the community has undergone a "leap" (Schütz, 1932), a discontinuity, bringing out the need to redefine and give meaning to the new circumstance, making it real and objective.

The research project aims to investigate the social effects of the atypical situation of lockdown in Italy due to the emergency Covid-19, through the observation of individual and collective experiences, told on digital traces. The analysis of the documents was done through the analytical perspective of qualitative content analysis, to explore and deeply understand their meanings. The construction of the analytical categories was developed following the reasoned reading and coding approach of *Grounded Theory*, letting the documents speak and extrapolating meanings from them (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It was found out how the lockdown has changed, on the one hand, the habits, behaviours, thoughts and life perspectives of individuals, and, on the other hand, how it has contributed to the emergence of new problems and unprecedented challenges for society and for the community.

2.2 Research design

The research aims to understand individual and collective experiences during the domestic confinement. The research path has developed dynamically, raising new questions from time to time and enriching the initial theoretical interest. Initially, the research question aimed to analyse the impact of the pandemic on population, i.e., in a general way, how they were living the domestic confinement situation, both from a practical and emotional point of view. Above mentioned question has been searched within social network platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. In particular, Facebook adapts appropriately to the search for spontaneous narratives, because it allows the creation of digital diaries by individual users and thematic pages on which anyone can share their story. Therefore, the survey was oriented towards the selection of various pages that narrate the experiences concerning the domestic confinement through different users' posts. At the same time, within the Instagram platform, personal audio tracks have been selected from the "ViceItaly" page, which deal with the theme of the change in life, society and future perspectives due to the health emergency.

Following the first reading of the collected material, it became apparent the importance of giving voice also to the categories considered "at risk" for health, economic and social reasons. Thus, online newspaper articles were found that reported the testimonies of those who for various reasons do not use social media pages to describe their situation. The selection process therefore concerned the identification of spontaneous narratives published by users and testimonies of the social categories considered vulnerable.

Facebook posts and Instagram audio tracks combined with newspaper articles represent the cases of research. The cases can then be divided into two main categories: on one hand the *user generated contents*, namely Facebook posts and audio tracks of Instagram, on the other, traditional data such as testimonies in newspaper articles. The *user generated contents* allow a truthfulness of the contents as non-intrusive data and produced in "real time", but they have presented exhaustive problems solved by the sampling of newspaper articles (Cipriani et al., 2013; Caliandro & Gandini, 2019).

For the analysis of documents, the exploratory content analysis was adopted, offering not only the possibility to thoroughly investigate the data, but also to identify similarities and differences, through a constant comparison, useful to interpret the contents and extract latent meanings (Schreier, 2012). Web content analysis merges a new place of data collection, which is the web, with a research

methodology that is renewed through the support of tools (Lewins & Silver, 2007). A software, called Nvivo, which adapts appropriately to content analysis, has been used for qualitative analysis of text, audio and video files (Coppola, 2017). It was possible to "capture" entire web pages and import them directly to Nvivo in pdf format, thanks to *Ncapture* function, included in the software. The analysis, aimed at giving voice to the subject of study, followed an *inductive* procedure, letting the documents speak, through an *open coding* approach, in line with *Groundend Theroy*'s approach which is informed into the nvivo software. This meant excluding analytic categories established beforehand by a theory, but exploring the topics that the subjects experienced, giving relevance to what was important to them. Therefore, the built analytical categories represent practices as well as reflections and problems emerged from the documents, through the support of the software Nvivo, that offers the possibility to qualify the material collected in containers called *nodes*.

The empirical material analysis' phases have foreseen the segmentation and the qualification of the documents, carried out simultaneously, through an iterative procedure. Therefore, the segmentation of the material empirically supports a specific qualification, and in turn the qualification creates new analytical categories, widening the themes of interest as the material is read, and making it necessary to return to the text. The segmentation and qualification process of the material was guided by the contents of the testimonies, which represent micro-stories of the lived experience. In fact, about the newspaper articles, only the direct testimonies of the categories under study, quoted by the journalist, have been taken into analysis.

After coding the material, the most relevant *attribute values* were applied in relation to the cases, which helped in the analysis phase to identify the relationships between the different categories and to represent the graphs. Nvivo allows the production of descriptive graphs of analytical categories created on the basis of segmentation and, at the same time, exploratory graphs that have highlighted the relationships between them. During the analysis phase, as you will see, graphs such as cluster analysis and word cloud will be presented. They were automatically generated by the software according to a quantitative logic, respectively through the functions of word similarity and word frequency. From these graphs, latent dimensions of meaning emerged, always interpreted in a qualitative way. Content analysis, in fact, is also considered an important bridge between purely quantitative and purely qualitative research methods (Amaturo and Punziano, 2013).

2.3 Research structure

The analysis of the documents revealed fundamental macro-dimensions that represent the two main thematic nuclei. Regarding individual impact, we have constructed the dimension of *perception of change*, which describes the perceptual sensations of the research subjects, which include both the state of mind experienced and the perceptions about the world around them. The second dimension identified, called *thoughts*, refers to the reflections matured during the Covid-19 emergency on the current general conditions but also on the prospects of life and the future. Finally, the dimension of *behaviours* concerns the change in life habits and the levels of adaptation to new circumstances.

The dimensions detected within the conceptual macro-area of the *community* are the following: *health*, *socio-economic* and *social issues*, which may at the same

time represent previous problems which have become more acute or have taken on a new form as a result of the Covid-19 emergency, or contingent problems which may lead to demanding challenges.
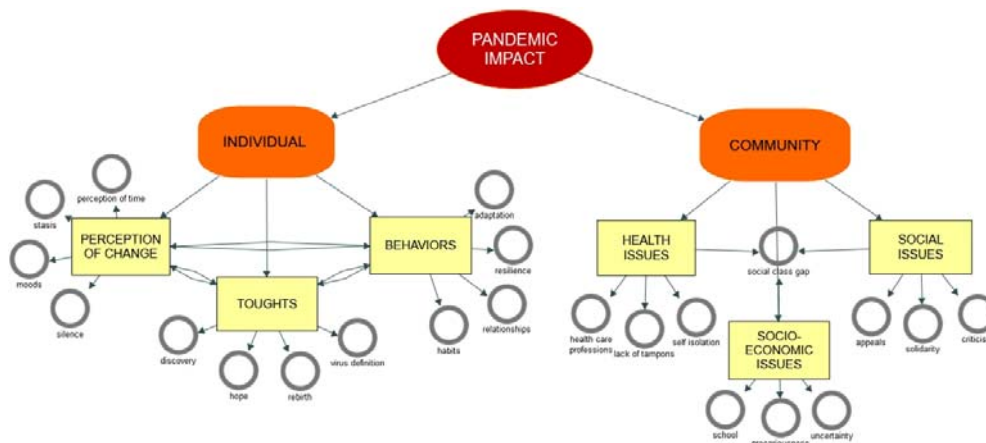

Figure 1: Concept map

3. Individual impact

The analysis on the individual level was done to understand the point of view of some subjects, who have left spontaneous testimonies and narrations of their quarantine, accounting for both the change in habits and its effects on the cognitive-emotional level. From a phenomenological perspective, the breakdown of everyday life was looked, due to quarantine, as a process defining the situation, characterized by the *perception of change*, *thoughts* and *behaviours*, that chase each other in a circular process.

3.1 Perception of change

The perception of change, which was made clear and unavoidable by domestic confinement, refers to the first impact that many individuals had of the emergency. What seems to characterize the individual experience of quarantine is the *stasis*, understood as the feeling that everything is still; even time seems to have stopped. In this context of immobility, silence is both a manifestation of stasis and a container of moods that contribute to the definition of the situation.

«That music violently broke a sort of collective stillness that hides and protects everything that each of us feels. Anger. Sadness. Fear. Frustration. Tiredness»[1] (Sara, personal diary on Facebook).

Silence is the new protagonist of the quarantine, but precisely when it breaks, the rhythm of "normality" is re-established. Several testimonies refer to noises that were previously taken for granted, but which now help to define the beginning of the day, such as the shutter of a grocery store, or even recall the crisis, such as ambulances.

In the process of individual impact analysis, the categories of feelings were found to be closely related to the categories that relate to the perception of time. If

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[1] The testimonies quotations in this article are proposed with *our own translation* from Italy.

on one hand the *perception of time* accounts for the condition of immobility and the succession of an almost circular time, with days always the same, on the other hand it also represents an attempt to re-establish a routine and therefore a time scan of the day, especially with work, which becomes essential for the attribution of meaning.

A category derived from the perception of time is the *time of the community*, codified in this way because the quarantine period becomes, for some, a moment of reflection on the time they dedicate to work, on the frenzy of life that characterizes the entire community. The time of the community is closely connected with another node, which is the *discovery*, which includes the testimonies of those who, thanks to the slowdown of activities, discovered that they feel the need for much less than they would have thought and re-evaluate, in this sense, the value of time. The few testimonies that fall into the category of *serenity*, refer precisely to the reappropriation of control by some people over their time.

«I realized that time is really something precious, maybe many of us have forgotten about it, maybe we should slow down and enjoy the little things» (Regina from south Italy, "Il diario di una quarantena da Nord a Sud" Facebook page).

The *estrangement* identifies precisely the disbelief towards this new situation, but also for the new way of life that lies ahead, even when the emergency will be over.
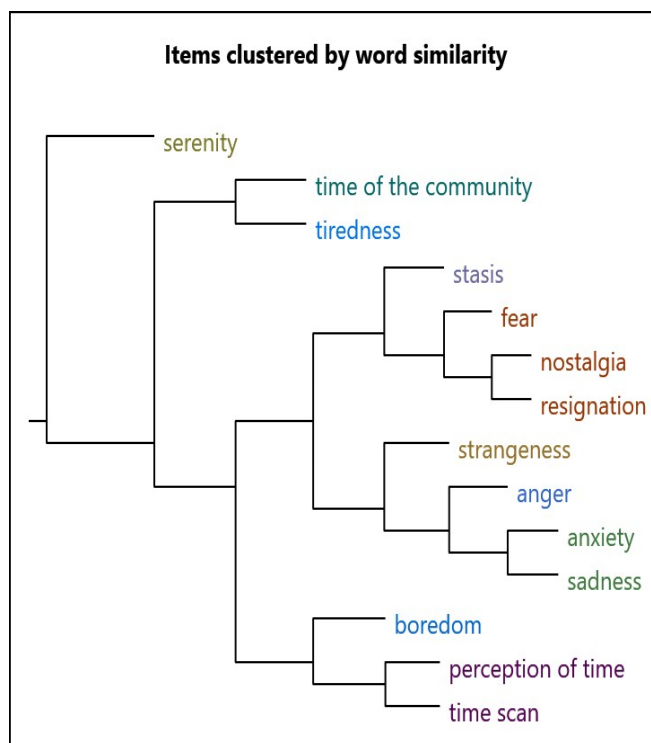

Figure 2: Word Clustering

The cluster analysis (Navigli and Martelli, 2019) brings out the process of defining the situation, in which these categories are linked. The first groups to form are those of *anxiety* and *sadness*, and *nostalgia* and *resignation*, which identify a frustration and a sense of helplessness towards the new "normality".

Subsequently, *anger* and *fear* are added to the first ones, which have a more active character and could be identified as a reaction. *Strangeness*, *stasis* and *perception of time* characterize instead a more reflective phase, where there is a greater awareness of the situation and a return to a new "normality" and routine. Then comes *boredom*. This graph represents the process of attribution of sense of the new state, which is accompanied by an awareness of the frenzy of "normal" life and in some cases, the desire to regain possession of time and slowness.

3.2 Thoughts

Among the testimonies, there are several *definitions* or metaphors that the subjects gave to the Covid-19 emergency. Giving a name to a new situation allows people to get in touch with it and try to understand it. The found definitions showed how people need to tell about the current period and thus giving it a meaning. "Being in a war with an invisible enemy" is the most common metaphor used in this period by many subjects. Health professionals have been described as "heroes fighting in the trenches" and the sick became the inevitable civilian victims of an invasion and dying became a defeat. All definitions show fear of novelty, but if on one hand there are those who look at COVID-19 as "a storm" or "a nightmare", on the other hand there are those who has showed trust in a humanity that has the strength to go forward and defeat it. For example, "We are riding an epidemic"[2] presupposes the idea that it can be "tamed".

«This virus sucks. But does it also do good?» (Cosimo from North, "Il diario di una quarantena da Nord a Sud" Facebook page).

This question, asked in a testimony, shows the link between further analytical categories built around the dimension of *thoughts*. Thanks to the perception of a still world, the subjects reflected critically about their lives and routine before the lockdown. There are those who reflect on sociality, on relationships taken for granted and now rediscovered precious; while others reflect on the division between free time and work time and unmask an often hasty life.
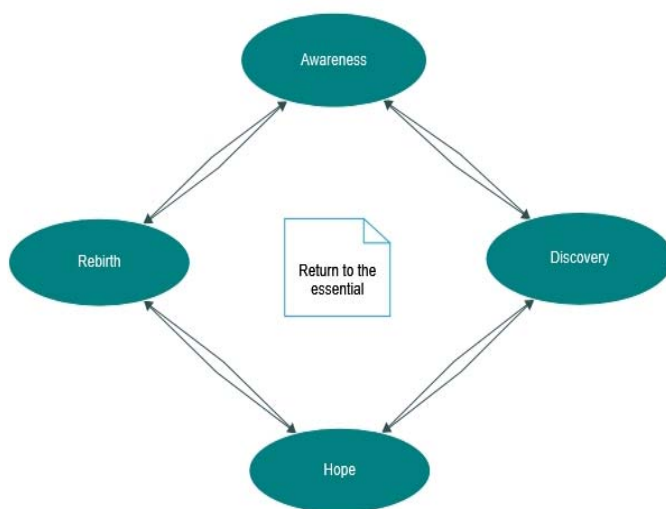

Figure 3: Circular Concept Map

The path that leads to the *attribution of meaning* is configured as a circular process marked by several steps, as shown in the graph: the *awareness* both about oneself and how everyday life took place before the forced quarantine, the *discovery* intended as an understanding of everything that was previously taken for granted and, finally, the *hope* that the period experienced will lead to the birth of a new world where one can *reborn* and start again. The above schematic path leads to "the return to the essential", which could be seen as a way of perceiving life different from the last decades.

The subjects, referring to life before the lockdown as "normal", reflect on the frenetic speed that characterized it. And they ask themselves if this lifestyle is useful for their well-being or if they have only adapted to the trend of society, so

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[2] Valeria, nurse from Lombardy, "Niente da dire" Facebook page.

much so that they have become accustomed to its frenetic essence, not even doubting its naturalness.

What was the speed with which the time was perceived before the quarantine? Some people traced back the speed to a day devoted to too much work.

> «I worked two hundred hours a day» (Anna, Audio tracks on Instagram, "ViceItaly" page).

Others to a more structural setting of society.

> «This is a good time to stop, something capitalism needed» (Francesca, "Chi resta fuori dai diari degli scrittori in quarantena", Internazionale).

The subjects become aware of how the capitalist mode of production has shaped their own way of being.This is demonstrated by the constant need to possess and reach new things.

> «In these two weeks I have realized that I need much less things than I thought» (Dario, Audio tracks on Instagram, "ViceItaly" page).

How can the standstill of everyday activities lead to good? Subjects hope for a rebirth of themselves, in which feelings, the values of altruism, of social relationships are brought back to the center of their lives.

Therefore, various testimonies underline a strange serenity in living this situation, hoping for a general change in the way of being and living of the whole society. They hope that the ultimate goal of the days will shift from constant pursuit of new things, to an understanding of the importance of the purest and most essential values, such as those of affection.

> «Let this be the last chapter in the history of a society that had lost its inner home. And the beginning of a new world» (Ilaria, personal diary on Facebook).

Furthermore, there are also different senses of *hope*. The subjects hope that this sense of community, demonstrated in the afternoons singing together outside the balcony or by the sadness that has crossed them in listening to the number of contagions, will continue in the future, bringing a greater understanding and solidarity towards the other.

In conclusion, the subjects attribute a deeper meaning to the lived experience. The days spent at home have revealed probable "defects" in time management and a desire for deeper change of the human being and a humanity united in a community.

3.3. Behaviours

The rules of social distancing and the constraint on the domestic environment have changed the *habits* of an entire country overnight. Unexpectedly, people found themselves in their homes forced not to go out, with much more free time. The reversal of everyday life gave the perception of a sudden immobility, which in some ways was only apparent. In fact, many activities have undergone a change in

practices, so people have been looking for ways to adapt, entering new dynamics and *habits*:

> «Habits protect us. They put us in a comfort zone that makes us feel safe» (Sara, personal diary on Facebook).

Many testimonies report the problem of how to reinvent and manage time. Staying up late, getting caught up in boredom and inactivity are constant features. Each person therefore tries to find a way to rethink time imposing new habits and activities:

> «In an attempt to correct these habits, I have imposed myself to carry out a series of domestic tasks at a strict cadence» (Auro, "Diario della quarantena", la Repubblica).

There are many habits that have taken on new meaning, first of all the acquisition of basic necessities. Shopping has become an important issue, as it is the only time for many people to leave their homes. If on the one hand this fundamental activity has been particularly regulated with compulsory masks and limited access, on the other hand many businesses have adapted by activating delivery services. Many businesses have developed apps to guarantee the service, but in order to meet the needs of those who do not have digital literacy, they have also developed analogue ordering methods such as telephone calls. The delivery service has also proved to be important for households isolated due to Covid infection that cannot rely on the family for the supply of basic necessities.

> «The main unknown is the refrigerator. My relatives are getting organized to supply me with food. However, I believe that in the coming days I will try the delivery service proposed by some supermarket chains» (Davide, household block, "Coronavirus, diario di una quarantena", la Repubblica).

But digitality comes in many forms. Many testimonies stand out for a marked desire to continue their work and their hobbies by deploying a great ability to adapt. An *adaptation* that is certainly technical, i.e. being able to learn and master digital devices in order to connect, but also a type of resilience, the ability to recover after an event that could put an end to many activities that classically need to be done in presence. Despite the difficulties, the need has pushed people to digitize themselves and experiment with the totally unthinkable solutions that the digital world can offer. Some people have thus adapted their activities to the current phenomenon:

> «Anyway, I am not discouraged: I will continue to be a yoga teacher, more convinced than before» (Andrea, "Partite iva e precari, i lavori più penalizzati dall'epidemia", Internazionale).

The computer, or rather any digital device connected to the network, has become the central tool to interact with the outside world.

> «My dependence on the computer, the only window to the outside world» (Paolo, personal diary on Facebook).

In fact, while for some the lockdown was the time to adapt to the digital world, for others it was an opportunity to experience further immersion in cyber space. The use of digital technology that has involved most of the daily activities, from smart working to relationships, has helped to build the routine and at the same time has become a cause of stress and fatigue due to hyper-connection.

«I've been working for almost twelve hours on the computer between video conferences and WhatsApp chats and I'm tired. I've been so hyper-connected that I've disconnected from myself» (Ilaria, personal diary on Facebook).

4. Community impact

The second dimension refers to deep-seated issues that the impact of the pandemic has brought to light in all areas. At the same time, the issues represent past problems that have been exacerbated or have taken on new form, or contingent problems. In this regard, the thematic nodes that were considered, refer to the new challenges that the community is facing in work, health and social spheres. In this dimension, both spontaneous stories collected by social networks and testimonies from newspaper articles have been analysed for *health*, *socio-economic* and *social problems*. The phenomenological approach allowed to focus not only on the representation of the situation but also on the adaptation of the categories involved.

As for the individual dimension, also in the collective one, the problems intersect. The classification conducted among the different problems must therefore be understood in its entirety, going beyond the distinctions in order to understand the complexity that characterizes the society during the lockdown period in Italy.

4.1 Health issues

In the analysis of the problems related to health care, many testimonies have been found that denounce a sense of abandonment by the institutions. One of the first problems to emerge for citizens, but also for companies and in particular for health facilities, was the difficulty in finding safety devices.

«We will work with polystyrene on our faces, garbage bags on our feet, we will work anyway» (Valeria, nurse in Lombardy, "Niente da dire" Facebook page).

This excerpt from the diary of a nurse tells not only about the lack of devices, but also about the fear and stress that this entails. The diary describes the rituals of dressing and undressing, the yellow line separating the wards, all necessary measures for the isolation of Covid patients. The laborious care for this separation of the rooms is accompanied by the lack or poor efficiency of the devices. The lack of adequate safety devices also involves workers who cannot take advantage of smart working, especially those who work in contact with the public, to whom the company should ensure the safe exercise of the profession. At this stage, however, the most common scarcity is perhaps that of tampons. Testimonies that show the difficulty of access to the swab were found. One such testimony was that of the alarm cry by a woman who, in protest, lied down in the Sanità district, a historic neighborhood of Naples, to ask that her husband be swabbed and tested.

The fear and anger, the sense of abandonment by the institutions involves in particular those who have already lost loved ones, who are not given clear instructions on what to do. This is how a woman relates the loss of her parents:

«We were all night and day in contact with Mom and Dad, we saw them go to the hospital in desperate conditions, and now we can't take them to the grave. But there

is no assistance, there is no worry for us. What prevention, what logic, what common sense explains this?» (Arianna, "Coronavirus a Napoli: «dopo mamma è morto papà, ma niente tampone ai familiari»", la Repubblica).

The traditional problem of social inequality is connected to health problems. The human body is the spokesperson of inequality. It is marginalized physically to the extreme margins of society, where institutions do not arrive.
«In reality, Covid-19 reiterated that belonging to a certain class means being part of different groups of people, who can count on greater or lesser protection of the body. And I do not speak of the body as a metaphor, but of the real body, the cells and matter we bring into the world» (Francesca, "Chi resta fuori dai diari degli scrittori in quarantena", Internazionale).

What seems clear is that the emergency caused by Covid-19 has only brought to light previous problems that now emerge from systemic flaws in light of the contingent implications of the pandemic.

4.2 Socio-economic issues

Lockdown is a transversal phenomenon whose impact is perceived indiscriminately among all segments of the population. To create the differences of experience is the mode of this impact, which can be explained by the working condition and the possibility of being able to work.

From the testimonies emerge a feeling of sharing among workers who, although have different occupations, find themselves in great economic disadvantage due to the interruption or closure of activities. The feeling of belonging to one's own social class seems necessary in order not to feel alone in the face of uncertainty. In the same way, for many people, the lockdown is doing nothing more than emphasizing the classic "class gap", creating differences in terms of opportunities.
«If you're a writer coming from the working class, you'll have to worry» (Alberto, "Chi resta fuori dai diari degli scrittori in quarantena", Internazionale).

> «Someone has a little money aside and with that he is dealing with the emergency» (M., "Il Covid-19 fa paura anche ai rom ma nessuno li ascolta", Internazionale).

There are various occupations that at this particular time are experiencing job and economic precariousness. People who have lost all income, without any shock absorber. The sufferers are, first of all, the workers with atypical types of contracts. Freelancers, who perceive their work as constantly uncertain, find themselves suffering from increased anxiety.

> «Those who do a job like mine are used to staying at home for periods, but the problem at the moment is that we are facing great uncertainty about the coming months. I have estimated that I can survive without working for the next six months. After that I don't know what I will do» (Angelo, sound engineer, Rome, "Partite iva e precari, i lavori più penalizzati dall'epidemia", Internazionale).

There are those who have already lost their jobs and there are others, who expect to lose theirs, those who have recently invested in technological tools and now do not know how to recover the money spent and those who depend on the commissions of other work activities, also closed. In the same way, insecure

employment involves the restaurant owners and the shopkeepers, those who have just invested in the opening of a restaurant or, simply, those who find themselves no longer receiving any earnings. All these categories feel a particular anxiety about how they can survive and sustain those necessary expenses, such as bills or rents.

> «With that money I will do nothing but pay the bills that are not paid by themselves and the expenses that remain unchanged» (Viola, owner of a bookstore, Rome, "Partite iva e precari, i lavori più penalizzati dall'epidemia", Internazionale).

Uncertainty is also influenced by the same emergency situation that does not allow even experts to predict a date for the opening of the activities. If not even the State, that protects you is able to guarantee certainties, then these certainties will collapse in every field. There are many who call for greater support from the government.

> «The decree lacks an intervention for workers with occasional collaboration contracts, almost completely unknown to INPS. The majority of riders are hired, for example, with this type» (Andrea, union reps of Nidil-Cgil, "Partite iva e precari, i lavori più penalizzati dall'epidemia", Internazionale).

In this regard, we can recall the exponential growth in recent decades of the types of employment contracts that are moving more and more towards a precarization of the labour market (Mingione and Pugliese, 2010). This creates obstacles in the construction of standardized regulations to manage contributions in an emergency situation, such as the current one.

The perception of the subjects for the work dimension goes to underline the classic social inequalities, making them almost insuperable, in terms of opportunities and the performance of certain practices. To be perceived by subjects as a further marker of the class gap is the digital divide, which refers both to an unequal possession of devices or access to the network, and to a marked differentiation in digital literacy. This theme becomes strongly relevant during the lockdown, which has led to a generalized expansion of the use of digital. In particular, some testimonies have highlighted the difficulties of schools in offering online education. The digital divide, present internally among the various schools, makes the services and learning methods offered to students vary. This rift is perceived as injustice and lack of care for every single child who has the same fundamental right to education as everyone else, whether they attend a prestigious school or a suburban school.

> «In this imprisonment, class differences affect the youngest and the schools they attend: those who have a little more means, those who are a little richer, those who are a little cooler, are organizing very nice things. Others, on the other hand, do not make it» (Davide, children's books writer, "Chi resta fuori dai diari degli scrittori in quarantena", Internazionale).

The gap between the infrastructure owned also affects Italians in their homes, the effect of a more general economic poverty. Not everyone possesses the newest infrastructure to adapt to these new digital modes.

4.3 Social issues

In this emergency, a part of the population remains forgotten and cut off from the narrative of a nation facing a pandemic together. Partial or complete inattention towards certain weak social categories by the government and the community determines the formation of the dimension of *social silence*. Djarah Kan, an Afro-Italian singer-songwriter, says:

«Drug addicts, undocumented or simply poor immigrants no longer exist, even if they continue to live. Their existence no longer brings percentage points to this or that party. We no longer exist» ("Chi resta fuori dai diari degli scrittori in quarantena", Internazionale).

Some fragile and exposed categories, already normally marginalized or disadvantaged, have experienced an exacerbation of difficulties during the period of home isolation. The population groups present, although united by the same *social silence*, reflect different shades of marginalization.
First of all, during the period of quarantine the homeless experienced a paradox: there was the obligation to stay at home, but they do not have a fixed abode.

«I wash my hands as much as I can, but it is difficult to stay clean on the street» (Benicio, Rome, "La solitudine dei senzatetto nei giorni del Coronavirus", Internazionale).

For this fragile category we report mainly testimonies of social workers who somehow try to take care of it.

«Demand has increased, because those who live on the street know they are more exposed and are afraid» (Alberto, spokesman of Caritas, Rome, "La solitudine dei senzatetto nei giorni del Coronavirus", Internazionale).

The complex circumstance of homelessness is aggravated by the restrictive measures imposed on welfare activities run by various associations such as Caritas. Many shelters have been closed or have forbidden access to new guests in order to ensure the new level of health security. Alessandro Radicchi, founder director of the National Observatory of Solidarity in Italian stations, recounts an obstacle:

«We had to stop possible new entrances. We are sorry, but we are not able to control everyone, also because we are less, the volunteers these days prefer not to come, and we must protect both our operators and our guests» (La solitudine dei senzatetto nei giorni del Coronavirus, Internazionale).

Another forgotten social category is the Roma people. The camps where they live are in poor sanitary conditions, there is a lack of electricity and the water is distributed through tankers. It becomes very difficult to get supplies of basic necessities, first of all physically, because of the distance of the camps from the city centers, but above all economically, because of the interuption caused by the lockdown to the often occasional nature of their works that allowed them to have a day to day livelihood. Significant is the cry of alarm of S., a 55-year-old man from Castel Romano:

«We are abandoned, no one tells us anything, we don't know how to do it. All the elders of the camp are like that! We are human beings, yet we are abandoned, and no one helps us» ("Il Covid fa paura anche ai rom ma nessuno li ascolta", Internazionale).

Women victims of violence are another "at risk" category. They also experience a paradox, as they are forced to share the house with those who make them victims.

«The house is a safe place. It is completely ignored that for many women staying at home is not safe» (Giusy, "Non una di meno" Facebook page).

In addition to canteens and shelters, also the listening centers for women victims of violence have suffered severe limitations but have tried to adapt to the new social situation. Most of the centers have not only set up reception modalities that guarantee health security, but have implemented assistance procedures that adapt to the new conditions, such as the dissemination of social awareness campaigns on the importance of psychological support to women, or the activation of remote services, which provide calls and video calls for victims who had already started the path of support, and for anyone in need. In general, the activation of switchboards or toll-free numbers focus on the objective of the centers and its operators to maintain or establish relationships so that women victims of violence do not feel alone. Dr. Micci, SVSeD's coordinating psychologist tells this purpose:

«Psychic discomfort will increase and, therefore, even situations of domestic violence will return to be felt more strongly. It is important, therefore, that women know that, even in this moment, they are not alone» ("Coronavirus e violenza di genere, in tutta Italia «non sei sola»", Futura).

As it has been shown, the health emergency and the consequent domestic confinement have brought to light some relevant social problems. The cases of the research report in different forms and modalities, the acts of solidarity towards the weaker population. These are not only associations but also actions of individual solidarity. In order to fully explore the issue of care, a word cloud has been generated for the *solidarity* node.

One can find at the center terms such as *need*, *difficulties*, *people*, which call for solidarity action in itself; while words such as *close*, *structure*, *centers*, describe the emergence of obstacles and difficulties on the part of associations in the third sector that had to adapt their service to the emergency situation.

Figure 4: Word Cloud.

In the context of individual solidarity, there are widespread phrases of support for doctors and nurses, those who "work in the front line during this emergency situation", but not only. Solidarity actions also extend to different areas. A cab driver from Bologna, for example, shows solidarity with his colleagues:

«I decided not to go to work anymore because at least this way I leave the few clients to colleagues who have just bought a license and who still have the mortgage on their shoulders: they are in great difficulty» (Roberto, "Partite iva e precari, i lavori più penalizzati dall'epidemia", Internazionale).

Figure 5: "Panarosolidale".
«If you need take,
if you can put»
(La Republica, 2020)

But some actions of solidarity have been determined in this situation of serious emergency especially towards the homeless, families in difficulty and in general all those in need. For example, the city of Naples has launched the initiative of the "panari solidali" that have become the symbol of Neapolitan solidarity, and that have spread to other Italian cities.

Individual solidarity actions seem to be linked to the awareness of the difficulties experienced by the neighbours, which is affirmed and expanded, both because of a widespread empathy and because they often experience similar needs or difficulties. That of Covid-19 is an emergency that we are all suffering the consequences of, and it is for this reason that the need to "express solidarity if we want to receive it" has spread. Therefore, it seems that the common circumstances experienced by people in this difficult emergency situation has pushed them to do solidarity actions.

Conclusions

The emerged dimensions from the various testimonies have opened up numerous opportunities for reflection, which are closely linked to issues and problems relevant to individuals and society. The analysis highlights how the virus and the resulting lockdown have affected everyone indiscriminately; what varies, however, is the way this new situation is experienced and the impact both on individuals and on various social categories.

Domestic confinement has changed the everyday life of both individuals and community and has brought out the need to define and give meaning to the new circumstance. The process of defining the situation can be described as a method through which subjects have constituted a "new normality". In response to a condition of alteration of reality, re-establishing the routine has allowed an "ontological security". In a phenomenological perspective, individuals have activated an adaptation process by defining the lockdown situation through a name that recalls the value sense that has been attributed to it. In this way, the subjects adapted their lives to the "new normality", making it real and objective.

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas, 1928).

The sensations and emotions that accompanied the different phases of domestic confinement were countless. Also, in this case, individuals undertook a path of adaptation in seeking a balance between contrasting moods, in which they came to the acceptance of a still world. The immobility of the world has infiltrated the individual, that perceived the experience as something that should not be let go. In this regard, some subjects have activated a process of resilience that has led them to face and reorganize their lives following the traumatic event of domestic confinement. The condition of stasis and slowness becomes a moment of reflection about their own life and how to live it.

«If we are closed in the house and we leave our hearts open, we will be able to realize many shades that until now, perhaps, we had not considered» (Ilaria, personal diary on Facebook).

Since "society cannot exist without man; and man cannot exist without society, and both co-produces with each other" (Pecchinedda, 2009, p. 11), adaptation has not been a process limited to individuals, but has also involved associations dedicated to others, who have activated their forces in an attempt to continue their service through alternative methods.

The research highlights how the community's issues have been structurally related to the Italian context. These issues became even more difficult to manage in a time of crisis that made clear the strong insecurity in which many social categories live and their frustration and sense of abandonment.

The background dimension that has been touched by all the interventions is the role of digital. It seems impossible to imagine the experiences of individuals during the quarantine period without the constant presence of the digital and its countless forms. For many subjects it represented a window on the world, as a bridge to build and maintain relationships. Digital has allowed people to perceive a sense of normality, despite the atypical conditions of the lockdown. For others it has been a way to feel part of a community, offering indistinct help to the weakest sections of society.

Digital has also assumed a fundamental role in the social context, allowing the dissemination of all information. The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has taken a completely new form compared to any other historical social phenomenon. The dissemination of information offered digitally, has in fact allowed everyone to know the disease and all its problems, both closely related to the virus and to individual experiences. The continuous use of digitality during the health emergency has configured in this sense several forms of digital divide, characterized by different digital literacy in school, work and home contexts.

This social inequality has not only affected the digital world, but the lockdown has also exacerbated the exclusion of population groups already normally disadvantaged. Each segment of the population interprets the concept and idea of home in a different way. While in a mainstream narrative *home* can be identified as a refuge from illness, for some women it has been the place steeped in violence and insecurity, and for others, such as Roma and homeless people, the home is a necessity, often unmet.

The transformations that marked the historical period of the Covid-19 pandemic plunged society into a "new normality". Italy and its citizens had to deal with a progressive digital acceleration that involved practices and habits. During the lockdown, society poured into the digital universe and tried to adapt to the new context. One of the main questions moved by these transformations is whether this adaptation will lead to a change in the organization of life, and therefore to the

affirmation of a permanent digitalization of social, relational and economic activities. In the labour market, for example, smart working has become the predominant type of work; schools, such as universities, have speeded up, or even started, a process of digitalization; finally, commercial activities had to face the challenges of the digital world in order to remain competitive. Could technological acceleration trigger a new revolution capable of redesigning the way cities are lived?

Finally, it is necessary to ask whether digitalization will intensify social inequalities, or on the contrary, society will be able to trigger training paths aimed at activating a generalized digital literacy in the population. Could digital acceleration create a world of equal opportunities?

Acknowledgments

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