

# Impact of the pandemic on young people in Sicily.

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## The Impact of pandemic on young people in Sicily

This research started in march 2020 when the pandemic in Italy was very worrying. The government imposed the lockdown and for some region like Sicily this decision created some problems:

- First a huge wave of students came back from the north or central region where they were attending university, panicked many students have returned home to Sicily risking to bring the covid especially from the Nordic regions
- Second, in Sicily many jobs are undeclared and therefore the subsidies made available by the government could not be used, and this created panic in a region already poor.

We decided to investigate how this situation has impacted specially on young people.

The first round of interviews was conducted at the very beginning: April/May 2020

The second round was after almost a year in January February 2021. In total we interviews 22 young people between 19 and 29 years old, the majority was students and some of them were workers, almost all of them (19 out of 22) lived in other regions and returned in Sicily to pass the lockdown with the family. The interviews were conducted virtually, they were semi-structured, lasting more or less one hour each. I leave the floor to Alessandra to present the results.

Like all research fields, Sicily has its peculiarities: it is a rather poor region in line with the other regions and in contrast with northern Italy considered as the driving force for the presence of many industries. Northern and Southern Italy are very different contexts from each other in climatic, economic and cultural terms. Many young people therefore decide to study in other regions of Italy and often stay there to work (they return in the summer). Particularly pressing is the phenomenon of *lavoretti* as jobs that are underpaid and without protection because they are not declared such as restaurant or tourism.

At the beginning of lockdown in 2020 there were some “waves” of rage because people were scared for their future because they couldn't work. We wanted to see if young people managed the situation of spending a long period home usually with family.

We came out with three particular aspects that basically refers to the idea that young people, despite being stuck in their attitude to the future, have put in place a series of strategies to exploit the situation in a productive sense rather than being blocked by the pandemic.

- The first aspect it's a redefinition of time: at the beginning everyone showed a sense of loss and confusion in the face of empty days to fill, but all of them organized dividing the days in different moments to do some activities: like studying/working, doing sports, relax or carrying out some new or old hobbies. But this regard the short time, in fact in what concerns the long-term there wasn't the same calm and the capacity to act strategically. As an interviewee told me with her conscience of generation young people are attentive to the future cause it's the dimension where they belong, where they are projected. The covid has upset the vision of the future already very blurred/cloudy by the problems of today's society, in the first period lockdown the fear of the future was caused by not knowing when it will end, in the second period it was caused by not knowing how long the covid will impact on the

future of economic, society, etc. So about the futuro young people are scared by the long term and this is a remark of the actual situation characterized by the instability of the world. But for what it concern the short time young people seems organize and determinate to not waste time, even if they are locked home.

- The second part regard a closer relationship with the context of the house. In a research about the rhythm of life in Paris I found out that people have a sort of moment filler between and activity and another, those moment are important to clear up their mind or to switch activity: like going to one place to another with the metro or queuing to the doctor's office. In the structuring of time we saw before those moments aren't possible because every activity is made at home. But young people seems to carve out time between one activity and another by taking care of the house, then preparing food, arranging their desk, their work surface or the space used for sports: it seems that the daily living practices have become accentuated and the space of the home has become a place more felt by young people.
- The last finding is about the socialization we notice that young people managed the situation by focusing on themselves but for as it regards the socialization with others they were skeptical about set up relationships with friends via social media. What they were experimented in pandemic, the emotional inner world, doesn't seems right to share online. They were missing in fact al the daily practice of socialization that the social media can't reproduce, this is shown with the answers to questions about the relationship with media. If mass media was both a source of anxiety but because of the informations, social media were considers as something useless used just to distract with stupid contest or as something fake. Young people didn't like to spend time on media because it showed fake emotions that were inadequate and in contrast to the true emotions of the pandemic.