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COVID 19: Compliance, Deviances, Social Control and Contagion Risks during the Lockdown. The Results of a Research in Two EU Countries (Italy and Romania)

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Abstract

The pandemic spread caused by the Covid 19 virus and the consequent risk of contagion has recently forced most national governments to adopt drastic measures of social control and containment, such as social distancing, which has led to a significant change in the lives and habits of citizens, which in turn pushed people to adapt to a changed external circumstance. This adaptation, which translates sociologically and substantially into a request for compliance with the prescriptions, had in many cases captured oppositional reactions through individual and group deviant behaviors, which, in addition to breaking the rules of a community, have contributed to the violation of that general principle of “mutual altruism” that should characterize modern societies and increase the viral contagion. The conducted research has explored the risks of contagion from Covid 19 regarding compliant or deviant conducts of behavior with reference to the lockdown requirements in the first half of 2020.

Keywords: social change, adaptation, compliance, deviance, society, contagion, social control.

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Introduction

Today as in the past, pandemics have not only represented a viral issue in the biological and health sense, but have involved the adoption of a complex and articulated system of social management interventions, taking into account that every social order is characterized by fragility and that a pandemic event always involves a social contraction. Pandemics also determine a modification of the modern individual perception of mass society, where individuals were given the possibility to enter voluntarily or not in contact with others, to be part of a mechanical community or by choice; today, on the other hand, immediate survival is given by dividing oneself, isolating oneself from each other, excluding old-fashioned forms of social aggregation.

Where, for reasons of service or work, it is not possible, mechanical aggregation takes place with due caution, distances and distrust towards the closest people, the latter result of an exasperated individualism and the dismantling of the supportive social fabric and of class that has commodified feelings and relationships at the expense of building elective affinities.

Pandemics also cause fear (especially of contagion), fears, mistrust and the desire to return to order, but they also determine the abandonment of that ethics of responsibility in taking on the consequences of one's behavior on others. In pandemic events, therefore, joint and several liability is based only on prescriptions and regulatory sanctions, referring to a generic and empty "common sense". Failing this, the legitimacy of the measures adopted by the authority is attributed to the need dictated by the state of emergency which unfortunately spreads a general sense of helplessness, frustration and depression which, in many cases, translates into forms of transgression and deviations. Durkheim (1969) in "The rules of the sociological method" brings about a juxtaposition between social phenomena and biological phenomena, arriving at the conclusion that they can assume, according to the cases, different forms. Basically, the character of "normality" responds to the requirement of generality, while the "pathological or morbid" character, referable to a social minority, is configured as an exception in space and time. The author also explains that when morbid events affect the organism, the normal play of functions is altered, anticipating, in fact, the subsequent analysis of Parsons (1951) with reference to the role of the disease in the social system, which is transformed, according to the latter, in a dysfunctional phenomenon, as the associates are prevented from carrying out their social role, consisting in compliance with the norms and expectations of status and the risk (especially health) may in some way alter the macrosocial balance, creating, in fact, a sort of plastering of the sub-systems. Luhmann (1996) compares risk to unpredictability, starting from the assumption that every complex society is in fact risky, despite trying to function rationally, and that in general the risk, harmful or disadvantageous for the community and the individual, it represents a price to pay or to face through prevention. The process of globalization, the transformation of society and the

modification of the human condition, according to Beck (2000), define modern society, qualifying it, however, as a society more exposed to risk. He points out that faced with the technologicalization of society, the risk in the health, environmental, financial fields, and so on, has grown in parallel. Beck's (2000) vision diverges, however, from the general systemic one, according to which modern society coincides with the bureaucratic and technocratic machine. The elaboration of his theory on risk is anchored to the dual model of social rationality and scientific rationality, where modernity, on an intellectual level, opens up to contiguous conditions. The fear of pandemic contagion brings to light the theories of Giddens (1994) and the relationship between fear and trust: the latter, in general, always operates in risky environments, in which there is a variability of safety and protection from dangers. Risk and trust are therefore connected, even if the former always presupposes danger, identifiable as an element that threatens the expected and desired results and compromises safety in general. Luhmann (2002), correlates trust to time, precisely because it allows us to reduce a future in which complexity prevails and a resizing to the extent of the lived present is needed.

Literature review

Pandemic and rediscovery of the relationship between self and society

As is well known, social interactions are governed by behavioral norms oriented towards conformity (respect for social norms) or deviance (failure to respect social norms). These rules can be essential and mandatory (mores) or customary (folkways). Conformity and deviance, with respect to social rules, is above all the result of socialization processes, so if the latter is perfect, the individual will adapt to social norms without perceiving them as an external imposition; if, on the other hand, it is imperfect, the subject will swing his behavior between a very partial (or no) subjective respect for the rules or their total violation (very frequent case). Socialization, therefore, encompasses a series of processes that reverberate not only on information, or on what concerns information in a given society, but also on people's attitudes, ideas, conformity or deviance. These processes give structure to some types of action and behavior, as well as to the basic categories of understanding and classification in general (Watkins, 1975). Socialization, according to Berger and Luckmann (1969), can be defined as the complete and coherent settlement of an individual in the objective world of a society or one of its sectors. The theme of socialization, therefore, is of great importance today for the purpose of reflecting on the processes of social control, especially in terms of pandemics, also providing the key to understanding the phenomena of the social order that concern emotional involvements and their implications in terms of personal image and identity (Watkins, 1975). The pandemic experience has also contributed to highlighting the relationship between self and society, a combination

that, according to Mead (1925), underlines that “society” and “self” represent the mechanisms of the same process of “social interaction”, As the development of a “self”, and later of a well-structured “I”, find their indispensable premise in the human ability to metabolize the attitude of the alter, which, in its universal form, is “a generalized alter”. Coser (1983) identifies Mead as the first author ever to have highlighted that the process of building the Self through the assumption of perspective, but also of respect, of the alter represents the process of social control in the known canons. Contrasting behaviorist theories, Mead (1966) points out that psychology has as its objective the study of individual behavior within social processes and that the understanding of this behavior occurs in a totalizing way only when the connection is made with the group of which the individual is part, bearing in mind that individual social acts are associated with larger acts, which concern the other members of that group. According to Watkins (1975), speaking of the universality of socialization processes does not seem to imply the universality of the techniques and tools with which individual social integration takes place.

Social control in the pandemic emergency: characters and theories

In the context of the current pandemic phase, it is important to make a connection between deviance and social control, but, above all, to understand the effectiveness of this tool to lower the index of deviant behavior. Becker (1966), Kitsuse and Cicourel (1963), have highlighted the importance of social control which specifically concerns the phase of “primary” deviation in producing a “secondary” deviance, but they have not deepened the analysis from a variable and analytical point of view. Others like Lindesmith (1965) limited themselves to stating the uselessness or ineffectiveness of social control; finally, others, such as Hollhingshead and Redlich (1958), Simmons (1979), Clark and Gibbs (1965), have tried to delimit the social characteristics of the deviant, which condition the type of public reaction. An in-depth study of post-deviant forms of social control can be found in a paper by Clark and Gibbs (1965). They distinguish between normative reactions and actual reactions. The former look at the social norm, can be considered as reactions to supposable deviance on the basis of a certain more or less legal evaluation criterion of deviance. They are divided into evaluative (sanction for deviance), legal (sanctions of an official nature) and provisional (probable sanctions). Of these reactions, in principle, it can be said that they undergo a lot of variability: the cited authors take into account the degree of generality, of specificity (many reactions are applied discretionally and not specifically), of relativity (the reactions depend on the characteristics of the deviant, of the victim, of the reactant, of the situational circumstances), of consent (not all reactions are equally legitimate, of coherence (which concerns the normative reaction). The same discourse concerns the actual reactions, of which it is not possible to predict a precise taxonomy, but only to determine two fundamental schemes: correlation and relativity. With the first (correlation) you can

establish links between actual reactions and types of deviance: e.g. to what degree a certain reaction actually applies to a certain type deviance (degree of generality); to what extent a given deviance is able to elicit a more or less wide range I of reactions (degree of variation); to what degree a reaction is exclusive in relation to a deviance (degree of distinction); to what degree the sanction is triggered for deviant conduct referred to a specific reaction (degree of specificity). With the second (relativity) it is possible to trace the link between the characteristics of the deviants, the victims, the situations, and the actual reactions.

Covid 19: a reference to the theories of conformity and deviance

It is now known that the pandemic spread from Covid 19 has constituted a test bed to ascertain, also, the effectiveness of the social control mechanism, studied, as theories and studies have shown, by a set of knowledge, powers, strategies, through which the power elites preserve a particular social order, placed in a precise historical, contemporary moment, which gives specificity to the concept of normality and pathology, also highlighting the relationship between individual and group with respect to the normalization that connects the group to the individual (Simmel, 2006). It should be noted that in the current lexicon, conformism means that attitude which is the result of the collective pressure on the individual and that this pressure is in contrast to the individualistic one. Tocqueville (1968), defining the individual as a “weak” subject due to growing social development, supports the relevance of general opinion that affects the spirit of the individual by abandoning him to a significant number of beliefs and opinions. However, many theorists start from the assumption that the company is already in possession of an “order”, and that, albeit generally, its members are projected to abide by the rules of conduct that come from the institutions, concluding that compliance represents a social factor of behavior rather than a psychological attitude. Brandt and Kohler (1972) emphasize that the internalization of norms during the socialization process through identification, imitation and adaptation to the group, corresponds to the certainty that compliance with social norms is rewarded through the so-called social recognition. Speaking of “imitation of the acting of the alter”, Weber (1922) clarifies that this behavior does not in itself constitute “social action” as it lacks the sense of acting (individual / own). Durkheim (1902) emphasizes, on the other hand, that the social feeling deriving from uniformity is strong only and exclusively if the subject is not. Parsons (1951) defines conformity and deviance as the result of problems related to the integration and poor integration of both social systems and related subsystems. Asch (1957) inaugurates a new season of studies aimed at understanding the cognitive and perceptive factors that lead subjects to yield to the pressures of a group. Milgram (1975) distinguishes conformity from obedience on the basis of some criteria: conformity is characterized by equality of status, imitation, compulsion, illusion of freedom; obedience, on the other hand, from a rigid hierarchical structure, general execution, intentional commands and

the awareness of submission. Allport (1954) argues that conformity is steeped in simplified beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices. Muchi Faina (1998) in drawing the figure of the conformist highlights, however, the characteristic of interest in the present and current events. Closely linked to the concept of compliance is the so-called social consensus which translates as the degree of compliance that the individual subject maintains with regard to current regulations. "Consent" is characterized by three forms: a) "active", if the behavior of the social actor arises as a reflection of a profound internalization of the rules; b) "consensus agreement", as a result of an exchange that concerns economic services from which compliance with the rule originates; c) "compliance consent", characterized by compliance with the standard as a result of pressure on the individual by the group. The primary objective of each social group is to build self-preservation strategies that aim at the stability of the company itself and effectively ensure the safety of its associates. Social pressure, therefore, is counted as the key tool to ensure order and maintenance of compliance with the system.

Recalling the types, the one characterized by "incentive and compulsion" provides for the first (incentive) control over the subject's competitiveness, through suggestion, education and persuasion; the second (compulsion) relies on the individual's feeling of fear, using tools such as compulsion itself, threat, order; the so-called "Manipulation", on the other hand, exploits psychological mechanisms to investigate the conception that the individual has of the reality that surrounds him and obtain consent, operating, in fact, a real manipulation not of the facts, but, instead, of the perceptions that individuals have facts themselves; finally, "distraction" which consists in the ability of one or more dominant groups to shift the attention of public opinion to secondary issues or to recreational or cultural entertainment events, for the sole purpose of relieving tension. Cavan (1962) identifies the categories that pertain to conformity and non-conformity: the first category concerns in general the criminal counterculture, as a form of radical and organized deviance with revolutionary ends, often promoted by a group; extreme non-conformism, which includes systematic deviations accompanied by a significant ambivalence towards the structural values of the system; moderate non-conformism, dotted with occasional deviations that do not undermine the consensus on the values of the system; the average conformism, which is combined in the most widespread form of adaptation by minorities; moderate superconformism, characterized by strict observance of social customs and norms by the subjects; extreme superconformism, in which it prevails in a pathological and obsessive sense with regard to observance of the rules; the countercultural superconformism that encompasses the conduct of reformers, fanatics, radicals and idealists, structurally inserted in closed groups. Gurvitch (1997) in "Social control" notes that what appears as "order" (normal) to a group of individuals can be considered "disorder" (pathological or deviant) by other elements of the same society (e.g. reactions against the recently imposed lockdown). Gurvitch (1997) also deals with distinguishing between species and control profiles: to

the former belong the values related to morality, law, religion, education and so on, which must be integrated and the forms of social control according to the political structure of the specific society, which vary from the form of organized control (both autocratic and democratic), to the spontaneous one implemented by collective experiences (including revolts and revolutions), to the control exercised with the help of cultural practices and uses and, finally, the spontaneous one implemented by collective ideas and ideals.

Gurvitch (1997) again argues that social control can be functional to the reduction of the antinomies operated by social groups, individuals or institutions, through a continuous dialectical process that aims at an ever higher degree of development of society, respectful of the community. and otherness. Pitch and Ventimiglia (2001) distinguish between objective security, measurable with adequate tools free from prejudices and political orientations, and subjective security, perceivable individually or collectively, which is normally influenced by prejudices, emotions, cultural models, and so on. In order to exercise social control through the strategies of containing deviant phenomena, it is necessary to reduce the possibilities of behavior of individuals by determining constraints, which translate into techniques for detecting infringements and concretizing punishments. However, most theoretical approaches do not clarify the distinction, both conceptual and concrete, between social control and deviance, due to the fact that they consider social control as a simple tool to punish and instill fear, or, because, useful elements to greater understanding they are not even mentioned. The theory of rational choice of Cornish and Clarke (1986), going beyond the theoretical approaches regarding the conditioning of the group towards the individual, constitutes an interesting line of research that explores the behavior (especially deviant) of the subject as an expression of free action. and calculated by interest through three elements: 1) rationality (characterized by strategic thinking about information and the evaluation of opportunities and alternatives); 2) the choice (which involves the deviant's decision to carry out that given action); 3) the figure of the rational offender, as a criminal-minded individual who expects certain advantages from the infringement of the law (taking into account, however, that the rationality of human beings is limited, as the ability to predict, reason and plan is studded with objective limits). The application of this theory in a pandemic context appears interesting above all in the phase of the decision-making process of violation of the rules by the subject who puts his own needs before the need for safety (to avoid contagion, for example) of the other, one's own contingent motivations, one's state of mind and relative feelings, one's moral evaluation with respect to the deviant act, making use of neutralization techniques (Matza & Sykes, 1957) as justification for one's behavior, the ability to draw advantages, risk assessment and consequences. From this it follows that the deviant author is moved by needs to be expressed in a limited space and time, also taking into account contingent circumstances (Clarke, 1993).

Pandemic and social order: the need to build an effective collective model against deviances The need for a social order capable of channeling individual actions within socially accepted limits accompanies the entire reflection of Ross (1901), together with the conviction that this order “is a phenomenon that can only be explained in reference to society” (Bierstedt , 1981). According to Ross (1896), the reaction of individuals to the order depends on their mental disposition: some are peaceful and respond promptly to it; others are aggressive and do not. Just as there are individual differences, in the same way there are racial differences: in a quiet race, once the order has been established, the individual follows the prescriptions out of pure inertia. In an aggressive race, order is continually endangered by individual recklessness, and can only be maintained through the work of certain social forces. Park and Burgess (1924), delineate “social control” as “a set of mechanisms that make possible the transformation of the community into a model society and that the mechanisms of social control are the product of a political decision and assimilation cultural”. Ross (1896), Park and Burgess (1924) have been bitterly contested: Quiron (2001) and, before that, Cohen (1985) and Horwitz (1990) argue for the lack of “sense of measure in the management of deviations”. As noted by Quiron (2001), natural lawyers and all those who speak of an alleged “original social pact” rely on an unsustainable and naive caricature, that of a normative consensus. Mead (1925) specifies that social control guarantees the safety of institutions in change, taking into account that “social control” is dominion, power and authority. For Mead (1918), the social control of anti-normative deviations is constituted by a perennial dynamic encounter between the I and the You, of Freudian origin. Socialization is the result for the Author of a continuous confrontation of the subject with the outside world, “living with others and with others deciding, day after day, whether or not a conduct is tolerable by society or not”. To summarize, social control is the expression of myself when I meet others (Mead, 1918); social control therefore depends on the degree of acceptance with which the person places himself towards the other members of a specific group in which social activities take place. Living in society means communicating with others and sharing mutual experiences, in the awareness that “others” can approve, but also disapprove of the behavior of another partner. Mills (1963) summarizes every form of contrast to deviations in a series of psycho-linguistic or, in any case, communicative activities.

From the point of view of Mills (1963), crime, deviance and law would be a linguistic or, at least, gestural product. Quiron (2001), argues that social control synthesizes the complexity of processes that contribute to the metabolization of norms by directing subjects to a conformist practice, while Robert (2000), accentuates the traditional distinction exercised by contemporary sociologists, namely that between socialization and the social reaction to deviance, therefore, between learning to conform and eliminating non-conformity. Melossi (1990) and Sumner (1983) underline the presence of a real “sociological theory of the institutionalization of the discipline”, in which an attempt is made to investigate

the set of mechanisms that make social order possible. Ross (1901) qualifies “social control” as a domination of men by other men, as happened in the relations between husband and wife within patriarchal families. With Parsons (1951), the idea of an absolutizing “social control” takes place, conceived to neutralize anyone who is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as an enemy of peaceful collective coexistence. The “zero tolerance” towards deviances is also described by Clark and Gibbs (1965), who denounce in no uncertain terms the sad story of the failure to distinguish between anti-social behavior and, vice versa, anti-judicial conduct in the technical sense. According to Parsons (1951), the perpetrator of a crime causes a real disease in the community and social control is configured as a set of mechanisms that counteract deviance, guaranteeing the integration or exclusion of men, through punishments. From the perspective of Parsons (1951), social control has the task of bringing back to the conformist style the subject who has distanced himself from this or of removing him from the group of associates. Parsons (1951), however, is radical and peremptory, to the point of not distinguishing spontaneous socialization from the rigid and aggressive notion of “social control”. Finally, Parsons (1951) always does not postulate any form of prevention and propagates the social reaction as a remedy that intervenes after the commission of the offense. Cohen (1985), in disagreement with Parsons’ (1951) strict remuneration position, argues that within a democratic-social order it is not permissible for deviants to be excluded from everything and separated from others. In the conjugation of separation, social control indicates the set of organized responses, including punishment, dissuasion, treatment and prevention towards people and forms of deviance. Cooley (1964) believes it is important to know the person’s vicissitudes through study and understand their behavior. In particular, his theory on the “mirror self” and the social origins of consciousness have greatly served other illustrious scholars to study the socialization process (Cesareo, 1979) and the interactions between the individual and his group (Roucek, 1947). Sumner (1983), develops the concept of the importance of group customs, institutions and value judgments as socio-cultural forms capable of organizing the conduct of individuals. In addition to giving substance to group rules, these socio-cultural forms, without which it would not be possible to understand social behavior, are of primary importance in establishing the direction in which social control operates. The values and social organization of the group largely determine the eventual encouragement or inhibition, by the agents of social control, of some specific form of behavior (Roucek, 1947). Despite some interpretative differences, we are not dealing with mutually exclusive analyzes, but rather with approaches capable of opening up a range of varied and diversified hypotheses.

Methodology

Many empirical studies explore the diversity of certain behaviors or cognitions within a given population. Typically, the analysis involves comparing interview data for each topic investigated and then summarizing their diversity across a number of categories (topics of concern, types of behavior, attitudes, etc.). Several authors have criticized the weak methodological justifications or even the confusion regarding the logic of this simple type of qualitative research (Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992; Chamberlain, 1999). According to other scholars, however, the survey could be an effective method to collect data and information on a larger population starting from a sample. The purpose of this work, carried out in synergy between the “G. D’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara, the “Kore” University of Enna, the University of Craiova and the University of Bucharest, is therefore to offer an overview of the actual risks of contagion from Covid 19 with reference to deviant behaviors during the lockdown period in the first half of 2020. For the purposes of this study, the diversity to be studied is defined in advance and the purpose of the descriptive analysis is only to see which of the predefined characteristics exist empirically in the sample, translating, in this sense, each question in a diversity in the meanings of the participants, in order to measure frequencies and correlations. The primary knowledge purpose of this type of study is to explore the participants’ opinions as expressed in the questionnaire administered online. In the proposed questionnaire, reference was made to gender, age group (from 15 to over 50 years old), level of education, family unit and the possible presence of members with previous pathologies, the number of cohabitants present, personal habits during the lockdown period, the personal reasons for which he left home, the use of masks, sanitizing gels, gloves or other personal protective equipment, the difficulty in finding the latter, the personal work situation, if carried out in the presence or in smart working, the possible exposure to the risk of contagion at home in the case of public utility work, the psychological aspects deriving from the lockdown in the event of separation from the family unit, the current personal situation of a person infected with the virus or not, the incidence of lockdown on the physical, mental, emotional and psychological level, the number of working hours performed, the personal knowledge of cases of acquaintances who have contracted the virus, the level of tolerance towards the alter, the personal considerations on the increase of deviant behaviors within and outside the family and social in general, as well as the incidence of deviant behaviors on the level of social contagion. All the selected people who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate and informed about the rights, guarantees, data privacy (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the “protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data” entered into force on May 25, 2018, and of Legislative Decree of 20/06/2003 n.196 - Code regarding personal data). Individuals were instructed to complete the survey in all relevant sections; their (anonymous) identities and data have been entered / stored on a password-protected computer. All information has been

treated with the utmost confidentiality. Respondents completed a two-page online questionnaire. All analyzes were conducted using MathLab 2015a and a special statistic lab at the University of Craiova, Romania in collaboration with the Social Work department of the University of Bucharest.

Results

The dataset contains 731 individuals, for Italy, who answered the questions proposed in the Questionnaire. Among the most significant data, it emerges that as regards the age group, 49% is included between 15 and 25 years of age; 21.3% between 26 and 35; 16.1% between 36 and 50; 13.5 over 50 years of age. The degree of education for 56.4% is a high school diploma, 17.1 a three-year degree, 11.5% a master's degree, 12.1% a high school diploma, while remaining percentage the elementary school or other. With regard to the geographical position in Italy, 66.9% of the interviewees are resident in central Italy and 20.6% in the south, the remaining part in the north and islands. 65% said they were married, while the remaining 35% live together and are not married. Furthermore, 29.3% of respondents have children, while 70.7% said they have no children. With regard to the possibility that deviant behaviors (failure to use personal protective equipment, infringements of the various prohibitions imposed, conducts with a high risk of transmission of infections in the home, and so on) during the lockdown can cause contagion from Covid 19 (*Figure 1*), 86.5% answered with a firm "yes", 4.5% answered generically "maybe", 6.6% answered "no", and finally 2.4% answered "I do not know".

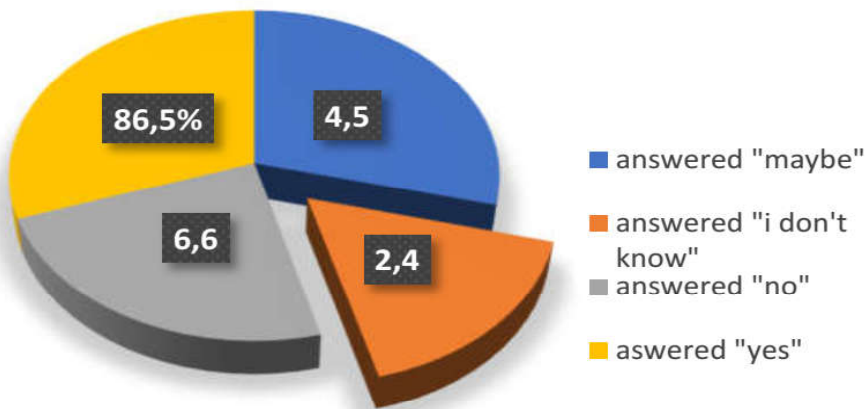


Figure 1. Lockdown: deviant behaviors that influence the contagion from Covid19 in Italy. The data from 731 participants

For Romania, the dataset contains 735 individuals who answered the questions proposed in the Questionnaire. Among the most significant data it emerges that with regard to the age group, 52.5% is included between 15 and 25 years of age; 22.4% between 26 and 35; 13.9% between 36 and 50; 11.2 over 50 years of age. The degree of education for 57.2% is a high school diploma, 17.9 a bachelor's degree, 11.8% a master's degree, 12.5% a college diploma, while remaining percentage the elementary school or other. With regard to the geographical position in Romania, 79% of the interviewees are resident in south Romania and 18.6% in the west, the remainder in the north and east. 55% said they were married, while the remaining 45% live together and/or are not married. In addition, 22.9% of respondents have children, while 77.1% said they have no children. With regard to the possibility that deviant behaviors (failure to use personal protective equipment, infringements of the various prohibitions imposed, conducts with a high risk of transmission of infections in the home, and so on) during the lockdown can cause contagion from Covid 19 (Figure 2), 81.5% answered with a firm "yes", 8.5% answered generically "maybe", 8.1% answered "no", and finally 1.9% answered "I do not know".

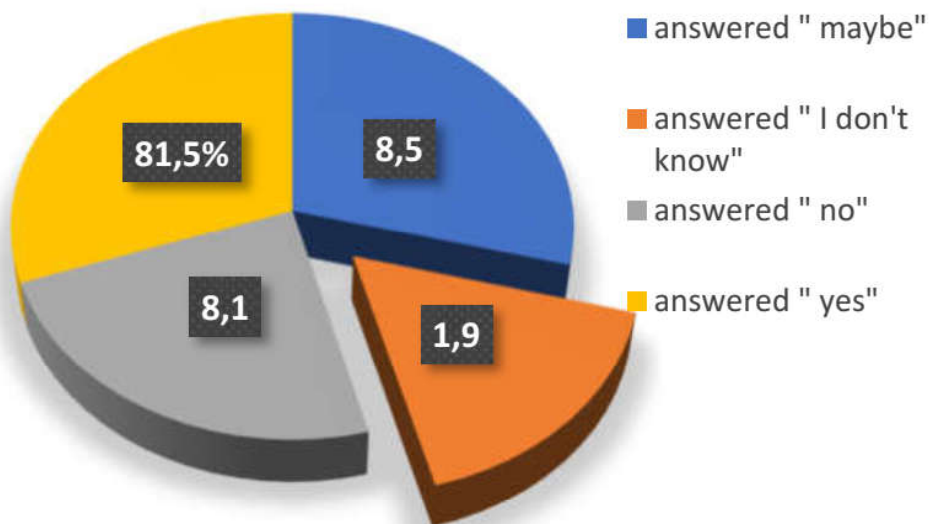


Figure 2. Lockdown: deviant behaviors that influence the contagion from Covid19 in Romania. The data from 735 participants

Discussion

The analysis of the data of the participants in the Questionnaire shows unequivocally that the fear of contagion from Covid 19, deriving from conduct that does not comply (therefore deviant) with the prescriptions, recommendations and prohibitions imposed during the recent lockdown, is perceived in a consistent way and translates, for a high percentage (93.4%) of the interviewees, in Italy, and (91.9%) of the interviewees in Romania, in a generalized risk for the protection of the health of society in general, of their own and that of close or cohabiting people. These beliefs would lead to glimpses, in the first instance, of new perspectives of the social need for “compliance” and full respect for the forms of social control (formal and informal) in place for the containment of the pandemic.

Conclusion

The survey, although addressed to a national focus, both in Italy and Romania, has the limit of a relatively small sample that could influence the veracity of the answers and influence the results of the study. Therefore, these results should be considered preliminary until more robust research, with a larger sample and variables, could confirm that the estimates get or produce new results. In consideration of the purpose, this study has, however, provided primary evidence of an interaction between socio-demographic, personal and social fears such as contagion from Covid 19, and this in order to hope for incisive actions at the institutional level to prevent forms of non-compliance, through deviant conduct, as well as interventions to promote compliance and compliance with the rules. A limitation concerning the study conducted is also identifiable in the use of the online self-assessment questionnaire to objectively evaluate these variables. Considering both the advantages and the limitations of the research conducted, what is proposed should be considered a first step to demonstrate the value of policies to reduce deviant behavior, and, above all, to preserve, in extreme situations such as the pandemic, the health of the whole society.

Comparing the two researches we can conclude, beside the fact that the data are fairly similar, that there is a genuine fear of the virus as in all the cases of a terrorist attack and the majority of people are willing to take the necessary precautions in order to avoid the risks that would come with such an infection (even death), but, as well as in other threats or attacks, people are not willing to sacrifice their normal lives, here we do not include deviant behaviors, in order to survive. In other words, the people are fearful but they will not be intimidated into changing their ordinary lives.

Recommendations

From the research data, we can see that although a fairly large number of the respondents inclined to respect the rules and comply with the restrictions in order to overcome the pandemic, however the compliance is “hopefully” on a short term. The longer the restrictions are in force, the larger the number of people inclined to avoid the prohibitions and become deviant in their behavior. Therefore, it is recommended for the authorities to act fast and firm in combatting the pandemic by taking the necessary measures, from finding and administrating the necessary cures, to easing the restrictions to a minimal possible in order to avoid a tragedy but at the same time making them more bearable for the individuals. At the same time, it is recommendable for the people to act responsible and trust the authorities with the measures, from restrictions to the cures, in order to assure their own safety and the safety of others.

The bottom line is that no matter how big or how imminent the threat is, in our days, people are not willing to give up their way of life, especially their hard fought and won liberties that they are already so used with, at least not on a long term, regardless the consequences.

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