



# TeMA

This Special Issue of TeMA - Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment, collects twenty-seven contributes of international researchers and technicians in form of scenarios, insights, reasoning and research on the relations between the City and the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic, questioning about the development of a new vision and a general rethinking of the structure and urban organization.



Journal of  
Land Use, Mobility and Environment

TeMA Journal offers papers with a unified approach to planning, mobility and environmental sustainability. With ANVUR resolution of April 2020, TeMA journal and the articles published from 2016 are included in the A category of scientific journals. From 2015, the articles published on TeMA are included in the Core Collection of Web of Science. It is included in Sparc Europe Seal of Open Access Journals, and the Directory of Open Access Journals.



*Special Issue*

**Covid -19 vs City -20**

scenarios, insights, reasoning and research



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# TeMA

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Land Use, Mobility and Environment

*Special Issue*

## COVID-19 vs CITY-20 SCENARIOS, INSIGHTS, REASONING AND RESEARCH

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The cover image is a photo collage of some cities during the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine (March 2020)

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## *Special Issue*

### COVID-19 vs CITY-20

#### SCENARIOS, INSIGHTS, REASONING AND RESEARCH

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## Covid-19. Some moments of the 21st century, with a look at Milan

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### Abstract

Critically narrating some impacts on the *civitas* and *urbs* of the pandemic, the paper argues how the relative pathos of death and poverty unleashed on Milan is, in fact, a contingency on the endless flux of the urban body in the long history of the city. The text, divided into five paragraphs - then (May 2019), yesterday (March 2020), today (April 2020), tomorrow (May 2020) and later (May 2030) -, in addition to the bibliography, develops as in a Gaussian curve, the two extremes being ("then" and "later") in points before and after the beginning of the curvature, respectively (i.e., describing situations "at full throttle"), the centre ("today") the peak of the curve and the two intermediates ("yesterday" and "tomorrow") in its ascending and descending sections, respectively.

The style varies from calmness at the extremes (with mainly hypotactic periods) to the unease of the intermediates, namely, at its peak (with mainly paratactic periods).

### Keywords

Metropolis; Catastrophe; Permanence; Milan.

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## 1. Then (May 2019)

When it happened, at the time, I could hardly believe it.

It was an article about Milan, expressly requested of me by the dear daughter of a dear friend and colleague who was trying to make her debut in the scientific community through a curatorship of certain pretentiousness. I was glad to provide it. I managed, at once, to produce a piece that, from the title alone, sounded like a passionate declaration (in Milan, precisely) of a disappointed lover (I, being Milanese). Acknowledging this, I was very pleased because that was my intention at the time. But I aborted the girl's initiative - albeit not through my fault.

I had completely forgotten it when, sometime later, another dear friend and colleague asked me, amongst other things, for a contribution of a certain piece for an editorial operation he was dedicating to me. The writing came to my mind; yes, but it would clearly have needed updating. I read it again: there was no need. In fact, it was still very topical.

Ten years later (Busi, 2011)!

In fact, the explanation - as I realised a few moments later - was simple: already in its first draft, in fact, the article - far from being current - focused on the basic characteristics of the urban planning body dealt with. Milan, therefore, was outlined there, not on the episodicality of the contingency, but through the marked clues of its profound nature. And these do not age or deny themselves: it is only possible, in a critical analysis, to integrate and, at best, outline them.

Let's see these basic features of Milan's profound nature.

First and foremost, industriousness and, even more so, an aptitude for entrepreneurship.

Certainly, of course. But these characteristics of the *civitas* are translated into precise - and connotative - peculiarities of the *urbs*. With roots that date so far back in time: even in the 12th century, which saw the construction of the *Naviglio Grande* [Grand Canal], which extended the range of action of the economy of Milan through inland navigation to approximately 200 km - a true world record in modernity - from a few dozen to those times made possible with a load-bearing mule track (Busi, 2018, La "*riapertura*"...).

Then there were the other canals (Busi, 2018, La "*riapertura*"...), railways (Ogliari, 1974), trams (Ogliari, 2010), motorways (Bortolotti, 1992) and undergrounds (Ogliari, 2010).

Therefore, a strong focus on the territory. Thus, bringing together, in essence, "capturing" and "leading" to the city with the very extensive and endless movement of things and - even more so - of travelers. The daily transhumance of people - over a twenty-four-hour period on weekdays - is a rite of all the metropolises and of Milan, above all.

A city bustling with business. This is the reason why there is so much movement of goods. Also, of employees, always as regards manual skills and increasingly more so since the services sector was added.

It should be noted, as an example and confirmation of what was stated earlier, that this character of the Milanese trait - like the others, amongst the many connotations, generally for the good, the city and those who live in it - comes from afar.

Since Roman times? No, from before that: Celtic Milan was already, by the standards of the time, a reference metropolis for the whole Po plain. Its name says it, which means medium-land; that is: in the middle of the plain. Thus it was, at the time of the Ligurians (and perhaps even their predecessors) and then: the Celts (as has been said), the Romans and the Lombards, when it was municipalities and seignories, under the Spanish and French and Austrians, when it was the monarchy and then fascism and now the republic.

Are these peoples, these governments and, in general, each of these experiences important? Yes, very much so because they had various influences on it. But it was always a matter of contingencies, even if they operated for centuries.



Thus, even under the - to observe the enlightened and, in general, well-thinking, Manzoni - Spanish misgovernment, Milan even expressed the majestic and enlightened urban plan - consecrated, in the middle of the 16th century, by the relative circle of the "Bastioni" walls - which supported, with what was foreseen for the precisely "urban" and "extra-urban" context, the expansion and the virtuous relationship of phenomenological inclusion of the surrounding territory for more than three centuries, up to the Beruto plain, in the late 19th century.

Thus, also, the several decades with Austria, albeit unassailable due to the impeccable "first moment" - the Teresian moment - marked, amongst other things, for our disciplinary interests, by the activation of the valuable land registry -, even in the "second" moment, the post-French era, although massacred by the rhetoric of the Risorgimento, no one can deny that they have left a legacy amongst other things, as far as we are interested here, a non-trivial railway network (Briano, 1977) that connected Milan, in its hinterland, with Gallarate, Como, Bergamo, Treviglio and Brescia (as well as, over medium and long distances, with Turin and Venice and, from there, with Udine and Trieste and then with Central Europe), second - by a little - only to that intended in Piedmont by the very efficient modernism of Cavour and, in any case, very predominant over the modest - and not interconnected - Tuscan, Latium and Campania achievements, also, then, the only other ones in the Peninsula.

Relationships always - and increasingly over time - strong, inclusive and symbiotic between Milan and its territory, therefore; and gradually, with the progress of transport technologies, over an increasingly longer range. Another profound character of the city has always been the desire - and the ability - to enjoy leisure time. Especially by practicing the pleasure of taste.

The subject, perhaps not present in the contemporary common imagination, was universally so from past times, until the first decades of the last century.

In this regard, two authoritative testimonies from which we extract as many gems: in the 16th century, Matteo Bandello wrote that Milan is "the most opulent and abundant city in Italy and that where it is most expected to make the table fat and well-stocked" (Montanari, 1997); and, in the 19th century, utopian idealist Ugo Foscolo, indignant for the Ambrosian lingering power over rich and calorific foods, branded it with the epithet of "Paneropoli", that is, of: "*city of the panera*", the latter word being a Milanese term for "cream" (Savinio, 1944). Then, after replacing the Milanese cuisine from the south first and then from the ethnic group, the time spent at the table decreased. But it remained the impelled exercise of conviviality expressed, in an increasingly connoted way, with the practice of the aperitif: Milan has become a world capital of cocktails and, what goes with it, even refined and/or abundant. Furthermore, in extension, Milan has also become a world capital of nightlife.

Let us now concentrate on what the Milanese-type day looks like. Going to and from work, to and from the aperitif, pizzeria and/or nightlife; by car or, better - there is too much traffic, and someone is busy discouraging its use (Busi 2017) -, by train or metro or tram, or bus or on foot. And being at work, or at the aperitif bar, or at the pizzeria, or in the street for the nightlife. Then a few hours later - but only a few hours - at home, for rest. That is, except for these last "few hours", you are constantly at close (or very close) distance to each other: a few meters walking in the street and in the office, a few decimeters at the bar and the nightlife, crowded on the train and on the underground. This is unavoidable because, as in the most enlightened disciplinary theorization (Consonni, 2019), proximity is the proper and positive nature of urbanity. On the contrary, there are those who maintain - and argue, and demonstrate - that even the bicycle is exceeding the proper use of urban spaces, because it takes over the pavements bothering the pedestrians who, in their masses, walk along them; urban spaces all, instead, to be reserved for the pedestrian and, in the appropriate locations, for collective transport (Busi, 2018, Pianificazione... Busi, 2018, Potenzialità... )!

More: because... Milan is beautiful (Busi, 2015; Consonni, 2015; Savinio, 1944) and it is also a renowned tourist destination. Therefore, during every season, adding to the crowds of Milanese are those of visitors. On the other hand, the Milanese - who don't want to miss anything - during every season and, especially, during the upcoming summer, tend to flock to the beaches, bars, restaurants and other nightlife areas. In short (and in summary):...this is Milan, beauty!

## 2. Yesterday (March 2020)

That there might be something new there began to be perceived in the second fortnight of last month. In fact, rumours of an infection in China were spreading; hearing them, a few medical friends, whilst not convincingly justifying why, became angry; from the Chinese city of Wuhan (who has ever heard of it?) came disturbing images of streets populated by people all wearing masks and hospital wards with doctors and nurses, wrapped in protective suits, sitting exhausted on the beds.

The final week of February is Carnival. Like every year, I celebrate, in my own way, the privilege granted to us Milanese people by having "Ambrosian rite" - with the consequent postponement of its duration from midnight on Tuesday to the following Saturday - by spending all those days at my house on the lake where, as the "Roman rite" is in force,... you can enjoy, during Lent, the utmost tranquility. Muffled, I hear voices that: even in Italy... especially in Lombardy... especially in Milan... yes, near there, in Codogno... !

At the beginning of March, I was in Milan. Sure: Codogno and its surroundings in isolation... many cases... it was the "red zone"... government decrees, the Prime Minister, regional measures, the "Governor"... but also in Milan.

There was a strange air in Milan. Some - quite a few - businesses were closed; commuter trains were almost deserted, and the undergrounds were depopulated; traffic was reduced to light use: it seemed a Ferragosto of the '50s.

At the end of the first week, I felt, in the late afternoon on the Saturday, I deserved a proper reward; which, as a Milanese, can only consist of a good aperitif. In a completely reliable bar, which I've always frequented and where I know and am known, I ordered a Negroni: the barman, embarrassed but perhaps more regretful, informs me that he can only serve me sitting down - you know, there is a certain measure... - and showed me a coffee table with a chair desolately isolated along the wall (but it's a joke! the cocktail alone and seated? no, it's a ritual to be consumed standing up, joking with the many superficial acquaintances of those moments of periodic and fleeting escape, shoulder to shoulder with many strangers, in that cheerful promiscuity and contiguity indispensable - maybe even more than the drink - to give the right quality to the gratification of that moment).

I fit in there. In the squalor of how much - far from being the end of the pleasure of tasting an exquisite drink, I was living like the gulp of a concoction - I looked to the side and I saw him, isolated at his coffee table in his chair, one of the strangers I have glimpsed in that bar for years. Forced by the case, we exchange a few words. And immediately we discovered that we are colleagues, that we have quite a few acquaintances in common and even that we already know each other by name. Spontaneously, leaning over the chairs, we shook hands. We immediately withdrew them, blushing and looking around fearful of having been caught committing an illegal act. As in fact, for a certain measure, it already was.

The next morning, I was, as always on Sunday, with my wife in another bar, even one of the temples of the Milanese cocktail, for a Sbagliato. Even there they confined us to a secluded table, against the window facing the street. We looked around sad. That bar, on feast days and at that time always crowded, was almost deserted: missing crowds of regular customers, the few present, like us, were lined up on isolated tables along the walls.

Rumours were also circulating that the splendid Milanese nightlife, which, for decades, has crowded dozens of streets in the city all night long, was practically switched off.

Only one consideration can be drawn from the serious clues mentioned above: Milan was indeed no longer the same.

And from the day after, state regulations tightened by regional regulations required it: Lombardy Region, in fact, was subject to lockdown with the closure of all businesses and serious restriction on personal freedoms. With Lombardy, it was the same for the whole of Italy. But elsewhere the much lesser pressure of the severity of the infection made the formulation and application of the prohibitions less harsh.

There were certainly good intentions in this - of which, however, we know how paved the road to hell is - by those who issued them (the State Government; and, in the operational specifications, the Prime Minister) and those who aggravated them (in Lombardy: the "Governor"). However, beyond the - possibly positive - future (on which, lacking the counter-evidence regarding its attribution to the contents of such norms, we cannot comment), for the scientific interests of the present paper it is in any case right to remind ourselves of its essential contents and hint at the perplexities that already, at the first critical glance, become apparent.

We are forbidden to leave the house except for: work (but only in the very few cases permitted at the state level; even less so in Lombardy), necessity, health or returning home (or to a dwelling or residence). And this only if certified by self-certification supported by adequate evidence, with no minor fines and also, until a certain moment, criminal penalties. Permitted (tolerated?) is the shopping in the supermarket under the house (within 200 meters?!?) and walking the dog (still within 200 meters?!?). No one, however, is to go out with their baby!

But that's not all.

It is said that sneezing, in the absence of specific equipment, is to be done in the inner elbow of your jacket; this gave a well-known TV presenter the relative testimonial task that he carried out with an enthusiasm and conviction worthy of a better cause, even mimicking the scene (but do you realize how the poor man's wardrobe would have reduced after a week? and with the dry cleaners closed... !?!); that, in front of our fathers and grandparents who have been through two world wars, we are only required to spend "two weeks on the couch", as per the patronizingly smug message of an important television journalist ("two weeks"?!? that much... !?!); "stay at home", everyone tells us, on television and on the Internet (but is it really necessary? and is it really healthy? doesn't it also depend on who else is in the house?!?); and "wash your hands", this too, said to us by everyone, in all places (certainly, we agree! but perhaps it was already practiced in the days of Cardinal Federico... ).

An unthinkable March, then.

But next month... everything will be over... !

(Or, at least, one strives to believe it. But will it be?)

### 3. Today (April 2020)

This is not the case: the tension climax of March continues.

Distraught, in the media, by news and tragic images of intensive care hospital wards, coffins lined up, military trucks leaving for distant destinations where cremation possibilities are still available (in Brescia, things are going very badly; in Bergamo things are even worse; Milan is on the turn and Brescia and Bergamo are there, just outside Milan; Lombardy is the worst hotbed in the World... ) we try to survive the day in the best possible way by juggling the prohibitions.

The city is violated by the impossibility of expressing its innate functions and it is even vilified by the denial of its reasons for being.

Its metabolism is at a minimum.

The closure of schools and universities and the substantial cancellation of production have wiped out mobility on both the territorial and urban scales: trains travel with a few units of travelers per carriage and so do underground trains, trams and buses; it is rare to see a car or motorcycle in any urban street. And it is misleading to say and believe that this is positive, because crowds and traffic represent negativity; it is true instead that, as in the enlightening and irreplaceable metaphor of the (human) body, they are for the city the equivalent of blood circulation which, although it has to be - always and constantly - monitored and - depending on the cases and moments - moderated, it must be continuously kept active, on pain of bloodlessness and even the extinction of the vital capacities of the individual, so much so that it should even - when appropriate - stimulate them.

This has also led to the desertification of production areas. This has only - however serious - economic consequences for those of the secondary sector, but it is supplemented, especially, by the retail trade and, above all, by the catering sector, which is an integral and essential part of the system of collective outdoor and indoor spaces and - using the above metaphor - the true airways of the organism-city and the maximum expression of its liveliness.

And again: the life of proximity has been mortified, made up of the myriad micro-functions of the "under house" - the neighborhood, in short - completely indispensable for the weakest of the family: the child and the grandfather, as well as the permanently or temporarily disabled; and also - or in any case of relief - for the woman, when busy - or even overwhelmed by extra-family commitments - as housewife.

In light, however, of the abnormal overload of the roles attributed to the home that, to the current physiological functions of relaxed family conviviality - with the various components of this minimal social core who meet, relaxed, after the factory or office, school and sociality - and also rest, but nothing more than housework and school work, must also be a place of work and distance learning as well as physical exercise. All this in spaces that are generally too narrow and, in any case, unequipped, with current overlapping of conflicting needs. You are hammered by the ban on going out and, added to this, also psychologically constrained by the continuous messages on the media of the most diverse testimonials that would like to convince us of how all this is the rediscovery, in a context dripping with "smart", of the pleasure of being together.

A completely distorted use, in short, of the city. And Milan, and with it all its territory, cannot but suffer.

But, of course, it is the Milanese who are affected; both the few who, if they are clear-sighted about the health dangers of the present, unfortunately also perceive the devastating consequences of certain measures; and the many who, living in terror because of the undoubted danger, do not know how to refrain from reacting to it except with the search for the guilty party, who is undoubtedly their neighbor, perhaps not as zealously uncritical as they are in literally sticking to the ban.

Everyday life is made up of shocks.

Here are a few at random.

I have to stay in the house! Yes, to stay safe! But who else is in the house? Perhaps someone who works in the supermarket, or the bus, or the pharmacy, or the hospital? And this guy, on his way home at night, what does he bring us? But do they know that we share the cutlery and the tablecloth, the chair and the sofa... and maybe even the bed?

I have to stay in the house! Yes, to stay healthy! But how can I satisfy the cardiologist who told me that my everyday walk of a few kilometers is essential? Sure: the other day I walked the corridor in my slippers a hundred times (maybe two kilometers... .. and yesterday too, but today... I'm dizzy just thinking about it... They tell me that, for "health reasons", I could go for a walk... but it has to be "proven". How? With a prescription! I asked the cardiologist for it by email. I hear he's now working a shift at the hospital in a new intensive care unit... . Will he answer me?



I have to stay in the house! Yes, to protect my health! But I also need to feed myself! It's a great reason to - legally - go out: great! Should I go down now? No: the queue on the pavement to enter the supermarket is only about fifty meters... better in the late morning, when maybe it will be two hundred... a couple of hours in the open air... what an opportunity!

I have to stay in the house! Yes, in Milan! But the beach house is empty... couldn't I ... ? The second house?! And outside the region!?! It's forbidden! But... I'd drive there... alone... and there I'd be alone... and take a few walks alone in the woods... . No: it's forbidden! And then didn't you hear that in Liguria they revolted against a family from Turin who had fraudulently gone to their second home? And what about the municipality in Bergamo that equipped itself with a drone to capture and sanction a deserving subversive stranger who used to wander alone in the woods? (Well... ! I continue, deep inside, to believe that, perhaps, if instead of "at home" he had been invited to stay "secluded" in any available niche - firstly the second home - and allowed to move freely on his own, it would have been better, both to keep the individual in better health and to preserve him from infection... at home... . Well!)

The only sure improvement in living conditions this month compared with the previous month has been - let me make a joke - the no longer existing requirement to sneezing into the crook of your elbow, a good sign of some critical sense.

And then there is another gem: the bicycle, that means of transport towards which the writer here has not concealed strong suspicion about its use - particularly in the city - even if previously mentioned in this paper. Well: if it is confirmed here that such mistrust has a strong foundation in a situation of cities in full working order - for the disturbance and insecurity that the improper use of the pavement by the cyclist causes to the pedestrian and for the cannibalization of collective transport - all this would not apply now, with the deserted carriageways and the high risk of infection in the metro and tram. Yet instead... the measures in force demonize it, as the runner is demonized, both seen as a source of infection. But why?

Apart from that, the air you breathe is increasingly heavier: there is no way out.

What about next month? Something better?

Maybe!?! Let's not despair!

#### 4. Tomorrow (May 2020)

It has been realized that cases of infection are much lower. It had been happening, in fact, since the second fortnight of March, but in essence it was denied by ambiguously denying it and hinting instead at the relative stationarity with phrases like "we are plateauing... ". It was the uncertainty of the doctors, the only category of experts - with that of managers with a degree in economics - involved by the decision-makers, who, not knowing the specificity of the virus in question, continued to lean towards an enormous prudence, the result of fear.

Now, some awareness has leaked out that lockdown, if a possible beneficial tool for containing the infection, is undoubtedly a factor in the collapse of the production system and perhaps not only of this deviance.

The delivery has therefore changed: now it is "open"; but the medical experts still make themselves heard with their uncertainties and fears; and the specification follows, which, in essence, is: "yes, but with caution."

A first evident result is the (correct) rehabilitation of the cyclist and runner, with the (correct) extension of the benefit of walkers and (also correct) hikers also being able to go about; yes, also of those who perform some kind of movement as advised by the cardiologist. But, here you get into a crisis if you find him resting for a moment on a bench in the park: in fact, the doubt arises as to whether he has thus become a spreader.

In short: the new measures continue to be as nagging as the previous measures, not expressing themselves with the generality and abstractness proper to good law, but omitting the list of cases and sub-causes and,

therefore, falling repeatedly into contradiction and even achieving - beyond the seriousness of things and the tragedy of some health contexts that continue to persist - some level of comedy.

The "cautious opening" thus comes to be translated into a painstaking and tedious rigmarole, over the period of three weeks - until the middle of next month - of who opens now and who later, but with none of the legal certainties resulting from the generality and abstractness of the formulation mentioned above, all in a discouraging inaccuracy both at the first perception of the instruction and - above all - at every subsequent analysis: the passage between the who first and the who later is entrusted with the following verifications, both on the categories of activity and on a territorial level, both regional and sub-regional (following what? which verifications? carried out when?).

The Sword of Damocles is, however, in the requirements so that the opening is done "in safety" (but who reassures that the - moreover, problematic - execution of the measure indeed achieves "safety"? would it not have been more humble - but correct - to say "legally"?).

Even if on different themes and with different pathos than before, we continue to live with shocks.

Here are a few.

If there are crowds: trouble!?!? But what is a "gathering"? Wasn't it said that interpersonal distances of up to three feet are tolerable?

On collective transport, passengers must not be near each other! And so, on railway trains - especially those commuting to Milan - and on underground trains, but also on trams and buses, the seats that can be used are marked one by one, which are in a conspicuous minority compared with those that must be strictly free. And also marked on the floor are the rare standing positions that can be occupied in addition to the sitting positions. Such is the case on trams and buses. Access to the platforms is restricted to the barriers at the entrance, so that there are only those who will be able to access the wagons according to the available seating and standing space. On trams and buses, the people counters automatically control the entries and exits and inform the driver of any excess in relation to the permitted total. The other day, on the trolleybus on which I was travelling, the driver declared a surplus of three units and ordered the intruders to get off, otherwise the vehicle would be stopped indefinitely: three - the kindest of those present - took heed. What if no one was adequately willing to do so? And, above all: if the demand for mobility were far greater than the miserable supply, what would be the consequence on the reliability of the system? And, further still: how can the inescapable economic deficit from the budgets of transport companies be sustainable?

Why, however, do we find that in these first few weeks the number of travelers on the collective service and on the roads is relatively modest? And this with the not few - even if in reality... not many - production categories legally admitted to business these days? In order to be able to do this, we need to be aware of the many limitations imposed in order to prevent people from gathering in the workplace, namely: interpersonal distances to be respected and hygienic practices to be implemented. But the two fulfilments are not of obvious implementation. On the contrary: the first sees the emergence of new numbers of possible people actually admitted to the workplace, created by hasty demands of current events - with distances and physical barriers - against consolidated acquisitions of ergotechnics that have forged, over the decades, machinery and proxemics of operators; the second new and disturbing terminologies - firstly, sanitization - with disturbing implications; both with underlying - but, for all parts, announced - inspections and heavy penalties, either administrative or criminal. The consequences are staggering: open... work... produce... ...and not just a few people are experimenting... we'll see this later.

This issue is emphasized in terms of the reality and the next prospects for trade and catering. In any case, the presence of the adventurer is to be limited: waiting, in the queue, on the pavement, one at a time along a unique path that sees the entrance clearly distinct from the exit. Additional staff are then required to control the customer's movement and these new employees combine firmness with action - penalty: the sanction

always threatened - with courtesy (otherwise the customer is lost). In the trade then follows the exhibition of the product and, in the case of an item of clothing or footwear, the inevitable test on the garment; all this must, however, be legally followed by the inevitable notorious sanitation that, in this case, adds to the previously mentioned problems the safe - or, at least, feared - incompatibility of treatment to the delicacy of the fabric and leather. The case is even worse is for bars and restaurants, where the (minimum) distance between tables is added to the (minimum) interpersonal distance of one meter. Terrifying images are exhibited of possible tables with diners inevitably encapsulated in three directions - front and sides - by Plexiglass barriers. And one has to figure, in the squalor of those tables with some chairs desolately floating around on the floor of the business, a service carried out by maître and waiters aseptically expropriated from the captivating professional friendliness by the mask that hides facial features and expressions. It is certainly true that, for weeks, take-aways have been allowed, but, by now, there is no longer any pleasure in it: that of catering lies in the complexity of the physical and social environment and the service of the restaurant, as well as, of course, the food. And it is not comparable to swallowing, at home and with the sole presence (always) of family members, of the same - though delicious - food (but at home, with take-aways, no more than the same temperature as the service in the restaurant room). For the aperitif and the nightlife, the discourse is even more delicate: the surrounding environment - physical and social - is fundamental for the pleasure that is promised, in which drinks are certainly essential, but far from sufficient. The result of all this is that most of the businesses remain closed. The manager of a nightlife bar, on the towpath of the Naviglio Grande, which is now open, yesterday stated that the daily cash drawer is 40 euros, compared with a monthly rent of 300 (with a daily incidence, therefore, of 30). A well-known TV chef has said that, whilst providing a take-away service, the chance of survival of his restaurant in the Centre cannot exceed one more month. These are all disturbing clues, including the low turnout (of (employees and customers) in collective transport constitutes the terrible stigma and the disheartening summa.

And the "at home"... what's left of it? The peremptoriness of having to be there and stay there is formally unchanged. But now it is a tired and desolate refrain: a survivor of the speed of events. It has been ascertained that 25% of infections have occurred "at home", but these rumors circulate quietly: those who write or speak about it do so with modesty, as if fearing to stain themselves with injured majesty towards an indisputable must. We are made to think that if, to this enormous percentage is added the one - perhaps even greater - generated by the enormous numbers developed in environments of care homes (*residenza sanitaria assistita* - RSA), there would remain very few other ways to be somehow responsible for the numbers of the pandemic (with good peace of mind perhaps - paradoxically - of the recurrent heavy criminalization of "gatherings"). Certainly, there is the fact that the lockdown of more than two months leaves very a heavy legacy: physical and mental disorders due to inaction - in confined spaces, sometimes in absolute solitude or, more frequently, in stressful overcrowding and unbearable promiscuity - from which traumas will descend; exacerbation of matrimonial tensions, with soaring applications for divorce; moral and physical gender and intergenerational violence; deficits in school learning and productive performance (eh,... the rhetoric of smart applied simply to the remote teaching and remote working... ); worrying about being overweight and having flaccid muscles. There are males who were already depressed before and girls who have always been anorexic and bulimic and who now, in addition, refuse to even think about leaving the reassuring nest of their home. We hear of many families that continue - and do not want to consider deadlines - to voluntarily maintain absolute isolation by receiving supplies at home, disinfecting the packages before taking them in and paying for them by bank transfer. The whole situation is indeed worrying.

Even more worrying is the future that is emerging, both in the medium and long term. The picture of possible holidays next summer is bleak. In the reality of international frontiers which, in the perspective of reopening, never contemplate Italy (in which, moreover, Lombardy, like a stone guest, hovers in the background as

absolute evil) and, in our country, of hotel reservations cancelled, seriously meandering, as ineluctable, ideas to counteract the infection in everyday holiday life that clearly appear for what has already been seen for bars, pizzerias and restaurants. We now assume that it is established that the structure of the daily accommodation shall follow to the sea, even bathing facilities would not be excluded: there are squares with no less than meters between the shafts of the parasols and between the deckchairs. We watch a television service from Forte dei Marmi with willing lifeguards who, with collaborative enthusiasm worthy of a better cause, appear satisfied with the relative sample with a rare presence of equipment in the sand desert after, of course, an access control barrier and, there on the coffee table, the digital infrared forehead thermometer which customers must be subject to; not far away, the colleague of the toilets next door shakes his head and, with two jokes, denies the economic and managerial feasibility of all this. In another service in Riccione, the lifeguards say that you can't even go in: better, perhaps, to keep it closed. In a further service, there is something even more impossible: a hemispherical Plexiglass canopy to provide further cover - entirely, starting from the sand - parasol and deckchair in a context of even more rare presences, in order to preserve even more surely from infection.

The greatest discomfort is hearing unanimous and confident voices telling us that everything in transport, work, services, living and holidays will always be like this: we have to get used to this - it will be the future! And even that this is good! Things were bad before... no account was taken of the danger of a pandemic... but now... new rules... masks... social distancing... and spaces to rethink... because the infection will last a long time... and after that there will be another one... and another one... we will discover other values... ! But don't they realize that this is confusing and inapplicable? That it's inhuman?

Uh... the Milan of before!

## 5. Later (May 2030)

Milan is flourishing and in full development.

The railway system has been greatly enhanced not, of course, by the unworkable construction of new lines, but by modernizing both the technology and the management of existing lines. Now, trains are all the faster and more comfortable than in previous decades. In addition to high speed, much - and above all - has been focused on local railways, so much so that the daily gravitation area on our metropolis has seen an almost doubling of the radius of influence of the capital, with the almost quadrupling of its surface area.

Urban transport has also improved a great deal; above all, in addition to the completion of line 4 of the underground, with the construction of three others, which brings the total to eight (line 5 already existed); all of them now have their heads of line radially forwarded outside in multiple branches of many kilometers, thus making the service in the hinterland much more widespread. As a result, the supply of the tramway, trolleybus and bus, in support of all these aspects, has also been extended and improved in quality.

On the other hand, car traffic has reduced by a lot: it could not have been otherwise, given that the important strengthening of Milan's territorial projection could not be supported by private motorization, if only due to of the size of the vehicles, which are inconsistent with urban space; it has gained the quality of the environment and the serenity, health and safety of the inhabitants.

It was finally realized that the bicycle - and, with it, every means of micro-mobility - is incompatible with the city; so, after the hasty construction of cycle paths, the original sections of the pavements have been restored and, indeed, are being increasingly widened at the expense of the carriageways. The bans on the use of bicycles - and micro-mobility - have also benefited the constant demand for collective transport that previously saw falls on good days, even though it still had to be reduced for bad days, when the use of bicycles, scooters and the like is not pleasant.



Certainly: on trains, undergrounds, trams, trolleybuses and buses you're getting squashed. But physical proximity is in human nature and, specifically, in the character of urban life.

The pavements are crawling with pedestrians. This is the primary indicator of social well-being and, above all, of the good quality of the relationship between *civitas e urbs*, in addition to, as no secondary factor ... of beauty of the urban landscape due to the relaxed joy with which the crowding infuses the observer.

Production is strong: in the manufacturing and production sector - mainly industrial - in the hinterland, in the services sector - and crafts - in the city.

But especially everywhere - and especially in the city - trade and, even more so, hospitality is fierce: restaurants and bars are crowded with customers; sitting, densely side by side, indoors - and even more so in the outdoor areas - and out in the open on the pavements, enjoying beers and cocktails, sushi, pizzas, lasagne and kebabs. From the late afternoon to the early morning, the nightlife rages. It has become increasingly lively, over time, in the areas that have hosted it since the early '80s of the last century - the Navigli, the Darsena and Piazza San Lorenzo, above all; but also Corso Como, Brera and the beginning of Corso Sempione - from there, it has expanded towards the centre in Via Torino, Via Verdi and Via Manzoni, Via Dante and Piazza Cordusio, until all these axes of nocturnal liveliness in Piazza del Duomo have merged: it is now a single articulated labyrinth of dozens of kilometers of streets and squares, the undisputed kingdom of late risers even - especially on weekends - until dawn with a foggy glass in one hand and a snack in the other, in cheerful gatherings. Naturally, standing up, elbow to elbow, and with their breaths blending into talking and laughing.

Tourists play a big part in all of this. Worldwide guests contribute to the fervor of the nightlife after today in a conference or business meeting and tomorrow in museums or in historic buildings: as Milan is well known for, in addition to being one of the international capitals of work, being a prestigious city of art.

All this whilst the Milanese, recently having returned from a business trip, are preparing to leave for tourism, even out of season, to distant lands.

In short: Milan, with its work, moving around it and enjoying it is more alive than ever. And the gathering of locals and outsiders is the most effective indicator of this.

But what about Covid-19?

Ah, yes... ten years ago, maybe... .

It was a real burial in 2020: so many bereavements at first, to which we reacted with the lockdown. And, immediately afterwards, so much uncertainty because, prey to the lack of specific knowledge of that infection, there was fear of reopening.

However, the vaccine quickly became available, as it had long been the case during an epidemic. But the infection had already weakened, perhaps due to the increase in temperature with the arrival of the summer, perhaps due to the reduction in virulence of the pathogen. And, as with other viruses, did the effects dampen - or was it also the concomitant action of vaccination-induced herd immunity? - until it very gradually disappeared.

The closure, for so many months, of practically all economic activities led to poverty. The recession caused a severe selection in the corporate world, especially in the hospitality sector, with generally virtuous effects on quality even with distortions for the preventive expulsion of excellent companies mowed down by the lack of liquidity.

But we recovered quickly. The *civitas*, in fact, had retained a great deal of liveliness.

Milan, above all, with its hinterland, immediately expressed its desire to work ... and to enjoy the fruits of work.

Its profound nature reacted quickly and effectively. , Thus, it had been over the millennia, when the destruction of Attila and Uraia, followed by that of Barbarossa and the aerial bombing of the Second World War had gutted it since its foundations(Busi, in edit mode; Busi, in publication; Comune di Milano, 1955).

And, in light of this, Covid-19: was, traumatically, there ever anything like it?!?

The *urbs* was completely intact; it was, therefore, more simply, one of the many massacres induced, over time, by epidemics: in the 1900s, the Spanish Flu, in the 1800s, Cholera, in the 1700s the Plague of Marseilles, in the 1600s the Great Plague. If a rough simplification would ascribe them all to the year 20 of the relative century, there were, however, phenomena of varying duration spread around this recurring date, of which history tells us, some monuments and tombstones in our cities and sometimes literature, as is the case of *Il mulino del Po* [The Mill on the Po] by Bacchelli (for the cholera of the 1800s) and *I promessi sposi* [The Betrothed] by Manzoni (for the Great Plague of the 1600s). But not the shared memory that, whilst great-grandparents and grandparents conveyed to us the horrors and difficulties of the two world wars, this was not the case the Spanish Flu, immediately following the first one, of which nothing reached us more than some memories - conveyed to us laughing - of days in bed with fever and, perhaps, of an old uncle who had not made it.

Milan, in short, resurges from Covid-19 as if waking up from a nightmare, with the desire to quickly reaffirm all of itself and its vitality: the industrial manufacturing and production sector, especially in the hinterland; the crafts and services sector, especially in the city; mobility; having fun; travelling; hosting; all of this being - as is proper of human nature and, specifically, of life in the city - shoulder to shoulder, in the city crowd.

It is, on the other hand, a firm rule of history: to leave solid footprints over time is what is manifested in the long term (Bloch, 2014; Braudel, 1986; Febvre 1976; ) - that is, specifically, for a city, in expression of the basic characteristics of its urban body (Columbo, 1966; Mazza, 2013; Morini, 1963) - and not in the contingency, as it is for catastrophes - in the fields of hydraulics, hydrology, geology, volcanology, seismology and, obviously, also infectiology - with long return times (Rossi and Salvi, 2003), in this case, Covid-19, of the agenda of the century.

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## Author's profile

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