

Ethnographic report:

An auto-ethnographic and discussion with participants on the topic of the impst lockdown and current Pandemic: How has the lockdown re- shaped the lives of myself and others?

This report aims to discuss and understand the emotional changes that have occurred during this Pandemic. Whilst discussing the re- shaping of emotions, this research seeks to understand the re shaping of our 'doings'. How has the changes in our emotional state and everyday doings, affected life as we knew it? Also, how was the Pandemic and imposed pause on the lives we were accustomed to, and how has the Pandemic re- organised our lives? Will the pattern of our lives return to some state of 'normal'. This paper will discuss several experiences and compare and contrast the social and cultural shock of lives cross-globally. This discussion concerns itself with the differences of our lives from 'pre-pandemic normality' to 'pandemic living', lending example from discussions with participants. Auto- ethnographic research, writings and exploring with myself, have afforded me the opportunity to understand and actually appreciate life as i knew it, and compare the once 'unknown luxuries' during these uncertain times. How doings deemed the norm have been taken for granted and how I will never in this lifetime be unappreciative of these simplistic actions, doings and emotional state. Discussions with participants, has allowed a deeper understanding of life for others during this time, the differences that have occurred from one person to another. How are these lives different from one and other?

First participant: Jamie Short. 34 year old male; occupation: steel fixer in construction. job entails - tying, fixing and carrying steel.

Stephanie (myself) : "How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it?"

Jamie Short (Participant) : *So, it has affected me by not being able to see family and friends but it has not affected me at work."*

Stephanie : "Was there a period where we were forced to stay home to isolate?"

Jamie Short : "I didn't self isolate due to symptoms, it was because I just got back from Spain a day before lockdown."

Stephanie : "How has the lockdown reshaped your 'doings', what is now different and what has remained the same, i.e. hobbies?"

Jamie : "Most things are normal again except can't go to the gym, but other things like going and Rollerblading ,surfing and biking have stayed the same."

Second Participant : Kirsty Bowen. telesales operator aged

Stephanie: "How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it?"

Kirsty: "I'm currently stuck in lock down, as i have to work from home and I am not aloud out unless to appointment - due to being pregnant"

Stephanie : "Could you explain how working at home has re - shaped the working environment as you knew it - pros and cons."

Kirsty : "Pros; is that i can shower and put clean pj's on...and I am now safer away from the danger of infection, as i work in a 11 floor building, surrounded by people in a busy office."

"Cons; my routine is wrecked, my partner suffers from a condition called ocd and adhd so it affects his daily routine, as he can't be in the same room as me at all times. You also don't get a chance to separate your work life from home life."

Stephanie : "Being pregnant during the lockdown has caused you to be shielded at home, how has this re - shaped your doings more so than if you were not pregnant?"

Kirsty : "If i wasn't pregnant i could go shopping and not panic so much of people coming closer and being able to go for walks at the moment i can not do it though."

Third Participant. Jess Langley - Evans. female occupation - student. aged

Stephanie : "How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it?"

Jess : "So, because I live in a vehicle, I usually live quite a nomadic lifestyle. I'm used to waking up somewhere different almost every day. Now because of the need for a water supply and toilet I'm stuck living on a driveway, not moving."

Stephanie : "Having said this, would you say your morale has been affected during this time?"

Jess : "For sure. Morale is at an all time low. It really goes to show how important socialising is."

Stephanie : In your opinion, could you fathom a guess as to when the restriction will be eased - enabling us to socialise without a social distancing measure in place?"

Jess : "I honestly have no idea. When this started I really didn't think it would last this long. Now I've stopped trying to guess because I don't want to get my hopes up."

Stephanie : "Being a student, would you say the lockdown restrictions stopping you from attending uni, has had an effect on your studies?"

Jess : “Definitely. I've managed to keep up my marks, but I don't feel that personally I've gotten as much out of it. Without free flowing discussions that happen in the classroom it feels like I'm not gaining the deep understanding of things that I did before lockdown.”

Participant four: Kerry chapman, student, key worker and mum of three.

Kerry : “It has been more difficult having children I think have to advance plan shopping ect, have to rethink every day ect.”

“Life is different as no one talks to each other in public as such people stay away from you.. it's all expected but all so different.”

Stephanie : “Can you explain a bit about being a Key-worker and how this has been a different experience of someone who maybe has been in for 11 weeks, what have been the pros and cons of being able to go out - but also the difficulties you have faced having to be around people and then going home to your family?”

Kerry : “Key worker my hours went up to 60 a week some shifts 21 hours long, we do not have the correct ppe in our work place but are expected to support the vulnerable. Coming home daily risking bringing something home, changing at the back door running into the house to shower, clothes on a 90 wash to try and keep my own family safe. Struggling to get food shopping as working 12 hr shifts and shops being shut by time finished work. No online shopping available slots went so quick.”

“As a family and living with someone with mental health issues it has not been easy, the kids have coped better than the adults at times, my husband has had to go out every day no matter the danger or his mental health will suffer. so many worries, loss of one wage, being able to go for a walk has probably kept us all sane.”

“My father has had to isolate himself from the March as he is shielding. We are now unable to see him till August and as he lives more than 5 miles away we are unable to see him which is heartbreaking for me and my kids are really missing him so badly.”

“I miss my friends terribly and miss the freedom to be me for half an hour with a coffee. Life consists of teaching the kids and working so many hours.”

Stephanie : “If you had to hazard a guess, when would you think life will return to ‘normal’ as you knew it?”

Kerry : “I'm guessing next year? But sooner I hope I miss normal life but we took it all for granted.”

Stephanie : “Being a near graduated student, would you say that ‘Pandemic life’ had an affect on your studies, during your final year?”

Kerry : “Yes most definitely. I needed the face to face support and I didn't have it.”

Participant five : Loretta, stay at home mum.

Stephanie : “How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it?”

Loretta : “I have not considered myself as an anxious person before this lockdown, now anxiety defines me.”

Stephanie : “That is sad to hear, how has this new imposed anxiety had an affect on your ‘doings’?”

Loretta : “Mental health has gone from healthy to deteriorating quickly, I now have no routine and found myself not being able to leave the house at times. I most days sit in the house with the curtains closed. I have lost interest in my appearance and don't want to get dressed some days. I feel like I can not leave the house with the children for exercise”.

Stephanie : “Lots of people are feeling like minded struggles, you are not alone. How do you think society will recover from this moving forward? Do you think the majority of people will find hardship returning to what we defined as social norms and everyday life as we knew it?”

Loretta : Yes, I think so. (that people will find the return to the ‘norm’ problematic) and also children. Elsie (Loretta`s daughter) used to love going to the shop but after a bad experience where I had to take the kids with me to co op Elsie no longer wants to go with me which is a struggle.”

Participant six - Robbery Mudd, truck driver.

Stephanie : “How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it, how has the lockdown restricted or rearranged you ‘doings’?”

Robert : “Very much so; work wise, it’s stayed the same. I’m a key worker so I just carried on as normal.”

“Socially speaking, a lot. I used to like going to my local and seeing my friends, playing pool, and having a few drinks. That is now non existent.”

“Relationship wise, the pandemic has finished. My ex partner struggled a lot with being stuck in the house and took its toll on the relationship.”

Participant seven : Hannah Edwards, mum and key worker.

Stephanie : “How has the current Pandemic and imposed lockdown, reshaped life as you knew it, how has the lockdown restricted or rearranged you ‘doings’?”

Hannah : "It's made me realise that we don't need certain things for the world to keep turning. That family has always and will be first priority. Myself and Ruby can live without having the luxuries in life (we never really needed? when really all she wants is a hot chocolate, a film and a 'cwtch' with mam. Also the carmarthen community spirit has been phenomenal."

Participant eight. Rebecca Bevan, key worker.

Stephanie : : How have the changes in your 'doings' affected life for you and Ruby? Have you struggled without the social aspect of living?

Rebecca : "Honesty when it all started out I feel like that was a lot of scaremongering and panic and lack of knowledgeable information. Throughout the weeks passing I have just started to wonder if and what we are being distracted from.

How bad is this virus in actual reality and what is the addenda behind everything that is going on in the world at the moment.

I really feel for those who are fighting for their rights and it saddens me that I'm unable to do more to help that fight but at the same time I can't help but feel everything this year is all one big distraction from something bigger than all of us.

I don't like the idea of the kind of world we are heading towards and some of the information that I've found is deeply disturbing as to what world we already live in.

My mind and heart have been at a constant conflict throughout lock down."

To draw these accounts of life in lockdown together, there is an overwhelming 'sameness' . By this I mean anxieties and fears of life once we begin to return to our own state of 'normality'. Different people have faced different issues, socially, culturally, physically and mentally. In these exceptional circumstances, I was not afforded the luxury of conduction research cross - culturally, and had to rely on accounts of peoples of Carmarthen. Evans - Pritchard discusses the problematic methods of the arm - chair anthropologist, to which I concur.

Consent of interviewee participation can be shown upon request.