

Pandemic as a Factor of Deformation of Social Time and Space in the Postmodern Community

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has defined new vectors for the development of the world community and social institutions. At the same time, the impact of the pandemic crisis on the evolution of civil society may differ significantly in the national (tactical) and global (strategic) dimensions. If at the national level there is a likely expansion of the space for public activism (medical volunteering, social assistance, etc.), then globally it is threatened by the de-intensification of international non-governmental cooperation and attempts to revise civil rights and freedoms. Today it is no longer possible to name a single area of public life that has not been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Directly or indirectly, the consequences of the worldwide spread of the COVID-19 virus are experienced by everyone - government authorities, large and small businesses, citizens of the vast majority of countries. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the future of each of the social actors is largely determined today, depending on the adequacy of the response to the pandemic crisis, the ability to absorb its most painful manifestations, and, possibly, find new opportunities for development in this difficult situation. The aim of the article is to investigate the vectors of influence of the coronavirus pandemic as a factor of deformation of social time and space in the conditions of postmodern society.

Keywords: *postmodern society, factor of deformation, social time and space, educational institutions, COVID-19 pandemic, national and global dimensions.*

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1. Introduction

The crisis processes caused by the pandemic are largely determining the prospects for socio-economic development. According to the World Health Organization, a pandemic is an unusually strong epidemic that covers the territories of countries and continents (from the Greek "the whole nation") (Bacq & Lumpkin, 2020).

In terms of population coverage, the pandemic affects many key global and national socio-economic processes. The spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic, recognized by the World Health Organization as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, requires special consideration. Traditionally, a pandemic is considered primarily in the health aspect as a disease. The patterns of distribution of COVID-19 are similar in many respects to the spread of some variants of influenza virus. Direct contact between people is also a key condition for the spread of COVID-19. The patterns of pandemic inevitably differ due to the many features of the social space of different regions and countries. Accordingly, the social aspect of the spread of a pandemic requires separate consideration (Weaver, 2020).

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic depends on many factors that determine the nature and intensity of social communications in the territory, in general - on the specifics of social space and time. The dynamics of the spread of the pandemic can change in many ways with the introduction of a number of prohibitions, restrictive measures - social restrictions that change the structure of relations in the social space. It is with the social aspect that changes in many characteristics of the pandemic's spread across the territory are largely connected. The medical and epidemiological processes of the pandemic are extraterritorial and largely homogeneous (there are many models of the epidemic spreading in a homogeneous environment) (Crescentini et al., 2020).

The social processes affected by a pandemic are more diverse and heterogeneous. They differ markedly territorially and are significantly transformed under the influence of measures taken to counter the pandemic. In the conditions of diversity of the state of social spaces, within the framework of traditional mainly medical and epidemiological approaches, it is almost impossible to obtain correct estimates and forecasts of social, and even more so socio-economic consequences of the pandemic (Chen et al., 2020).

The variety of social factors influencing the spread of the pandemic is great. It is a combination of social factors that causes significant differences in the dynamics of the spread of the pandemic across territories.

Among them: the number and density of the population, the degree of isolation of territories and social groups, the intensity of interregional and international communications, population mobility and migration processes, the economic specialization of the territory and the structure of employment, cultural traditions, lifestyle and communication, organization of public spaces and much more (Guerrieri et al., 2020; Mahler et al., 2020).

The combination of such factors is unique for each territory and predetermines the diversity of the characteristics of the social aspect of the pandemic. The problems of assessing the humanitarian crisis associated with the pandemic are also extremely diverse, and the scale of the socio-economic consequences is such that the term "coronacrisis" has come to be used to reflect the consequences of the pandemic in various aspects of social development. The negative socio-economic consequences of the coronavirus crisis are global. They stand out against the background of all the crisis consequences since the Second World War. In addition, the problems of the coronacrisis have aggravated the crisis processes of previous years. In the context of a variety of factors of influence and local specifics, the effectiveness of countermeasures to a pandemic differs markedly. Significant deviations in the effectiveness of solving the pandemic problems are noticeable in many countries, starting with the United States (Pászto et al., 2021).

The effectiveness of measures to counter a pandemic (starting with the simplest social restrictions, preventive sanitary measures, etc.) changes significantly in the context of individual social spaces and management practices. Obviously, in a pandemic, any standard template measures without taking into account the factors of territorial heterogeneity and the specifics of social processes will be ineffective, but will turn out to be very costly for the economy and society.

2. The main patterns of the impact of the pandemic on the social structure of the country

Today, it is no longer possible to name a single area of public life that has not been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Directly or indirectly, the consequences of the worldwide spread of the COVID-19 virus are experienced by everyone - government authorities, large and small businesses, citizens of the vast majority of countries. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the future of each of the social actors is largely determined today, depending on the adequacy of the response to the pandemic crisis, the ability to absorb its most painful manifestations, and,

possibly, find new opportunities for development in this difficult situation (Lin & Meissner, 2020).

There is practically no doubt that the crisis will become a real "crash test" with the clarification of the viability of modern socio-political institutions and practices. Civil society is no exception, which, obviously, will also have to change. Already, thousands of civil society organizations around the world, whose continuous activity, expertise and other services are very important, are faced with the need to revise the agenda. They are forced to cancel their actions and programs, abandon many plans, start building anti-crisis strategies - and all this in conditions of remote work and unpredictability. A drop in the intensity of international non-governmental cooperation is almost inevitable, in particular, the unknown future of many grant programs (Chiou & Tucker, 2020; Henry, 2020).

A pandemic specific in its medico-biological basis, especially at the initial stage, spreads as an unexpected and unpredictable process. In fact, she is the classic unpredictable black swan.

In the conditions of the unpredictability of the "black swan", a rational and comprehensive explanation of such processes can be made with a delay and only by observing its actual development, that is, "in hindsight." At the time of its onset, many of the unique patterns of a pandemic are inevitably understudied, especially in terms of the effectiveness of the response (Moore et al., 2021).

Further, many patterns of the social aspect of the pandemic inevitably change under the influence of many different characteristics both at the level of countries and regions, and at the level of smaller territorial entities. The variability of patterns, in turn, contributes to the transformation of social space. Areas of increased contact and infection threats inevitably appear (Korman et al., 2021).

3. The main manifestations of the deformation of social time and space in a pandemic

Recent events have significantly changed the information field around the world and turned the lives of many people: there has been a redistribution of the time of our usual everyday practices towards an increase in media consumption - for both adults and children, we are chronically in a situation of high uncertainty; increased information noise, repetition and replication of unverified information, lack of evidence-based knowledge for decision-making (Ratten, 2020).

WHO experts are even introducing a new term - "infodemy" - an explosive growth of inaccurate information during outbreaks and the

difficulty of obtaining clear, reliable and useful information in the context of information noise.

Therefore, in this text, we want to briefly consider the main most common media-psychological phenomena of quarantine life: alarming information whirlpool, satiety of media streams, polarization and preservation of negative communication (Burggren & Mueller, 2015).

We are the first to consider the phenomenon of an alarming information whirlpool, as such, which most affects the emotional state of individuals and public moods in general. We regard an alarming whirlpool of information as the contamination of the media system with alarming messages that contain information about a threat to life. Messages of this type are extremely emotionally rich, because they contain emotionally colored content - "deadly disease", "risk of infection" and others. Often such messages are "viral", that is, they are quickly replicated and instantly reach large audiences. Emotionally charged information is capable of not only arousing and holding the viewer's attention. The commercial underpinnings of modern media, the efficiency and profitability of the media business always depend on audience growth. Therefore, the information is presented in such a way as to literally "chain" viewers to the screens (conflicts, scandals, threats to life correspond to the conditions for the existence of commercial media). That is why, in a pandemic situation, ideal conditions are created for a media boom: the more alarming information is produced, the more viewers "stick" to the TV or "hang" on the network. In various media, an explosively huge number of messages, excessive for the human psyche, are produced, a significant part of which contains hoaxes, inaccurate, or deliberately false information, which makes it difficult to find really important and useful information (Weaver, 2019).

At the same time, viewers are becoming addicted to negative information as a constant stimulus. And in order to capture the viewer's attention again, you need to give more and more negative, shocking and impressive messages. This is how the information whirlpool is formed, which supports and deepens itself. Consumer reactions create a dynamic self-organizing information structure, a sort of "funnel" into which information regarding the virus, quarantine, government decisions, our actions, and the like is drawn. In general, media workers are not always objective in their pursuit of ratings, and in this maelstrom they often lose the last crumbs of this objectivity and adherence to professional standards of journalism. Rather, they cannot help but make certain messages, because the viewer expects them. And this alarming maelstrom is exhausting everyone - both producers of media products and consumers. The strong emotions

experienced by the audience rather block positive changes in behavior - new skills are not formed, lead to maladjustment, panic, exhaust, harm health, rather than contribute to changes in behavior, adaptation, mobilization, because they are superfluous in the situation (Calcia et al., 2016).

The second phenomenon, we observe, is information satiety - exhaustion, which is caused by excessive stay in contact with the media. At the beginning of quarantine, in conditions of extreme uncertainty, media practitioners can be viewed as a protective psychological mechanism - the search for reliable information, the establishment of online contacts. Anxiety mobilizes information behavior, people's activity in searching for information increases significantly - this is a natural mechanism for mastering anxiety. Clear information about the risks, the duration of the threat, the algorithms for action and the search for help and support - all this reduces anxiety and helps to mobilize for the actions necessary to overcome problems and dangers. However, turning to the media, a person often receives a flurry of completely different - emotionally colored - messages only increase anxiety and fear of missing important information (Teasdale et al., 2012).

But, like any compensation, informational activity can dry up and lose this temporary function. And all this, in turn, changes the basic mobilization states, reduces efficiency, endurance, exhausts, and ultimately undermines the immunity that the body needs to overcome viruses.

The stress of a pandemic, instead of performing a mobilization function due to infodemic, begins to destroy the body's defenses. Over time, irritation, fatigue begins to arise, the targets of which are both individual gadgets and technologies, as well as other people in the network or cohabitants in the space of self-isolation (family), individual media practitioners, sometimes aggression is directed at their own psychological characteristics (optimism/pessimism, extroversion/introversion, be different) (Kuo, 2015).

It is clear that natural psychic dynamics is associated with fluctuations from mobilization and tension to relaxation and rest. Any discomfort, strong emotions are indicators that the natural rhythm of informational behavior is violated, has ceased to correspond to the natural rhythms of the psyche. In addition, informational behavior often consists of mainly on-screen practices that do not provide full-format communication; there is a deficit of "corporeality", which also affects the mental state of a person. Unusual and unnatural communication practices lead to a feeling of "overloading contacts" with a simultaneous lack of contact (Shaw & Carter, 2007).

Polarization, recently observed in the information space, is another information phenomenon that is associated with media practices in social

networks and distance learning and working. During a pandemic, new examples of group polarization appear that did not exist on such a scale before, for example, supporters of wearing masks and flaunting their absence, neglect of hygiene products; supporters and opponents of certain technical platforms, social networks, means of distance communication. And this polarization is the response of the psyche to existence in conditions of self-isolation and quarantine and the limitation of contacts by information and communication technologies, which have their own characteristics in comparison with personal communication (Mair et al., 2012).

Conservation of negative emotions during the quarantine period also acquires signs of an information phenomenon. After all, it happens in social networks and Internet communication. In habitual personal communication, there is mutual contamination, the division of common emotions, the circulation of emotions in a group, because usually emotion is a very dynamic formation. If people constantly or from time to time infect each other with emotions, then this natural dynamics of liberation from an acutely negative emotion is disturbed, people seem to “conserve” their emotional state. During self-isolation, such conservation can lead to negative scenarios for the development of communication, interruption of contacts (removal from “friends”, deterioration of relations, etc.).

4. Generalizing factors and conditions of deformation of the coronavirus

The realities of the functioning of government and society in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, which indicate the need to consolidate measures of a social, economic and legal nature, inevitably require the adoption of urgent systemic decisions to reduce the confrontation in society and harmonize the interaction of the doctor-patient subsystem.

So, the signs of following the strategy of solidarity are:

- massive support by the population of almost all countries of prohibitive and restrictive measures during the period of information uncertainty and covid-storms at the initial stages of a pandemic;
- a high level of self-isolation of the population, even in the absence of previously indicated penalties and the absence of precedents for resolving disputes over prohibitive and punitive measures taken against violators of prohibitions;
- the rapid growth of volunteer and other public initiatives to support those in need, promote government measures, informative positive coloring of the efforts of the health care system to combat coronavirus;

- the powerful, often proactive role of the media in covering events against the backdrop of the fight against the pandemic;
- integrating the efforts of governments and professional medical communities in the measures taken, in assessing their effectiveness and in approving legislative and enforcement measures of an emergency or increased preparedness.

The reasons and signs of following the strategy of confrontation or confrontation include (Ananat & Gassman-Pines, 2020):

- stress and information hunger in the early days of the pandemic, caused by the unpreparedness of governments and health systems for the growing wave of covid events: a rapid increase in the number of hospitalizations, the translation into statistical summaries of information about mass disease and especially about mortality from covid infection;
- various, within the framework of the existing models, combinations of measures to combat covid infection;
- disorientation in determining the directions of medical activity itself and the correctness of government measures to support them;
- competition of economic, political and other interests and factors (economic, cultural, religious, social) in a situation where it is necessary to take tough unpopular measures;
- real narrowing of the field of human and civil rights and freedoms within the framework of any models.

5. Conclusions

Pandemics are rare events and the risk of their occurrence is influenced by anthropogenic changes in the natural environment. Moreover, accountability for preparedness is diffuse, with many of the countries most at risk having the most limited capacity to manage and mitigate pandemic risk. Unlike most other natural disasters, pandemics do not remain geographically confined and losses can be significantly mitigated through intervention. As a result, there are strong ethical and global health imperatives for building capacity to detect and respond to pandemic threats, especially in countries with weak preparedness and high risk of spreading. Today, the social consequences for various sectors of health care, transportation, housing, employment, food, water and sanitation must be considered. This global pandemic may still provide an important opportunity to reorient policy to ease further social exclusion. Therefore, decision-making by individuals and stakeholders should be based on scientific evidence of the benefits and drawbacks of population well-being, not just economic costs and convenience. A full understanding of the consequences

of social isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19, on both the short and long term health of populations, will require careful study.

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