

BRIQ

Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly



The New World After COVID-19

Towards An Era of Shared Development

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The COVID-19 Crisis: A Decisive Moment of Truth

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Graphic Design • Mehmetcan ztrk

Editorial Office • Aksaray Mah. Cerrahpařa Cad. No: 5 D: 9 Fatih-İstanbul +90 (212) 586 72 31

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Principles of Publication

At a time when US ambitions for a unipolar world order have lost their appeal, a new order is taking shape thanks to the multipolarization of world politics and the acceleration of cooperation between developing countries, rejecting the globalism of imperialist states. Under these conditions, the new agenda of global cooperation should respond to the needs and aspirations of developing countries seeking joint development and solidarity under the guidance of public-driven projects. In particular, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -put forward in 2013 by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China- provides a suitable opportunity and a sound foundation for the implementation of this new agenda of global cooperation.

BRI is an epoch-making move to re-implement the concept of the Silk Road, which dates back 2,000 years, to a time when China was immensely contributing to global prosperity and the development of trade and cooperation. The revival of this concept entails a much more comprehensive approach that also incorporates rail and sea transport, and digital systems.

BRI proposes to bring together over 60 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America –together accounting for nearly half of the world's gross domestic product– for prosperity and development at the initiative of China. Unlike the Western-centered world order, BRI seeks peaceful collaboration for improving global trade and production towards common goals for humanity. It firmly rejects crude imperialist exploitation. Two thousand years ago, the Silk Road was a conduit for the flow of gunpowder, spices, silk, compasses and paper to the world. Today, it offers artificial intelligence, quantum computers, new energy and material technologies, and space-age visions to developing countries. In addition, the New Silk Road provides incentives and opportunities for the development and implementation of bio-economic schemes in stakeholder countries against the threat of climate change and other environmental threats that bring the entire ecosystem to the brink of extinction.

Turkey has a significant role –real and potential– in accelerating South-South cooperation. Turkey is conveniently located as Asia's farthest outpost to the West. It assumes a critical position as a pivotal country on BRI's North-South and East-West axes. However, China's development and BRI's contribution to the future of humanity have remained to a large extent underrecognized and superficially evaluated in Turkish academia, media, and politics. This is mainly because Turkey's academics, media professionals, and policy makers have been observing China using Western sources. In the same manner, China and BRI's other potential partners have been viewing Turkey through a Western lens.

BRIQ has committed itself to developing an in-depth understanding of the present era, with a particular emphasis on the new opportunities and obstacles on the road to the New Asian Century.

BRIQ assumes the task of providing direct exchange of views and information among Chinese and Turkish academics, intellectuals, and policy makers. In the meantime, this journal will serve as a platform to bring together the intellectual accumulation of the whole world, especially developing countries, on the basis of the Belt and Road Initiative, which presents a historic opportunity for the common future of humanity.

BRIQ is also devoted to publishing research and other intellectual contributions that underline the transformative power of public-driven economies, where popular interests are upheld as the basic principle, ahead of individual profit. The fundamental tasks of BRIQ are to demonstrate how BRI can contribute to the implementation of this public-driven model, and to help potential BRI partners -including Turkey- to realize their real potential.

BRIQ stands for the unity of humanity and a fair world order. It will therefore be a publication for the world's distinguished intellectuals, especially those from Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas: the defenders of a new civilization rising from Asia on the basis of peace, fraternity, cooperation, prosperity, social benefit and common development.

Submission Guidelines

BRIQ features a broad range of content, from academic articles to book reviews, review essays, interviews, news reports, and feature articles.

The Editorial Board can issue calls for papers for special issues and invite authors to contribute manuscripts; however, it also welcomes unsolicited submissions.

Submissions are invited in English or Turkish. All submissions are to include a short biography (150-word limit) and should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments to briq@briqjournal.com Articles or other content that have been previously published or are under review by other journals will not be considered for publication.

BRIQ follows American Psychology Association (APA style, 6th edition, <https://www.apastyle.org>) and uses American English spelling.

BRIQ applies a double-blind review process for all academic articles.

Academic articles should be between 5000 and 9000 words in length, including abstracts, notes, references, and all other content. Please supply a cover page that includes complete author information, and a fully anonymized manuscript that also contains an abstract (200-word limit) and five keywords.

Book reviews should not exceed 1,000 words; review essays covering two or more works can be up to 3,000 words.

News reports consisting of brief analyses of news developments should not exceed 1,500 words; feature articles combining reporting and analysis can be up to 3,500 words.

Please contact the Editorial Board for interview proposals.

EDITORIAL

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the importance of the key skills that human beings acquired in the course of their evolution: Solidarity and sharing!

In the history of humanity for thousands of years, we have developed to the extent that we cooperate, and we have become human to the extent that we share. In order to succeed in fighting the pandemic, it is now clearly seen that collective behavior is compulsory. Furthermore, it is understood that the success of a country against the pandemic will also benefit other countries as well.

When confronting the pandemic, the governments of the countries within the Atlantic system faced the question of which one comes first, human beings or markets, and they made their choices in favor of markets. The dire consequences of this choice can be assessed by reference to several examples from Italy, England, Spain, France, and especially, the USA. Profit-oriented health systems collapsed during the fight against the pandemic. In the imperialist centers, moreover, the pandemic agenda expanded to include other crucial issues such as the explosion of unemployment, racism, and mass protests. All of this led to large-scale economic and social instability, which is expected to continue in the long term.

By contrast, China has shown tremendous success in the fight against the pandemic. Even isolating the Hubei province from the rest of the country in order to prevent the spread of the virus all over the country was highly critical by itself. Moreover, China has exhibited an exemplary stance in terms of international solidarity. It has provided medical staff and equipment to major developed countries. What is more, it has frozen the debt of poor countries, which have been suffering from the COVID-19 outbreak. From the perspective of the system of individual profit and interest, it would be impossible to make sense of China's attitude and unique success against the pandemic. The secret of China's success as a whole lies in its public-driven/popular state and its social system organized from the bottom-up. A key concept that can explain China's international approach is "shared development", which also happens to be the main motto of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Turkey also fought against the pandemic and was successful thanks to its strong institutional infrastructure and human resources inherited from the Atatürk Revolution. Turkey, as a developing country, supplied medical aid to 125 different countries, including the USA and UK.

The COVID-19 pandemic also showed that nation-states can overcome cross-border problems through cooperation on the basis of equality, common benefit, and shared development.

As a result, one could argue that the crux of the issue is what to prioritize: the profits of monopolies and the stability of the financial markets or an economic model based on the production of essential human needs.

The COVID-19 outbreak has revealed the collapse of neoliberalism, which disintegrates nation-states in the developing world, both economically and culturally. Asia is now home to newly proliferating values such as the public interest, solidarity, shared development, socialism, and collaboration on the basis of equality among nation-states. These values stand in contrast to the socioeconomic model of the Atlantic system, which is rooted in individualism and profit maximization.

BRIQ is closer to achieving the goals announced in its first issue, particularly that of crossing the continents. Our current issue features articles by prominent authors from Australia, Europe, and Latin America.

From this issue on, we will create a special section on *History*, featuring original historical documents that address interactions among developing countries, in their struggle for revolution and liberation.

We greatly value the intellectual contribution of our Advisory Board, whose members also include the representatives of the Eurasian business community. Therefore, our current issue features interviews with Ethem Sancak and Cankut Bagana, our Advisory Board members.

This issue also includes an interview with the President of Yunus Emre Institute, Prof. Dr. Şeref Ateş. Prof. Dr. Ateş describes the COVID-19 HUB established within the Institute and its functions in order to share information between countries in the fight against the pandemic.

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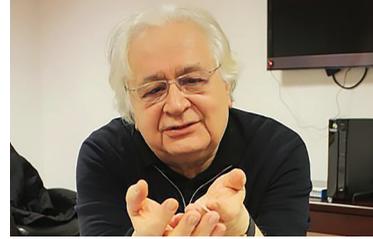
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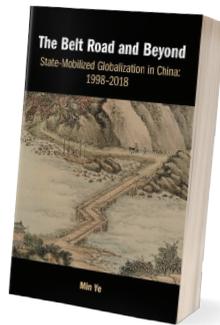


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Chairman of BMC Executive Board
Ethem SANCAK:

“The Two Wings of the Asian Eagle, Turkey and China”*



Mr. Sancak graduated from Istanbul University, the Faculty of Business in 1976. He worked as a journalist between 1976 and 1978. He served as the representative for the southeastern and eastern regions of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey and also the Diyarbakır Province Head of the Party. He later ventured into the business world and founded Es Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1978 and Esko Perfumery in 1989, Hedef Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1993 and later bought BMC, a manufacturer of truck, bus and military vehicle. He was selected “Business Manager of the Year” in 2001 and “Entrepreneur of the Year” in 2005. He was granted an award of “National Sovereignty Outstanding Service and Honor Award” by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. He served the Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Wholesalers Association of Turkey between 2004 and 2010. He is currently the Vice Chairman of Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, member of the Board of Directors of Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art, member of the Advisory Board of Okan University.

“BRIQ will play a really important role in terms of not merely being a local initiative, but also being a medium where actors of the new world can have a voice, and in terms of preparing the ground for the new world powers to develop themselves through mutual discussion. Of course, it was not with this virus that imperialism began to collapse and new centers of civilization emerged in Asia. These were already in progress. In a sense, the virus was a blessing from Allah, which hastened its emergence. In other words, the USA's massive capitalist system based on looting would collapse anyway. We saw the clues in the 2008 crisis. This crisis was as devastating as the 1929 crisis. Because the forces against the USA were not organized, because there was a lack of communication between them, because of the Western-induced contradictions that divided them and antagonized one another they could not form a union of forces, and capitalism was perceived to be restoring itself. But within capitalism these fires were going on. The wheel was broken once. Now, this virus has accelerated it.”

**Ethem Sancak (Chairman of BMC Executive Board),
answers the questions of Adnan Akfırat, Chairman of the Board of BRIQ.**

Adnan Akfırat: Mr. Ethem Sancak, you are one of the most important businesspersons of Turkey and you possess an intellectual background and depth. We thought that it is important to talk with you as a member of our journal's Advisory Board about the “post-Coronavirus world”. Therefore, we would like to know more about your views. Today, many observers anticipate an economic crisis that may be more destructive than the Great Depression of 1929. How do you see the situation in June 2020? What future awaits Turkey and the world?

Ethem Sancak: First of all, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I congratulate your journal. BRIQ has become a publication that I welcome with excitement and joy. As the world of the future is taking shape, there is a growing need to look for new sideways to instill the thought that will lead this formation.

First, there was the word. Humanity began with a word. If there is no word, development does not occur rationally; otherwise, development does not result in an efficient manner. So, saying the word is the beginning of everything. The new world needs words, too. The word is the greatest characteristic of people. It is a result. What distinguishes humans from other creatures is their ability to think, their ability to reason. Indeed, in our holy book, The Qur'an, Allah makes us understand: “Use your intellect and speak your words.”

Therefore, the BRIQ journal embarked on its publishing journey by dealing with a very important problem. And I am very happy to be a part of it. Besides, this journal will play a really important role in terms of not merely being a local initiative, but also being a medium where actors of the new world (China, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Venezuela, etc.) can have a voice, and in terms of preparing the ground for the new world powers to develop themselves through mutual discussion.

A Lot to Say for the New World

The virus revealed that lots of words are to be said for the new world. This is needed now. In our faith, the source of knowledge and the gate of custody is Hz. Ali. Our prophet says, "If I am the city of knowledge, Ali is my door." Therefore, all faiths and sects in our belief system see Ali and Ali's children as the source of knowledge. "The reward (sevap) of one hour of contemplation is equal to the reward of 70 years of prayer," Ali said once. Tefekkür (Contemplation) is an Arabic word, as you may know. It means generating thoughts. They ask, what is this contemplation? He says, it is looking for answers to who I am, where I came from, where I am going. This is exactly where we are now. You need to turn to yourself and ask these questions. This natural disaster was instrumental in seeking answers to these questions.

The East Is the Source of the Word and the Human Thought

Humanity's rise and intellectual journey began in the east. Ancient Indian civilization centered in the Hindu Valley and the system of thought that rose above it and came up to Buddha; ancient Chinese civilization, the great civilization that started with Zen and continued with Confucius; the great civilization of the Middle East and monotheistic religions; they all appeared in this medium. The thought begins therein and spreads throughout the world.

These geographies share several characteristics. They carry the human civilization. If we start the history of civilization with writing, even before, and if we leave out the last 500 years from almost 25 thousand years of human history, civilization has always developed in these geographies. The reason they can carry vibrant civilizations

there is that people in these geographies adopted systems of thought that glorify the human; they are based on the human. Look, in Confucius, the most sacred being is the human. It is the same with Buddha and Prophet Ali. So is with Prophet Muhammad. They are based on humans.

"He is the animal that produces and consumes more than he produces. Man is a wolf to man." They brought a system that monopolizes over worldly pleasures and produces selfishness from it. That's capitalism.

What does this mean? To be at peace with the earth, to be sincere and to love all living things... you know how they say, "we love the created, because of the creator." It exists in all the basic ideas and Eastern philosophy. These are the hallmarks of all great powers and great people who advance humanity. To devote himself to nature and the person next to him, to work for his happiness and to enjoy it, to love the person.

Capitalism: Anti-Civilization

As humanity advances like this, an "anti" rises from the West: capitalism. This is the opposite of the system of thought we are talking about. The ideologues of capitalism are based on the idea that man adores himself and further humiliates man. These ideologues describe the man as: he is the animal that produces and consumes more than he produces. Man is a wolf to man, they say. They brought a system that monopolizes over worldly pleasures and produces selfishness from it. That's capitalism. Since its advent, humanity has never seen both ends meet. The Western system, centered on Western-centrism, created a welfare society only for the West; it built slaugh-



terhouses, and accumulated enormous wealth. But 80 percent of humanity was sentenced to hunger and misery, plundered. During the birth of capitalism, 100 million African people were enslaved and sold to the New Earth as commodities: forced to work on agricultural plantations, becoming a means of production for exploitation...

This system captured almost two third of the world, with the powers it obtained by plundering the world. In response, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic civilizations resisted. The native Americans, the Aztecs, the Incas resisted. But they were enslaved by the wheel of history, the great powers the system generated and the brutality devices these powers eventually produced.

That's how this wheel has been spinning for 500 years. Of course, these 500 years are full of glorious victories of the resistance against this wheel. A lot of heroes came out like Mustafa Kemal, Mao, Sun Yat-sen, Gandhi, Nehru, Patrick Lumumba, Che Guevara.

The Grave Diggers of Capitalism: All Humanity

Over these 500 years, the system, the enemy of humanity born in the West, began to crack. When Marx said, "capitalism produces its grave diggers," he didn't mean just the proletariat working in the factory. We perceived that way for a time. He actually meant all humanity. With

the digital revolution that we have seen recently, there are possibilities that may benefit humanity: communication, being able to communicate, being able to see everything immediately, that is what drives these “gravediggers.” Now people realize that they are deceived by the grave digger created by this capitalism much more quickly.

Of course, it was not with this virus that imperialism began to collapse and new centers of civilization emerged in Asia. These were already in progress. In a sense, the virus was a blessing from Allah, which hastened its emergence. In other words, the USA's massive capitalist system based on looting would collapse anyway. We saw the clues in the 2008 crisis. This crisis was as devastating as the 1929 crisis. But because the forces against the USA were not organized, because there was a lack of communication between them, because of the Western-induced contradictions that divided them and antagonized one another they could not form a union of forces, and capitalism was perceived to be restoring itself. But within capitalism, these fires were already going on. The wheel was broken once. Now, this virus has accelerated it.

Now look, our Eastern Thought System, which scholars call dialectics and attribute it to Marx and Engels: this dialectical thought system actually goes long way back. Division of 1 into 2, carrying the opposite of everything in it... that's in Chinese philosophy. Good and evil are side by side. Yin Yang... even in Chinese language, crisis and opportunity are expressed in the same way. Looking at Indian civilization again, there are rival Gods, Lord Shiva and Brahma, forces of good and evil. In Islam, it is said, “there is a good in every evil and a bad in every good.” This virus may be a disaster, but it carries such good in it. This will be revealed now, the collapse of capitalism will accelerate.

Humanity Has Seen Many Pandemics

Adnan Akfırat: *Is it the collapse of capitalism or imperialism?*

Ethem Sancak: Capitalism has already lost its progressive character since the crisis of 1929. Capitalism had relatively progressive sides against feudalism and slavery, and it also advanced societies in the direction of the development of productive forces. But especially after 1929, it lost its progressive character and went into its special phase, imperialism as Lenin called it, leaving no progressive side. It generated a predatory, imperialist ideology. It became reactionary with its ideology, art, and all its aspects. Because, after all, its fiction is based on the plundering of the majority of humanity. So, when we say capitalism here, we don't imply the period in history when it is progressive. We imply the imperialism phase, and this system was rotten; it has always been destined to collapse. This virus will speed it up.

Now, I am very opposed to the concepts that scare humanity with this virus. Disaster is coming; we're all dead, we're done for good: there is no such thing. Humanity has seen many pandemics. The black plague came and destroyed one



third of humanity. There are many pandemics, and humanity has overcome and outlived all of them. Why hasn't humanity been effective against these outbreaks in the past 100 years?

Because capitalism has antagonized humanity with nature and hindered the development of the immune system. It prevented the development of the immune system with the foods it produced, with fake foods, GMOs, etc., with the poisoned soil and nature destroyed. Now it is going back to its essence. Look, as a result of the pandemic, the black hole in the atmosphere has gone. The poles are being cleaned; the climate is getting better; the seas, nature, and air are being cleaned. Very nice things will come out of this trouble. Humanity will learn very good lessons. You see: prostitution is gone, gambling is gone, alcoholism is gone.

The collapsing Western powers will try to conceal the problem by blaming the emerging powers China, Turkey, Iran, Russia, allegedly covering up the problem. I'm very hopeful, though. This coronavirus crisis will lead to a faster birth of a whole new world. Maybe that's why we'll love Corona in the future.

Adnan Akfirat: *(The virus) does its duty in the unity of the opposites...*

Ethem Sancak: Of course, a lot of people died. These were painful from an emotional point of view. Over a hundred thousand people died. Humans are brothers and sisters in our philosophy. We do not discriminate. When we say the capitalist system, we do not mean the 600 million people already living under capitalism. Almost 550 million of them are our brothers and allies. We cannot become enemies with our American brothers who have experienced the civil war and removed slavery. How do we

become enemies against Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson? These were the heroes of humanity. How can we get angry at George Washington, who beat British imperialism? They were our allies in history.

"Today, 80 percent of the West's wealth is in the hands of 10 percent of its population," the statisticians say. The 100 richest, on the other hand, hold 70% of humanity's wealth. They are our enemies. I mean, the forces that steal and plunder the labor of humanity, and use it against humanity.

Xi Jinping Turns to Mao's Policies

Adnan Akfirat: *How do you evaluate China's position here?*

Ethem Sancak: China stood up. China left Deng's policy of subserviency to capitalism. They returned to Mao's politics under Xi Jinping's leadership. "I will turn China into a country with a social system dominated by moderate prosperity," he says. Beneath all China's current efforts resides this nationalist thought. It is not a nihilistic nationalist view. China says it can form fraternal alliances with other nations similar to itself. This is very important. China was born as a rival to the United States in the world's production and revenue. And now Xi Jinping says, I am ready to share it with humanity. Some say China defends globalism, America has turned to nationalism. This is an illusion. America is trying to save itself, to recover its economy. China says your globalism is about plundering others, mine is about developing together by establishing an equal and fraternal relationship. What is China doing? It is trying to develop African countries. The Americans were going to Africa to plunder their mines, their wealth, to buy their people and sell them as slaves. How is China going to

Africa? China is going to support national development. It does not strangle those countries with financial games. China says, let's produce together, let's win together. This philosophy defines the globalization of China.

Only China and Turkey Have Succeeded

Adnan Akfırat: *Observing the beginning of the pandemic in China, TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD [Turkey's business associations] claimed that Asian economies will be weakened and collapse, that these economies cannot resist the economic crisis, and that the West has recovered itself, and that Turkey should grow by improving relations with the West economically. How do you assess these predictions? You are the former director of TÜSİAD; you know those circles...*

Ethem Sancak: The fact that this pandemic began in China is an illusion. We don't know it. Several scientific circles are conducting investigations and are finding that the first case began in France in December. There is also another report that traces the origin of the virus to Canada. Where did the rumours that the virus started in China first come from? Chinese society is so organized thanks to its system that it quickly noticed the virus. Maybe at the time, this virus was already traveling throughout America, Italy, and France. Even if it started in China, what's it

doing in Brazil's Amazons? How did it get there so fast? In the process, this will come out. In the end, humanity, with the technology it produces, will reveal where this virus originated, and if it is man-made, by whom it was produced.

Why is it called China-virus or Wuhan-virus? Since China is an organized society, they were the first to notice it. They also raised the first alarm in the world. They said: "There is a virus; it kills people and we took measures; you should take your own measures, too." Therefore, they neutralized the virus in a short time, because they took precautionary measures quickly. Even South Korea and Singapore were affected and took precautions because it was close to China in terms of natural geography. So, Asia has taken measures earlier, as it possesses a more organized force. Asiatic Turkey, which gradually assumed its own identity and spirit, also has seen this earlier and taken measures earlier than all the Western societies. So, today the two countries are victorious in the battle against the virus are China and Turkey.

The two powers of the new world, organized and fit, displayed exemplary attitudes and examples of humanity in this regard. They protected their people and others. Famous director Francis Ford Coppola says, "the strategy of the war against the virus exists in the most important Surah of the Qur'an for Muslims." He means Fatiha. He says: the compassionate and the merciful. He says that if we know the Rahman (the compassionate) and Rahim (the merciful), we will overcome it. It expresses love and compassion. Where did this come from? It appeared in China and Turkey. Has it ever happened in America, in the country of that fascist-headed President of Brazil, or Germany? Germany defended itself, but didn't help anyone else.

"Asia has taken appropriate measures earlier, as it possesses a more organized force. Asiatic Turkey, which gradually assumed its own identity and spirit, has also seen this earlier and taken measures earlier than all the Western societies."

Adnan Akfırat: *Do you say that the “strategy of closing the doors” stems from capitalist morality?*

Ethem Sancak: Yes. They just shut their doors. The European Union, the European Brotherhood, the European way of life and culture, they threw it all away. Germany took the lead. Suddenly, seeing the danger, Germany said, I should protect my own Germans, I don't care about the Italians, the Spaniards. With a very selfish approach, of course. Because there is selfishness in their basic thinking systems and their nature. They're so alienated. The selfishness, egocentrism, and capitalist looting have reached their climax. The capitalist Western system, representing a total of 1 billion people, was standing by, plundering 6-7 billion people. Now those people stand up. South America, Asia, China, Iran, Turkey are no longer accepting this situation.

TÜSIAD's Opinion Is Nonsense

Adnan Akfırat: *What does TÜSIAD say about COVID-19? Is a national attitude developing in the economy?*

Ethem Sancak: TÜSIAD's view, “the West will develop, not Asia”, is complete nonsense. Because the way to triumph in this business is (the same as in the economy, war, social relations): The more prepared you are and the better your morale, the faster you will overcome the crisis. Westerners are down in morale, they're actually not prepared; they're bewildered by what they're going to do; they have fallen out with each other. On the other hand, countries such as Turkey, Iran, Russia, and China detected the real problem and have taken appropriate measures. These countries were more prepared to take advantage of this situation in economic construction and development.

In our faith, a saying goes: A Muslim doesn't go through the hole he went through once. There is no longer a Turkish leadership that has sold its soul to the West. The national forces have seen this: we will not look back on these Western looters who have deceived us, no matter what carrots they give us. No more looting like that: Turkey will return, take the carrot that the United States, France, whatever else extends, and be enslaved again. Because we've tried these before.

Even in the pandemic, when people are fearing for their lives, the American government is sending huge amounts of aid to the PYD, which it has created to divide Turkey. Again, the USA does not stand idle about building the terrorist state that will protect and save Israel. They are making moves in the Eastern Mediterranean. They are not giving up on their nature. There is no government in Turkey that will eat these carrots stupidly anymore.

We Return to National Production

Adnan Akfırat: *Is a national attitude developing in the economy?*

Ethem Sancak: Of course! Look, July 15 was a critical battle. On July 15, the Republic of Turkey cleared its bowels. Turkey took huge steps toward becoming a national state. Turkey captured this national spirit with its army, its state, its police, its political parties, and its people. This was what we have long been dreaming of.

The Republic of Turkey now says, “Look, brother, I cannot reset my customs barriers in front of the World Trade Organization and European Union”. Turkey puts 30% customs again. And Turkey also says, if you produce something that substitutes for imported products, all the resources of the state are at your disposal. Three public banks have announced the largest loan

agreement in history. This is based on the idea of supporting national production. This is a terrific event. This is a serious development. What we haven't been able to do for 80 years, what Mustafa Kemal tried to do, what national leaders tried to do from time to time, and what Demirel tried to do, is to return to national production, which was always interrupted by coups, and today the Republic of Turkey, which cleanses from within those who have sold their souls, is doing so.

We Must Unite With the New World

Adnan Akfırat: *What do you think Turkey needs to do first in the face of changing world balances?*

Ethem Sancak: What Turkey is going to do now is to build alliances with the actors of the new world very quickly. The Republic of Turkey should form alliances with China, Russia, Iran, Indonesia, India, Korea, North Korea, Maduro, Argentina, alliances with the oppressed, like Mustafa Kemal envisioned at the beginning of the 20th Century, as the representative of the oppressed nations. Forming such alliances, Turkey has a great future ahead of it. As such, Turkey can become one of the top 5-6 countries that will shape the world.

“If Turkey and China can clap their wings in harmony, other powers will join in. The Asian Eagle takes off and will defeat America’s vultures”.

To defeat America’s imperialist vultures, the Asian eagle must take off. China, the eastern wing of the Asian Eagle, is very prepared. It is ready with its new system, which comes from its traditional system of thinking. Now it is time for Anatolia

and Turkey, the western wing of Asia, the land of Mustafa Kemal, to act. Turkey will be prepared quickly, and if these two complementary forces can clap their wings in harmony, other forces will join in. The Asian Eagle takes off and will defeat America’s vultures. That’s the gist of it. This is going to happen. That’s the way history goes. Because humanity has always moved forward.



So I’m very optimistic. First of all, I am optimistic about the development of humanity. Secondly, capitalism is in the throes of death. I look optimistic to the end of imperialism, which is nearby. This will pave the way for the new world to make an alliance that will bring this end. The least damaged by this virus is Asia. China has recovered. Even Iran has recovered. Even though it looks like the most unrecoverable due to America’s pressure and embargo. This was challenging for Iran, because America has flown at it. The USA was trying to overthrow the resisting Persian bravery. Thanks to God, the Iranians

have also surpassed the threat. Turkey has, too. And Russia is in the recovery process and it will succeed. China is already helping; we will help too. China will also help us by sending tourists.

Our Tourism Will Develop

Adnan Akfırat: *We have many reasons to look at the developments with optimism and hope.*

Ethem Sancak: Yes. For example, I think we will be the heart of world tourism in the next 3-4 months because of the reputation and climate that we have created during the pandemic. Think of yourself as a German, French, Swedish, British, Russian citizen. You want to go on vacation. Which is the safest country in the region? Of course, Turkey. Its nature is most appropriate; Turkey has the longest tourism season. In other words, we will double the 50 million tourists we received last year only in 4 months. Because they have nowhere else to go. Perhaps some would ban their own citizens from going to Turkey because of their hostility toward Turkey. But how long will they be able to ban it? Germany has said to its citizens that you can go here and there but do not go to Turkey. Will the German citizen go to Spain, Italy, Greece, to the heart of the danger? Or are they going to Turkey? They will come to Turkey. In other words, German citizens cannot give up Alanya, Russian citizens cannot give up Antalya, British citizens cannot give up Bodrum and Fethiye. Tourism is an important sector of our economy. I think our tourism will revive tremendously.

Taking advantage of this pandemic, Turkey provides great agricultural support in food production, too. We will become an agricultural powerhouse. Our machinery and equipment industry will be supported. There is a national movement and therefore I am very optimistic. The future is ours.

What Measures Has BMC Taken?

Adnan Akfırat: *How has this pandemic affected BMC?*

Ethem Sancak: Since we are a defense industry company, we said we will not put any of our employees on the street at the beginning of the process. We promised that we're not going to put any of them in danger on job or health matters. We also have to continue producing. Because we're a defense industry company. We serve the purpose of the Turkish Armed Forces. Maybe there is a pandemic, but our enemies other than the pandemic do not sleep. We have to continue our production. We have taken the necessary measures and continued working. We didn't put even one employee at the door. We had some workers who got virus treatment and we have helped them (even their relatives who were infected) by paying for the health expenses. Thank God, we didn't suffer any casualties. Over 4 thousand employees have never had even a nosebleed. We have no casualties. We did not underpay anyone's salary. We've cut the board's salaries by 20%, but we haven't cut anyone's salary below our board. We have completed the remaining amount of what the government gave us, and we have not left our employees without a job. We kept them healthy.

Our Lives Are No More Precious Than the Lives of Our Soldiers

Adnan Akfırat: *How do you manage the administrative affairs of your offices?*

Ethem Sancak: Fewer people came to the offices. But we continued working from home. Our hot production employees, the people at the workbench, took the necessary precautions and worked. Our union is the Turkish Metal Union. A national union, we cooperated with them very well.



Our chief of General Staff called me and said, “Ethem, look, the water sleeps, but the enemy doesn't sleep. Do not interrupt production.” I said: “Commander, our lives are no more precious than the soldiers in operation Peace Spring”

The President of the Turkish Metal Union has been a worker of BMC for 25 years. We joined hands with the Union, and together in these three months we carried out serious production. In the second week since the pandemic began, our chief of General staff called me and said, “Ethem, look, the water sleeps, but the enemy doesn't sleep. Do not interrupt produc-

tion.” I said: “Commander, our lives are no more precious than the soldiers in operation Peace Spring”. Our soldiers are on duty there, and we will produce here. This is our role. This is a national cause; there is also to die for this cause. While our young people, who are 22-23 years old, are resisting in Euphrates Shield, in Mavi Vatan (The Blue Homeland) and Libya, can we say that we have a pandemic and let's not get anything produced?

We keep up with this understanding. Everyone is satisfied with BMC. We are happy, too. Our production continues. Our national engine works, tank works, gun works continue. We did not take any break. It goes as we planned. We said to the employees that we do not want the expected 20%

profit as patronage for 3 months. Let our cash flow run smoothly, let our employees receive their salaries, make production, take our raw materials, and protect our suppliers. We do not want profit. We removed 20% profit in the budget we put at the beginning of this year. We already have a contract with the employees as follows: We will now account for all of what BMC produces as value. I gather our employees together and account every six months. And I say to them that one-third of the produced profit is your right before your sweat dries, it will be given to you; one-third is the right of our state, we will pay as tax; we said one third is the right of the business owner. We are also working with our union, trying a new system. No matter what profit you make, there is no such thing as you keep all profit for yourself. Whatever profit is made, premiums etc. come accordingly. Our employees are also very satisfied.

“We will now account for all of what BMC produces as value. I gather our employees together and account every six months. And I say to them that one-third of the produced profit is your right before your sweat dries”

Last week, I told our staff by teleconference: I want your family to attend the conference from your location. Almost everyone virtually attended. Every employee of BMC sees BMC as his or her own, not only Ethem Sancak's. This is a national company, and I'm a partner here. It's the truth. It's going so well, and it's going to get even better. Because we have stepped into international marketing, too.

Our products are also needed for friendly countries that fight against the looting of imperialism. I'm going to Libya next week. I will identify the needs of the Libyan government, from there I will move to Algeria, Tunisia, from there to Somalia, from there to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. I'm waiting for flights to resume. Our relations with Azerbaijan and Pakistan are already working. Then we'll go with you to China. You know, last time we had more of a diplomatic trip. Now we go for BMC. We'll talk to them about what we can do together.

Adnan Akfirat: On behalf of BRIQ, thank you very much. It was a very fascinating, enlightening, beautiful interview. 🍷

Chairman of the Board of Directors of
Onur Air

Cankut BAGANA:

**"If Turkey Defines and Sets the
Goals That Will Make A Difference
in the World, It Will Benefit From
This Crisis!"***



Mr. Bagana graduated from the Faculty of Law, Istanbul University. He started his career as tour leader in 1965 and worked as manager in different working areas of the tourism industry until 1975. He established Incoming Travel Agency in 1975 and joined Ten Tour as one of the founders and shareholders in 1980. In 1985, he started to work personally in Ten Tour. He served as Onur Air joined with Ten Tour in 1994. He is President of Onur Air since 2013. He speaks French, German, English and Italian.

We think that if Turkey defines and sets the goals that will make a difference in the world, it will benefit from this crisis. We shall produce. The sectors selected and assigned highest priority should not change for the next 20-30 years. We will be the best in the world. We will sell and buy products. Our efforts will be backed up by our logistics power, coupled with transit trade opportunities. In short, we will both produce and trade with the whole world. Those nations who study their lesson well and set clear and fixed goals for themselves can easily transit to tomorrow's world without the need to demolish today's world. However, this is only true as long as they carry on the goals that make a difference in the world, with strict and persistent discipline.

Cankut Bagana (Chairman of the Board of Directors of Onur Air), answers the questions of Adnan Akfırat, Chairman of the Board of BRIQ.

Adnan Akfırat: *In its assessment of April 8, 2020 the World Trade Organization announced that international trade will decrease by between 13% and 32% in 2020 due to the pandemic. Because of pandemic, it is believed that the recession in global trade is worse than that of the 2008 financial crisis. What changes do you foresee in the global economy after the COVID-19 outbreak?*

Cankut Bagana: The COVID-19 outbreak speeded up the process leading to the end of the neoliberal economy. All the world states make an effort to find a solution, first on a national scale. Then solutions on a regional and ultimately global basis will be sought by them. These efforts will determine the post-pandemic economic structures.

The biggest problem of developing countries is this painful transition and transformation problem.

Adnan Akfırat: *What differences and similarities will there be between the developed and developing countries regarding the pandemic's effects on the economy?*

Cankut Bagana: Of course, the developing countries will be more prone to innovations such as artificial intelligence, robotic manufacturing, and quantum computer technologies for the next 10- 20 years. However, their transition from today to tomorrow will be problematic and painful. They need to pull down today's world and build tomorrow. For example, the manufacturing of electric cars in Turkey is easier compared to Germany. The biggest problem of developing countries is this painful transition and transformation problem. Those nations who study their lesson well and set clear and fixed goals for themselves can easily transit to tomorrow's world without the need to demolish today's world. However, this is only true as long as they carry on the goals that make a difference in the world, with strict and persistent discipline.

Turkey Should Set Targets As Soon As Possible

Adnan Akfırat: *What are the effects of the pandemic, either positive or negative, on Turkey's foreign trade, and furthermore what will be the likely effects in the future?*

Cankut Bagana: Today's economic situation of Turkey is, so to say, the point where the sea ends. Targets should be set as soon as possible. We think that if Turkey defines and sets the the goals that will make a difference in the World, it will benefit from this crisis. In our opinion the Goals should be the following:

- 1- Agriculture and agricultural industries,
- 2- Logistics and related industries (we need to produce items such as wagons, trucks, airplanes, vessels, etc. necessary for transportation),
- 3- Tourism and associated industries,
- 4- Manufacturing of equipment to fulfill our role as an energy corridor for gas and oil.
- 5- Digital Technology

Adnan Akfırat: *What are the possible comparative scenarios regarding Turkey's foreign trade with Asia, Europe, the US, and Latin America?*

Cankut Bagana: I think that the geographical location of Turkey is of a unique value and the greatest advantage. Therefore, Turkey's unique location requires us to prioritize the production and the trade with the whole world primarily in the sectors favorable for Turkey, mainly with Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasia, the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa. We shall produce.

Selected Sectors Should Not Change For the Next 20-30 Years

The sectors selected and assigned highest priority should not change for the next 20-30

years. We will be the best in the world. We will produce sell and buy products. Our efforts will be backed up by our logistics power, coupled with transit trade opportunities. In short, we will both produce and trade with the whole world.

Adnan Akfırat: *As far as the Turkish economy and financial markets are concerned on a global scale, what changes may take place after the pandemic?*

Cankut Bagana: After the outbreak in Turkey and elsewhere, abrupt changes in the financial markets are likely to occur. The decisive step will be an agreement to be reached by big players, either voluntarily or as a compulsory action. Only after that stage, it will be possible to get an idea about the nature of changes that will take place in the world and in Turkey.

I think that the geographical location of Turkey is of a unique value and the greatest advantage. Therefore, Turkey's unique location requires us to prioritize the production and the trade with the whole world primarily in the sectors favorable for Turkey, mainly with Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasia, the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa.

Adnan Akfırat: *What are your preparations in your companies for the period after the pandemic?*

Cankut Bagana: Aviation and tourism took the biggest blow because of the pandemic. I believe that these sectors will need to take shape from the very beginning. We set new goals (without putting all the eggs in the same basket) for ourselves and draw a roadmap accordingly. The wind is useless for a captain who does not know where to go! 🌪️

A Decisive Moment of Truth: The COVID-19 Crisis Unveils the Weaknesses of Western Societies and the E. U.



DOMINIK PIETZCKER

Prof. Dr.
Public Relations and Communication's Management,
Macromedia University of Applied Sciences

*Since 2012, Dominik Pietzcker, Dr. phil., is a fulltime professor at Macromedia University of Applied Sciences, Hamburg and Berlin Campuses and a member of the Media Faculty. He studied comparative German literature, philosophy and history at the University of Freiburg/Br., Trinity College, Dublin, and in Vienna. From 1996-2010, he worked as a creative director for political institutions (E.U., the German government's, Federal Press Department) and taught at Universität der Künste (UdK) Berlin, Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (HTW) Berlin and Technische Universität (TU) Dresden. Since 2014, he is an honorary juror at the Foundation of German Entrepreneurs (Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft, SDW). Since 2017, he holds lectures at universities in China, at Zhejiang University City College (Hangzhou) and Tongji University (Shanghai). He publishes regularly on intercultural, Sino-German, and socio-economic topics.
Email: d.pietzcker@macromedia.de*

ABSTRACT

All crises – whether they are political, economic, organizational, societal or medical – have one decisive quality: they expose the strengths and weaknesses of the affected system and of all its members. COVID-19 challenges a liberal economic system where personal security, individual comfort and well-being, and the accumulation of wealth are considered to be the highest values. These values, and the way of life that goes with them, are still powerful motivational catalysts in societies based on materialism. Indeed, the free exchange of goods and services, individual mobility, the international flexibilization of production and distribution – all that we call globalization or as an eponym, “global capitalism” (Beckert, 2014) – carry deep, intrinsic risks. One of the most obvious outcomes of the coronavirus crisis is to reveal how easily this interdependent system between global players – enterprises, institutions and states – can be disrupted, damaged and partially destroyed. Those countries that succeeded in fighting, in as fast and draconian as possible, the COVID-19 pandemic will be the global winners of this race against time and spread. Among these countries will certainly be China, South Korea and Singapore, as they all entered the crisis in its early stages and quickly established strict, coherent and elaborate medical regimes (Welter, 2020). The economy of the Eurozone, already weakened before the pandemic, has suffered enormously and will not recover soon. Unemployment rates are already increasing dramatically in Southern Europe. Europe, and the E.U. as a political idea and visionary project for so many decades and generations, are facing harder times. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, authoritarian and reactionary neonationalist ideas are likely to gain strength, while the world economy may experience an enduring recession, destroying wealth and stability, and challenging – if not changing – the existing global order. COVID-19 could mark a crucial historical moment: the end of the laissez-faire era, not only in economics and finance, but also in politics, culture and private life.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Asianization; economic crisis; European integration; globalization; neoliberal capitalism

*Dreams in the spring;
Clouds in autumn.
It is easy to meet, and to part too.*

Yan Jidao, 11th century (Qiu, 2009, 191)

A Declaration of War Against Reality

WITHIN MERE WEEKS, THE GLOBAL economy, medical infrastructure and national politics have lost their stability and even shifted into a chaotic path in some parts of the world; as, for example, in Bergamo, Italy (Zamapano, 2020; Jones & Montale, 2020). Already on March

2, 2020, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published an interim report under the alarmist title “The World Economy at Risk”. Every single index in this report is pointing downwards (OECD, 2020: 15): “If downside risks materialize, including a much wider spread of the coronavirus outbreak, and global growth looks set to be much lower

than projected, governments could be faced with the challenge of having to respond to significant weakness at a time when domestic policy space is limited.” After a rather pessimistic outlook, the report concludes (OECD, 2020: 14): “Looking ahead, this episode of weak growth reinforces the need for stronger public investment in many countries, broadly defined to include education and health care spending, to support demand and boost medium-term living standards.” Since March 2020, the negative global macroeconomic effects of COVID-19 have accelerated.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the E.U. proved its inability to speak and stand up as one. Instead, since March 2020, national positions have dominated media, economic discussions and monetary negotiations alike.

While international organizations have tried to describe, from a very early stage, the immediate, mid- and long-term economic and financial outcomes of the pandemic (Lagarde, 2020; IMF, 2020), national policies have had to address unstable situations, risking a total loss of control. In a decisive moment, French president Emmanuel Macron used the term *guerre sanitaire* (sanitary war) (Elysée, 2020)¹ – not as a metaphor, but as a factual description. His members de cabinet obediently took over the phrase of “being at war” (Vignaud, 2020: 29).

The fight against COVID-19 has turned out to be an epic war against an invisible foe; yet every state fights it alone, and sometimes states even fight against each other. “America First” was a phrase often heard before the COVID-19 crisis, but policies of a strictly national perspective can also be recognized among E.U. member states. Tensions between Germany, France and Italy have become apparent. French commuters crossing the German border to go to work were abused and insulted as “dirty French” (FAZ, 2020a). The Belgian politician Charles Michel, president of the E.U. Council, recently had to explain “why the E.U. is not on the brink of failure” (FAZ, 2020b). Spanish foreign secretary Arancha González Laya was asked if the coronavirus would be “lethal to the E.U.” (González Laya, 2020). Are there any symptoms or indicators of a real political decline behind these questions?

During the COVID-19 crisis, the E.U. proved its inability to speak and stand up as one. Instead, since March 2020, national positions have dominated media, economic discussions and monetary negotiations alike. Of course, all frontiers in Europe were closed – it was never easier to fall back to a regime ante the Maastricht treaty and the Schengen agreement.

Under the rule of a pandemic, isolation makes absolute sense; as a political symptom in a globalized economy, it is simply devastating. A supranational union like the E.U. loses its meaning when it only consists of isolated members and ceases to represent a higher order or historical vision. During COVID-19, the E.U.,

¹ Speech of Emmanuel Macron, March 16, 2020 (Elysée, 2020): “Nous sommes en guerre, en guerre sanitaire, certes : nous ne luttons ni contre une armée, ni contre une autre Nation. Mais l'ennemi est là, invisible, insaisissable, qui progresse. Et cela requiert notre mobilisation générale.” (“We are at war, at a sanitary war. We do not fight against an army, nor against another nation. But the enemy is here, invisible, unpredictable, and progressing. This demands a general mobilization.” [Transl. by the author]) Following the example of the French president, Donald Trump declared himself on Twitter as a “wartime president” and boldly proclaimed “WE WILL WIN THIS WAR” (The Washington Post, 2020). See also the critical comment by Susan E. Rice (Rice, 2020 : 9).

and the European Commission as the executive institution, were simply non-existent. Peoples – and voters – all over Europe will not forget this sign of decreasing relevance, visibility and importance. The E.U. missed the chance to prove its strength and unity in a moment of extreme external pressure. This critical moment passed without any understanding of its political potential. True statesmanship, once part of the European political tradition,² was entirely missing at a time when it was crucial. This opportunity is now completely lost, leaving disappointment if not indifference towards E.U. politics among citizens and voters.

The Absence of E.U. Politics and Its Consequences

During the COVID-19 crisis, every single state could easily do without the E.U. Public health was not a matter of official E.U. politics: member states looked out for themselves and took, or did not take, precautions. But if the E.U. market is common, and frontiers are open for trade and travel, why is there not also a common organizational and infrastructural standard of public health? Unlike Asian states, particularly those which had learned from the SARS epidemic in 2008, the E.U. member states were not prepared for a pandemic, as improbable as it might have seemed beforehand. The successful crisis management of Asian states, among them China, stands out against the relatively late and hesitant reaction of European states. Singapore and

South Korea, too, managed to handle the crisis remarkably smoothly and without much ado. The highly digitized infrastructure of both countries enabled officials to initiate punctual measures against COVID-19 instead of mass invasive measures. Citizens behaved in a disciplined manner; the number of those infected remained low compared to other states (Normile, 2020). In South Korea, even legislative elections were held in mid-April. Public life has returned to normal.³



Statement by the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen and High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell' (Avrupa Info,2020)

The outcome of COVID-19 may weaken the E.U. and encourage centrifugal political forces. More specifically, the current crisis will lead to a reorientation towards national agendas of politics and economics. All over Europe, bankrupt airlines are likely to be nationalized (Asquith,

2 If one thinks of such practitioners of power as Cardinal Richelieu and Talleyrand, Cromwell and Churchill, Bismarck and Adenauer, de Gasperi and de Gaulle, one might come to the conclusion that politics and policymaking have not become more complicated these days, but that today's European politicians are simply missing any idea for the right moment and its unique (positive or destructive) potential – what the ancient Greeks so rightly called *kairos*.

3 COVID-19 also dramatically proves that, without digitization, societal survival would not be possible. The digital infrastructure has already proved to be the backbone of the global economy. Now it enables national crisis management and connects human individuals, institutions and scientists all over the world. Go Digital or Die, a popular slogan among start-up entrepreneurs, expresses a higher political and societal truth.

2020); national – not European or global – infrastructure in agriculture, medical surveillance, pharmaceuticals and digital information is in demand; for individuals and nations alike, autarky has become desirable again. Even Brexit is now a marginal topic. Who cares about Britain’s new “splendid isolation” while COVID-19 drives the world economy into the deepest recession since the late 1920s (Riley, 2020; FAZ, 2020c)? The impact of COVID-19 overshadows any other political decision in Europe. But what are the pending consequences of all of these developments and powershifts? The actual figures and forecasts for Western economies give an idea of what might be expected in the aftermath of COVID-19.

But the E.U. acts – again – divided. While Southern E.U. member states demand that the negative economic effects of COVID-19 should be shouldered fairly by all E.U. members, wealthier countries like Germany or the Netherlands prefer to continue their policy of national responsibility. Economic disaster is regarded as a matter of national policy; every state, therefore, should be held responsible for its own debts and financial situation. This is a hardliner position that is only shared by the relatively wealthy E.U. member states. These petty discussions reflect a *total lack of the metapolitical perspective*.

“When you are covering the United States,” says French RFI correspondent Anne Corpet (Corpet, 2020), “it’s as if you’re on the frontline of Western culture.” Latest figures from the IMF (2020) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) indicate a dramatically increasing U.S. unemployment rate – a rise of 16 million between March and April 2020 alone. Only the Great Depression in the 1930s hit harder on the American labor market. The European outlook is

equally gloomy. Millennials in Southern Europe (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece) see themselves as members of a “lost generation” (The Economist, 2020a: 20). “After two big crises at a formative period of their lives, a politicised and traumatized generation will need to be catered for ... The anger built up during the previous crisis has not receded. About two-thirds of Spaniards declare themselves dissatisfied with democracy in their country” (The Economist, 2020a: 20). But what would be the alternative to democracy? Authoritarian national regimes promising more economic security? The rise of anti-establishment movements? The loss of interest in politics? The return of openly fascist ideas in Europe (Albright, 2019)?⁴

The symptoms of societal decay are evident. In Southern Italy, organized crime replaces state authority, distributing food to the poor and offering loans to small shopkeepers as financial support and compensation for an absent state (The Guardian, 2020a). All over Europe, as well as in the U.S., Russia, Brazil and Argentina – to mention but a few – national economies are at stake and forecasts predict decreasing GDP (The Economist, 2020b: 6). As in 2008, economic figures have turned into nightmares; only this time, it might last much longer.

The idea of Europe as a visionary project is losing momentum, inspiration and, maybe for the first time, real relevance. A formerly powerful political idea – the best Europe has ever had in centuries measured not in money but in common cultural values and shared experiences – is evaporating.

⁴ Some years before the outbreak of COVID-19, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote: “People want to vote but they need to eat. In many countries, the climate is reminiscent of that which, a hundred years ago, gave birth to Italian and German Fascism” (Albright, 2019, 112).



(Xinhuanet,2020)

The idea of Europe as a visionary project is losing momentum, inspiration and, maybe for the first time, real relevance. A formerly powerful political idea – the best Europe has ever had in centuries, measured not in money but in common cultural values and shared experiences – is evaporating. It could be that these values have simply become insignificant. Which political powers will emerge from the void of a weakened and disunited Europe?

The European Unease

Even before spring 2020, the E.U. as an institution struggled with shrinking acceptance among citizens and voters. The 2018 elections to the European Parliament strengthened the radical political parties in France, the UK, Italy and Germany. Brexit, much debated since 2016, is only the most prominent symptom of a stronger underlying feeling of unease among E.U. mem-

ber states and their citizens. Without a doubt, from education to economics, from individual rights to institutionalized prosperity, from peace to mobility, the E.U. has a lot to offer. But not to everyone. Social and political reality within E.U. member states (and likewise in non-member states, e.g. Switzerland and Norway) consists not only of those who profit from tax privileges, high educational standards, professional mobility, second homes in the countryside and a relaxed liberal-cosmopolitan lifestyle where minority rights are guaranteed, but also of those who consider themselves not as winners but as losers from competitive markets, global production and the growing internationalization of the economy. These people, large segments of the European population, prefer – for very personal economic reasons – protected national markets. They are also those who are suffering the most from the negative impact of COVID-19: small shopkeepers, underpaid staff in restaurants and cafés, self-employed entrepreneurs without much of a financial cushion, blue-collar workers whose working conditions are dramatically worsening⁵ and all those who have already lost or will lose their jobs in an economy already going into a deep and long-lasting recession. Their skepticism towards a political-economic system that could not protect them from loss, deprivation or even poverty will only grow.

The European idea, once meant as a unifier and peace-bringer after the bloodshed and disasters of the early and mid-20th century (Mak, 2007), has lost most of its attractiveness. It doesn't reflect the political polarization and radicalization of European societies. The political climate, already distorted before COVID-19,

⁵ One should always bear in mind that, for all its enormous potential, the digital revolution is also the main source of a new kind of poverty and economic dependence: underpaid jobs in Amazon warehouses, self-employed drivers in Western cities without any insurance, sweatshops in South East Asia, etc.

is deteriorating, posing new risks in an already unstable situation. Populist parties and right-wing movements are reckless enough to take advantage of the – from the perspective of their voters – political impotence of the E.U. “The siren is ringing” (Jones & Montale, 2020); not only for the poor all over Europe, who have become even poorer by now, but also for well-established bourgeois pro-European representatives as they face the growing risk of losing their political influence and majorities. Those who suffered economic losses during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath will not forget those who left them alone and did not provide help when it was most needed. They will remember the pictures of the endless discussions and nightly negotiations at the E.U. headquarters in the Berlaymont building in Brussels, which ended without a solution. They will not consider the E.U. flag with its 12 golden stars as their own anymore. The enormous sum of €2.7 trillion, the new “Marshall Plan” for Europe (von der Leyen, 2020), will not change their negative attitudes towards the E.U.

Under the regime of the COVID-19 pandemic, petty national interests, particularly in Europe, overshadowed individual sacrifices. Acts of solidarity between European states were more or less entirely lacking.

Again, COVID-19 exposes one of the most vital weaknesses of the E.U.: its inability to explain itself and its vision of a unified and strong Europe. In its institutionalized form, the E.U. is totally helpless against populism. “In this pandemic,” writes Scott L. Greer, a professor of public health (Greer, 2020), the E.U. “doesn’t appear

to live up to its ideals: A union that speaks often of solidarity between peoples initially saw little solidarity. A union often reproached for technocracy showed none of it. A union built on the freedom of movement of people and goods has become a chaotic continent of closed borders and export bans.” *Chaque-un pour soi* seems to be the *realpolitik* of each E.U. member state when facing a severe crisis. European institutions like the European Center of Disease Prevention and Control (E.C.D.C.) in Stockholm or the newly founded RescEU, the European Union’s organization for crisis response at home and abroad, were more or less invisible during the outbreak of COVID-19.

Under the regime of the COVID-19 pandemic, petty national interests, particularly in Europe, overshadowed individual sacrifices. Acts of solidarity between European states were more or less entirely lacking. The Italian public, whose emotions were fueled by political right-wing agitation, is openly disappointed at the unwillingness of relatively rich E.U. member states to share, as true partners, the financial and economic burdens of the COVID-19 crisis. Help and solidarity, when it comes to mutual sacrifices, have become unpopular among E.U. member states. Under pressure, individuals and institutions reveal their true reliability and strength. Facing hard times could have been one of the rare cathartic moments of contemporary politics: Europe’s “finest hour”. But it turned out that the European Commission only represented the political calamity of an organization fragmented and disunited by partial economic interests. The rich member states (Netherlands, Germany and others) are obviously not willing to share their privileges with weaker partners. Political alien-

ation – or better, political distancing – between E.U. member states is already one of the paradoxical outcomes of the COVID-19 crisis.⁶

Are There Any Other Humanitarian Topics Left, Apart From COVID-19?

One of the most astonishing phenomena of the COVID-19 crisis is the total disappearance in the Western media of the formerly hot topic of mass migration from the Southern Mediterranean and Sub-Sahara regions. In February 2020, 11 migrants were assassinated in Hanau, Germany; one of the most violent and bloodiest xenophobic assaults in recent German history (The Guardian, 2020b). A brief outcry in the media followed, before COVID-19 swept away any other topic, including the public debates over refugees, asylum seekers, and xenophobic and antisemitic tendencies in Western democracies. But under the surface of the pandemic, the conflictual dynamite of a society that suppresses its inner self-contradictions is still there, ready to explode at any given moment.

COVID-19 dominates as a monothematic wave the international news circus; be it print, TV or social media. Obviously, the news industry follows its own rhythm; nevertheless it is somehow irritating that the destinies of tens of thousands of emigrants are no longer of any public concern. Questions of personal health and individual well-being are, seen from the perspective of the broad public, apparently more important than the fate of the damned of this world. The German parliament, representing a population of 80 million people, agreed to

take in 50 unaccompanied minor-aged refugees from the war-ridden regions of the East. This is nothing more than a weak humanitarian gesture, tired from former generosity and political confrontation.

Emigration has ceased to be of any public concern. COVID-19 is the ideal pretext, a true *deus ex machina*, for establishing a restrictive border regime in Europe without facing any opposition. It also exposes the hollowness and unreliability of European humanitarian engagement and the moral hypocrisy of both officials and citizens. Turkey, Russia and China are not blind to the weak ethical commitments of Western Europe.

Western Lifestyle and Consumerism, Coming to Its End

The coronavirus pandemic might be as costly and destructive as going to war. But is it also as decisive, brutal and reckless as war? Behind the epidemiological facts and the obvious dangers of COVID-19 stands another adversary, as hard to grasp as the virus itself: the corrugated way of life in Western societies. Nobody was prepared for the complete shutdown of economic activity. There were no holidays, either; and what was left, apart from queueing for food, eating, jogging and watching Netflix or Disney+, was the shocking proof of the hollowness of the Western materialistic way of life. What could be seen was the abyss of an absolute conceptional, philosophical and emotional emptiness, where only petit-bourgeois anxieties reigned and a diffusive existential angst lay hidden.

⁶ These lines were written while the fruitless negotiations between the ministers of finance on “Euro bonds” and other measures of supranational solidarity were unfolding. Yet it is clear that the times of austerity are over. The E.U. has to prove that its members will emerge from the crisis less damaged than non-member states. Even Brexit has become a question of lower public and political interest. The United Kingdom will probably not do better or worse than the rest of the E.U. Again: The COVID-19 crisis, as a crucial moment of political truth, totally changes proportions, perspectives and relations.

Short after the official lockdown and the de facto curfew in Europe began, the novel *La Peste* by Albert Camus was briefly out of stock.⁷ World under the threat of infection quickly develops socio-phobic attitudes. Once again, reality follows literature; the worldly regime and daily life under COVID-19 closely resemble T.S. Eliot's 1925 poem *The Hollow Men* (Eliot, 1974: 91): "In this last of meeting places / We grope together / And avoid speech / Gathered on this beach of the tumid river". In times of external pressure, humility – and not self-confidence – has become the main virtue. When shops are closed and, apart from food, nothing can be bought, what is the essence of consumerism? Staying at home, attending webinars, following video conferences or working on Excel sheets are the main activities, apart from eating, sleeping and – at least in Northern Europe – amassing toilet paper in astonishing amounts. Refrigerators and freezers became top sellers overnight (Müßgens, 2020). The masses prepared themselves to outlast the crisis. What does all this tell us about the self-perception and self-deception of a society where entertainment and amusement suddenly turn into fear?

Behind all these rituals, imposed by a strict medical regime, lies the fragility, fearfulness and emptiness of a hedonistic and post-heroic society. Wealthy Western societies have learned to delegate a lot to absent third parties: hard working conditions, exploitation, poverty, pollution, violence and crime. Now, they learn that everything can be delegated, but not one's own fears. Like acid, COVID-19 exposes the unpleasant aspects beyond the shiny surface of Western wealth and values. Materialism easily turns to decadence, and decadence to decay.

Cultural Criticism and COVID-19

One would have to be politically naïve – or truly optimistic – to believe that the E.U. and, in a broader sense, the European idea of partnership among equals, will be among the winners from the recent developments. COVID-19 has already given a boost to nationalistic and reactionary ideas throughout Europe, particularly in Italy, France, Poland and Hungary. In Italy, the neofascist movement *Fratelli d'Italia* (Brothers of Italy) and its charismatic leader Georgia Meloni have become more popular than ever before. The concept of an authoritarian state based on reactionary ideas – the late and unlikely heritage of fascism – has recovered its appeal among democracies.

Authoritarian tendencies become more apparent as governments all over Europe demand unconditional obedience from their citizens. COVID-19 boosts the desire for control and security; authoritarian policies satisfy these demands. In Germany, where citizens traditionally believe in state authority and control, the joyless atmosphere of total conformity is almost palpable. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine seeing in a European democracy a police-enforced order that limits personal freedoms", writes Russian editor-at-large Maxim Trudolyubov (Trudolyubov, 2020).

COVID-19 unveils the true emotional driving forces behind the mask of peace, profit and prosperity. Without any doubt, we are on the threshold of a new age of angst.

⁷ On April 15, the author interviewed Regina Steinicke, the spokesperson of the publishing house Rowohlt Verlag. Camus' novel could not be delivered anymore, at least not without heavy distributional difficulties.

COVID-19 puts democracy to the test as the antivirus regime oppresses all actions – and even attitudes – that oppose the executive orders. The ratio of seemingly necessary restrictions knocks out all liberal and democratic rights. What is good for public health can be bad or even devastating for a political culture. Obedience and conformism are regarded as social and personal virtues; in Germany it has become popular to snitch on neighbors flouting virus rules (Chambers, 2020). This is reminiscent of certain totalitarian practices of the past.

It is strange to observe how easily a pluralistic and open society can be turned into a homogenous angst-ridden community where all members try to avoid each other. Again, the virus brutally exposes the fragility and vulnerability of modern societies and their political-economic systems. COVID-19 unveils the true emotional driving forces behind the mask of peace, profit and prosperity. Without any doubt, we are on the threshold of a new age of angst. Citizens, colleagues and family members are avoiding each other. Social distancing, considered before as borderline behavior, has become a virtue. Making new contacts is regarded as a major offence. Physical contact of any kind has strangely become a health risk. To love someone is to endanger that very person; whether a partner, a child or a parent.

COVID-19 depicts a society of obedience and conformism. It is not about technocratic functionality or what seems to be necessary from a strictly medical viewpoint – it is about the republican and individual right to agree or disagree with official policy. Mainstream society obediently and uncritically follows executive orders. Thus, within weeks, COVID-19 has already exposed the potential for an absolute Orwellian system. Democratic procedures, critical reason-

ing, enlightened discourses, the Socratic right to disagree; all forgotten when the political system is under pressure. This timeless political lesson about democracy turning into an authoritarian regime or even a dictatorship has to be learned again and again, although it tells us nothing new. Alexis de Tocqueville already knew the risks of mass conformity, obedience and intolerance within the system of democracy (de Tocqueville, 1992).

Some Remarks on the Macroeconomic and Geopolitical Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis

COVID-19 stands in the same tradition as the European economic crisis of 2012–2014, the global financial crisis of 2008 and the brief but intense economic recession after 9/11 in 2001 (Hillinger, 2010). The immediate and indirect effects of the COVID-19 crisis also impose some questions that demand political answers: What is the price of globalization and are we willing to pay it? Are we ready to live, act and cooperate in a world that overnight has become dangerous again? How often can an economic system undergo deep crises before it corrugates and implodes? And finally, are we all in need of a new global order?

For the fourth time since 9/11, the global economy has been devastated by a severe crisis. Throughout this period, the economic system, based on private possession and the accumulation of personal wealth, has been heavily backed up by public means. Trillions of Euros and U.S. dollars were practically pumped into the staggering capitalistic system. As a consequence, after 9/11, 2008 and 2012 many states in Europe and all over the world faced severe budget problems. Public infrastructure was neglected. But COVID-19 is not the only thing that kills; poverty, poor social and medical infrastructure, and

an underfinanced state can be lethal too. Western governments are heavily subsidizing the neoliberal economic system and its idea of the free market. Risks are carried in public hands, but profits belong exclusively to the shareholders. But why should dysfunctional competitive markets be regularly subsidized? When state power becomes such a strong economic player as during COVID-19, it should also be regarded and rewarded as such. Are we getting closer to a multilateral capitalistic system where governmental control and public shares are the two main economic pillars – instead of free-market competition and neoliberal globalization? Massive public means are necessary to cover the negative economic effects of COVID-19. When governments step in and take economic responsibility, the discourse on renationalization and new forms of capitalism, depending both on state control and the forces of the free market, enters a new stage. Another “new deal” – this time, paradoxically, without the U.S. – has become possible again. Will China be its leader?

investment, two different politico-economic systems have been competing against each other. On the one hand, the state-controlled capitalism of China; on the other, the self-controlled market capitalism of traditional Western understanding. Both models represent giant experiments. At the moment, each model is having to prove its capability to adapt to the heavy risks and highly volatile markets of a globalized economy. COVID-19 puts both models to the test. But China seems to be in a better starting position.

Geostrategic investments along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will not come to a halt, although they might be reprioritized or slowed down. China has no interest in losing its new allies along the trade routes and coastlines of Africa, South East Asia and Latin America. Unlike the U.S., China has no interest in protected markets; meanwhile, international markets depend heavily on Chinese exports. COVID-19 is undoubtedly a backlash against globalization; but it will not change the historic direction towards Asian hegemony (Khanna, 2019; Maçães, 2018) and Chinese dominance in the Eastern hemisphere. The Asian century has just begun; COVID-19 will be nothing more than a footnote. Maybe it is worth remembering the Spanish influenza of 1918–1919. It took more lives than World War I, but it had practically no impact on the growing importance, and soon Western hegemony, of the U.S.



(China Daily, 2020)

Since China systematically opened its huge market of 1.4 billion consumers to international

“From Russia With Love” – Learnt Lessons From the East

Even in a post-COVID-19 world, some major aspects of global importance remain. The dramatic and unavoidable power shift from West to East (Rachman, 2016) is not affected by COVID-19; it might even be accelerated. China was the first nation to be hit by the pandemic; but it was also

the first state to get out of the acute state of crisis. Since the end of March, daily life has returned to Shanghai (a metropole of 25 million inhabitants); since April 11, shops and factories have restarted their business and production activities in Wuhan, once the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang & Yang, 2020). As the pandemic was reaching its peak, China sent medical equipment directly to Lombardy, the Italian region that was suffering the most.⁸ Now, China is offering practical help, equipment and medical know-how to the U.S. and other Western countries (Cui, 2020). Russia, too, sent medical corps to Northern Italy. These gestures generated huge media coverage; their propagandistic goals were perfectly matched. The East Helps the West out of the Crisis: the underlying message is absolutely clear.

“Will China win?” (The Economist, 2020) – the cover title of the April 18 issue of The Economist – points to the *bête noire* of European and Western polities: the perception of the growing influence of Asian societies over the occidental hemisphere (Khanna, 2019). Those states and national economies which recover the fastest from the critical blow of COVID-19 will be able to enlarge their global influence. China will be among these states; the U.S. probably not. In fact, China has offered active help to the U.S., proving its ability to swiftly change its diplomatic tonality from competition in a *de facto* trade war to solidarity and empathy in a moment of common suffering (Cui, 2020). No other administration has proved capable of reacting in its international relations as smoothly and quickly as the Chinese, although Russia didn’t hesitate to send medical staff and equipment to Italy. “From Russia with love” was written on the Tupolev transport aircrafts of the Russian air force. It was, as the Italian media observed, the first time since the Napoleonic wars that Russian troops had entered Italian territory (BBC, 2020). The Russian PR stunts won global media coverage. The strategists of the Kremlin have well understood that dominance in symbolic pictures and gestures counts nearly as much as military dominance over territories (Corman & Coraci, 2020). This is something that the E.U. administration seems to have totally forgotten.



"Everything that happens to human is not unconcerned." box of medical supply donated by China to Italy. (Xinhuanet,2020)

Summary

The ideas and findings of this article can be summarized in a few aphoristic sentences:

⁸ In Hangzhou, one of China’s wealthiest cities, public buses were painted with the Italian tricolor as a sign of solidarity. These activities, which had a massive impact on social media, did not occur among E.U. member states. At least the author couldn’t perceive any flag, be it of Italy, France or Spain, on public transport vehicles in Berlin. It seems as if the West has forgotten the symbolic language of solidarity.

- (1) The COVID-19 crisis mercilessly exposes the political fragility of the European Union and its institutions..
- (2) Post-COVID-19 Europe will have to deal with the centrifugal potential of stronger nationalistic political movements.
- (3) The disjunction between the E.U.'s self-perception, and how it is perceived by its citizens, is becoming palpable.
- (4) Poverty, ideological radicalization and political instability are coming back to Europe.
- (5) Those national states that mastered – as quickly and strictly as possible – the COVID-19 crisis will be the economic, political and strategic winners of the recent developments: China, South Korea, Singapore, Japan; in Western Europe maybe Germany.
- (6) Neoliberalism and laissez-faire capitalism have lost their legitimacy; in the U.S. the neoliberal macroeconomic framework will survive, but in Europe it will be drastically rebuilt.
- (7) The divides between Europe and the U.S., and also among European states, are growing; political alienation in a multipolar world will be the consequence.
- (8) Seen from a cultural-critical perspective, COVID-19 unveils the self-contradictions and, finally, the shallowness of the Western value system.
- (9) Digitization is no longer revolutionary; it enters the stadium of being the new normal.
- (10) Clio, the muse of history, looks to the East. Her view remains unclouded, unchanged, unbiased. 🌸

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Tasks Entrusted to Humanity by the Post-Coronavirus World



SEMIH KORAY

Prof. Dr.
Department of Economics, Bilkent University

Semih Koray received his Ph.D. in Mathematics from Boğaziçi University in 1980. He has several articles published in journals such as Social Choice and Welfare, Review of Economic Design, Journal of Economic Theory, Econometrica and Semigroup Forum. Koray acted as the coordinating editor-in-chief and an associate editor of Review of Economic Design, as the President and Secretary General of the Association of Southern European Economic Theorists, as the Chair of the Turkish Mathematical Olympiad Committee, as a member of the International Mathematical Olympiad Advisory Board, and as the President of the Foundation for Economic Design. Koray's research interests focus on economic and social design, game theory and social choice theory. Koray is currently the Deputy President of the Patriotic Party – Turkey in charge of the International Relations Bureau. He also has several articles on political and social issues published in the monthly periodicals Teori and Bilim ve Ütopya, along with writing in a weekly column on Eurasian Alternative in the daily newspaper Aydınlık. Email: ksemih@bilkent.edu.tr

Social systems that succumb to the pandemic will seek new footholds to hang on to, while those who overcome the pandemic will try to turn their successful deeds into permanent achievements of humanity. The upheaval triggered by the coronavirus will intensify the conflict between the socially advanced and the backward, the rising one and the one that has started to collapse. In developed capitalist countries, it has been the worry about losing social consent, which triggered public intervention in the outbreak. The failure of the USA in its efforts to globalize the world by military force and the financial crisis of 2008 triggered by this failure caused neoliberalism to begin to decline rapidly. The main factor behind neoliberalism's decline was, however, the unavoidable rise of Eurasia, based on statism and development by sharing, rather than the domestic developments in the homeland of neoliberalism. The coronavirus, which has led to a strong sensation of the common destiny of humanity, has brought about the biggest blow to neoliberalism on the ideological plane. The key to success in the combat against the pandemic is seen to be statism that is implemented under the guidance of science and accompanied by social solidarity. While the "invisible hand" remained desperate in the combat against COVID-19, it was the "visible hand" of the "nation-state" that brought success. The currents triggered by the coronavirus pandemic have created a very suitable ground to further limit hegemony. Taking advantage of this ground to consolidate world peace more securely will enable humanity to breathe more comfortably.

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC continues to affect the whole world deeply. The combat against the pandemic covers not only the health sector, but also the entire social system with its economic foundation as well as its superstructure. Therefore, the pandemic also functions as a touchstone that distinguishes between social systems. Moreover, there is no one in the world whose work, income or daily life has not been affected since the beginning of the pandemic. Hence, the coronavirus's testing of social systems takes place on an open stage that everyone watches with intense attention.

The economic crisis triggered by the pandemic has already reached great dimensions. More importantly, in some countries this eco-

nomics crisis is accompanied by a social crisis, where fundamental value judgments are also scrutinized. The coronavirus experience reflects an unprecedentedly wide common ground for humanity. The processes that unify the fate of humanity reveal the "power of solidarity" by destroying the dreams of "salvation alone". COVID-19 is a disease, which may end up with death, and its treatment is not yet known. It is therefore that this experience has lifted the "openness of mind" to a level that goes far beyond that in the usual periods. The coronavirus brought forward the conflict of the "social being" of man with his "individual existence."

The virus, of course, does not make history. It is the human who makes history. Yet, the effect

of the processes triggered by the virus accelerates the change that our world has been going through for quite some time. This effect will continue to also exist after the pandemic to such an extent that it cannot be overlooked by anyone. Social systems that succumb to the pandemic will seek new footholds to hang on to, while those who overcome the pandemic will try to turn their successful deeds into permanent achievements of humanity. The upheaval triggered by the coronavirus will intensify the conflict between the socially advanced and the backward, the rising one and the one that has started to collapse.

"Private-Interest-Focused" Systems versus "Human-Focused" Systems

Different countries' attitudes towards the pandemic have revealed the value attached to the human by the system adopted by those countries. The human's position within the system along with the function attributed to the human has thus become visible with naked eye.

The capitalist health system considers the treatment of a disease as a commodity that can be bought by paying its price. Yet, since the cure of COVID-19 is still unknown, there is no commodity that the capitalist health system can supply to the market in this regard. The production of health care under capitalism is shaped according to profit maximization. The capacity of hospitals and intensive care units is determined in accordance with the purchasing power demanding healthcare, and not the community's health needs. Arranging a temporary capacity increase during the pandemic is regarded as an inefficient investment by the private sector. Therefore, meeting the health needs of the society in a pandemic is something that only the public sector can handle, not the private sector.

In the eyes of the capitalist system, people exist to the extent their "purchasing power" covers. The loss incurred is measured not by the number of people who die in the outbreak, but by the impact of the pandemic on the "private interest", which orients the economy.

Capitalist countries, which have largely privatized the health sector, have thus faltered in face of the coronavirus pandemic. The desperation of some developed capitalist countries in dealing the pandemic is, let alone being strange, an inevitable and natural consequence of having privatized the health system.

The first reaction of the capitalist system against COVID-19 was to let the outbreak alone until "herd immunity" appears. This approach is consistent with the nature of the system. Such consistency is, however, not limited to the viewpoint of healthcare sector. In the eyes of the capitalist system, people exist to the extent their "purchasing power" covers. The loss incurred is measured not by the number of people who die in the outbreak, but by the impact of the pandemic on the "private interest", which orients the economy. Hence, the fact that the proportionally greatest loss during the pandemic in developed capitalist countries was in elderly nursing homes cannot be regarded as the outcome of just a simple and accidental negligence.

However, the "herd immunity" approach has been partially abandoned in many of these countries gradually and protective measures started to get employed to take the pandemic under control. The main reason for this consists of having identified that "letting the pandemic alone" started to shake the social trust in the sys-

tem deeply. Systems that lack “social consent” become unsustainable. In developed capitalist countries, it has been the worry about losing social consent, which triggered public intervention in the outbreak.

The People’s Republic of China, where the pandemic first appeared, took control of the pandemic in a short time with a human-health-based approach and overcame the first wave of the outbreak. There is no doubt that this positive example also played a decisive role in getting the herd immunity approach abandoned. Therefore, China not only protected the health of its own people, but also made an effective contribution to the protection of the health of other peoples with its successful combat against the pandemic.

Even though there was no prior example China could benefit from, following science as a guide, mobilizing all public means without losing time, and establishing an organized social discipline in the implementation of preventive measures lie behind China’s success. By sharing information, materials and health personnel, China has also revealed that it sees the combat against the pandemic as a common problem of humanity that requires solidarity. Some other countries including Turkey have also been successful in the fight against the pandemic to the extent they adhered to these fundamental principles and have contributed to international solidarity.

The coronavirus conducted to revealing the real essence of private-interest-focused systems. The emerging truth, however, does not only pertain to the health system; it is rather concerned with the overall value attached to human by such systems. The social currents triggered by the outbreak are dealing a final blow to neoliberalism, which had already entered a process of rapid collapse. The imperialist system itself is now in search of new footholds that it can hang

on to ideologically. It will not be surprising that we will be facing a new paradigm that replaces neoliberalism in the near future.

The Ideological Collapse of Neoliberalism

The basis of neoliberalism is neoclassical economics. Its perspective concerning man is also derived from neoclassical economics. According to neoclassical economics, man is “homo economicus”. The main feature of homo economicus is not “rationality”, it is “sheer self-interest, accompanied by not caring about others’ fates at all”. Rationality, however, depends upon what the aim is. The rationality of an individual, who finds happiness in others’ happiness, induces an altruistic behavior rather than a selfish one. But homo economicus has no freedom to choose his own preferences. He has to “want to have more of everything” as is imposed upon him by neoclassical economics. If the rest of the world is destroyed, he must be pleased without caring about it, in case the value of the papers he owns on the stock exchange increases by five cents.



Xinhuanet, 2020 Aid packages from the People’s Republic of China

The homo economicus of neoclassical economics reduces the essence of man to the level of passive organisms, which react against the stimuli of prices in a way expected of them. His only freedom consists of "choosing between apple and pear". Yet, since the consumption bundle he will choose is constrained with his budget, his freedom is just as large as his budget.

The "Welfare Theorem" of neoclassical economics, which states that a competitive market equilibrium is efficient, makes three important assumptions. The first is that all economic agents who act as decision-makers belong to the species called homo economicus. Secondly, there should be no public goods in the economy, instead all goods should be "private goods". Thirdly, the larger the scale of the market is, the higher will be the efficiency level. Even if we keep separate to what extent one can talk about perfect competition in a world, where people can list monopoly names more precisely than country names in a questionnaire in the street, the remaining three hypotheses do not fit either the circumstances of the world or the essence of man. This situation left a single remedy to neo-liberalism. It is to "try to fit the world to the theorem if the theorem does not fit the world". The essence of the ne-

oliberal globalization consists of creating a single global market by destroying national states, transforming all public goods into private goods through privatizations, and reducing the human species entirely to homo economicus. In other words, "globalization" is nothing more than an attempt to "adapt the world to the theorem of neoclassical economics".

The failure of the USA in its efforts to globalize the world by military force and the financial crisis of 2008 triggered by this failure caused neoliberalism to begin to decline rapidly. The main factor behind neoliberalism's decline was, however, the unavoidable rise of Eurasia, based on statism and development by sharing, rather than the domestic developments in the homeland of neoliberalism.

The coronavirus, which has led to a strong sensation of the common destiny of humanity, has brought about the biggest blow to neoliberalism on the ideological plane. The key to success in the combat against the pandemic is seen to be statism that is implemented under the guidance of science and accompanied by social solidarity. The solution of every social problem requires the formation of an organized social force that is directed towards the right goal. The goal is identified in the light of science. The creation and mobilization of a social power capable of overcoming the problem can only be achieved through an organization equipped with the necessary skills and tools. While the "invisible hand" remained desperate in the combat against COVID-19, it was the "visible hand" of the "nation-state" that brought success.

Individual Freedom and Collective Freedom

According to neo-liberalism, the social structure does not have an objective existence be-

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yond and above individuals. The basic features are ascribed to the individual and the interaction between individuals is derived from these features. The society is nothing but the sum of individuals who come together as sand particles do. Social welfare is then just the sum of individual welfares. There is no further "public interest" outside and beyond this. "Public pest" individual acts are also included in the total welfare account due to their "contribution to the individual's welfare". Freedom also belongs to the individual since the public does not have an existence beyond the totality of individuals. There is no space for "collective freedom" that belongs to the public. Thus, the concept of freedom is exempted from its social content by disconnecting individual freedom from public interest and collective freedom.

Freedom is "to be able to do". The individual is "as free as he can do". Making history, developing science and art, in summary, all activities that reflect the human essence at its highest level can be realized not with individual power, but only with a collective power based on the accumulation of the entire humanity. That is why freedom is among the concepts whose social content is most eminent.

Freedom, to the contrary of the neoliberal approach, is not an ahistorical concept. Throughout history, the social function of liberty contributing to the development of humanity has been to unleash the potential of doing, not to make the way free to destruction. Democratic revolutions freed man from land slavery and equipped workers with the "freedom to hire or not hire their workforce". Of course, the worker has no choice but to hire his workforce to survive. But the naked force of feudalism is turned into economic force under capitalism. More importantly, the social consequence of this libera-

tion was the raise of the productive forces to an unprecedented level. Freedom served to unleash the economic potential of society.

As is also mentioned earlier, the "doing-component" of freedom granted by neoclassical economics to masses who try to survive on a constrained budget, is as large as the budget. In the age of imperialism, "individual freedom" is clashed with "collective freedom", which has become an indispensable part of human development, and thus mobilized towards destruction, rather than towards doing. During the imperialist campaign to demolish nation-states and to dissolve the nations of the Oppressed and Developing World, the function assigned to "individual freedoms" has always been to clash with the nation-state and divide the nation.

The collective measures that were implemented to control the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Wuhan, when the pandemic was limited to China, have been widely slandered in the West as a "severe violation of individual freedoms". However, after the pandemic gained a global character and China took control of the pandemic in a short time, the practices in China have become "a handbook against the pandemic" everywhere. Today, a struggle against COVID-19 is a "collective freedom struggle". In all countries of the world, those who violate the collective measures taken to combat the virus under the banner of "individual freedoms" are no longer considered as "libertarian", but as "defeatist".

It is extremely important that the relationship between individual freedom and social freedom is handled properly. This question should not be tackled by an ahistorical approach, but within the framework of the needs brought by social development to the agenda of humanity. The virus outbreak has led the function of the

nation-state and the relationship between the nation-state and democracy to come forward. This function and relationship constitute the most suitable framework for the discussing of the question of freedom.

Nation-State and Democracy

Democracy, like freedom, is not an ahistorical concept. Plato is the founder of idealist philosophy. He is the inventor of the "Idea"s, after which this philosophical approach is named. But his greatest contribution to the history of thought is perhaps his identification that the "idea"s -as reflections of absoluteness- do not exist on earth and are thus carried outside of life. Democracy is not an "idea" outside of life, but it is a form of social order, whose formation and transformation are subject to historical circumstances.

What makes social development a subject of science is that it is subject to objective laws. In social sciences, the criterion of truth is testing against objective reality as in natural sciences. Therefore, the laws of social development are determined by science, not by election. Hence, there is an objective yardstick of what is socially advanced and what is backward. But there is another fact that is just as important as this. It is that knowing what is advanced and what is backward does not suffice to replace the backward by the advanced.

There is also an important difference, which distinguishes social sciences from natural sciences. In natural sciences, the subject is the human and the object is the nature. On the other hand, society forms both the subject and the object of social change. History begins with the division of society into classes. While some classes constitute the social power of progress, others stand as obstacles to development. To materialize a social

transformation requires the creation of a sufficiently strong and target-oriented social power.

Today, the main obstacle to social development is the imperialist system. The nations of the Oppressed and Developing World, on the other hand, constitute the main engine of social progress. The oppressed nations can realize their development and advance their nation-building process to the extent they limit imperialism and make it retreat. Nation-states are the organizational means that nations possess to achieve this goal. One of the most striking proofs of this is that the "neoliberal globalization" attack of imperialism focused on "destroying nation-states and dissolving nations". The rise of Eurasia constituting an alternative to the imperialist system was realized as an outcome of the resistance of the nation-states. Imperialism is capitalism endowed with an armed state. The success in making the way free to development by overcoming imperialism requires a struggle organized at the level of a state.

On the other hand, the nation-state can fulfill its duty only if it becomes the genuinely organized form of the nation. The yardstick of the democratic content of a nation-state is its ability to unleash and mobilize the nation's social potential at a maximal level. Strengthening this ability is only possible by increasing the level of the masses not only on the economic plane, but in all spheres of life. In other words, the main factor to reinforce the democratic content of the nation-state is a "cultural revolution", which should be continued uninterruptedly.

The masses learn by experiencing in their own practice. This process requires peace of mind along with an atmosphere that enables making comparisons. Democracy provides the breadth and flexibility required for the success of this process through individual freedoms.

Terrorism and imposition form an obstacle to “appropriation by internalizing”, which lies at the core of the learning process. Terrorism employed by the imperialist system as a battering ram also aims to deprive the masses of the experience of learning. This is because the masses deprived of this experience do not turn into an effective social power.

Neoliberalism is the philosophy of clashing individual freedom with collective freedom. However, individual freedoms do not form an alternative to collective freedom; they, to the contrary, provide a tool to reinforce collective freedom.

Neoliberalism is the philosophy of clashing individual freedom with collective freedom. However, individual freedoms do not form an alternative to collective freedom; they, to the contrary, provide a tool to reinforce collective freedom. Besides, the stronger collective freedom becomes, the wider will be the area of individual freedoms. The destruction of collective freedom is the function ascribed to individual freedoms by neoliberalism. According to the dictionary of neoliberalism, “authoritarianism” is the name given not to “lack of freedom”, but to the “subordination of individual freedoms to collective freedom”.

Each state represents the “power of sanction”, in other words, “authority”. The problem is not the existence of this enforcement force, but whether it is used in the interests of the nation. Democracy is the tool to mobilize the nation's power in line with her social interests.

Social power requires social discipline. Democracy is not the antithesis of social discipline, but it is a tool to reinforce social discipline on a

voluntary basis. Voluntary discipline can only be achieved through the internalization of the social goals by the nation. Creating the opportunity for a nation to learn in her own practice and maintaining a cultural revolution, which aims to raise the level of the nation, uninterruptedly are, therefore, amidst the indispensables of democracy.



(Xinhuanet,2020)

Contemporary democracy entered the agenda of humanity through the democratic revolutions against feudalism. What made individual freedoms possible was the collective freedom that democratic revolutions brought to the nation by destroying feudalism. Today, the main obstacle to the collective freedom of oppressed and developing nations is imperialism. The more nation-states limit the pressure and control of imperialism, the wider becomes the area of the nations' collective freedom. For a nation being crushed under the feet of imperialism, individual freedoms will be out of the question.

It is common to all social systems, which exhaust their historical life, that they lose the ability to do and turn into a mere destruction power. Today, the imperialist system can contin-

ue its existence based on the power of destroying rather than doing. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that neoliberalism is trying to turn individual freedom into a tool for destroying collective freedom by falsifying its content.

In the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, every nation is left alone with its own state in ensuring her safety in health and other areas. The pandemic has tested not only the skill level and the tools the nation-state owns in dealing with the outbreak, but also its ability to mobilize the society. Successful countries are those that have achieved voluntary social discipline in implementing the measures taken.

The prominence the nation-state gained with the pandemic has also brought to the agenda the question of the content to be assigned to contemporary democracy. The nation-states of the oppressed and developing nations are the main organizations these nations own in protecting and developing their collective freedoms against imperialism. That is why the perfection of these nation-states by transforming them into genuinely organized forms of the nation is of decisive importance for the future of humanity.

Science is the Truest Guide in Life

Science has also taken its place among the rising values during the pandemic. Everyone hopes that science will find the treatment and vaccine for COVID-19. Science has gained prestige by rising to the "savior" status in the eyes of humanity. But there is another crucial issue that the pandemic brought to the agenda regarding science. It is the vital importance that the "immediate and open sharing of scientific findings" carries.

In the process of globalization, privatization also covered information. Using the nomenclature of neoliberalism, the essence of the

"Information Age" is nothing but the "privatization" of information. The effort was to reduce information to a private good, which only the purchaser is entitled to use, by exempting information from its public features. Therefore, trendy information of the Information Age is information that immediately gets converted into money or military or political power, i.e., information such that there is someone who is ready to buy it. Knowledge whose return is to occur in the longer run is discredited no matter how large that return might be, since nobody wants to pay the "storage" expenses. This approach struck the heaviest blow to basic natural and social sciences. Moreover, in the short term as well, the profit-oriented production of information acts as the biggest obstacle to sharing information. In fact, information is eminent among the products, which increase as you share. It is only through the re-expropriation of knowledge that the produced information becomes "the property of the entire humanity".

It is not only because of the struggle against COVID-19 that science was located higher in the agenda as a rising value during the pandemic. Government interventions to control the pandemic required a holistic approach and planning covering all areas of life with economy at the top. The "miraculous" achievements in economic and social development brought about by planning a mixed economy and social life under the leadership of the state had previously been carried to the world agenda by the Chinese experience. A prerequisite for the success of such a holistic approach is the guidance of science.

Humanity has come to the end of the spontaneous development of production relations with capitalism. Capitalist production relations were not born as an outcome of design. These relationships were formed spontaneously within

feudalism due to the driving force caused by the need for expansion in production. But socialist production relations do not arise within the capitalist system by themselves. Today, all countries that are in the stage completing their national democratic revolutions and opening up to socialism are supposed to find the way of development that suits their initial conditions, pave this path and create the means necessary to progress on this path. Such a development can only be achieved by drawing science to the center of life. Today, as technological development has become impossible without a scientific knowledge basis, so also has permanent social progress that is not based on science.

Knowledge has been central to productive forces throughout history. With the Enlightenment, democratic revolutions turned science into a source of social power as well. With the formation of social sciences, science has now become the main tool for constructing the future. Today, the creation of social power of development is dependent upon getting the goals set in the light of science appropriated by the masses. "Making science the truest guide in life" by drawing it to the center of life can only be materialized by letting the masses live these experiences.

The USA's Hegemony Ground Slips Rapidly Under Its Feet

One of the most important effects of the coronavirus pandemic is the blow it has dealt to the hegemony of the USA. The USA had the dream to turn the 21st century into an American Century after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, this dream did not last long. Attempts to consolidate the dominance of the world at gunpoint by taking advantage of America's unmatched military superiority have failed. The goal of the

USA's armed power-based political hegemony was to get its financial capital dominate production all over the world without hindrance. In this way, the coverage of collecting financial tributes would expand and its political hegemony would be reinforced thanks to the domination of financial capital. America, which was left as the only "superpower", started in the 1990's to invent new financial capital instruments and to expand their coverage in an unfettered way. This led the USA to think that it had found a way to "consume without producing" and to "gain without working".

Keeping this "recirculating machine" work permanently depended upon America's ability to maintain the perception that it was the only force that is "able to get everything it targets" and "capable of shaping the future." The military failures of the USA started to erode this perception rapidly. The joint effect of this erosion and the unfettered practices in the financial sphere caused the financial crisis of 2008 to break out in America. More importantly, in the meantime the center of production in the world had shifted from the West to the East. Eurasia, with China at its the center, was on the rise, which could not be controlled by the US through financial capital. Moreover, this rise based on statism, populism and development by sharing had already started to represent an alternative to the imperialist system in the eyes of the whole world.

The United States itself is deeply divided today in an unprecedented way since its foundation except for the American Civil War. It is the collapse of US hegemony which underlies this dividedness. America is seeking to rebuild its hegemony, but cannot find any remedy to do so. This is what deepens the internal dividedness of the USA.

Hegemony requires dominance not only over the Oppressed and Developing World, but also over other developed capitalist countries. The decline of the USA and the rise of Eurasia strengthened the centrifugal forces within the Atlantic System and induced a tendency to approach Eurasia. The struggles led against the US hegemony on three different planes in the world had started before the coronavirus pandemic and also continue today. Syria's resistance and Turkey's military operations in West Asia are armed struggles against the plans and armed forces, which are referred to by the US as "their land forces in the Middle East". China is leading the struggle against America on the economic plane. The political struggle against US hegemony is also getting stronger day by day in Europe.

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The US administration cannot lead its own states in the struggle against the coronavirus pandemic, let alone acting as the leader of the Atlantic System or the world. Conflicts between states and the central government as well as those between states came to the surface and got deepened during the pandemic. It is neither leadership nor solidarity, which left its mark concerning the relations of the USA with Europe during the pandemic. What will be remembered in that regard is that the US Government seized the protective health material belonging to European countries while it was passing through its own ports.

When the countries of the European Union were left alone in combating the pandemic, they started to remember the location of their national borders, which they had forgotten for a long time. In Italy, who suffered severe losses dur-

ing the outbreak, flags of the European Union, which did not care about Italians, were taken down and instead the flags of China and Russia, who ran to their aid, were drawn.

In fact, this process is an indication of the extent to which the "soft power" of the USA – an indispensable aspect for American hegemony – is eroded. Anti-racist demonstrations that encroach all over America and spread to Europe after the murder of African American George Floyd by police, reveal the dimensions of this erosion. The United States, who had condemned China's quarantine measures against the pandemic as a severe violation of fundamental freedoms, is now declaring a curfew to suppress anti-racist demonstrations and summoning the army to the streets.

The effects of the outbreak have strengthened the ground for international cooperation in the fight against hegemony. The 20th century has always witnessed that "wars lead to revolutions". The 21st century, on the other hand, is a candidate to witness that "revolutions prevent wars".

Both the success of the People's Republic of China in its struggle against the pandemic and the solidarity it has shown by sharing information, materials and health personnel with other countries have enhanced this country's worldwide prestige. The USA, who sees this prestige as a great threat against its hegemony, has launched an anti-Chinese campaign to overshadow this success. In America, perhaps a more intensive effort is being spent to "showing that China is responsible for the spread of the virus to the world" than to take the pandemic under control. A diplomatic campaign is being carried out on the international plane to establish a "virus alliance" against China.

The effects of the outbreak have strengthened the ground for international cooperation in the fight against hegemony. The 20th century has always witnessed that "wars lead to revolutions". The 21st century, on the other hand, is a candidate to witness that "revolutions prevent wars". The world wars of the last century were imperialist wars to re-share the world. If a new world war is to come, that will be a war led by the imperialist system headed by the US against the Developing World. What will deter such a war is to make the USA see the impossibility of winning it from the beginning.

The USA currently lacks the power to pull the Atlantic System into such a war. NATO is described by its own members as an organization whose "brain death" has already taken place. The rising trend in Europe and other developed capitalist countries outside the USA is "approaching Eurasia against the US hegemony". America has failed in its attempts to damage the relations between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. In fact, in the USA's latest National Defense Strategy Document announced in December 2017, China and Russia are both included in the "enemy front". The reason for this is that the US has set its main goal as slowing down its decline and creating circumstances which will allow it to get on a rise again.

This situation should not lead the Oppressed and Developing World to lessen its efforts against hegemony. The currents triggered by the coronavirus pandemic have created a very suitable ground to further limit hegemony. Taking advantage of this ground to consolidate world peace more securely will enable humanity to breathe more comfortably.

The Economic Crisis Caused by the Coronavirus Outbreak

The pandemic has dealt a great blow to the economy all over the world. Unlike the crises arising

from within the economy itself, production and consumption shrank simultaneously. The shrinkage in production resulted from precautions taken against the pandemic along with the break of supply chains due to the global nature of the outbreak. The shrinkage in consumption resulted from the rapid increase in unemployment accompanied by a decline in incomes, as well as from the service industry and transportation getting largely disabled during the pandemic.

The problem of countries' self-sufficiency has also come forward since international trade got significantly interrupted during the outbreak. Insufficiencies arose in the provision of health supplies and some other basic items. The economic crisis will not be overcome by taking the pandemic under control and returning to the usual daily life. In fact, the relationship of the crisis with the social system will occupy the agenda in an even more pressing way.

In private-interest-focused systems, economic operation is completely shaped by market forces. Production is subject to consumption demand and growth is consumption-oriented. The line of development of the country's production power is determined by the quantitative and qualitative content of consumption demands. Consumption-oriented growth renders the place, where the goods are produced, unimportant. For what matters is not the origin, but the price of the good. In case a good can be imported more cheaply from another country, its domestic production becomes unnecessary. Consumption-oriented growth makes the nation-state fade away. It creates incentives for sources getting allocated to consumption rather than savings and investment. So long as borrowing is sustainable, borrowing acts as a means of growth until it becomes unsustainable.

Consumption demand reflects the tendency of those who possess purchasing power, not the actual needs of society. Everyone is included

in total demand to the extent of his purchasing power. Therefore, consumption-oriented growth has a discriminatory rather than unifying effect on different sections of the nation.

It is impossible to build a production-oriented economy in the absence of the planning, participating and guiding leadership of the state. The point of departure of a production-oriented economy is public interest and not private interest. The quantitative and qualitative development of production power is planned in order to meet the needs of the country and society. The needs are determined by the combined effect of ensuring public safety in certain main areas and promoting social welfare. Private incentives and markets are employed by subjecting them to public interest. The balance between savings and consumption is established in a way that unleashes the nation's production potential at a maximal level. In order to prevent unemployment, a suitable range of technologies is used in production. Acquisition and development of necessary technologies in specific priority areas are planned including the training of qualified workforce needed.

In the post-coronavirus periods, there will be state interventions to overcome the crisis in both developed capitalist countries and developing countries. But these interventions will gather around two different axes.

State interventions in developed capitalist countries will aim to restore capitalist markets by expanding consumption. In fact, there is no doubt that the system will try to make “flexible work”, which is introduced as a temporary application during the pandemic, permanent to the extent possible. Ensuring a friction-free operation of the labor market through flexible work is a goal that the capitalist system has been dreaming of for quite a long time.

On the other hand, the outbreak has shaken the trust in the private interest focused system. Besides, there is also a social opposition

that started to rise against this system before the pandemic. Therefore, while the capitalist system will try to get out of the crisis, social opposition will simultaneously take its place on the stage as well. In fact, the anti-racist demonstrations that spread to different states of the USA and then to Europe after the murder of George Floyd by the police in the US should be regarded as a precursor of this opposition.

The coronavirus outbreak has brought forth the problem of self-sufficiency concerning basic needs and security in each country. The need for self-sufficiency is naturally accompanied by the production-oriented economy approach. The experience lived during the pandemic along with the driving force of objective necessities will strengthen the production-oriented economy approach in developing countries. Developing countries can continue their development only if they build a production-oriented mixed economy led by the state. But the success of this process depends on the formation and implementation of a holistic program. It should be expected that the differences existing in the developing world in this respect will be reflected in a more accentuated way on the developments in the forthcoming period.

Conclusion

The coronavirus crisis delivered a final blow to neoliberalism, which already began to decline rapidly as the USA started to lose its hegemony power. The imperialist system has already begun to search for new footholds to hang on to in place of neoliberalism on the ideological plane. It would not be wrong to predict that the search for a new paradigm will be affected by both the social opposition that will rise within the capitalist system and the struggle of the Developing World on the international plane.

Values such as the human-focused nation-state, science, statism, populism and devel-

oping by sharing, which have risen during the virus crisis, should be expected to lead to more permanent gains after the pandemic in the Developing World. This is because these values constitute the building blocks of the only way out of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, as they also coincide with the objective interests of the Developing World. Moreover, the decline of the US hegemony provides the Developing World with a wide range of freedom to maintain these values. As regards Turkey, turning the experience we are going through into a permanent gain will be possible by reaching the aim of the "Producers' National Government" that will put the 'Program of Production Revolution' into practice .

Globalization is the derivative of neoliberalism on the stage of international relations. The coronavirus crisis has put an end to globalization along with neoliberalism. This situation provides a suitable ground for organizing an international cooperation, whose main actors are nation-states. This cooperation should be of such a nature that each country trusts its own power, while it also has the opportunity to benefit from the international cooperation to consolidate its own power. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, first introduced by Zhou Enlai in the 20th century and later adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, will form the basis of such international cooperation. These principles are "mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference into each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence".

The "Belt and Road Initiative" led by the People's Republic of China provides an infrastructure to Eurasia, which will enable a rich international economic interaction. This infrastructure creates a suitable ground for each country to benefit from international cooperation in line with its specific development path and strategy. This kind of cooperation will not be a "new type of globalization",

since cooperation will not make nation-states fade away, but it will, to the contrary, strengthen them and cooperation itself will develop further as nation-states become stronger.

The construction of this kind of international cooperation should be expected to bring important political results along. It will bring Europe and other developed capitalist countries closer to Asia, serve to isolate the hegemony pursuing USA and thus force it to normalize its relations with other countries.

It is vital for the future of humanity to maintain the guidance of science that has gained prestige all over the world during the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. In our age, the nation-states of the Developing World constitute the main organized forces of social development. It will only be possible for nation-states to fulfill their duties by turning into "visible hands" that will replace capitalism's "invisible hand". What the "visible hand" will need most is to replace spontaneity by the guidance of science. Finally, transforming the nation-state into a genuinely organized form of the nation itself will be possible to the extent the nation appropriates the guiding role of science within its own experience.

The rising values in the struggle against the coronavirus outbreak can once more be summarized as follows:

- a nation's confidence in its own power -Nationalism;
- republic is the form of state that ensures that a nation-state is genuinely the nation's organization -Republicanism;
- to subordinate private interest to public interest -Populism;
- the leading role attributed to the state in economic and social development -Statism;
- the guidance of science -Laicism;
- the need to maintain economic and social development continually -Revolutionism.

These principles are the basic principles of the Atatürk Revolution. 🌸

COVID-19 in Historical Perspective: How Disaster Capitalism Fabricates a Fear-Managed World Order?



EFE CAN GÜRCAN

Asst. Prof.
Istinye University, Department of International Relations

ÖMER ERSİN KAHRAMAN

Asst. Prof.
Istinye University, Department of Sociology

Efe Can Gürcan is Associate Dean of Research and Development for the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences at İstinye University. He is also Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and a faculty member in the Department of International Relations, İstinye University. He serves as Research Associate at the University of Manitoba's Geopolitical Economy Research Group. Gürcan completed his undergraduate education in International Relations at Koç University. He received his master's degree in International Studies from the University of Montréal and earned his PhD in Sociology from Simon Fraser University. He speaks English, French, Spanish and Turkish. His publications include three books as well as more than 30 articles and book chapters on international politics, area studies and globalization, with a geographical focus on Latin America and the Middle East. His latest book is Multipolarization, South-South Cooperation and the Rise of Post-Hegemonic Governance. Email: efe.gurcan@istinye.edu.tr

Ömer Ersin Kahraman holds a BS degree in Industrial Engineering and a Minor in Philosophy of Science and Logic from Middle East Technical University. He obtained his master's degree in Science and Technology Policy Studies from METU (graduated top of his cohort in 2010). During his BS and MS studies, he took a keen interest in the problem of consumerism. In 2011, he started his PhD dissertation at Rennes 1 University in order to investigate the problematic relationship between rationalism and the excessive consumption phenomenon in western societies. In 2015, he successfully defended his thesis, "Consumable Freedom" under the supervision of Prof Catherine Colliot-Thélène. He obtained his PhD degree with the mention "Très Honorable" (High Honors). After working as a high school philosophy teacher for a year at Académie de Poitiers between 2016 and 2017, he joined the Istinye University family. Dr. Kahraman specializes in consumer society, the sociology and psychology of consumption, ideology, political philosophy, political economy, and the Frankfurt School. He has published several articles featured in national and international journals. His French and English are fluent. He also speaks German at an intermediate level. Email: omer.kahraman@istinye.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may have led to the most significant public health emergency of the 21st century, with enormous implications for the global economy and politics. Again this backdrop, the present article aims to bridge the gap between the “disaster capitalism” approach and the study of “cultures of fear”, to provide a systematic explanation of how the capitalist world order undergoes profound transformations. We argue that the cultivation and diffusion of a culture of fear erected on world-historical disastrous events serve as an important medium for the transformation of the world order. In this context, we draw on the ways in which neoliberalism was globally instituted as the organizing principle of the US-led world order in a political-economic and cultural context constructed around disasters. The focus will be on emblematic cases that illustrate the symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and the culture of fear as a constitutive element of the US-centered world order: the Pinochet coup in Chile and Argentina’s military dictatorship era, “shock therapy” economics in Russia, and the US war on terror following 9/11. Our inferences from these cases will then be used to perform an anticipatory analysis of how the COVID-19 pandemic may give way to a world-historical transformation based on a rapidly spreading culture of fear. In the Western world, right-wing populist leaders weaponize COVID-19 in the expectation of mobilizing popular support and marshaling all resources to restore the legitimacy of global capitalism. In doing so, they also resort to Sinophobia and demonize China as a “common enemy” to be geopolitically isolated, in the hope of reversing the multipolarization of world politics. We observe that increasing Sinophobia can also be exploited to radically transform the division of labor in global capitalism with the pretext of “bringing manufacturing jobs back home”. The rise of social isolationism – due to mass fear of pandemics and authoritarian government practices under surveillance capitalism – is likely to disperse attempts at popular mobilization. While the justification of surveillance for public emergency may perpetuate a stronger form of surveillance capitalism, it is also possible that the proliferation of distance-working technologies will lead to a deep transformation in global labor regimes and an unprecedented growth in the “precariat”.

Keywords: COVID-19; cultures of fear; disaster capitalism; multipolarization; precariat

THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) may have led to the most significant public health emergency of the 21st century, with enormous implications for the global economy and politics. Some recent forecasts suggest that the COVID pandemic is likely to plunge the world economy into a deep-seated crisis whose consequences will be even worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s (Caşın, 2020). These forecasts were recently validated by Gita Gopinath, the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who portrayed the current situation as “the worst recession since the Great

Depression, and far worse than the Global Financial Crisis” (Gopinath, 2020). What is more, Western leaders’ recent statements may well be interpreted as early signs of a rapidly accelerating geopolitical turbulence. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has described the COVID-19 pandemic as the greatest threat since World War II. The European Union (EU), already suffering from heavy blows dealt by the 2009 European debt crisis and Brexit (Britain Exit), has been accused by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez of abandoning his country. For similar reasons, Italian mayors have ripped down EU flags and

politicians participated in popular protests targeting the EU's indifferent attitude. Meanwhile, Italy and Spain welcomed generous medical aid delivered by China and Russia. Italy, as one of the top troop contributors to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), went so far as to host Russian military personnel operating near a US military base (Braw, 2020; Clark, 2020; Smith, 2020).

These cracks within the Atlantic Alliance seem to be accompanied by a rising Sinophobia. French President Emmanuel Macron openly targeted China with his statement, "There are clearly things that have happened that we don't know about" (Financial Times, 2020). In his turn, US President Donald Trump publicly supported claims that the pandemic originated in a lab in Wuhan and went on to proclaim that he had decided to defund the World Health Organization (WHO) for its "insidious relations with China" (Chomsky, 2020). He insisted on branding COVID-19 as the "Chinese disease" (The Conversation, 2020). Similarly, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo directed open threats at China: "There will be a time when the people responsible will be held accountable ... There will be a time for assigning blame" (Bild, 2020). Pompeo went so far as to name China "as the most dangerous adversary for the United States and for all Western governments". He added: "We're going to do the right things by building up our military" (Finnegan & Margolin, 2020). British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab joined the chorus by declaring, "We'll have to ask the hard questions about how it came about and how it couldn't have been stopped earlier ... We can't have business as usual after this crisis" (France 24, 2020).

Against this backdrop, the present article aims to bridge the gap between the "disaster

capitalism" approach and the study of "cultures of fear", to provide a systematic explanation of how the capitalist world order undergoes profound transformations. The "capitalist world order" refers in this context to a system of global governance that institutionalizes a status quo of capitalist-imperialist cooperation and expansion under the leadership of an imperialist power or group of powers. The main argument in this article is that the cultivation and diffusion of a culture of fear erected on world-historical disastrous events serve as an important medium for the transformation of the world order. In this context, we will draw on the ways in which neoliberalism was globally instituted as the organizing principle of the US-led world order in a political-economic and cultural context constructed around disasters. The focus will be on emblematic cases that illustrate the symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and the culture of fear as a constitutive element of the US-centered world order: the Pinochet coup in Chile and Argentina's military dictatorship era, "shock therapy" economics in Russia, and the US war on terror following 9/11. Our inferences from these cases will then be used to perform an anticipatory analysis of how the COVID-19 pandemic may give way to a world-historical transformation based on a rapidly spreading culture of fear. We will rely on the method of process tracing, which uses logical reasoning by reference to major events of historical importance, as well as the preferences, goals, values, and perceptions of global actors involved in these events (Venesson, 2008; Bennett, 2010; Collier, 2011).

Our article is structured as follows. The first section will conceptually explain the symbiotic relationship between disaster capitalism, neoliberalism, and the culture of fear. The second section will be devoted to case studies that show-

case the said relationship. In the final section, we will recontextualize our research within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disaster Capitalism and the Culture of Fear

The term “disaster capitalism” was coined by Naomi Klein (2007), who based her conceptual framework on the critique of neoliberalism. In her lexicon, neoliberalism refers to a policy paradigm defined by three landmark demands: privatization, government deregulation and deep cuts to social spending. Her polemic against neoliberalism focuses especially on Milton Friedman, one of its most prominent neoliberal thinkers. Reflecting on Hurricane Katrina – one of the most devastating natural disasters in US history – Milton Friedman recommended the US government to dismantle its public education system by extending the network of charter schools and distributing vouchers to households for food access. Ultimately, Klein shows that the Katrina disaster provided an opportunity for the Bush administration to implement Friedman’s neoliberal recommendations with action (Klein, 2007). Based on similar cases, Klein advances the argument that global capitalism instrumentalizes man-made or natural disasters (e.g. military coups, terrorist incidents, economic crises, wars, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes) for the sake of advancing its own agenda of renewal and reconstruction. According to her, such disorienting disasters help to suspend public debate and suppress democratic practices. This allows capitalists to exploit the window of opportunity opened by traumatic shocks (Klein, 2007).

Undoubtedly, capitalism cannot succeed in rejuvenating itself merely through top-down policy impositions. It needs to secure popular consent from the ground up. In this

regard, we believe that the study of “cultures of fear” would be helpful for a deeper understanding of the inner mechanism of disaster capitalism. A culture of fear is a system of beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns rooted in negative emotions such as fear and terror, which can be used as “affective tools of government that come into being as a modus of population management deployed by military, political, and administrative actors” (Linke & Smith, 2009: 5). It feeds off a strong sense of existential insecurity that inflates the meaning of harm and fosters a mood of mistrust. This is facilitated by simplistic blaming of the media and the propagation of alarmist reactions meshed with catastrophic rhetoric (Furedi, 2018). In certain cases, the end result is the formation and consolidation of an imagined community united against the threat of the Other, whoever or whatever that might be. In this way, global capitalism can easily deploy a securocratic language around disastrous events to emotionally mobilize popular support and execute its own programmatic agenda conducive to large-scale transformations in the world order (Linke & Smith, 2009). Ultimately, fear becomes “a central figure of global social life” (Linke & Smith, 2009: 4).

Neoliberalism and Disaster Capitalism in Action

Chile is widely regarded as the first laboratory of neoliberalism: the later structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were modeled on the Chilean experiment. In fact, the case of Chile perfectly reveals how the roots of neoliberalism formed in world-historical disasters are constitutive of the US-centered world order. Chile’s socialist president Salvador Allende was overthrown in 1973 by a military coup led by

Augusto Pinochet and actively supported by the United States. In 1975, Chile transitioned to neoliberal capitalism under the guidance of the Chicago Boys: neoliberal economic advisors, most of whom were trained at prominent American institutions such as at the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Klein, 2007). Chile's neoliberal restructuring owed its power to wide-scale social pacification: the military junta cracked down on opposition forces and inculcated a culture of fear, ensuring compliance with neoliberal shock therapy measures. Estimates suggest that in the Pinochet era, more than 3,000 people disappeared and tens of thousands were jailed, tortured, and/or exiled. This repressive environment strengthened Pinochet's hand in reducing import tariffs and social expenditure, abolishing price controls, carrying out mass privatization, and debilitating unions. Ultimately, Pinochet's shock therapy exposed Chile to deep recessions in 1975 and 1982, and contributed to extreme levels of inequality. Chile's Gini coefficient rose from around 0.45 in the mid-1970s to over 0.6 by the end of the 1980s (Taylor, 2006). Moreover, the replication of the Chilean model in the rest of the region resulted in disaster. The number of people in poverty in Latin America grew from 118 million in 1980 to 196 million in 1990. The region's total foreign debt increased from US\$31.3 billion in 1972 to US\$430 billion in the late 1980s, and US\$750 billion by the 2000s. In the period 1981–2000, average annual economic growth was only 1.6% in Argentina, 2.1% in Brazil, and 2.7% in Mexico (Arestis & Saad Filho 2007; Saad Filho, 2007).

The mobilization of fear through military coups was also instrumental in the case of Argentina's transition to neoliberalism under US influence. Argentina stepped into a long era of

military dictatorship when Isabel Perón's government was overthrown by General Jorge Rafael Videl as part of Operation Condor, a US-backed campaign of state and paramilitary terror in support of right-wing dictatorships in Latin America. This period – also called the Dirty War era (1976–1983) – led to the disappearance of 30,000 people, along with other human rights violations including child kidnappings (Hellinger, 2014).



Salvador Allende at the meeting of the Workers' United Center of Chile. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_%C3%9Anica_de_Trabajadores_de_

This environment of public fear was used by the military junta to impose neoliberal restructuring on the Argentine economy (Klein, 2007). In 1976, thanks to US support for the military dictatorship, Argentina was granted “the largest loan ever to a Latin American country” (Cooney, 2007). In line with the newly adopted neoliberal agenda, the country initiated a radical deindustrialization policy that accentuated agroindustry in favor of the landed oligarchy. This process went hand in hand with financial deregulation and the suppression of unions. Argentina witnessed a record increase in foreign debt, from US\$9.7 billion in 1976 to over US\$45 billion in 1983 (Cooney, 2007).

A world-historical disaster of an even greater magnitude took place in Boris Yeltsin’s Russia in 1991–1999, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin took advantage of the environment of fear and confusion created by the disintegration of the Soviet Union to launch a shock therapy campaign with the aim of liberalizing the Russian economy. The campaign started in 1992, with the IMF’s active support: Yeltsin made a hasty move to liberalize prices and trade, which was followed by mass privatizations. An important side effect of these privatizations was the emergence of a new stratum of Russian oligarchs feeding off rising corruption in the Yeltsin era (Bedirhanoglu, 2004). The shock therapy resulted in average real pay falling by almost 50% in the period 1990–1995. Organized crime grew to such an extent that up to 80% of private banks and businesses in major cities were involved with “mafia” organizations (Kotz & Weir, 2007). In the long run, excessive liberalization and indebtedness exposed Russia to the negative effects of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. This eventually marked the end of the Yeltsin era and

paved the way for Vladimir Putin’s rise to power (Baiman, Boushey, & Dawn, 2000: 210-217).

The post-9/11 conjuncture is an important example of how the world order is shaped by the symbiotic relationship between disaster capitalism and the neoliberal culture of fear (Mendieta, 2011).

The collective trauma created by these attacks served as a historic opportunity for the United States to launch the “war on terror”: a strategic campaign for restructuring the world order in pursuit of its imperialist agenda.

On September 11, 2001, four passenger planes were hijacked by terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda. Two of the planes crashed into the World Trade Center complex and the third into the Pentagon, while the fourth plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The attacks claimed nearly 3,000 lives and resulted in more than 25,000 injuries. The collective trauma created by these attacks served as a historic opportunity for the United States to launch the “war on terror”: a strategic campaign for restructuring the world order in pursuit of its imperialist agenda. As such, “the Bush administration outsourced, with no public debate, many of the most sensitive and core functions of government – from providing health care to soldiers, to interrogating prisoners, to gathering and ‘data mining’ information on all of us” (Klein, 2007: 12). The enacting of the USA Patriot Act enabled the government to suppress civil liberties and enhance the influence of the US military- and prison-industrial complexes. Mass surveillance and incarceration thus became the norm (Klein, 2007; Mendieta, 2011). The driving agen-

da was not limited to reasserting the waning importance of US interventionism in the absence of the Soviet Union and reordering the Greater Middle East with the aim of inhibiting the rise of potential US rivals in Eurasia. The United States was also interested in refuelling its stagnating neoliberal economy based on a military stimulus. This was particularly seen in the US occupation of Afghanistan since 2001, the War on Iraq, and other interventions, for example in Libya and Syria as part of the so-called Arab “Spring”.

In summary, these cases demonstrate how disastrous events such as terrorist attacks, state failures, and military coups lead to large-scale transformations that open up new possibilities for neoliberal restructuring on a global scale. Disaster-led crises sweep away the conditions for healthy public deliberation; this process is facilitated by an authoritarian environment of fear and confusion. Such an environment is easily exploited by capitalist interests in favor of an agenda of renewal and reconstruction. In particular, the post-9/11 conjuncture strongly exemplifies the ways in which disaster capitalism reproduces itself by deploying an Islamophobic culture of fear, where highly inflated and alarmist reactions help to reorganize the world order in line with the catastrophic rhetoric of the war on terror.

COVID-19 and the Collective Mobilization of Fear

The above cases can give us valuable insights into the possible ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic may pave the way for a paradigm shift in the world order. Worthy of mention in this regard is Giorgio Agamben’s thesis of a “state of exception”. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Italian philosopher Agamben assert-

ed that the danger of the disease was highly exaggerated. According to him, the pandemic is a socially constructed phenomenon, which helps governments to create a state of exception in deploying extraordinary measures that might have been difficult to implement under normal circumstances. In other words, Agamben claimed that governments purposefully exaggerated the risks of the pandemic in order to implement new social control devices and methods (Agamben, 2020). Though he may have underestimated the lethal potential of the pandemic, there seems to be some value in taking his “state of exception” thesis seriously. The pandemic of COVID-19 has great potential to be used by capitalist forces to reinvent the capitalist system or postpone the collapse of global capitalism by exploiting widespread anxiety and panic. By creating a culture of fear that feeds off the COVID-19 disaster, global capitalism can potentially incapacitate anti-systemic forces through increased use of new surveillance technologies and enhanced social-distancing strategies.



Photo by Cottonbro from "Pexels"
"Fear of Coronavirus"

It is known that infectious diseases can trigger negative psychological effects such as hypochondriasis and anxiety (Duncan et al., 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception to this psychological peril. A case in point is a survey by Wang and his team, which reveals the psychological damage that the pandemic caused in China during its early phases. In this study, 16.5% of respondents showed moderate to severe depression symptoms while 28.8% of them experienced anxiety problems and 8.1% had high stress levels (Wang et al., 2020). Similarly, in a survey conducted during the lockdown period in Italy, 17.3% of respondents said they had depression while 20.8% admitted having anxiety problems (Rossi et al., 2020). In a similar vein, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the people of Italy to intense stress, closely associated with high levels of uncertainty as to how long it will take for Italy to return to normal and whether the pandemic will affect loved ones (Montemurro, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic may really have engendered a collective trauma and mass anxiety that can be easily taken advantage of by global capitalism.

Another important observer who anticipates the potentially dangerous outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic is Slavoj Žižek. He claims that there is no turning back to normal and that this pandemic will irreversibly change our lives. Žižek implies that the pandemic will have paradigm-shifting effects for the world. In his opinion, the pandemic can only have two possible outcomes: either a new normal will be constructed “on the ruins of our old lives” or a new form of barbarism will emerge (Žižek, 2020: 3). Žižek goes on to suggest that the pandemic has the potential to engender the worst socio-economic catastrophe since the Great Depression. In this new period, markets will not be able to

prevent the forthcoming waves of poverty and chaos. Moreover, Žižek does not believe that developing medical treatments or a vaccine will suffice to reverse the crisis of global capitalism (Žižek, 2020). Indeed, even when the pandemic is brought under control, the markets may not function as they used to, because the risk of a new wave of COVID-19 could discourage investments and lead to monopolistic prices at the expense of lower income groups.

One possible explanation for this situation is that leading politicians in Western societies are seeking to capitalize on a historical opportunity to reorganize global capitalism by justifying extraordinary measures through manufactured mass panic and Sinophobia.

Žižek maintains that the pandemic can only be controlled by using a different paradigm to neoliberalism; that is, through large-scale measures including government-imposed quarantines. Furthermore, he points to the fact that the spontaneous functioning of markets would eventually deepen the inequalities and hamper access to basic necessities and services. As such, the risk of economic disaster can only be averted through globally coordinated efforts; not only in the battle against the disease, but also in production and distribution. In the meantime, Žižek expresses optimism that this crisis presents a universal threat and therefore may give birth to global solidarity inasmuch as it invites us to reconsider “the very basic features of the society”. In this sense, the WHO’s global coordination efforts at leading this process based on precise and scientific recommendations without causing

panic can be seen as a key catalyst for an emergent solidarity on a global scale (Žižek, 2020: 41). This is in contrast to US efforts to delegitimize the WHO by reference to its alleged “China-centric” approach (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

In contrast to the WHO’s responsible approach, certain world leaders are not interested in following scientific guidance, preventing mass panic, or promoting global solidarity. Agamben (2020) underlines the fact that public authorities – and the mass media – contribute to the diffusion of panic at first hand. For instance, Donald Trump has not restrained himself from amplifying popular anxiety with his statements highlighting the number of potential fatalities from COVID-19; at the very beginning of the pandemic, these were estimated at somewhere between 100,000 and 240,000 (Mangan, 2020). Similarly, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has not hesitated to stir mass panic by warning his people to be prepared “to lose loved ones to coronavirus” (Hughes & Payne, 2020). Yet political restraint could have played a key role in reducing pandemic-related social risks. One possible explanation for this situation is that leading politicians in Western societies are seeking to capitalize on a historical opportunity to reorganize global capitalism by justifying extraordinary measures through manufactured mass panic and Sinophobia. Therefore, they are mobilizing a culture of fear predicated on the COVID-19 disaster. As such, China’s geopolitical isolation can be used to re-industrialize capitalism in core countries, reverse the increasing Chinese influence on global governance, and postpone the multipolitatization of the world order.

Yuval Noah Harari’s warnings buttress this possibility of exploiting the disaster for a fear-driven political agenda. A state of horror triggered by economic and social turbulence

can encourage society as a whole to search for a strong leader who will restore public order. This is similar to how the incessant economic disasters in post-World War I Germany resulted in the rise of the Nazis to power. Harari thus underlines how a crisis can be a turning point for a society, or a decisive moment to determine the direction of history. The COVID-19 pandemic is exemplary of such a milestone. It marks one of the deepest crises in recent history, which will surely have serious ramifications, not only for public health but also for the global economy, world politics, and culture (Harari, 2020). According to Harari, the human species will certainly survive the pandemic, but the world will be subjected to a deep-seated structural crisis. He goes on to argue that today’s political choices will greatly affect how the post-coronavirus world takes shape.

Similar to how Agamben cautions about a disease-induced “state of exception”, Harari refers to the “nature of emergencies”, underlining how these are “fast-forward historical processes”, and there are some “short-term emergency measures” that can be implemented to overcome the crisis (Harari, 2020). We are already seeing the rapid proliferation of immature technologies such as distance-education platforms and teleworking environments. The diffusion of such technologies in the post-coronavirus era may result in the permanentizing of precarious labor practices (e.g. temporary employment, lower wages, de-unionization, job insecurity) and the intensification of labor exploitation (e.g. unpaid overtime and further disturbance of work-life balance). Meanwhile, governments across the world have already declared states of emergency and started to take extraordinary measures to counter the pandemic. One of these measures is the implementation of new surveillance technologies on the pretext of controlling the contagion.

For instance, the UK government has adapted its facial recognition systems to identify COVID-19 victims (Tovey, 2020). Another case in point is how Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has authorized the use of surveillance technology, normally designed for anti-terrorist activities (Harari, 2020). Coupled with the proliferation of mass anxiety, “social” isolation and new surveillance technologies, the perpetuation of authoritarian government practices may seriously undermine the mobilizing potential of popular movements against neoliberal capitalism and imperialism. These possibilities parallel Harari’s observations: he suggests that the implementation of biological and emotional surveillance is another possible outcome. What is more, once these measures are normalized, they may become permanent, in the same way as the extraordinary antiterrorist measures adopted in the post-9/11 era (Harari, 2020).

According to Harari, our political choices are the important things. Like Žižek, he believes that we need a global plan that avoids isolationism and encourages the free flow of information and equipment all over the globe, since the pandemic cannot be regionally contained. Moreover, global cooperation requires stronger trust in science and close care for personal hygiene, regular handwashing, and physical distancing. Just as Žižek advocates a stronger state to deal with the crisis, Harari maintains that the state’s role is crucial in this period and surveillance is necessary to overcome the pandemic. However, he also cautions that data collected for this purpose should not be exploited to invent “an all-powerful government” (Harari, 2020). According to Harari, more dangerous than the disease itself is “our own hatred, greed and ignorance”, which may even set the stage for a new dictatorship under mass panic (Deutsche Welle, 2020, April 22).

Such tendencies – which are perhaps most strongly reflected in a Sinophobic culture of fear in Western nations – evoke the pre-World War II period during which protectionism increasingly gained currency and minorities such as Jews and Roma were persecuted.

In this sense, mass surveillance on social media platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook – as well as banning and removing content associated with “false” news and “conspiracy” – risk generating new forms of censorship to sustain the relations of domination and oppression. While Harari shares Žižek’s optimism about the prospects for global cooperation, he also cautions that these prospects are threatened by a growing tendency towards scapegoating or targeting minorities and rival nations. Such tendencies – which are perhaps most strongly reflected in a Sinophobic culture of fear in Western nations – evoke the pre-World War II period during which protectionism increasingly gained currency and minorities such as Jews and Roma were persecuted. At this point, Žižek calls for caution about a possible return to the premodern state of reason after COVID-19 (Žižek, 2020: 14). Even though developed countries benefit from higher educational standards, their citizens can be prone to anthropomorphizing the COVID-19 pandemic. The origins of this regression of reason may be found in mass anxiety and panic, which are further provoked by political authorities and corporate media (Žižek, 2020).

According to Žižek, rational thinking dictates the necessity for collective struggle against the pandemic and stronger social policies geared towards protecting society as a whole. On any account, Žižek reasons that our health and wel-

fare are inextricably linked to those of others, which brings forth the principle of altruism at the expense of absolute individualism. However, in the case of COVID-19, Žižek's reasoning does not seem to fit the facts. Individualism may well be taking on increasing importance to the extent that people have started to see others, not only as potential rivals in the marketplace, but as "biological threats". Enhanced individualism also has the potential to atomize society by fostering anxiety, especially when individuals withdraw themselves into their own private domains and see the public domain as inherently threatening. Such perceptions can be easily manipulated by political authorities such as Trump and Johnson, who are interested in taking advantage of disastrous situations. Put differently, a panic environment facilitated by public authorities may result in increased mass anxiety as a coping mechanism in the face of disastrous or threatening situations.



(Portugal News,2018)

On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic may further exacerbate the global economic crisis, with the total disappearance of growth,

a ubiquitous rise in unemployment and debts, and a cascade of bankruptcies across the world. On the other, it may have already started to create material conditions for the reproduction of neoliberal individualism. Perhaps most importantly, the meaning of self-quarantine against COVID-19 may be extended from mere home isolation to the normalization of self-interested behavior. When society allows itself to be taken over by fear, individuals become more prone to pursuing nothing else but their own well-being and daily survival. In this environment, those in power positions could easily seize the moment to reshape the public domain in line with their agenda. This means that the COVID-19 pandemic may not be the absolute end of neoliberalism per se, even though it has exposed the deepening of the crisis of global capitalism. Under the influence of self-interested politicians, mass anxiety – as a popular self-defence mechanism against dangerous situations – risks the retreating of individuals, not only into their apartments but also into their narrow individual interests.

Review and Discussion

The history of neoliberalism since the 1970s shows how global capitalism can shape the world order by instrumentalizing disastrous events. Inculcating a culture of fear serves as a strategic means to legitimize paradigmatic policy shifts so as to radically alter the structure of the world order. A characteristic of such cultural practices is the deployment of a securocratic language around disaster, similar to the anticommunism of putschists in Latin America and the case of post 9/11 Islamophobia. Military, political, and administrative actors capitalize on heightening feelings of existential insecurity, panic, and anxiety, resulting from disasters such as the collapse of the Soviet Union. As such, they can encourage alarmist reactions and exploit the people's affec-

tive situation so as to impose drastic measures without democratic deliberation.

In a similar direction, there are early signs that COVID-19 is being fed into a culture of fear to rejuvenate the US-centered world order. In the Western world, right-wing populist leaders weaponize COVID-19 in the expectation of mobilizing popular support and marshaling all resources to restore the legitimacy of global capitalism. In doing so, they resort to Sinophobia and demonize China as a “common enemy”, in the hope of reversing the multipolarization of world politics. Clearly, the US and its Western allies are concerned about the fact that their monopoly over global governance institutions such as the WHO is being challenged by China and other developing countries. To reverse this situation, they invest in geopolitically isolating China from international trade and global governance by blaming China for COVID-19. For Trump, increasing Sinophobia can also be exploited to radically transform the division of labor global capitalism with the pretext of “bringing manufacturing jobs back home”.

Overall, one cannot easily foresee in what direction COVID-19 will affect the world order. In the meantime, this pandemic as a disaster reveals the crisis of neoliberal globalization and the ineffectiveness of US-led global governance. It creates a perfect opportunity for capitalism to launch a process of creative destruction, which has been much needed since the 2007–2008 financial crisis. Interestingly, *The Economist* predicted in an article published in 1999 that the world economy would see the prospect of a new paradigm change in 2020 (*The Economist*, 1999). From a similar perspective, one could argue that the COVID-19 pandemic offers a suitable moment for the reorganization of markets in a way reminiscent of how the 9/11 terrorist attacks brought about the opportunity to reform the

world political structure and overcome the 2001 recession. The rise of social isolationism – due to mass fear of pandemics and authoritarian government practices under surveillance capitalism – is likely to disperse attempts at popular mobilization. While the justification of surveillance for public emergency may perpetuate a stronger form of surveillance capitalism, it is also possible that the proliferation of distance-working technologies will lead to a deep transformation in global labor regimes and an unprecedented growth in the “precariat”. The precariat can be understood here as a working-class stratum that “consists of people living through insecure jobs interspersed with periods of unemployment or labour-force withdrawal (misnamed as ‘economic inactivity’) and living insecurely, with uncertain access to housing and public resources” (Standing, 2014a: 16). Coupled with economic crisis and heightened competition in the labor market, distance-working technologies have great potential to endanger representation, employment, and income security by facilitating de-unionization, employment flexibility, arbitrary dismissals, wage cuts, and a lack of social security (Standing, 2014b). One could thus anticipate substantial increases in household debts and work-from-home monitoring that violates workers’ private life.

As is often the case, capitalism’s real agenda may be hidden behind positivist and empiricist discourses, which pretend to pursue the public interest in the name of science. Yet the danger cannot be overcome by merely subjugating politics to science and rational thinking. In modernity, knowledge itself is the source of power and technocratic discourses can be used to veil the true nature of authority (Habermas, 2015). The battle against COVID-19 is thus to be merged with the battle against neoliberal capitalism and the relations of domination and oppression

in the world order. This being said, the battle against COVID-19 cannot be reduced to a mere choice between the empowerment of the individual and that of the state, or public versus private measures. One should consider the fact that these distinctions are of an illusory character inasmuch as the individual's perception of threat is shaped through public channels of information. All of this raises another crucial question: How will global institutions be transformed in this period of disaster? Rather than merely framing today's dilemma in terms of the individual versus the state, one could focus on whether our institutions will be reorganized according to the needs of markets or the working classes. As Žižek cautions, this is not a moment to confront "the ultimate abyss of our being" (Žižek, 2020: 112). Even though we are "socially" isolated and withdrawn into our private enclaves, our collective future largely depends on major transformations in the public sphere. 🌱

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The Coronavirus Blame Game: The Emergence of Pandemic Lawfare



BINOY KAMPMARK

Dr.
Department of Global, Urban and Social Studies,
RMIT University

*Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne and is a contributing editor to Counterpunch Magazine. He is also an associate of the Nautilus Institute of Security and Sustainability (San Francisco) and a member of the human securities program at Royal Roads University, Canada.
Email: bkampmark@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

In keeping with a historical tendency to name, and implicitly attribute blame for public health threats and emergencies, COVID-19 has become the “China Virus”. This has led to the emergence of what this paper describes as pandemic lawfare, primarily directed against the People’s Republic of China. The staggering costs occasioned by public health lockdowns, restrictions on business and social activities have seen a proliferation of such calls to arms. Reconceptualising pandemics through the lens of legal liability can be seen to be a tactical measure framed around concepts of lawfare. Doing so accords human and institutional blame to otherwise natural transmissions of a pathogen. The practice of pandemic lawfare, through which public fora and institutions are used to attribute blame and seek compensation, promises to be a lasting legacy of the COVID-19 virus. In doing so, it promises to challenge and undermine the principle of sovereign immunity accepted in international relations, resorting to a rule-based order of international health regulations.

Keywords: China; COVID-19; legal liability; pandemic lawfare

IN DEBATES ABOUT PANDEMIC responsibility, the field of law has been consulted and drawn upon to continue conflict, in an adjustment of Carl von Clausewitz’s dictum, with legal means. Such hostilities, as it were, are conducted through a country’s legal institutions and quasi-legal fora, making use of jurisprudence and regulations to attain strategic goals. Law constitutes “the new politics”; what Siri Gloppe and Asuncion Lera St. Clair see as a field “expanding in social and political significance, not least in the contexts where other governance structures are weak” (2012: 899). The practice of using law in that way has been described as lawfare, though the word itself, as has been noted, has a curious career (Werner, 2010). During the years of the George W. Bush administration, it became a pejorative, a form of activity viewed with suspicion as potentially undermining liberal democracies. The neoconservative adoption of lawfare as a term was done to discredit any resort to law and procedure that might advance

nefarious, underhanded goals, provocatively described by the US Department of Defence as a “strategy of the weak, using international fora, judicial processes and terrorism” (Werner, 2010: 62). The Lawfare Project notes that negative sting in describing lawfare as “the use of law as a weapon of war, or more specifically, the abuse of the law and legal systems for strategic political or military ends” (Werner, 2010: 62). As Werner argues, “The meanings of terms such as ‘lawfare are not set in stone, but rather, evolve through their use in different social practices” (Werner, 2010: 62).

Now, the shoe is on the other foot, with those very same instrumentalised principles being used to target China for being the cause of the novel coronavirus, otherwise known as COVID-19.¹ Lawfare has become the mechanism by which transborder grievances can be contested and litigated and in the absence of an international public health body with compensation or investigative powers. It has become the means by which politicians in the West, pri-

¹ For a discussion on its contested origins, see Bryner, 2020.

marily the United States and Britain, can appeal to international and domestic mechanisms to seek compensation for charges of Chinese guilt. In doing so, they appeal to various regulatory frameworks that traditional neoconservatives have shunned: the rule-based order; the role international bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) play, and the use of traditional courts to accept that the People's Republic of China (PRC) can be sued in domestic courts. Along the way, exhortations have been made that challenge central tenets of the international legal system, including the principle of sovereign immunity and its correlative, sovereign equality.

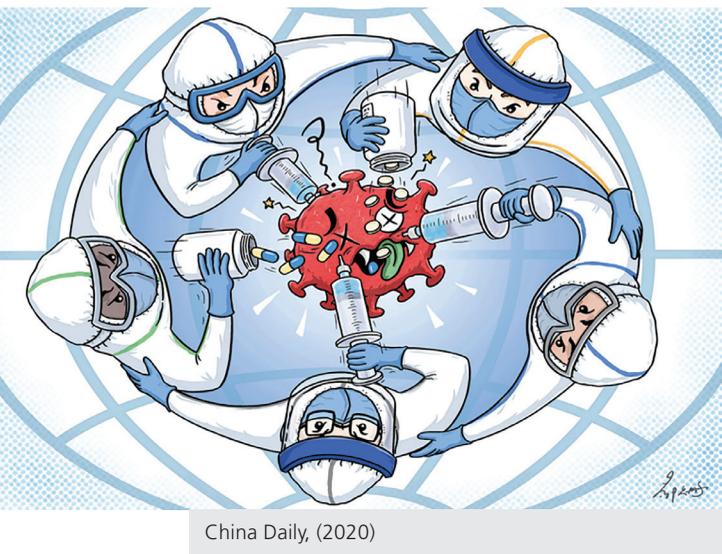
Blameworthy Diseases

“The beauty of blaming ‘China’ lies in its ambiguity” (Liu, 2020). This tendency of pandemic blame is not, unlike COVID-19, novel. Disease and infection, as Susan Sontag noted with penetrating clarity, engenders moral turpitude and suggestion (Sontag, 1989). The naming of infections and diseases in terms of geographic and cultural origin is rooted in the language of attribution and moral suggestion. Syphilis was deemed *morbus gallicus*, or the “French disease” by Italians in the 16th century facing the soldiers of the French monarch Charles VII; the French retorted by referring to it as “the Neapolitan disease”. It did not take long for accusations to be directed at the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, given links with the mission of exploration by Christopher Columbus to the Americas (Rumbaut, 1997: 440). The Black Death in Europe also brought upon Europe a range of regulations with a principled purpose: to target the corrupted bodies who were themselves accused of being repositories of degenerate filth. In Florence, for instance, prostitutes and beggars were seen as “sources of pollution in the civic body” (Slack, 1988: 447).

Italian immigrants arriving in the United States in 1916 were accused for being particularly susceptible polio carriers. As Alan Kraut documents, many lived in “tightly concentrated neighbourhoods, and because immigrants were viewed by many as a marginal and potentially subversive influence upon society, the incidence of Italian polio made a dramatic impact upon the imagination of a public already shaken by the virulence of the epidemic and the youth of its victims” (Kraut, 2010).

The H1N1 virus that killed millions in 1918 and 1919 became associated with Spain less for geographically accurate reasons than political convenience. Belligerents during the Great War were keen to restrain discussions about a virus that might sap the morale of fighting forces. Spain, being neutral during the Great War, did not embargo or prevent reports on the virus. When an outbreak took place in Madrid as reported in the city's ABC Newspaper, the illusion of Spanish responsibility was created (Trilla & Daer, 2008).

The last century also saw notable instances of epidemic blameworthiness, fuelled by political motivation. In 1985, the official journal of the Soviet Writers Union, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, ran articles arguing that Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was a product of biological work being undertaken at Fort Detrick, Maryland, in collaboration with the Centres of the Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia (Elkin & Gilman, 1988: 361; Seale, 1986). The political cartoonist for the official broadsheet *Pravda*, D. Agaeva, was inspired by images that remain relevant as tropes of blame and presumption: a sinister looking scientist, supplying a test tube filled with the AIDS virus – and swastikas – to a US general. Many dead also figure, but as concentration camp victims (Elkin & Gilman, 1988: 361).



China Daily, (2020)

In recent times, the same accusations have been directed at culture, habit and behaviour, notably with Ebola. An argument has been made that populations suffering from such disease also endure judgment in a political and epidemiological sense, assessments that neglect the “power relations” that constitute “an active reinscription – and therefore legitimization – of global health inequities along colonial lines” (Richardson, McGinnis & Frankfurter, 2019: 1).

Frameworks of Blame

The novel coronavirus has not been spared the lexical game of attribution. Regarding its cause, Australian Senator Malcolm Roberts took up the theme: “Should China pay compensation for unleashing COVID19 on the world?” (Roberts, 2020). The answer is implicit in the question; intention, guilt and causality are assumed. Under the cover of law, a complex natural event has been given an anthropogenic impetus in the service of geopolitics. “The case for Chinese liability for COVID-19’s consequences,” suggested global health specialist David Fidler, “seems less about international law than how the geopoliti-

cal rivalry between the United States and China has shaped the politics of the pandemic” (Fidler, 2020). In the United States it has become the “Chinese virus”, a prelude to a range of legal efforts to seek compensation, restitution and retribution (Libby & Rank, 2020). This has prompted counter-accusations from China that the virus was a US creation, a narrative that has been picked up by other countries unsympathetic to Washington’s geopolitical agenda (Aarabi, 2020). “It might be,” charged China’s foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian, “a US army who brought the academic to Wuhan” (Lijian, 2020). Such accusations have taken root despite the stance taken by such prominent medical journals at *The Lancet*, which has condemned “conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin” (Calisher et al., 2020: 42; Bryner, 2020).

Conspiracy narratives about COVID-19 being engineered and then deployed also supplied the momentum for broader accusations, contributing to a pandemic demonology.

Conspiracy narratives about COVID-19 being engineered and then deployed also supplied the momentum for broader accusations, contributing to a pandemic demonology. A leading proponent in this game of attribution has been US President Donald Trump. On March 16, Trump tweeted about the US “supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus” (Trump, 2020). When asked as to why he insisted on naming it such, he was blunt. “Because it comes from China. That’s why. It’s not racist at all. I want to be accurate” (Fallows, 2020). US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo preferred the term

“Wuhan virus”, giving a sense of locality and specificity, while also underlining the element of dissembling on the part of the PRC. “The mere fact that we don’t know the answer – that China hasn’t shared the answers – I think is very, very telling” (AP News Agency, 2020). For Pompeo, the proximity of the wet market where the virus is said to have originated, and that of a virology institute, was also telling, a potential conspiratorial thread linking motive with malfeasance. “We know that there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology just a handful of miles from where the wet market was” (AP News Agency, 2020).

In late April, Pompeo showed even greater conviction in building upon the lab-engineered thesis, contradicting the position taken by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “The best experts so far seem to think it was man-made. I have no reason to disbelieve that at this point” (Pompeo, 2020). The Intelligence Community’s position, outlined in an ODNI statement, had a rather different assessment of that expertise, accepting that COVID-19 had Chinese geographical origins while concurring “with the wide scientific consensus” that it was “not manmade or genetically modified.” The Intelligence Community would continue “rigorously” examining information and intelligence on “whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan” (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2020).

In March, Missouri Republican Senator Josh Hawley and New York Republican Representative Elise Stefanik, introduced a bicameral resolution demanding a “full, international investigation” into the origins of COVID-19.²

The point was a moot one, as the culprit was already assumed. The resolution found “that the Government of the People’s Republic of China should be held accountable for the impact, of its decision to hide the emergence and spread of COVID-19, on the lives and livelihoods of the people of the United States and other nations.” In a manner defiant of Chinese sovereignty, the resolution also wished any such investigation to be led by public health officials drawn from the US and “other affected nations”.

Delegitimising Sovereignty

The most conspicuous element of pandemic lawfare in Congress came in efforts to delegitimise the juridical nature of Chinese sovereignty. Not only was the PRC to be investigated with a pre-determined goal of identifying guilt, it was to be stripped of customary immunities in US courts. Various proposed bills served to repudiate the principle of sovereign equality in international law, one that accepts the premise that all states are equal in a juridical sense, in spite of asymmetrical realities in military power, economy and demography (United Nations Charter, Article 2(1); Anson, 2016). “The equality of States,” as the jurist Hans Kelsen formulated, “is frequently explained as a consequence of or as implied by their sovereignty” (Kelsen, 2000:34). The principle is further developed in the UN Declaration on Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States: “All States enjoy sovereign equality. They have equal rights and duties and are equal members of the international community, notwithstanding differences of an economic, social, political or other nature” (United Nations, 1970).

² US Senate Resolution Supporting an international investigation into the handling by the Government of the People’s Republic of China of COVID-19 and the impact of handling COVID-19 in that manner on the people of the United States and other nations, 116th Congress, 2d session, available at: <https://www.hawley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/Hawley-China-Coronavirus-Resolution.pdf>

In Congress, a challenge to the merits of the FSIA, urging both an investigation and an easing of litigation barriers for state institutions and private citizens, coalesced around ideas of pandemic liability.

Axiomatic in recognising such equality is the principle of sovereignty immunity sparing a State's officials from legal action in the courts of another country. As the noted English case of the Queen's Bench *Mighell v Sultan of Johore* (1894) reasoned, a sovereign could never waive immunity except through submitting to the jurisdiction of the court "by appearance to a writ" (*Mighell v Sultan of Johore*, 1984). The US equivalent of a sovereign's protection from suit is to be found in the Foreign Immunities Act of 1976 which, in the words of a United States Court of Appeals decision, "protects foreign sovereigns from the burdens of litigation, including the cost and aggravation of discovery" (*Rubin v Islamic Republic of Iran*, 2011: 795).

In Congress, a challenge to the merits of the FSIA, urging both an investigation and an easing of litigation barriers for state institutions and private citizens, coalesced around ideas of pandemic liability. China's conduct vis-à-vis COVID-19 was deemed exceptional to decades of accepted jurisprudence. The inspiration for paring back the principle of sovereign immunity was drawn from the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), an act which deterritorialised the commission of torts contributing to a terrorist attack carried out on US territory (JASTA, 2016: section 3). Both Senators Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) and Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) resorted to this particularly controver-

sial precedent as a model with which to frame exceptions to the FSIA. Hawley's Justice for Victims of COVID-19 Act would remove sovereign immunity while creating "a private right of action against the CCP for reckless actions like silencing whistleblowers and withholding critical information about COVID-19" (Hawley, 2020). Cotton, along with his House counterpart Representative Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) proposed a bill with ideological specificity, avoiding any overt reference to country and preferring, instead, to target the political apparatus. "This Act," went the bill's short title, "may be cited as the 'Holding the Chinese Community Party Accountable for Infection Americans Act of 2020'" (Cotton, 2020). To that end, the United States Code would be amended to create a civil action "against a foreign state for deliberate concealment or distortion of information with respect to an international public health emergency, and for other purposes." The bill did not exclude the executive from reviewing private suits: the Secretary of State could stay proceedings but only if it was certified that the US was "engaged in good faith discussions with the foreign state defendant, or any other defendant, with respect to the resolution of the claim against such a defendant" (Cotton, 2020: 6).

Other legislative proposals have been more aggressive, insisting upon generous compensation. Accepting the bio-engineered thesis, Tennessee Senator Marsha Blackburn proposed a bill to amend the FSIA by establishing "an exception to jurisdictional immunity for a foreign state that discharges a biological weapon". Her proposed bill was duly titled the "Stop China-Originated Viral Infectious Diseases Act of 2020" or the "Stop COVID Act of 2020" (Blackburn, 2020). The rationale for the bill was outlined in an interview with Charlie Kirk, president of

the conservative group Turning Point USA, an encounter notable for the accusation that China was part of “the new axis of evil”. Cause and culprit barely warranted a challenge. “We know they caused the COVID virus. They did this by hiding information by lying about what is happening. They were not transparent. They would not give us the viral sample to work from.” She then makes the leap, obfuscating motive, design and carelessness. “It most likely started in one of their labs. And China is now trying to say, ‘Oh, it was not one of us’, when there has been concern about those labs expressed going back to 2014” (Martin, 2020).

Pandemic Lawfare Suits

Legal interest in seeking compensation from China via legal fora has stirred in several countries. “When all this will be over, and perhaps even before,” warned the Italian sociologist Massimo Introvigne, “the CCP may find itself attacked by an enemy its mighty military power will not be able to stop, aggressive Western lawyers” (Introvigne, 2020). These efforts have varied in scale, from small, private suits for loss of income to state-sanctioned actions against the PRC and its various entities. In Italy, a ski resort hotel in the Dolomites presented a subpoena to the court of Belluno seeking compensation from the PRC’s health ministry for loss of business earnings, notably the period March 18-22, when it was fully booked for the Alpine Ski World Cup (Oggi Treviso, 2020). In the words of legal representative Marco Vignola, “The early and sudden closure led to disastrous consequences, including the dismissal of all staff and the cancellation of contracts with suppliers” (Bowcott & Giffrida, 2020).

A few of these cases are worth mentioning, not so much because of their prospects of success, but because of their underlying assumptions about China’s culpability vis-à-vis the virus.

A clutch of legal actions have also been filed in the United States against the PRC and its various entities. In the course of a few months, six suits were filed in US federal courts. These have varied from individual business owners to the actions of state attorneys (*Bella Vista LLC v The People’s Republic of China et al.*, 2020; *Logan Alters, et al. v People’s Republic of China, et al.*, 2020). All run the formidably imposing barrier of sovereign immunity, one that remains despite current Congressional efforts to undermine it. All, to some extent, make the argument that China’s malfeasant conduct vis-à-vis COVID-19 has ostensibly waived such a protective assertion (Carter, 2020).

A few of these cases are worth mentioning, not so much because of their prospects of success, but because of their underlying assumptions about China’s culpability vis-à-vis the virus. Their overall purpose is also galvanic in nature and, to that end, a paragon example of lawfare as practice: to encourage political representatives to diminish and qualify the immunity principle by giving US citizens standing to sue foreign states for damage arising from pandemics (Johnson, 2020).

In March, a class action complaint was lodged in United States District Court of the Southern District of Florida “for damages suffered as a result of the Coronavirus epidemic” (*Logan Alters, et al. v People’s Republic of China, et al.*, 2020). The accusation: that China and its various arms of government “knew that COVID-19

was dangerous and capable of causing a pandemic, yet slowly acted, proverbially put their head in the sand, and/or covered it up for their own economic self-interest”. Such conduct had caused “incalculable harm” and injury “and will continue to cause personal injuries and deaths, as well as other damages”. The Florida class action suit attempts to sidestep the obstacle of sovereign immunity by claiming an exception for commercial activities and for death and harm “caused by the tortious act or omission of that foreign state or of any official or employee of that foreign state while acting within the scope of his or her employment” (*Logan Alters, et al. v People’s Republic of China, et al.*, 2020).

The state of Missouri also took it upon itself to commence a federal court lawsuit seeking to hold Beijing and the Chinese Communist Party accountable for COVID-19 and its consequences. The allegations in the lawsuit filed by the state Attorney General Eric Schmitt follow the standard narrative of suppression, evidentiary destruction and concerted cover-up. “During the critical weeks of the initial outbreak, Chinese authorities deceived the public, suppressed crucial information, arrested whistleblowers, denied human-to-human transmission in the face of mounting evidence, destroyed critical medical research, permitted millions of people to be exposed to the virus, and even hoarded personal protective equipment – thus causing a global pandemic that was unnecessary and preventable” (The State of Missouri, 2020).

To puncture the veil of sovereign immunity, two exceptions, neither particularly plausible, are cited: the “commercial activity exception” to the FSIA which waives immunity for foreign states when such activity has a direct effect on the US; and the tortious liability exception,

which has been read narrowly to only include tortious conduct that has occurred in its entirety within the United States (*In re Terrorist Attacks on Sept. 11, 2001*, 2013: 117). In the wording of the suit, China’s COVID-19 conduct constituted “commercial activities” causing “a direct effect in the United States and in the State of Missouri” including operating the healthcare system in Wuhan and China; commercial research on viruses undertaken at the Wuhan Institute and Chinese Academy of Sciences; the use of traditional and social media platforms for commercial profit; and “production, purchasing important and export of medical equipment, such as personal protective equipment (“PPE”), used in COVID-19 efforts” (The State of Missouri, 2020: 9-10). The FSIA non-commercial tort exception was cited as waiving Chinese immunity, as money damages were being sought against “a foreign state for personal injury or death, or damage to or loss of property, occurring in the United States” (The State of Missouri, 2020: 10-11).

The way these exceptions have been cited in the context of suing China and its various entities goes some way to understanding the lawfare elements inherent in these actions. In these, China figures as both economic competitor and perpetrator of civil wrongs; a dangerous threat and an authoritarian, negligent power. COVID-19 is reasoned analogously as a product of manufacture and commerce, a point that ties in with the trade war approach of the Trump administration (Wong & Koty, 2020). While acknowledging the thesis about zoonotic transmission from the Wuhan Seafood Market, the State of Missouri’s legal action also shows a degree of sympathy for the “emerging theory” that the virus “was released from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which was studying the virus as part

of a commercial activity” (The State of Missouri, 2020: 12). The virus becomes the equivalent of a dangerous, disruptive export, affecting the global economy and jobs, viewed as a weapon equally if not more significant than industrial espionage and cyber hacking.

Rule-Based Orders and International Law

China has repeatedly been critiqued, criticised and challenged for contesting what has been asserted as the rule-based international order (Chellaney, 2019). Malcolm Chalmers has suggested the provocation that there is no single “rules-based international system” (Chalmers, 2019). Such a view pairs with the idea that the international system tends towards a degree of anarchy, softened by areas of consensus and state understanding. If there are rules to be laid in any such system, there are done so, as Henry Kissinger states with frankness, by the dominant power “according to its own values” (Kissinger, 1994: 17). Others prefer a more refined version of this blunt formula, referring to the presence of “identification” norms that underpin a global system run by “great power management”, with the Concert of Europe of the nineteenth century being a notable example (Zala, 2017; McLaughlin, 2018). To that end, the rules-based order as rhetorically articulated was based on one key assumption: the continuation of US primacy.

Pandemic politics and statecraft in response to COVID-19 have invariably continued the theme of rules-based criticism, with China showing, according to this argument, the credentials of a putative lawbreaker in the international community.

Such primacy tends to be ignored in such publications as Australia’s 2016 Defence White Paper, which merely sees such rules as part of “a broad architecture of international governance which has developed since the end of the Second World War.” The publication warned that “the rules-based global order” was being placed “under increasing pressure and has shown signs of fragility” (Australian Government Department of Defence, 2016: 45). (Rules-based global order, as a term, is used on 48 occasions in the document.) The term also finds greater currency in British policy positions since 2015. The UK government’s 2015 Strategic Defence and Security makes reference to the term no less than 27 times; references to a “rules-based international system” number a mere two in the 2010 National Security Strategy (HM Government, 2015; HM Government, 2010; Chalmers, 2019: 1).

Pandemic politics and statecraft in response to COVID-19 have invariably continued the theme of rules-based criticism, with China showing, according to this argument, the credentials of a putative lawbreaker in the international community. In Britain, a number of veteran Conservative politicians, led by former Deputy Prime Minister Damian Green, penned a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson urging him to reconsider the nature of Britain’s post-coronavirus China relationship, worried about the “damage to the rules-based system caused by China’s non-compliance with international treaties”. They spoke of those, “Legally binding international healthcare regulations (that) require states to provide full information on all potential pandemics”. China had, it was argued, failed to abide by them, a grave omission that “allowed the disease to spread throughout with extraordinary serious consequences in terms of global health and the economy” (Holloway, 2020).



Pikist

(Pikist, 2020)

Such regulations were first adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1969 to control cholera, plague, yellow fever, smallpox, relapsing fever and typhus. Additions of smallpox, poliomyelitis, SARS, and human influenza caused by a new subtype were made in the 2005 revision (WHO, 2016). Consulting the International Health Regulations reveals various state undertakings, obligating States to develop, strengthen, and maintain public health infrastructure to assist in detecting, monitoring, reporting and notifying the events of the global health crisis. In the event of a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), a State is obligated to communicate to the WHO via the National IHR Focal Point all public health-related information and events taking place within its territory within 24 hours of assessment (WHO, 2016).

James Kraska (2020) of the Stockton Centre for International Law at the US Naval War College found Article 6 of the IHR particularly salient. The provision obligates states to provide expedited, timely, accurate, and sufficiently detailed information to the WHO about public

health emergencies outlined in the second annexe of the 2005 revision. Transparent information needs to be furnished within 24 hours and collaborative assessment of those risks conducted. “Yet China rejected repeated offers of epidemic investigation assistance from WHO in late January (and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in early February), without explanation”. For Kraska (2020), the International Law Commission’s Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts 2001 offered guidance, notwithstanding their non-binding nature (International Law Commission, 2001). To circumvent this drawback in his argument, Kraska suggested that the restatement, developed with contributions by numerous parties constituted customary international law, thereby binding all states. “Wrongful acts” were those that could be “attributable to the state” and “constitute a breach of an international obligation; such conduct could be attributable if it was an act of the state’s executive, legislative or judicial functions of the central government (Kraska, 2020).

Like Kraska, Introvigne makes the point unreservedly: that China’s reaction to COVID-19 was itself a violation of the public health order that arose in response to Beijing’s handling of SARS in 2002. “It is, indeed, a basis the world created with China in mind.” Such language is purposefully directed at China as an outlaw state, with the “world” duly taking stock in creating the International Health Regulations of the WHO. Reference is also made to the Draft Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts. The PRC, Introvigne submits, violated its obligations due under such laws triggering the basis for “full reparation for the injury caused by the internationally wrongful act” in “the form of restitution, compensation and satisfaction” (International Law Commis-

sion, 2001: Article 34; Introvigne, 2020). Article 39 of the Draft Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts is also cited, namely, that, in determining reparation, “account shall be taken of the contribution to the injury by wilful or negligent action or omission of the injured State or any person or entity in relation to whom reparation is sought” (Introvigne, 2020). While Kraska is rather short on a solid legal basis for Chinese compensation, he suggests exclusion, alienation and estrangement from the international community. The PRC is, effectively, to be marginalised from the international comity of nations.

Arguments favouring compensation for pandemic wrongdoing were also voiced in British quarters.

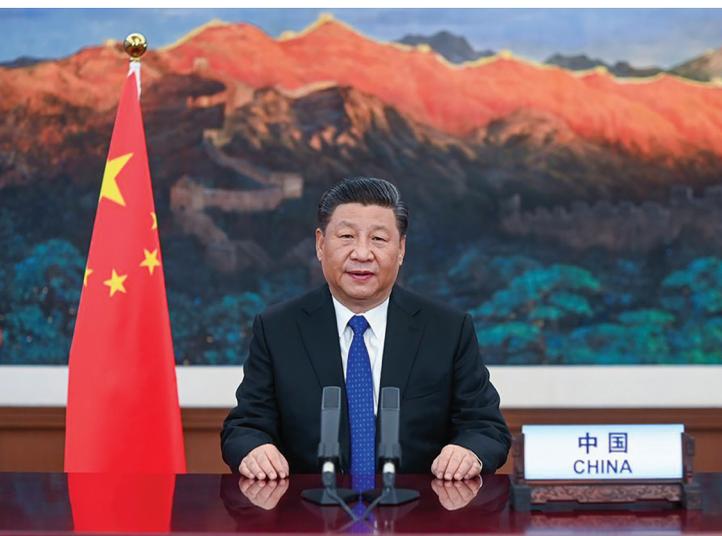
Arguments favouring compensation for pandemic wrongdoing were also voiced in British quarters. The neoconservative British-based Henry Jackson Society, while admitting that successful legal actions might be problematic, took an interest in the whole question of PRC liability, putting the claim in a report that China’s balance sheet of damages had come in at £3.2 trillion from G7 countries alone (Henderson et al., 2020). The HJS, having accepted Chinese malfeasance and clear responsibility, constantly iterate “the rules-based international system”. To preserve that system “and to protect taxpayers from punitive liabilities, the world should seek to take legal action against the PRC for the breaches of international law and their consequences” (Henderson et al., 2020).

The central argument made by the organisation hinged upon Beijing’s reckless indifference or negligence towards international health provisions. To anchor Chinese liability in inter-

national law, the HJS report suggests the norms of international health regulations dating back to the nineteenth century, when the International Sanitary Convention came into being (Henderson et al., 2020: 23). As with Kraska, the HJS makes solemn reference to the IHR 2005, which outlines duties and obligations of the WHO while also conveying those for member states “to prevent the spread of infectious diseases” (Henderson et al., 2020: 23). The PRC was bound “to report timely, accurate and detailed public health information.” It failed to do this throughout December 2019 and January 2020. “In fact, it appears at least possible that this was a deliberate act of mendacity.” (The authors minimise the importance of those common historical tendencies in decision-making: negligence through error; damage caused by complacency.) The report’s central sentiment is resentment: had the detection and sharing of accurate information taken place in good time, “the infection would not have left China” (Henderson et al., 2020: 3). Furthermore, “Inadequate and inaccurate information” from the PRC hampered the UK’s formulation of an effective response. Reliance was placed upon World Health Organization reports drawing upon faulty Chinese data claiming, at that point, that “there were no cases of medics contracting the diseases” (Henderson et al., 2020: 19). An argument as also advanced that the PRC had attempted to influence the impartiality of the WHO Director-General through withholding information, providing potentially false information or by not providing information at a critical moment in time might also constitute grounds (Sarkar, 2020).

Cause and accountability in terms of concealment is extended to the politburo itself, with the HJS noting a timeline of President Xi Jinping’s engagements with the matter outlined

in the CCP's "main theoretical journal, *Qiushi* ('Seeking Facts')". A transcript of a speech made on February 3, 2020 by Xi referred to a statement made in early January taking note of "requirements for the prevention and control of the new Coronavirus" (Henderson et al., 2020: 21).



Chinese President Xi Jinping at the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) while he promotes global cooperation in the pandemic fight. (Xinhuanet, 2020)

In terms of viable international fora to hear such grievances, options proved thin. The HJS admitted that bringing any dispute based upon the IHR before the WHO would be "unprecedented" but possible. "This would be a readily accessible avenue for states bringing complaints in relation to the handling of COVID-19" (Henderson et al., 2020: 24). The WHO Constitution, via Article 75, also provided a possible avenue for involvement by the International Court of Justice. In its words, "Any question or dispute concerning the interpretation or application of this constitution which is not settled by negotiation or by the Health Assembly shall be referred to the International Court of Justice." This does not preclude the parties in dispute choosing oth-

er modes of dispute settlement that could trigger ICJ involvement (International Court of Justice, 2002). The World Health Assembly might itself be bypassed in undertaking ICJ proceedings, provided it satisfied the negotiation condition. But, as has been suggested by Peter Tzeng, a specialist practitioner in public international law, the State in question would have to frame its complaint regarding Chinese conduct "as one concerning the interpretation or application of the WHO Constitution" (Tzeng, 2020).

Pandemic Lawfare's Pitfalls

A generous body of scepticism has been generated by the pandemic law effort. For instance, using the commercial activity exception, was, according to Joel Trachtman of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, "specious" (Johnson, 2020). Alleged government failures in handling a pandemic could hardly count as a matter of commerce. The jurisprudence on the subject has also pointed to the need to show that economic damage and the linking act must take place on US soil. Ingrid Weurth of Vanderbilt University School of Law is even more specific. "The tortiable activity has to be done in Missouri, not in Wuhan, China." The only genuine way where this could be circumvented would be to pass legislation removing sovereign immunity on tortious and commercial exceptions (Johnson, 2020).

The pandemic lawfare endeavour to undermine sovereign immunity, a cardinal principle of international law and the comity of nations, also echoes debates waged over the passage of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, a bill designed to smoothen the way for legal suits for the families of victims of the 9/11 attacks. It amended the FSIA and the Anti-Terrorism

Act, effectively overruling “judicial constructions of those statutes that had foreclosed lawsuits against Saudi Arabia for its alleged support of the 9/11 attacks” (Daugirdas & Mortenson, 2017: 156). Josh Earnest, White House Press Secretary, articulated the main argument against JASTA, calling sovereign immunity “something that protects the ability of the United States to work closely with countries all around the world. And walking back on that principle would put the United States, our taxpayers and our service members and diplomats at risk” (Earnest, 2016).

President Barack Obama, for his part, urged members of Congress to realise that there already were “ways of addressing state-sponsored terrorism.” Lawsuits could be instituted, for instance, against designated sponsors of terrorism. By accepting the premise of JASTA “devastating” consequences would arise for the Department of Defence, service members, those active in foreign affairs and the intelligence communities. “The United States relies on principles of immunity to prevent foreign litigants and foreign courts from second-guessing our counterterrorism operations and other actions that we take everyday” (Obama, n.d.). US foreign policy and security decisions would, as an important consequence, be privatised and become the purview of litigants rather than that of the Executive (Obama, 2016).

JASTA also served to complicate international relationships, even with close partners, exposing them to litigation and, in doing so, limiting “their cooperation on key national security issues, including counterterrorism initiatives, at a crucial time when we are trying to build coalitions, not create divisions” (Obama, 2016). The bill was itself passed with reservations, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) claiming that it would have “unintended ram-

ifications”. (His initial support for the bill had been given, he subsequently claimed, under a mistaken impression based on material from the White House.) Then Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) also expressed a view that “some work had to be done to protect our service members overseas from any kind of legal ensnarement that occur, any kind of retribution” (Kim & Everett, 2016).

Most troubling to critics of the pandemic lawfare approach is the risk posed by reciprocal retaliation. US officials face the prospect of the lawfare juggernaut, including those who were rather slipshod in informing the US public about the dangers of the novel coronavirus. Allowing lawsuits against China with Congressional approval could see China, John Bellinger warns, “retaliate by allowing lawsuits against the US government or its officials in China for claiming China had intentionally manufactured COVID-19” (Bellinger, 2020). Rachel Esplin Odell of the Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs further underlines the dangers posed by targeting PRC officials: “If applied to Chinese officials, such sanctions would likely invite swift retaliation against US officials who themselves dismissed the threat of COVID-19, shared incorrect medical information about it, or spread false theories about its origins, such as the president, vice president, and many governors and members of Congress – including [Senator] Cotton himself” (Odell, 2020).

Odell also warns that using the Draft Articles on State Responsibility in the context of public health, a point enthusiastically advanced by Introvigne and Kraska, is more than mildly treacherous. Disease outbreaks can be unruly things, hard to monitor and track. The customary rule accepting that a state in breach of international law is required “to make full reparation for the injury caused” by that breach has not featured in international health efforts.

The International Law Commission has added a complicating factor: that any reparation would not cover “all consequences flowing from an intentional wrongful act”, only injury directly “ascribable to the wrongful act” (International Law Commission, 2001: 92).

The deployment of rules-based arguments and lawfare suits has also encouraged Chinese commentators to revisit historical instances of aggression, seeing such health narratives as an attempt to perpetuate power inequalities. Debates about compensation were hard to divorce from the historical context of humiliation foisted upon China during the Century of Humiliation and the Opium Wars. “Britain and China,” suggested *The Economist* (2017), “see each other through a narcotic haze”. As a widely circulated comment on Twitter went: “Cool, great, you just pay us back for the Opium Wars” (Shumei, 2020). President Xi Jinping, in an address in Hong Kong, that last outpost of British Empire, referred to a poisoned legacy that enfeebled a state. “After the Opium War, China has been repeatedly defeated by countries which were smaller and less populous” (Connor, 2017). Such ideas recur in the current observations of the PRC diplomatic corps. Liu Xiaoming, China’s ambassador to the UK, saw the legal suits as reminiscent of Europe’s colonial wars waged during the 19th century. “Some politicians, some people, want to play at being the world’s policemen – this is not the era of gunboat diplomacy, this is not the era when China was a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society” (Bowcott & Giffrida, 2020).

Conclusion

From Fort Detrick to Wuhan; from the prostitutes of Florence during the Black Death to the sufferers of Ebola in the Democratic Republic

of Congo, blame and forced accountability has been a common theme. Behind pandemic lawfare’s thrust in targeting the PRC lies a motive of using public health as a politicised vehicle, one that seeks to contain Chinese power even as it claims to hold it to account. The mechanism for such liability lies in international laws that are portrayed as universally accepted, legitimised by consensus. Legal avenues and fora are being used to pursue traditional power rivalries.

The narrative of pandemic attribution also paves the way, at least in a rhetorical sense, for a grounding of culpability in a manner Ho-fung Hung (2004) regards as parochial and “anti-globalist”. In his study of SARS and efforts to combat it, Hung concludes that a coordinated, global response is far better than a national, anti-globalist one. Global cooperation, not blaming fractiousness, is preferable; empowered global institutions are desirable over weak ones (Hung, 2004: 19). In responding to COVID-19, pandemic lawfare has become the weapon of choice for the anti-globalists. 🌐

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COVID-19 and the Hyper-Crisis of Neoliberalism: The Breakdown of Financialization



LUIS KATO MALDONADO

Dr.
Azcapotzalco (UAM-A), Department of Economy
Metropolitan Autonomous University

GUADALUPE HUERTA MORENO

Dr.
Azcapotzalco (UAM-A), Department of Business Administration
Metropolitan Autonomous University

Luis Kato Maldonado is Senior Professor Researcher in the Department of Economics at UAM-Azcapotzalco. He completed his undergraduate education in Economics at UAM-A, received his master's degree in Economics, with specialization Political Economy of Science and Technology from UNAM, and earned his Ph.D. in Economics from National Autonomous University of Mexico. He published several research articles as an experienced national researcher.

Email: katomaldonado@gmail.com

Guadalupe Huerta Moreno is Professor Researcher in the Department of Business Administration of Metropolitan Autonomous University-Azcapotzalco. She completed her undergraduate education in Business Administration at Metropolitan Autonomous University-Azcapotzalco. She earned her PhD in Economics from National Autonomous University of Mexico. She is a member of the research project PAPIIT (2020) at National Autonomous University of Mexico. She has several publications, awards, and honors as a national researcher candidate.

Email: mghmoreno@yahoo.com.mx

ABSTRACT

The pandemic crisis produced by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes the disease COVID-19, has rapidly exposed the limits of growth in neoliberal globalization, where financialization, far from bolstering global productive and commercial activities, has proved to be merely an efficient means of redistributing wealth towards society's wealthiest members. The paralysis of global productive chains and trade is exacerbated by the deterioration of financial-market assets and loss of liquidity, high levels of corporate and private debt in industrialized countries, and the prominence of the informal economy in developing countries. Taken together, these phenomena will make it impossible for the global economy to return to the way it functioned before the COVID-19 crisis. With the hyper-crisis of modern-day neoliberalism exacerbated by the pandemic, difficulties in the supply chains essential to global trade have increased the risks of default on sovereign and corporate debt markets. For both sectors – government and business – a temporary restoration of liquidity is mediated by issuing higher volumes of debt. In a context of uncertain recovery, falling investment, failing businesses, mass unemployment, and declining family income, this will shift insolvency from the real to the financial sector. The potential way out of this hyper-crisis of neoliberal capitalism should be a new development strategy based on domestic markets, which globalization has relegated to niches of industrial specialization dictated by the need for supplies in highly profitable productive chains in developed countries. The current crisis, with its attendant high unemployment and increase in poverty, will define workers' global struggle for better living conditions, thereby defining the structure of income distribution between capital and labor for the rest of the 21st century.

Keywords: Debt securities; financialization; global value chains; hyper-crisis; pandemic

THE CURRENT HYPER-CRISIS OF capitalism can be seen as an exacerbation of the functional contradictions manifest in the global economy since the 1970s, which peaked in the crisis of 2008. However, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, like an echo chamber, has amplified the failures of the economic model that has driven the transformations associated with the global imposition of neoliberalism. In the network of global governance, organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Institute of International Finance (IIF) are portraying this hyper-crisis of global neoliberalism as a crisis of imbalances between the productive and financial sectors (Gürcan 2019; Carlsson-Sz-

lezak, Reeves & Swartz, 2020). In response to it, they are urging governments to inject money into their economies to minimize the lack of liquidity in businesses and keep economic activity afloat. Although such measures also seek to reduce large investors' exposure to the abrupt movements of capital which are occurring on securities exchanges, thereby preventing further contagion in the financial sector and safeguarding its tenuous stability, the argument holds up only on the assumption that the COVID-19 pandemic is an external shock. As such, it only impacts the markets indirectly through the shockwaves it sends through the economy, the psychology of investors, the financial markets, and the political leaders charged with making economic decisions.

In this context, the radical social distancing measures adopted in the attempt to contain the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus have caused violent disruptions in economic activity, which are resulting in loss of jobs and loss of income for businesses and families. This in turn is translating into tremendous stresses on patterns of local and global consumption. Thus, the imbalances in productive activity are deflationary.

However, this explanation ignores the real systemic nature of the hyper-crisis of modern-day neoliberalism. The appearance of COVID-19 has merely accelerated the breakdown of the agglutinating mechanisms of globalization in the real sector. It has revealed in uncompromising terms how governance based on financialization has failed to bolster global productive and commercial activities, and instead served only to advance a sharp redistribution of resources for the benefit of society's wealthiest. As a result, under the present crisis, the standard of living of workers and their families will fall to levels not seen since the Great Depression. Consequently, poverty and marginalization among the neediest, most vulnerable sectors of the global population will increase.

This article was prepared based on this fundamental reflection; it is divided into two sections. In the first section, we analyze the effects of the hyper-crisis of capitalism triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic on one of the foundations of neoliberalism, the paralysis of productive chains and the effects of this on the supply of goods on global markets. The second section examines the pressures the economic and social consequences of the pandemic are exerting on the financial markets, especially in the sovereign and corporate debt segments; without overlooking the fact that uncertainty and restrictions on liquidity are already affecting the functioning of

commercial banks, presaging a rupture in global processes of financialization. Finally, we present some conclusions which will further help analyze this hyper-crisis of global neoliberalism and the network of financial governance.

The Productive Sector, Value Chains, and COVID-19

The crowning achievements of globalization, in the productive sphere, include global production chains whose links are articulated in different parts of the world based on the concordance in levels of productivity of the workforce in the various countries which form the essential parts of the structure. Such chains emerged in response to growing pressures on companies to lower the costs of supplying their products, leading them to design business strategies focused on creating lean manufacturing with hubs via delocalization and subcontracting. An important aspect of this process is that reducing costs depends fundamentally on eliminating or avoiding interruptions in supply chains. In this sense, the paralysis of trade flows produced by the ongoing hyper-crisis of neoliberalism shows that a large majority of global companies have failed to develop logistical strategies to mitigate their risk exposure in relation to the slump in productive activities in the Asian manufacturing sector. This is because, very few international conglomerates are fully aware of the networks and locations of all the companies which provide parts to their direct suppliers, due to their organizational scale (Haren & Simchi-Levy, 2020).

For example, in the textile and garment industry, retailers and marketers of clothing depend on full-package supply networks, in which they buy garments made in Asia from manufacturers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea. When wage levels in those countries rose, man-

ufacturers in East Asia started developing multi-layer global supply networks which allowed them to implement assembly bases in low-wage countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Brand clothing manufacturers tend to create production networks in which garments are assembled using inputs imported from regional production networks. US manufacturers go to Mexico and the Caribbean Basin, while companies from the European Union work more with North Africa and Eastern Europe (Gereffi, 1999; Audet, 2004; Tewari M, 2008).

Now, the paralysis of trade and the contraction of global investment produced by the COVID-19 pandemic is merely reproducing on a larger scale the choking of supply networks in global value chains, which accompanied changes in global productive and commercial leadership.

With the hyper-crisis of global neoliberalism, these networks of manufacturers, differentiated and sustainable in a globalized economy operating without major disruptions, are facing choke points and bottlenecks which slow international production processes, resulting in job losses and slumping levels of global consumption and commerce. The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that the increasingly complex intersecting networks of global supply chains developed without a centralized administrative strategy capable of assessing the potential risks created by an interruption in the supply chain they depend on for essential inputs (Gertz, 2020). In parallel, the war among capitalists to

generate ever-greater earnings has reached a point of saturation, and costs of research and development have risen; meaning that, in many traditional markets and activities, profit margins are far below the levels of the 1990s, when global value chains were in a process of full expansion.

With the opening of economies and the imposition of different export-led growth models (ELGM), global supply chains became differentiated among countries, resulting in a rapid succession of important shifts in positions of leadership in the global economy and trade. On the one hand, capitalist production (based on a wage-earning workforce) in the United States has ceased to be profitable several decades ago; since then, it has operated under a strategy which entailed increasing leveraging by families and companies to maintain domestic demand and consumption (Debt-Led Growth Model). In contrast, China, with its cheap and seemingly inexhaustible workforce, opted for an export-based development strategy (Strongly Export-Led Growth Model). Not only did it become a global manufacturing center; it displaced the U.S. as the global leader in commerce. Now, the paralysis of trade and the contraction of global investment produced by the COVID-19 pandemic is merely reproducing on a larger scale the choking of supply networks in global value chains which accompanied changes in global productive and commercial leadership.

In Latin America, neoliberal globalization consolidated two models of specialization in production and participation in global commerce. The first, adopted in countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, features a heavy reliance on natural-resource-based industries to produce products like vegetable oils, pulp and



(Xinhua/Wang Fei, 2020)

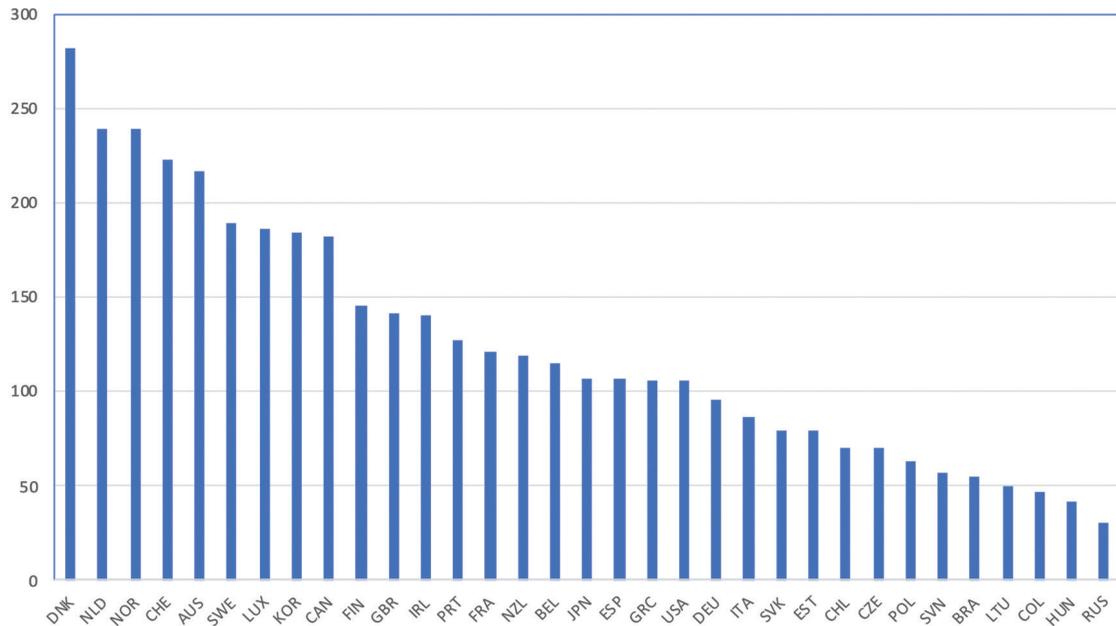
paper, iron and steel, fish meal, aluminum, orange juice, and other goods. Such industries are usually capital intensive and highly automated, using discontinuous-flow production processes and relatively little labor. The second, developed mainly in Mexico and some Central American countries, was characterized by the consolidation of a tendency toward specialization in assembly (contract manufacture) in industries which produce computers, televisions, video players, and garments for export to the United States. These sectors rely heavily on unskilled labor (Katz & Cimoli, 2001)

The industrialization patterns of recent decades produced two modes of participation in international commerce for the economies of Latin America. It is noteworthy that before the COVID-19 pandemic shook the very foundations of neoliberal globalization, Latin American countries had sought to maximize their economic openings through free-trade policies in an attempt to produce a dynamic change in the structure of local production, based on what was seen as the region's natural comparative advan-

tage: cheap unskilled labor (Katz, 2001). This was despite the fact that sectors of the region's export industries produce with low added value. Consequently, the productive specialization of the aforementioned Latin American countries was associated with two different forms of subordinate insertion in global commerce. In the case of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, commercial integration was accomplished through what is known as the Weakly Export-Led Growth Model; this did not lead to significant changes in their traditional productive structure, but did produce substantial external imbalances. In the case of Mexico and some countries in Central America, commercial development was based on a Debt-Led Growth Model, in which policies of stabilization and financial deregulation facilitated a massive influx of capital. This, through indebtedness, sustained private consumption (Lavoie & Stockhammer, 2012; Hein & Mundt, 2012).

These models of commercial insertion have led to a polarization of manufacturing production. The first pole of production rests on the sector of micro-small and medium-sized businesses which produce consumer goods of low capital intensity for domestic consumption; the second pole is made up of large multinational corporations which produce raw materials (iron and steel) and/or products assembled in the contract manufacturing (maquiladora) industry (e.g. computers, automobiles) for export. This produces highly differentiated growth rates, which in turn reflect the varying elasticities of demand on the domestic and foreign markets. The factor common to productive specialization and insertion of Latin American countries in international trade circuits is the precariousness of work. This became the basis for these states'

Figure 1: Total Household Debt (% of net disposable income)



Graphic 1: Figures are for the latest available year (2015–2018).

Source: OECD, National Accounts Statistics: National Accounts at a Glance. OECD: <https://stats.oecd.org/>

competitiveness, which explains the substantial contraction in consumer goods at the global level since the 1970s.

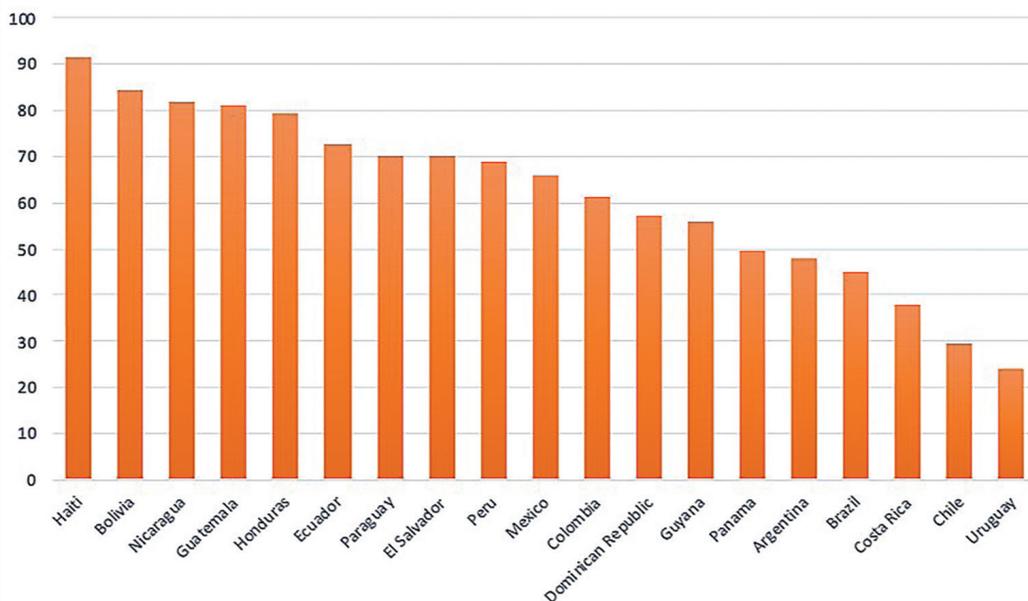
From a broad perspective, the pandemic crisis has shown that consumption as an engine of growth, based on global production processes, has very narrow limits. On the one hand, the purchasing power of workers in developed countries is associated with their capacity for indebtedness. In most cases, the total debt of households greatly exceeds their total disposable income (Figure 1). In developing countries, boosting demand among the working class depends on their economies being able to increase formal employment to build a consumer base similar to those of developed countries, and

thereby to establish sustainable debt mechanisms for wage earners to drive the growth of domestic consumption.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020), around 6.7% of all jobs are expected to be lost in the second half of 2020 as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19; this is equivalent to 195 million full-time workers.¹ This in turn will cause a massive spike in household debt in relation to income, triggering a sharp drop in private consumption, especially among low-income, high-debt households. For example, “the bottom 90% of households by net wealth represents more than 72% of outstanding debt in the U.S., but controls less than 15% of financial assets” (IIF, 2020a). Thus, lower-income

¹ The ILO estimates this figure based on variations in working hours; it reflects both layoffs and other temporary reductions in working time.

Figure 2: Informal Employment in Latin America (% by country)



Graphic 2: Figures are for the latest available year (2012–2018). Informal employment includes own-account workers outside the formal sector, contributing family workers, employers and members of producers' cooperatives in the informal sector, and employees without formal contracts. This harmonized series on informality is derived from processing national household survey microdata files using a consistent approach. Source: ILOSTAT

families are more vulnerable to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Latin America, the direct impact of the pandemic on the job market is an upturn in levels of informal employment. While at present, 60% of the economically active population already depend on the informal economy, massive layoffs – some of which have already begun, and more are anticipated – will increase pressures on the job market, and by extension levels of informal employment. With the loss of jobs in the formal economy, consumption will fall even further from the levels seen before the pandemic (Figure 2).

Financial Markets, Financialization, and COVID-19

Another pillar of neoliberal capitalism shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic is the global network of financial markets; particularly sovereign and corporate debt markets, and, by immediate contagion, private banking. In other words, the basic network of institutions of neoliberal financial governance on which global financialization has relied over the last 40 years. This is understood as the unbalanced relationship between the financial and real sectors of economies, which has been identified within globalized capitalism as the tendency for the value of transactions in the financial sector to greatly exceed

the value created in the real sector (Toporovski, 2000; Epstein, 2005; Bellamy & Magdoff, 2009; Lapavitsas, 2011). This gap has widened as policies of financial liberalization and deregulation – encouraged under the Washington Consensus by the pillars of global financial governance, the IMF, OECD, and IIF – were complemented by the opening of capital accounts, favoring the global movement of capital and the execution of cross-border financial transactions.

Under neoliberal globalization, financial transactions – purchases of instruments, debt, and loans for purposes other than production or commerce – have gained a never-before-seen autonomy from the real sector.

Following this approach, the interrelationships between financial markets, institutions, and instruments were linked to a system which depended for its smooth functioning on the existence of exchange stability; sufficient liquidity in the interbank market; and low, stable exchange rates which would permit both validation of debts and payments and the valuation of portfolio investments in the financial market.

Under neoliberal globalization, financial transactions – purchases of instruments, debt, and loans for purposes other than production or commerce – not only gained a never-before-seen autonomy from the real sector. They became a source of speculative earnings for large investors and global companies able to benefit from movements of capital and their effects on interest and exchange rates; variables which directly impact the behavior of prices of stocks, securities, and credit. At the other extreme, in the case of work-

ers, the global persistence of informal employment, which comprised almost 50% of the total active workforce, and inequalities of earnings between the top executives of large companies and the lowest salaries of the rest of the workforce, were compounded by other phenomena which boosted indebtedness among workers and their families. The relocation of companies and policies of labor flexibilization, based on outsourcing, exacerbated the loss of collective bargaining capacity and contributed to the weakening of job markets; this in turn caused a cheapening of labor and a drop in its share of salaries in global income from the levels seen in the 1980s. Thus, families with formal jobs increasingly took on debt as a complementary means of maintaining their level of consumption (ILO, 2008; 2011, 2013; 2017).

In the global financial crisis of 2008, the bursting of the real-estate bubble was first felt in banking circles. Due to the ties among intermediaries (mortgage, commercial, and investment banks, and institutional investors), this evolved into a crisis which dragged down the leading banks in developed countries and their institutional investors (insurance companies, investment funds, and pension funds). With the collapse of the network of bank obligations and the disappearance of liquidity in interbank markets, the crisis spread to the real sector, affecting all companies which had made investments in structured products, collateralized debt obligations (CDOs), and other derivatives (swaps, forwards, options, etc.), or which had taken part in processes of securitization; that is, debt transfer strategies which were incorporated in packages tradable on the stock exchange.

In fact, the world economy never overcame the effects of the 2008 crisis. To a great extent, the funds from government bailouts and mon-

etary policies of quantitative easing, whose goal was to boost liquidity in markets by increasing bank reserves, served instead to clean the balance sheets of large intermediaries affected by the crisis. There followed a round of mergers and acquisitions in the global banking industry, augmenting its international concentration. Thus, the assets of the world's 10 largest banks – 4 of them Chinese, 1 Japanese, 2 American, 1 English, and 2 French – add up to U.S.\$28.54 trillion (Kim, 2016; Rao-Nicholson & Salaber, 2016). Amid widespread job losses and the closure of companies resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, past-due loan portfolios of the highly concentrated international banks will increase exponentially, affecting their financial gains and the availability of credit to productive sectors. This will not only contribute to the ongoing global recession and stagnation, but also erode the already precarious stability of international financial systems.

Unlike the 2008 financial crisis, the present hyper-crisis of neoliberalism has seen the composition of debt shift from bank credit to bonds. As a result, the fundamental uncertainty in financial activities today is produced by the high levels of debt in the form of bonds. This has sowed panic among large investors, who do not expect that in the short or medium term, their issuers – corporate and sovereign debt – will be able to redeem their obligations; even more so when the long-term outlook (between three and five years) does not include forecasts which allow them to anticipate achieving a minimum balance between risk and yield.

Amid the current hyper-crisis, obligations in the form of government and corporate bonds are collapsing because there are no prospects for long-term profitability for investment funds and large institutional investors worldwide. There-

fore, on the one hand, problems of public liquidity are increasing as governments have had to make extraordinary expenditures on healthcare and unemployment benefits; on the other hand, corporate revenues are falling due to supply bottlenecks in global value chains and the paralysis of global trade, combined with falling demand due to layoffs and confinements. This has reduced opportunities to diversify investments to their lowest possible level.

The evolution of debt figures between 2008 and 2019 is more than illustrative. In this period, global government debt doubled, reaching U.S.\$70 trillion, while non-financial corporate debt reached U.S.\$74 trillion. Considering all economic sectors, in 2019 alone debt rose by U.S.\$10 trillion to reach U.S.\$255 trillion, almost 322% of global GDP. One could only anticipate the further exacerbation of these conditions in the post-coronavirus period.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, growth of debt through issuance of sovereign and corporate bonds has also been significant, reaffirming the subordination of real-sector activities to the flows of liquidity between global financial centers. The region's sovereign debt rose from U.S.\$10.2 billion to U.S.\$42.4 billion between 2008 and 2019, and corporate debt surged from U.S.\$8.8 billion to U.S.\$72.6 billion in the same period. Most importantly, the average gross public debt of central governments

This is critical because, to sustain the financial lines of support to business, governments have to trade sovereign bonds, since parts of their central bank reserves are invested in government debt issued by other countries.

throughout the region grew to 44.8% of GDP in 2019, an increase of 14.4 percentage points compared to 30.4% of GDP in 2008 (IIF, 2020b; ECLAC, 2019, CEPAL, 2020).

Governments and corporations face different problems. The former are experiencing rising fiscal deficits and financial demands to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, implying a new wave of sovereign debt which, in a context of contracting global liquidity, means greater stresses on global securities markets and reduced access to liquidity on secondary markets.

This is critical because, to sustain the financial lines of support to business, governments have to trade sovereign bonds, since parts of their central bank reserves are invested in government debt issued by other countries. The problem is that such debt is being sold at the same time as higher-risk variable-income assets. Consequently, the guarantees for government loans, which allow companies to acquire debt on the financial markets, cannot be enforced; in other words, they must be written off and the resulting losses will then appear on government balance sheets, giving a further boost to the spike in all countries' sovereign debt.

In the case of corporate debt, the core problem is that corporate fixed-income securities tend to be more closely correlated to stocks. Therefore, when stocks lose value, historically bonds also fall, and high-yield bonds tend to drop (credit spreads expand) much more than investment-grade bonds (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018; Çelik, Demirtaş & Isaksson, 2020). In this context, even commodities like gold have not been spared from massive sales and falling prices. Therefore, the risks of investments other than sovereign and corporate debt are also extremely high as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For corporate debt, an additional risk derives from economic and financial damage to supply chains. This results from potential insolvency preventing clients from paying their debts and uncertainty in establishing credible contracts in terms of compliance between companies, suppliers, and clients. In addition, prices for insurance policies and premiums corresponding to commercial hedging strategies will reach unsustainable levels.

In the context of a highly concentrated global banking sector – which, combined with securities exchanges, is another of the operational pillars of financialization – the instability of bank revenues, derived from noncompliance with contractual terms for debt and payments between banking intermediaries and large companies, exposes the fragility of access to liquidity in the global banking market. Due to the damage the COVID-19 pandemic is inflicting on the payment capacity of debtors, whether companies or families, the quality of bank assets will diminish as banks' revenue streams dry up due to defaults on payments and falling fees and rates. The harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic range from loss in value of companies' fixed assets and sales, loss of family earnings, and unemployment, to lower consumer spending on retail businesses.

Even if interest rates remain low, any increase in loan volumes may result in higher delinquent portfolios for banks. Thus, bank losses will rise in parallel to the problems of other sectors of the economy: small businesses, tourism, hotels, entertainment, and air transportation. A substantial slowdown in investment banking activity is also to be expected due to the cancellation of investment projects by companies in global manufacturing, wholesale commerce, aviation, and energy; particularly the oil and gas sector, which is immersed in an ongoing crisis that has had an unprecedented impact on production and prices.

As a result, the cumulative structural imbalances between the real and financial sectors in the wake of the 2008 crisis have merely been augmented by the slowdown in business activity, rise in unemployment, and loss of earnings resulting from the impact of COVID-19 on all sectors of the economy. Thus, the harm to economic activity is global. Advanced economies are expected to suffer an average GDP contraction of 6.1% (6.0% for the U.S., 7.5% for the Eurozone). For emerging markets and developing economies, anticipated losses are in the order of 0.1%; in Latin America and the Caribbean, GDP is expected to fall by 5.3% (CEPAL, 2020).

The tensions COVID-19 has created in the network that has supported financialization in the economies of countries, businesses, and families, have various impacts. Based on the scale of the damage caused to financial markets, we can expect to see further questioning of the institutions in the financial arena which have supported neoliberal governance and its policies of financial deregulation and liberalization, fomenting cross-border financial businesses which produced massive speculative gains to the detriment of the real sectors of economies. The process began with banking and non-banking financial intermediaries expanding their operations without seeing massive flows of financing and funding for investments in the areas of production and circulation. Then came the deregulation of operations, with financial instruments and securities used for acquisition of assets with debt; not to increase installed capacity, diversify markets, or increase investment volumes, but so that large companies could have financial assets on their balance sheets with which to speculate at times of greater financial instability and reduction in global liquidity.

Also, funding of operations on markets for debt instruments with government guarantees

will be tested, to the extent that such guarantees will prove unenforceable and be added to ballooning public debt and financial obligations assumed by governments. Thus, the obligation of states to operate on the basis of tax surpluses is losing the positive economic meaning which the institutions of global financial governance gave it for decades. Now more than ever it is crucial to recognize the need for fiscal spending and monetary policies to be subject not to the dogma of a balanced budget, but the real need for economic growth.

In this sense, the results of efforts to reactivate the global economy are uncertain; they will depend on the world's ability to create a strategy for economic growth different from that which preceded the hyper-crisis of neoliberal capitalism triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions

For at least 40 years, globalization favored the consolidation of neoliberalism, which found in the creation of global value chains and the opening of national economies: the perfect means to differentiate countries' spaces of reproduction in productive and commercial terms. Most developed countries made global commercial networks and control of markets the source of expansion and profitability for their companies. However, emerging and developing countries – with some exceptions in emerging countries which rapidly took the lead in productive industry and commerce – assumed subordinate roles in supply networks within those chains and focused on producing raw materials or products with low added value. Against this backdrop, the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the breakdown of lines of communication in global governance, especially in supply chains between developed and developing countries which sus-

tained global value chains. This will exponentially boost unemployment and plunge into insolvency households which have maintained their level of spending by taking on debt.

But the COVID-19 crisis is also torpedoing the functioning of financial markets; further revealing the limits of financialization, which were already visible in the crisis of 2008. The immediate economic perspective prefigures severe problems for sovereign and corporate debt markets, but also for the commercial banking sector: to face the crisis, governments are increasing their sovereign debt even more and corporate securities are rapidly losing value on debt markets worldwide. In both cases, a temporary restoration of liquidity is limited to issuing large volumes of debt. In a context of uncertain recovery, falling investment, failing businesses, massive job losses, and falling family income, this is causing the crisis to shift from the real to the financial sector as levels of insolvency rise.

The potential solution to this hyper-crisis of neoliberal capitalism should be a new development strategy based on domestic markets, which globalization has relegated to industrial specialization dictated by needs for supplies in highly profitable production chains in developed countries. This is despite the fact that domestic production costs may initially be higher than those achieved to date in globalized production. Growing domestic markets is at loggerheads with the interests of huge, highly concentrated, and centralized globalized companies, which have no ties to the development strategies of nation states. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has cast doubt on the criteria of efficiency of international competitiveness and has once more underscored the need to make the economic development of nations the fundamental goal of public policy.

The challenges are daunting. On the one hand, the financial architecture must be rede-

signed to reverse the supremacy of the financial sector over the real sector of the economy, which requires giving global finance new content. On the other, the prevailing contradictions of neoliberal governance, in terms of the tensions between the needs of major global economic players and the international workers' struggle for better living conditions, must be exploited: this hyper-crisis of global neoliberalism will force us to redefine the structure of income distribution between capitalists and workers for the remainder of the 21st century. 🌱

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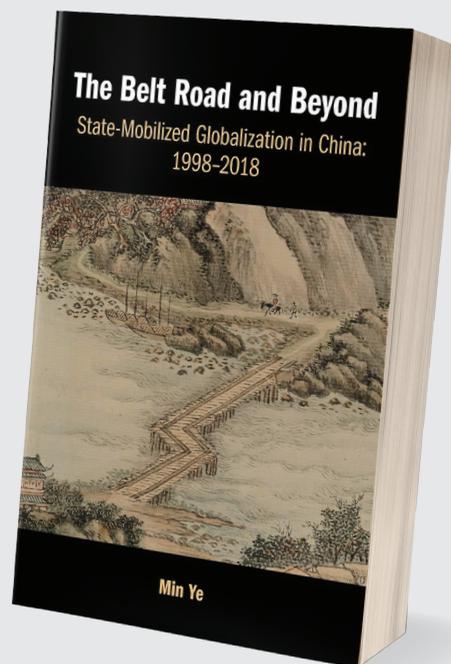
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VICTOR MANUEL ISIDRO LUNA

Victor Manuel Isidro Luna is an instructor in the School of Economics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He obtained a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Utah (2013) and has numerous articles in journals such as Journal of Economic Issues, World Review of Political Economy, and Ecos de Economía. His main areas of interest are development banks, BRICS, and the role of money in development.

Email: u0559410@uofutah.onmicrosoft.com



THIS BOOK EXPLORES THE CHINESE MODEL of development by reference to the notion of “coordinated-capitalist state”. The author of the book, Min Ye, associates China’s model with the “state-mobilized globalization” (SMG) formula. According to Ye, over the last 20 years, China has witnessed a unique interaction between economic and political actors. In the first place, political leaders formulate certain strategies, and then economic actors such as private and state companies as well as subnational entities interpret these strategies in an attempt to achieve economic growth following market rules. All the actors involved in this process share three underlying values: nationalism, competition in the market, and a common quest for economic growth. The book addresses three national initiatives: the western development program (WDP), the China Goes Global (CGG) strategy, and the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI).

Chapter 1 makes the case for three crucial observations revolving around the SMG. Firstly, it shows that China’s above-mentioned national strategies have been proposed in response to a number of economic challenges: shrinking exports, loss-making state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and industrial overcapacities. Secondly, it describes the SMG, which is a process led by market forces and integrated by interactions between political and economic actors. After national political leaders propose overall strategies, private and state-owned enterprises as well as subnational entities interpret them in accordance with their own interests. Even though certain conflicts among actors may exist, what unites them is a strong commitment to economic growth. Finally, the chapter contrasts the difference between the SMG and other growth models: state capitalism, liberal economy, coordinated markets, and developmental state.

Chapter 2 focuses on interactions among the main actors of the SMG, China’s available resources for carrying out projects, and an empirical de-

scription of the three national initiatives. The process of the SMG starts with the announcement of ambitious and often ambiguous proposals by political leaders. The proposals are then interpreted by commercial actors, which, through the market, results in feedback on the adequacy of the policies for a fragmented bureaucracy. The process of the SMG is circular and conflictive, but in the end, it frequently leads to harmonious results. The resources for carrying out projects are provided by taxing economic growth. All the actors involved in these projects agree on taxation as a source of funding as long as the wealth of the country is increased. Finally, the author explains how the WDP, the CGG, and the BRI –initiated in 1999, 2000, and 2013, respectively– have followed the SMG patterns described above.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the initiative of the western development program (1999). This program was implemented in view of: (1) the economic backwardness of western China, (2) the political objectives of Chinese leaders throughout the 1990s and (3) major events that shaped the global economy in the 1990s. First of all, western China has historically lagged behind the coastal region in terms of industrialization, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and foreign direct investment (FDI). Second, during the 1990s, political leaders emphasized the western economic development and the need for infrastructural development in the region. Finally, external events included the following: the Asian financial crisis and China’s entry into the World Trade Organization, which encouraged the restructuring of Chinese’s state-owned enterprises.

Chapter 4 takes into account the mobilization of outbound FDI through SOEs under the policy of CGG, which started in 2000. This policy was implemented in response to several economic challenges in China (industrial overcapacity, substantial nonperforming loans, and SOE losses), the initiative of Chinese authorities, the mobilization

of subnational governments, and the restructuring of SOEs. After 2007, Chinese outbound FDI increased, especially to the US.

Chapter 5 describes the Belt and Road Initiative established in 2013. This initiative is mainly driven by the consequences of the 2007-2008 crisis, the ideas of Chinese authorities, and China's search for development and security. Antecedents of the BRI were Chinese authorities' proposal for a Chinese Marshall Plan and the building of in road and maritime infrastructure in Asia and Eurasia. Even though this policy can be thought of as an international initiative, it is also dedicated to domestic development. Whereas BRI targets political leaders' goals with respect to foreign and domestic policies, moreover, different local actors mobilize their resources to boost their exports or solve problems of overcapacity.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe the local actors' interpretation of central government policies and the implementation of diverse strategies to take advantage of China's subnational territorial specificities and market opportunities. Chapter 6 describes the experience of three cities: Chongquin, Ningbo, and Wenzhou. The three cities have implemented different strategies for development and they have also pursued different goals. According to the author, the development strategy in Chongquin is state capitalism, whereas Ningbo pursued a model developmental state. Wenzhou drew on the liberal market model. These cities also prioritized different sectors and different degrees of public-private partnerships: SOEs, state banks, and highly politicized local governments in Chongquin; strong local bureaucracies in Ningbo; and private companies in Wenzhou. Chapter 7 outlines how private companies as well as SOEs have always pursued commercial interests in adjusting to the process of increasing capital mobility and exploring overseas expansion.

Finally, Chapter 8 revisits the book's arguments in light of a number of crucial issues: the relevance of relationship between the state and

the market in the process of development; the relationship between the accelerated process of globalization in China over the last 20 years and liberal democracy; the centrality of political power in China; and the uniqueness of China's model of development using the ambiguous mandates of political authorities combined with the strong participation of local entities.

Overall, this book is well documented and also provides vivid and context-rich descriptions of the political economy of Chinese companies and cities. In my opinion, two major contributions of this book are: (1) the comparison in Chapter 2 of the Chinese model (SMG) with other developmental models; and (2) the neat explanation in Chapters 6 and 7 of the complementary relationship between the micro agents (companies, fragmented bureaucracies, and subnational entities) and the macro initiatives in promoting growth. Other important issues are addressed in the book, but they could have been explored in greater depth. For example, the possibility of China reforming new global institutions is omitted in Chapter 8; however, the US and China are, today, the most powerful countries in the world, and, thus, China's role in shaping new institutions may be inevitable. Given the gravity of certain social and economic problems in today's world, it is desirable that leading countries such as China participate in the construction of a new international order, as highlighted by Tutan (2019-20), or in security issues, as has been singled out by Chen (2020). Finally, another worldwide concern that the book could have taken into account is the cultural aspects of China influencing initiatives such as the BRI. 🌐

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THE INTERNATIONAL VALUE OF THE VICTORY OF THE TURKISH NATIONAL ARMY*

*Translation to Turkish: Emrah Alan***



GAO JUNYU



Gao Junyu 高君宇 (1896-1925), Marxist, a student leader. Gao Junyu was the Leader of the Beijing University Student Union during the May 4 youth movement. In 1920, he was the founder of the United Marxist Theory Research Association and Deng Zhongfu 邓中复. Later, he became a member of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. Gao Junyu was elected to the central committee in the first congress of the Chinese Socialist Youth Association in 1922. He was also a member of the Central Committee in the Second and Third Congresses of the Chinese Communist Party. He died of a disease in Beijing in 1925. Gao Junyu, who was very productive despite his young age, has compiled and published many articles.

* This letter was published in the 3rd issue of the Xiangdao Zhoukan (向导周报) weekly magazine on September 27, 1922.

** Translated from Turkish to English by Işıkğün Akfırat and Deniz Eren Erişen.

THE VICTORY OF THE ARMY OF Ankara Government has swept away the Greek forces, the representative of British imperialism, from eastern Symrna. This is a major event in near world history, its importance lies in its international impact: it has started a new phase for the oppressed nations. Turkey's victory was neither a victory of Muslims against Christians nor a triumph of the yellow race against the white race. It is the victory of the oppressed Turkish nation against the occupation of European imperialism. It is clear that this is a punishment on great powers inflicted by the Ankara Government. For years under the pressure, oppression and humiliation of European imperialism, Turkey almost could not even breathe. Ordinary people thought that the fate of the country was on the knife edge of great powers so that even enthusiastic and promising Young Turks believed that the concentration of the occupying forces were completed, and it was impossible to overcome these trenches. As a result, the Ottomans were begging for mercy in the arms of imperialism. However, with the strong resistance of Mustafa Kemal in the past three years, they have won an unexpected great victory. No matter what steps Kemal will take in the future, his current situation is determinable: Turkey, being its hands tied for a long time, now does have a hope for liberation from imperialist oppression. This would also encourage, inspire most the oppressed nations that face similar experiences and call them for resisting against imperialism in the same way. At least, this would encourage Egyptian and Indian independence movements, enable them to reach broader masses and hence empower their campaigns.

This victory has hit the biggest blow to the British imperialism. Paris newspapers were say-

Britain has long been depending on the plunder of the oppressed nations of the East "From Gibraltar to Hong Kong" preserves its oppression by means of looting.

ing that the defeat of Greece is the defeat of Britain, which is true. After Britain has defeated the Central European Union, with the power of treaty on their hand, they hired Greece as hitman on the one hand, and increased the level of destruction on Turkey and gained economic privileges inch by inch on the other hand. Yet now those privileges are on the rocks. Britain would not tolerate American imperialism, with hatred and envy, to seize Mesopotamia's mineral oil. Mineral oil is an essential means for the development of the empire. In the same vein, the statements of "Freedom to the Strait of Tartary" and "Open the Doors of China" are serving for the interests of British imperialism. Britain has long been depending on the plunder of the oppressed nations of the East "From Gibraltar to Hong Kong" preserves its oppression by means of looting. Even though Britain relies for keeping the entire path open on her pirate forces to attack all around madly, these interests are now being shaken. The most critical issue is the freedom of the straits. If the Britain get "brought to her heels", British imperialism would not only lose in Turkey, but this would also end her superiority (in the east of the Suez Canal); and, as a result, Britain would not be able to control colonies and oppressed nations in the East (including feudal settlements in Greater China¹) so comfortably. This is an event that would put British imperialism in the tears of a painful loss, and no wonder that Lloyd George

would tear his hair out and announce that he will send troops. However, we are asking, except possible potential minor conflicts with the Turkish military, is it possible for Britain to declare a war against the Turkish army? It is not possible. Britain's post-war wounds, ready to break out in their colonies, American and French and Japanese imperialism putting their noses into these affairs; this whole situation would not allow Britain to focus on Turkish forces. Even though England is well-off, the workers of the country has already begun to look for ways to stop the war. Such a force will put a pressure on the military activities of British imperialism. Events that took place before the Soviet Revolution might be used as preliminary evidence. Therefore, as a result, Britain is obliged to find a peaceful solution with Turkey sooner or later.

This victory will show to all the oppressed nations that only Soviet Russia is the faithful friend who will help for Turkey's liberation.

After the war, French imperialism supported the Petite Entente² Union in order to establish its hegemony in Europe, on the other hand, and did not accept Britain's power in the East, so signed an agreement with Ankara on its own. A couple of years later, this structure, also called an Anglo-French alliance, broke into pieces. The only thing left was that two imperialists are looking

into each other's eyes and uttering war threats. Attacking British interests is precisely what will fully comfort French imperialism. Some think that France is not helping England because of its agreement with Ankara, which is not valid. We all know that Mustafa Kemal's success in such success is thanks to the support of the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks want the workers to take power in the same way they want the oppressed nations to get rid of imperialism. Of course, the conservative French politicians will oppose it to death, so they will also feel anger and envy in Ankara's victory. Moreover, while oppressed nations are uprising and preparing to attack one of the imperialist powers, how does France not consider to put Turkey in the line? France would not cooperate with England for a while; the crack between them is extensive and in-depth. This victory will show to all the oppressed nations that only Soviet Russia is the faithful friend who will help for Turkey's liberation.

The world trend after the European war is, on the one hand, that the imperialist countries are slowly collapsing into a violent conflict, and on the other hand, the unification of workers, oppressed nations, and colonies. If we look at the state of England after the Turkish victory, these two trends would be further enlightened. Let's be optimistic.

NOTE: The translator inserted footnotes for a better understanding of the text. 🌸

¹ The concept of Greater China refers to all areas where there are Chinese culture and presence outside of the China mainland.
² Small Union. Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia found this trilateral alliance in 1920-21.

The Views of Chinese Revolutionary Gao Junyu on the Turkish Revolution

EMRAH ALAN*

“THE VICTORY OF THE ANKARA Government’s Army has wiped out the forces of the representative of British imperialism -Greece- in the east of Smyrna. This is a major event in near world history, its importance lies in its international impact: it has started a new phase for the oppressed nations. Turkey’s victory was neither a victory of Muslims against Christians nor a triumph of the yellow race against the white race. It is the victory of the oppressed Turkish nation against the occupation of European imperialism.”

It might be assumed that these remarks are made by a Turkish patriot, revolutionary. However, these words belong to a supporter of the Turkish Independence War, who lived in China, ten thousand kilometers away from Anatolia. Gao Junyu高君宇 titled his article “The International Value of the Victory of the Turkish National Army” which was featured in Weekly Guide (Xiangdao 向导) on 27 September 1922. Gao Junyu was a young revolutionist, only 26 years old at that time.

I Am the Sword, I Am the Spark

Gao Junyu was born in the Jingle country of Shanxi province in 1896. His father, Gao Peitian (高配天), was a wealthy and intellectual person. He was a strong supporter of Sun Yat-Sen and he served for the office of the local government established after the 1911 Revolution. By the influence of intellectual environment around him, his father prepared Gao Junyu for the exams of Taiyang Model High School (太原模范中学校), a newly launched school that offer modern education. After passing the exams, Gao Yu made it to the school and graduated from there.

In 1916, he passed the entrance exams of Peking University (北京大学), which was considered an important center of new cultural movements spreading Marxism. He found himself in the intellectual environment of Peking University. The progressive and revolutionary journals he read, such as New Youth (新青年), Morning Post (晨报), Weekly Review (每周评论) inspired him greatly, and he developed a keen interest in Marxism.

* Emrah Alan completed his undergraduate degree at Marmara University, Department of History. He is a graduate student at Beijing University, Department of History of Chinese Studies. His studies mostly focuses on Ancient China’s foreign relations. Email: alanemrah@gmail.com

I am a sword, I am a spark, I wish to live shining, like lightning. And I want to die like swift as a comet.

In 1919, he became the student representative of Peking University. The same year, he was one of the youth leaders pouring in Tiananmen Square for protesting against Japanese Imperialism on 4 May. The 4 May Movement is a milestone in the Chinese history. It is one of the culminating points of the idea that China must struggle against its internal and external enemies as one. May 4, 1919, regarded as the New Democracy Revolution of China, is also celebrated as Youth Day every year in China. As regards its causes and outcomes, the 4 May Movement has many similarities with Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Samsun on May 19, 1919, the emblematic moment of the Turkish Independence War.

Gao Junyu joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1921. He was elected as an executive member of the Central Committee of China Socialist Youth League during its founding congress in 1922. He was also elected as a Central Committee member of CPC in the Second and Third National Congresses.

In 1924, the Party appointed him as the secretary of Sun Yat-Sen.

He passed away in Beijing in 1925 due to tuberculosis, when he was only 29 years old. His premature death is one of the greatest losses of the Chinese Revolution. China has lost a jewel at a young age, but a spark was extinguished. Gao Junyu's tomb is located in Taoran Pavillion Park (陶然亭公园) in Beijing.

Like a revolutionist in the 1920s, he was interested in writing and reading poetry. The best words that describe Gao Junyu also belong to himself:

我是宝剑，我是火花，我愿生如雷电之耀亮，我愿死如彗星之迅忽。

I am a sword, I am a spark, I wish to live like shining, like lightning. And I want to die like swift as a comet.

After his death, these words engraved on his tombstone by Shi Pingmei (石评梅), his lover and famous writer.

Despite his young age, Gao Junyu was a prolific writer. All his articles have been compiled and published several times.

The Turkish Revolution Has Been Made Against Imperialism

There has been conducted various research on the international effects of the Turkish War of Independence especially on the oppressed nations. After the victory, the impact of the Turkish War of Independence has reached far beyond Anatolia. All the countries who confronted imperialism from Egypt to India, and China, have closely examined this great historical event. As a Chinese revolutionary, Gan Junyu was closely following the developments concerning the imperialist nations and the movements who struggle against imperialism in order to find solutions to the problems of his own country. Only two weeks after The Great Offensive (Turkish: Büyük Taarruz) was completed successfully and Izmir was liberated on September 9, 1922, the article titled "The International Value of Victory of the Turkish National Army" was published ten thousand kilometers away from Izmir. This is a concrete proof that

This would also encourage, inspire most the oppressed nations that face similar experiences and call them for resisting against imperialism in the same way. At least, this would encourage Egyptian and Indian independence movements by enabling them to reach broader masses and rendering them empowered.

the Chinese revolutionaries were following the Turkish War of Independence very closely.

In this article, Gao Junyu clearly describes the scope and the impact as well as the fronts of the Turkish War of Independence:

“No matter what steps Kemal will take in the future, his condition in the present may be determined: Turkey, being its hands tied for a long time, now does have a hope for liberation from imperialist oppression. This would also encourage, inspire most the oppressed nations that face similar experiences and call them for resisting against imperialism in the same way. At least, this would encourage Egyptian and Indian independence movements by enabling them to reach broader masses and rendering them empowered. This victory has hit the biggest blow to the British imperialism. Paris newspapers were saying that the defeat of Greece is the defeat of Britain, which is true.”

Considering that even some circles in Turkey today are trying hard to reduce the importance of the Turkish War of Independence to simply mere Turkish-Greek war, it is important that Gao Junyu was able to see the situa-

tion in 1922 as it was, ten thousand kilometers away from Anatolia.

In the period leading to the liberation of Istanbul after the Great Victory, the possibility of a conflict with Britain was being discussed in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Gao Junyu's analysis echoed that of Mustafa Kemal and clarified that Britain has no strength whatsoever to fight.

“We should ask whether it is possible for Great Britain to declare war to the Turkish army, even though the station troops in the straits may engage in minor conflicts with the Turkish army. It may be said that this is impossible. After World War I, the situation of the colonies is unstable, and United States, French, and Japanese imperialisms would not allow Britain to focus on the military strength of Turkey. Even though Britain is a well-off country, British workers are already looking for ways to stop the war, and this kind of force would certainly put pressure on the military actions of British imperialism. The events that took place before the Soviet Revolution can be used as preliminary evidence. Therefore, Britain is obliged to find a peaceful solution with Turkey, sooner or later.”

Looking from today's perspective, one may think that these observations are rather insignificant. However, considering that there were few people who saw the situation that way even in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the importance of these observations might be better understood. The history has proved that Mustafa Kemal and Gao Junyu were right. 🌸

**Yunus Emre Institute President
Prof. Dr. Şeref ATEŞ:**

COVID-19 HUB Raises the Awareness of the Entire World Against the Corona Pandemic¹



Prof. Dr. Şeref Ateş was born in Malatya in 1964. His teenager years passed both in Turkey and in Germany. After completing his undergraduate degree at Selçuk University, he started his academic career at Gazi University. Ateş completed his master and PhD in Ankara University, Faculty of Language and History-Geography, Western Languages and Literatures. He then completed his second PhD at Marburg University in Germany. His academic career continues in various universities and research institutions both in Turkey and abroad. Prof. Dr. Şeref Ateş has participated in several national and international projects. After becoming professor in 2011, he continued his professional career at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Sakarya University. Moreover, he serves as the President of Yunus Emre Institute since 2016. Professor Dr. Şeref Ateş's areas of expertise include international relations, cultural diplomacy science diplomacy, civilization and art, media communication, multiculturalism, cultural politics Turkish language education and non-governmental organizations (NGO). He has published several articles in the national and international arena. He also plays an active role in numerous scientific and social institutions. He is married and the father of four children.

¹ This interview (by Deniz Renkveren from trdergisi.com) was retrieved from <https://covid19.tabipacademy.com/2020/04/28/covid-19-hub-raises-the-awareness-of-the-entire-world-against-corona-pandemic/> and published with the approval of the Yunus Emre Institute.

Yunus Emre Institute has established a site called COVID-19 HUB in order to support the fight against the corona pandemic affecting the entire world within the scope of the Academic and Scientific Cooperation Project of Turkey (TABIP) executed by the Institute under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey. Conveying the developments regarding the measures taken against the coronavirus and the treatment methods used, the site is uniting the experiences of scientists and technology developers from all over the world. Thus, the enriched pool of knowledge is presented to the benefit of the world. COVID-19 HUB incorporates not only medicine and sciences but also the perspective of human sciences such as psychology and sociology and administrative and economic sciences such as economics into its solution-oriented approach. Being one of the best examples of the helping hand extended by Turkey to the entire world in the fight against the coronavirus, COVID-19 HUB is proving that the only way of sorting out global problems affecting the entire world such as pandemics is unconditional mutual assistance.

Yunus Emre Institute has established a portal named COVID-19 HUB in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. What is the aim of this portal? Who is the target audience of the site? What is the content thereof?

As Yunus Emre Institute, we have launched a website called covid19.tabipacademy.com in order to support Turkish and foreign scientists fighting against the new type coronavirus pandemic threatening our country and the world alike. The site has different categories such as medicine, vaccine development, drug use, the use of artificial intelligence, test kits, respirators, face masks, biology, chemistry, technology, sociology, and economics. Under these categories, we are publishing the latest developments on the corona pandemic. We have also built an ecosystem. In this way, we would like to reach engineers, pharmacists, scientists as well as those who want to invest in medical equipment. In order to be a part of the solution, we aim to convey the most accurate information assembled from the best sources to the doctors, scientists, medi-

cal equipment manufacturers and all people racing against time to save the lives of patients, and to accelerate their studies. Considering the information pollution on the internet, COVID 19 HUB has been positioned as a site replete with academic and scientific publications and news articles to contain no baseless, false or speculative elements.

Culture Asks Why While Science Asks How

We are rather used to hearing Turkish language and culture-art projects from Yunus Emre Institute. A project related to COVID-19 HUB is actually a project beyond expectations. Why is Yunus Emre Institute executing such a project?

As Yunus Emre Institute, we are generating culture and science. We are connecting with people around the world through culture and science. Culture has more than 850 definitions. One of these definitions draws attention to the role of culture in making sense of incidents and processes. More importantly, culture seeks the

answer to the question of why. Science looks for the answer to the question of how. Considering the example of coronavirus, science asks questions such as “How did the virus appear?”, “How many days does it take to complete its development?”, and “Where does it spread?”. In other words, it usually looks for the answer to the question of how.

While launching such a site within the framework of TABIP, we are focusing on how we respond to this universal problem faced by humanity and why we respond in that particular way instead of another one.

On the other hand, culture is a much broader concept and takes on a much broader meaning considering humanity as a whole. The question “What does this virus pandemic mean?” is important for the culture. This question concerns us directly as a cultural institution. While launching such a site within the framework of TABIP, we are focusing on how we respond to this universal problem faced by humanity and why we respond in that particular way instead of another one. Therefore, instead of telling people, “read this, read that”, we are acting in a particular manner. Maybe this may sound surprising but how we act against and how we respond to difficulties is the most important mental heritage that we leave to future generations and our cultural memory shapes it. In other words, our current behaviors and emotions will be a part of our future cultural heritage. For this reason, we are trying to contribute to the solution of this problem for the benefit of humanity by using the TABIP portal, the TABIP team, and the 58 centers of Yunus Emre Institute.

A Disaster Gave A Great Lesson to the World

The current system of the world is a power-based system. Accordingly, a power-based hierarchy was established in international and intranational relations. Generations raised within this hierarchy are shaped according to this hierarchy during their socialization processes. This criterion of social hierarchy, which is prevalent all over the world, does not consider and question the nature and reason of power. Even if it is disturbed, it accepts this as data. Education systems also strive to train people accordingly. The role of science here is mostly to reveal only the ways of achieving the assigned goal or, in other words, embracing the power and to devise appropriate technologies. So, “why” will we achieve this power? What will we do with this “power”? The answer to this question is usually explained by competition, which is decisive in international relations. There is a famous saying: “If you pity others or show compassion, you will fall into a state of pity and compassion.”

In this international system created and designed depending on the concept of power, it does not matter what your religion, race, or gender is, whether you are Western or Eastern or what your ideological or political priorities and colors are. Any means devised for achieving power follow a rising trend within national boundaries or in international communities. To achieve such power, it is legitimate and necessary to use any means from the arms industry to building an energy corridor, from monopolizing in certain sectors to media campaigns you will develop to defeat your opponents, from unethical behaviors to surrounding your borders with walls or wire fences and establishing diplomatic alliances.

In this equation, the opposite of power is always defined as a weakness. However, power is questioned in our cultural codes. We are considering the adventure of becoming a person as a process leading to embarking on the world from the womb. We know that human beings must be born out of themselves in order to have a smooth transition from becoming a person to humanity. Our greatest test is the assumption that power belongs to us. Therefore, we constantly say “*lā hawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-llāh* – *There is no power nor strength except by Allah*”. The purpose of this is to purge one of “power” and to put him/her in his/her place. The freest people are those who can purify their minds from power. They always put weakness against or to the opposite of power in order to legitimize power. However, this is a big mistake. There is compassion, not weakness, in the face of power because power enslaves its holder. S/he sacrifices everything in order not to lose it. In the universe, there is power at the heart of every movement, every occurrence, and change. It is not possible to move on without power. But this power is not ours, its holder is the great will also covering us. Power is also granted to us within causality. Just as a woman suffers great distress and difficulties and brings a human being to the world from her womb, and yet does not carry any power in herself, one should also use the power entrusted to him/her mercifully. Having knowledge, money, or authority, all of them, make us powerful.

The greatest freedom is to get rid of power. Power gives its holder a sense of ownership. Mercy naturalizes man and makes him/her feel that s/he is part of the universe s/he lives in. In our culture, whether a person remains human or whether s/he is born out of himself/herself and turns into a human being is concluded by whether power or mercy outweighs in his/her relations with three different factors.

What are these three relations?

The first of these three relations is the relation of man with himself/herself. How does one see his/her own body, soul, and essence and how does s/he act? What is the predominant factor: mercy or power? Secondly, what is prevalent in the relation of man with other people? Is it power or mercy? Finally, is there mercy or power in the relation of man with nature and the environment? In order to know and differentiate a person, one must look at these three relations. What is decisive in all relations, irrespective of being horizontal or vertical is how we make use of the power that we think belongs to us.

If you approach things only from the perspective of science, the collective consciousness of humanity cannot make any progress at all because science does not ask “why”. When faced with a problem, science only asks this question: “How can I sort it out?” Science also produces weapons that are capable of destroying people. Science can produce both the coronavirus and its drug because science only asks “how” while solving the problems. Science generates whatever its ruler – employer – wants. The level of consciousness that will make science ask “why” to its employer is culture. Consciousness is the subject of culture. Culture always raises the question of “why” when building consciousness. Purge is not rejecting power or putting weakness against



it, but placing “mercy” against power. Mercy is what it takes to understand that every creature is connected with each other and unique. Culture gives meaning to incidents, situations, attitudes, and processes. It seeks the reason for everything. According to the understanding of power, what is small does not matter. However, we have observed through the outbreak of this virus that even the most powerful weapons cannot eliminate such a small impact. The breath we inhale 24 thousand times every day on average is the most important power as we clearly see today.

The Concept of Power Replaced by Fellowship in International Relations

Does COVID-19 HUB only deal with people’s survival against the coronavirus or does it also address economic, political, psychological, and sociological problems that occur or may occur worldwide after the pandemic?

These issues are also among our categories and especially developments regarding the social and individual impacts of the coronavirus will be present on our site. What we call as culture comes into play here. As a cultural institution, the Yunus Emre Institute is directly interested in the question of how these developments will be reflected in international relations. Will power-centered relations prevail in international relations? Unfortunately, the coronavirus is doing what people cannot do and uniting all people regardless of religion, language and race because this virus is “opening the eye of the heart” just like old people used to say or, in other words, creating the eye of contemplation. In this sense, the little virus is making us question our relationship with ourselves. It allows you to listen to yourself and turn into yourself. Thirdly, it makes one question his/her relationship with

the people s/he lives with because international relations have always been considered to be power-centered up to now. What Yunus Emre Institute is doing is called “soft power”. In fact, power is impure or, in other words, not humane. As Yunus Emre Institute, we have always told about it but how real it manifests itself now. In my opinion, this pandemic is eliminating the concept of the power of international relations. Neither the USA nor China, the superpowers of the world, can solve this problem because there used to be a power-centered order of international relations. In this respect, the virus stopped all these powers.

This virus eliminated both international and interpersonal competition. In other words, we have turned into follows, not rivals. We actually accompany each other in this fight because “I can live when I protect you”.

In other words, this whole system of relationships with people is being redefined. There was a mentality of competition in international relations. Following World War II, international relations were based on a completely hard-featured competition. In order to adapt to this competition, each individual was seen as an opponent to another one. This virus eliminated both international and interpersonal competition. In other words, we have turned into follows, not rivals. We actually accompany each other in this fight because “I can live when I protect you”. States are at this stage now. As an initial response, all states closed their borders, but they will have to open them 6 months later. Enemies will have to protect each other. In this regard, the virus

requires a holistic approach. From a cultural point of view, all of our routines have turned upside down. Everything based on show-off and all our showcases has been destroyed. Therefore, the phrase “Memento mori” (“remember that you must die”) commonly used in Europe once upon a time when faced with major difficulties is reminding one of the holism of life. Right now, people are facing their inner worlds they never want to meet. We must understand this as regards the cultural aspect of the problem.



Every country across the world is using different methods in tackling the coronavirus. There are also some disagreements among physicians because there is no clear-cut treatment for this disease yet. Different drugs and methods may be used in both the prevention of transmission and the treatment of the disease. Will COVID-19 HUB help with comparing these methods and finding the most accurate methods? How will this contribute to combating the pandemic worldwide, especially technology development and drug development processes?

As Yunus Emre Institute, our particular goal is to show that Turkey, the Turkish culture and, especially, Turkish people are working for all people. While doing that, we must share this knowledge with each other. Scientists can generate solutions if everyone shares their knowledge.

We have an ecosystem within the COVID-19 HUB: The site brings together technology developers and scientists. Thus, we are looking for a solution together with the stakeholders in our country and abroad because a single developer cannot achieve it by itself. This is the most basic modus operandi in this ecosystem. In other words, Turkey can be certainly a part or a stakeholder of the solution. COVID-19 HUB is a site bringing together not only scientists but also stakeholders.

We are sharing all our experiences with the world and we are also sharing experiences in other countries such as the USA and China. We are sharing experiences in different countries. As the coronavirus spreads quickly, the solution must also be a rapid one. By ensuring quick information flow, we are supporting both practitioners and those treating the disease. We are offering this opportunity to scientists, researchers, manufacturers, and engineers in a freeway.

Our second social contribution can be summarized as follows: We are receiving electronic mails from the individuals infected with this disease or treated for this disease from all around the world through which they are sharing their experiences.

In the second stage, we will also share them if they give consent. This subjective experience and perception are very precious. Each individual can have a tackling method against the disease developed with both his/her personal and cultural richness and perspective. These experiences can inspire other people. When they see that they are fighting against the same enemy, the thought and belief of coexistence crossing borders and languages can develop among people. In this respect, we believe that those who want to share their individual experiences will make an ethical contribution to common human knowledge. We also

think that these experiences will help all patients see what must be taken into consideration.

Are there any special teams working for the COVID-19 HUB?

8-10 of our own staff are working for the COVID-19 HUB. Apart from that, we are in constant contact with both scientists and the members of TABIP scientific committee. There are also people who support us on a voluntary basis. We are also talking to people working in the field of medicine and drug development. We would like to make a contribution to all people across the world even if it is the slightest one. Culture is identified by the intention forming the basis of each behavior especially from how we respond in the face of the most difficult times to how we manage the relevant processes. Therefore, culture is a way of doing things. At this stage, we consider COVID-19, which is a problem for all humanity, as a case study within the framework of TABIP because we, as TABIP, see the science generated in Turkey as the common heritage of humanity. For this reason, we are sharing our knowledge with all people without considering any of them as a rival. Likewise, we also believe that the knowledge and experiences in the world should be shared with other nations.

Do you foresee any collaboration with international organizations for the COVID-19 HUB?

As the entire world is tackling with this virus, these collaborations are only going on through the digital environment as institutions in western countries and our Institute have introduced the working from home model. We are still discussing these collaborations. We will continue to maintain our collaborations all

over the world. At the moment, lots of promotional materials are being published in many countries especially including those in both the western world and Arab geography. We are also planning to launch concrete collaborations with research institutes and universities in the upcoming period.

Is it planned to develop a mobile application for the COVID-19 HUB?

COVID-19 HUB has been renewed every day and new developments have been added to the site since it was released about 10 days ago. Data is being updated on an hourly basis. Of course, both its design and technological infrastructure are being constantly developed. Work on the mobile platform is going on.

When the corona pandemic loses its significance, will the COVID-19 HUB be used to tackle other pandemics? What is the broader function and purpose of this site?

The peculiarity of COVID-19 is that it threatens the whole world. The mortality rates of former pandemics such as Ebola and SARS affecting some countries were much higher. Since the balance in nature is constantly changing from a cultural perspective, I always express this phrase in parentheses: science answers the question “how” while culture answers the question “why”. If the question of why is not answered, new viruses come up because nature encompasses such imbalances. The international system is a part of the universe so we have to strive to read this book of the universe. In other words, unless we read the message of the universe, new viruses will emerge in the future in the long or short run. Maybe there will be more

dangerous viruses than this because we must answer the question “why”. In this respect, unfortunately, we will have to continue operating this site, and even now, it is assumed that it will take 18 months to complete vaccination development studies. Therefore, we will continue to meet this need.

No Discrimination in Turkish Healthcare System

What is the place of Turkey in the fight against the coronavirus across the world? How do you evaluate the work done by authorities, especially the Ministry of Health?

Turkey has taken it seriously since its inception. We have had the great advantage of Turkey’s very advanced healthcare system. Besides, the social nature of the state has become prominent in Turkey’s healthcare sector. The procedures intended for diagnosing and treating the coronavirus are free of charge, unlike most developed countries. In this sense, Turkey has a social security system open to not a certain segment of the society, but the entire society. This is the biggest advantage for Turkey. Secondly, we do not seem to have any problems with preventive healthcare equipment, respirators and the intensive care units of hospitals. Another important aspect is that all healthcare professionals in Turkey are composed of the top quality and intelligent individuals of Turkey. This is also a huge advantage. For around 40 years, Turkey has directed its high-achieving individuals towards the healthcare system depending on its university admission exams through which a social screening and filtering is performed. Thus, we have a highly-qualified human resource base that can quickly adapt to any emerging situation, build networks among themselves and ra-

pidly generate medical solutions to any problem. This is our biggest advantage. We may not have been so successful in any other field or sector. The number of deaths has escalated in European countries due to the lack of respirators. As long as the number of intubated patients does not go over a certain threshold, we have no problem in terms of respirators. In other words, we are self-sufficient. Therefore, the number of patients should not increase anymore. Again, culture is very important: Our nation has a great advantage as individuals support and helps each other.

If Man Flourishes, the State Will Also Flourish

As you have mentioned, we see that Turkey is in a good position especially in terms of medical equipment and hospitals. Likewise, this is also reflected abroad in the form of medical aid. How do you comment on the helping hand extended by Turkey to Spain, Israel, the UK, and Balkans at a time where humanity is in a dire situation as a whole?

This is very valuable for us and it is the most important feature that distinguishes us from other cultures. We do not do this for showing off, we do it since we believe in it because we have a saying “Either exists as you are, or be as you look” and this thought summarizes our basic approach. If we have an essential material that can be useful for humanity, we always share it. This is the basic approach of the state because if man flourishes, the state will also flourish. This person may be Turkish, Arab, or English, which makes no difference. We see all humanity as a single entity in this sense. For this reason, we are very pleased to see many positive feedbacks for our colleagues from a myriad of countries from the UK to Poland. 🌸

Dilek Uyar (Photography Artist)



After milking, shepherd's effort to bring the herd back to pasture and their dusty journey. (Bitlis)

Dilek Uyar was born in 1976 in Çanakkale. She completed her undergraduate degree at Gazi University Faculty of Law and her master degree at Gazi University in Work and Social Security Law. She has been working as an attorney at Ankara Bar Association since 2000. She is married and mother of two children. As a photographer she has many worldwide awards such as; Praiseworthy Photographer by Sony World Photography Awards in 2017, World Prize in the 2017 by National Geographic (I became the second Turkish and the first Turkish female photographer to bring this degree to our country), First prize in the Black & White category of the Travel Photographer Society in 2018, First prize in Documentary category of 1x International Photography Contest in 2018, In the 2018 IPA International Photography Awards; 1 Sub Category First prize, 2 Sub Category Honorable Mention, 1 Category first prize. Also she is the first and only Turkish photographer to be one of the 12 finalists nominated for the "Discovery of Year" as the Photographer of the Year, third place in 2019 in SIENA International Photo Awards and she is winner of the 2020 Sony World Photo Awards National Category. She is the only Turkish photographer who is one of the 13 photographers from all over the world who are entitled to take part in the exhibition organized by the United Nations on the importance of water. The exhibition met with the audience in New York and Paris. She has also been present with her photographs in the exhibition of the Gulnara Samoliva in USA, which has been nominated for Pulitzer. She is still working on her cancer and abortion projects within the scope of social responsibility.

