

The world after the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are some signs of a shift of paradigm, including the sudden disappearance of the wall ideology: a cough was enough to suddenly make it impossible to avoid the responsibility that each individual has towards all living beings for the simple fact that it is part of this world, and of the desire to be part of it. The whole is always involved in part, because everything is, in a sense, in everything and in nature there are no autonomous regions that are an exception.

The virus seems to restore the supremacy that once belonged to politics. One of the virtues of the virus is its ability to generate a more sober idea of freedom: to be free means to do what needs to be done in a specific situation.

The world after the COVID-19 pandemic

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are some signs of a shift of paradigm, including the sudden disappearance of the “wall” ideology: “a cough was enough to make it suddenly impossible to evade the responsibility that each individual has towards all living beings for the simple fact of (still...) being part of this world, and of wanting to be part of it”. (Foucault, Agamben, and Benvenuto 2020) The whole is always involved in part, that "everything is, in certain sense, in everything" and that in nature there are no autonomous regions that are an exception. In nature there is no "dominion within another", according to Spinoza. (Spinoza 2019) The epidemic leads to the creation of red zones, internal isolation and the militarization of territories, but here “the wall has a completely different meaning compared to the walls the rich build to keep out the poor. A wall is being erected for the other, whoever she or he may be”. (M. Foucault, Agamben, and Benvenuto 2020) Ronchi believes that these walls are erected to replace handshakes, they are a means of communication, not a sign of exclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitates the application of pragmatic intelligence to govern, as far as possible, the spontaneity of a process that takes place against our intentions. The political command will have to assume specific responsibility. it will have to take precedence over the economy.

In addition, the virus invites us to meditate on our fragility. He has the ability to generate a more sober idea of freedom: to be free means to do what needs to be done in a specific situation.

The famous French philosopher Bruno Latour wrote an essay for the *AOC* newspaper, *Imaginer les gestes-barrières contre le retour à la production d'avant-crise*, stating that this lesson is “the most amazing: we have actually shown that it is possible, in a few weeks, to stop all economic systems in the world...” (Latour 2020)

Bruno Latour considers this epidemic to be a huge opportunity for us to learn; a huge experiment. Viruses are in us, and we will have to learn to live with them.

Epidemic isolation has forced us all to retreat into ourselves through introspection. The questions we asked ourselves developed a different way of thinking about how they would create a different future than the one we had foreseen.

The pandemic has shown us how quickly we can become infected globally. An incredible demonstration of network theory and the power of virality. This implies a fusion, in a sense, between the individual and the collective.

The pandemic has reopened the debate about what is necessary and what is possible, what is useful and what is not. We will not have to change the production system, but to replace it completely. Bruno Latour states that if he had enough power, he would first and foremost change the production system on an ecological basis.

At the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, (Arènes 2020) the sphere of human existence was defined as the "critical zone", a narrow band of Earth that can support life, including only a few kilometers thick - above and below the Earth's surface. In light of this concept, you can be an escapee trying to escape from this area, like Elon Musk, or a captive. but for us captives, resources are limited. We have to take care of what we have, because it's finished.

This seems to add a political limit to James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis (J. Lovelock 2001) which explains how "Life" acts to protect itself. Compared to the infinity of worlds preached by science, Lovelock, together with Margulis, (J. E. Lovelock and Margulis 1974) proved that the Earth is unique because it has life. Bruno Latour considers the confirmation of the idea of the two as his greatest discovery of this period, although not yet accepted by mainstream science. In this

sense, the shift of paradigm from Aristotelian cosmology to Galileo is just as important as from Galileo to Gaia. (Sfetcu 2020)

Buheji and Ahmed highlight the opportunities and possible positive effects generated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Buheji, Ahmed, and Ahmed 2020) and the relationship between the crisis and the global societies of extreme capitalism. They summarized the respective ideas in two tables:

Visible and hidden socio-economic opportunities of the crisis (COVID-19) - Opportunities: (Buheji, Ahmed, and Ahmed 2020)

Visible Opportunities	Hidden Opportunities
Beyond Technology Advancement	Controlling & Balancing the Growth Model
Rise of Safety-Entrepreneurship	Controlling Diverting Socio-economic Development
Understanding the Fragility of Capital Economy	Controlling Resilience Attentions
Understanding the Importance of World Harmony	Getting to Work Out of Comfort-Zone
Communication Model	Enhancing Sharing Economy
Importance of Self-Sufficiency	New Insights of livelihood and Welfare Promotion
Synergy and Community Solidarity	Eliminating the Threats of AI Domination
Intrinsic Power	Enhancing Community Capacity
Importance of Credibility and Transparency	Living with Minimalist Mindset
Value of Physical Contact	Enhancing Curiosity Economy
The Rise of Epidemiology	Re-establishing Our Spiritual & Social-Being

Visible and hidden socio-economic opportunities of the crisis (COVID-19) - Risks: (Buheji, Ahmed, and Ahmed 2020)

Visible Risks	Hidden Risks
Rise of Cross-infections	Limitation of Human Development Capacity
Risk Inside & Outside Health Center	Being busy with AI while Pathogens are getting sophisticated
Limitation of Isolation facilities	Stagnant Business Models
Increase of Interconnectivity that Spread the Viruses	High-rise Building in Global Cities with Minimal Preparedness
Uncontrolled Human Apatite & Desire	Non-availability of Global Agreed Risk Management Framework
Free Market Hostility	Low Competence in Solving Socio-economic Complex Problems

The authors conclude that the next 20-30 years would be the age of change towards greater dependence on intrinsic powers. In addition, due to the challenge of cross-infections, a new trend could be triggered that affects all types of lifestyle industry. Humanity needs most today not extrinsic powers, but rather intrinsic powers that come from within, but the current mentality driven by the capital economy is not yet ready to accept this choice, being dominated by the lack of need to own and control. (Buheji, Ahmed, and Ahmed 2020)

To address climate change and economic inequality, a set of social and economic reforms (Green New Deal - GND) (Whyte 2019) has been proposed in the United States that combines Roosevelt's economic approach with modern ideas such as renewable energy. and resource efficiency. (Lovell 2008) There are proposals to include the Green New Deal or parts of it in the US COVID-19 pandemic recovery program (Gilliland 2020) and in the European Union, in April 2020, the European Parliament called for the inclusion of the European Green Agreement in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery program. (European Parliament 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a global paradigm shift, with a strong impact on the global economy and sustainable development scenarios. According to Contipelli, the pandemic highlighted the weakness of current governments, poverty, fragile health and education systems and the lack of international cooperation. (Contipelli and Picciau 2020) Possible future crises cannot be solved with the same economic and social models. Deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change maximize the likelihood of other pandemics occurring in the future. Contipelli believes that more needs to be invested in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure and funding new research and development, reforestation, coral reef restoration, regenerative agriculture, sustainable fishing, etc. A sustainable post-pandemic future will exist only through

international agreements to reduce emissions and increase finance for sustainable development. (Bastian, Jetten, and Chen 2013)

Manoj Kr. Bhusal, in *The World After COVID-19: An Opportunity For a New Beginning*, argues that the world after COVID-19 will be "different and difficult one, with unprecedented economic hardships and rampant social anxieties" (Bhusal 2020) We now have a chance to reflect and review our system, and to come up with a fairer alternative. COVID-19 will shape our economic and political future and leave a profound cultural and psychological impact. COVID-19 will shake global power structures in a disordered and multipolar post-pandemic world.

China has proven its effectiveness (Waterson and Kuo 2020) given that, according to Ikenberry, the liberal hegemonic order led by the Americans has already been threatened during the George W. Bush administration. (Ikenberry 2012) Bhusal predicts that the two countries will isolate themselves to serve their own interests, and trade wars and the race for supremacy will intensify. As China is not yet fit and ready to lead the world, with a divided European Union, and more emerging but powerless powers, we will witness a new international order that is not very orderly.

The idea of a multipolar world is an older one, being considered by some to be more stable. (Amin 2006) Haass proposes the idea of non-polarity, without a center (nation states, corporations and non-governmental organizations) controlling or dominating any other center. (Haass 2020, 44–56)

It is possible to develop an increase in repressive regimes and powerful people in some countries, with dictators taking advantage of this pandemic to concentrate power, with Bhusal citing Viktor Orban in Hungary as the first EU dictator. (Kelly 2020)

Modern technologies already allow almost total pandemic-motivated surveillance, such as smartphones in China, (Xu Elegant and Chandler 2020) facial recognition in Russia, (Ball 2020) police robots in Tunisia, (Jawad 2020) drones in India (Poovanna 2020) or smart bracelets in South Korea. (Cole 2020) These practices will continue after the pandemic, extending abusively to spying on political opponents or suppressing dissent. Thus, the pandemic will fundamentally change the way information services operate. In this regard, Yuval Noah Harari recently wrote:

“As a thought experiment, consider a hypothetical government that demands that every citizen wears a biometric bracelet that monitors body temperature and heart-rate 24 hours a day. The resulting data is hoarded and analyzed by government algorithms. The algorithms will know that you are sick even before you know it, and they will also know where you have been, and who you have met.” (Harari 2020)

Bhusal notes that, although instability, global conflicts (United Nations 2020) and poverty will increase, (Picheta 2020) we will not witness the end of globalization. Capitalism and globalization will survive, but multilateralism and global cooperation will fail miserably, reducing international development cooperation activities.

The practices adopted during the "quarantine" period (telework, online school and telemedicine) will be normal activities. The digital world and automation in the production and services sector will develop exponentially, redefining consumer behavior.

Bhusal concludes that

"Most of the problems that we have witnessed during this pandemic, however, are not caused by COVID-19 itself, but by dysfunctional political and social systems built on the foundation of neoliberal corporate capitalism. In that sense, COVID-19 is a wake-up call for a historical retrospection. Hence, the ultimate task of humankind, in the aftermath of this crisis, is to reject patchwork on neoliberal corporate capitalism and construct an alternative system that will be just, inclusive and fair for the many." (Bhusal 2020)

Noam Chomsky emphasizes social issues and questions the contradictions of the Western political system and the varying degrees of importance given to each crisis, depending on who suffers from it. (Chomsky, Pollin, and Polychroniou 2020) (Redacción MAPFRE 2020) He

emphasizes the socio-economic problems that, in his opinion, are products of neoliberalism, and our lack of foresight when it comes to protecting us against a pandemic. But he believes that we have a chance for society to reorganize into a better society. Chomsky insists on the implementation of the Green New Deal, a pact to reduce social inequalities and combat climate change. Chomsky says that "there is no profit in prevention", and that is why we did not invest in it. The concept of "black swan" developed in 2007 by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, (Taleb 2007) which refers to totally unpredictable events, should have been taken into account.

According to Rocco Ronchi, in *Le virtù del virus*, if the virus has the characteristic of an event, it must also possess its "virtue" (a force, a property, a vision, that is, they do something). An event is always traumatic, producing transformations and generating "real" possibilities. The "virtue" of an event thus consists in making possible operational methods, methods that "before" were simply impossible, unimaginable. (Ronchi 2020) In this sense, the "COVID-19 event" shows signs of paradigm shift, the most obvious being the sudden disappearance of the ideology related to "walls". It teaches us that in nature there are no autonomous regions that are an exception. The epidemic leads to zonal isolations, but here the wall has a different meaning than the one that separates the rich from the poor. Here, "your neighbor" is radically reduced to the size of "anyone."

The virus seems to restore the supremacy that once belonged to politics. According to a metaphor by Ronchi, the very hypothesis of domination is ridiculed by a cough in Wuhan. In this sense, "COVID-19 also possesses this virtue: it commands politics to assume its specific responsibility, it restores the primacy that politics has illusively left to other sovereign spheres, becoming subordinate to them, declaring its own impotence and limiting to play an exclusively technical role". (Ronchi 2020)

Among the virtues of the virus, we can mention its ability to generate a more sober idea of freedom: to be free means to do what needs to be done in a specific situation.

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