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## SOCIOPOLITICAL CRISES IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19

### *Abstract:*

*The subject of this paper is research of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social and political crises world-wide. A special emphasis was put on elaborating interpersonal relations, given that “social distancing” and quarantine were the main measures applied world-wide, with the goal of prevention of spread of this virus. The author examines the changes in the security context as well, especially in light of denial of human rights and strengthening of state powers. The position of extremists and terrorists, who will use the fear caused by this pandemic for a deeper destabilization of contemporary political systems, was also analyzed. The author concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic will generate numerous sociopolitical crises, but that the only rightful response will be the global response, given that we are speaking of a global crisis. It is only a question when the contemporary political subjects will have an ear for such response.*

**Key words:** *Pandemic, COVID-19, crisis, social crisis, political crisis, security, new world order.*

### INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the pandemic caused by coronavirus (COVID-19). From that moment, the entire world faced numerous up-coming challenges which cannot be warned with ease. Despite advances in medicine, highly developed technique and technology, artificial intelligence, financial and military power developed by the contemporary society to a peak, a man has never felt more helpless. It is obvious that we are speaking of a disproportional power distribution between the unknown and invisible enemy (in the form of virus) on one side, and the entire planet on the other.

It seems that no one, not even the richest and the most powerful ones, was prepared for a pandemic of such proportions which, in the real sense of the word, made the entire world pause on March 11. Sooner or later, the majority of countries closed off schools, kindergartens, universities, cinemas, cafes, sports centers, malls, restaurants... The freedom of movement is restricted, states of emergency were introduced, countries sealed their borders, and the story of human rights was reduced to only one right (“meta-right”) – the right to live.

This pandemic has, in the real sense of the world, shown that we are all intertwined by the principle of connected vessels and that we live in a “global village” that is by many called “the new world order”. In the beginning, it seemed that the focus of the pandemic was somewhere far away from us, in Wuhan (China), but soon enough, it turned out that COVID-19 is not picky regarding faith, nation, religion, that it does not know of borders, and that, in the speed of

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light, it transferred to Iran, Italy, Spain, the United States... In Serbia, the first case of coronavirus was registered on March 6, and the state of emergency was introduced on March 19. At the time being, the entire world is still under siege of the invisible enemy, against which there is no weapon but “social distancing”.<sup>1)</sup> It is odd that the contemporary man succeeded in developing 5G network, unmanned aerial vehicles, robots, nano technology, weapons of mass destruction, but still stands bare-handed and powerless before one small, unknown virus.

Many countries were shocked by this new situation. Some, such as Sweden (and in the beginning the Great Britain as well), attempted to introduce the model of “collective immunity” by more or less continuing with their normal lives, without any special restrictions, while others, such as China, introduced the harshest measures of mandatory quarantine and social distancing. It seems that democracy was put to a serious test, since it turned out that, in this confusing situation, the countries to which neoliberalism often taught lessons about “human rights violations” and the democratic value system tend to cope better. It is known that China, even though it was hit first, successfully put the virus under control, while some European health systems (Italy, Spain) experienced a complete collapse.

The coronavirus has raised a number of controversial questions regarding a variety of challenges in the years ahead. It is a fact that this pandemic will lead towards redefining international relations and world politics. Besides human losses, the contemporary world is also facing terrible financial problems which will certainly lead towards economic recession. Based on historical experience, it is well-known that economic crises easily predispose to security and political crises. All the same, the occurrence of this pandemic will also have a strong impact on interpersonal social relations within which certain habits will change, and which will very likely result in restriction of certain rights and freedoms. Are we entering an entirely new era which will change our social and political life for good?

## 1. Social challenges

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus is definitely nothing new in human history. For centuries, the man has been living with viruses, encountering and fighting various diseases and epidemics. Only throughout the twentieth century, pandemics were declared three times (which means that the illness spread on a global level and hit a tremendous amount of people). During the previous century, the Spanish flu, the Asian flu, and the Hong Kong flu had significant social and political consequences in the entire world. The Spanish flu, which ravaged the world from 1919 until 1920, had infected half a billion people worldwide and claimed more than 50 million lives, and is deemed as the deadliest

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<sup>1)</sup> The term “social distancing” was later replaced by the term “physical distancing”, given that the point is not for people to stop contacting among themselves, but to only be physically distanced from each other.

pandemic in the human history (Humphreys 2018, 219). For example, this virus claimed more lives in certain countries than the World War One and the World War Two combined (Riccio 2006, 53).

It might be said that the contemporary world is currently in a kind of a state of war, only this time, we do not possess adequate weapons but the one tested for centuries in such situations – quarantine, that is, physical distancing. Exactly this distancing leads towards crucial changes on a global level when speaking of social context. By all odds, we might expect huge changes in the future regarding interpersonal relations, especially when speaking of communication, socializing and group gathering. The fear for life will, at least for a certain period of time, bear down the need for social contacts, which will possibly have significant implications to the psychophysical health (especially when speaking of the elderly and vulnerable groups of people). The crisis caused by the pandemic will most definitely intensify online communication, but the increasing impact of artificial intelligence as well, and probably the biggest turbulences might be expected on the economic plan, which will bring along certain security and political issues. We will take into consideration each of these issues separately and provide a prediction of possible scenarios as well.

### **1.1 Interpersonal relations**

The most precious thing stolen from us by the coronavirus epidemic regarding interpersonal communication is – a hug. For most of us, the mother's hug was the first experience of touch, which we encounter at birth. Hundreds of studies and scientific papers have been written on the healing effect of a hug. John Bowlby defined the term *affective attachment* in 1969, stating that the child's attachment to the mother is a primary need, such as the need for water or food (Bowlby 1969). Hug is a form of non-verbal communication that gives us a sense of security, warmth and belonging. It is scientifically proven that emotional closeness that a child achieves with the mother in the first years (which includes the mother's embrace) creates the foundation for future emotional relationships we build throughout our lives. This means that a child, if awarded enough attention, warmth, love and embrace from the mother, would later in life have good predispositions for building healthy emotional relations with other people. Of this testify research conducted among children in orphanages that were not awarded with enough love and affection, which later had a very negative impact to their health – they were more prone to certain illnesses and suffered from premature death (Livingston & Smith 2010).

It is interesting that this need is almost identical among people and among animals. Therefore, even animals have the need for intimacy. Scientists have discovered that certain species of monkeys from the *Colobus guereza* family express intimacy in a form of some sort of a hug, which shows benevolent behavior towards

each other (Kutsukake et al. 2006). A similar behavior involving touching the face and hugging was observed in anthropoid monkeys as well.

Even the origin of the word “hug” in different languages points to intimacy, gentleness, acceptance, touching... In English, the word *hug* originated from Saxon and Teutonic words *hog* or *hagen*, translating to – *being gentle, to accept* (Forsell & Åström 2012). The similarity of these words can also be seen in Norwegian (*höggva, haggvan*) as well as in Swedish (*hugga*) words, which also might be translated as “to catch”. Another English word - *embrace*, a synonym of the word *hug*, etymologically originates from the Latin base word *brace*, with a prefix – *em*. The Latin expression *bracchia collo circumdare* is a synonym for hugging, that is “putting one’s arms around someone’s neck” (Forsell & Åström 2012). In Serbian, the word *zagrljaj* is linked to the word *grlo* (throat, neck), which corresponds with the previously mentioned Latin expression “putting one’s arms around someone’s neck”, which in fact means – hugging. Therefore, from the beginning of time, people always had the need to hug each other, as well as to articulate such behavior in an adequate manner.

Throughout history, people often hugged in order to express affection, as a sign of farewell, parting. It might be said that the entire history of humanity is, in a way, a history of hugs. And this chain of hugs is broken due to COVID-19 pandemic. The saddest thing of all is that some were not even able to give the last hug to their loved ones who fell ill, since in that way, they would risk becoming infected as well. From one point, the pandemic impacted the physical distance between people, but at the same time it caused more intense and more emotional connection as well.

## 1.2. Online communication

As a result of social distancing, online communication has intensified even more. For a very short period of time, people started organizing almost all of their activities online – the classes in schools and at universities started being held via internet (with the help of platforms such as Zoom, Webex, etc.), gym exercises are now available on a variety of applications, and meeting new people has long been conducted via certain platforms (Badoo, Tinder...).

The European Commission adopted the education plan via internet due to COVID-19 virus, based on two principles: *online platforms* (eTwinning, Learning Corner, SALTO-YOUTH...) and *EU projects* (Edu Hack, Bio talent, BINGO, Open Mind...).

The coronavirus will drastically transform education, given that even now we have various offers for organizing the so-called digital camps and summer schools which would serve for educating the youth. Does this mean that this virus will last more than we expected?

The World Health Organization passed clear recommendations to people regarding how to behave during the pandemic in all segments of social life. The point is that all possible activities should be reduced to online communication (WHO 2020).

In accordance with the global health crisis, many social networks have started certain research regarding communication during COVID-19 pandemic. Twitter started analyzing communication since January 28 using API and Tweepy streaming with the help of certain key words.<sup>2)</sup> Over 50 million of tweets were collected from this date until March 16, which represents about 450 GB of materials. The majority of tweets were in English (61.76%), in Spanish (13.09%), while in third place were tweets in French (4.36%) (Chen et al. 2020).

### **1.3. Psychological effect of the pandemic**

We should also pay attention to the psychological dimension of the pandemic, given that previous research has shown that every major pandemic leaves certain negative consequences on the life of an individual and the society (Li & Gang 2020). In that context, it is necessary to establish certain programs for psychological intervention, which is already being actively implemented in China, while some countries in the West, such as the Great Britain and the United States, have established clear procedures for psychological crisis intervention in order to address the public health issue.

Given that they were the first to encounter this virus, the Chinese are pioneers in research regarding psychological problems faced by individuals during quarantine as well. The research was conducted on a sample of 120 respondents in 194 cities in China. The impact of the epidemic on psychological state of the respondents is the following: 53,8% of respondents stated that psychological impact of the epidemic on them was mild or difficult; 16,5% of them noted that they faced mild or harsh symptoms of depression; 28,8% of individuals faced mild or harsh symptoms of anxiety, while 8,1% of them reported suffering from a serious amount of stress (Cuiyan et al. 2020).

The newest research showed that this pandemic might cause psychological symptoms, even among individuals who do not suffer from mental illnesses. In the majority of cases, people faced fear of infection and death, feeling of helplessness, but often blamed others who fell ill which, in total, led to development of mental problems. It was discovered that psychiatric morbidities varied from depression, anxiety, to somatic issues, panic attacks, suicides, which were in certain countries predominantly present among the youth, and which are associated with guilt (Ho et al. 2020). Such mental state might have far-reaching consequences for the society in terms of stigmatizing the sick, feelings of shame, creating greater social distance

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<sup>2)</sup> The following key words were used: Coronavirus, Koronavirus, Corona, CDC, Wuhan coronavirus, Wuhan lockdown, Ncov, Wuhan, Kungflu, Epidemic, Outbreak, Sinophobia, China, Covid-19, Corona virus, Covid, Covid19, Sars-cov-2, COVID-19, COVD, Pandemic.

and mutual distrust, but also the distrust that the state system can keep the epidemic under control. In such constellation of interpersonal relations, the economy suffers as well, especially those industries that are associated with mass gatherings (cafes, restaurants, malls, cinemas, theatres...), which results in financial problems that increase the feeling of frustration and negative motions. In Singapore, mental health issues were approached via Zoom application, with the use of behavioral therapy and mentalization-based therapy (MBT). In Serbia, psychotherapists also started with online sessions because an increasing number of people was in need of this type of help.

#### 1.4. Fear in the time of Corona

It is known that man is a creature of fear and that this emotion is very familiar to him. Even the bravest men in the world fear someone or something. The fear of death<sup>3)</sup> is a natural fear, imminent to every man. Sometimes those fears are irrational, and sometimes, such as in the times of pandemics, they are completely justified and rational. So, for example, the British started using the new model of combat against the COVID-19 virus only when new estimates indicated a possible mortality of 260,000 people (Mahase 2020). The fear of death predisposed a new, more strict set of political measures.

The fear of unknown and invisible enemy has made people throughout the planet return to the places from which they originated – they returned to their roots. Just as a wounded beast retreats into a cave in search of a safe haven from the enemy, so the people retreated to their “hiding places”: first to their countries, and then to their homes. The most beautiful (and safest as well) place is home, wherever it is and whatever it may be. The man is “rooted” where he was born, be it in the countryside, in the desert, in the world metropolis, or by the sea, in a fertile plain, or on the top of a harsh mountain. Like a plant, the man has its roots in the place from which he originated, and he often returns to them, especially in the times of a crisis.

It took ten years for more than half a million of people to leave Serbia<sup>4)</sup>, and only a few days for about 400,000 of our citizens to return during the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus! (B92 2020). This serves as another proof that “birds of a feather flock together” in the times of a crisis. Fear of the unknown made people return to their homes from abroad. Some did it due to financial reasons, because they lost their jobs and finances; the others returned in order to be with their families; others realized that, in the times of a crisis, it is best to be

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<sup>3)</sup> If the fear is intensive, then it can become anxiety, that is, thanatophobia.

<sup>4)</sup> According to data provided by OSCE, from 2000 to 2019, a total of 654,000 people, of which the majority younger than 25, left Serbia. Source: Bukvić, Lj. 2019. “Mladi jedini dali predloge za sprečavanje odliva mozgova”. *Danas* 08.05.2019. <https://www.danas.rs/ekonomija/mladi-jedini-dali-predloge-za-sprecavanje-odliva-mozgova/>, 08.04.2020.

amongst your own kind. There are many reasons and many life stories. What they all have in common is – fear.

Besides the fear of unknown, the pandemic generated the fear of the future as well. What will the world be like after the pandemic? Will there be an economic crisis? Will we be hungry? How long will all of this last? Will we survive? Will the world be the same after this pandemic? When will we be able to hug our loved ones?

At first glance (and at least short-term speaking), it seems that people were worried the most about social distancing. Epidemiologists educated us well that the only “remedy” for this virus is – social isolation. The less we socialize, the less we hug, the less we kiss, the virus becomes weaker. In the Aristotelian sense of the word, this is the biggest challenge for a man seen as a *zoon politikon*. As a social (and political) being, one finds the conditions of social isolation difficult and reluctant.<sup>5)</sup> From the first days of their existence, people have been interlinking in order to help each other, for the reasons of safety, existence, defense... The man is a *homo socialis* and as such, he longs for the company of other people. Only rare spiritual individuals succeed in overcoming the human nature and voluntarily isolating themselves from the rest of the world.<sup>6)</sup>

At this moment, when the entire world is waging an uncertain battle against the invisible and unknown enemy (called COVID-19), the fears are numerous. It might be that this fear of uncertainty is the one which bothers the modern man the most. But there is still one thing that, despite social distancing, brings us all together: we have all become the same. This virus has shown that the rich and the poor are the same, that there aren't any differences between the nations, races and religions. We all share the same fate. It sounds as a paradox but, even though we are deprived of social contact, we have never been as close as we are today. The closeness of the contemporary man is reflected precisely in the *communal destiny*, awarded to us by this virus. Apart from fear, the virus taught us of solidarity, but also of the fact that hope dies last and that there is something in a man that has enabled him throughout the long history to overcome various fears carried along by wars, illnesses, floods, fires, financial crises, poverty... that is, the will to live. Like the *Ramonda Nathaliae*<sup>7)</sup> plant which grows in harsh conditions and gives beautiful flowers, and which regenerates even after it completely withers, a man as well in difficult times manages to resist the greatest temptations if he has the will to live.

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<sup>5)</sup> For example, solitary confinement in prisons is regarded as one of the harshest forms of punishment for disobedient prisoners.

<sup>6)</sup> Such example are the monks from Sveta Gora, who retrieve to their cells to pray to the Lord in solitude.

<sup>7)</sup> This plant is also known as *Natalie's ramonda* and the *Phoenix plant*, is the symbol of the Serbian army's struggle during the World War One. The plant was discovered by Sava Petrović, and scientifically described in the field of botany by Josif Pančić. Nathalie's ramonda, as a rare and protected specimen, grows only in Serbia, Northern Macedonia and Greece.

## 2. Political, security and economic challenges

It is more than clear that not one government in the world (including the ones of the richest countries) was not ready for a pandemic of this magnitude. To this testify the best the health systems of Spain and Italy (which are currently the most vulnerable ones in Europe) and the United States. Italy stepped into the COVID-19 pandemic with 5,200 beds in the ICU, which is insufficient for a pandemic of this type (Remuzzi & Remuzzi 2020). As many other countries, the United States faced the lack of medical equipment and respirators, and Donald Trump's advisor even gave a prediction in which, despite all the measures, he predicted the death of 100,000 of Americans (Zurčer 2020). Spain had been saving on public health and medical equipment since the economic crisis of 2008 which, in the midst of this pandemic, resulted in insufficiently developed capacities for intensive care and lack of medical equipment (Ledigo-Quigley et al. 2020).

In terms of state strategies for the fight against this pandemic, the countries were mostly divided into two sides: the majority of them accepted self-isolation measures, that is, physical distancing<sup>8)</sup>, while the minority of them, such as Sweden, favored the principle of “constructing a collective immunity”, that is, “the herd immunity”. There were also the ones who were stuck deciding between the health of their nation and the economy, but as they saw the collapse caused by the coronavirus infection, sooner or later, decided to introduce the principle of isolation.

Apart from drastic changes in interpersonal relations, the coronavirus will also introduce tectonic changes on the international level in terms of redefining international power, security and economy ratio. In the first place, the pandemic showed that the virus does not differentiate nations, religions and races and thus can happen to anyone, without exceptions. Besides that, the distinction between the rich and the poor, the celebrities and common people was blurred as well. We have all become vulnerable. In such constellations of events often starts the real fight for survival, to which there are no rules. The most explicit example is the competition of countries for respirators on the world market (in the beginning of the crisis), which were the only chance for survival of a significant number of the ill.<sup>9)</sup>

Solidarity is a rare occurrence in these times of crisis, but not an impossible one. To this testifies the best the international aid which arrived, first of all, to Italy from China, Russia and Cuba. This caused revolt among many Italians, and thus, it was not unusual to see throughout Italy the flags of China, Russia, and Cuba, as a sign of gratitude, instead of flags of the EU (which, in the beginning, did not help

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<sup>8)</sup> It is believed that people must keep at a distance of two meters, and the prohibition of social contacts, socializing and gathering is recommended as well.

<sup>9)</sup> One of such scandals was also noted in Czech, which confiscated medical equipment sent to Italy by China. Source: RFI. 2020. “Czech Republic sends face masks to Italy after China shipment 'stolen'”. RFI, 22.03.2020. <http://www.rfi.fr/en/europe/20200322-czech-republic-sends-face-masks-to-italy-after-shipment-from-china-stolen-coronavirus>, 13.04.2020.



Italy, as it was expected). In such way, the so-called “soft power” of certain countries is increased, among which China especially stands out, given that it showed solidarity with many countries, including Serbia<sup>10)</sup>. The fact that Russia sent humanitarian aid to the United States in the form of medical equipment in the most critical moment testified to the fact that a crisis can sometimes, even for a moment, bring down ideological and political differences (Al Jazeera 2020).

The fight against the pandemic brought along another very important ideological issue. How is it possible that some “collectivist” countries did better during this pandemic in comparison to some richer countries of neoliberal capitalism? It turned out that public health actually makes a lot of sense and that, in critical situations such as pandemic, the state interventionism remains the only option. It is interesting that, during this health crisis, China, Singapore and South Korea did better, though at the expense of human rights of their citizens. So, in China, there are already apps used by the citizens to prove their health status, which impacts their freedom of movement, and algorithms and artificial intelligence give recommendations regarding the direction and the duration of their movement. Singapore even went one step further by introducing the “TraceTogether” (HealthHub 2020) app which, with the help of the Bluetooth signal, can determine with whom the individual infected with COVID-19 virus contacted. Artificial intelligence also found its use in the fight against the coronavirus, which might be seen on the example of China, where numerous robots conducted significant tasks regarding the care for the infected, and there are also indications that, in the future, robots might be used among the lonely people for their socialization (!?) (Clifford 2020).

In this context, Amnesty International determined several segments of human rights that were directly violated during the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Those are the following: media censorship, right to health protection, prohibition of public expression, fake news, discrimination and xenophobia, restriction of freedom of movement and border closure (Amnesty International 2020).

Introduction of curfews and states of emergency curtailed many human rights and freedoms but, on the other side, caused a significant reduction of number of criminal acts. Specifically, the number of criminal acts conducted in Serbia since the introduction of the state of emergency reduced by 55% (Danas April 8, 2020), but this does not mean that the criminals will not find a new way for conducting certain corruptive actions, trafficking of goods, transport of illegal migrants, etc.

The isolation measures have distanced us from other people, but have made us closer than ever to the members of our household. This has caused another security risk in the form of domestic violence, which significantly intensified during the

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<sup>10)</sup> China sent help in the form of medical equipment and manpower.

pandemic. In China, the domestic violence cases tripled<sup>11)</sup>, in Montenegro, they rose by 20%, and in France by 30% (Danas April 14, 2020). The worrisome statistics in terms of domestic violence is registered in the Great Britain as well, with a 25% (Vesti Online 2020) increase, while in Turkey, an increase of domestic violence cases by 30% was recorded as well (Isik 2020).

The pandemic influenced the spread of “conspiracy theories” for which we are not sure anymore that they are only theories. What is characteristic for them is the fact that they emerge in the conditions of social crises and that they always have “easy solutions during the harsh times”. The following two conflicting views on conspiracy theories emerged during this pandemic:

1. According to the first view, conspiracy theories are not theories but absolute truths.
2. The second view points towards absolute untruthfulness and paranoia of the sympathizers of such theories.

The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, but a temporal distancing is necessary in order to determine this with certainty. The truthfulness is especially put to a big test, having in mind semi-information, news spinning and propaganda flooding the ordinary man on a daily basis. If we look back to the “conspiracy theories” phenomenon, we might notice that they are in fact a cultural phenomenon that culminated in the twentieth and the twenty-first century. When speaking of conspiracy, it is the property of the man since the beginning of the time. The basic element of every conspiracy is the secret, and the goal of the conspirators is usually of a dual character: to help or to hurt someone.<sup>12)</sup> Thus, it is not really unusual that conspiracy is an integral part of many political phenomena such as terrorism, political killings, assassinations, etc. Thus, it is undisputable that the conspiracies exist; however, the problem arises with the phenomenon of the “conspiracy theories” which additionally confuses the contemporary man. Until now, it turned out that, in the ideological sense of a word, “conspiracy theories” are mostly dealt with by the right-wing which, in such way, express additional vigilance towards the group to which they belong (nation, race, religion).

Even though at first glance it seemed (at least in the beginning) that even terrorists and extremists withdrew before the coronavirus, the reality is completely different. The pandemic had consequences even in this segment of security, since terrorists focused on online action, especially when speaking of recruitment of young people who spend more and more time in the virtual space. The fear of corona joined

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<sup>11)</sup> After the pandemic was over, the number of divorces in China increased by 20%. Source: Dekić, Dragana. 2020. “Nasilje kao zaraza”. Vesti Online, 13.04.2020. <https://www.vesti-online.com/nasilje-kao-zaraza/>, 13.04.2020.

<sup>12)</sup> See more in: Simeunović, Dragan. (2009). *Uvod u političku teoriju*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije (pp. 109-110).

hands with the fear of terrorist activities<sup>13)</sup>, which created the feeling of collective anxiety and psychosis among people. Besides, we cannot but ask ourselves – what is the COVID-19 virus serves as an idea for some new form of bioterrorism?

At this point, the humanity stands at the crossroads between human rights and protection of general health. The majority of countries has, by introducing states of emergencies, neglected the idea of human rights, which was the “mother of all ideas” in the countries of neoliberal system. For example, France passed a controversial law on “comprehensive security”, which was met with public condemnation due to the disputed Article 24, which stipulated prohibition of taking photographs of policemen.<sup>14)</sup> Therefore, new rules regarding media reporting were introduced as well, and thus the journalists, if they wished to report from some protest, had to put themselves on a list. How will all this impact the freedom of the media? The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the prohibition of movement, free reporting, breathing air without masks, the freedom of gathering. Is the world steadily going towards neototalitarianism?

For the economy, the COVID-19 crisis definitely carries along the time full of uncertainty and frustration. Small and medium entrepreneurs are the first to be hit, which will definitely suit the big production chains getting ready to swallow everything before them in the future. Even on the global level, there will be numerous challenges. Certain long-term predictions show that the US and the Great Britain will feel long-term deeper effects of the economic crisis, while China has 50% chances of being better (Chudik et al. 2020). The chances for the EU are also negative, even though there is a possibility that it will make a faster and better recovery when compared with the US and the Great Britain by the end of 2021 (Chudik et al. 2020). In any case, spillover of the problems will take on global proportions, reaffirming the well-known paradigm of the world as a “global village”.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic might be the biggest social and political challenge faced by the humanity until now. Even though the human kind was for centuries exposed to various states of crisis such as wars, natural disasters, collapses of world stock markets none of those crises did not hit the humanity at the same time and in the same way. Never was the entire planet stopped at the same moment, by the unknown and invisible enemy, which additionally complicates the situation and makes it more complex.

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<sup>13)</sup> Through brutal attacks world-wide and throughout Europe (France, Austria) in the fall of 2020 the terrorists showed that the crisis caused by the coronavirus suited them, given that it only deepens the fear among the “soft targets”, such as the citizens.

<sup>14)</sup> This would mean that the citizens of France will be punished even if they record police officers during their excessive use of force. For violation of this law, a fine amounting to 45,000 EUR or one year of prison is prescribed.

Maybe exactly due to the fact that it is the problem of a global character should it be resolved in a global manner – by actions of all political subjects, together and unified. This idea seems utopian, having in mind the man’s imperfect and “perishable” nature depicted in the works and speeches of many anthropology pessimists for centuries. Still, even though the situation seems apocalyptic at a first glance, it is evident that, in some odd way, all people will connect when found in the same trouble.

The only question is, in which way will the new crisis be resolved: through constructive global solutions, or through insurgency, protests and mutinies, which is becoming more and more dominant in the world? While we await to exit from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, maybe it might be the best to quote the words of the famous theoretician Ernst Bloch who stated that “the rebellion, as well as dreams, come from the stomach – but an empty one”.

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