

The Dark Side of Covid. A Critical Sociologic Viewpoint

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ABSTRACT

The management of covid pandemic shows relevant collateral effects on society. In fact lockdowns and hyper-hygienic measures aimed to prevent any social interaction are exasperating a complex of psicosocial dynamics that we presume are stressing the transition toward a chaotic post-human era characterized by moltitudes of barbaric, desperate and crazy monads. In other terms, according the brilliant and intuitive baumanian thermodynamic methapora, covid crisis works as catalyzes in the "evaporation" process of post-modernity by exasperating just the psicosocial processes (individualization, desocialization, cultural omologation, videoaddiction, medicalization, health consumerism, etc.) functional to capitalism. From dissolution of society and populistic drift of democracy we could even expect a new age of totalitarianism. Starting from some controverse and questionable diagnostic aspects making pandemic oversized, this critical viewpoint aims to stress how the covid crisis represents a precious opportunity to change urgently the rules of the system in order to prevent the end of society and to save the Planet.

Abbreviations: PCR: Polymerase Chain Reaction; Ct: Cycle Threshold

Introduction

Universally the governments have adopted anti-social and ultra-hygienic measures aimed to counter the spread of covid and prevent the collapse of healthcare system, but also to promote the mass in vivo experimentation of the vaccines [1]. However the dominant epidemic paradigma inspiring lockdowns, closures and suspension of the basic human rights is based on controverse and questionable diagnostic aspects. Today, more than one year after the beginning of the emergence, except for accidental and unexpected beneficial effects on climate, we can observe the amount of collateral effects on society of unsuccessful policies adopted by technocratic governments unprepared and incapable to stem global dangers [2]. Starting from data emerging from a minority literature, I support the idea of an oversized pandemic allowing governments to exploit the crisis in order to consolidate neoliberalistic and autocratic drifts by mean of the fear, and in parallel to divert the attention from the Sustainability issues. In addition many reflections warn us how covid is catalyzing the transition from the late modernity to a post-human condition characterized by moltitudes of barbaric, desperated and crazy monads. These distressing changes makes

this crisis a precious opportunity to urgently change the rules of the system if we want to prevent end of society, onset of a new age of totalitarianism, and to save the Planet

A "Test, Test, Test" Constructed Pandemic

The reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests performed on the general population play a crucial role in the management of covid crisis. In fact this molecular test detecting viral genes from the nasopharyngeal swabs shows a practical accuracy lesser than 90% because of an amount of limits and pitfalls [3]. In particular an eventual positive result in asymptomatic people who has not been in close contact with patients suffering from covid doesn't inform at all about the real infectivity of the subject tested because the most of asymptomatic cases have a minimal viral load and failed in vitro cultures. For this reason rather a qualitative binary result (positive/negative) we need to quantitate the viral load: lower the cycle threshold (Ct) value, higer the viral load and viceversa. If Ct value is over 35 and if only one viral gene out three is amplified it's unlike that an asymptomatic subject can be an infector. Inert viral fragments, cross-reactions toward coronavirus-

like antigens, contamination of reagents during the transportation of samples and “pooling” procession are reported as the most common causes of artifacts [4,5]. Moreover, according to the Bayes’s formula, the ignorance of pre-test probability and prevalence due to mass screenings without scrutiny affects the reliability of the results [4].

In essence the rate of false positive results from mass screenings performed during periods of low prevalence can reach 50% [6]. A study conducted at Whuan on 10 million people reports a rate of false positive results of 36.7%, confirmed by failed viral cultures and lack of immune response [7]. Other studies warn us about epidemic trends inflated by significant amounts of diagnostic errors, only qualitative and non-retested dubious results [8-11]. Paradoxically these errors contribute to overload the healthcare system, apart from the unfair confinement of the subject tested and his close contacts.

Hunt for the Occulted Spreader

Despite a “state-of-war” rhetoric, in the vast majority of cases covid-19 is a silent or a mild flu-like disease, while hospitalization is required for a 10% of patients. A minimum fraction of patients suffering from SARS dies because of older age and/or concomitant debilitating conditions [12-14]. At the present in Italy the presumed victims of covid-19 are 75,891, and in every instant media let us know the daily number of deaths. But likely very few know that annually die 230,000 Italians because of cardiovascular diseases and 180,000 because of cancer (source: ISTAT, 2017). That is most people prematurely die because of environmental and social distress-related pathologies. The representation of covid nullified any other reality; it monopolized information; it is making us forget that the Planet is seriously sick. Among the darkest sides of a disconcertant storytelling has to be included the surprising fact that, whereas the unaware people are believed to be silent infectors, at the same time natural immunity is believed not protective and everybody has to be vaccinated by experimental drugs believed to be not fully effective. In particular, about the asymptomatic transmission of covid data seem quite controversial. In fact, although it is reported an occult viral transmission up to 88% of cases, Yanes-Lane’s group stresses the concept that if PCR Ct value is over 30, viral RNA concentration is below 100,000 copies/ml, and only one gene out of three is amplified, the inter-human transmission of a significant viral load is very unlikely [15].

The most of the close contacts of sick passengers on board of the Diamond Princess cruise ship just resulted covid-free [16]. In large samples of asymptomatic index-cases some studies proved no one secondary infection [17-19]. Early USA CDC guidelines highlighted the uselessness of mass screenings and of testing close contacts of asymptomatic index-cases [20]. [21,22], some observers arise doubts about inappropriate and more and more expansive screening campaigns without scrutiny [23-25]. A Sweden

study documenting a higher mortality rate in countries which in the first wave adopted rigid lockdowns makes us reflecting about the crucial role of good home cares [26].

Gainers and Losers in Times Like This

A part from failure of international cooperation, lack of updated anti-flu protocols, unpreparedness of McDonaldized healthcare systems, covid unmasked the extreme fragility of globalization, so that local events can quickly spread worldwide becoming uncontrolled “black swan”. Now China, USA, Korea, Japan and Western Europe, together accounting for 65% of gross world product, have to face the collateral effects of improvised draconian lockdowns [27-29]. Entire sectors (transportation, tourism, hospitality, sport, culture, housing, catering, leisure) collapsed; families overloaded by the additional costs emerging from closure of the schools and digital tools for remote learning; investments postponed; hirings suspended [30]. Fortunately the air levels of PM, NO₂ and CO₂ decreased in comparison with 2019, despite the incineration of growing volumes of nonrecyclable plastic disposals, making air cleaner and many ecosystems recovered [31,32]. Not by a chance covid hit just the regions where industrialization and urbanization are higher. But if the Planet accidentally and unexpectedly benefits from the recession, covid could even trigger an epochal change by accelerating the end of late modernity. In essence, by destroying society covid heralds a post-human world characterized by swarms of isolated and lonely monads wandering aimlessly. In fact lockdowns, confinements and social distancing are accelerating the atomization of society making more and more fragile, precarious, flexible, fragmented, virtualized the social ties. In a society forced to stay at home, keep a safe distance, avoid encounters, wear a mask, inevitably the residual shreds of solidarity are destined to dissolve.

Following the brilliant and intuitive Bauman’s thermodynamic metaphor, covid risk to “evaporate” a society in an advanced state of liquefaction projecting the humans toward a new chaotic desocialized condition [33]. Digitalization plays a crucial role in making society increasing atomized, hyper-egoic, cultural regressed, and covid is favoring 5G applications making healthcare more and more de-humanized and world capillary surveilled [34]. In addition isolation, solitude, fear, uncertainty, poverty, social distress are spreading worldwide a sort of collective madness [35]. But exploiting the pandemic unelected, populist and technocratic governments are also making people more and more docile, obedient, resigned, omologated, in order to prevent eventual rebellions. And the step from populism to totalitarianism, riding on social disintegration, is very short [36].

Final Considerations

In extreme essence the covid crisis imposes us to try urgently the ways to make economy sustainable, recover democracy, renaturalize the life. By Nemesi Medica (1974) Ivan Illich explained

that the growing complexity of the business-oriented healthcare is socially iatrogenic. More recently Lewis and Maslin (*The Human Planet: how we created the Anthropocene*; 2018) and Harari (*Homo Deus*; 2015) documented how from artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, bioengineering, robotics, 5G applications can be generated unpredictable and uncontrolled catastrophic reactions. But was Karl Marx in the far 1864 to predict that the capitalist system would be implosed just because of own ontologic unsustainability, and likely the covid will increase more and more the distance also from the targets fixed by the 2015 Paris Agreement.

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