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CROSS-NATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN A PANDEMIC

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Abstract. *The ever-decreasing danger of coronavirus infection is forcing scientists from various fields of science to unite to assess not only the medical and epidemiological consequences of the development of this strange disease, but also social and socio-cultural changes in society. In this regard, it becomes necessary to summarize and understand the resource capabilities of various scientific areas to identify both general and specific aspects of the transformation of organizational culture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why the authors considered it relevant to analyze the emerging scientific approaches and methods for diagnosing the degree of influence of the pandemic on social processes. The most important manifestation of the cross-cultural aspects of transformation is their socio-psychological base, which reflects similar forms of behavior of individuals in situations of collective stress. The presented study reflects a multidisciplinary approach to intangible factors in the development of social processes under the pressure of global challenges associated with the development of an unknown disease – COVID-19. A special place is occupied by the case related to the change in the attitude of Russian society to culture and cinema in the context of a pandemic. The results of scientific research include identified trends in the impact of COVID-19 on social and economic processes in all countries affected by the pandemic. The authors identified the national characteristics of organizational cultures in a pandemic. The novelty of the study lies in the formalized concept of the cross-national aspects of the transformation of organizational culture in a pandemic. The conclusions and approaches of the authors can be used in the development of national programs to overcome the consequences of COVID-19, taking into account international experience in the economy, social sphere and culture.*

Key words: *pandemic, social changes, socio-cultural changes, organizational culture*

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КРОССНАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ В УСЛОВИЯХ ПАНДЕМИИ

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Аннотация. *Постоянно уменьшающаяся опасность заражения коронавирусом вынуждает ученых из разных областей науки объединяться, чтобы оценить не только медицинские и эпидемиологические последствия развития этого странного заболевания, но и социальные и социокультурные изменения в об-*

щество. В связи с этим возникает необходимость обобщить и понять ресурсные возможности различных научных областей для выявления как общих, так и конкретных аспектов трансформации организационной культуры в контексте пандемии COVID-19. Поэтому авторы сочли актуальным проанализировать возникающие научные подходы и методы диагностики степени влияния пандемии на социальные процессы. Важнейшим проявлением кросс-культурных аспектов трансформации является их социально-психологическая база, отражающая сходные формы поведения индивидов в ситуациях коллективного стресса. Представленное исследование отражает мультидисциплинарный подход к нематериальным факторам развития социальных процессов под давлением глобальных вызовов, связанных с развитием неизвестного заболевания – COVID-19. Особое место занимает кейс, связанный с изменением отношения российского общества к культуре и кино в условиях пандемии. К результатам научных исследований относятся выявленные тенденции влияния COVID-19 на социальные и экономические процессы во всех странах, охваченных пандемией. Авторами определены национальные особенности организационных культур в условиях пандемии. Новизна исследования заключается в оформленной концепции кросснациональных аспектов трансформации организационной культуры в условиях пандемии. Выводы и подходы авторов могут быть использованы при разработке национальных программ преодоления последствий COVID-19 с учетом международного опыта в экономике, социальной сфере и культуре.

Ключевые слова: пандемия, социальные изменения, социокультурные изменения, организационная культура.

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Introduction

The ever-decreasing danger of coronavirus infection is forcing scientists from various fields of science to unite to assess not only the medical and epidemiological consequences of the development of this strange disease, but also social and socio-cultural changes in society. In this regard, it becomes necessary to summarize and understand the resource capabilities of various scientific areas to identify both general and specific aspects of the transformation of organizational culture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why the authors considered it relevant to analyze the emerging scientific approaches and methods for diagnosing the degree of influence of the pandemic on social processes. These processes affect the most diverse aspects of social life: the transformation of the behavior of individuals, the change in economic processes associated with an ongoing pandemic, the need to make global strategic decisions about the prospects for the existence of the world community. In connection with these circumstances, the importance of multidisciplinary research is increasing, which could form new concepts of the socio-economic development of countries, taking into account global trends in the fight against the pandemic, on the one hand, and solving specific national economic, ethical and social problems, on the other hand.

Existing approaches to assessing cross-cultural changes in a pandemic

The crisis, stricken by the stormy development of the pandemic as a new social phenomenon, forced scientists in different countries to reconsider its possible consequences and impact on all aspects of the socio-economic development of countries.

Ho H. K. [10] showed that in December 2019, a new strain of Coronavirus, later identified as SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) or COVID-19, began to surface in Wuhan, China. By February 2020, COVID-19 had become a pandemic which required emergency measures across the globe. According to Khlopov O. A. [14], it is practically impossible to assess the depth of the influence of the coronavirus on global development in the subsequent period, since the effects of economic and social consequences will continue indefinitely.

Since January 22, the city of Wuhan has been quarantined, and two days later – and the surrounding urban districts. The Chinese authorities informed the World Health Organization of the outbreak on December 31, 2019. China's initially slow response to the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak soon gave way to swift and draconian measures, especially after Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a public directive on January 20, 2020 calling for «decisive efforts» to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Less than two months later, in March 2020, Chairman Xi's long-awaited visit to Wuhan took place, signaling that the measures introduced have borne fruit.

Chan H. F. et al. [4] explains the fact that the current COVID-19 pandemic is a global, exogenous shock, impacting individuals' decision making and behavior allowing researchers to test theories of personality by exploring how traits, in conjunction with individual and societal differences, affect compliance and cooperation.

Curşeu P. L. et al. [5] study investigates several antecedents and consequences of negative emotional reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic in a cross-national sample of 737 participants. Results show that

COVID-19 anxiety and negative mood are positively predicted by death anxiety and the use in communication of general COVID-19 information. Death reflection reduces negative mood in relation to COVID-19 and attenuates the positive association between death anxiety on the one hand and the negative mood and anxiety in relation to COVID-19 on the other hand. This trend encourages people to choose personal protective equipment, which has significantly spurred the medical industry to increase their production.

Gupta M., Shoja A., Mikalef P. [9] proved that this study conceptually explores the relationship between a nation's culture and the success of utilizing various digital technologies to mitigate the spread of a pandemic, such as novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in social isolation globally, creating heightened levels of stress and anxiety. This study investigates the link between social isolation and mental wellbeing in later life, and how it varies across countries. Research Design and Methods: it was drawn on a subset of older adults from Global Behaviors and Perceptions in the COVID-19 Pandemic, a unique global online survey of 13,660 participants from 62 countries [13]. It is possible to use mixed-effects models to analyze the data. In the absence of a cure or vaccine of COVID-19, the national governments and public health authorities have been aggressively utilizing digital technologies to mitigate the pandemic spread [7] [18].

Using the Hofstede method to assess organizational culture changes in a pandemic.

Cross-national changes in organizational culture

A study of culture according to the Hofstede model. A social psychologist from Holland, G. Hofstede [11], in the 80s of the twentieth century, conducted a study of different national cultures using the example of the work of departments of the IBM corporation in different countries. As a result, he developed a multivariate value model that helps explore the culture of an organization. The parameters used for the research: Individualism – collectivism. Power distance (large or small). Uncertainty aversion (strong or weak). Masculinity is femininity [18]. Orientation (long or short term). Both leaders and followers define more clearly the boundaries of groups during a crisis. Believers in Iran and Israel continued to gather, considering their religious community as their single group, asking for help from God. National leaders say to the people of their country: "Hold on to me, Obviously, from a biological point of view, the coronavirus considers all humans – and an unknown number of other mammals – to be equally suitable as their home, regardless of religion or nationality [15]. Our strategy as humans should be to recognize this and act accordingly. At least in this respect, the coronavirus resembles climate change: we are all in the same boat.

While we share one boat, we all have our separate cultural cabin. We tend to stick to the unwritten rules of our culture. This makes societies respond in different ways to the virus.

According to Krings V. C. et al. culture is by no means the only influence. We also have historic coincidences: who happens to be in power? How rich, how young, how numerous is the population? The future can be different [16].

Individualism vs collectivism

In an individualistic society, such as Anglo countries or the Netherlands, people behave like atoms in a gas. They can freely choose whether to group or to separate. Society could respond very quickly to a change in external factors. In the USA, Republicans and Democrats have quickly buried their feuds to fight coronavirus. This will last as long as the crisis.

In a collectivistic society, people are more like atoms in a crystal. What they do, reflects their role in society. Whatever the external circumstances, they organize themselves in groups that tend to stick together for life. Getting out of role can be severely shamed or even punished. This happened for the first Chinese medical doctor who diagnosed corona in 2019.

Power distance

A society of small power distance has a strong sense of mutual obligation between all its members. Citizens are likely, in these cultures, to do as their leaders ask. They are used to exerting community duties [16]. Austria, one of the most egalitarian countries in the world, is now releasing its lockdown, opening its small enterprises again, as a sign of mutual assistance.

A society of large power distance has no such unwritten social contract. Might makes right. Authorities will neglect large parts of their populations, possibly repress them forcibly as Filipino president Duterte is doing, and these unfortunate have-nots will expect nothing different [16]. Leaders are also likely to present a desirable picture rather than a truthful one, and subordinates to report desirable data rather than truthful ones.

Masculinity

In a masculine society, the use of force and big words is taken to be a sign of status. Police could also be violent. There could be hypervigilance in corona response. In times of COVID-19, people are likely to accept and endorse a degree of state violence. It would make them feel safer. Massive disinfecting of public spaces, ineffective but showing muscle, happens in masculine cultures. Boris Johnson, a few weeks ago before he was diagnosed with COVID-19, gave some muscular talk about «sending the virus packing». Trump twittered about a «very big New Deal», a kind of recovery programme for the country [16].

In feminine societies, the use of force is not seen as a good thing. Pressure should be soft, and good intentions are stressed. The maximum punishment for break-

ing the COVID-19 social distancing rules in the Netherlands is a € 400 fine. President of the Netherlands has not used the word «war» for talking about our efforts to suppress the pandemic. Each week he issues a press conference with praise for good behavior, and advice. Apps for tracking and tracing are voluntary and likely to remain so.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is about stress in the face of the unknown. Rituals of separation and cleaning are stronger in uncertainty avoiding societies. If a culture is both masculine and uncertainty avoiding, response to a crisis is likely to strongly push towards authoritarianism. Hungarian Orbán is an example, seizing his opportunity.

In uncertainty tolerant societies, there could be a risk of carelessness. States are likely to talk of letting the virus run its course, so that life can go on as normal. This has been the line in the Netherlands, UK and Sweden, for instance, although in the former two cases, the virus quickly forced the country into more severe measures. Still, the Dutch and English go out of doors in their numbers, enjoying the fine spring weather. Swedish children still go to school.

Long-term orientation

The countries that were fastest in curbing the pandemic: Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, all have long-term oriented cultures. These countries and their citizens are ever preparing for uncertain events that may happen. They are used to epidemics spreading from the Chinese mainland. Citizens are used to adapting their behavior too, rather than sticking to fixed form. China itself, also long-term oriented, also responded very rapidly after the initial cover-up.

Many European countries are also long-term oriented. They are likely to have ample hospital capacity, and savings. How they distribute assets is another matter, having to do e.g. with power distance.

Short-term oriented countries are more likely to react with emotion, either defensive avoidance or hypervigilance. This emotion could also be positive, with acts of defiance and solidarity.

Indulgence

Indulgent societies are those in which people feel that life is good and it's okay to feel that way. If forced to keep social distance, they will be quick to make songs and jokes about it, and turn it into a fun event as much as possible.

In restrained societies, the idea is that life is hard, and this is normal. People will accept the misery of social distancing as inevitable. They are more likely to accept the utter misery of not being able to say goodbye to family members about to die.

An outbreak of coronavirus disease began in China in mid-December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei province. The first cases of pneumonia of unknown origin were observed in residents of the city associated with the local

Huanan seafood and animal market. Some commentators have argued that policies intended to control the spread of the virus tend to exacerbate the pandemic, and that democratic governments are better at controlling the virus [17].

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publicly announced on October 5, 2020 that COVID-19 can be transmitted by airborne droplets. However, this section argues that COVID-19 should be viewed as a scientific issue, not a political one. A crisis such as COVID-19 is highlighted by some Western officials who did not have scientific knowledge nor a pandemic seriously, because they tend to consist of careers of politicians, such as the UK, who have narrow labor backgrounds and lack of life experience but the opposite trend can be observed in the Eastern government. For example, the current Secretary of State for Health.

First, the global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) has affected the availability and the guaranteed supply of the population cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, although the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that its citizens consider using face coverings from April 2020, and each US state had to decide how such a recommendation should be adopted as a policy and implemented. In addition, some countries such as Finland (Ministry of Social Affairs) and the Netherlands initially did not recommend the use of face masks based on their own opinion of scientific experts, but later reversed this decision. And some countries, such as Sweden, did not recommend the use of face masks at all. The problem is that most people infected with the virus are asymptomatic or show only mild symptoms, they often cause the virus to spread without realizing it [2].

Second, many Western governments were worried about broader civil rights implications because the mask uses the coercive power of the state to force a person to do things that they would not otherwise want to do.

Third, some governments have argued that the wearing of masks can be a source of social stigma and discrimination against those who do not wear them.

Fourth, some countries have sought to achieve «herd immunity» - by deliberately allowing citizens to contract the virus in order to create antibodies in the general population - in order to protect the economy and freedom of movement. However, while variations of herd immunity were implemented in the early stages of the pandemic in countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, they were later canceled. On the contrary, none of the governments in East Asia pursued such a policy towards their citizens.

Achieving herd immunity leads to high numbers of infected people and death, which should not be the «ultimate goal» of COVID-19 control. Further evidence suggests that recovered patients may suffer from irreversible damage to the lungs and other organs, which is known as “long covid”.

Given the low population density of Sweden, it suffered from one of the highest death rates from COVID-19 in the world, reflecting the failure of herd immunity. The elderly was denied hospital care even when COVID-19 was in nursing homes, and this group accounted for 48.9% of total deaths.

China's story of the fight against coronavirus has evolved along with progress in the fight against the disease. In the initial stages, the official line focused on containing the spread of the coronavirus in China, and it was believed that the source originated from a specific location, that is, from the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan. At a later stage, as China took control and cases outside of China began to rise, Beijing began to question the origin of the coronavirus. Southeast Asia as a whole was depicted by Beijing as standing [8].

The disease was named the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) on February 11, 2020. Due to the high level of globalization, the disease spread quickly, and already on March 11, 2020, WHO declared an outbreak of the disease a pandemic, and on March 13, Europe became the center of its spread [12]. In Russia, the first cases of the disease were detected on January 31 (two patients were citizens of China, received treatment in Russia and were discharged healthy), in parallel, communication with the PRC was suspended, however, on March 2, a Russian tourist who returned from Italy was diagnosed with a disease in Moscow. The figures show that the epidemic in Russia has hardly started yet, it has been postponed until May or even June. The situation of the pandemic has significantly affected the state of small and medium-sized businesses in all countries. As for Russia, according to Buldakova A.A., the measures that the government took to support both the population and entrepreneurs allowed to partially mitigate the severity of the crisis [3]. Subsidies to small businesses to compensate employees' wages while maintaining their employment have supported a stable trend in the labor market and the softening of the development of unemployment in Russia [21].

Such postponement helped prepare the country's health care system for the outbreak of the disease, developed understandable treatment regimens, which could help reduce the number of deaths. However, such postponement negatively affects the country's economy, which may negatively affect the situation in the future. In the context of the announced pandemic, scientists are discussing its medical aspects: treatment, provision of beds in hospitals, ventilators, forecasts of the number of cases and deaths, the timing of the vaccine, etc. Less often they talk and write about the economic consequences [4] [5], the impact of coronavirus on certain industries (tourism [1], logistics [20], trade [6] [19] etc., the labor market). The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on demography has not yet been practically studied, it will probably be thought about later. This influence, as we see it, is not unambiguous [18].

An interesting example is the sharp drop in performance in the film business economy. This is directly related to the state of social psychology and the relationship between individual well-being and group solidarity.

According to this principle, all countries of the world are divided into four groups:

- striving for personal success, well-being and self-actualization.
- personal safety motives, leading values – well-being and hard work.
- individual well-being is less important than group solidarity.
- personal success is assessed as a common achievement, and the quality of human connections in the living environment is of particular importance. Russia is closer to this group.

A similar situation was observed in other countries, for example, in South Korea or Japan, where in the first quarter of 2020 revenues fell to \$ 139.5 million and \$ 190.3 million, showing a decrease of 65.3% and 46, 2% respectively.

The impact of the pandemic on national art

A clear example of the impact of a pandemic on economic processes is the identification of economic problems that have arisen in the economy of culture on the example of cinema and theatrical art.

According to some estimates, by the end of 2020, the box office in the United States was reduced by at least 50% compared to the previous year. By the end of May 2020, the total losses to the global film industry amounted to USD 10 billion.

Film companies that produce expensive feature films (blockbusters) designed for wide screens and a large number of viewers were forced to postpone the release dates of film premieres due to the drop in ticket sales. Hollywood studios have postponed the release of such potential movie hits as «No Time to Die» (new James Bond film), «Mulan», «Wonder Woman: 1984» to a later period. Some companies were even more cautious and postponed the release of projected blockbusters until 2021: the measure affected the films *Fast and Furious 9*, *Minions: Gruvitation*, *Jungle Cruise*.

The pandemic has brought changes not only to the distribution of films, but also to their production. Due to the restrictions imposed, the production of films such as *The Matrix 4*, the seventh film in the franchise, has been suspended.

«Mission Impossible», sequels of the films «Fantastic Beasts», «Avatar». Such stoppages of filming lead not only to monetary losses, but also to a shift in the date of release of new products on the big screen.

Filmmaking is now being gradually launched in a number of countries, including Russia, UK and USA, but it is already clear that the resulting pause of almost six months will continue to affect the release schedule,

and will also entail large financial losses: the global box office lost about \$ 7 billion.

Significant financial losses are observed in the theater sector. The Bolshoi Theater expects the greatest costs from the pandemic in absolute terms: due to the crisis, the institution did not receive more than 850 million rubles from ticket sales.

The total losses of the Bolshoi Theater were estimated at over 1 billion rubles at the end of 2020. The second place in terms of lost income is taken by the Moscow Academic Theater of Satire, where the drop in income was 65% of the original plan. Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Mariinsky Theater V. A. Gergiev said that revenues due to the pandemic fell three times: in eight months of 2020, the theater's revenue amounted to only 800 million rubles.

In France the restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral (Notre Dame de Paris), which was damaged by the fire, was suspended for a month and a half due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovery work continued with fewer workers: 50 instead of 170 before the pandemic began. However, the authorities still expect to complete the restoration by 2024.

In Spain on March 13, 2020, it was decided to stop construction work and visit to the Sagrada Familia (Sagrada Familia). On July 25, 2020, it was reopened to everyone (previously only doctors of city hospitals, law enforcement officers and their relatives could visit it).

The COVID-19 crisis has had a particularly negative impact on the employment of creative professionals. UNESCO notes that the cancellation of concerts, the postponement of festivals, the cessation of film production have all had disastrous consequences for the creative profession, where many work independently or are employed in small and medium-sized enterprises, which are particularly prone to financial shocks. Even in countries where social welfare systems allow payments to be made to creative workers, it is difficult to cope with the effects of the cultural crisis.

Preliminary US data show that as of May 6, 2020, more than three thousand museum workers have been laid off (museums in the United States provide 726 thousand jobs and support the national one annually).

Restrictive measures have led to massive movie theater closings and significant financial losses for all

stakeholders. In the first quarter of 2020, China recorded a record drop in revenue in the field film distribution: the number of sold tickets in theaters decreased by 97.4%.

In this way in the case of coronavirus, our tour across cultures so far seems to indicate that long-term orientation is an important cultural characteristic that helps a society be prepared, and be vigilant rather than denying the threat or overreacting.

The aftermath will be long enough to become intensely politicized, with governments needing to cater for the anxieties of their constituencies. As Trump said, the cure should not be worse than the disease. This is a political question though; every society will answer it differently. Will we prioritize children, homeless people, apparatchiks, businesses, schools? As the pandemic progresses, culture will become ever more important in its management.

Research results

The conducted content analysis made it possible to identify the general direction of the formation of cross-national processes of changing organizational culture in all spheres of life in a pandemic, both at the level of individual individuals and at the level of national communities. If in the pre-COVID period organizational culture as a phenomenon was an attribute of economic objects and depended solely on their basic characteristics, then in a pandemic, socio-psychological and medical factors significantly influence the organizational culture of society and individual companies.

Conclusion

Of course, the pandemic has created conditions for a new type of crisis phenomena that have affected all aspects of the social, political, economic and cultural life of nation states. It became clear that under its pressure, on the one hand, national borders are being closed, and, on the other, it can only be defeated by pooling cross-cultural resources and sharing national experiences to reduce the degree of collective stress. This will entail the process of internationalization of organizational culture as a way of rallying and overcoming national differences in making strategic decisions in economics, politics and culture.

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