

Editorial

Pandemics in globalization times

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Human societies as a whole are attached to the difficulties imposed by the forces of nature that can be, otherwise, extremely destructive, as evidenced by natural disasters and, in this case, the silent enemy of the pandemics that, Yesterday and today, they have ravaged entire nations. Just remember the ravages that once caused strains or viruses such as typhus, measles, bubonic plague, leprosy, yellow fever, tuberculosis or HIV, among many others that continue to evolve.

For many experts in the area of public health and viral diseases, the last known great pandemic was the so-called Spanish flu of 1918. The first World War was over, surviving soldiers return to their places of origin and thus very quickly spread the virus that would end the lives of millions of people. In the words of (Pumarola & Antón, 2018, p. 63):

The influenza A virus has been and continues to be a constant threat of pandemics with a high level of population risk. Probably, the worst of them took place in 1918, the so-called Spanish influenza pandemic, in which a new influenza A (H1N1) virus spread rapidly in three pandemic waves between 1918-1919 and killed more than 50 million people, a higher quantity than the number of deaths associated with the First World War.

Before the advent of the third decade of the 21st century, the world population has multiplied at a vertiginous rate to the point that the demographic

balance between available natural resources and existing populations has been definitely broken, hence, for some pragmatic analysts and utilitarian, the great pandemics could be interpreted as an attempt by the biosphere to recover the lost balance in the natural order in which the anthropic cultural order is chaotically inserted.

In fact, certain theoretical paradigms such as the general theory of systems (TGS) promoted by classical authors such as Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901-1972) and more recently by the Chilean Humberto Maturana (1928-present) would confirm in some way this perspective of analysis, since as well explained (Arnold & Osorio, 1998) systems in general, including in this category societies and the international order, have a holistic intelligence that allow their parts to act in an interconnected way to guarantee the autopoiesis at all, even if this implies obliterating some or all of its parts. This is because the whole is, qualitatively speaking, more than the sum of its parts as Aristotle already claims in classical antiquity.

Be that as it may, the really important thing is to know if we are today better prepared from the scientific, technological and political point of view to face a new pandemic that dawns with title to humanity in a rapid, coordinated and effective way? Obviously, the answer to this crucial question is not simple and far exceeds the explanatory possibilities of this editorial, however, everything

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indicates that the development of scientific knowledge in areas such as: microbiology, immunology and virology allow us to understand more rigorously the processes through which viruses and strains mutate and spread to the detriment of infected people, but despite this, the treatments to address them are still very similar to those of yesteryear and there is still a long way to go in health sciences.

Unlike what happened with the Spanish flu in 1918, the links and relationships that interconnect contemporary societies in the political, economic, social and cultural fields are much more significant, since the globalizing impulse promoted by the hegemonic powers tends to blur in many aspects, the borders that historically have separated central or peripheral national states, as a condition of possibility to leverage market economies, as demanded by the prevailing neoliberal conception that characterizes the world-system, according to Immanuel Wallerstein. Unfortunately, these processes that integrate economic factors have not led to the consolidation of a universal citizenship in correspondence with the discourse of human rights that supposes in the preservation of human dignity, the *raison d'être* of political and economic systems (Arbeláez-Campillo, Rojas-Bahamón, & Arbeláez-Encarnación, 2018).

At the time of writing these lines another mutated strain of coronavirus (Covid-19) activates the epidemiological alerts of the international community. In the world there are already more than 83,310 confirmed cases and at least 2,858 people have died and around 50 more countries have launched the alert with new infected people. In this sense, it should be remembered as well indicated (McKeown, 1990) in his classic work that these infectious contagious diseases are associated with poverty contexts in which the conditions of pollution, hygiene, food and access to health are

deficient or deplorable, so, the cost of social inequalities even generates the conditions of possibility for the emergence of viruses that can put the order of existing things in check.

To suppose that the normal development of the market - without the intervention of the state - as the supporters of globalization postulate is sufficient in itself to reduce the odious social asymmetries that condemn, in the 21st century, a good part of humanity to a life for below the threshold of quality and dignity that we all deserve, it is at least illusory and, like it or not, has a great impact on public health systems, so that the responses that the affected states give to current pandemics must also include social programs aimed at overcoming extreme poverty.

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