
THE SOCIETAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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PREFACE

The COVID-19 Pandemic, started in China and has since spread all over the world in a short time, deeply affecting all countries.. Most countries have declared a partial or complete lockdown to limit the spread of the virus. A significant portion of employees have been unable to work in traditional ways and have had to adapt to what has become known as the “new normal”. In essence we have gone beyond the norms we used to know and have had to construct new ways of living in the times of COVID-19. The way we know how to work and live has changed. Middle and upper classes, whose jobs are suitable for digitalization, started working online. Every extraordinary period has its winners and losers. The winners of the coronavirus pandemic period were mainly hygiene materials manufacturers, gaming companies, electronic commerce, high technology, and pharmaceutical companies etc. On the other hand, economies all over the world have shrunk. The hardest hit in the pandemic have been the areas of tourism, hospitality and entertainment etc. resulting in high rates of unemployment or underemployment within these sectors. Unemployment and existential anxiety have peaked during 2020 with increased fears posed by the new risks associated with becoming infected. With the loss of loved ones and separation from friends and family. Psycho-social problems have also increased due to the effects of prolonged uncertainty imposed by the pandemic across all facets of everyday life. In all life satisfaction has declined across in all social groups with the vulnerable most at risk due to the long lasting effects on the pandemic.

While the virus has impacted on the people from all social stratas, its effects have not been felt evenly. Poverty has deepened in most countries with large rises in unemployment and governments going into more debt to buffer their economies from the effects of the pandemic. In addition to higher rates of unemployment, and greater economic uncertainty communication problems have also increased. The poor, the unemployed, those with limited education and some women were more severely affected than others. In this process, the problems experienced by particularly vulnerable groups are more severe than others. The uncertainty created by the pandemic has deeply shaken people’s feelings of trust. Increased existential anxieties about life have weakened people’s analytical thinking skills. There has also been a significant correlation between low trust and people’s beliefs in conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories have spread more easily in societies with low trust levels. The weaker the sense of trust that binds a society , the more people are likely to adhere to conspiracy theories in that country.

This book, prepared with the contributions of authors from different countries, consists of sixteen chapters in total. The aim of the book is to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on societies. The first chapter titled “Unprecedented? Pandemic Memory and Responses to COVID-19 in Australia and New Zealand” was written by Claire Brennan and Patrick Hodgson. This chapter examines the common collective amnesia that surrounds pandemics, and compares the level of collective memory of the 1918-1920 influenza pandemic in Australia and New Zealand before the arrival of covid-19. It scrutinizes government statements and actions while preparing for and responding to pandemics, the nurturing of historical knowledge among medical experts, and the actions of groups of citizens. Additionally, the section analyzes the importance of collective memory in designing effective responses to covid-19 in these two countries.

The chapter entitled “Risking a New Underclass: Young Australians, Broken Transitions and the Pandemic” by Glenn Dawes and Kirstie Broadfield, highlights the risks young people face due to their vulnerability to reduced employment and education opportunities as a result of the current recession in Australia. The chapter highlights the negative consequences of long-term unemployment in terms of youth identity construction and mental health concerns, and stresses the need for additional government and community assistance to ensure that young people have new avenues to reach their potential as productive adults. Today, many teenagers in Australia face a different world compared to their parents. The challenges associated with the transition to adulthood are now more problematic and personalized for some teenagers due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is alleged that the current situation has interrupted the transition to adult status and now threatens to produce a new subclass of youth due to high unemployment, underemployment and negative effects on youth mental health and well-being.

“Coronavirus in Turkey Effects on Daily Life and Change of Habits in Society” is a chapter written by Deniz Ülke Arıboğan and Tuğba Aydın Öztürk, which examines the daily life practices of Turkish society during the lockdown period. This research reveals important results in terms of understanding and evaluating the perception of the crisis. Coronavirus, in many parts of the world, including Turkey, has caused a financial crisis particularly among low-income social groups. The concerns of the young participants were not just about lockdown, but more about having financial independence, finding a job, or going to school during the pandemic.

The chapter titled “Staying at Home”: Rhythmanalysis of the Self-quarantine”, written by Güzin Ağca-Varoğlu, aims to establish the experiences with rhythmic phenomena, which explains the effects of the social practices on the everyday life of a female ‘house-academic’ during the self-quarantine. The author examines her autobiographical experiences during the three-month self-quarantine period from Lefebvre’s rhythmanalytical perspective. The author posits that the pandemic has affected our lives at different levels. With the concept of physical distance, daily interactions and our relationship with the social sphere have changed. The house has lost its meaning as the starting and ending point of the daily cycle of urban life. During the lockdown, it has gained a new meaning as the only place of our daily life.

The chapter titled “Psychosocial Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic” was written by Neşe Çakı, Dino Krupic and Philip Corr. The purpose of this chapter is to address the psychosocial impacts of COVID-19 on society resulting from lifestyle changes such as lockdown, social distancing and social isolation due to wearing a mask, and behavioral changes, including changes in shopping habits. This review argues that new conditions lead to many different negative psychosocial effects, such as anxiety, stress, obsessive behavior, depression, loneliness, stigma, and hoarding, but individuals experience these effects to varying degrees.

The chapter titled “The Sociology of Coronavirus Conspiracies in Turkey: Who Believes and Why?” was authored by Özgür Sayın and Veysel Bozkurt. The purpose of this research, is to document demographic conspiracy beliefs about coronaviruses in Turkey, and also to examine the

determinants of political and religious impacts on society . The research reveals that a significant portion of the society believes in conspiracy theories related to coronavirus. Housewives, young people, women, people living in rural and small towns, the unemployed or less educated have been found to be more likely to believe in coronavirus conspiracies. It has also been found that political identities, religious involvement, and reliance on science are strongly associated with conspiracy affirmations. Those who described themselves as right-wing or more religiously conservative people were more convinced that the conspiracies could be true. Moreover, as expected, there is a negative correlation between trust in science and conspiracy thinking. Those who believe in a coronavirus conspiracy often believe in other conspiracies. In other words, conspiracy belief has been found to be the result of a general mindset.

The chapter titled “Music Industry in Crisis: The Impact of a Novel Coronavirus on Touring Metal Bands, Promoters, and Venues” was written by Kyle J. Messick. This section used evidence from qualitative interviews and public disclosures to draw inferences about the impact of COVID-19 on the music industry, with a particular focus on musicians and their managers, promoters and booking agents. As concerts play a stimulating role for surrounding businesses, it has been demonstrated how the closure of concert venues negatively affects the communities dependent on them. Musicians reported negative emotional and financial consequences as a result of COVID-19, but also reported financial support from metal music fans, making the consequences of the pandemic less severe. The findings of the study reveal that not giving live concerts makes musicians feel incomplete and causes depressive symptoms and anxiety.

The chapter titled “The Arts as Refuge: COVID-19, Crisis, and the Heroes Waiting in the Wings” was written by Ryan Daniel. This chapter explains how the COVID-19 pandemic has destroyed the industry and workforce; institutions have closed, festivals and events have been canceled, and art production has been severely restricted. As a result millions of artists and art workers around the world are currently unemployed, and many are unable to access government support initiatives designed mainly for traditional business models. In relatively stable times, art often struggles to survive financially. However during the current pandemic, this already fragile industry has become much closer to total collapse. It is argued that art has a strong capacity to provide shelter. The author emphasizes that we need artists, art workers and the art industry more than ever.

The chapter titled “Pandemics and Migration” was written by Erin M. Sorrell and Elizabeth Ferris. This chapter analyzes the relationship between pandemics and migration. It first examines migration and then reviews the effects of the pandemic on both migrants and host communities. Additionally it also analyzes the policy consequences of the two-way relationship between migration and the pandemic. Of particular importance Particularly for this analysis is that international migrants tend to work in sectors at high risk for the virus- such as the service sector, child and elderly care and work related to the hospitality industry.

The chapter titled “Refugee Students during Pandemic time: Key Words for Academic Integration” was written by Anna Fausta Scardigno. The article specifically focuses on the most

relevant words of the focus group discussion with refugee students at Bari University. The article was looking for an answer to the question: How did refugee students react to the cessation of in-person classroom teaching and to the host university's digital-only learning arrangement and online administrative services?

The chapter of this book titled “Migrants and Communication Technologies in Challenging Times; A Double-Edged Sword” was written by Hakan Gülerce and Housein Turner. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the social and psychological effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on refugees. In this study, a literature review and situation analysis method was used to understand the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on refugees. The research mainly examined the impact of mobile phone and internet addiction on the daily living habits of immigrants during the pandemic period, and focused on education difficulties, digital divisions, loneliness, alienation and other psycho-social factors that affect migrants and refugees in particular. Studies show that smartphones are very important for Syrian refugees. Smartphones are used to connect with relatives and loved ones abroad at a much more affordable rate than making a traditional phone call. The unifying power of smartphones allows refugees to connect with each other, share news and memories, and access vital public service information.

The chapter titled “The Impact of Covid-19 on Crime” was written by Ruken Macit. The author contends that crime rates and trends have changed dramatically in many countries after the COVID-19 outbreak. As the COVID-19 pandemic developed as a global health, human and economic crisis, criminals found new opportunities. Within the framework of COVID-19, while measures were taken, including the call for “stay at home”, many types of crime (theft, murder, migrant smuggling) decreased, while some (cyber-crime, domestic violence) increased.

The section titled “Family in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Family Ties and Communication Problems” was written by Ünal Şentürk and Veysel Bozkurt. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on family relationships. The authors seek answers to the following questions: i) To what extent have family ties strengthened? and ii) To what extent have communication problems within the family increased? Fifty-five (55%) of the respondents stated that family ties were strengthened during the quarantine period. On the other hand, 17% stated that communication problems between family members increased. While the lockdown brought members of middle and high-income families closer together, the unemployed and the poor faced greater economic problems. This reflected negatively on family relationships among some disadvantaged groups. Most of those who said that domestic communication problems increased were the poor, unemployed and young people. Especially those who were unable to continue their work online faced greater economic and social problems during the time of lockdown.

The chapter titled “Pandemic and Social Vulnerability: The Case of the Philippines” was written by Ericson H. Peñalba. This article discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic crisis disproportionately affected certain segments of the population, and led to conditions that create new vulnerabilities or exacerbate those that already exist. In the aftermath of the pandemic,

children, women, the elderly, the disabled and low-income families faced much greater problems in the Philippines. The unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak has made certain segments of the population more vulnerable.

The last part of the book titled “Global health status in the COVID-19 pandemic duration: Home quarantine, obesity, psychological behavior” was written by Hakan Çelebi, Tolga Bahadır, İsmail Şimşek, Şevket Tulun, Gülden Gök, Melayib Bilgin. This chapter focuses on the indirect positive / negative effects of COVID-19 on the environment and people, and in particular psychological factors and obesity.

We hope that this book will contribute to understanding the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which deeply affects the life, ways of working and mental health of all humanity. There have always been pandemics in history; and these led to massive casualties and social problems. Despite all the advances in science and technology, humanity has been caught off guard for the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus has infected and killed millions of people around the world. Many more people have lost their jobs while poverty, anxiety and depression has increased across the globe. There may be new pandemics in the future. Our wish is that humanity will be more prepared for future pandemics and this book will raise awareness on the social problems caused by events.

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Hakan Gülerce
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