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### **IMPACT OF EPIDEMICS ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC, MIGRATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF SOCIETY**

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#### **Abstract**

The history of civilization is the history of endless epidemics that have influenced the demography, economy, migration, history, and culture of mankind. Until the middle of the twentieth century, pathogenic organisms were the main regulators of the world's population. Even at the present stage with developed hygiene, medicine and pharmaceutical industry, epidemics claim millions of human lives every year. According to WHO, in 2018, 405 thousand people died from malaria alone (WHO, 2020), and annual influenza epidemics lead to 3–5 million cases of severe illness and 290 000–650 000 deaths from respiratory diseases (WHO, 2018). Infectious diseases can be considered a changing power in history. Homo sapiens have almost no “native” infectious diseases inherited directly from ancestral forms. We owe this feature to the “bottleneck effect” that our ancestors went through. In ancient times, the density of our population fell to a critical size, and the species was on the verge of extinction. The “bottleneck effect” has led to the loss of humanity's microbial diversity. With the transition to a manufacturing economy and a sedentary lifestyle, mankind was facing dangerous infectious diseases. From that moment on, they became an influential factor in the cultural and economic development of mankind. The two largest pandemics of the past forty years, HIV and COVID 19, have not only disrupted the global economy, but also led to fundamental cultural shifts. The aim of this work is to study the consequences of pandemics on various aspects of the life of human society.

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## 1. Introduction

Since ancient times, waves of epidemics have caused panic in people. The term “epidemic” itself, translated from the Greek language, means a general disease. People of different sex, wealth and social status became victims of epidemics, which could not but cause panic and irrational fears. As a result, the epidemics affected the religious consciousness. In the Bible, in the description of the ten Egyptian executions, it says: “and there will be inflammation on people and on livestock with boils, in all the land of Egypt” (Bible, 2013, Exodus 9:9). In the archaic religious consciousness of the masses, general diseases were associated with the anger of the Gods or God, with the intrigues of evil spirits and sorcerers. Popular culture and even criminal law did not ignore the causes and consequences of diseases. Until the first half of the 20th century, Russian peasants believed in the existence of spirits of disease. Plague or pestilence was personified in a woman of enormous stature, driving along the roads, and waving a red or bloody handkerchief in all directions of the world; after each swing, whole regions died out (Bodur, 2008). In Antiquity, human sacrifice was practiced getting rid of infectious diseases. Thus, the Athenians kept two people of low social status in order to stone them in the event of a plague epidemic (Frazer, 1998). In the late Middle Ages and early modern times, the causes of epidemics were considered the intrigues of the Devil and sorcerers, as a result of which Europe, and then America, plunged into a whirlpool of lawsuits. One of the frequent accusations in the trials sounded the guidance of pestilences and diseases by sorcerers (Robbins, 1996). Unfortunately, superstitions and fears about epidemics have not remained in the past, despite advances in science and education. Modern man, faced with epidemics, is also inclined to believe in conspiracy conspiracies and the machinations of hostile foreign forces. The COVID 19 pandemic has shown how persistent archaic delusions are in society. So, at the end of March 2020, the Republic of India, like many other countries, was forced to quarantine the country due to the spread of the new coronavirus. As a result, a huge number of foreign tourists remained on the territory of this state. Simultaneously with the threat of coronavirus among the indigenous Indian population, the opinion quickly spread and took root that it is foreigners who are carriers of the deadly disease. Many foreign tourists testify that they have been victims of stigma and violence from the local population, accusing them of spreading the coronavirus (Zhigalkin, 2020).

Mass consciousness, burdened with fears of disease, gives rise to completely exotic and at the same time terrible socio-cultural practices. The HIV pandemic, which has gathered thousands of people every day since the early 1980s, has led to the spread of beliefs among the population of several countries, according to which, if you rape a virgin, you can acquire immunity to infection or be completely cured of it. For example, South Africa, which for many years has been a leader in the spread of HIV infection, 15% of victims of rape are girls under the age of 11. In 2002, South Africa was shocked by the rape of a seven-day-old baby, the offender committed this crime to cure himself of AIDS. But not only India and South Africa, with their multimillion illiterate masses of disadvantaged people immersed in the darkness of ignorance, are subject to the spread of fear and superstition amid the spread of epidemics. Russia also faced massive cases of xenophobia and racism against the backdrop of the spread of COVID 19. At the beginning of 2020, numerous cases of aggression against Chinese citizens and people with an Asian type of appearance were recorded in the country. The motive for this behavior was the fears of Russians about the spread of the new coronavirus (Kovaleva, 2020). Superstition, ignorance,

and panic are not the only phenomena caused by epidemics. Pandemics wreak havoc on economies, culture, and politics. Epidemics even change culture and many, even quite intimate spheres of human life. Research confirms the fact that the HIV epidemic has impacted the sexual practices of homosexuals and even heterosexuals. Igor Kon writes that the HIV epidemic forced gay men to drastically reduce the prevalence of some sexual practices and made them take a more responsible attitude to their health by giving up drugs and alcohol (Kon, 2003). It should be noted that epidemics also have positive aspects. Clark (2011) argues that the “black death” epidemics that exterminated people in the Middle Ages had a positive impact on history in the long term. They shattered the feudal order and contributed to the development of Western democracy.

## 2. Problem Statement

Studying the problem of the impact of epidemics on the socio-cultural environment and the economy seems to be relevant and very much in demand. Understanding the essence of it, explaining the reasons for this influence and reproduction, the socio-cultural effects generated by them, has both theoretical and practical consequences, and provides opportunities for both more complete and comprehensive understanding of the process, and provides tools for their practical change.

The problematic of the impact of epidemics on society is insufficiently developed for a theoretical plan. At the same time, modern theorists consider epidemiology a complex of medical, sanitary, and biological disciplines, ignoring socio-economic and cultural consequences of this phenomenon, both in historical retrospect and in social perspective. Epidemics and pandemics are interpreted simply as a kind of natural reality of social, cultural, or economic life, devoid of internal socio-economic causality and determination. Therefore, socio-historical study of the nature of epidemics and diseases influencing various spheres of society and the historical process seems to be scientifically justified.

Scientific research on this topic can lead to practical conclusions, with the help of which it will be possible to develop applied recommendations aimed at creating a favorable social environment that prevents the spread of the negative consequences of epidemics on culture, history, economy, and migration.

## 3. Research Questions

The subject is the essence and causation of epidemics as a factor in the historical process and an important socio-economic and cultural phenomenon.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the reasons for the positive and negative impact of infectious diseases on historical processes, culture, economy, and migration movements of the masses.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of this research is materialistic dialectics, the comparative method based on it, a complex of formal analysis of documents.

## 6. Findings

The domestication of animals by humans, the transition to a sedentary lifestyle and the emergence of large stationary colonies with multimillion-dollar accumulations of people inside them created an extremely favorable environment for the emergence and development of infectious diseases. Why did it happen? Hunter-gatherer communities are small and mobile by themselves, unlike farmers who are forced to live in a crowded and stationary life. Hunters and gatherers are constantly forced to migrate, which means they always move away from the accumulations of their sewage, which are a breeding ground for pathogenic life forms that negatively affect the life and health of the population. Farmers living in villages are forced to live among their own excrement and waste products of people and domestic animals. This state of affairs not only created the risk of disease outbreaks, but also killed people. In 1183, the floor of the Great Hall in the Erfoot castle (Germany) collapsed under the emperor Frederick and his nobles. There was a toilet pit under the floor, as a result of which many aristocrats drowned in feces (Golden, 2002). Sedentary urban life shortens the path for germs from one person or pet's body to another person's drinking water and food. An interesting fact is that many infectious diseases are reliably dated quite late. The historically proven plague epidemic is the epidemic of 531–580 years (Tokarevich & Grekova, 1986). Smallpox dates from about 1600 BC, mumps 400 BC, leprosy 200 BC, epidemic poliomyelitis 1840 AD, AIDS 1959 (Diamond, 2010), coronavirus COVID 19 was recorded in 2019.

One of the most important factors in the spread of infectious diseases and pathogenic organisms is the development of global and regional trade routes. In the Bronze Age, trade routes covered vast territories. Derlugyan (2019) notes that the first World System was formed during the formation of the first states of Mesopotamia and Sumer. The Empire of Alexander the Great united vast territories from Greece to India, and the Roman Empire turned the Mediterranean world with Africa, Europe, and Asia into a single economic and political space. Together with political and economic unification, humanity has mixed its infectious repertoire.

Great geographical discoveries with small migratory movements of population and goods erased geographical barriers for pathogenic microbes. The impact of migration on the spread of infectious diseases has been studied by domestic and foreign authors (Lifshits & Neklydova, 2018, 2019; Tsapenko & Sautkina, 2018). Before the appearance of Europeans, and then African slaves, there were almost no dangerous diseases on the continents of the Americas that could lead to devastating epidemics. Diseases brought in by migrants from the Old World sparked a demographic revolution that wiped out a huge number of aboriginal populations and altered the racial and ethnic makeup of the continents. In 1494, an unknown disease wiped out almost the entire aboriginal population of the Caribbean, affecting only a third of the Spanish conquistadors, most of whom survived. Until now, scientists argue about the nature of this disease (Clark, 2011). Historiography notes that the smallpox epidemic at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries destroyed 3.5 million people in the cities of Peru. So, when Pizarro arrived in Peru in 1525–

1526, a smallpox epidemic destroyed the Inca emperor and his successor for him, unleashing a struggle for the throne. The conquistador did not even meet with serious resistance. According to the roughest estimates, a third of the population of the New World died from smallpox. Clark (2011) states that 95 % of the local population in America has been killed by epidemics of smallpox, measles, and other unidentified diseases. The example of the island of Haiti is illustrative. If at the beginning of the 16th century there were 1.3 million indigenous inhabitants on the island, then fifteen years later only 60,000 remained. And in 1503, the first ships of African slave traders arrived on the island (Yurban, 2003). The massive demographic loss of the New World and European colonization led to the creation of a unique and brutal phenomenon in human history as the Transatlantic Slave Trade. According to UN (2007) estimates, over 400 years, 17 million people were forcibly displaced from Africa to America, excluding dead slaves. The relatively rapid colonization of Siberia by the Russians was also largely due to the fact that half of the local aboriginal population died out from smallpox (Zuev, 2012). In 1801, Napoleon Bonaparte lost the island of Haiti due to the Yellow Fever virus, which weakened his army and took about 20 thousand French soldiers to the grave, which was used by the local Negro population. Yellow fever, coupled with malaria, destroyed, and ruined the Panama Canal Company. From 1880 to 1888, the company spent USD 300 million on the construction of this structure, but was unable to cope with the epidemic and, having lost 20 thousand human lives, was forced to give up its plans (Daniel, 1990).

Nowadays, even the longest intercontinental flight takes less time than any infectious disease. Often, diseases spread throughout the world even before they are detected by sanitary and medical services. This is how the smallpox outbreak in Moscow was eliminated in 1959–1960. The disease came to the USSR because of a Soviet tourist who took a two-week tour of India. The first signs of the disease appeared later after they could be identified. As a result, 45 people became infected with the disease, several people died (Sidorchik, 2020).

Infections cause irreparable damage to the national economy and the economy. The COVID 19 epidemic has shown how fragile the global and regional economy is and how the virus can reformat entire sectors of the economy. Many countries and government agencies were forced to take very painful measures to restrict economic activity and the rights of the population. The Russian experience in the fight against coronavirus shows that the sphere of passenger air transportation has suffered from them. On May 18, 2020, the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare developed recommendations for organizing work on air, water and road transport while maintaining the risks of the spread of a new coronavirus infection. According to them, the air carrier was strongly recommended to fill the aircraft cabins only by 50 %. (Rospotrebnadzor, 2020). According to the Minister of Transport of Russia Yevgeny Dietrich, the minimum ticket price will be 70 thousand rubles while people are forced to be socially distanced (Zhigalkin, 2020). Such demands from the authorities will simply kill the airline industry. The new coronavirus has caused massive unemployment and social tension. In the United States, 39 million people, or 24 % of the working-age population, lost their job because of the consequences of coronavirus (Zhigalkin, 2020). According to Forbes estimates, the measures taken by the Russian authorities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have threatened the closure of 50 % of small and medium-sized businesses (Pyatin, 2020). Coronavirus has hit the state budget painfully and unpredictably. Only the third economic package of measures to support the economy,

announced by the Russian government in May 2020, costs 800 billion rubles, and this is in the face of budget deficits and falling budget revenues (Bazanova & Sterkin, 2020).

The pandemic has affected all areas of social interaction. For example, in March 2020, the number of grave and particularly grave crimes increased in Russia, it was 13.5 % more than in 2019. A similar trend was observed in 2019, but this time experts did cross out the impact of the coronavirus (Minak, 2020).

Outbreaks of epidemics affect fundamental traditional elements of culture, forcing people to revise socio-religious practices and customs. Some religious practices themselves are examples of easy ways of spreading infections, including dangerous ones, for example, HIV and hepatitis. In many African countries, there is a senselessly perverted custom of cliterodectomy (female genital mutilation) surgery, that savage operation today has been performed from 80 to 130 million women, and 20 % of them died from blood poisoning, others were infected with HIV (Andreev, 2008). Religious practices and rituals of some religions such as Christian also contribute to the spread of infection. When kissing icons, crosses, the sacrament, the causative agents of many infectious diseases can easily spread among parishioners and priests (Tokarevich & Grekova, 1986). At the beginning of the COVID 19 epidemic in Russia, many clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church did not want to stop the performance of their religious ordinances. The head of the communications sector of the St. Petersburg diocese, Natalya Rodomanova, said that while cities and countries were closed, 70 thousand pilgrims came to bow to the relics of John the Baptist. During the service in the cathedral, where relics of the saint were exhibited, there were about a thousand of people. In such conditions, it is difficult to rebuild religious practice consecrated over the centuries.

## 7. Conclusion

The above facts indicate that the problem of infectious diseases goes beyond medicine and penetrates into all spheres of society. Epidemiological outbreaks turn into a global threat in a short time. The emergence of HIV and especially COVID-19 has exposed vulnerabilities in the global economy. The viruses managed to break the system of the international division of labor. The coronavirus has disrupted traditional migration flows. The consequences of epidemics are difficult to underestimate. For this reason, the issue of social forecasting of the consequences of outbreaks of new infections for the society of its culture and economy becomes relevant.

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