

## The Fitting memory. How the Covid-19 pandemic blended past with present?

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### ABSTRACT

Covid-19 brought back memories of past pandemics. In society, a pandemic imaginary was installed, framing an imaginary landscape, alongside a rationalized pandemic intellect to which the media contributed a lot. We live immersed in tele technologies, adding present to the past and past to the present. At a time when home confinement became the rule, this was even more highlighted. In this screen technological Era, social practices were even more subject to the five great sociotechnical effects that condition information and the way it articulates memory and the present: ubiquity, instantaneity, acceleration, mobilization and presentism. This article intends to demonstrate the presence of the imaginary of past pandemics in the present (Applying Einstein's Theory of General Relativity), the way in which we appropriate these memories to create solutions and the way in which we mix the present with the solutions that came from the past.

### RESUMO

A Covid-19 trouxe de volta memórias de pandemias passadas. Instalou-se na sociedade um imaginário pandémico, enquadrando uma paisagem imaginária, ao lado de um intelecto também ele pandémico, racionalizado, para o qual os meios de comunicação muito contribuíram. Vivemos imersos nas teletecnologias, agregando o presente ao passado e o passado ao presente. Numa época em que o confinamento domiciliário se tornou regra, isso ganhou ainda mais destaque. Nessa Era tecnológica dos ecrãs, as práticas sociais ficaram ainda mais sujeitas aos cinco grandes efeitos sociotécnicos que condicionam a informação e a forma como ela articula a memória e o presente: ubiquidade, instantaneidade, aceleração, mobilização e presentismo. Este artigo pretende demonstrar a presença do imaginário de pandemias passadas no presente, a forma como nos apropriamos dessas memórias para criar soluções e a forma como misturamos o presente com as soluções que vieram do passado.

### RESUMEN

El Covid-19 trajo recuerdos de pandemias pasadas. Se ha instalado en la sociedad un imaginario pandémico, enmarcando un paisaje imaginario, junto a un intelecto también pandémico, racionalizado, al que mucho contribuyeron los medios de comunicación. Vivimos inmersos en las teletecnologías, sumando el presente al pasado y el pasado al presente. En un momento en el que el confinamiento domiciliario se convirtió en norma, este cobró aún más protagonismo. En esta era tecnológica de las pantallas, las prácticas sociales quedaron aún más sujetas a los cinco grandes efectos sociotécnicos que condicionan la información y su forma de articular memoria y presente: ubicuidad, instantaneidad, aceleración, movilización y presentismo. Este artículo tiene como objetivo demostrar la presencia del imaginario de pandemias pasadas en el presente, la forma en que nos apropiamos de estos recuerdos para crear soluciones y la forma en que mezclamos el presente con las soluciones que vinieron del pasado.

### KEYWORDS:

Covid 19  
Memory  
Pandemics  
Time  
Space

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Covid 19  
Espaço  
Memória  
Tempo  
Pandemias

### PALABRAS-CLAVE:

Covid 19  
Espacio  
Memoria  
Tiempo  
Pandemias

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## Introduction

With the Covid-19 Pandemic, a historic moment was experienced worldwide. Being one of seven human coronaviruses, Covid-19 will have been released on the last day of December 2019, in the city of Wuhan, the capital and largest city in the province of Hubei, in the Popular Republic of China. From then until March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the state of Pandemic, Covid-19 had already spread across five continents (ISAILÃ & HOSTIUC, 2020).

Counted in practically all countries, with more than three million deaths and more than 140 million infected by April 2021, the pandemic is considered one of the worst scenarios for human health. Etymologically of Greek origin, the word "pandemic" is the union of *pan*, which means "all or all", and *demos*, that means "people", and has an overwhelming power, both at the health level as well as at the social, political and economic level. In addition to the deaths caused, the great pandemics interfered with social, political, artistic, cultural dynamics and even from the point of view of innovation and technology (BARATA, 2020).

These facts, which we will present in detail below, lead us to some theoretical considerations related to both political and social decisions, taken to end or mitigate the pandemic, such as confinement policies, communication strategies or social practices adopted in the pandemic era, as with the creation of collective understandings and imaginations that appropriate past experiences to extract or guide perspectives, understandings and actions in the present. We advance with the hypothesis that both political and social decisions as well as the creation of collective understandings and imaginations were derived not only from strictly sanitary processes but, fundamentally, latent in the ongoing historical process, where a fit-memory was called upon to underline social processes in course. We believe that the social precipitation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the social, political, technical and economic precipitations generated by the pandemics announced in Table 1, both at the level of historical and ideological evocation, reflects the *contingent intellectus*, a mass of information that results from the fusion of the concept of intellect (reasoning, understanding, reflection) with the concept of contingent (which happened and made the present more dynamic). Contingent intellects are circulating (in TV news, Cinema, series, publications on the respective digital platforms, etc.) and express consensus, controversies, conflicts,

opinions, ideas and imitations capable of creating lines of action, thought and mobilization (COSTA, 2020). In addition to reviving memories and imagery of other past pandemics, Covid-19 bring us adopted solutions from the past in experiential comparison. At the same time, it served as a warning and as a know-how of experience (SOUSA, *et al*, 2020).

With regard to containment policies, they concern issues such as the spatio-temporal suspension of sociological contingency. From a philosophical point of view, the confinement made it clear that time does not represent any kind of unity, contrary to what Newton fixed in his classic mechanics, which, contrary to what, even today, is often propagated, is not the only variable capable of containing the answers to all of our questions. To measure time, for example, it is necessary to change the way of looking at it, since it is neither uniform nor independent of space. The interpretive proposal inscribed in the dictionarization is no different, once it can be interpreted as the meaning of time; an uninterrupted and eternal series of instants; or an arbitrary measure of the duration of things. This means that time is time, and space is space. However, this “canonical” idea, still used today, was called into question more than 100 years ago (more precisely on 25 November 1915), at the Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin, by Albert EINSTEIN, when he presented an article that explained his Theory of General Relativity. The confinement observed in almost all countries of the world resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic made each person's home a kind of laboratory to test Newton's theory, looking at EINSTEIN's, which goes exactly to opposite way. In a limited space, how much time is associated with it?

With regard to the interference of History in the communicational processes, we verified a set of situations that underline a communication with historical and scientific responsibility and contrary to essentialisms, but also a set of mythic narratives, with concerns of providing hero worship, a set of pragmatic narratives, in which the attempt to manipulate behaviours was a constant. Thus, communication based on the event took the lead throughout the pandemic period, highlighting the current and historical influence of information and communication technologies on understanding, memory and action.

With this reflection we intend to reveal how time and the question of memory were installed throughout the pandemic period, demonstrating the strength of

pandemics from the past in the present and the way in which this past was appropriated in communication.

### **Social time and confinement**

In a revolutionary way, a gravitational interaction occurred in a totally different way from Newton's proposal, pointing out that time was one of the dimensions of space and, the more intense its magnitudes, the greater the deformation of space-time could be. Which, in times of social confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic, may constitute a nonsense: for a body that is tendentiously still, time runs at maximum speed. However, as it would be defined later, in Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle (1927), within the framework of Quantum Theory, it is not possible to measure, simultaneously and accurately, directly related quantities, such as speed (time) and the position of a body (space).

For EINSTEIN, time is an additional dimension to the three spatial dimensions – altitude, latitude and longitude – and cannot be separated from them. The physicist thus defined a new entity, the space-time curvature that could be distorted according to the speed and gravity. In this way, the more intense they were, the more intense the deformation of that curvature could be (SCHWARTZ & MCGUINNESS, 1999).

It was from here that an alleged “fifth dimension” emerged, which, although it never existed, gained strength after EINSTEIN's “fourth temporal dimension” became very popular in Great Britain and the United States of America, even though it had nothing to do with it. What is certain is that the alleged “fifth dimension” will have spread through the various fields of knowledge, being used as a kind of God, in a metaphor for what cannot be explained.

In EINSTEIN's idea, space and time are, therefore, faces of the same coin, and the Universe is moved at a speed distributed between both dimensions, but with different repercussions, varying even from person to person. Which means that, in a still body, time runs at maximum speed. Therefore, it can be associated with the moment of social confinement, in which many people are sent to their own homes, working remotely, leaving only to solve basic day-to-day problems, using masks, disinfectant and gloves to avoid contact with the virus, in a dynamic imposed by the national Health entities. And, the departures from home, although sporadic and

functional, are a balm to avoid the almost entropy of the system, because the confinement that is said to be social but, in practice, has antisocial cuts, which can cause damage to health, particularly at the mental level (SOUSA, 2020; PIMENTA, *et al*, 2021).

In confinement, it becomes difficult to find something to fill the secluded time, involving, in addition to professional work (for those who telework), almost unlimited leisure, as well as the boredom caused by the restriction of freedom of movement in an equally wide way, in which there is an apparent total time to manage, which therefore involves all hours of the clock, from the beginning until the end of the day. In other words, life is circumscribed in a new way and with limited freedom. This is where the problem may lie. In the framework of the Theory of General Relativity, the speed is maximum for a standing time; on the contrary, when social time is viewed with “normality” (in which there is face-to-face interaction with the “other”), the body moves, gains speed in the dimension of space, even though EINSTEIN points out that the speed of time decreases, which means, for example, that at the speed of light, time doesn't pass at all. Therefore, it is necessary to slow down, moving the body.

Social time is not only the objective reality that shapes and organizes social life, but it is also the way in which each society develops and gives meaning to its existence, living in a temporality that it has configured itself. Time is not like that, just an external factor that is assumed by subjects to be acquired, since times are not uniform, nor are societies homogeneous.

With modernity, there was a break with the previous temporality, being directly related to the world of work. Since the 1960s of the 20th century, there was an era based on the development of Information and Communication Technologies, with the consequent increase in velocity. The subsequent fragmentation and integration of new realities resulted in the crisis of paradigms (LYOTARD, 1986), which also impacted the identity plan, which Stuart HALL (2000) integrates in a broader process of change that shook the frames of reference that gave stability to the individuals in the social world.

As François HARTOG (2003) points out, there is a risk that everything from History can be compressed into contemporary History, which he himself typified in the concept of “presentism”. Even before, the historian Marc BLOCH (1965) defined History as the

science of men in time, questioning the idea of those who claimed that History would only be the science of the present, or the science of men, adding the factor of time as a preponderant dimension to consider. The feeling of loss of historicity at certain moments or in the context of certain world views that appear in History may have a plausible explanation based on the concepts of “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation”, by Reinhart KOSELLECK (2006), who was a pioneer in references about the acceleration of time within the framework of History.

One of the decisive aspects of our time is that we live in a dictatorship of the present, generated largely by the media. In this way, the present should not be simplified, to the point that it can no longer be understood. This does not mean that the present does not represent an abstract dimension of time (SOUSA, 2020).

### Fitting memory in communication during the pandemic

Summarizing the top ten pandemics, we observe that in most major global epidemics, the post-pandemic has resulted in major changes. In addition to the deaths caused, the great pandemics affected empires and political regimes (Athens Flu, Antonina Plague and Justiniana Plague), with religions and behaviour as ways of facing the problem (Cyprian Pest), impacts on agriculture in the Middle Ages, as well as technical innovations and influences in literature and art (Black Death) or social stigmas, as in the question between AIDS and homosexuality (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Ten great pandemics of History

10 Great Pandemics of History										
<b>Name</b>	Athens Flu	Antonina Plague	Athens Flu	Justiniana Plague	Black Plague	Spanish Flu	Asian Flu	Hong Kong Flu	AIDS	Covid 19
<b>Time and duration</b>	(430-427 a.C)	(since 130 d.C)	(251-270 d.C)	(541-750 d.C.)	(1346-1353)	(1918-1920)	(1957-1958)	(1968-1969)	(since 1981)	(since 2019)
<b>Origins</b>	Ethiopia	Asia	Ethiopia	Egypt	Asia	EUA or China	China	Hong Kong	África	China
<b>Causes</b>	Typhus, fever typhoid, smallpox or measles	Smallpox or measles	Smallpox, measles or other	Bubonic plague (bacteria Yersinia pestis)	Bubonic plague (bacteria Yersinia pestis)	Pneumonic Flu (H1N1 influenza virus)	Influenza virus H2N2	Influenza virus H3N2	HIV virus	Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

Consequences	Two-thirds death of Athenian population, including Pericles, political leader and military	Beginning of the end political and military of the Empire Roman; death of emperors Lúcio Vero and Marco Aurélio	Die the Roman emperors Claudius II and Hostile; Christians accused of be the disseminators	One of the causes of the end of the Eastern Empire and fall of Constantinople	Impact on agriculture in Middle Ages, technical innovations, influence in literature and art	500 million infected people; demographic disaster, production crisis	Without great impact on economic growth ongoing	Without great impact (except in EUA)	About 38 million infected people still today with the AIDS	social, economic and medical crisis
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**Source:** Own production from BARATA (2020).

These profound impacts on the social, cultural, political and technical organization of the different eras have constituted a base of knowledge and information on how the catastrophe in general can be devastating and at the same time inspirational. Something that puts, in our view, both History and memory about these catastrophes on a very important plane, both for the moment and for predicting ways of thinking, feeling and acting in similar situations in the future.

In the view of Jacques LE GOFF (1990), the concept of History seems to pose six types of challenges today, both to History and to memory. Namely: i) what relations exist between the lived History, the "natural", if not "objective" History, of human societies, and the scientific effort to describe, think and explain this evolution, historical science? ii) what relations does History establish with time, with duration, both with the "natural" and cyclical weather of the seasons and with the lived and naturally recorded time of individuals and societies? iii) the dialectic of History seems to boil down to an opposition - or a dialogue - between past and present. In general, this opposition is not neutral, but implies, or expresses, a system of attributing values, as for example in the old / modern pairs, progress / reaction. The document / monument pair, on the other hand, is wider because it allows the variation conferred by the "possible representations". iv) History is unable to predict and predict the future. How does it stand in relation to a new "science", futurology? v) in contact with other social sciences, the historian today tends to distinguish different historical durations. There is a revival of interest in the event, although it seduces more the long-term perspective. This led some historians, both through the use of the notion of structure and through dialogue with anthropology, to elaborate the hypothesis of the existence of an almost immobile History. vi) finally, the idea of History as the History of man has been replaced by the idea of History as the History

of men in society. But does it exist, a History of man, only? A History of climate has already developed - shouldn't a History of nature also be written? Is man not subject to the relationship with nature, as we have seen in the pandemic?

These considerations by LE GOFF invite us to reflect on two dimensions of History when related to the field of communication, which in the specific case of the pandemic had a strong impact (SENHORAS, 2020). Stretching LE GOFF's thinking, in contact with other social sciences, as is the case with the communicator or journalist, History tends to print different temporal dynamics. Points ii) and v) (the relationship established between History and time and the growing interest in the event), invoked by LE GOFF (1990), allow us to perceive a bifurcation. On the one hand, History appears, in communication, as a science that reveals the human in action in space-time. In this, the human finds the elements of his existence in the achievements of and with his ancestors. On the other hand, with a growing interest in the event, the communicator-journalist makes History a *contingent intellectus* (COSTA, 2020), that is, it describes the present through a set of legitimate understandings and facts that form intellects. These, in turn, add in space-time a set of imitations, differentiation modes, beliefs, traditions, values, opinions, suggestions, ideas, knowledge. The permanent relationship established, in the various media, between the confinement of the 1918 pandemic and that of 2020, gripped the present to the past through a *contingent intellectus* that concentrated pandemic response methods and techniques (overcoming ideas, confinement policies, modes of social control, etc.).

The perspective of History as complementary of science and communication, which was inscribed in the action of communication during the pandemic, proved, in our understanding, four major structural dimensions: narrative History, pragmatic History, scientific History and the historical variant of the School of Annales.

As an example of the narrative dimension, in the media in general, are the events narrated often without concern for the causes, with the results or even with the veracity itself. In addition, other issues have come in that have not been so evident so far. This was the case with the emancipation of some professions. During the pandemic doctors and nurses were targets of worldwide elevation to heroes (ISAILÃ & HOSTIUC, 2020), as well as the political class, in which it was common to attribute historical action to the representatives of the elites, constantly gluing the pandemic



to the idea of war (PEREIRA *et al*, 2020). However, this perspective came to us without any explicit methodological process (ALCANTARA, 2020).

Otherwise, already within more pragmatic dimensions, we were exposed to events described with didactic concern. In these cases, the communicator showed the "mistakes" made in the past, as well as the change in customs, as a story as master of life. Looking beyond the pandemic, something that has not always happened, would allow us to look at the pandemics of the past and realize that almost all had major social impacts that should now be taken care of (LOLE *et al*, 2020).

From a perspective of more scientific communication, in many cases we have been concerned with the truth, with the method, with the critical analysis of causes and consequences, with time and space. Contesting, in a certain sense, the "Historical Positivism" of other journalistic and communication works, this more scientific communication was able to expose a more neutral perspective of the processes (OLIVEIRA *et al*, 2020).

Finally, within a perspective closer to the History of the Annales, there was also communication with perspectives that aimed at breaking with the idea of the cult of heroes (doctors and nurses) and, in other cases, the placement of people at the center of historical action (FERREIRA, 2020). Here, daily lives, art, the affairs of the people and social psychology have become fundamental elements for understanding the transformations undertaken in the pandemic (FREITAS, 2020).

However, this is History in its four major processes. What LE GOFF (1990) emphasizes as problematic is the question of the growing interest in the event and its imprisonment in the present. If we add to this the fact that today we live immersed in social media, we conclude that in the pandemic, westerners added present to the past and past to the present, using, the screen above all other media. At a time when home confinement became the rule, the use of the screen and its speed of connection to events were even more emphasised. Social practices were even more subject to five major socio-technical effects that condition information and the way it articulates memory and the present: ubiquity (Valery, 2005), acceleration (VIRILIO, 2000), mobilization (JUNGER, 1990) and presentism (HARTOG, 2003).

During the pandemic, the concentration of millions of people in front of the screen and the simultaneous transmission of daily data of deaths and infected people, allowed an hegemony of the idea of History as a contingent intellect with focus on

the instant, that is, the event of the world at the moment. The control of people on the streets during confinement, the use or non-use of personal protective equipment, was the target of an unprecedented live moralization, where the medical-sanitary power described by AGAMBEN (2020) returned to the prevailed moral state that occurred in the pre-modern era (BAUMAN, 2007). Although the medical-sanitarian is linked to science, he found in the communication of the pandemic a pre-scientific form through the fear-immediacy-moralization set. This set made communication a *contingent intellectus* according to the moralizing objectives of the dominant.

With this dynamic, we understand that a level of History-present has been reached (HARTOG, 2003), that is, History tailored the dominant intellects with a set of typical traits: individualized fear has generated an absence of collective awareness, insofar as the required approach aimed not at a collective conscience but rather at a collective sanitary contingency that pushed the "other" than the target of fear to the margin - other diseases (DUARTE, 2021), the problem of social isolation (SCHUCHMANN *et al*, 2020), socioeconomic survival (PIRES *et al*, 2020), and the imbalance and inequality in the education and teaching processes (MARASCA *et al*, 2020), in child and youth development (VICENTE *et al*, 2021) and cultural development (AMORIM *et al*, 2020).

History from the perspective of *contingent intellectus* is the History of those who currently dominate thinking, understanding and communication. Therefore, it is contrary to an idea of collective that presupposes the community. The contingent common does not reflect the conscious common, but rather the forces that are evident in the contingency. For GIORGIO AGAMBEN (2020), the rise of medical power (as a religion) meant, therefore, the archetypal elevation of one of the three main beliefs of the West: religion. Replacing Christ, the doctor rose to the cult figure in the contingency, becoming a kind of hero. But he is a hero born from one of the other belief systems, Science. History told in this way generates a new sociological subjectivity, in which the doctor functions as the archetype-major (Christ) and Science as the Holy Spirit that allows his ascension. The moralization of the world from a medical-sanitary perspective elevates the History and memory of the pandemic to a contingent moralizing intellect, which defines good and evil, right and wrong, installing a single and very own collective contingency and making one forget a

diverse, multiple collective embracing consciences. The behaviour that fits in the medical-sanitary morality is included, and the behaviour that does not fit in this morality is excluded, ostracized, silenced (as BAUMAN referred to the existing moralization in the pre-modern era). This collective contingency, as long as possible, which became common and collectively appropriate, later gave rise to very specific and common associations, that is, moralizing “contingent associations” (COSTA, 2020).

Henceforth, and arranged by the media in this way, the sources that will support the memory of the pandemic will tend to reveal, above all, the dominant contingent intellect of the period, a moment characterized by the set of present contingent associations shielding themselves in the lines of force and in the common understandings of the dominants of the time and who guided and influenced, by imitation, counter-imitation, suggestion, differentiation, innovation and adaptation, the ways of thinking, feeling and acting. From a perspective from GABRIEL TARDE (1978), History and Memory, the past (by imitation and counter-imitation) and the future (by suggestion, adaptation, differentiation and innovation) of the pandemic start to act on the present through contingent association, promoting a collective individuation of the pandemic contingency (associations by appropriation); and reproducing that part of the collectivity (associations by reproduction), that is, as societies that reproduce and report partial historical events.

The growth of this idea of History as a *contingent intellectus* greatly contributed to the effects of technological confinement (RIBEIRO, *et al*, 2020; DINIZ & FRANÇA, 2020; CASSIOLATO *et al*, 2021). The spatio-temporal compression of social dynamics promoted by TIC was overwhelming. Intense time (BERGSON, 2011), such as what was experienced in the confines of the pandemic, tended to distort previous notions of space-time, where life was circumscribed in a new way and with limited freedom (CASSIOLATO *et al*, 2021). In technological confinement, in constant acceleration due to the suggestion for telematic action, ubiquitously deceived by the reticular effect, we become even more presentist – one day seem to be several. What did we do with all this during the pandemic? We created an imaginary from the present, but with a reflection on the pandemics of the past, we created health rules that mixed solutions from the past, such as laws and the withdrawal of freedoms, with the present possibilities of freedom (consumption of films, series, etc.), and we look

to the future of the world with greater distrust of institutions and science, unleashing primary survival instincts such as fear and exclusion from opposing tribes. In short, we have made History an immense contingent intellect mixed by prevailing global forces and mistrust bringing in future consequences, both in the subjectivity and in the memory of this pandemic.

Memory is not a faithful film, tending to edit the present with information from the past (PAUL, 2014; RICŒUR, 2000). As one of Tomás de Aquino's main theses suggested, truth often arises as the adaptation of the intellect to the thing. Memory, therefore, appears to us as a mixture of past and contingency (COSTA, 2020) between issues of fact and issues of contingent interest (LATOURE, 2020). Or, as an African saying sums it up, memory goes to the woods and brings back the firewood you want. However, memory is essential to understand the dynamics of the present, because it gives us context. Without memory, we fall into post-memory (HIRSCH, 2008), which represents a second-hand memory and, therefore, an unlived reality, which has to be bridged, in an attempt to close this kind of hole. Besides, PAUL RICŒUR (2000) had already confirmed the inseparability between memory and oblivion, which means the main job of a historian, is not to remember, since the job is developed in the direction opposite to the dynamic of believing in memory, even going against it, since it has been revealed to be false.

### **The consequences of crises as a “new normal”**

A crisis like this has never happened before, and no other crisis has had such a rapid impact worldwide. Portugal has gone through the State of Emergency and the State of Calamity, with exceptional circumstances resulting from the crisis caused by Covid-19, and which have changed people's lives forever. Although it has been recently declared, the pandemic seems to be lasting an eternity. Because there has never been an event in History that could stop the world so suddenly and drastically, in a situation that is still far from being overcome. Even if a solution is envisaged through the inoculation of a vaccine, it is known that the solution will not have immediate effects. The word "confinement", in itself, already has a relative intrinsic weight depending, however, on the meaning that each one attributes to it. It is true that it does not bring any good thought and there is the certainty that this is a global epidemic, abrupt and endless.

BYUNG-CHUL HAN (2016) argues that our current affairs are dominated, not by an incessant acceleration of time, but, on the contrary, by a temporal crisis based on dis-synchrony, which is nothing more than atomization of time itself without direction or order or conclusion that prevents it from lasting substantially in our lives. It consists of indistinguishable and sequential moments, which make any moment, look the same as another, and there is neither a rhythm nor a direction that gives meaning to our lives.

And in times of confinement caused by the pandemic will there be dis-synchrony? How do changes in social life affect the time flow? Is it an inverted atomization? Does the context change the rhetoric? Does time concern itself now with everyone and in the same way? It is known that it is not and, like any other crisis, it has an impact on most people, but not, in the same way. At the limit, there are those who, from the start, became unemployed during the pandemic and with great difficulties to survive. On the contrary, there are those who telework and manage time almost at their will, despite confinement.

As the social reality of times is less objective and constantly reconfigured, ARAÚJO, *et al* (2013) discuss the meaning of the expressions "doing nothing" and "having nothing to do", in the context of contemporary societies. Although these are exploratory ideas, the authors note that the cultural changes that occur in societies can be analyzed as "interpretative repertoires". And, taking into account that there is no internal psychological content in the individuals who control their behavior, both "doing nothing" and "having nothing to do" can be conceived as constituent elements of the critical discourse on the modes of scientific management of time that takes this as the central unit of production and, therefore, they can configure modes of subordination or resistance to these structures of valorization of time.

This is how BYUNG-CHUL HAN (2016) proposes the revaluation of leisure as contemplation of the truth, which does not have to do, paradoxically, with any departure from reality. The philosopher wrote this long before the pandemic crisis, making it clear that the temporal crisis arises precisely from the elimination of contemplation. The reality is that, because it has an instantaneous cut, it does not get anyone to reach its fullness due to the lack of depth and excess of ephemeral dynamics. In this sense, does the pandemic crisis help the contemplation, the temporal duration, adding some of the pieces of dis-synchrony?

In this context, there is no question of any non-explanatory time for the anomaly caused by the current pandemic. In MARC AUGÉ's *Non-places* book (2012), he explores the intervals that remain confined in these places through images captured on public transport. Far from our home today, the real shell against Covid-19, which, by definition, is the opposite of non-place, MARC AUGÉ proposed, precisely, the non-place in opposition to home, residence, and space custom. A non-place was thus assumed, for example, as an airport, a subway station, hypermarkets or hotel chains. Now, at the time of Covid-19, did this concept change, subverting the logic of its coinage? Returning home has always been the goal, and staying home for a few more months, then developing almost all of our activity - leisure, work, love, madness ... - can mean boredom and, although not literally, it can be as if we were at an airport, moving to another location; for another time. An extremely uncertain time. And, although suspicious, confinement persists and, with it, the approach to the non-place, cadenced for a non-time. From a non-society. Of a non-existence. On the contrary, based on the hope that the uncertainty of the future can bring. JONATHAN CRARY is also referring to a "non-time", with the criticism he develops in the book *24/7: Late capitalism and the end of sleep* (2013), in which he explores some of the consequences that he considers ruinous of the non-stop expansion of 21st century capitalism. This society in which the market uses all hours of the clock, pushing us towards constant activity and undermining forms of community and political expression, damaging the fabric of everyday life. For CRARY, human apathy is incompatible with non-stop capitalism, which is still interesting at a time when the world has apparently stopped. But it continues to feed the news channels, 24 hours a day, showing that the changes resulting from the crisis may be less than we think. In addition, this dynamic has intensified in the full development of the pandemic, with the media that, despite showing the slowness of the streets, promotes fast time with news related to the virus that has been taking over the media space. Hence, everything is seen by the consumer in a slow, stopped time, in line with the subsequent maximum speed, according to the Theory of General Relativity.

Like the notion "time", the word "space" also has several meanings. It may be an area that is in the range between limits; an empty place that can be occupied; or the duration time. It may also mean Universe, an extension that contains the solar

system, galaxies and stars, and that's where EINSTEIN's Relativity comes in, adding the temporal dimension to the three spatial dimensions. And all the sensations of an apparent slowdown, due to social confinement, enter the lives of people who are forced to stay at home. Involved in an experience of the present that, suddenly, suffered a cut, because of the measures to avoid the contagion of a virus. And very quickly, what was considered a paradigm, underwent a radical change. With people being taken to their homes, confined to a few square meters, where they live with others who live with them, eat, sleep, work, watch television. It is a world at a distance that continues, as before and is as always, a social construction, which makes it continue in the experience of the present creating awareness of an "anomaly". This determines profound changes in daily life and has to do with how time flows. And then it really accelerates, as if there is no tomorrow.

It is the new-normal, a word that comes out of television breaking news, through the voice of politicians, journalists, firefighters, citizens, to internalize a new reality that will emerge with the end of the pandemic.

### **Nothing will be as before, or the ratification of the exception**

Between the temporal speed and the respective deceleration, is there a discontinuity? Is it an anomaly due to the use of the same clock hours to work harder and produce more? Or is it a departure from the policies followed by the most developed European countries of the 90s of the 20th century, in which the total time of daily work was reduced to add to leisure? The intensification of the globalization phenomenon has thrown the whole idea to the ground. The anomaly already existed, based on the uninterrupted time that occupied all hours of the clock. Alternating the previous balance where the distance from the delay has become a good anxiety. And that, afterwards, implied serenity, conviviality, with people interacting.

MARK HONIGSBAUM (2020) has spent the last few years studying the main epidemics and their consequences on societies. The investment in the health area, the vertigo of the destruction of natural habitats and the economy based on immense profits will, according to the researcher, be largely responsible for the crisis that we will have to face in the coming months.

In any case, the confinement paid off in Portugal and all over the world. And it taught us what we should do and what we should not repeat. We learned several lessons: the importance of science, the need for robust public health services, the dilemmas associated with individual freedoms, the need to combat fake-news (infodemia), ending with ways of teaching and working at a distance and challenges that an unprecedented economic crisis will bring to work and personal relationships. It must be added that the confinement has such a countercurrent logic that its duration must be limited in time. The problem is to know how long it will last, making it clear that what we call a post-pandemic is actually the beginning of a long period of intermittent pandemic. More than a health problem, it is a human rights issue.

Depression (and the development of situations very similar to post-traumatic stress), unemployment and hunger have already emerged and will continue to manifest themselves in different degrees and modulations, touching us, as always, in a different way. Seeing the world we live in and the way we relate disappear, not knowing if we will ever fully recover, will leave us all depressed, but unemployment and hunger will affect each of us in a very different way. With this crisis, some things will never be the same, as is the case with democracy. And although democratic countries allow exceptions, albeit limited in matters and time, alarm situations do not suspend pluralism, but only its competitive dimension.

## **Conclusion**

The new-present is uncertain, as the future has always been. We envisage that the quarantine we use to isolate ourselves from the virus may be the beginning of a set of new imitations that take over as a barrier not only against the virus: against each element of a production method that we do not want to resume (LATOURE, 2020). This is called a new normality, and normality may well be an abstraction in itself. This idea does not prevent the debate about a "new world", the "new man" and the "planet (which must be more) green". Those are recurring ideas that already existed in society, in fact, but where will the rhetoric of the post-pandemic be based, if not even globalization escapes it? And, in a context in which the crisis stands out, it remains to be seen whether the alternative path of alterglobalization advocated by MICHAEL HARDT & ANTONIO NEGRI (2019) will fall short. Since time is a consensus



and, those who are not aligned, can be even more absorbed by the new-normality. Perhaps this is why JÜRGEN HABERMAS makes it clear that, in this crisis, we must act with the explicit knowledge of our non-knowledge (TRUONG, 2020).

What is certain is that the future will be (even more) uncertain than usual. This will be the new normal. The present is what allows the consistency of movement in the flow of life, the encounter and intensification of the living forces of the past and the future, so that from there they can radiate multiple directions. However, the existence of many world crises cannot be much observed on a macro scale. In addition to the two world wars, the crisis that is related to the Covid-19 pandemic appears to be the third, as it has global cuts and almost no country has escaped it. The problem with this crisis was its immediacy and this is the big difference in relation to other crises.

The uses of memory and History fitting to interests (political, social, economic, etc.), this fold carried out in a torrent of possibilities conferred by the collective time-space (in Einstein's version), concretize the paradox of *contingent intellectus*. They emerge as a basis for the generalized understandings of the time, but they end up exposing ideologies, interests and dominant lines of force that are socially legitimized or that, then, has gradually been legitimized. In this sense, the paradox fits perfectly in this pandemic era. Communication and information technologies strengthened their positions, teleworking was emancipated, digital communication was able to generate an unprecedented global feeling and the memories, stories and practices of the past served as a reference to the actions of the present in the pandemic. However, as we saw earlier, this adaptation of the intellect to the thing experienced in the present, but with strong influences from the past, did not contradict the tendencies of the past, as are the cases of social, economic and psychological crises. If digital communication has strengthened its power, or if science and medical power have achieved strong myth, policies in general have not been able to generate satisfactory results in mitigating the collective tragedy. The invocation of memory and History served only to strengthen powers already installed. The adequacy of the "truth" (historical and scientific) has placed the future at the mercy of socio-historical processes in progress, from which there are no glimpses, in the short, medium or long term, of major corrections of imbalances at a global level.

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