

The New Coronavirus and World Geopolitical Transformations

ABSTRACT This article studies the major transformations resulting from the global Covid-19 pandemic and how to examine it from the point of view of social philosophy through two sub-themes. The first relates to understanding the state of collective panic in Spain, France, and Italy. It is logical that fear of the pandemic should not turn into a state of collective panic in societies living under technologically advanced political systems, except in cases where these societies lack the basic elements on which social ties are based. Therefore, how do we understand the fragility of these social ties in European countries where mass panic is threatening daily life? The second sub-theme is related to the gestures and features of creating a new geopolitical map that has benefitted from the geopolitical retreat of the West to consolidate other political and regional alliances, mainly the Chinese initiative to tender aid to Italy at a time when other European countries turned their backs on and closed their borders with that European Union member state. How do we understand the contribution of the pandemic in forming new geopolitical alliances that could reset the balance of power in the world? We will observe the political behavior of countries that are supposed to be the first to have shown solidarity with Italy, Spain, and France, which are members of the European Union. We analyze the factors related to the erosion of the basis on which classical European society is based, where collective panic represents one of the manifestations of this disintegration. This panic, which was expressed in the rush to buy foodstuffs and the outbreak of a “toilet paper” buying fever that spread throughout Europe and the United States, saw shelves suddenly empty without a direct reason for this fact. Also, the study determines the relationship that binds these factors to the political disintegration expressed in the lack of solidarity from parts of the European Union with the three countries most affected by the pandemic. The second part of the study discusses how China will benefit from these political developments in the West with the prevalence of collective panic due to the pandemic, especially in the case of Italy, and how China is consolidating solidarity relations with these countries, drawing a map of new international political relations as part of its Silk Road project. Also, there is a discussion of the French philosopher Michel Foucault’s study on plague as a theoretical framework. **KEYWORDS** new coronavirus, geopolitical transformations, collective pain, solidarity, hegemony, new world order

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has caused an unprecedented state of panic around the world, revealing the fragility of international and regional, social, and political relations. It generated the emergence of selfishness, leading to the collapse of a sense of human solidarity, which comprises the core of the political body of any society. This was accompanied by the rapid spread of the virus in several countries. It struck countries far from China, where the disease first spread before moving to other countries, including Latin America and the United States. It is noteworthy that the latter is the primary rival of China, and with which it has the strongest economic relations. This state of mass panic was most exhibited in Europe, especially in France and Spain, with respective death tolls of 80,147 and 63,061, bypassing China by far. As for Italy, the number of victims reached 92,002 according to the latest statistics published on February 10, 2021.¹

This pandemic's spread around the world has overwhelmed and forcefully swept through countries that enjoyed major influences in regional conflicts, especially in the post-Arab Spring Middle East, mainly Italy and France. This is what prompts us to think about what will happen after this pandemic is over. How do we understand the geopolitical transformations in the world after the pandemic? To answer this question, it is important to lay out some basic concepts used throughout this article.

Collective Panic

It is considered a type of collective panic towards the spread of the pandemic, which is represented by the acceleration of the acquisition and purchase of large quantities of food that escalated in Europe and the United States, or the panic buying and stocking of non-foodstuffs such as toilet paper (Barnard 2020). This is not a moral panic and an excessive societal reaction towards a type of behavior, indicating a more general and widespread social and moral anxiety (Giddens and Sutton 2017, 295), because the factor that caused this panic is not a social issue or a group that threatens a set of common moral values (297). Rather, it is about panic resulting from an epidemic that is threatening social and political security, and the life of humans on Earth. The pandemic does not threaten the identities of other countries and does not

1. For an update on Coronavirus cases worldwide, see <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>.

discriminate between social classes. However, the concept developed by Anthony Giddens shares one feature with the phenomenon of the current social panic caused by the pandemic, which is the outcome generated in the post-pandemic panic situation in terms of state intervention and reforming the political system. Accordingly, the pandemic becomes exaggerated and reactions to it spread via mass media, which leads to the public sensation-alizing the subject and raising the level of anxiety. This leads to calls to do something, with mounting pressure on the authorities to act and issue new legislation. In some cases, panic continues until the cycle of media attention ends (297).

Solidarity

This concept is attributed to the founder of sociology, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), who distinguished between two types of solidarity: organic and mechanistic. Organic solidarity is like the harmonious function of the nervous system. This system organizes the functions of various organs of the body and entails diversity, unlike mechanistic solidarity which is based on commonality between material components (Durkheim 2013, 120–22). In addition, organic solidarity is a byproduct of the division of labor. Regarding this point, Durkheim notes an important point related to the source of this solidarity in human awareness. There are two types of awareness in each one of us. One is common to us all and is not particular to ourselves. Rather, it is the living community that influences us. As for the second type of awareness, it does not represent something other than us, but is our distinct characteristics, or what makes us independent individuals. Thus, solidarity, which is derived from similarities, reaches its highest level when the common awareness is the sum of our total consciousness at all levels. Organic solidarity can only grow in opposition to the growth of personality (Durkheim 2013). It also indicates that negative solidarity is automatic solidarity because it does not achieve integration into society as a whole unit based on integrated difference. Positive solidarity is represented by organic solidarity that carries in itself the conditions for the possibility of establishing a modern society.

Social Bond

According to Pierre-Yves Cusset (1923–2006), social bond has many definitions, the simplest of which is the sum of the relationships that bind us to family, friends, neighbors, etc. down to the collective mechanism of solidarity, while bypassing standards, rules, and values that provide us with the

minimum for collectiveness (Cusset 2007, 5). The social bond draws the group of relationships that unite individuals belonging to the same social group, as it sets social rules between individuals or different social groups. Social ties also represent an important element in achieving the cohesion of the social body and the integration of individuals in it, either by sharing common values or through the social recognition of differences when establishing social rules. The social bond also represents an essential element for individuals through which they derive their social identity.

Geopolitics

The term “geopolitics” was first used in the late nineteenth century, and ever since it has witnessed several developments. It is usually defined as the science of the state as a geographic object or as an element in space, that is, the country as a state, territory, and domain. From a political science perspective, Defay (2005, 3) stresses the unity of the state because he wants to contribute to an understanding of its nature. As states compete as organic entities that grow and deteriorate, geopolitics becomes the competition that allows states to reach their maximum expansion and prevent their collapse. Besides state-centered geopolitics, Defarges (1994) proposes another geopolitical concept in which contemporary geopolitical features are shaped. Defarges analyzes the microphysical elements of society and the state: regions, cities, multinational companies, and various organizations. This micro-geopolitics is part of global developments that affect all social phenomena (138). Therefore, in classical geopolitics, the central issue is land-grabbing and the sovereign state is the only actor. The environment raises new geopolitical issues such as the future of the Amazon and how waste transportation is to be organized in addition to other factors. It is no longer just a question of distributing territorial holdings, but also of monitoring flows of all sorts, and the power that gets formed by them. Thus, geopolitics is less concerned with sharing spaces than how they are used and how they are managed (71).

The Pandemic and Social Solidarity

Modernity as a cultural model, particular to the European context, was an important element in transforming human relations from kinship relations, based on automatic solidarity (tribe, clan, etc.) to organic solidarity (solidarity imposed by the division of labor inside the factory and the social division of labor outside the factory). This makes the difference between its members an element of community cohesion, because the different tasks and

responsibilities assigned to individuals meet different needs. This essentially came in response to the needs of the new division of labor that serves the interests of Capital and the European bourgeois class, which in turn contributed to the transformation of European societies that used to be feudal societies into the model typical of an industrial society. With the development of the idea of modern society in the post-colonial era and the attempt to make it a universal model, and the development of the individual's needs, the pandemic remains a social and political dilemma, especially in its continuous ability to threaten all kinds of solidarity, and to question all kinds of belonging.

With the revival of religious forms of belonging that are related to the idea of individual salvation in relation to belonging to a particular religion, and with the rapid spread of information through means and techniques of social communication that count the number of people who died as a result of infection, the news has become an element of threat stimulating fear in a person, even from those closest to him. This fear is embodied in the lack of confidence in collectivization policies to protect people from the pandemic. Consequently, a person's faith in the ability of human action to surpass catastrophic crises makes him turn his back on religion. For example, a field study on the psychology of epidemics indicated that there were cases of religious conversion among people who contracted AIDS in the 1990s (Bégot 2004, 42–60).

This also raises questions related to the problem of human nature and human existence at the center of the issues today, as it is among the questions that are always revisited as humanity advances in science and develops convictions that science alone is capable of bringing us out of the barbaric and brutal state of nature (as formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes), especially since man has not yet rid himself of the tendency towards the instinct of animal survival which conflicts with his thinking about the future of humanity and how to preserve the world in which we live for future generations. But a person cannot achieve food and health security and safety without a "society" in which he lives and develop ways of life that provide him with a means of security and physical protection. But does this not pose an important question in relation to the significance of humans belonging to modern societies: Can we explain or even understand the inverse relationship between the development of types of belonging to the so-called international community and the development of cohesion provided by globalization which defends universal human rights, in which, however, within which

a person loses the sense of the state and the local community? Yet can the international community ensure protection from pandemics?

THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL TIES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES AND EUROPEAN PANIC

Maurice Godelier discusses the relations that lay the foundations of a society and states and that only political–religious relations in the West have the ability to create societies, as they bring together several social groups and individuals and make them coexist under a form of sovereignty. These groups exploit the resources of the territory where they exercise that sovereignty (Godelier 2007, 161). This refers to the elements through which social ties are crystallized and from which society emerges. These ties go beyond the primary relationships of family or clan, and even the social ties resulting from economic processes. The existence of kinship or alliances (that go beyond kinship or loyalty between clans), economic or otherwise, is not sufficient to prove that there is society. It is necessary to have a link between individuals and groups that transcends the primary and secondary relations in order to build a kind of stable community. Godelier believes that it can only come from a political–religious approach in the sense of managing relations and creating the necessary arrangements for the functioning of the work of the human society as a constructed unit with a hierarchy, division of labor, distribution of power, and religious legitimacy (161). Here lies the essence of the issue and the hinge point from which an understanding of the state of panic can be developed. Since this situation was only a consequence of the fragility of social ties and the loss of the spiritual dimension on which these ties are based, the spiritual authority that emanates from ties between individuals that go beyond basic material economic relations has been lost and withdrawn, and its social role has been greatly diminished. It is also embodied by the weakening of national enthusiasm, especially with the globalization of the economy and the decline of the role of the bureaucracy in the state. According to Zygmunt Bauman, bureaucracy required compliance with rules, not moral judgment. In fact, employees' morals were redefined as obedience to orders and a willingness to master their work, whatever the nature of the task and its impact on the affected parties (Bauman 2006, 134).

According to Alain Touraine, the disintegration of European societies takes its extreme form when the link between the system and the subject is broken, that is, when the meaning of the criterion in relation to the system

and its meaning with regard to the subject is not matched, then everything takes a double meaning, and the individual tends to assert himself by opposing the norms of the society (Touraine 2007, 118). This disintegration is an inevitable result of the disconnection of the social bond, leaving the individual lonely, leading him to depression, or to search for artificial and dangerous relationships (125). This type of individual autonomy comes at the expense of the overall cohesion of society, as it is a logical product of individual interest that has replaced social utility, and which was embodied in several demands represented by new social movements that are defended according to a collective scope. This includes feminist movements, groups which defend sexual freedoms, environmental organizations, and anti-racism groups. Giddens looks at social movements as a collective attempt to promote a public interest or achieve a public objective, often through actions outside the realm of the existing formal political institutions. They are movements to change society in the sense that they hold visions different from the lifestyle of the society they live in and often hold contradicting social agendas and rarely share the same objectives (Giddens and Sutton 2017, 346–47).

Regarding technological and bureaucratic issues, enlightenment philosophers argued that technology makes an effective contribution to achieving human happiness. But in reality, technological development has not served humanity as a whole, nor has it become a service for man in all dimensions. Rather, it serves the material dimensions of the human being at the expense of the moral dimension. It inevitably comes at the expense of some groups of people, which is what Bauman referred to in relation to the victims of Hurricane Katrina 2005 in the United States. Those who were most affected by that natural disaster were those who were already marginalized by the system and modernization even before the hurricane hit them. Long before the disaster, these victims found themselves the least cared for by the authorities. This made it clear that the search for happiness is a universal right and that the means to achieve it is the principle of the survival of the fittest (Bauman 2006, 110). Just as bureaucracy lies at the core of the spirit of modernity, the rigid modern age has neutralized the ethical effects of human action, so liberal technology in our time does something similar by providing moral anesthetics (123).

Bauman opens wide doors that can facilitate the understanding of the causes of the rise of nihilistic tendencies in Europe, and the inflated ego and self-centeredness, which, according to Christopher Lasch, is nothing but a product of the weakness of the Western self in the face of the modern life

system dominated by superficial professional relations. Sometimes the person becomes captive of hierarchy or psychology in which he feels interchangeable, moves in a universe of indifference, fleeting relationships, and commercial connections. Even his family seems to him broken and shattered. Hence, living in the present becomes the prevailing passion rather than living for one's ancestors or descendants/future generations (Lasch 1991, 5).

Bauman refers to an important point associated with the amplification of the state of fear, which is the ability of technology to neutralize social action and remove it from moral law. He considered this a logical extension of the relationship between bureaucracy and the ethical dimension of man by underestimating the importance of moral standards or whenever these standards can be completely eliminated from evaluating the desirability of human actions (or their permissibility). Thus, it culminates in stripping the individual active human soul of its moral sense and suppressing its moral impulse (Bauman 2006, 133). The more the moral sense is neutralized from social and political action in which technology has become totally dominant, the more the ability of man to confront dangers facing humanity diminishes and weakens. At this particular moment, fear is amplified and transformed from an individual state to collective panic because we are now facing a virus, the Coronavirus, which we cannot determine the time it takes to infect. For humankind is now fighting a war with an invisible enemy which was not identified until it spread on a global scale.

On the other hand, China, which was the first country where the pandemic spread, was the first to overcome mass panic due to its long-standing experience in handling epidemic situations, and its centralized political system, which enjoys huge power to enforce strict precautionary and preventive measures. On January 24, 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the Central Committee of the Communist Party to discuss the pandemic challenge. During that meeting, Xi stated: "faced with the grave situation of the accelerating spread of the new Coronavirus [. . .] it is necessary to strengthen the centralized and unified leadership of the Party Central Committee."²

Despite major upheavals it has faced since the Maoist revolution to the present day, China has not abandoned the solid elements of its local culture. Even the Maoist revolution was a popular revolution that preserved the Confucian culture and the culture of the peasants who were excluded from

2. For quotations from this statement, see <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/wuhan-virus-china-president-xi-jinping-warns-spread-is-accelerating-country-facing>.

power before the 1949 revolution. Hilda Hookham considered that the 1949 revolution, and later, the Cultural Revolution, were not directed against Chinese heritage and that education in China is a continuation of Chinese cultural heritage while adopting Western technology (Hookham 1970, 370).

THE PANDEMIC AS A TOOL OF GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE

This section addresses the issue of external factors, which are an extension of societal disintegration, that have destroyed political solidarity, making the pandemic a historic opportunity to reshape the future geopolitical map of the world. This pandemic mainly affects the elderly. The proportion of elderly people who reached sixty years and over in 2017 in China was 17.3 percent, and it is expected to reach 34.9 percent by 2050. As for the proportion of elderly people over the age of sixty-two in Italy, it is estimated at 21 percent. By April 16, 2020, the death toll in Spain reached 21,645 and was mostly elderly people. The 2015 report issued by the European Commission in April confirmed that European Union countries were facing major challenges, represented by an increase in the number of elderly people and a decrease in the birth rate (Alkompis 2015). The population of Spain has decreased for the first time in the modern era because of the financial crisis of 2008, which forced half a million Spaniards to emigrate to other countries. France recorded high death rates while witnessing a protest movement since 2017. Clearly, this pandemic will have an impact at the economic level in relation to the economic recession that the world is passing through due to demographic changes.³

At the qualitative level, we can understand it based on Michel Foucault's study of the phenomenon of pandemics in his *Madness and Civilization: History of Insanity in the Classical Age* (1988), in which he deals with the political history of modern institutions (including the clinic) and the relationship of power to change and the role of these institutions using state interventionism in the framework of its conflict with the Church. The clinic has a role that goes beyond the therapeutic one because it follows a policy of social exclusion through the analogy between the greedy, the old, the prostitute, the impotent, the stupid, the lost, the criminal, the vagrant, the impudent, and the beggar. This was all based on an archeological study of knowledge that Foucault made on medical practices in France between the fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By answering the question how the

3. For an overview of world population changes, see <https://bit.ly/35FiOxd>.

clinical view was formed within medicine, Foucault tries to summon all the decrees issued by the kings in the seventeenth century and the legislations issued by the Parliament that contributed to the establishment of quarantine houses and hospitals. He examines health policies that seek to nationalize (the monopoly of the state) the health body by eliminating the individual and familial character of treatment. In addition, he tries to understand how the State, in the context of its struggle with the Church, attempted to secularize health by removing the religious character from the therapeutic practice. This transformation represents the content of what Foucault calls “the great coup.” This was represented in changing the major function of the general hospital from arrest (arresting the insane and all those with mental illnesses) to reform, treatment, and punishment, especially since general hospitals did not treat patients with venereal diseases, who were instead presented to doctors in order to correct their behavior and punish them by issuing them tickets (Foucault 1961, 107–08).

Foucault’s perception of the development of the relationship between the doctor and the patient is noteworthy. He examines the symbolic authority that the doctor acquired, related to the extent of his ability to intervene in the details of the patient’s life, and his exclusion from other institutions (such as the Church, for example) which may interfere with the patient’s “life system” related to his body. Therefore, the culture of society can change its parameters through structural transformations targeting the institutions that have symbolic authority over a human being, and through giving these institutions (the doctor/hospital) a wider symbolic authority by exploiting and employing such major exceptional cases that intensify in the case of a pandemic, especially at the stage in which a pandemic turns into a globalized phenomenon, the way it is happening currently (Foucault 1961, 107–08).

When a situation of mass panic prevails, the state provides alternative institutions that prove to people that cases have been successfully addressed and to convince them that it is these state institutions that will take care of them and protect them. The level of trust then rises to an extent that these institutions control the spread of the pandemic, in collaboration with other state agencies. The citizen’s confidence in his state’s institutions increases, and the state, in the case of exception, becomes more comfortable in extending its influence. This can be called the bio-political dimension of power, meaning political control of the body through the mechanisms of power. There are examples where the state succeeded in controlling pandemics which present examples of the success of authority in overcoming a disease

certain countries have seized: forming solidarity relations that may redraw the future political map, with China especially exploiting the current state to promote its economic hegemony while appearing as a benefactor, which will strategically benefit it in the post-epidemic European collective panic. This is where the pandemic turns from a geopolitical phenomenon of the hegemony of the state over individuals to a geopolitical phenomenon that prepares the ground for the hegemony of states over other countries, by paving the way for future political relations that may alter the balance of power in favor of new superpowers. But what would be the effects of these transformations on the geopolitical map and the undeclared war between China and the United States?

THE PANDEMIC AND US-CHINESE COMPETITION OVER HEGEMONY IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

This discussion centers on countries in which the epidemic has spread more extensively and where a large number have fallen victim to it. Despite China's ability to control the situation, since March 18, 2020, the number of victims in Spain and Italy has increased. While the structural strength, or weakness, of health institutions in countries such as Italy was debated, the focus was on the strength or weakness of international solidarity with countries in which the pandemic threatened the economic and health security of its citizens. The focus then shifted to China's ability to control the pandemic while providing help to other countries. This came at a time of total silence by the United States, which has always presented itself as global policeman maintaining security and peace around the world. On March 18, 2020, then-President Donald Trump said in a press statement that the world is paying "dearly" for China's slowness in providing information about the new Coronavirus, and that "it would have been much better if we knew all this months ago, it would have been contained in a region in China" (Gearan 2020). In addition, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, in a statement on March 19, 2020, was content with only warning that millions of people were in danger if the world did not show solidarity, especially with the poorest countries, in combating the new Coronavirus and warned against resorting to protectionism (UN News 2020).

In the last ten years, the Chinese economy has developed rapidly, and China's gross domestic product (GDP) is the second highest after the United States (International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2018). Chinese companies have become among the largest exporters of modern technology in the world (they

have fifth-generation (5G) technology, which will be the banner of the next technological revolution). This is what made its economy open to the world. Among the main reasons that helped the spread of the Coronavirus epidemic was the excessive concentration of the public governance system that robs local authorities of the freedom to take initiatives and quick decisions, with the difficulty of quickly passing information from local institutions to the central administration, and monopolizing the channels of information transmission by the central authority, according to the Chinese Professor of Sociology Xuegung Zhou (Ronkin 2020).

The opening up of the Chinese market and the invasion of Chinese goods in global markets, especially European ones, is evident. But how is the silence of international organizations, which were supposed to intervene and help the affected countries, justified? How do we understand this silence within the context of the Sino-American conflict that was evident last year with Trump's decision to ban US companies from dealing with Chinese companies such as Huawei on the pretext that it was spying on the United States? This is worth understanding as the whole world thought that China would be the main loser in this war of the pandemic, and that it was enough for the United States to do nothing and wait for the further the deterioration of the situation in China to achieve victory. However, the tide was reversed and China was able to control the pandemic, and even tender aid to other countries. In the absence of any initiative from the White House, the US position towards Italy can be understood as being associated with Italy opening its doors to China and selling it some ports to pave the way for the new Silk Road.

After we thought that this epidemic war would bring the European Union back to the forefront of the world order with the United States, and that it would end, at least partially, the Chinese influence that has swept across Asian, African, and even European countries to pave the way for new Silk Road, we saw the opposite happening. China is addressing the world again by delivering messages of reassurance to strategic friends or threats to its enemies. It even emerged stronger than before at the expense of major European states such as France, Spain, and Italy which became in need of China, to the extent that Europe became part of the Third World according to French philosopher Michel Onfray (Le Fol 2020). Jacques Attali can help us understand the prospects of change in political systems in times when fear becomes a feature that threatens social security (Attali 2009).

There could be other battles that will be fought between the two world giants similar to that over Huawei, especially as China invests in developing

its infrastructure while the United States keeps spending on its military, with its military expenditure making up 45 percent of global military expenditure in total. Studies show that the world's economic structure will drastically change by 2050, and that the combined GDPs of China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey will form 50 percent of global GDP, while the G7's total GDP (the United States, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan) will fall to 20 percent of global GDP (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2020). Hence, what will this struggle lead to? Will it lead to the victory of one of the contenders over the others, or will it lead to a bipolar system which would represent a new form of world governance, while preserving a major role for Russia? Or will it lead to a partnership between Americanization and Maoist Communism sharing influence in the world (Musso 2003, 231-47)?

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has etched out the process of disintegration that Western societies are going through, and how this situation has affected the political dynamics of the past ten years, and it discusses some of the immediate situation that calls for political and social solidarity between societies affected by the pandemic. There has been an attempt to prove how this disintegration, at the political level, represents suitable grounds that allow for the consolidation of Chinese relations with part of the European Union, and also an opportunity for the realization of the Chinese project which is the new Silk Road that will connect China to the world. Through this analysis we were able to prove the ability of the pandemic to act as a turning point in redrawing the future of the geopolitical map of the world.

The spread of the Coronavirus pandemic has proved to be a key juncture for the future of the world, and it may represent a decisive historical point in the unfolding international geopolitical map, which turns this pandemic into an opportunity to discover the importance of societal solidarity which preserves the cohesion of societies that have a common history and thus a common destiny. Still this opportunity, like any other, would be easy prey to other forms of geopolitical domination that transcend the bio-political dimensions of the pandemic.

The colonial and post-colonial eras are significant in that there is historical evidence documenting the path of relations of hegemony and power in the global system. The winners of World War II are the countries that

dominate the world. Thus, the world has been divided into former colonizing states and colonies. The process of restructuring the global system starts with the countries that are the leading powers in the global system (currently the United States and Europe). Hegemony in the global system will evolve by changing the positions between the hegemon powers of the past and the hegemon powers of the present to generate a new world order, while relegating the Third World countries, including Arab countries, to marginal roles.

This prompts us to pose an urgent question regarding the impact of geopolitical changes for the Arabs. Will the Coronavirus pandemic bring back the major questions related to the concept of the state and its social role in the Arab world? Especially since the Chinese model has proven its ability to control the spread of this virus, and the Chinese city of Wuhan has returned to normal since April 8, 2020, as if it had never been struck by the pandemic at all. Or will Arab countries continue the policy of liberalization and alienation in vital sectors? This is something that will be discovered in the upcoming months and years. ■

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