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**THE (RE-)BIRTH OF BIOPOLITICS.
AUTONOMY, BIOPOWER, CORONAVIRUS, DISCOURSE, EMERGENCY, FEAR,
GLOBALIZATION, HEALTH, I...¹**

The article reveals the problems of biopolitics in a globalized world, which were actualized by the social, political, economic, cultural and other consequences of the pandemic. Based on the work of Michel Foucault regarding biopolitics and biopower, the author analyzes the key concepts of the study of biopolitics in the context of globalization from the sociology of knowledge perspective. The problem of (re-)birth of biopolitics in the conditions of a globalized capitalist society is investigated. It is emphasized, that the trends and patterns discovered by M. Foucault differentiate, become more diverse and unexpected in their manifestations. Classifications of subjects of biopolitics, as well as biopolitics themselves, where the author identifies biotactics and biostrategies, are given and analyzed. A special emphasis is placed on the multilevel structure of biopolitics in the modern world: from the point of view of Foucauldian consideration of dispersed and diffuse power, using examples of the activities of different subjects of the modern world it is studied, how the same participants in the social game turn out to be both subjects and objects of biopolitics. Here, the security discourse as a tool for legitimizing biopolitics in a state of emergency (according to G. Agamben) turns out to be the most important plot. In addition, the participation of various actors (academic, political, economic, sacred, every day, communicative) with the use of a wide variety of biopolitical tools (material, symbolic, discursive, practical, communicative) by them is important. A number of conclusions are formulated both about the changing role of biopolitics, and about the potential place of sociology in such a world.

Keywords: social, sociology of knowledge, knowledge, biopolitics, biopower, violence, globalization, strategies, tactics.

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**(ПЕРЕ)РОДЖЕННЯ БІОПОЛІТИКИ.
АВТОНОМІЯ, БІОВЛАДА, (КОРОНА)ВІРУС, ГЛОБАЛІЗАЦІЯ, ДИСКУРС,
ЖАХ, ЗДОРОВ'Я, НАДЗВИЧАЙНІСТЬ ... Я**

Розкрито проблематику біополітики в глобалізованому світі, актуалізовану соціальними, політичними, економічними, культурними та іншими наслідками пандемії. Ґрунтуючись на розробках М. Фуко щодо біополітики і біовлади, вивчено ключові концепти дослідження біополітики в умовах глобалізації з позиції соціології знання. Досліджено проблему переродження біополітики в умовах глобалізованого капіталістичного суспільства. Наголошено, що тенденції та закономірності, виявлені М. Фуко, диференціюються, стають більш різноманітними та несподіваними у своїх проявах. Наведено й проаналізовано класифікації суб'єктів біополітики, а також самі біополітики, де виокремлено біотактики та

¹ The article is published as an invitation to the discussion.

біостратегії. Окремий акцент зроблено на багаторівневості структури біополітики в сучасному світі: з позицій фуколдіванського розгляду дисперсної та дифузійної влади це досліджується на прикладах діяльності різних суб'єктів сучасного світу, як одні й ті самі учасники соціальної гри виявляються і суб'єктами, і об'єктами біополітики. Тут найважливішим сюжетом є дискурс безпеки як інструмент легітимації біополітики в умовах надзвичайного стану (за Дж. Агамбеном). Крім того, важливою є участь різних акторів (академічних, політичних, економічних, сакральних, повсякденних, комунікативних) із застосуванням ними найрізноманітніших інструментаріїв біополітичного "підігрування" (речових, символічних, дискурсивних, практичних, комунікативних). Сформульовано ряд висновків як про мінливість ролей біополітики, так і про потенційне місце соціології в такому світі.

Ключові слова: соціальне, соціологія знання, знання, біополітика, біовлада, насильство, глобалізація, стратегії, тактики.

"Yes, you guessed it right. I will teach you the ability to die instantly, at any moment, by your own free will, using nothing but the internal forces of the body. From time immemorial, all tyrants hated most of all people who arbitrarily left their power over life and death. The right to control life and death has become the inalienable right of the master. And people believed in this fetishism"
(I.A. Efremov "The Bull's Hour").

The door suddenly opened before humanity in the desert of the real – and reality turned out to be unexpectedly trivial, paradoxically banal and bright gray. A pandemic, one of many², which since the end of 2019 has become a media, social, economic, political, cultural, communicative fact, invited communities, structures, institutions, states and corporations to update the rules of their game. And although many politicians, theorists, philosophers, public figures have already issued a number of optimistic statements regarding how much more altruistic, freer, humanistic post-pandemic society will be, the very tendencies of social, political and economic processes in a pandemic put these statements under the question. The ethics of universalism and obligation since the times of M. Weber [1] has been a good tool for ideological and scientific prescription with simultaneous hand washing, but an extremely weak way to stay against real ethics of particularism, partisanship, private interest and private property.

This dilemma is especially relevant in the era of late capitalism with its biopolitics, demonstrated by M. Foucault. The followers and students of M. Foucault, among which G. Agamben is certainly the most striking in this field, showed the legal, political and even existential consequences of biopolitics both at the micro-level and at the macro-level. However, the most daring assumptions regarding the possible explications and deployments of biopolitics do not seem to have soared to such heights, that the daily actor has had the opportunity to observe in recent years. The caricature in which the reader of the book "1984" peers with horror at the book of the neighbor on which the signs "2020" are written, has not

² According to various sources, more than a dozen different pandemics have been announced in the world now.

been adequately comprehended either conceptually or empirically, socially or epistemologically.

In this sense, both Ukrainian and many other societies of 2020 are illustrative examples: in this combination of many attractive subjects for research (globalization, biopolitics, subjective autonomy, interweaving of power strategies and resistance tactics (according to De Certeau [2]) it is easy to isolate the many possible aspects for research. And many of them are currently either not developed at all, or developed only at the categorical and conceptual level. It is worth noting the conceptual challenge from G. Deleuze regarding the “disciplinary society” [3] as a continuation of M. Foucault’s conceptualizations, and a much more optimistic picture from U. Beck [4], and quite apologetic proposal by G. Vattimo [5], and cruel warnings of G. Agamben [6], and providential visionaries of G. Lipovetsky [7] and P. Virilio [8]. It cannot be said that world intellectual thought did not react at all to the arisen epistemological discomforts. In a rather intensive process of comprehension, it should be noted the approaches to the shell performed by B. Latour [9], as if having received a second wind for his theory of environmental policies [10]; G. Agamben [11; 12], surprisingly departed from the highways own theorizing; S. Zizek [13], who retouched his own Lacanian methodology, but continued axiology, critical of capitalism; N. Klein [14], who was quite expected to extend its development on the “doctrine of shock” and “capitalism of disasters”; J. Ranciere [15], who logically develops his own hypotheses about the “sale of fear” [16]. However, all these thinkers, who embraced the problem from the standpoint of criticism of capitalism, environmental problems, the self-realization of man in a complex world, surprisingly little turn to such a problem that is obvious in this case – namely, the problem of biopower and biopolitics. Whereas the transformation of them (and in some sense their new birth), as we will show in this article, is quite obvious.

That is why the **purpose** of this article is to define, classify and analyze the processes of transformation of biopolitics and biopower in the context of globalized capitalism at different levels of its rhizomatic organization (on the example of COVID-19 pandemic).

As an empirical basis for this article, the author of the article collected a set of cases in Ukrainian and global contexts for the period of February-May 2020 (273 news posts and blog entries). Data collection was carried out using the “snowball” method, without suggesting any strict selection procedure, unambiguous procedures and criteria, or a quantification methodology. Such an empirical basis, of course, limits us to propose any explanatory, interpretative hypotheses, remaining within the limits of descriptive studies that focus on “classification data within the assigned tasks (questions), a detailed description of the object structure with the minimum necessary interpretation set facts” [17, p. 109-110]. Such methodological limitations orient us first to the discovery of the multiplicity of phenomena, to the nomination of sketches of their empirical typologization, and, finally, to the illustrative verification of the conceptual theses put forward before us. We did not set the goal of a discourse analysis of the media behavior of various entities, a content analysis of the media policy of the state or organizations, an intent analysis of the micro-policies of participants in the processes under study. Our task was to “mark out” the general framework of the study, to find the most common changes in biopolitics (at the level of both tactics and strategies) and the most common types of actors involved in this. This is based on the

hypothesis that fundamental shifts are taking place in biopolitics themselves and their structures, which were not described at the end of the twentieth century, and which need to be fixed now in order to proceed to more specific studies.

It is quite obvious that such a large-scale task can be at least conceptually solved exclusively in interdisciplinary design, which determined the style and form of this text that we chose. The sociological framework³ does not deny the possibility of "building up" cultural, philosophical, political, or even ethical or aesthetic constructions on it, but it will be fundamentally enriched with these constructions.

Biopolitical as an occasion to (re)think about history and yourself

"Hegel wrote that the only thing we can learn from history is that we learn nothing from history, so I doubt the epidemic will make us any wiser"
(S. Žižek "Pandemic!").

In some scientific studies, "biopolitical" is seen as a policy rooted in biology. Or, in other words, from the angle of biology as a political source: for example, one of the leaders of such studies in the post-Soviet space in works suggests from the standpoint of the study of biopolitics "to summarize the experience and to discuss the development prospects in civil society of social micro-structures of a non-bureaucratic decentralized type called networks by researchers (networks)" [18]. From this angle, articles are written and even textbooks and monographs are published [19; 20]. The same direction can be found in Ukrainian science in S. Kostyuchkov works [21], according to which "it is important for biopolitics to understand the specific mechanisms of emergence, personal behavioral manifestations and the investigation of the ways to escalate or reduce such rudimentary phenomena in society, as aggression" [21, p. 315].

In this light, "biopolitical" appears as a theoretical framework for the study of biological in political. For example, the processes of differentiation, integration, generalization in such works are studied as a tool for considering populations (including human ones) as large systems. For example, on the way of studying such a de-differentiating reduction, scientists observe the reproduction of the classical evolutionary-biological primary principles of functional specialization / generalization in large populations, within which any biosocial system is built on one of two opposite principles:

- either completely deprived of specialized roles: "everyone knows everything", all generalists;
- or based on the distribution of functions (roles) [18].

This view of society and man, their ratio somewhat complements the classical theories of biopolitics (they will be analyzed later) by posing an important question, namely the question of "responsibility for the group," as biosociologists and sociobiologists call it: "So, going beyond one narrow role is determined by a sense of responsibility for the group as a whole" [18]. Going beyond the narrow role of the producer, entrepreneur, teacher, student,

³ Primarily in the understanding of society as a holistic system, at the base of which there is some specific fabric of sociality that connects the micro-, meso- and macro-levels; in the understanding of the unity of society and culture; in the interpretation of individual actions as products and (at the same time) producers of social structures and systems; etc.

employee, into a new experience of the role of a “potential carrier” or “potential victim” in the context of changed biopolitics, poses again a number of fundamental sociological questions about trust, compatibility, collectivity, responsibility, rights, openness and closeness, etc.

However, the section that is most well-known, which modern researchers designate as follows: “In the 1990s already, it became obvious that many problems of public policy have a pronounced “biological component”” [22, p. 28]. Namely, it turned out that the authorities face a number of biopolitical risks that can be typologized: “On the one hand, there are internal risks. On the other hand, there are external risks, that the state faces in the process of making and implementing decisions in the social sphere. External risks include the general economic situation both in the country and in the world” [22, p. 28]. Another method of typologization is one by the sphere of risks associated with biopolitics – or, more precisely, the risks to be managed by biopolitics: human health; environmental; political; changes in social structures; ethical.

It is from this angle the metaphor of biopolitics is so firmly rooted in the discourse, that I. Sandomirskaya, studying the “writing regimes” of the Stalinist period of the USSR’s development, speaks about “language biopolitics” [23], although she primarily sets literary and hermeneutical tasks. Moreover, it is precisely the discourse of risks that becomes the way of introducing and legitimizing⁴ biopolitics into the fabric of the social; however, the essence of biopolitics does not coincide with the form of its manifestation; its phenomenality is far from epiphenomenality. The essence of biopolitics, unfolding over the past half century, is that biopolitics is a way of controlling the population through the management of “life itself”, through the transformation of “life itself” (or, as G. Agamben writes, “naked life” [6]), in political relevance. That is what gives the basis to well-known critic of global capitalism A. Negri call biopolitics “...the contradictory context of life within life”. This context according to its own the definition “is a distribution of economic and political contradictions in the whole social fabric...” [24]. Moreover, as we observe in the reality of public life, this distribution is carried out by appeal and interpellation of everyone, with the identification of key social groups (in the discourse of vulnerability, danger, riskiness, protection, guardianship and care), with the introduction into the political and public space hitherto carefully crowded out categories of well-being, self-awareness, decency, methods of biological existence, protection against pathogens, and ultimately life and death.

For such purposes, the most functional and effective way turns out to be the discourse of a sudden, unpredictable, particular (that is, non-universal), illegitimate, “equalizing” and “egalitarian”⁵ threats. Along with the radiation threat⁶, the biological threat is well suited for

⁴ Hereinafter, we will understand the legitimation and all its derivative processes and phenomena in Foucauldian way, that is, as the process of successful imposing a certain way to know. In other words, this is a non-institutional and non-separated way of social control, “invisible” for traditional methods of studying “external” legality.

⁵ We put quotation marks because of the high problematicity of these words with respect to risks in general, whatever U. Beck spoke about this [25], and in relation to viral diseases.

⁶ Which is non-discrete and territorial, and therefore universal, and does not meet the requirements of unpredictability.

its “role” as such. We draw attention to the fact that, for example, biotechnologies play a significant role in contemporary political discourse and in oppositional criticism, namely, the discussion of laboratory research, scientific researches in this area, environmental consequences, social inclusion and ethical dimensions. It is in such contexts, for example, O. Mashlykina explores them. She addresses primarily to the risks of the modernization development of modern society in the context of biotechnology, the food crisis, and biological factors of social growth [26].

It is significant that biopolitics has a high potential for the integration of the three types of management, identified in the 17th – 18th centuries, namely self- management (moral), family (economics) and the state (politics) [27]. Biopolitically it turns out that an invasion to any of these areas allows to open other levels of control.

Recall that Machiavelli in his “The Prince” described the political management method, relying on what M. Foucault identifies three its features:

1) The ruler is external to the state, “this is a purely synthetic relationship: there is no fundamental, essential, natural and legal status of the prince”; later, G. Agamben, relying on K. Schmitt, calls such a figure “sovereign”;

2) This externalization of the relationship entails the vulnerability of such a relationship: it is constantly attacked and threatened, moreover, by subjects of different levels and spheres;

3) The goal of power is to strengthen and protect the state, and not the essentiality of the state (subjects and territory), but the relativity of the state – that is, the relationship of the ruler and the possessed [28, p. 14].

It is this that leads to the expansion of techniques, procedures and management techniques, in particular, as M. Foucault points out, – to the economic intervention in the political sphere. As a successful manager state poses a quantitative control and analytical oversight of the geopolitical characteristics of the space (border landscape, topography, climate, weather) and biological characteristics of the population (births, deaths, illness, intellectual development, education, literacy) [28]. This, as G. Agamben points out, leads to the transfer of control from *bios* (social life, the life of socially and politically active entities) to *zoē* (biological life as a characteristic of all creatures). If until the XVII century the object of government was precisely *bios*, then after – and *zoē* too. This is how a “naked life” is created, where *zoē* connects and merges with *bios*, where the state does not need mediators and legitimators to decide whose life is important and whose one can (must) be sacrificed. And if earlier, according to G. Agamben, the zones of fabrication of “naked life” were clearly located and defined (concentration camps, prisons, points of entry and exit), then today they are everywhere: in the subway, at airports, on the street, at the entrances to malls, in the intimate space of a person and so on [6].

Just so, governmentality arises instead of the state: “Under the “governmentality” I mean the set of institutions, procedures, studies and analyzes, calculations and tactics that allow to implement very specific, albeit complex, form of power, whose main goal is the population, the main form of knowledge – political economy, and the security devices are the primary technical tool” [28, p. 28]. The medicalization of political discourse, the medicalization of news, the medicalization of everyday discourse, the shaft of numerical data

that floods the daily actor from the side of the state (public ministries of health), public (NGOs), educational⁷, commercial institutions – all these are the examples of the development of biopolitical in modern society. Of course, this development leads to the expansion of the functionality of biopolitics: “Biopolitics (through local forms of biopower) takes control of the management of health, hygiene, nutrition, fertility, sexuality, etc., since each of these various areas of intervention has become a matter of politics” [24]. The object of regulation is sex with carriers of the virus (even in close relations with the subject [30]), methods of hygiene⁸ and ways of eating (prohibitions on public places of eating; annoying informing about the allowed and forbidden ways and places of purchasing food and more⁹). A biography turns out to be the same clay for biopolitics as the history that was shown to us by M. Foucault.

Struggle for community vs struggle for structures

*“In no other way does human superiority come so close to divine as in the act of founding new societies and preserving existing ones”
(Cicero).*

A characteristic phenomenon in the new biopolitical reality is the confrontation between communities and structures. Indeed, insofar as “the main objects of biopolitics ... are the health and labor of the population” [27, p. 220], there are many applicants for such subjects of biopolitical regulation. Macro- and micro-subjects, structures and communities, individual and collective actors claim for subjectivity in biopolitics. If the traditional spheres of biopolitics and biosocialities were fashion, army, sexuality, school, prison, hospital, then now, outside the doors of the “desert of the real”, each actor faces the challenge of subjectivity in the context of biopolitics. It turns out that not only the “threshold in space”, but also the “threshold in time” separates biopolitized reality from de(bio)politicized one. And here the concept of “ultimate events” (limit event) plays the important role. They are “the events, which put on the brink of extermination of any ethnic or social community and, because of their monstrous character, undermining our ability to understand and imagine” [32, p. 118]. Moreover, according to J. Baudrillard or W. Thomas, it is completely unprincipled whether the enormity of the event is real and whether the threat of extermination is real (we note right away for the whole article: we are not even going to discuss this issue). More importantly, the “non-encoded”, “unnamed”, “indescribable” ultimate event, once modeled by racial and ethnic genocides, is far from being “unique inexplicable”, that is, beyond the boundaries of history, biography, ethics, evil as such.

⁷ Here a good illustration is the work of Johns Hopkins’ University and especially JHU Coronavirus Resource Center, which entered into competition during the pandemic with many states for the implementation of “governmentality” [29].

⁸ And hygiene tools, distributed and placed in public places, become not only a material, but also a symbolic way of the presence of biopolitical subjects in public space [31].

⁹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 11, 2020 № 211” of April 2, 2020 № 255. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/255-2020-п#n9>

Incidentally, this poses a completely different question of subjectivity, the right to subjectivity, what in general once we conceptualized as metasubjectivity [33], that is, the right to subjectivity. So, S. Winter, analyzing the colonial policy of modern Israel, says: “The one who called the victim in the full sense of the word, not only proves once and for all rid of the need to be accountable and responsible, but acquires also the right to speak for all “Humanity” and take the place of a universal judge” [34].

And precisely by analyzing the (bio)politics of various actors in a pandemic situation we find different perspectives of the struggle for subjectivity as prerequisites for the struggle for oneself, one’s self, one’s existence. Based on this analysis, the following typology of subjects of biopolitics in a pandemic situation can be proposed (see Table 1).

Recall a symbolic moment: the concept of biopolitics as a historically emerging technology of power, fundamental to modern societies, was introduced by M. Foucault in the last lecture of the course “Society must be defended” at the College de France in 1975/76. This appeal became emblematic for biopolitics issues. And this appeal exactly follows from the generalized analysis results shown in Table 1. It is easy to see that the left and top of the table are mostly filled with resistance tactics (interpreted by M. De Certeau [2]), while the right and lower ones are dominated by domination strategies, restrictions and regulations. In the same way as “the sovereign’s basic right was the right to life and death of its subjects...; only the right to kill allows the sovereign right to control life to be realized” [32, p. 118-119], just like in a pandemic biopolitics, the right to prohibit, the right to restrict provides, allows the sovereign the right to dispose, the right to prescribe, the right to allow. In other words, in place of the old brutal formula of sovereign power, “make die or let live” [35, p. 255], which, as pointed out by M. Foucault, in the XIX century, modified in the opposite (“get to live or let die”), comes a new formula, the formula of the XXI century – the formula “to make die to let live”.

We shall recall that, in contrast to the individualizing disciplinary power, the “anatomical policy” of the human body, the “massifying” biopolitics is addressed to the human race, to the multiplicity of people that make up the “global mass, subject to the general processes of life, such as birth, death, reproduction, disease, etc.” [35, p. 255-256]. Such biopower constitutes a fundamentally different “character” of the world history – namely, a population that does not coincide with either the object of discipline (individual) or the object of political and legal theories (society). Moreover, such biopower objectifies collective and serial phenomena, since its purpose is primarily “optimization” (in the managerial, governmental sense) of life as the functioning en masse. It is not surprising that in such a space of biopolitical entities, primarily two classes are distinguished – the class of decision makers and the class of implementers of decisions in their practice. Or, as K. Schmitt put it, “the one who makes the decision in the state of emergency is sovereign” [36, p. 15]. From this point of view we single out tactics and strategies in the pandemic space practices. Strategies are techniques for making decisions and their implementation; tactics are techniques of coexistence with decisions made; in other words, decision-getting and decision-implementing techniques as part of their lives. During the empirical review of cases, whole classes of tactics and strategies (political, economic, media, and so on) were discovered, the most striking and often found among which are shown in Table 2.

Table 1

**Empirical typology of actors in the biopolitical space
(based on the results of the author's study)**

	Micro-	Meso-	Macro-	Mega-
Single	Everyday actors; executors of instructions; carriers of protest moods	Bloggers, scientists, historians; experts; sociologists; doctors; journalists; leaders of local and professional associations ("President of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Economics")	State specialists ("head of the Kurchatov Institute") and state doctors ("director of the Alexander Hospital", etc.); state and opposing economists; infectious disease specialists and immunologists of state significance	Politicians, world-famous scientists (medicine, economics, philosophy); global patrons or applicants for this (Jack Ma, for example)
Group (community)	Self-help groups; family communities; professional communities; sports communities; leisure communities	Sports clubs; trade unions and organized professional communities	Represented (in the order of "occupation of delegation", according to P. Bourdieu) large social groups: "...economists say", "doctors against", "a blow to business"	Simulacra of communities represented by specific people (or symbolized by them)
Institutional	Watchmen of rules and norms (actors or groups); material and symbolic carriers of the "new" rules (advertisements on the doors of institutions; sanitizers; new types of advertising like a car with a medical mask on it; etc.)	Educational institutions; medical institutions; institutions of mass contact of people with their meso-politics of things, practices, discourses and signs (see below)	Mass media; ministries (health, as well as areas of mass contacts of people, for example, education); paramilitary and disciplinary institutions and communities (army; law enforcement; any community mobilized)	Global media; global social networks; institutions with a claim to global action (for example, Johns Hopkins University); foundations and non-governmental organizations (Bill Gates and Melinda Gates Foundation; Adenauer Foundation)
Social	Administrators translating strategies and policies to the micro-level; overseers of their implementation	Conductors and repeaters of state and non-state "large" strategic policies (schools and universities, hospitals and prisons, institutions and factories, etc.)	New state and non-state "devices" for the functioning of states and other large structures in the new conditions (special speakers; special posts and functions)	World Health Organization; governments of the leading countries of the world, claiming the global nature of their interests and actions (primarily the USA and China)

Table 2

**Empirical typology of biopolitical practices
(according to the results of the author's study)**

	Tactics	Strategies
Policy	Criticism of capitalism and its system of medicine; promotion of alternative political agendas (comparison with the incidence of other diseases; actualization of social, political, economic issues); comprehension in political terms (“state of control”, growing inequalities, capitalism of supervision, “culprits of a pandemic”)	Social Darwinism VS “the state of intensive guardianship”; the development of “obsessive care” through the universalized presence of the state in communications, social networks, instant messengers; launch of special bots on the Internet; the struggle at the global level for the establishment of state truth (the origin of the virus, its nature, responsibility for it); the imposition of new sanctions for new restrictions (for example, community service in hospitals)
Economy	Struggle for prosperity; adaptation to new conditions; consumer or production adaptation to the economic reality of the pandemic	State economic policy; subsidies; privileges; support programs; expansion of production of specialized goods
Culture	The transfer of communication in the cultural sphere to the online sphere (for example, YouTube broadcasts “Stay at home”); forced modifications of educational systems	Historical excursions into the past of such pandemics; modifications of entertaining-sporting and mass-entertaining events (cancellation of competitions, exhibitions); “YouTube” education
Media	Specialized COVID humor; apologetic or critical mood blogging and media	Transformation of media policies, editorial policies (change of agenda*); “Mortality Media Production Policies”
The science	“Switching” research attention to the problems of COVID and viral diseases in general; modification of the circle of scientific interests and topics; public and unwritten restrictions on raising questions and understanding	Changing the structure of grant allocations; stimulation of statements of certain questions and inhibition of statements of other questions; the struggle to establish a centralized truth about the pandemic
Daily routine	Makeshift “conspiracy theories”; “fight” / “confrontation” / “resistance” to control and surveillance systems; changing the part and weight of gadgets; change in their software and their use practices	Creation of control and tracking systems; promotion into everyday practices and the space of pandemic sign-symbolic and material attributes (masks, sanitizers, information support, etc.)

* Here are just a few examples of such agenda transformations : “World Hunger Could Double as Coronavirus Disrupts Food Supplies”; “Thousands of Pigs Rot in Compost as US Faces Meat Shortage”; “Global Food Exports Get Paralyzed by Problems for Ports”; “One Billion Pounds Of Potatoes At Risk Of Waste As Restaurants Remain Closed”; “Farmers Dump Milk in Latest Blow to Battered US Dairy”; “Food Supply Chain Slows Around the World on Trucking Bottlenecks”; “From Spain to Germany, Farmers Warn of Fresh Food Shortages”; “Virus Hotspots Grow in Meat Plants From Germany to Brazil”.

We note that in general strategy, for example, of the medical entities of state biopolitics completely fit into this description: “Biopolitics is, first of all, a strategy of total management of the living space of humanity. Moreover, the paradox of this strategy is to diminish the

essential significance of the life potential of each individual person and humanity as a whole” [37, p. 110]. Moreover, of course, this is done from the angle of forming and caring for the population, which “becomes the wealth of the state, replacing land in this role... To preserve and to increase the working capacity of the population, the state actively intervenes in the private life of the individual, playing the role of a shepherd” [37, p. 115-116]. In the strategies of the state and its allies (state in the Deleuze sense) – i.e. medicine, state science, state economy, media, etc. – three of the four main areas of application of biopolitics are updated and constantly reproduced. Namely, the problems of morbidity, problems of old age and accidents, problems the environment. Perhaps, only the problems of reproduction at the moment are “falling out” of the pandemic’s discourse, which does not allow us to speak at the moment about the universalization of pandemic biopolitics.

It is no less significant that the nature of biopolitics indicated by the authors – namely, its rootedness “in the techno-rationalistic module of the adaptive strategy of technogenic civilization” [38, p. 268] fully and completely confirmed. All the power (and performative power, too) of science and techno-science falls upon the micro-subject, the average man, in order to obtain his agreement about biopolitics and the biopower exercising it.

In this light, (more or less naturally formed) communities of people find themselves under the mighty blows of structures (legislative, executive, judicial, non-state) – those very structures that establish norms and monitor their observance; under the constant attack of experts – who “possess scientific knowledge, on whose conclusions the parliamentarians, governments, judges, etc. really or declaratively rely” – in short, the very hidden or obvious mechanism of an essentially political decision [38, p. 269].

At the same time, states and their structures are not even between two, but between much more fires. So, the connection between biopolitics and geopolitics, long ago noticed by researchers, in the current pandemic becomes obvious: “Geopolitics does not exhaust the existence of political in the modern world. M. Foucault in his works considered the state not only as a territory, but also as a population. If the policy in relation to the territory is expressed by geopolitics, then the policy in relation to the population is associated with biopolitics” [39, p. 63]. The emergence and development of biogeopolitical discourses of states engaged in mutual objectification in their biogeopolitics is very indicative. It can and should explain the “search for the guilty” in a pandemic situation¹⁰, as well as the struggle of states in the geopolitical space for the biopolitical status of “saviors”, “assistants”, “allies in the fight against the virus”. In this sense, the narrowly formulated understanding of biopolitics as a policy to form “obedient bodies” through the use of numerous disciplines should, in our opinion, be expanded. This is what we are prompted by, for example, the representative doubling of the world, when real objects are accompanied by their signs and “labels”, due to which reality and its phenomena are “individualized and “cataloged” as elements of virtual reality – becoming elements of the Internet of things. Such digital tags containing information about objects represent a fundamentally different way of packing and

¹⁰ Perhaps for the first time in the history of mankind; it’s hard to imagine what kind of precedents this could lead to, if you recall, for example, the source of the incredibly deadly “Spanish flu” at the end of the First World War.

storing information about objects on the objects themselves” [40, p. 204]. This doubling of reality, as J. Baudrillard would have designated it, manifestly and declaratively oriented towards autonomy, freedom, security, care and guardianship, is “attached” to an individual or collective body, to single or multiple bodily aspects of existence. Disciplinary violence is supplemented and compensated by the temptation [41], which strengthens traditionally biopolitical methods of influence – such as “addressing personally to each member of society..., the use of vital needs and interests, including interests related to mobility, mobility in terms of residence, place of work” [40, p. 205].

So, it is not surprising that “the final statement of the biopolitical dispositive coincides with the total distribution of media, and the current biopolitical paradigm is immersed in a virtual environment and permeated by network interactivity” [42, p. 57]. Extremely rapid development of mobile applications, Internet monitoring tools (and representing the results of this control), media methods for describing and referring to biopolitical data¹¹ – all this pursues not only “public safety”¹², not only market or political preferences¹³, but is primarily focused on controlling specific methods, modes and areas of action. To this end, it is possible to turn a state of emergency into a “systemic error” and virtualize it – namely, transfer it to functioning in the “pluralistic structure of any event typical of modern times and the ontological hybridity of a modern state of emergency” [42, p. 58], where the “virtual” Deleuzian is not Baudrillard’s simulation, but the “pluralistic ontology mode”, the multiplicity of coexisting realities, the rhizome correlation of different worlds within which the nomadic singularity flickers [43]. Such nomadic flicker is perhaps the most effective (but also the most difficult in consistent implementation) tactics for avoiding biopolitical strategies.

It is significant that it is in such a Deleuzian design the geobiopolitics of victimization carried out by different states becomes clear: “The biopolitics of the victim’s rhetoric is winning, and therefore the demand for the medial appropriation of victim status and recognition of this status by the international community is so high” [42, p. 61]. This is a somewhat new form of terror, with points of suddenness and disorder, with arbitrarily resonant and global (but equally fleeting) consequences – quite in the spirit of Baudrillard’s “The Spirit of Terrorism” [44].

Pandemic in a pandemonium: threats to a familiar world

*“The policy itself, in its essence, in its “doing” is a thought.
Metapolitics is an understanding of the political,
is something, that follows after the policy and is under its influence.
Metapolitics is the discovery of the mechanisms of political reality”
(A. Badiou “Metapolitics”).*

Biopolitics, as later scholars (often of the non-Foucauldian style) demonstrate to us, are inevitably the fruit of an enlightened, modern, rationally organized and bureaucratically ripe managerial state. In this sense biopolitical functioning of the state is nothing unexpected or

¹¹ That is, data oriented through mass control of individual.

¹² Which is functional primarily for legitimizing actions.

¹³ Which are functional for a symbolic struggle primarily within a specific, relatively autonomous field.

“protuberancemorph” relatively late capitalist society: the biopolitical functioning is a product of a long process of balancing “between the private civil, limited state of a person and it does not limited to universal freedom” [45, p. 319]. A state organized for a long time according to the “Shaftesbury doctrine”, namely on the foundation of the axiom “the inevitability of interference in family affairs seems to be a greater evil than all the pluses from protecting children” [46, p. 250], inevitably seeks infantile and childish reacting micro-subjects. Indeed, otherwise biopolitical security apparatuses will turn out to be unclaimed. This explains the often absurd (from the point of view of well-known medical and sanitary standards) of overmedicalized discourses pandemic the world: in fact biopolitical apparatuses of the state need to express themselves, “for example, in medicine, with its health and hygiene practices, and specific methods of control over the birth rate and mortality” [47, p. 85]. This inevitably leads to biohyperpolitization, overmedicalization and overrepresentation of discourse, materiality and guardianship practices in the everyday life of citizens – up to, as we’ve already mentioned, interventions of statistical and demographic data in the everyday life of citizens, incorporation into everyday practices of citizens¹⁴ of multiple and not always consistent requirements and restrictions – in short, the doom of citizens to the fact that citizens turn into either “experts themselves” (carrying out the same Foucauldian “self-care”), or rely on recommendations, requirements and government policy restrictions. Certainly, cultural, enlightened, justified, scientifically developed care for oneself, one’s body, consciousness, behavior, and environment is much more aggravating and difficult to implement, as a result of which falsely understood principles of subsidiarity spread in the mass consciousness and social space: social problems, of course, are solved on the very low, peripheral level, but the techniques themselves, principles, syntax, rules for solving these problems are “imposed from above”. The liberal discursive manifestations of “rule, which is always abundant” turn out to be illiberal practices of laying down (on the lower levels) of the principles that are not defined by the lower and dominated. It isn’t possible to practice the autonomy of the individual, but allows to discourse such, and it is first “to legitimize neoliberal practices of removing the state from the sphere of social regulation and general discredit idea of the ‘social state’” [47, p. 86].

An interesting aspect of (re)constructing subjectivity and autonomy under such conditions is the interaction of biopolitics with subjectivity, experience, and memory. This issue is also not conceptually new: so, I. Kobylin and F. Nikolai explore biopolitics in its interaction with cultural memory and trauma, in which the production and overproduction of the community and its borders is carried out on the example of a community of war veterans [48]. And if traditionally this problem is considered from the “bottom” perspective, that is, with the a priori hypothesis of micro-tactics as tactics of effective resistance, then we have to mirror the issue. Using other emergency situations as an example, this has already become problematic: “The medicalization of 9/11 events provided the state with additional means of organizing the subjective experience of citizens” [49, p. 158]. Subjective experience, collective memory, community identity become the object of biopolitical artifacts – and, of course, this is consistent with how M. Foucault understood biopolitics. For Foucault

¹⁴ Often arbitrary and contradictory hitherto well-known medical recommendations.

biopolitics rationalized problems of the population, “the health, hygiene, birth rate, life expectancy, offspring... We know a growing place occupied by these problems since XIX century, and what political and economic goals they constitute to this day” [50, p. 405]. Then M. Foucault unfolds how close attention to the body¹⁵ is reflected in seemingly distant memory problems, identity, experience: “...The “Machine-Man” by M. Lamettrie is both a materialistic reduction of the soul and a general theory of drill, where the concept of “obedience” rules in the center, adding a manipulated body to the analyzed body. An obedient body can be subjugated, used, transformed and improved” [51, p. 198-199]. This is another, far more vitalistic, model for explaining the proximity of biopolitics and geopolitics: because if “the investigation of geopolitical interests implies the availability of sufficient energy and the ability to achieve the stated goals” [52, p. 37], if its orientation to the outside, its militarism and aggressiveness can be provided in any way, then only by the police character and auto-aggression of biopolitics: “Geopolitical goals are associated with the conquest and control of space, biopolitical goals are associated with control of the individual. Geopolitics sets goals. Biopolitics delivers means” [52, p. 37]. Biopolitics turns state citizens into an instrument for achieving geopolitical goals, not only as soldiers or well-trained athletes, but also as (non)carriers of the viral threat, as (un)protected from a pandemic. And if “... “The index of quality of life”, “the index of happiness” is also biopolitics” [52, p. 58], the various indicators of the pandemic threat for each specific country¹⁶ become biopolitical instruments of geopolitical efforts.

Paradoxically (this paradox detailed and explained M. Foucault), that it was the liberal ideology is at the foundation of this, in essence, a total invasion of the “life-world”: if “moral community... ultimately should be able to develop the criteria for bodily existence from our spontaneous life processes, and this bodily existence should be assessed as sick or healthy” [53], then not only weak and incapable of demonstrating self-care micro-subjects, but the same macro- and even megasubjects should be subject to this criteria universal and total in their criteria.

This, in its turn, limits both the social and political subjectivity of each and every one. After all, if “...politics can exist as the thought of all. And in relation to politics, the point of view from which it can be seen is the point of view of the actor, not the observer. Who does not make policy, does not exist in it” [54], then anyone, faced with any constraints in (re)thinking the biopolitics, is forced out of politics as the production of ideas.

In such a system of restrictions, some effects become unsurprising. For example, the effects when not only the means of functioning, but even the “needs of a person, shaping their social and even physical appearance, become state-shaped (recall, in a broad, Deleuzian sense of the word). Ultimately, mechanisms of total control of needs arise in society” [55, p. 41]. Management by not even a threat, but by fear becomes the most important management of such a society, as J. Ranciere pointed out to us, according to which the state

¹⁵ Manipulation, formation, drill, obedience, reaction, strength, dexterity, anatomy, physiology, statutes, control procedures, body correction, exercises.

¹⁶ Mortality, the number of infected, the number of tests performed, relative indicators, and the place in the “rating”.

apparatus (policia) first creates dangers, and then acts as a force that can protect citizens from various threats [16]. And, of course, the easiest way is to attach, to nail this fear to the body: “For a capitalist society, the most important biological, bodily dimension. The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopolitical strategy” [50, p. 20]. This is facilitated by anisotropy, amorphousness, uncertainty, and not guaranteeing security, but also threats. Unwarrantness of a threat (interesting Bourdieu’s dialectic negation) is, perhaps, a fundamentally new stage in the development of biopolitics, which, among other things, undermines the very possibility of solidarity: it is precisely the guaranteed, distributed for all, universal threat that unites and unites. This is how the liberal community is born, if it is still a community in general, and not Sloterdijk’s foams [56].

In this sense, it is necessary skeptically and with extreme doubt to refer to the beautiful-hearted assumptions of some public intellectuals about the future growth of altruism and humanism in society. Quite the contrary: such a society vitally needs atomized individuals, their personal interests, their activities, which increase the capabilities and strength of the sovereign, their market orientation as the only, monopoly mechanism of interaction between entities. Sovereignty of the state through discipline cannot be directed towards autonomy and altruism: it is directed towards selfish arbitrarily defined freedom (F. Toennis would like to say *Willkuer*) and control. It is here becomes possible to establish universal control “at a glance” from the point of “all-illuminating light”, from the “place of convergence” of all that is knowable [51]; it is this autonomy that turns out to be just internalized heteronomy; it is precisely this freedom of thinking that constantly reveals the flags of skirmishers and corral fences, and non-reflectively perceives them as its own requirements for security and guardianship.

Another aspect is the sportomorphic commodification of physicality. The biopolitical nature of sport has long been known, and the fact that sport has formed a special biopolitics that manipulates biotechnological tools that industrially produce winners [57, p. 103] is a well-known fact. However, the fact that biopolitics in this sense go beyond the boundaries of sport is, perhaps, a relatively recent media phenomenon. And everything that researchers attribute to biopolitics of sports¹⁷ is already appearing in this emerging reality of biopolitics. The sports classification of the Olympiads is extremely close in aesthetics and in differentiation to the “offset” of the countries’ conditions in a pandemic; constant numerical comparisons of the effectiveness of biopolitics in a pandemic¹⁸ not only turns human corporeality into an artifact, constructs technological from natural, not only makes human nature and body labile, presentable, modifiable, rectified [57, p. 104], but generally raises the question of subjective autonomy, of a person’s right on disposal of himself and his biotactics. The memojoke “It is better to breathe hard through a disposable mask, than easy – on the ventilator” refers both to the infantile inability of the micro-subject to make a

¹⁷ “The formation of aesthetics of complexity” (as the aesthetics of sports overcoming), “the practice of overcoming pain”, body control, bionic devices, and the ethics of sports.

¹⁸ Listing the successes achieved by the state or its structures in the fight; the number of vaccines or tests developed; the number of purchased tools to combat the virus; the number and nomenclature of inventions and improvements; “bionic” ventilation machines, ECMO and “iron lungs”.

decision, and to uniformity for the human body (and therefore – equal proximity for him) of a bionic devices. Note, how quickly many states adopted the “ventilator-discourse”, flaunting either the number of issued, the amount of cash, or the number of devices purchased right now: this is significant primarily in the light of legitimation and strengthening of biopolitics.

Prospects for biopolitics (instead of the epilogue)

“We admit, finally, that the so-called social networks have once again demonstrated that they are the first ... nurseries of swaggering mental paralysis, uncontrolled rumors, the discovery of antediluvian “innovations”, if not mossy obscurantism”
(A. Badiou “*Sur la situation épidémique*”).

In such a pessimistic picture, the “self-care”, interpreted first of all as the science of self-control-to-control-others¹⁹, as the art of autarky (Greek self-sufficiency), enkrateia (temperance), ataraxia (imperturbability), apatheia (unaffected by the passions), anakhoresis eis heauton (renunciation and detachment from the world) [42] is under significant threat. The bourgeois economy of accumulation and cynical (according to P. Sloterdijk [56]) materialistic disposition of resources cannot function without a biopolitical dispositive of power and does not allow, for example, breaking by altruistic *potlatch*. And this bourgeois economy turns out to be too massive and mass, too densely and reliably covered up by the manifestation of human life as the highest value (a truly humanistic principle – but also a biopolitical attitude). It brings down opportunities for public expression and the formation of a civic position: and now in the communities of scientists, networks of the conviction of the colleagues’ heretical statements begin to crystallize, if these colleagues allowed themselves to objectify the sacred and undeniable (bio)policies of the state. Then network media is turning into a fiery tornado of *ressentiment*, firestorm of cynical reason [56], Dresdenly burning all possible shelters for any heretical “think differently”. The Lacanian Big Other is in demand primarily as a representative of unconscious single weakness in front of a global threat. And it is significant that the states in this situation also find themselves in a weak position, they also become part of (bio) (geo) politicians – and not only facing the “economic tribunal” (according to M. Foucault), which was called on by the authorities of Sweden or Belarus. That is why states in pandemic situations try to make themselves “not-weak” (even if they are victims!): after all, “the first object of biopolitics are the most defenseless, vulnerable in their status people the children, the sick, the financially unsecured and persons of advanced age, – that is, those to whom the widespread liberal understanding of autonomy is not applicable” [58, p. 85], and, accordingly, the state not only demonstrates its own biopolitical subjectivity, but also its own non-objectivity in the biopolitical and geopolitical sense.

But equally important is the fact that at the micro-level, we are seeing quite isonomic phenomena, and this applies not only obscurant spaces of the Second and the Third World: “It seems that the test for the epidemic everywhere dissolves the inner activity of the Mind and forces the subjects to return to its sad consequences – mysticism, fantasies, prayers, prophecies and curses that took place in the Middle Ages, when the plague spread across the

¹⁹ It is not so important for individual hedonism or for the collective good.

earth” [59]. Instead of biopolitics as a democracy of equals, as a policy of equal communication, we find a “security state”, “that is, a state in which “for security reasons” (in this case, “health care”, a term that recalls the notorious Public Salvation Committee during the Jacobin Terror) any restrictions on personal freedoms may be imposed” [11]. And all this against the background of the actions of the authorities, which “first destroyed health care, and then made a number of equally serious mistakes” [11], against the background of the demographics being oriented toward a “Darwinian worldview” installation [60, p. 259]. And here, it is worth saying, sociology and its epistemological family are far from up to par. The vast majority of them fully supported the almost theological position of virologists, who “admit that they do not know exactly what the virus is, but in His name they claim that they know exactly how to live for humanity” [11], they participated and participating with a completely Oedipal voluptuousness in the labeling of “conspiracy theories” and “heresies”, they happily joined the technologically advanced production of the competitive, rating, commodified reality of the global pandemic. Of course, this cannot be extended to the entire community of scientists, but the mainstream has been and remains that way.

Conceptually, this means that sociologists need to reconsider their place in the (re)production of (bio)politics, in their relations in the global and open world with the state and states, society and societies, order and orders, fabrication of “qualitative demography” [61] and (bio)politics of different social groups [22; 28; 30; 32; 42; 46; 48; 57; 58]. The (bio)politics of the twenty-first century now refer not only to the body practices of micro-actors, but also to the discursive practices of meso- and macro-actors, as well as to anyone who claims to speak and act at the meso- and macro-levels. The civic position in such (bio)politics is gradually segregated, and the “state” (and more broadly – structurally) supported variations of this position receive the status of “civic”, “approved”, “legitimate”, “spread”, while structurally protest, contradictory, polemical positions are double oppressed and discriminated, which is facilitated by the internal structure and nature of biopolitics. In addition, the power potential of biopolitics is enriched and increasingly latentized, and in this sense, the famous idea of Pierre Bourdieu that “doubt is never excessive when you doubt the state”, takes on new meanings.

In this situation, sociology and society can only be recommended to increase suspicion and doubt, especially in situations of a deliberate, demonstrative, manifest call for urgent action, to subordinate to the emergent state power in a state of emergency. This is important not only for maintaining sociological autonomy, but also for social development and existing as is: after all, micro-actors whose tactics of opposing domination strategies in an emergency are ignored will inevitably look for alternative ways of confronting and influencing structures and, more broadly, a social system where violent or destructive ones can become actual.

Of course, we did not cover all the problems of the (re-)rebirth of biopolitics in the new conditions of the global confrontation between the universalized pandemic, the particular I, local communities, etc. However, from our point of view, the territory marked by us in the future is quite amenable to analytical study both from the standpoint of studying the opposition of tactics and strategies, and from the standpoint of typologizing subjects, and from the standpoint of studying the specifics of the areas of biopolitical practices, and

(re)actualization – in the poststructuralist-postmodern, critically-kinic way – the very issue of autonomy in comparison with the question of security, that is already a worthy task in itself.

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