

What after? Essays on the expected consequences of the COVID-19 pandemics on the global and Russian economics and population

Irina E. Kalabikhina¹

¹ *Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, 199911, Russia*

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Letter from the editor-in-chief of the *Population and Economics* Journal about the special issue

Dear readers!

At this alarming time, we decided to make a special issue of the *Population and Economics* Journal “What after? Essays on the expected consequences of the COVID-19 pandemics on the global and Russian economics and population».

It is important to emphasize a peculiarity of this issue. Our main objective is to open a platform for discussion on the impact of the pandemic on population and economy in Russia and worldwide. It is still difficult to draw final conclusions. Many events have not yet occurred, data is still catastrophically lacking. However, I am deeply convinced that an academic community should start a discussion on the possible consequences of the pandemic as soon as possible, in order to be able to react in a timely manner or even preventively to changes whenever possible, so that the best possible scenario could be accomplished. We provide a platform for such a discussion (the issue will be closed at the end of June).

Though some articles are not long and some of them use descriptive methods, all of them present original, often systemic insight into our near future, represent an expert opinion on the prospects for the development of economy and society after the pandemic in Russia and in the world as a whole, under the conditions of scarce data, epidemiological uncertainty and ongoing crisis. The collection of articles is supplemented with notes on particular themes related to the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic came to Russia in mid-March – two months later than in China, two weeks later than to Spain, Italy, France, about the same time as to the United States. As of 15th April, according to available data at the Center for System Science and Engineering at John Hopkins University, Russia is among the top 15 countries by the number of recorded cases. International comparability of national data on COVID-19 is a separate issue; it will be addressed in one of our articles. Now I just want to state that Russia is affected by the pandemic, and it disturbs population and society. Moreover, a number of anti-epidemic measures taken in the country can bite the economy. In this context, the search for specific Russian consequences of the pandemic initiated by our authors along with the global consequences are particularly interesting.

We invited economists, demographers and sociologists to think about the impact of the pandemic and its attendant recession on the population and economy in Russia and in the global world.

Economists in their articles and notes assess the peculiarities of the current crisis with its uneasy dilemma – saving lives now or saving the economy, and thus preserving lives in the near future – and predict its consequences. Sociologists analyze the state of various strata throughout the crisis and in its aftermath. Demographers draw parallels with previous pandemics trying to understand the specificity of the current COVID epidemic; they focus on failures of pandemic statistics and the impact of the pandemic on demographic development.

I will briefly describe the collection of this “pandemical issue”, which is already available to us and will soon be available to readers.

There is a number of studies of macroeconomics and institutional development in the historical perspective. Alexander Auzan describes the consequences of the current crisis for the civilization, stressing that the pandemic is the price for globalization and such situation has been repeated many times in human history. He calls to take at the crisis as a chance to change the path dependency at a time when the authorities of all countries have increased their credit of trust from the population in the context of the pandemic. In particular, the author discusses institutional changes needed by contemporary Russia to realize this chance – the tax system revision and the law enforcement agencies reform. Oleg Buklemishev gives a system analysis of the current crisis in terms of its main channels of transmission through demand, supply, finance and expectations. The author assesses the probable consequences of the crisis, including technological shift, changing directions and volumes of trade flows, adjustment of structural proportions and relative prices, strengthening role of the State, and the deepening process of deglobalization in the face of epidemiological uncertainty.

Andrey Shastitko writes about three important directions of the crisis research: reflection of features of socio-economic systems in the sanitary-epidemiological indicators; comparison of discrete structural alternatives in the light of choice of solutions to counteract the pandemic and its consequences; adaptive effectiveness of institutions in the context of relationship between micro and meso-institutions. Alexander Kudrin reveals in more detail the thesis of comparing discrete institutional alternatives by stressing that the pandemic provoked the development of “intermediate” regulatory solutions and led to the formation of a short-term “institutional continuum” instead of a predetermined range of alternatives.

Leonid Grigoryev describes the pandemic as a global social drama for the entire society and economy in very figurative language. The author writes about the destruction of the consumption model of the wealthy strata, about situation of different social groups during the pandemic, about the future epidemiological certification of countries and territories, and about what we will be like after the pandemic ends.

Studies of different segments and sectors of the economy and the situation of certain social strata are also presented in this issue. Sergey Bobylev studies the positive, negative and uncertain environmental and economic consequences of the pandemic, including for Russia. Marina Sheresheva writes about tourism under the pandemic. Sergey Berezin in his note predicts the change in the consumer sector in Russia.

Irina Denisova proposes a solution for the Russian labor market that will make it easier for the government to overcome the economic consequences of forced quarantine measures by providing effective mechanisms to support population in a period of temporary but large-scale economic decline, including development of an unemployment insurance system.

Marina Kartseva and Polina Kuznetsova introduce the concept of “workers vulnerable to the pandemic” and assessed the economic effect of lockdown on the welfare of Russian households of different socio-demographic types by using representative surveys.

On the example of the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone in 2014-2015, Ana Androsik describes the dramatic consequences of the crisis on employment and income of the poor, with a focus on the gender component and emphasizes the importance of addressing the consequences of crises for various social groups.

Olga Isupova writes a note about new problems of Russian families, which have arisen in self-isolation. Uliana Nikolaeva describes the changing role of dachas during pandemic in Russia.

The article by Irina Kalabikhina addresses the demographic and social issues of the pandemic. Irina Ivakhnyuk writes about the economic, sanitary-epidemiological, socio-psychological, and political challenges faced by migrants in the context of the coronavirus pandemic; raises the question of the further status of migrant workers in Russia. Natalia and Leonid Gavrillov analyze the peculiarities of mortality during pandemic on the example of the Spanish flu of 1918 and cautiously predict possible development of the current pandemic.

I thank excellent members of the Journal’s editorial board, who have in an incredibly short term performed high-quality work to make the issue published on time and in an uneasy format: executive secretary of the Journal Irina Troitskaya, editors of the English and Russian text Irina Ivakhnyuk, Zarina Kazbekova, Irina Bashnina, Olga Kalyagina, translator Oleg Geraschenko, proofreader Elena Polyachenko, layout designer Darya Kardanovskaya, all reviewers from the editorial board, who have taken the major reviewing workload.

We are going through difficult times, and it is hardly possible to overestimate the role of science in the quickest passing through the crisis with the least human and economic losses. We hope that our Journal will contribute to the crucially important discussion on the impact of the pandemic on the economy and population.

Sincerely and wishing health and courage,

Irina Kalabikhina
Editor-in-chief of the Population and Economics Journal

April 20, 2020.