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SOCIOLOGY OF THE CRISIS BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION: TOWARDS A NEW INSTITUTIONAL VISION COVID-19 AS A PRACTICAL LABORATORY FOR THE CRISIS

سُوسيولوجيا الأَزمة بين الدِّيمقراطية والمَأْسَسَة:

نحو رُؤْية مُؤسَّسَاتية جديدة، كوفيد–19 كَمُختبر عَمَلي لِلأَزمة

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مُلخص:

تَهدف هذه الورقة إلى تحليل مَسارات الأَزمة التي تُنْتَج في الدُّول والمجتمعات، تَنطلق الدِراسة من فرضية مَفادها أنَّ سُوسيولوجيا الأزمة تَتجاوز مُستويات الدَّمقرطة إلى دَرجة المَأْسَسَة التي وَصَلَت إليها هذه الدول، تَتَطلَّع إليها كحالة يَنْبَغينية من خلال رصد موارد التَّعبئة التي تَحوزُها كَحالة استِبَاقية قبل الأزمة أو استذماجها لهذه الموارد والاستعدادات كمواقف واستراتيجيات تُنتجها في مراحل الأزمة.

أَفْضَت المسَاءَلة الإمبريقية لأزمة كوفيد–19 كَأزمة أَخْضَعت جميع دول العالم إلى اختبار جَودة وفعالية مُؤسَّساتها، طبيعة أَنظمتها السِّياسية ودَرجة مأْسَسَتها. واستنادًا للمُعطيات الاحصائية، تُوحي المُكاشفة السُّوسيولوجية إلى تَبايُن كبير في النتائج انطلاقًا من معرفة مُستويات النُّمو، دَرَجة المَأْسَسَة، عدَد الوفيات كمُحصِّلة في النهاية باعتبارها دِلالات، تُوحي بتلاقي وَضْعيتين بِمُفتَرضاتهما، تَتَجاوز الطُروحات الدِّيمقراطية إلى مُستويات المأسَسَة، بل تُضفي شَرعيات جديدة كرُدود أَفعال واستجابات تَتَجاوز بها مراحل الأزمة كَرِهانات مُؤسَّسَاتية جديدة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

أزمة كوفيد 19؛ المَأْسَسَة؛ الدِّيمقراطية؛ التَّنمية الاقتصادية؛ سُوسيولوجيا الأزمة

Abstract:

This paper seeks to analyze the trajectories of crises within countries and societies. The study is based on the hypothesis that the sociology of crisis extends beyond the levels of democratization achieved by these entities. It examines the degree of institutionalization of their political systems and their effectiveness. Furthermore, it considers the capacity of these systems to resist and endure crises, whether through preemptive measures or practical actions implemented following the exacerbation of such crises.

The empirical investigation of the COVID-19 crisis serves as a comprehensive assessment of the quality and resilience of global institutions, the efficacy of decision-making processes, and the evaluation of governance systems, political structures, and the extent of institutionalization. An in-depth analysis of statistical data, specifically the number of deaths in various countries relative to income levels, reveals a significant disparity in outcomes, as suggested by sociological findings.

Keywords:

COVID-19 crisis, democracy, economic development, institutionalization, sociology of the crisis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Beyond its organizational characteristics, activities, and stated objectives, a crisis can be conceptualized from a dual perspective. Firstly, it pertains to referential frameworks, and the "guiding models" or "paradigms" as proposed by Thomas Kuhn, which are frameworks that shape the formulation of political agendas. Secondly, it involves a social process that emerges from dimensions manifesting across various fields simultaneously. This type of participation is integral to monitoring the trajectories of democratization and the degree of institutionalization within political systems. The process of institutionalization is fundamentally grounded in an epistemological hypothesis that the forms assumed by the sociology of crisis primarily originate from the belief that objective scientific knowledge can underpin the formulation of effective policies to address the myriad dangers confronting states at every stage. This article seeks to examine the manifestation of crises, with a particular focus on the COVID-19 period. Since that phase, the topic of crises has garnered significant attention from researchers in sociology and political science, especially concerning the sociology of crises. This study aims to analyze the nature of the crisis, concentrating on the COVID-19 period. Since that time, the topic of crisis has become increasingly significant in the interests of researchers in sociology and political science, particularly in relation to the sociology of crises. This study emphasizes the analysis of statistical data, which serves as an analytical framework, as presented in the World Health Organization reports published in 2019. These reports clearly highlight significant disparities in mortality rates, indicating that countries with democratic systems have experienced substantial losses, pointing to the fragility of their institutional structures, particularly the health institution, which is an integral component of other institutions. Based on the analysis of guiding models, each with its own assumptions— "democratic transition, institutionalization and new institutionalism"—this article's central question concerns the impact of the degree of institutionalization in these countries on either undermining or containing crises, irrespective of their high level of democracy, in the analysis and understanding of the sociology of crisis and the policies dedicated to addressing it. What explanations do the two models provide? Drawing on the theoretical frameworks proposed, particularly Bourdieu's field theory and Michel Dobry's sectoral approach within the classical theoretical approaches, or modern institutional and new institutionalism approaches (Discursive Neo-Institutionalism), this study posits the hypothesis that the crisis, as a multidimensional phenomenon, interconnects all social, political, and economic fields across multiple sectors.

The levels of democratization extend to the degree of institutionalization that these countries have reached. We examine a case that these societies aspire to through" the internalization and monitoring of mobilization resources they possess as a proactive measure before the crisis, or the integration of these resources and preparations as positions and strategies produced during the crisis stages. Based on the obtained results, starting from understanding the levels of growth, the degree of institutionalization, and the number of deaths as an outcome considered as indicators, it suggests the convergence of two situations with their assumptions, moving beyond democratic proposals to levels of institutionalization, and even bestowing new legitimacies as reactions and responses that surpass the stages of the crisis as new institutional proposals. The issue of this article revolves around the question of the paths the crisis takes. What are the varying reactions produced by countries in response to the crisis and its trajectories in order to contain it? Does this go beyond the nature of their political systems and the level of their democracy to the point of institutionalization? What is the nature of the relationship between political and economic institutions in mobilizing resources and transforming expertise into effective policies? And what are the institutional strategies that these countries are integrating and extracting to confront the COVID-19 crisis and legitimize their interventions?

This study is based on the hypothesis that the effectiveness of states in facing crises is not determined by the degree of democracy as much as by the degree of institutionalization and their ability to mobilize their institutional resources. Additionally, crisis containment is linked to the process of integrating resources and expertise into institutionalized practices, which grant it systematization, effectiveness, and legitimacy.

2. Toward Reshaping the Concept of Crisis

The term "crisis" (Krisis) has its origins in Greek medicine, where it referred to a pivotal moment in determining whether a patient would recover or succumb to an illness. Notably, the crisis itself is distinct from the disease; it represents a critical juncture that tests the organism's ability to withstand disturbances and reestablish equilibrium. This concept has been integrated into social sciences through the structural functionalism doctrine and modern theories. It has been applied to the COVID-19 crisis, where the outcomes are similarly framed as recovery or demise. Thus, the term "crisis" signifies a decisive point in a process.

We seek to provide a definition of crisis as an epistemological concept in Thomas Kuhn's framework. Kuhn posits that a crisis should not be viewed as a pathological state but as an epistemological moment that arises when the dominant paradigm fails to account for the growing body of knowledge and processes. In such instances, the traditional model loses its explanatory capacity, leading science into a crisis that can only be resolved through a scientific revolution, resulting in the establishment of a new paradigm. This suggests that, according to Kuhn, a crisis is not a collapse but a cognitive condition necessary for the generation of new knowledge. The transition in Kuhn's propositions from the epistemic structure of the crisis to practical pathways, particularly within the broader social system, is generally accepted if we recognize the legitimate intersection of this field with political and economic domains. This model of transition is adopted despite the methodological challenges it presents, especially when political institutions fail to justify their inability to address crises, often because they have contributed to their emergence by not establishing institutions capable of managing or preventing these crises initially. According to Kuhn (Kuhn 1997, p. 91), scientific revolutions are characterized as non-cumulative developmental episodes where an older paradigm is wholly or partially replaced by an incompatible new one. Further exploration is warranted, particularly regarding why a paradigm shift is termed a revolution. Despite the significant differences between political and scientific development, what parallelism justifies the metaphor of revolutions in both contexts? One aspect of this parallelism is evident: political revolutions often begin with a growing awareness, typically confined to a segment of the political community, that existing institutions no longer adequately address the challenges posed by an environment they have partially shaped.

Political crises often serve as a manifestation of dissent against the perceived legitimacy of those in power. Although a decline in legitimacy may not initially trigger these crises, it frequently emerges as a byproduct, exposing either the fragility of the governing bodies or the oppressive tendencies of the regime. (Nay, 2017, p.137).

An economic crisis is defined as a sudden disruption or collapse in existing economic relationships and activities, manifested through a decline in growth and production. It may result from external causes, such as wars and natural disasters, or from internal imbalances within the economic system. An economic crisis leads to an imbalance between supply and demand and disrupts investment, production, and credit which negatively affects both the real sector and financial markets. Its effects

may also extend to living standards, and recovery and return to pre-crisis levels can be a lengthy process that depends on the economy's ability to restore equilibrium.

Simple textbook explanation relates economic crisis to economy's out-of-equilibrium position because of external (exogenous, i.e., irregular) shock, for example, natural disasters or wars, causing a mismatch between supply and demand for goods and services. A structural crisis may be due to uneven growth across sectors (e.g., countries relying on primary commodities as economic growth drivers), whereas sector crisis may be affecting one sector only. A more diversified economy is better prepared to withstand potential shocks to the system. (Gevorkyan, 2015, p. 1).

In the context of political economy, crisis is defined through the lens of institutionalism and new institutionalism, reflecting significant elements like rupture, imbalance, and stagnation, particularly in economic science.

3- Typology of the Theories of Crisis Between Classical and Modern Approaches

At this level of analysis, we seek to identify theories of crisis within classical approaches concerned with studying crises from within a sub-system of the social system: economic, political and cultural. Viewing them (crises) as dysfunctions. We then return to more recent approaches that have emerged within democratic transition, institutionalism, which emphasizes the resources that the state mobilizes and interiorization in the form of positions and dispositions within these fields and systems. In the new institutional approaches, they exteriorize these resources as sources of legitimacy underlying the discourse adopted by the state during periods of crisis.

3-1- Crisis as a Social Process within the System:

We assume that a crisis emerges within one of the various systems, drawing on the early ideas of structural functionalism, which conceptualize crisis as a form of dysfunction within the social structure, as well as on Pierre Bourdieu's ideas, according to which society is structured around a set of fields. This is also reflected in the neo-Bourdieusian approaches developed by Michel Dobry, who views crisis as a multi-sectoral phenomenon.

The concept was subsequently adopted by sociology, particularly by functionalists led by Talcott Parsons. They perceived society as an organic entity, akin to a body whose parts integrate like organs. When an institution fails to fulfill its function, it disrupts the system's equilibrium, leading to a crisis that necessitates adaptive and rebalancing mechanisms. For Hippocrates, a crisis tested the biological

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body's capabilities, whereas for Parsons, it tested the social system's ability to maintain stability. Parsons (Parsons, 1951, p. 24) defined a social system as an organizational mode of action elements concerning the persistence or ordered processes of change in the interactive patterns of multiple individual actors.

Pierre Bourdieu approaches the understanding of society by considering it as composed of social fields within which actors compete according to their positions and the volume and composition of the social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital they possess ((Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 241–258; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 15-18)

Building on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, the crisis is seen as a multi-sectoral intersection of social, political, and economic domains, complicating their separation. Michel Dobry emphasizes that the crisis affects operational logics within independent sectors, enabling new resource allocation in fluid contexts. Despite crises, the social space maintains continuity, but sectoral boundaries shift, altering operational logic and governance, and fostering competition for resources and power among actors. political crises are essentially characterized by multisectoral mobilization and a conjunctural desectorization of the social space, whereby the boundaries separating relatively autonomous sectors become blurred and sectoral logics increasingly interfere with one another (Dobry, 2009, pp. 127, 141). this perspective examines the nature of crises within complex social systems, asserting that such crises are characterized by subjective relationships and social balances. It critiques the pursuit of a natural law governing crises or the search for a single influencing factor, suggesting that tracking the evolution of crises is more pragmatic. M. Dobry's perspective positions the crisis as a functional extension of social systems, challenging assumptions about transitions in social time and space. It argues that despite severe circumstances or actor behaviors, labeling any societal phase as transitional is inadequate, given the persistence of established dynamics even amidst changes in methods for achieving status and favor.

3-2. Crisis as a Hybrid Field: From the Preconditions of Democracy and Institutionalization to the Production of Legitimacy in New Institutionalism:

In this section, we conceptualize crisis as a hybrid analytical field in which there is a convergence between a range of interconnected concepts, particularly those connected with democracy and institutionalization. Across institutionalist and new institutionalist approaches, the meanings and analytical implications of these concepts are continually reconfigured and extended, moving from economic development and the institutionalization of political systems to legitimacy as a

fundamental basis for the exercise of political authority. Under conditions of crisis, legitimacy assumes particular significance, as it contributes to the definition of political responsibilities, the allocation of authority, and the framing of appropriate responses and possible solutions.

3-2-1. The Trajectory of the Crisis Between Levels of Democratization and the Degree of Institutionalization:

We argue, at this level of categorizing theories of crisis, by distinguishing between modernisation approaches. the foundations of the former can be traced back to the work of Seymour Martin Lipset, who identified a set of prerequisites for democracy and linked them to economic development and legitimacy. Huntington, by contrast, associated political stability with the degree of institutionalization of political systems, irrespective of the nature of those systems.

"Democracy is related to the state of economic development. Concretely this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy." (Lipset, 1959, P.75).

Seymour Lipset is the leader of the idea linking the theory of modernization with democracy. He asserts that democracy is connected with a set of properties such as economic development, education and urbanization legitimacy: these are considered as the pre requisites of the democracy and its perpetuation.

"A crisis of legitimacy is a crisis of change, and therefore its roots, as a factor effecting the stability of democratic system, must be sought in the character of change in modern society. It may be hypothesized that crise of legitimacy. Occur during a transition to a new social structure." (Lipset, 1959, P.85)."The relationship between different degrees of legitimacy and effectiveness …Societies those which are high on the scales of both legitimacy and effectiveness, will clearly have stable political systems" (Lipset, 1959, P.90).

While Samuel Huntington argues that the congruence between the values of a given group and its own values is ensured through what is known as institutionalization. also emphasizes that the effectiveness and stability of a political system are less related to whether it is democratic or dictatorial than to its degree of institutionalization and its capacity to achieve legitimacy, organization, consensus, and effectiveness.

"Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability," The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of its organizations and procedures." (Huntington, 1968, p.13) "The differences between

democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities. Communist totalitarian states and Western liberal states both belong generally in the category of effective rather than debile political systems." (Huntington, 1968, p.1).

3-2-2. The Process of the Crisis from Institutionalist Approaches to New Institutionalism:

Institutional approaches primarily examine the interplay between democracy and economic growth. In contrast, new institutional approaches highlight the importance of the legitimacy of their discourses. This distinction arises because the essence of institutions is rooted in the discourses of the actors rather than in formal regulations.

The concept of habitus constitutes a central element of his analysis, as it refers to a system of durable, acquired dispositions that are internalized through social experience and that orient practices and attitudes. Thus, social action is not produced solely by external rules, but through the interiorization of objective structures and their exteriorization into practical capacities for action (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 53, 55).

March and Olson brings together Bourdieu's propositions by transforming the dispositions and Olsen do not limit their analysis to the nature of the political system and the degree of institutionalization emphasized by Huntington. Rather, they go beyond this to examine how the process of institutionalization transforms rules into sustained practices, thereby enhancing the capacity of institutions to respond to challenges and crises by generating appropriate rules for action.

In the new institutionalist propositions, according to March and Olsen, the strength of the state does not lie solely in the nature of its political system, but in the ability of its institutions to produce rules suitable for action and transform them into stable practices. This makes the crisis a test of the degree of institutionalization, not just the level of democracy. (March & Olsen, 1989, pp. 21–38, 159–167).

Whereas Schmidt argues that institutions operate not only through formal rules, but also through the ideas and discourses produced by political actors. She explains that political legitimacy, particularly in times of crisis, is constructed through discourse that interprets the crisis and assigns responsibility.

By contrast, Vivien Schmidt argues that institutions operate not only through formal rules but also through the ideas and discourses produced by political actors and employed to interpret reality, define problems, and propose solutions (Schmidt, 2008, pp. 304, 306). Consequently, the legitimacy of policies during crises is generated through the capacity of discourse to construct a shared understanding of the dangers facing individuals and communities, as well as of the solutions that should be adopted (Schmidt, 2008, pp. 310–312).

A crisis is not regarded merely as an objective event; rather, it is transformed into a political problem through a discursive process that identifies its causes, assigns responsibility, and highlights the type of intervention required. It also generates the legitimacy of policies by constructing a shared understanding of the crisis and the possible solutions.

A crisis is therefore not merely an objective event; rather, it becomes a political problem through a discursive process that defines its causes, assigns responsibility, and justifies the type of intervention required (Schmidt, 2008, pp. 309, 319–320).

4. Literature Review

Kaim and Kubbe (2025) examined the effects of democratic, hybrid, and authoritarian governance on disaster management and long-term recovery. By employing data from The Economist's Democracy Index, the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Index, and the State Resilience Index (SRI) across 150 countries, the study demonstrates that democracies, defined by transparency, accountability, and public participation, exhibit enhanced resilience and possess a superior adaptive capacity for recovery and future advancement. Hybrid regimes show centralized efficiency in initial responses; however, they are impeded by corruption and institutional weaknesses during recovery. Autocratic regimes, while capable of rapid resource mobilization, encounter challenges with transparency and public trust, potentially compromising their long-term resilience. Economic resilience is identified as a crucial factor in the ability to recover following a disaster. Kim (2025) conducted a study using excess deaths per 100,000 population as a metric for assessing government performance, specifically addressing inconsistencies and underreporting in official data. The study employs spatial autoregressive models to account for the geographic clustering of COVID-19 mortality, providing more accurate estimates than nonspatial models. The findings indicate that political institutions have statistically significant effects on COVID-19 mortality. Specifically, higher levels of institutionalization, greater degrees of liberal

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democracy, and increased centripetalism correlate with lower excess mortality rates. Additionally, an increase in a country's excess mortality rate results in elevated rates in neighboring countries and their subsequent neighbors, creating a ripple effect. Schmotz and Tansey (2023) explored the influence of regime type on the decisiveness of government policies addressing the coronavirus pandemic and its subsequent effects. They proposed that democratic regimes might delay imposing restrictions on civil liberties due to a "freedom commitment" and might expedite economic protections due to a "welfare commitment." Utilizing event history analysis and data from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, they assessed whether less democratic regimes are more inclined to implement restrictions more swiftly and spending programs more slowly. Contrary to their expectations, the findings indicate that more authoritarian regimes do not impose constraints more rapidly or delay spending more than democratic regimes. Alon, Farrell, and Li (2020) examined how regime type affects COVID-19 response by contrasting the reactions and responses of authoritarian and democratic regimes. The outcome favored democracy over authoritarian regimes. The authors viewed the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to assess and strengthen democratic institutions while acknowledging the actual characteristics of authoritarian governments. In the paper "Devastation Caused by COVID-19: Is Democracy to Blame" (Badar, 2020), the author conducted an empirical analysis using a cross-sectional dataset of COVID-19-related deaths from 120 countries. The study suggests that democracy may be implicated in the mortality rates in certain countries. However, the author cautions that it is premature to attribute the destruction caused by COVID-19 solely to democratic systems. Rapeli and Saikkonen (2020) examined the potential ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic in both developed and developing democracies. Their study argues that the pandemic is unlikely to have a significant long-term impact on existing democracies. The immediate effects on current democratic leaders are evaluated, and the long-term implications for the support of democratic institutions and ideals are projected. Furthermore, the study investigates how global trends of democratic retreat might be affected by the pandemic, anticipating that short-term impacts will worsen conditions in countries where democracy is already declining. Conversely, the long-term economic consequences may present greater challenges to non-democratic governments. Shaw, Yong-kyun, and Hua (2020) conducted a comparative study of the responses to COVID-19 in South Korea, China, and Japan. The authors focused on the idea that, despite the pandemic's global reach, local governance, socioeconomic, and cultural

contexts shaped the responses. In the context of Algeria, Zirari and Souar (2019) explored the causal relationship between democracy and economic growth, considering the divergent perspectives of modernization and democratization theory. Their study concluded that the causal relationship shifts from democracy to economic growth in both the short and long term. Nayebyazdi (2017) identified at least five theoretical models regarding the relationship between democracy and economic growth in his study "The Relationship Between Democracy and Economic Growth in Muslim MENA Countries." These models include modernization, where economic development precedes democracy; the notion that economic development results in high levels of corruption, leading to strong institutions and democracy; and the position endorsed by East Asian nations that establish authoritarian regimes to achieve economic growth. The fourth model posits that democracy precedes development, while the fifth model suggests that regime type and economic progress are unrelated. In their book "Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty," Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) highlighted the importance of institutions in a nation's growth, using the division of Korea into North and South Korea as an example. Despite having similar geographic and cultural characteristics, these two nations differ in the quality of their institutions.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Data and Methods

This study employed an analytical, and comparative methodology to examine political and demographic ten states representing American, European, African and Asian continents. All of these countries represent democratic or authoritarian or hybrid regimes: USA, Russia, the United Kingdom, Italy, South Korea, China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Algeria, Egypt. The analysis focused on GDP growth (economic growth), the Human Development Index (wellbeing), the World Bank Governance Indicators (institutions, 2004–2024), and total COVID-19 deaths. These variables were compared between a pre-pandemic period (2010–2019) and a pandemic period (2020–2024). Democracy was assessed using the Freedom House Index, a prominent dataset in the field (Boese, 2019), selected for its data availability. COVID-19 mortality data were obtained from the Johns Hopkins University and Worldometer datasets, including cumulative totals and deaths per million. Table 01 presents variables definition and sources.

Table 1: Variable definition and sources

Variable	Concept measured	Indicator / unit	Source
Economic growth	Economic performance	GDP growth (annual %)	World Bank
Wellbeing	Human development	Human Development Index (HDI), 0–1	UNDP / Our World in Data
Institutions	Governance quality	World Governance Indicators — Rule of Law, Government Effectiveness, Control of Corruption (−2.5 to +2.5)	World Bank (WGI)
Regime / democracy	Political rights & civil liberties	Freedom House — Global Freedom Score (0–100)	Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2025* (Boese, 2019)
Response speed	Government containment	Stringency Index (0–100)	Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT)

The source: Author construction

The reported COVID-19 mortality rate (figure 01) was highest in the most democratic states, with the USA 3,494, Italy 3,309 United Kingdom recording 3,404 deaths per million and South Korea 693. In contrast, authoritarian states reported significantly lower figures, with China at 85, Algeria 151, Qatar 239, Egypt 220, and Saudi Arabia at 299 per million, although China's figure is widely considered an undercount.

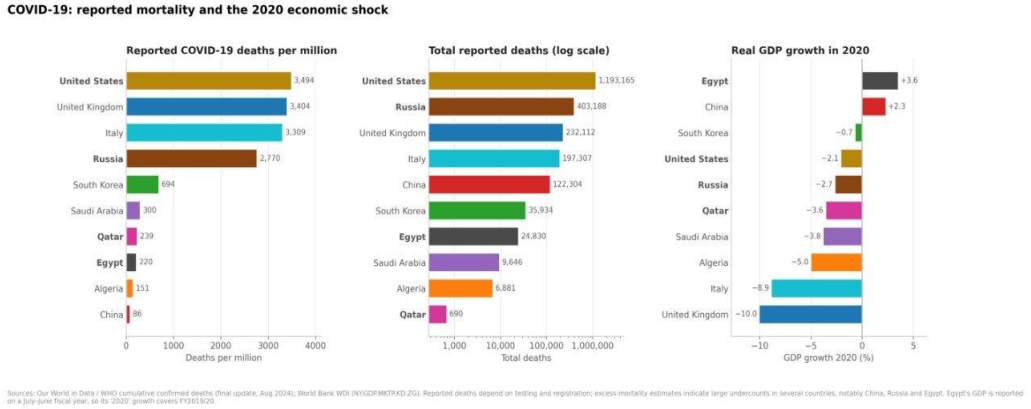


Fig.1. COVID-19 deaths

Recording the chart figure 2 that before the covid-19 the highest economic growth indicators were in democratic states such as USA, Qatar and United Kingdom; medium Russia and China (approximatively 10000; by construct the lowest economic indicators were in the authoritarian states such as Egypt 3000, Algeria 4000.

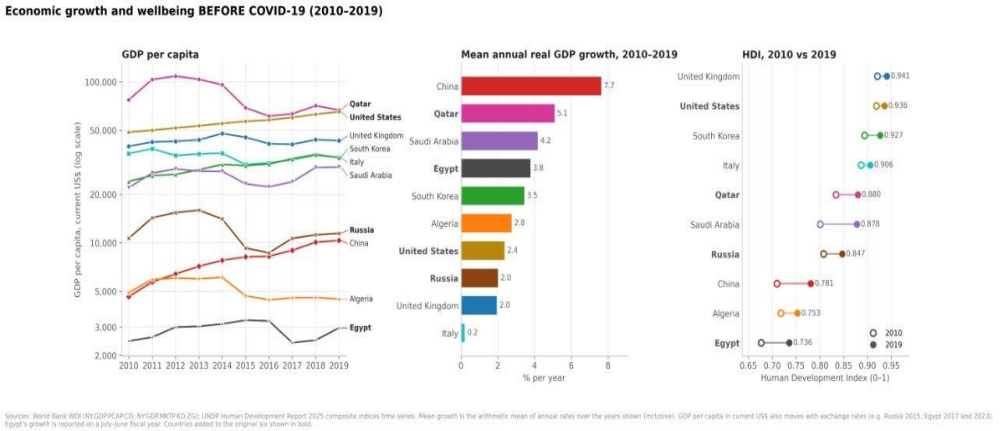


Fig.2. Economic growth and wellbeing (2010-2019)

Recording to the figure 3 after the covid-19 the same results: the highest economic growth indicators were registered in democratic states such as USA, Qatar and United Kingdom; by contrast the lowest economic growth indicators were in authoritarian states such as Egypt, Algeria and China.

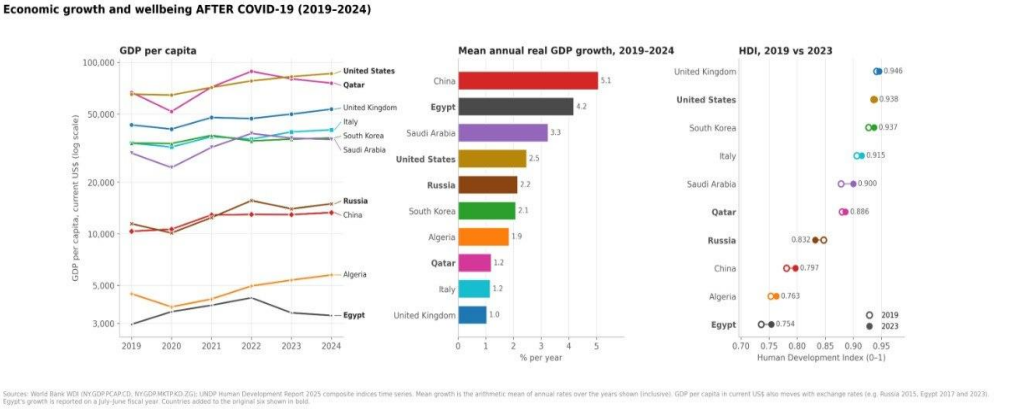


Fig.3. Economic growth and wellbeing (2019-2024)

Institutional quality (figure 4), as measured by the World Governance Indicators (WGI), was highest in the United Kingdom (+1.32) and South Korea (+1.15), USA (1,1); medium China Italy and Saudi Arabia; and lower in the authoritarian states (Russia -0,7, Egypt -0.6, Algeria -0,5).

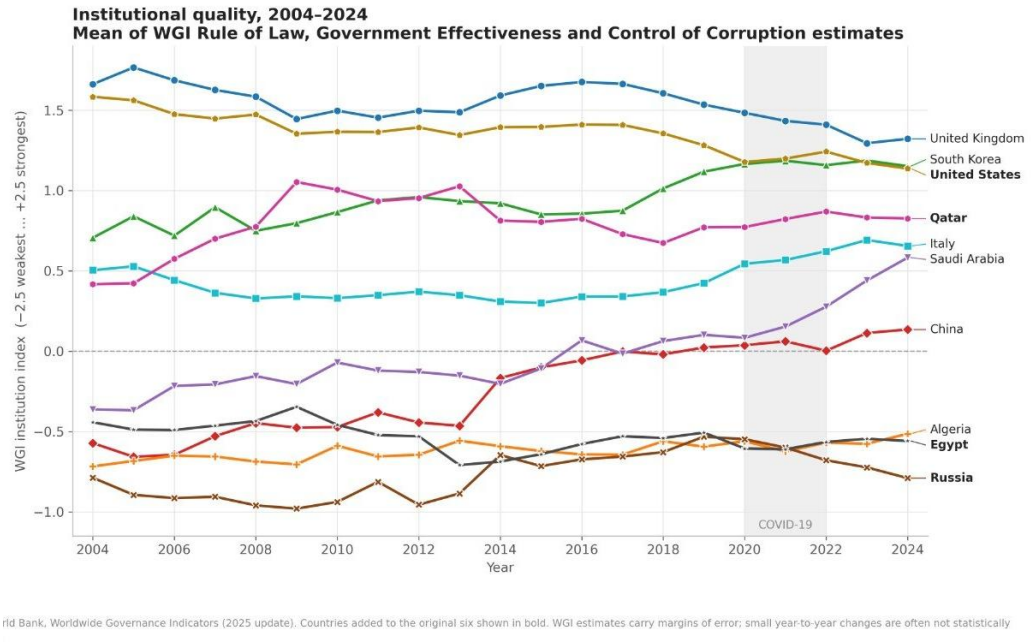


Fig.4. Institutional quality 2004-2024

As shown in figure 5, China, Italy and South Korea showed improvement, whereas Algeria Egypt and Saudi Arabia an increase in the death rates, the United Kingdom experienced a slight decline. The stringency index reveals that China reached approximately 80. These findings suggest that the speed of response, rather than regime type or institutional quality alone, was associated with lower reported mortality rates.

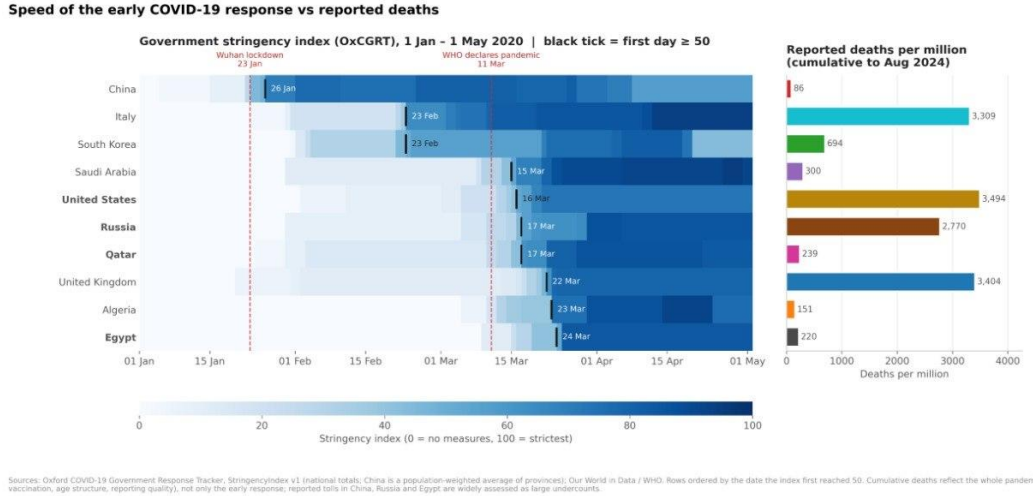


Fig.5. Speed of the covid-19 response vs reported deaths

This figure represents the relation between three variables: regime type, institutional quality and covid-1ç mortality rates. There three groups: United Kingdom, South Korea and USA; Qatar, Saudi Arabia and China; Egypt, Algeria and Russia.

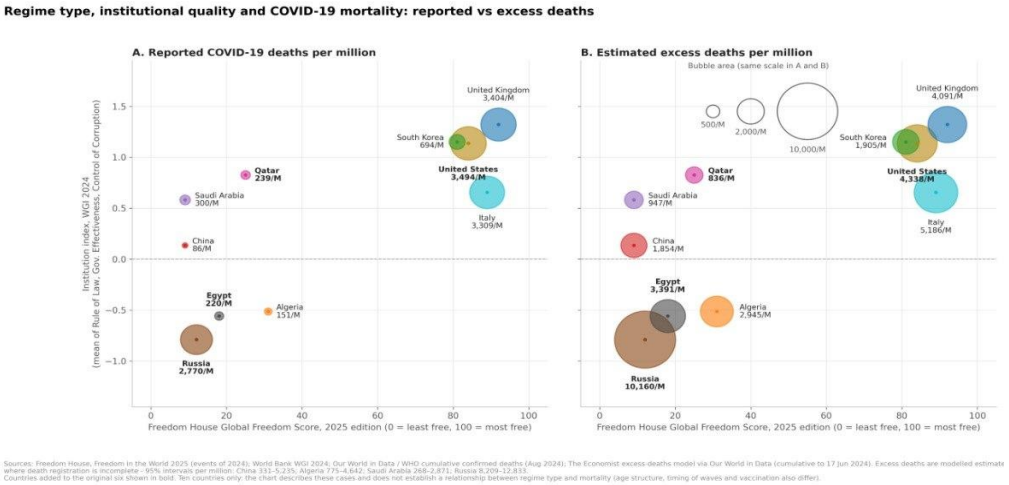


Fig.6. regime type, institutional quality and covid-19 mortality vs excess deaths

5.2. Discussion and Implication:

This article provides an analysis of the intersection of crises across various sectors, highlighting a critical juncture that challenges democracy with an unprecedented historical test. Democracy has become sluggish and ineffective in addressing crises. The COVID-19 crisis exacerbated and narrowed the trajectory of democratic decline, reigniting the debate on the capacity of democracies to endure, especially in comparison to authoritarian regimes, which demonstrated greater decisiveness and control during the crisis period. Despite the democratic nature of certain systems, they faltered in their initial practical test, as the crisis affecting these systems is structural and sectoral, impacting all areas and questioning the relationships that have undermined democracy.

We contend that the differences in outcomes between countries with varying income levels and COVID-19 mortality rates cannot be solely attributed to the nature of the political system, whether democratic or autocratic. Instead, the discussion should include institutional logic as a determinant of a country's ability to mobilize resources and coordinate strategies in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This period served as a test of institutional effectiveness. We argue that the reduction in mortality rates in some countries does not necessarily indicate the superiority of a particular political system but rather reflects the accumulation of institutionalized practices that enabled states to convert organizational capital into an effective response.

The crisis also underscored that the political sphere does not operate independently of social and health domains; it is influenced by the balance of power and the distribution of capital among actors. The sector emerges as a space for public action where decision-making, coordination, and regulation networks intersect. Consequently, the sociology of crises extends beyond regime characteristics to examine the degree of institutionalization within states. It aligns with the propositions of new institutionalism, viewing it as an analytical paradigm capable of explaining variations in public performance through the quality of institutions, accumulated preparedness, and the capacities possessed by states at all stages of transition.

6. *CONCLUSION*

The sociology of crisis does not view the crisis as a rupture within the social system; rather, it is a foundational moment through which the boundaries between these fields are redefined, ensuring the rebalancing and reproduction of its operational mechanisms. It represents a transition from one state to another, where the possibilities of stability intersect with the potentials for disruption, making the crisis a social trajectory that reveals the limits of existing systems and tests their capacity to endure. Therefore, the crisis does not remain confined to the domain in which it arises, but extends across various social structures, transforming from a health crisis to a political, economic, and institutional crisis, making it an analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of transition from the old to the new and the reconstruction of the social system on diverse foundations.

The COVID-19 crisis revealed that the real test was not the nature of political systems but their ability to transform their principles into effective responses. The crisis reexamined the perceptions that linked the success of the state to the legitimacy of its formal institutions, highlighting that legitimacy finds its answers in actual content when the paths of this crisis are contained by states, which are measured not by their political speeches but by their ability to mobilize resources and convert them into effective practices in facing these crises. The results of this study suggest, through the fecundation between economic growth, the degree of institutionalization, and mortality rates, that the disparities between countries were more closely related to the levels of institutionalization and effectiveness rather than the nature of the existing political system. Some democracies exhibited limited institutional coordination and a slow response rate, while other countries with higher institutional centralization were able to mitigate the

severity of the crisis thanks to greater efficiency in resource mobilization. This does not indicate the superiority of a particular political model, but rather confirms that the effectiveness of the state is linked to its ability to mobilize its accumulated resources into an organized collective action capable of containing risks and maintaining the continuity of the social system.

We conclude that the future of countries in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis will not be determined by their abstract political references, but rather by their ability to build institutions characterized by flexibility, efficiency, and the capacity to learn and adapt, which allows them to reproduce their legitimacy through achievement and effectiveness. In this sense, the sociology of crisis becomes an entry point for understanding how states reproduce social, political, and economic structures, transforming crises from moments that threaten stability into opportunities to rebuild the state and enhance its ability to extract, mobilize, and direct resources toward renewing the social system in the face of future transformations and crises.

7 .***BIBLIOGRAPHY LIST***

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