

The spread of fear in the globalizing world: The case of COVID-19

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Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of “globalization” has been one of the main topics of social sciences. Globalization is a controversial topic due to its main features and effects. Debates in this context generally focus on the “advantages and disadvantages” of globalization. On one side of these debates, some advocate that with globalization, people's lives have significantly improved and countries have started to develop rapidly, while, on the other side, some argue that nature, culture, and human life have faced grave threats and “global risk society” is being built. Debates on global risk society seem to have accelerated in recent years. With the COVID-19 outbreak, that emerged in China in December 2019 and went global, leading to a pandemic, it is seen that debates on “global risk society” started again in the media and among social scientists. This article aims to explore the effect of globalization on the spread of fear across the world by focusing on the case of COVID-19. Along with the basic characteristics of globalization, such as “widening,” “deepening,” and “acceleration,” fear seems to have spread all over the world and have forced people to discuss the benefits and harms of globalization once more.

1 | INTRODUCTION

“Globalization” has become the most popular concept of the post-Cold War era. This concept, to which social scientists have to refer in almost every discussion or study, has now turned into a reality of the age we live in. While many debates and discussions continue on the reality and inevitability of globalization, case studies based on globalization are becoming increasingly important within social sciences. In international relations, particularly, it is not possible to understand and interpret the world today without examining the effects of globalization. For this reason, globalization has become one of the most emphasized concepts in modern studies on international relations. This seems to be an expected outcome considering the fact that the interaction among countries increased especially in the post-Cold War period. Therefore, an event occurring anywhere in the world goes global to the extent that it can affect and transform the social, political, economic, and cultural structure of first neighboring countries, then neighboring regions, and ultimately the entire world.

Coronavirus (COVID-19), which first appeared in China in late 2019, was not at first predicted to have the potential to negatively

affect people's lives across the world. Although Chinese officials and the World Health Organization (WHO) claimed that the situation was “under control” throughout December 2019, the outbreak gradually got out of control and turned into a pandemic that afflicted the health, economy, politics, culture, and psychology of almost the whole global system. The ease of transportation across the world as a result of advancing technology and failure to timely take necessary precautions caused the coronavirus and the fear of the virus to spread all over the world. Similarly, the outbreak has brought almost all economic activities to a halt in China. Given the interconnectedness of financial markets, the world has started to drift into a more severe economic crisis than the 2008 crisis. After the failure to prevent the spread of the virus and the loss of thousands of people, strict quarantine measures affecting millions of people have been taken all over the world, especially in Europe. The year 2020 started with a test for humanity. This pandemic is considered to have caused unprecedented outcomes for the world. With the outbreak of COVID-19, economic and financial systems linked to each other as a result of globalization seem to have collapsed, all international organizations have been cancelled, and countries have already closed borders or introduced severe restrictions. Many political

leaders across the world have set aside their political agenda and designated "COVID 19" as the only item on their agenda.

Taking these as a starting point, this article aims to investigate the effects of globalization by referring to the basic characteristics of globalization, such as "widening," "deepening," and "acceleration," and the concept of "global risk society," with a specific focus on the case of COVID-19. The study will both discuss the impact of globalization on the spread of fear and seek answers to the question "Has the world turned into a global risk society with globalization?" Seeking answers to this question with a focus on the basic characteristics of globalization is the main goal of this article. To this end, the study will use published articles, magazines, newspapers, and social media news about both globalization and COVID-19 to develop deeper insights into the subject being studied. The study will contain two main headings and parts. In the first part, the concept of globalization will be addressed by referring to "widening," "deepening," and "acceleration"; in the second part, the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on global risk society assumptions will be discussed.

1.1 | Globalization as a concept and building a global risk society

Globalization is the process by which the world becomes increasingly interconnected as a result of increasing international commercial activities and cultural exchange. Globalization is considered to have been going on for centuries. However, it has been increasing at an unprecedented pace since the 1990s. According to Anthony Giddens, globalization is "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities" (Giddens, 1990). Proceeding from Giddens's definition, as a result of globalization, international commercial activities have intensified enormously, the number of international companies increased, dependence on the global economy increased, and contrary to the period of mercantilism, freer movement of capital, goods, and services has been ensured. Studies on globalization seek to define globalization by referring to different definitions and approaches. The focus of these studies, however, is the advantages and disadvantages of globalization. With the end of the Cold War, the advances in transportation and communication technology were welcomed in the world. However, due to global terrorism, global health threats especially in the case of COVID 19, global economic crisis, and climate change concerns, the "praise of globalization" that started in that period seems to have been replaced by "skepticism towards globalization." In other words, globalization seems to have brought many disadvantages to humanity besides bringing many benefits and possibilities. For example, in his essay "Looking Ahead to Century 21," published in *The New York Times* in 2000, Samuelson (2000) cites different approaches about globalization, comparing it to a double-edged sword:

"At the edge of a new century, globalization is a double-edged sword: a powerful vehicle that raises economic growth, spreads new technology and increases living standards in rich and poor countries alike, but also an immensely controversial process that assaults national sovereignty,

erodes local culture and tradition and threatens economic and social instability." (Samuelson, 2000).

Samuelson's analogy to a "double-edged sword" is today important to understand the contemporary debates on globalization. Irwin (2018), a correspondent for *The New York Times*, argues that although it is tempting to see globalization as an ever-ongoing process, the course of history does not say so. Because, according to Irwin, the process of globalization now and then sleeps/halts and starts again. Referring to the post-Cold War era to justify his assumption, Irwin points out that the speed of interconnectedness which increased in the 1990s and early 2000s has started to decline since 2016 (Irwin, 2018). Continuous growth goals, tight interconnectedness of global capital and financial markets, heading toward one-global culture, and industrialization that adversely affects the environment have increased across the world since the 1990s, as a result of which the concept of "global risk society" has entered the global agenda. This concept, which we first encountered in detail in Beck's (1992) book "The Risk Society: Towards Another Modernity," actually summarizes the process we are going through today. Beck notes in his book that a new modern era has begun and warns humanity against unpredictable and extraordinary risks that may arise in this new period (Beck, 1992, p. 21).

The phases of "widening," "deepening," and "acceleration" of globalization confirm the unprecedentedly rapid progress "towards another modernity," which Beck emphasized in a sense. Keyman (2013) describes this process by referring to the "network" metaphor:

"In Political Science and International Relations, the "network" metaphor is used in two ways. First, it is used to refer to the process by which distances between countries are reduced and interdependence widens and deepens in relations between countries thanks to the developments in communication and information technologies. The concept of "network society" says that relations between states, economies, cultures, civil society actors, and even individuals now appear like a "network." The second, similar to the first, symbolizes the widening, deepening, and acceleration in relationships, but this time, the network metaphor refers to the "spider web."We often hear the assumption that globalization has turned the world into a "spider web" (Keyman, 2013).

Keyman tries to justify his "spider web" assumption referring to regional and global events and phenomena, such as the 1987 South Asian crisis, the 2008 economic crisis, the fear of international terror surrounding the world after September 11, the Arab Spring, global hunger and poverty, and global climate change (Keyman, 2013). The process the world is going through today proves the accuracy of this assumption. Because, as Keyman argued, in such a world, actors win and lose in an instant. For this reason, actors should make very careful decisions in the globalizing world. Given the impact of globalization, a wrong decision taken anywhere in the world will have significant repercussions in other parts of the world, these effects will deepen after a while, and the negative consequences of the wrong decision will accelerate further (Görgün, 2017). Some authors also frequently claim that the new global order that is shaping the world is actually an irregularity. In the introduction of his book "The Reinvention of

Politics," Beck (2013) tries to describe this process by referring to Wassily Kandinsky's article entitled "And":

"The vagueness of And is the theme of the latter world, which is ours. Its farewell to order, its overflowing chaos, its extravagant hope for unity, its helplessness in the face of merely addictive growth, its limits and limitlessness, the increasingly elusive borders and the anxiety that they arouse—all that lures and thrills in And. The Either-or does not really terminate in the inconclusiveness, one could even say the undifferentiated mercifulness, of And. If so, then only imperfectly, vaguely, and dangerously. Certainly, the irredeemable globality of the world speaks in favor of And. The And worms its way through the armed borders, but this only makes the dangers general and indefensible." (Beck, 2013, pp. 9–10).

The last sentence in the quote from Beck actually explains the vulnerability the world is facing today against the COVID-19 pandemic and the concept of "global risk society." The dangers have now become general and indefensible. Danger will widen, deepen, accelerate, making the borders of nation-states invisible and ineffective. Another argument that approaches globalization negatively suggests that globalization is the opposite of universalization. Viewing globalization from the Arab geography, more precisely, as he puts it from the "south," Umara (2006) describes this situation in his book "Globalization and The Problem of Identity":

"Globalization does not mean 'universality.' These are different terms in terms of meaning and content. When we look more carefully, we see that globalization brings universalism to some issues as a result of pressure and coercion. Universality combines cultural richness with free will, without pressure and imposition. Globalization, on the other hand, is an overbearing and oppressive trend that universalizes cultural characteristics but ignores the basic needs of people. It is people who are decisive in universality. In globalization, on the other hand, people have no freedom of choice. They are just like a puppet in the hands of the strong!" (Umara, 2006, p. 27).

Despite being right at many points, Umara's presentation of globalization somewhat resembles the "theater of the powerful." However, today, globalization seems to have gotten out of the control of the powerful, as well. As if invalidating Umara's puppet metaphor, Bauman (2017) introduces the metaphor of "things getting out of control":

"The deepest meaning within the idea of globalization is the vague, unmanageable, and independent nature of the world: it is the absence of a center, a control table, a management board, an administrative bureau. Globalization is another name for Jowitt's 'New world disorder.' This property which cannot be taught of independent from the image of globalization separates globalization from another idea which it seemingly replaced, the idea of 'universality' radically. The idea that once constituted the discourse about global affairs, is no longer used, even not occurring to anyone but maybe philosophers, is only heard of once in a while." (Bauman, 2017, p. 75).

Bauman's emphasis on the "new world disorder" with a reference to Jowitt (1993) is remarkable at this point. The idea of creating a "new world order" has undoubtedly existed for thousands of years. Plato's theory of Platon (2019) "ideal state," Cicero's (2014) idea of "double citizenship," and "social contract" theories of Hobbes (2019)

and Locke (2016); all these were manifestations. Jean-Jacques Rousseau perhaps raised the clearest objection hundreds of years ago against the assumption that "the old" is evil and "the new" is better. According to Rousseau, Hobbes's, and Locke's depictions of the "state of nature" are problematic and wrong: the process that takes the man to the social contract is not the evil or danger of the state of nature, but on the contrary, it is the man himself. Man mingles, develops, socializes, and at the end of these processes, eventually evolves into not good but evil and acquires a disruptive character. Rousseau describes the disruptive and destroying character of man as follows:

"God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. He forces one soil to yield the products of another, one tree to bear another's fruit. He confuses and confounds time, place, and natural conditions. He mutilates his dog, his horse, and his slave. He destroys and defaces all things; he loves all that is deformed and monstrous; he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself, who must learn his paces like a saddle-horse, and be shaped to his master's taste like the trees in his garden." (Rousseau, 2009, p. 8).

In the above paragraph, Rousseau actually describes the evolution that the world has gone/is going through in the hands of humanity. In fact, Rousseau said these 300 years ago when mankind had not yet started the industrial revolution, millions of people had not been killed in world wars, no atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima, the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant had not affected the human physiology, the irreversible consequences of climate change had not started to be discussed, and the COVID-19 outbreak, which caused paranoia across the world, had not emerged. Perhaps, as many people studying globalization suggest, globalization is not a new process: the journey towards "global risk society" or "new world disorder" started when the first human beings socialized. What is happening today is, as Keyman underlines, the key features of globalization, that is, "widening," "deepening," and "acceleration" have been taken to a higher level by human beings and made more visible.

1.2 | Spread of fear in the global risk society and COVID-19

Globalization that has removed the borders between different places and different cultures has brought about more interaction among people in all areas of life (Lee, 2003, p. 63). Along with globalization, it is seen that neo-liberal policies are sacralized and the social impact of the state, seen as responsible for economic problems, is gradually reduced (Kantar, Gülay, & Kılıcı, 2018, p. 7). As a result, the role of the state in the economy has gradually decreased and through privatizations, a free market economy has emerged in areas such as education and health care. "Maximum profit," which is the ultimate goal of the market, has, in turn, prioritized the needs of the market, not human health or education. Humanity has switched from the "common good" to the "one good" model under capitalist oppression, which initiated the debates on the "new world disorder" as well as the "new world order." The principle of "aiming for the common good of all," which Aristoteles introduced, is being discussed again today (Aristoteles, 2010, p. 21).

Because it is still debatable whether the world has been a more living place or not since globalization took the world under its influence after the Cold War.

It is observed that each year, the average global temperature is rising (Figure 1). The rise in the post-Cold War period is particularly striking. With the increasing effects of globalization, human beings have begun to have more negative and profound impacts on nature. For example, Tuvalu, the fourth smallest country in the world, is nowadays facing the threat of disappearing from the face of the earth. With the melting of glaciers and rising sea levels, the island of Tuvalu is becoming more and more uninhabitable every day. Enele Sapoaga, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, cried out against the climate change: "We are sinking while you are rising!" (Lyons, 2019). With the disappearance of Tuvalu, a culture that is thousands of years old will also disappear. Despite the example of Tuvalu, world leaders who advocate the "new world order" do not take climate change seriously and resist taking action against it (Friedman, 2019). As a matter of fact, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement (Johnson, 2019). While climate change is a real threat to the whole world, it has not yet incited a worldwide fear. This is because the interests of the capitalist system conflict with the realities of climate change. Adair Turner (2019) explains this conflict as follows:

"Believers in a market economy are dismayed by radical voices arguing that capitalism is incompatible with effective climate action. But unless capitalism's defenders start supporting more ambitious targets and policies to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century, they should not be surprised if an increasing number of people agree" (Turner, 2019).

Turner notes that those who believe in the market economy are disturbed by movements demanding action on climate change. However, it seems clear that the capitalist system has to renew itself upon the spread of fear of climate change. That's because both producers and consumers of the capitalist system are humans, and humans have

fears. As we see in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, man is most afraid of losing, getting lost, and dying (Hobbes, 2019). Referring to Hobbes, Sancar (2007) describes this as follows:

"Politics of fear aims to create an atmosphere that will make people see themselves as the potential victims of an impending disaster. It does this not by addressing reason, but by addressing the weakest points of human existence. Ideas like self-determination and individual autonomy are shadowed and suppressed by a continuous alarm sound that targets these weakest points of people. Thomas Hobbes is also defined as the theorist of fear. As a way to get rid of the chaotic nature, in which fear of death is decisive, Hobbes proposed to create a very powerful sovereign, a Leviathan (dragon), to which we would delegate all our freedoms. Hobbes wanted us to give up our freedoms and fall asleep peacefully in the lap of this Leviathan." (Sancar, 2007).

As Sancar argues, politics of fear addresses the weakest points of people, namely, the fear of death. Hobbes stated this fear catches hold of the man mostly in the state of nature. However, in the state of nature reconstructed by capitalism, man's fears have also changed. The new world order has new fears, and these fears affect capitalism the most. To put it more clearly, capitalism, the Leviathan of the new world order, can no longer cope with this fear.

Volatility index (VIX) is called by some investors as the "fear index." Investors use the VIX to measure the level of risk, fear, or stress in the market when making investment decisions. VIX index, which moves in the same direction with the concern of investors, will cause a decrease in investments in global markets if it increases (Akdağ, Kiliç, & Yildirim, 2019). While index below 20% indicates that the perception of risk is low, if it exceeds 30%, it means that the perception of risk is high (Yildirim, 2019, p. 47).

Figure 2 above shows the fear index in the markets from January 1, 1990, to March 18, 2020. The index is, in a sense, like the electrocardiogram of the heart of the last 30 years that have witnessed the rise of globalization. Accordingly, the fear index measured the first

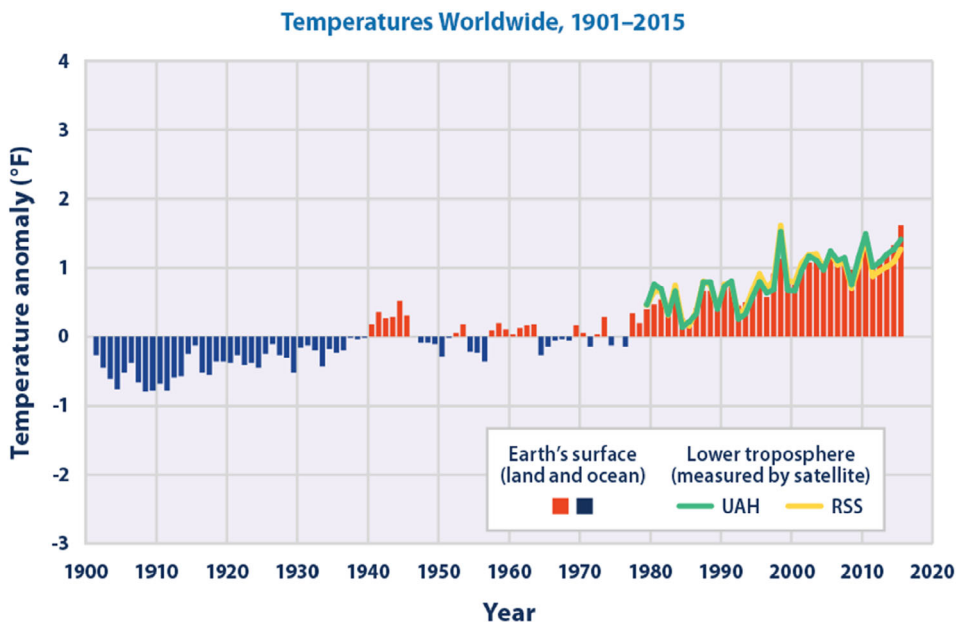
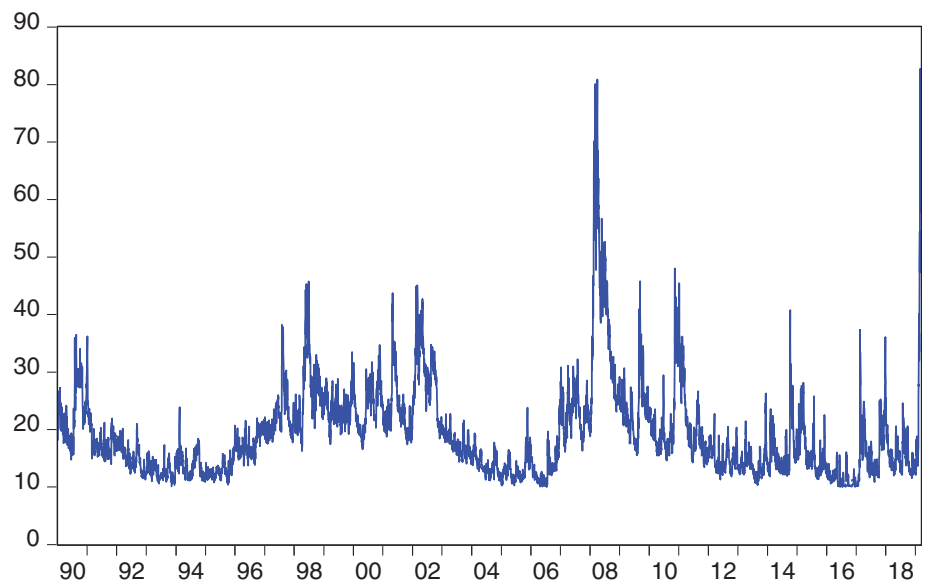


FIGURE 1 Temperatures Worldwide, 1901–2015 (EPA, 2016)

FIGURE 2 CBOE volatility index
(Investing, 2020)



major fear on August 2, 1990, when Iraqi forces led by Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait (Gordon, 1990). This invasion, which was the first major test for those who believed in the “end of history” thesis and the definitive victory of the USA after the end of the Cold War, prompted widespread fear across global markets, raising the VIX to 29.90 (Investing, 2020). After the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, no serious rise was observed in the index until October 1, 1997. “The Asian Economic Crisis,” which started in Taiwan in October 1997 and influenced the whole world, increased the fear index to 35.09 (Investing, 2020). The record increase set by the Asian Economic Crisis would be renewed only 1 year later with the economic crisis in Russia, raising the fear index to 44.28 in August 1998. After this date, there were curves, peaks, and dips in the index; however, the index set a new record with the “2008 Financial Crisis,” which raised the index to 59.89 in October 2008 (Investing, 2020). After the 2008 Financial Crisis, the index experienced similar spikes and dips; however, in 2020, the index saw a completely different level. As can be seen from the chart above, the index has set new records since March 12, 2020. On that date, the index saw the highest record of the last 30 years with 62.15, which was beaten over the next week. This “unstoppable rise of fear” is striking. On March 18, 2020, when these lines were written, the index saw a historical record with 85.47 (Hughes, 2020). When the VIX data of the last 30 years are analyzed, it will be seen that concerns related to either economy or wars were the factors responsible for fluctuations in the index. However, this time it is different: what raises the index so much is not the fear of losing jobs, of paying loans, or of losing money with the stock market crash, but the fear of death as a result of the “new state of nature” caused by globalization. The source of this fear that has spread all over the world is COVID-19, which has disrupted the agenda of all humanity.

Perhaps nobody guessed that 2020 would begin with such a difficult test for humanity. As of March 28, 2020 when these lines were written, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide was

650,928 and the worldwide death toll from the pandemic was 30,299 (Worldometer, 2020). WHO made the following statement on the virus and its effects:

“Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (e.g., by coughing into a flexed elbow).” (WHO).

The COVID-19 outbreak that first emerged in China has today spread across almost the entire world. The virus that spread to 199 countries has become the first item on the world agenda (Worldometer, 2020). Citizens in many countries of the world were asked to stay at home and even curfews were imposed by some countries (Welle, 2020). Fear and panic have started to prevail throughout Europe, in particular, after European countries were caught unprepared for the outbreak. Italy's growing death toll is causing great anxiety in people around the world (Harowitz, 2020). Perhaps for the first time after world wars, people are going through a period when everyone is afraid of death. The outbreak that emerged in Wuhan unfortunately spread to all continents and became a pandemic today (Aktan, 2020). The shrinking of the world due to globalization seems to make it easy for fear to spread, just like deadly viruses. According to psychologists, fear is also contagious like viruses, and like the COVID-19 disease itself, the fear of it is widening, deepening, and accelerating in the globalizing world. According to psychologist Ömer

Ateş, this fear might require some people to receive psychological support (NTV, 2020). It is seen that this fear and panic have led to grave consequences in the world. Author, activist and journalist Naomi Klein argues the coronavirus crisis, as the previous cases, could be a catalyst to shower aid on the richest interests in society, including the ones who are most responsible for our current weaknesses, while offering next to nothing to most workers and small businesses. In 2007, Klein wrote "The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism." Now she considers President Trump's efforts are a pandemic shock doctrine. In a video for The Intercept, where she is a senior correspondent, Klein puts forward it's paramount for people to fight for the kind of transformative change that cannot only limit the worst effects of the current crisis but also set society on a more just route (Now, 2020). Avcı (2020) from Gazete Duvar, an online Turkish newspaper, describes these consequences:

"Man, by nature, is a mortal being, and he establishes mechanisms that can avoid death both in psychological and physical life. However, since this establishment is carried out within a certain social life, the political-economic-ideological qualities of the societies we live in determine the ways in which fear is avoided. In other words, capitalist states that control social life today also possess the means to control fear. In fact, the individual cannot be freed from his fears; instead, new forms of fear replace the old ones. In a social space where the state determines where fear will flow and where the state is designed according to the needs of capitalism, fear depends on a chain of unpredictable causes; therefore, it opens the way to panic." (Avcı, 2020).

As Avcı argues, the state that controls social life also possesses the means to control fear. The society, which has been brought under control with the argument that "if there is no order, there will be chaos", is facing chaos caused by the order itself. The "new world order," which has turned the world into a large common market, seems to be mainly responsible for the transformation of the outbreak into a pandemic. It is a fact acknowledged by doctors and scientists that the virus has mutated and spread quickly. It is also a fact for social scientists, that both humans and the system have undergone continuous evolution over the past 30 years. WHO explains this as follows:

"The world urgently needs to improve its preparedness for outbreaks of emerging and epidemic-prone diseases. All experts agree: changes in the way humanity inhabits the planet make the emergence of more new diseases inevitable. Constant mutation and adaptation are the survival mechanisms of the microbial world." (WHO).

The answer to the questions of "How did the COVID-19 pandemic emerge and how did it spread so quickly?" actually in this statement of WHO. The same ideas were also uttered by Rousseau (2009) hundreds of years ago. Humanity is altering the planet and trying to "tame" it. This process of "taming," along with globalization, has led to the emergence of risk society at an unprecedented pace, as noted by Beck (1992). The over-consumption and the lifestyle of mankind have led to major transformations in health and culture. Capitalism, which has always taught man to ask for more, has, along with globalization, led to irreversible effects on both humans and nature (Algedik, 2020). Fossil fuel-based development, highways that destroy forests, glorious

airports with capacities of millions of passengers, and developments in information technology might seem to reduce the distance between people; however, they also increase the risk. As in the case of COVID-19, the outbreak emerging in Wuhan has benefited from this speed of globalization and has today affected more than 180 countries by probably air transport.

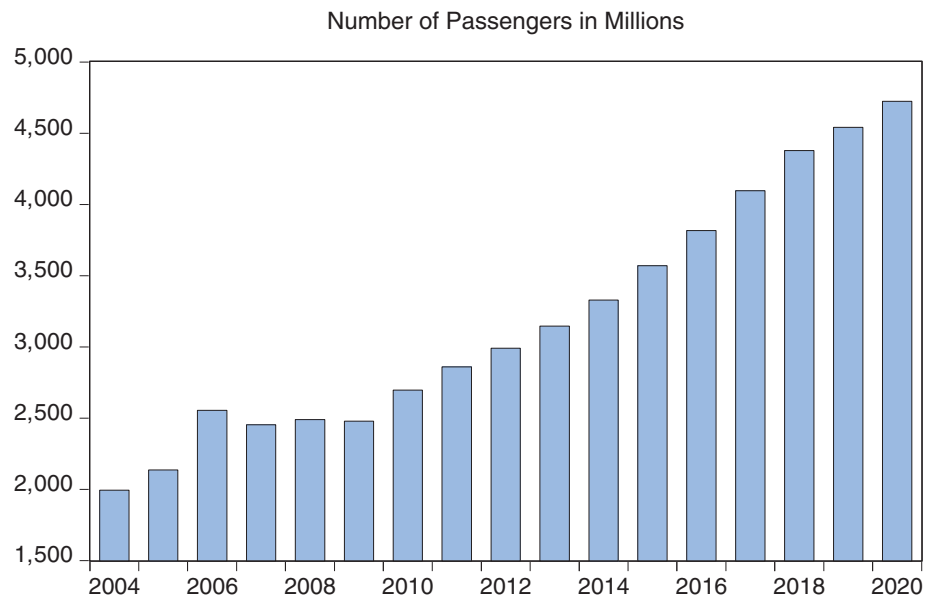
As can be inferred from the Figure 3, the number of passengers using air transport has increased tremendously over the years. The number of passengers, which was around 20 million in 2004, exceeded 45 million in 2019. More than 45 million people used air transport in only 1 year. Even this table alone shows how COVID-19 has spread all over the world so quickly. Globalization has not only shortened the distances but also prepared the conditions for the rapid spread of the virus. The people of the old world, who discovered America thousands of years later, managed to spread the virus to the entire continent in just a few months. The same 45 million passengers are today afraid to leave their homes: they are trying to cut off their communication with the world by quarantining themselves.

The number of COVID-19 cases across the world is increasing day by day and the situation is getting worse. There is insufficient health care capacity for corona patients requiring admission to hospitals; what is more, it is up to doctors to determine which patients receive treatment in intensive care and which are left to die (Mounk, 2020). Quarantine and curfews that are being implemented all over the world bring to mind science fiction novels and movies. Hakkı Yırtıcı describes this situation convincingly:

"We, the prisoners of the system, are frustrated by the desperation that there is no escape from being crushed in the cracks of the system; a brand new death policy is now in effect. When the coronavirus first began to spread, even when celebrities, rich, politicians developed this disease, we felt that we were equal with them. But this was not the case. The world was again divided into two as those who could easily access advanced diagnosis and treatment services and those who could not; once more, we realized that we are oppressed while they are powerful. Therefore, the coronavirus is as political as it is a natural disaster. We are, on the one hand, scared to death by it; on the other hand, we secretly sacralize it for its capacity to destroy the system. Is what I'm telling you imaginary? No, not at all. Take science fiction seriously. Ursula K. Le Guin says, 'Science fiction may not be talking about real events, but it tells the truth.' Yes, there is a virus spread around the world and we are all implementing self-isolation at our homes. Could there be anything more sci-fi than this?" (Yırtıcı, 2020).

The Syrian civil war mostly concerned Syrians just like the civil wars in Africa mostly concerned the people who live there. We did not care for workers, or even child workers, who are forced to work in exchange for an unbelievably small amount a day in China, Vietnam, and other Asian countries. However, as Hakkı Yırtıcı stated, COVID-19 taught us that we are equal. Because this virus does not distinguish between rich and poor. As in Keyman's (2013) "spider web" analogy, this virus threatens all humanity in the same way as a result of globalization. In his book "Risk Society," Beck (1992) perhaps wanted to warn humanity about what would happen in the future. Rousseau, when he advised humanity in his book "Emile" hundreds of

FIGURE 3 Number of scheduled passengers boarded by the global airline industry from 2004 to 2020 (Statista, 2020)



years ago, perhaps predicted these days. Humanity, which has faced all its fears until today, is left with its most basic and simple fear, that is, "fear of death." Evren Balta, referring to Beck's "Risk Society" book, notes:

"About 30 years after Beck penned 'Risk Society,' we witnessed how anxiety increased on a global scale. Moreover, welfare mechanisms that collectively distribute individual risks have also collapsed. We have evolved into a world where collective protection/distribution against risks has been decreasing (or has stopped existing), risks have become global, and the existential threat has been expanding and getting graver. The mechanisms to cope with risks are mostly individual now. This is a self-help community. Moreover, this is the first time we know so much about the threats we are facing. We are increasingly becoming the source of the risk. By transforming our planet, we carried existential threats to a completely different dimension." (Balta, 2020).

Facing the realities of the global risk society, humanity is trying to save today, rather than discussing what will happen tomorrow. States trying to intervene in this crisis caused by globalization aim to save the economy, not the planet. To date, people have lived in a world where there is no distinction between real needs and fake needs (Baudrillard, 2008). However, today people live for their most fundamental basic need, that is, to survive. Instead of discussing health or climate reforms against the crisis, many governments are discussing plans to prevent large companies from going bankrupt and looking for formulas to save the stock markets. However, the same governments are overlooking the fact that what they have to manage is "panic."

2 | CONCLUSION

As Bauman (2017) stated, global powers have lived in luxury so far and our planet and the "poor" people of the planet have paid for this luxury. As Tuvalu was sinking and as people fleeing poverty and wars were trying to cross the borders in old boats in the Aegean Sea and

the Mediterranean, the rich sipped their champagne on their plane. It seems that the pace of globalization has also struck those rich people. As in the case of COVID-19, today the rich, like the poor, are trying to escape from the worst scenario: death.

So far, globalization has been able to find solutions to many problems created by capitalist modernization. But it also triggered many wars and crises after the Cold War. "Continuous production" and "continuous consumption," as well as excessive individualization of the human being, caused the ecological order to deteriorate irreversibly. The place where this extreme individualization leads humanity to is "uncertainty." Tomorrow is uncertain for humanity; that is, it is not certain which "global terror" threat, which "global epidemic," which "economic crisis," and which "ecological crisis" will emerge tomorrow. The moral dilemma brought by globalization plays a major role in the emergence of this uncertainty: Gaining more money requires destroying forests just like achieving more wealth requires more people to become poor. At this very point, the question "Does more consumption mean progress and happiness?" which is frequently asked by Baudrillard (2008) comes to mind. Today, it seems that buying more plane tickets, having more travel packages, investing in the right stock market or buying the latest model phone has no effect on the prevention of fear that has arisen suddenly and spread rapidly.

The COVID-19 crisis has proved to be more shocking than any crisis that the globalizing world has faced in the past 30 years. Nobody has any idea when the pandemic will end; comments on long-term political and economic effects do not go beyond speculation. In an environment where fear has spread so much, the uncertainty about the solution frightens human beings as well as the system that is believed to have functioned flawlessly and have overcome every crisis that has arisen after the Cold War. Nation-states, which were claimed to have become ineffective with globalization, seem to return to the stage with this crisis. International cooperation against the crisis has not yet been developed (Limoncuoğlu, 2017, p. 500). As an indicator of this, the member states of the European Union have started to

search for a solution against the problem on their own and even closed the borders between each other. In this sense, COVID-19 has once again demonstrated the importance of internal and external sovereignty for nation-states.

Considering the reaction of financial markets to COVID-19, the Fear Index reveals the gravity of the situation. The world economy is facing a greater financial crisis than the 2008–2009 crisis. While people advocated more state intervention in the economy during the Great Depression of 1929, in the 1970s, they asked just the opposite. Although governments intervened in the financial markets with a “secret hand” in the 2008–2009 crisis, they were pushed out of the global system after the system recovered. However, the COVID-19 crisis is forcing governments to save the economy. People expect governments to take precautions so that they can be protected from both this pandemic and its economic effects. An important indicator of this is that every country, every head of state is announcing economic packages to save their dramatically shrinking economy. It seems that governments will have to choose between the economy and human health. It is also seen that there are ongoing discussions as to which is more important: human health or spinning wheels in the economy and preventing economic damage.

Another consequence of the pandemic is that people now want to listen to experts, not dream sellers. The conspiracy theories that emerged with COVID-19 have come to an end with the virus affecting the whole world. It is seen that people are giving an ear to scientists, not politicians in this process. In other words, science has prevailed politicians' discourses of “Chinese Virus,” “herd immunity,” and “warmer weather will halt the virus.” The claim that authoritarian governments can achieve better results against the pandemic of COVID-19 seems to increase the readings on Hobbes in the future. The Chinese government, in particular, is accused of being late to share information about the virus with the world. However, it is also attracting attention with its success in controlling people and reducing the impact of the pandemic (Chakraborty, 2020). Especially in Europe and the USA, calls for “stay at home” did not go beyond a request and it was too late to prevent the spread of the virus; so, the debates on democratic versus authoritarian regimes may intensify in the near future.

In conclusion, it is too early to talk about the political effects of COVID-19. However, this crisis somewhat justified the claims that globalization is leading humanity to a “global risk society.” Humanity first built the state and then the global system to escape the state of nature. Today, the same humanity has quarantined itself into caves, that is, homes, to get rid of the risks of the global system. As of now, mobility among people has significantly reduced, global stock markets have witnessed steepest falls, and human beings have started to isolate themselves from society. Similarly, the pandemic seems to weaken populist leaders. Nobody remembers the economic summits in Davos, the G-20 meetings, or the US-Russia-China polarization at the United Nations Security Council. In this respect, the COVID-19 pandemic seems to open the door to new debates for the world. That's because the difference between desires and truths has never been more evident. The gravest consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is fear. The process we are going through has proven to us how quickly fear can spread with globalization.

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