

Narratives on face mask wearing from members of Navigating Knowledge Landscapes Network - the contribution No. 8

Country: **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Lenka Lhotska

Czech Technical University in Prague

Email: lenka.lhotska@cvut.cz

Received May 13th, 2020

Part 1: At the beginning of the emergency state, the use of face masks was obligatory anywhere outside home. After several weeks, the mandatory use was specified for certain instances: shops, public transport, streets in cities, banks, and similar places.

Currently (mid May) masks are mandatory in shops, public transport and places, where there is expected closer contact (less than 2m) with more people. It is expected that people have their own masks. Mostly they use textile (cotton) washable masks, frequently sewn at home.

Part 2: I am wearing the mask according to the governmental regulation, i.e. in all public spaces (shops, transport, city streets, etc.). At my workplace I wear it only when I meet other people. In meetings with close colleagues, we agreed not to wear the masks.

I have several cotton masks, which I can wash and iron. At the place I live there are not so many people in the streets so we have the mask usually ready around the neck and if somebody is coming closer we put it on the face.

There was one strange point in the governmental regulations at the beginning. It was mandatory for a driver to wear mask in a car even if he/she was alone in the car. As this was heavily commented in the media and social networks, it was removed next days. Afterwards they made more precise specification when more people in one car have to wear the mask.

Part 3: In inner spaces (shops, public transport, etc.) people who wear the masks are in majority. There are only very few exceptions who do not. In case of larger shops, there are employees at the entrance who check whether the customers have the mask. If not they are not allowed to enter. Everybody respects the social distancing rules, no handshaking. There might be a problem with proper distance in Prague metro during rush hours. Shops placed disinfection at the

entrance – it is mandatory. And everybody is using it. In many shops at cash desk and banks, they made protective constructions from transparent plastics to enhance protection for employees. I observed that in many such exposed places the employers tried to equip the employees with more comfortable and safer masks with nanofabrics. They are also allowed to have more breaks. So in general my feeling is that people accepted the regulations and respect them in majority.

Part 4: Although during the first weeks there was lack of masks and respirators, it was great how many people proved their creativity. It concerned not only the textile reusable masks, but also design and development of respirators with higher level of protection. They were mostly printed on 3D printers. Later on some of the approved types were taken by larger producers and mass production started.