

Narratives on face mask wearing from members of Navigating Knowledge Landscapes Network - the contribution No. 18

Country: **SLOVENIA**

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Part 1: A short period before the spread of corona epidemic in the beginning of March (when Slovenia which is bordering with Italy was “bombed” with dramatic information from neighboring country) there were still a lot of unclearness around the wearing of face masks. Even the official spokesmen from National Institute for Public Health who explain the emerging pandemic crisis to the public (and who have the counselling role for politics) did not deserve a lot of attention to wearing of masks. Or they dispatched through media contradictory information (e.g. the wearing of mask is rational only for the persons who are infected with Covid, etc.). A few days after the spread of infections the official course did change very fast. The government did announce a similar measure as all neighboring countries. The government introduced the wearing of face masks and gloves mandatory in indoor public places (shops, etc.) and although these measures have been met with some opposition, these measures are still remaining in place.

Part 2: I assess, not only as a member of older generation which is more vulnerable to corona virus, that to wear of face mask in indoor public places and to keep social distance is rational. I am wearing mask in all indoor public space. Last but not least, to wear of face masks in indoor public space was becoming so and so mandatory under a governmental decree. There was not a lot of choices! For me and my family who are living in town (concerning the wearing of face masks there is big difference between those living in private house in countryside or those who are living in skyscraper flat in the center of densely populated town) the most frustrated was the lack of face masks. Nowhere was possible to come to the face masks. Typical situation: the government did announce decree, but it did not provide the means for its implementation. We as ordinary citizens need to improvise with needlework of masks at home as well. Taking in regard that immediately rapacious war profiteers did appear by selling masks the needlework of masks at home was even not the worst solution.

Part 3: Based on my observations, I would say that a great majority of people accept the rules of wearing a face mask. There are also individuals that wear a scarf or some other textile product. The individuals who do not find the wearing of masks as one rational measures to prevent the endemic of COVID-19 are more presented among young generation. They also feel themselves much more restricted because of all governmental measures. If I see people using face masks on quite ridiculous occasions (e.g. to wear a face mask while they were driving their car alone), than this phenomenon is much more frequent by representatives of older generation. Generally speaking, there exist no strong polarization between different age groups concerning the wearing of masks. During the last two months, all groups of citizens did accept quite disciplined the measures of government. They have the main merit that Covid-19 crisis is increasingly under the control.