Life in the Time of Covid-19

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**Introduction**

In the past, the world has faced many pandemics that interrupt people's social, political, and economic lives. These pandemics have had devastating effects such that they greatly threatened the survival of humanity. Black plague is one of the biggest pandemics that shook the world and humanity to its core. The Black Death originated from the steppe of central Asia, while some theory locates it in contemporary china (Sussman, 2011). Yernisa Pesti bacterium carried by fleas living on black rats caused the Black Death plague. The plague was first discovered in Crimea in 1347 (Zietz & Dunkelberg, 2004). Its most definitive time was between 1346 and 1353 when it gained its peak, killing approximately 75-200 million people (Chaikhouni, 2020). It started spreading in Eurasia, through the Mediterranean channel to the north of Africa. It was primarily spread by fleas living on rats, although the human flies may have played a great role in spreading the disease inland.

The great spread started when Kipchak Khan Janibeg was besieging Genoese in Crimea. Janibeg's army catapulted the plague-infested corpses into the town of Crimea. Crimea was a trading capital, and as a result, the plague easily spread through Genoese trader's boats (Cesana et al., 2017). It reached North Africa, inland Italy in the year 1348 though it has spread to Sicily a year earlier. It spread through Germany, Austrian, and Switzerland in 1349. In England, the disease first attacked the city of Bristol before spreading inland with devastating effects between 1349 and 1350 (Cesana et al., 2017).

**The social, political, and economic effects of the plague**

The traditional healers had no way of identifying the cause of the bubonic plague, and as a result, people thought that God sent it as a punishment. Even great poetic writers like Giovanni questioned whether the heavenly bodies could have sent the plague. Due to imitation in science, everyone believed that only God had such capacity to induce His wrath among people. As a result, the Christians developed an attitude toward Jews and accused them of poisoning wells to halt the European advancement in civilization. The close association of Jewish and the Black Death led to an uprising and Jewish towns' destruction while some were massacred (Cohn Jr, 2007). As a result, it led to the fleeing of Jews from England to Poland, where King Casimir warmly received them.

The black plague killed most of the government officials who were in charge of running the government affairs. At the same time, there was an uprising between the political and social class that became an antagonist in wages. At the same time, governments were becoming meaningless as more government seats became vacant. The government had failed massively to protect its people from the plague and the resulting consequences of famine (Benedictow, 2004). There was also a great political development where kings took the responsibility of protecting the Jews from the wrath of the angry people to the point of being referred to as the king's property. During the black plague, the governments also introduced measures for the restricted exportation of foodstuffs in fear of the mass starvation of its residents.

Economic opportunists took advantage of government measures to capitalize on the restriction of exportation of foodstuffs. Where the plague hit hard, like in England were unable to buy cereal products, England became economically unproductive with the death of peasants and laborers. Its involvement in a war with France pulled England further downward spiral as it used much of its treasury (Benedictow, 2004). With the death of many peasants, the land was left unattended, and the value fell drastically. On the other hand, due to the shortage of labor, the value of labor increased three folds.

**Covid 19 causes an outbreak.**

Unlike the Black Death, which was a bacterium infection, Covid 19 is a virus disease. The current strain of Covid 19 is believed to have originated in China, in the state of Wuhan, where the first case was recorded in December 2019 in a seafood market (Tu et al., 2020). Many scientists believe it originated from the bats, although one study suggests it originated from the pangolins. It is a common viral disease between people and animals but with devastating health effects on people. It causes severe acute respiratory syndrome among people (SARS), which sometimes could be fatal. There is a new strain of caused SARS-Cov-2, which causes coronavirus disease. Covid 19 was declared a pandemic on March 2020 by the Wood Heat Organization (WHO). Approximately 80% of the infected people recover without specialist treatment, as 1 out of 6 people experiences the severity of it by having trouble breathing. As of May 7, 2021, over 3.2 million people have succumbed to Covid 19 virus worldwide (Best, 2021).

As the Black Death plague, Covid 19 has exposed people to social, economic, and political crises. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on how the covid 19 pandemic has impacted social, economic, and political

status in a global arena.

**Social crisis**

Covid 19 has impacted our lives greatly on the war we socially interact with each other, especially while applying the prevention measures such as social distancing across all social segments. Older people are being isolated to enhance social distancing measures despite needing routine care (United Nations, 2020). People with disabilities have been put in difficult situations, especially while accessing the essential services independently due to isolation from the rest of the world. Youths have been affected because of the disruption of the normal school calendar. This disruption greatly affects the quality of education of more than 1 billion youths which may have long-term effects (United Nations, 2020). The pandemic has spread panic across the world. It has also created a family crisis as some family members have been trapped across international borders without the means to sustain themselves.

Probably the major effect on me regarding my social crisis was halting and rescheduling the school calendar. I also find the current school atmosphere less effective due to overdependence on technology. Sometimes you need a teacher in a classroom, and fellow students since studies are a group thing but not individual as it currently is. In terms of relationships with friends and relatives, I found it stressful. I could not visit my grandparents and spend weekends and have a glass of wisdom, as we call it. Furthermore, my Sundays turned into indoor routines as I could not interact with my childhood friends after the Sunday service. In short social crisis undermined my humanity aspect where I am a social being.

**Economic crisis**

Covid 19 has caused recession and depression in many countries caused by lockdowns and cessation of movements, among other measures introduced by the governments to combat the pandemic. Although studies suggest that government restrictions caused 7% of the economic decline, the bigger percentage has been caused by people voluntarily disengaging from commerce. Consequently, this has led to the crash of the stock market. According to the International Monetary Fund, some emerging economies will not recover fully until 2025 (Schulze, 2020). Data shows that the pandemic has reduced the annual economic growth to -6%, although in 2021, there is a likelihood for economic recoveries. Global trade fell by approximately 5%, but the current projection shows that it will bounce back with 8% growth. There has been a massive loss of jobs, especially in the service sector, where workers cannot work from home. The unemployment rate resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic is only comparable with the Great Recession in the 1930s unemployment effects. Estimates suggest that about 124 million people worldwide have extreme poverty, while around 39 million more are at risk of experiencing extreme poverty if the pandemic prolongs (Lakner et al., 2021). On a personal eve, the Covid 19 has exposed me to economic difficulties.

 I lost my part-time job in supply chain management as the company I worked for reduced workers as part of their cost-effective strategy to keep the business afloat. I had to search for a new job, which by the way, was hard to come by when the government opened up the restaurants. Little did I know what was soon to follow was the restaurant's closure as the government imposed a new lockdown and strict measures. Therefore, the whole pandemic has been and is being a hibernation moment for me and probably a few others, but I hope to bounce back when the pandemic falls under control.

 **Political crisis**

The wave of the pandemic has not left behind the political sector. Some countries imposed strict measures to prevent further spreading Covid 19, such as Australia and Argentina, regardless of the economic consequences (Herrera et al., 2020). Other countries were reluctant to impose strict measures, such as the United States and Brazil, to prevent total economic collapse. As a result of strict measures, countries such as Australia remain iconic for effectively dealing with the pandemic, and their approval rates rose gradually. The US and Brazil, which opted to consider the economy while imposing measures, faced the full wrath of the pandemic and their approval rates declined by 17% (Herrera et al., 2020). Pandemic negatively influences democracies where elections are subject to cancelation and postponement to prevent creating super spreaders events (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2021). At least 34 countries have restricted press freedom, whereby some governments are prosecuting reporters and causing media stations to criticize them (International Press Institute, 2020). The pandemic created a calm environment that magnified racial injustices leading to a mass demonstration against racial discrimination spread across the United States and Europe.

For me, the pandemic has been a blessing in disguise because more and more underlying political problems continue to emerge. In the US, racial discrimination that appeared institutionalized may end with the introduction of various reforms. Under normal circumstances, I don't think racial discrimination would have gathered much attention as it did. I also found the measures introduced by the government redundant, especially with curfews. Based on how Covid spreads through human contact, there was no logic with curfews as long as people come together.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, global pandemics have existed throughout human existence with devastating effects on the way people interact socially, economically, and politically. Unlike in the 14th century where people thought God sent the plague, we are now scientifically advanced to know that a virus caused Covid 19. It's important to note that the origin of these pandemics originated from china, and there is a need to investigate further why and how the diseases jump from animals to humans. Although rats spread the black plague, humans were solely responsible for enhancing its spread through their boats. The similarity with Covid is that transport by airplane enhanced its propagation. Just like in the 14th century where the government failed to protect is people, it's no different from now as some government has failed to impose measures to protect its people. The economic strain faced by England during the black plague, it's the same with the developing economies. We can learn from both the Black Death and Covid 19 that the only effective means of stopping global pandemics from reoccurring is by restricting the movement of people after identifying the threat. The economic consequences may be dire, but we can prevent mass loss of human lives and effectively overcome global pandemics.

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