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HIST 129A

18 May 2020

Reflection: COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the defining global pandemics of the twenty-first century. Since the emergence of the virus that causes COVID-19, the disease has continued to infect more people. It is uncertain when the spread will stop, or when a cure for the disease will be available. While the impacts of this pandemic have often been viewed from national and international perspectives, it has also massively impacted individuals and families. There have been different impacts that the pandemic has had on different individuals and their families. As a result of this pandemic, there have been substantial changes in the lives of people, especially with respect to movements and relationships between individuals. As a student, I have been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. I have also seen this pandemic impact my family and the community within which I live.

As an international student in the United States, COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected my education. As a result of the pandemic, I have had to cut short my studies and travel back to my country, South Korea, to monitor the situation. This has ensured that I miss the opportunity of sitting in class with my peers and sharing our experiences. I have always been a more effective learner in an environment where I can have discussions with my peers, as well as

my teachers. However, this has become impossible as a result of the closure of schools occasioned by the pandemic. The pandemic has resulted in the program shifting to an online platform where there is no physical interaction. It has, therefore, become significantly challenging to learn effectively. Adapting to learning on an online platform when I did not have adequate time has ensured that I spend more time trying to understand the workings of online classes, as opposed to interacting with the course content.

Additionally, my social life has greatly been impacted by the pandemic. As a student, most of my time was spent in school, and this means that most of the friends I have are in school. However, I had to move back to South Korea as a result of the pandemic. This means that I have lost contact with most of my friends. It means that I have lost a significant amount of social support, especially as it relates to my education. My friends in school have been a great support in my education, as well as in my ability to adapt to the culture of the United States. This pandemic is breaking that cycle and this means I may have to start over again once the pandemic is over and I travel back to the United States.

Back in my home country, South Korea, I have seen a significant impact the pandemic has had on the family. With regard to my family, there have been positive and negative impacts of the pandemic. The most important positive impact of this pandemic is that it has ensured that we stay together for longer as a family. When the pandemic broke out, most of the members of my nuclear family, from different parts of the country and the world, had to come back home. In my growing up, there has not been a time where all the living members of the family spend so much time together. However, the pandemic has made this possible and I have had an opportunity to spend time with the people I love most. We have got to relive our past, especially

when we were young, and this has helped to relieve us of the pressures and stresses of the movement restrictions that have come as a result of this pandemic. As such, the pandemic has had its positives, despite the fact that its negative impacts are the ones that are highlighted by the media and individuals.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also had negative impacts on families, especially in South Korea. One of the most significant negative impacts it has had is that it has significantly disrupted the family culture. Historically, the Korean culture is founded on the family. In my culture, the extended family is as important as the nuclear family. While the pandemic has brought the nuclear family together, it has pushed the extended family even further. It is essential to understand that there have been restrictions of movement for individuals as a way of minimizing the spread of the virus. As such, the interactions between us and the members of the extended family have substantially reduced. This has ensured that our relationship with the members of the extended family becomes virtual, as opposed to the physical interactions we have always had. As a result, there has been a disruption in the family culture.

I believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will greatly change the future of the globe, especially with respect to how we live and respond to pandemics. As the pandemic continues to impact different parts of the world, it is continuing to force humankind into innovating and changing the ways they work and live. One of the most probable future changes is that the world is going to be more contactless, and physical interactions are going to reduce significantly. The past pandemics have always resulted in substantial cultural changes in both social and economic spheres. The case will not be different from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has ensured that people are hyper-aware of the different touchable surfaces in our environments. As such,

people are increasingly avoiding coming into contact with these surfaces as a way of reducing their risk of contracting the diseases. I believe that this is a culture that is going to remain even after the pandemic is controlled. This will be the same case with physical contact between individuals. The increasing levels of consciousness about the disease are likely to remain with us for a long time.

In addition to that, I believe that this pandemic is likely to lead to developments in the field of healthcare. In the future, one of the most important components of the healthcare systems around the world will be big data. I believe that the lessons we are getting from this pandemic today will greatly influence how the world monitors pandemics. This pandemic will remain in global history as the pandemic that changed disease monitoring approaches. The stakeholders in the technology industry are likely to work with the experts in the field of epidemiology to come up with data monitoring approaches that provide early warnings of new infectious diseases. The globe is likely to adopt the use of GPS data in tracking where individuals who have been exposed to the disease are, and the people they have interacted with. This will ensure that the disease contacts are traced to the last individual. Currently, it is not possible to track contacts that are unknown to an individual who has the disease. However, with the GPS data, it will be possible to identify all the persons within the vicinity of an infected person. I believe the future will see a better response to pandemics.

Further, the structure of the economy is likely to change drastically, especially with respect to the labor force. Currently, most organizations are having their employees work from their homes. The organizations are just realizing that most of the work performed by their employees does not require them to be physically present in the office. This means that the labor

force is likely to shift its base to homes, as opposed to offices. What I predict is that commercial buildings are likely to reduce. Consequently, the cost of doing business may slightly reduce because of the fact that the rent may be unnecessary for some businesses. In addition to that, e-commerce is likely to grow more rapidly than it has been growing. This will be occasioned by the need for people to stay away from physical contact.

Politically, the pandemic is likely to change the political agenda for most of the countries. In the near future, healthcare will be one of the most important political discussions in different parts of the globe. The need for universal healthcare coverage has been seen by the way the pandemic has impacted the poor. It is not a secret that the impacts of the pandemic on the poor have been more severe. As such, the politics of the world will majorly be guided by the need to eliminate health inequalities. Health inequality has been one of the greatest concerns for governments across the globe. However, there has been little effort to address the issue. This is likely to change with the emergence of this pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is significantly connected to the things that we have learned in this class. This is especially with respect to how pandemics have impacted populations in the past. In one of the readings, we learn how a plague impacted the Aztecs, the indigenous people of Mexico. By the time this plague was being recognized, it had established itself within the indigenous people of Mexico, killing people and leaving others with permanent disabilities such as blindness (Portilla et al. 93). As such, the current pandemic relates to these historical plagues in the way it is impacting people around the globe. In addition to that, this pandemic also relates to the things learned in this course in the sense that it provides insights into how pandemics can change cultures. Just like in the past plagues such as smallpox in the Americas, this pandemic is

also changing the way people relate. Smallpox in the Americas resulted in people minimizing their interactions as a way of reducing the spread. That has been the same, with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is, therefore, likely to change how people relate with each other, just like it happened with smallpox. As such, there is a great link between the COVID-19 pandemic and the things learned in this course. It enhances our understanding of how pandemics impact societies as we have been learning in this history class.

Works Cited

Portilla Miguel León, et al. *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Beacon Press, 2006.