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Reflections of the Pandemic on Global Security: Problems and Solutions

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REFLECTIONS OF THE PANDEMIC ON GLOBAL SECURITY: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken its place among the most important developments of the 21st century and has an impact on a global scale, affects our lives in many different ways. New practices in the fields of individual and national security are among the issues affected by the pandemic. With this post-modern update, the pandemic has added a new link to the conceptualization chain, which is expressed as a new security understanding in the International Relations literature. The pandemic has deeply affected some institutions of the digitalized world. Societies, including the education sector, had to change their shell. Education and training institutions have operated remotely using various software during the hard period. Heads of state began to hold their meetings, which are called 'summits', without coming together. In the military, some combat elements were out of duty for certain periods, which negatively affected their combat capabilities. Many of the actors in the economic sector have suffered losses due to the pandemic. As a result of all these, the mental health of the societies that have difficulty in adapting to the new normal has been deeply affected. However, as an environmental impact, the pandemic allowed nature and the atmosphere to breathe a little, but this time it caused environmental pollution due to the increase in medical waste. The study presented here tries to deal with the reflections of the pandemic on security on a global scale with a holistic approach and to present a comprehensive analysis.

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Introduction[1]

The COVID-19 crisis has emerged as a phenomenon that has had the most widespread impact since the Second World War on a global scale and has created long-term consequences by affecting countries, international structures, companies, and even processes, as well as directly affecting individuals. The pandemic has forced people, companies, and states to shut down, by prioritizing the safety of individuals as well as the security of states and international organizations. The effects of the shutdown have caused a multidimensional process and the emergence of security-related problems in many areas. It has even led to skepticism toward some institutional and supranational structures. The most obvious example of this situation was the failure of other member states to respond positively to the calls for help made by the European Union (EU) member states Italy and Spain for logistical support. Therefore, the basic norms in the emergence of the EU (This is unclear. The emergence of the EU? Where from exactly? Editor) were damaged and the rigidity of the concept of "interest" in the nation-state structure caused the Union to receive serious criticism from within the two countries in question. Another issue that has gained importance during the pandemic has been that of "cyberspace" and this has led to a significant increase in digitalization and remote working practices in every field. In this context, the global security problems brought about by the pandemic are discussed from different perspectives and dimensions in this study.

With the end of the Cold War period, the classical understanding of the word "security" has been replaced by a new understanding of what security means. Since then, the state-centered approach, which was at the core of the security phenomenon, has undergone a significant transformation and has begun to be addressed in different dimensions. The concept of security needed diversification to keep up with the demands and challenges in the rapidly changing and developing world of the post-Cold War era. The conceptualization of security in the book titled "Security: A New Framework for Analysis" published by Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde in 1998, has an important place in security studies; it dealt with it by dividing it into five basic sectors: *military, economic, social, political and environmental*[2] . This approach, which was widely accepted in the academic community, has subsequently experienced more diversification. Many new security approaches have emerged, such as the concept of "cyber security", due to the vacancy in the cyber field with the acceleration of technological developments, and the concept of "food security" after new sensitivities in the realm of agriculture. Likewise, another important development that affected the world as of the end of 2019 was security concerns stemming from the COVID-19

[1] This policy note was written within the scope of the project titled "Sustainable International Cooperation in Post-COVID-19 World (SICOP-World)" initiated by the International Relations Council (IRCT) with the support and cooperation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association. Contributing as a speaker to the panel titled "The Reflections of the Pandemic on Global Security: Problems and Solutions" in the preparation of the policy note, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Alpaslan Özerdem, Prof. Dr. Rabia Karakaya Polat and Cenk Şen. To view the entire panel in question, see https://youtu.be/m_Nbf0_5ZIA.

[2] Buzan, Barry, Wæver, Ole and Wilde, Jaap de. *Security: A Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder CO:1998.

pandemic. Although it is known that the pandemic has impacted directly and indirectly on many areas, it is not yet clear how it will cause security problems in the future. In this context, the coronavirus phenomenon, which threatens the security of the individual first and foremost, has led to the emergence of different security problems in the cyber field. In this study, the COVID-19 pandemic has been examined in terms of security conceptualization and examined under six categorical approaches, including its effects on the digital environment, in addition to the above-mentioned *military, economic, social, political, and environmental* sectors, in order to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the subject.

Reflections of the Pandemic on Military Security

The most striking example showing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the military field was the case of Colonel Brett Crozier, the captain of the US Navy aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt. Due to the COVID-19 cases that emerged in early March 2020 on the USS Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most important elements of US naval power, the precautions the ship's commander intended to take were rejected by the higher authorities. In the crisis that emerged as a result of the leak of said correspondence to the press, an important element of the US navy was left out of commission for three months. In the process, Colonel Brett Crozier requested permission from the higher authorities to suspend the ship from duty and to disembark the infected personnel, in order to prevent further COVID-19 cases on the carrier, which has around 4,500 service members. However, this request was not deemed appropriate, and the necessary quarantine measures were ordered to be taken while the ship was at sea, and the ship was instructed to carry on with its mission. Following these orders, the colonel wanted to explain the seriousness of the situation further up the chain of command, and finally, a management crisis emerged in the US security bureaucracy, as a result of the said correspondence leaking to the press. Upon these developments, the ship's commander, Colonel Crozier, was dismissed from the ship's command and this situation received wide coverage in the US press. Moreover, when Colonel Crozier who had been dismissed from his duty was leaving the ship, all the ship's personnel cheered in his support. Video footage captured during this time being shared on social media made the situation even more delicate. The most important aspect of this event was the concern that it could create a chain of command crisis in the US Navy in general and the US Asia-Pacific Command in particular. The number of positive cases which initially had started with three people on the carrier reached 1,156 in about two months, and the ship was no longer combat-capable. About four-fifths of the ship's personnel were disembarked and quarantined. The ship was kept away from the island of Guam within that period.[3]

[3] Elizabeth Ireland, *Times of San Diego*, Report: Leadership Failures Led to USS Theodore Roosevelt's COVID-19 Outbreak, https://timesofsandiego.com/military/2021/02/08/report-leadership-failures-led-to-uss-theodore-roosevelt-COVID-19-outbreak/ (Accessed 8 September 2021).

Caitlin Doornbos, *Stars and Stripes*, USS Theodore Roosevelt Skipper Says Carrier Won't Wait for All Sailors to Clear Quarantine Before Going Back to Sea, https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/uss-theodore-roosevelt-skipper-says-carrier-won-t-wait-for-all-sailors-to-clear-quarantine-before-going-back-to-sea-1.628458 (Accessed 8 September 2021).

NBC News, Sailors on Sidelined USS Theodore Roosevelt Get Virus for Second Time,

As seen in the example given above, the activities of warships with spatial restrictions are interrupted in cases of pandemics caused by infectious diseases, especially when quarantine measures are required. Apart from the navy, land and air forces are other combat elements that have been affected by the pandemic. In the aforementioned period, many military exercises were canceled, personnel assignments and task changes were postponed, and military training exercises were suspended.

During the pandemic, many restrictive measures have been put forward in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). Within the scope of these measures, military schools had to suspend education for a certain period of time, entry to military units and barracks including from visitors were prohibited, and activities such as ceremonies, conferences, short-term meetings, seminars, and courses were canceled. In addition to this, weekend leave of non-commissioned officers and privates in the TAF was suspended, and their annual leave was postponed to future dates. In addition, national and international exercises were canceled, personnel assignments to temporary missions abroad were stopped, and military personnel coming from abroad were placed under quarantine for a certain period of time. [4] However, although the military movements and activities in the country were slowed down/stopped, the military units abroad continued to fulfill their duties. This is due to the fact that security takes priority in the dilemma between disease and security. Following Italy and Spain, which faced shortages of medicine and supplies during the early phases of the pandemic, various aid materials were also sent to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Kosovo by cargo aircraft (Primarily A-400M's) from TAF inventory.[5]

It was observed that the criticality of the security situation and the impossibility of military personnel working remotely, as they both live and perform their duties in communal spaces, led countries to vaccinate military personnel first. Thus, in many countries, especially in Turkey, priority was given to the army second only after healthcare personnel in the vaccination efforts, and all security forces, especially operational personnel were vaccinated.

Security forces also have different missions to ensure the safety of the public in the form of reinforcements in pandemics such as COVID-19, because regular military units, which are available as a ready force to be deployed at short notice by states, undertake important tasks during these periods. For example, in the UK, the British army has carried out many activities, from delivering vaccines to the relevant regions, carrying out vaccination of its citizens, as well as arranging vaccination zones and conducting COVID-19 tests. [6] Likewise, the Canadian Armed Forces stated that it was at the service of the

https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/sailors-sidelined-uss-theodore-roosevelt-get-virus-second-time-n1208076 (Accessed 8 September 2021).

[4] Arif Akdoğan, *Anadolu Agency,* New Measures within the Scope of Combating Coronavirus in Turkish Armed Forces were Discussed. (Accessed 12 September 2021).

[5] EUROMIL, Armed Forces and COVID-19 Country Profiles; Turkey, http://euromil.org/armed-forces-and-COVID-19/ (Accessed 15 September 2021).

[6] *Forces Net*, COVID: How The Military's Been Involved In Fighting Coronavirus, https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-how-military-helping https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/campaigns/COVID-19-military-response.html (Accessed 15 September 2021).

civilian authority during the pandemic, and stated that it tried to meet all requests for this purpose.[7]

Reflections of the Pandemic on Economic Security

Perhaps the most important strategic effect of the pandemic has been on the economies of countries. Pandemic restrictions have driven people to work remotely. Limitations on social life with the effect of curfews caused the closure of workplaces and many companies had to put their personnel on paid/unpaid leave. States have tried to prevent dismissals with various legal regulations they have enacted to prevent grievance, but this has been effective only to some extent. Some countries have provided financial support to their citizens by issuing additional allowances under the guise of pandemic aid, while others have tried to provide financial support to companies and small businesses such as SMEs. Many countries, especially European ones have closed their borders and controlled entrance to the country. Additionally, some have imposed restrictions on movement and travel within their borders as well, and as a result, many airlines, railways, and road transportation companies have suffered financial losses. Table 1 below shows the number of commercial flights worldwide for the years 2019, 2020, and the first nine months of 2021. The statistics shown in the red color code represent the flights for 2019, the blue color code for 2020, and the black color code for 2021. Here we can affirm as an important finding that in 2019 and the first three months of 2020, the number of daily flights was above 100,000, but as of March 2020, with the increasing travel restrictions, there was a marked decrease to 25,000. At the end of the same year and at the beginning of 2021, the number of flights continued to be around 75,000 and approached 100,000 in October 2021. This is because people started to travel again with the increase in vaccination rates around the world, the opening of borders, and the signs of a return to normalization. The economic value expressed in the table is that millions of US dollars were incurred as losses, including by the airline companies and in addition in accommodation, transportation, food, etc. related to those companies. They have been written off as losses in the accounts of all institutions and organizations in those sectors.

According to the data of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the COVID-19 pandemic has caused many countries' economies to enter recession and has led to a global economic crisis. In the reports prepared by the IMF, it is stated that the effect of the stagnation that emerged during this historical economic crisis will be long-term and deep, especially in the manufacturing sector.[8] From this point of view, it is expected that the effects of the pandemic will cause longer-term and permanent damage to the global economic system. As an example, the slowdown in the production of chips used in

[7] Government of Canada, Military response to COVID-19, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/campaigns/COVID-19-military-response.html (Accessed 15 September 2021).

[8] Barrett, Philip, et.al. After-Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Prospects for Medium-Term Economic Damage, *IMF Working Paper*: WP/21/203, s. 2. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/07/30/After-Effects-of-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Prospects-for-Medium-Term-Economic-Damage-462898 (Accessed 19 September 2021).

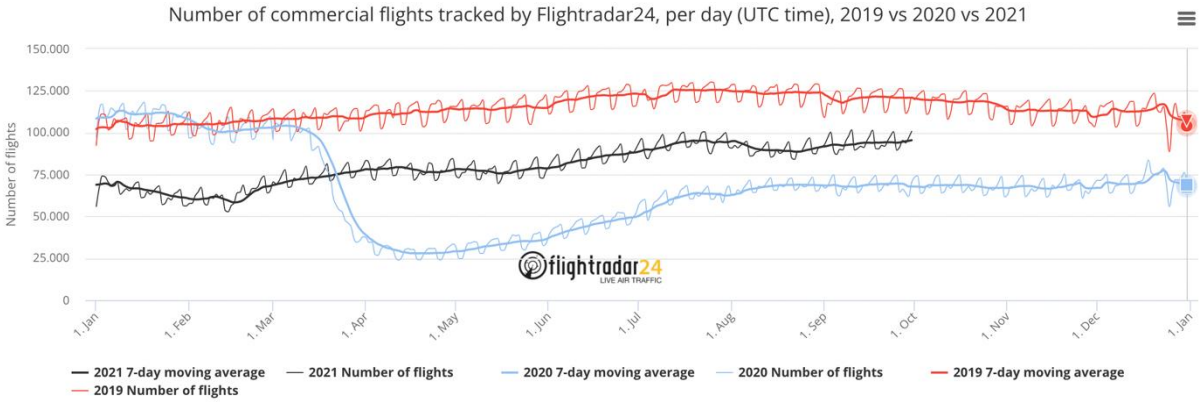

Table 1: Average daily number of commercial flights in 2019, 2020, and the first nine months of 2021.[9]

vehicles and produced by only a few countries in the world, especially Taiwan and the USA, has had an impact on the entire automotive industry. A bottleneck occurred in automotive production in 2020-2021.[10] Due to the slowdown in chip production using semiconductor technology, many global companies sent their employees on unpaid leave and even had to pause vehicle production. [11] It does not seem possible that the chip crisis will be concluded in the short term.

Based on this example, the increase in comparative unemployment rates between 2019-2020 in countries such as the USA, the UK, France, Italy, Canada, Germany, Japan, and Brazil included in Table 2 is striking. In fact, the increase in the unemployment rate in the USA was twice as high in 2020 compared to the previous year. It is useful to remember that many states have made legal regulations prohibiting the dismissal of workers during the pandemic. This situation should be taken into account in countries where the difference between unemployment rates in Table 2 is comparatively small.

Apart from the issues mentioned above, the COVID-19 pandemic has also dealt a serious blow to the tourism sector. Domestic and international travel restrictions, which have been put into practice by the states periodically for more than two years, have caused people in the tourism sector to face economic difficulties. Some hotels were sold, and some stayed closed throughout this period. According to the data of the World Trade Organization, the sub-organ of the United Nations, it is expected that the possible trade loss to be encountered worldwide due to the pandemic will be between 910 billion and 1.2 trillion US dollars. This means that gross national product will decrease between 1.5% and 2.8% worldwide. In addition, it is stated that 100 million businesses directly related to tourism in the world are at risk.[12] Since the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet ended

[9] Flightradar24, Flight Tracking Statistics, https://www.flightradar24.com/data/statistics (Accessed 01 October 2021).

[10] Kathrin Hille, *Financial Times*, Taiwan's COVID-19 Outbreak Spreads to Chip Companies, https://www.ft.com/content/ce18b201-551c-4fb6-bd82-766e4d453dbc (Accessed 21 September 2021).

[11] Daniel Yergin and Matteo Fini, *Wall Street Journal*, For Auto Makers, the Chip Famine Will Persist, https://www.wsj.com/articles/auto-car-makers-industry-semiconductor-chip-shortage-COVID-19-taiwan-vietnam-11632329226, (Accessed 21 September 2021).

[12] World Trade Organization, Secretary-General's Policy Brief on Tourism and COVID-19, https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-

at the time of writing, it is difficult to make a global damage assessment. For this reason, it is considered that a comprehensive recovery in the tourism sector, as in other sectors, will be difficult before 2023-2024.

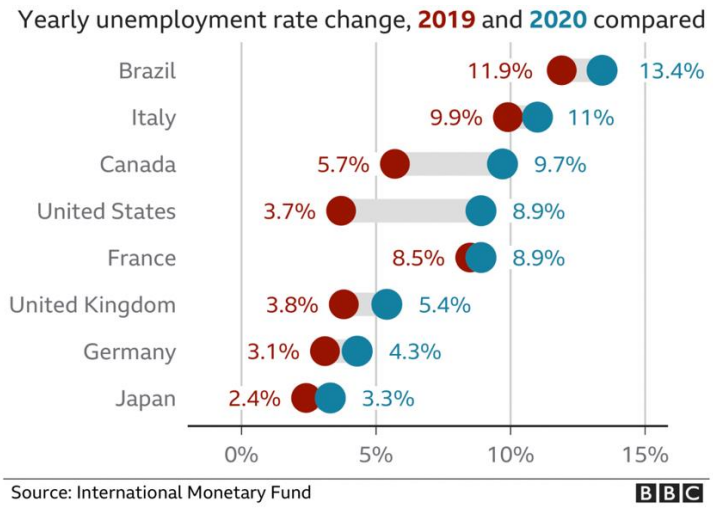

Table 2: Comparative unemployment rates table for the years 2019-2020.[13]

Reflections of the Pandemic on Social Security

Among the issues added by the pandemic to the social dimension of security, the best-known and most commonly heard concept has been "social distancing". This concept, which mandates a certain distance to be kept during social interactions, has been one of the most difficult measures to implement. This difficulty arises from the fact that humans are social beings and the problems caused by losing the sense of touch, which is one of the most basic sense organs, during socialization. These difficulties have led to the frequent repetition of the concept of social distance, which has broadly entered our lives. Social distancing plays an important role in the transformation of social life. The family structure, which constitutes the core social unit, has also had its share of changes from the COVID-19 pandemic. Even if mother, father, and children shared the same environment in the family, they had to be separated from each other for certain periods. More especially, contact with the elders of the family had to be cut off and they could not come together even on religious holidays, which take an important place in socialization. In addition, the children who could not go to school stayed at home because education was interrupted in schools, and in addition, the fact of not being able to socialize due to the closure of pre-school education institutions where working parents have usually left their children has affected every part of the society.

In cities, public transport vehicles have started to operate at a reduced capacity, shopping malls, cafes, and restaurants remained closed for extended periods, activities such as meetings, weddings, sports competitions, concerts, cinemas, and theaters have been suspended, and the social life that society is accustomed to has been put on hold. Due to the COVID-19 services that were opened in hospitals and the number of healthcare personnel that have been assigned in those services, most medical interventions except for emergency surgeries have been postponed to future

COVID-19-unprecedented-economic-impacts (Accessed 20 September 2021).

[13] Lora Jones, Daniele Palumbo & David Brown, *BBC News*, Coronavirus: How the pandemic has changed the world economy, https://www.bbc.com/news/business-51706225 (Accessed 20 September 2021).

dates. Even funeral ceremonies were canceled and people were not allowed to participate in the burial, except for a few relatives of the deceased. In practice, curfews ranging from two weeks to a few weeks in countries where the pandemic has peaked have turned into full lockdowns and people have been stuck in their homes for a long time. Within the same period, schools and universities transitioning to remote education have been an important factor in preventing the socialization of the young population. Moreover, it has been observed that mental health problems have increased among young people. A study questioning 1,143 parents of children aged 3-18 in Italy and Spain, where the effects of the pandemic were intense for a period, highlights the issue in question. According to the results of the research, it was observed that the children exhibited emotional and behavioral changes during the quarantine period. A total of 76.6% of the children had difficulty concentrating, 39% had sudden anger problems, 38.8% had sleep disorders, 38% had irritability, 30.4% had restlessness and anxiety disorders and 30.1% of them suffered from anxiety.[14] This research reveals the difficulty children and young people face in coping with the pandemic, which even adults have difficulty coping with.

In addition to the health-related anxiety experienced by people working in the private sector during the pandemic, it also caused the employees of many small businesses, which had to terminate their activities due to the economic difficulties they experienced as a result of the closures, to encounter psychological problems. In addition, the inability of artists to perform due to the prohibition of public events, and the long interruption of their work for those in TV series and the film industry, deeply affected the majority of the employees in the entertainment sector and caused these artists to experience various difficulties due to their struggle to make a living.[15]

According to Steven Taylor, author of the book The Psychology of Pandemics, one of the most important problems encountered during the pandemic is conspiracy theories. The psycho-social environment caused by fear and stress, which dominates in these periods, determines what people want to believe and causes logic and reasoning to fail.[16] For example, on the one hand, the claim that the pandemic originated in China or the USA for the purpose of population control was circulating. Moreover, many social media posts have been circulating, claiming that the vaccines produced by various companies ostensibly as a solution to the pandemic were in fact produced by the global rich to control humanity. As a result, the anti-vaccination movement has gained traction and many people around the world have organized various protests and demonstrations, thinking that they would be protected from the perceived ill effects of vaccines by not being vaccinated. Conversely, it has been demonstrated in many scientific studies that proportionally more

[14] Valeria Saladino, Davide Algeri and Vincenzo Auriemma, The Psychological and Social Impact of COVID-19: *New Perspectives of Well-Being, Frontiers in Sociology*, (2020:11), s. 2. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.577684.

[15] Burak Abatay, Don't Turn A Blind Eye Campaign by Artists After Gradual Normalization: 'We are ignored, no one sees us', *BBC Turkish* https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-57314578 (Accessed: 21 September 2021).

[16] Steven Taylor, *The Psychology of Pandemics*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, ss. 67-68.

intensive care unit admissions and deaths occurred among those who were hospitalized due to the virus compared to those who were not vaccinated.[17] In this context, anti-vaccine campaigns caused by conspiracy theories are a factor that has a significant impact on the safety of individuals.

Reflections of the Pandemic on Political Security

Pandemics that have occurred in the world since the 20th century has had significant effects on individuals, as well as states and their political powers. Therefore, the reactions of the states against the pandemic have started to become important in the current international competition in the world, even in the struggle for prestige, as Morgenthau puts it. Among the various parameters of the political powers in question, providing gratuitous aid to their citizens, contributing long-term loans to small and medium-sized enterprises, developing accurate and fast methods in combating the pandemic with the Hayat Eve Sığar (HES) code and e-pulse applications that are in practice in Turkey, and reorganizing the health system to combat the pandemic, are among these measures. Again, like a different dimension of the health practices of the states, supplying vaccines and especially providing these vaccines for all citizens has been one of the major steps both in the domestic and international arena. Since the rapid access to data provided by the Internet allows people living in different countries to compare themselves with each other, it is inevitable to make comparisons between countries, especially during global disasters. In this respect, states that cannot supply enough vaccines during the current pandemic are criticized by both domestic and foreign public opinion and are put in a tight spot. In fact, in the aforementioned process, there were states that supplied vaccines not only from a single source but also from many sources. Additionally, some states have made an effort to produce their own vaccines by investing in vaccine technologies. In order to enter the vaccine market, vaccine companies based in China, as well as Europe and the USA, have taken part in serious competition. For this purpose, vaccine development activities continue with the support of the state and private sector due to the quest for the prestige of the countries and the potential for significant economic returns. After the World Health Organization declared a pandemic, Italy and Spain, the countries with the highest number of daily cases in Europe, called for help from abroad. At the top of the list of materials requested by the two countries in question, where the number of daily cases was very high for a period, were the respirators needed especially by the health personnel in the intensive care units and the masks to be used by their citizens. For this purpose, the two countries in question also applied to the EU and NATO and requested support from both organizations. However, with the thought that the pandemic would spread to their own lands, many states have turned a deaf ear to their calls for help, even though they were EU members. This situation led to a negative attitude toward the EU, especially in Italy, and even membership of the Union began to be questioned in

[17] Carla K..Johnson and Mike Stobbe, Nearly All COVID Deaths in US Are Now Among Unvaccinated, *AP News*, https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-941fcf43d9731c76c16e7354f5d5e187 (Accessed 24 September 2021); "COVID Deaths Rare Among Fully Vaccinated", *BBC News*, https://www.bbc.com/news/health-58545548 (Accessed 24 September 2021).

Italian public opinion.[18] As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken even established political structures such as the EU and caused a conflict between national interests and Union interests.

The pandemic has also caused important developments in international politics in terms of its origin and spread. For example, the People's Republic of China has been declared guilty in the international arena of public opinion due to the emergence of the virus in the city of Wuhan. Global public opinion generally responded with acceptance of this, and even US President Donald Trump referred to the COVID-19 virus as the "Chinese virus". This situation was one of the most important developments that pinpointed China as the source of the virus. In fact, Trump has been the target of criticism on the grounds that this expression he used is racist rhetoric.[19] However, the attitude of China which leaves room for doubts, shows that the accusations are not unjustified. It is among the main arguments that support this opinion that China initially did not allow for the research that the World Health Organization wanted to carry out in the city of Wuhan, and subsequently did not show any more resistance to the critical attitude of the international public and gave permission to the relevant committee to conduct that research. However, the authorities of the WHO were not given permission for the research on the same subject requested at later dates.[20] Another issue that supports this thesis is that the data on COVID-19 requested from China by the World Health Organization were classified and the authorities of the organization were not given permission to access this data.[21]

Reflections of the Pandemic on Environmental Security

In addition to many negative situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has also been observed that there are some positive effects. Some of these were the disappearance of various factors that harm the environment during certain periods of the pandemic and having a beneficial effect on the ecological system in this regard. Due to the curfews imposed in many nations, there has been a significant reduction in emissions of carbon monoxide and other harmful pollutants, as a result of reduced vehicular traffic and factories operating at a limited capacity. According to a study, the rate of carbon monoxide in the world decreased by 17% in the first three months of the pandemic.[22] In addition, the interruption of the activities of the factories prevented the discharge of harmful wastes into rivers

[18] Stefano Vergine, *BBC News*, Coronovirus: Are Italians Losing Faith in the EU?, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52666870 , (Accessed 24 September 2021).

[19] Mishal Reja, Trump's 'Chinese Virus' Tweet Helped Lead to Rise in Racist Anti-Asian Twitter Content, ABC News, https://abcnews.go.com/Health/trumps-chinese-virus-tweet-helped-lead-rise-racist/story?id=76530148 (Accessed 26 September 2021).

[20] Sarah Boseley, China Blocks Entry to WHO Team Studying COVID's Origins, The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/05/china-blocks-entry-to-who-team-studying-COVIDs-origins (Accessed 26 September 2021).

Helen Regan and Sandi Sidhu, *CNN*, WHO Team Blocked From Entering China to Study Origins of Coronavirus, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/05/china/china-blocks-who-team-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html (Accessed 26 September 2021).

[21] BBC News, COVID-19 Pandemic: China 'refused to give data' to WHO Team, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56054468 (Accessed 26 September 2021).

[22] Le Quéré, C., Jackson, R.B., Jones, M.W. *et al.* Temporary reduction in daily global CO_2 emissions during the COVID-19 forced confinement. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 10, 647–653 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0797-x.

and lakes. In this respect, it can be thought that the pandemic actually supports the Paris climate agreement, an initiative developed against global warming. In addition, it has been observed that it prevents noise pollution and has positive effects on the mental health of people living in big cities.[23]

From a deeper perspective, the pandemic has led to a significant reduction in animal mortality in the wild. The inability to carry out hunting activities due to the curfews applied during the pandemic, as well as the reduced vehicular traffic causing less harm to the animals in nature, reduced the rate in question to approximately 50%. A similar situation was encountered in the seas. The decrease in fishing activities and the decrease in maritime traffic due to a downturn in maritime trade prevented both pollution and damage to fish species.[24] Avian mortality has also decreased, similar to that of land and sea creatures. The restriction of flights, and the resulting reduction in air traffic, reduced the damage to aircraft by bird strikes. According to the data of the US Federal Aviation Administration, there were 17,228 collisions between airplanes and flocks of birds between 1990 and 2019.[25] The excessive number also indicates the decrease caused by the restriction of flights. This and the above-mentioned situations reveal the positive and satisfactory dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic for the environment.

However, the other side of the coin has revealed a different situation, especially the damage caused by medical wastes to the environment. Among these, there is intense mask waste, which is caused by widespread mask usage The fact that disposable masks are very light and can be blown into the fields and forests with even the lightest of winds have caused a pollution problem for the environment. Another issue is the pollution problems caused by medical wastes other than masks in daily use. These include disinfectants used for hand sanitization and sold in plastic bottles, and other hygiene-providing materials, and their plastic packaging waste. These plastic materials and toxic wastes pose a serious threat to the environment, as they are difficult to recycle.

Reflections of the Pandemic on Digital Security

The most effective method in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, which spreads through close contact between people, is expressed by many health institutions as social distancing. It is known that increasing physical distance in this way reduces the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the population. Therefore, among the many measures taken by states to cope with the pandemic, curfews have been the easiest and most common. Because, although reducing the interaction in society, no other comprehensive way of dealing with the pandemic has been found. The said restrictions have led individuals, companies, and even public institutions to come up with alternative solutions. Thus, remote working practices have increased and societies have started to benefit from

[23] Tanjana Rume and S.M. Didar-Ul Islam, Environmental Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic and Potential Strategies of Sustainability, *Heliyon*, 6 (2020), doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04965.

[24] Jennifer Huizen, How COVID-19 Has Changed The Face of the Natural World, *Medical News Today*, https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/how-COVID-19-has-changed-the-face-of-the-natural-world (Accessed 27 September 2021).

[25] Federal Aviation Administration, Frequently Asked Questions, https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/wildlife/faq/ (Accessed 27 September 2021).

the possibilities of digitalization in all areas. In business life, many companies and organizations that produce final or intermediate goods have directed their employees to remote working systems. In education, many institutions, starting from primary school and as high as undergraduate and graduate levels, have switched to remote education through various software solutions. Thus, students have been able to continue their education without interruption, thanks to software with various technological infrastructures. It is evaluated that the practices experienced will continue increasingly in the form of remote education in some educational institutions and in the form of working from home in companies in the coming years.

The banking sector has been able to easily adapt to the remote working system and has enabled many services to be provided without visits to branches. During the pandemic, some museums were opened to circulation in virtual environments free of charge, and concerts were performed by some artists online. Instead of stores and shops that were closed due to curfews, people shifted their shopping habits to online platforms and there was a significant increase in online sales. Many meetings, especially national and international academic conferences, have started to be held remotely. Even summits that include meetings attended by heads of state have begun being held via live connections using digital platforms.

In the fight against the pandemic, software platforms have been created by countries, and the health status, movements, and locations of individuals have been controlled and monitored. Thus, it has become possible to easily detect whether there are people who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus or have been in contact with an infected individual. At the entrances to shopping malls and public spaces, these controls were carried out with various code applications (HES code, etc.). However, while those controls increase the security of individuals, on the other hand, they cause the states to go so far as to violate individual freedoms. Thus, the concept of privacy has been damaged to some extent, and all kinds of individual movements and activities came under the control of the political authority. Moreover, with the pandemic, there has been a 600% increase in cybercrime rates.[26] This is due to the increase in big data in the rates of remote connection and data flow provided over systems with weak e-protection during working from home periods. As a result, while the pandemic directs people toward remote working practices in terms of the convenience and sustainability this provides, it is imperative to try to fix the current vulnerability in digital systems.

Conclusion

I think it would have sounded like an outlandish fiction if anyone in the world had predicted a year before the outbreak of the pandemic that states would declare curfews, and impose restrictions on personal freedom, that individuals' movements and travel would be controlled with strict measures, and that schools would pause education for months and switch to remote education. However, at this point, all this has come true.

[26] Embroker, 2021 Must-Know Cyber Attack Statistics and Trends. https://www.embroker.com/blog/cyber-attack-statistics/ (Accessed 28 September 2021).

Although the whole world has difficulty in getting used to this situation, it has mostly succeeded in adapting to it. This process, which is called the new normal, has forced people to produce solutions and the solutions found have led to various measures taken against the problems that arise in the fields of military, economic, social, political, environmental and digital security. The emergence of this global threat, not from nuclear or conventional weapons but from viruses, has put humanity to the test. And during this test, images reminiscent of scenes in science fiction movies have emerged. Although the efforts to develop a vaccine against the COVID-19 virus have made some progress by putting global companies and states into competition with each other, many speculative news items about the success rates of vaccines have merely served to downplay the success of these efforts. As a result, virus-related threats were also included in the scope of the "new security understanding" that emerged after the Cold War in the security conceptualization, and even climbed up the list of security threats and found itself in the very top ranks.

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