**NAME: OSIAGWU PAMELA**

**MATRIC NO: 16/SMS09/079**

**COURSE CODE: IRD 402**

**QUESTION: From late December 2019 to January 2020, the world was struck unawares by a new corona-virus with rapid spread and devastating consequences. Attempt a critical assessment of the impacts of the pandemic**

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the name given to the 2019 novel coronavirus. COVID-19 is the name given to the disease associated with the virus. SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are viruses that circulate among animals with some of them also known to infect humans. Bats are considered natural hosts of these viruses yet several other species of animals are also known to act as sources. For instance, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) is transmitted to humans from camels, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-1 (SARS-CoV-1) is transmitted to humans from civet cats. More information on coronaviruses can be found in the ECDC factsheet.

While animals are believed to be the original source, the virus spread is now from person to person (human-to-human transmission). There is not enough epidemiological information at this time to determine how easily this virus spreads between people, but it is currently estimated that, on average, one infected person will infect between two and three other people.

The virus seems to be transmitted mainly via small respiratory droplets through sneezing, coughing, or when people interact with each other for some time in close proximity (usually less than one metre). These droplets can then be inhaled, or they can land on surfaces that others may come into contact with, who can then get infected when they touch their nose, mouth or eyes. The virus can survive on different surfaces from several hours (copper, cardboard) up to a few days (plastic and stainless steel). However, the amount of viable virus declines over time and may not always be present in sufficient numbers to cause infection.

The incubation period for COVID-19 (i.e. the time between exposure to the virus and onset of symptoms) is currently estimated to bet between one and 14 days.

We know that the virus can be transmitted when people who are infected show symptoms such as coughing. There is also some evidence suggesting that transmission can occur from a person that is infected even two days before showing symptoms; however, uncertainties remain about the effect of transmission by  non-symptomatic persons.

COVID-19 epidemic not only threatens human health but also undermines social and political patterns. Firstly, COVID-19 has a characteristic to inhibit politics. The most important reason for this is the conflict between the traditional logic of politics, which discriminates between friends and enemies, and health-based techno-politics. This dispute also influences the decision-making dynamics. The social-economic decisions about the future of a country are now left to the private-technical information regimes and representatives. COVID-19 outbreak has demonstrated that the political reflexes introduced at first are dramatically dysfunctional and a new style of politics which prioritizes technology/technical information replaces it. It is one of the most striking examples of how a scientific report in Britain forced a right-wing populist power to take a stand. In the U.K., Boris Johnson's government initially adopted the policy of “spreading the virus” using initiative and taking political risk, but quickly switched to a policy of “suppressing” the virus based on a new report of scientists from Imperial College. It is remarkable in this sense that the policy on the virus outbreak in Turkey, which has not made this mistake, has been left to the skills of a science board since the beginning. Another important example in this sense is how the successful crisis management of the minister of health, a physician, has made the current political power more acceptable even in the eyes of the opponents.

Secondly, civil society and solidarity politics all over the world are being replaced by policies of strict controls, which make hillbilly and social isolation a priority. This is also a development closely related to the political technique. Indeed, the introduction of politics into a techno-political form not only pushes the average citizen further out of the corporate politics, but also challenges preliminary assumptions about the functioning and nature of the state. This new form makes the state that holds devices of controlling health-technical regimes even more advantageous to the individual. The society, which is trying to find its way between the faltering economic structure and the volatile political practices, is becoming more confused. Society can find no other way than to surrender itself to this language and politics of health, which is emerging as a new ideological device. This new form is radical and jarring. Because unlike certain ideological devices, it appears in ways that do not cling to the culture/tradition, or even to the possibilities of “reproduction”, such as the fetish of consumption. For example, it is not only the restrictions on mosque and Friday prayers, but the fact that congregational worship and other social practices will likely not take place during the upcoming Ramadan as a result.

Thirdly, there is a leap in social formation and communication shifting to more virtual realms. The mediocrity, which ideology “calls” the individual as the subject, is disappearing. The fact that the school, the most important medium of social reproduction, is shifting to the digital space by changing form and content, heralding a radical change. While this is a trend we have been experiencing for a long time, with the recent global COVID-19 epidemic, the traditional mechanisms of socialization that have taken the individual (from teacher-student relationship to Sunday shopping) are seriously shaken. Another consequence of this new state is that it is easier to control individual opportunities and initiatives in one direction. With the coronavirus epidemic crisis, the increase of (false) communication and the shift to (urgent/alarmist) sectoral language with virtual communication, which liberal capitalism has blessed as “the possibility of freedom from the state”, make the future of social movements more pessimistic.

The European Union is one of the regional blocs that suffer the most from the epidemic. It continues to display an inability to use the “common good” and “public benefit” in crises, one of its most fundamental claims since the Cold War. Recently, with the rise of the radical right in Europe, identity politics has gained a considerable momentum and far-right parties have become the partners in power, either directly or by likening mainstream parties to themselves.

In addition to breaking down the identity of the Union, it can be said that the first political trend that COVID-19 will displace is the far-right identity politics. However, the disruption of identity politics, in addition to the U.K. example and other examples we have mentioned, does not mean that the union will save the future. Because techno-politics, which replaces identity politics, also prefers the closure of territorial and social borders. The fact that each country makes its own health issue a priority eliminates the political-economic integrity and solidarity that are the most important engine of the EU. In short, the EU, which has been destroyed by the identity politics, continues to be destroyed by the new isolationist dynamics of techno-politics, even if identity politics loses its position.

Some countries’ experiences give significant clues about the direction of the world politics. Especially, the COVID-19 experience in Iran has characteristics worthy of note. China, just like Iran, has an authoritative regime type. On the other hand, remarkable differences between Iran and China have occurred during the crisis. In the COVID-19 epidemic, Iran, which has a theocratic form of government, engaged in identity politics and lied to its people, paving the way for a major disaster. As a result of this religious-identity politics, Iran has not interfered for long, for example, with people from Qom, nor has it delayed in taking the necessary measures to combat the new type of coronavirus outbreak. China, on the other hand, used its authoritarianism as a means of settlement politics at the time of crisis and prevented the spread of the virus with rapid, on-the-spot measures. Therefore, it turned out that authoritarian governments, which operate through technical devices instead of authoritarian governments built through identity, intervene in crises much more effectively.

Another fact demonstrated by the Iranian experience is that the U.S. does not ease Iranian embargoes despite all the calls from the world, and may even consider military intervention in Iran in the process. This shows more clearly how the new politics of hegemony imposed by the U.S. President Donald Trump would take shape at a time of crisis. The new image of the U.S., which relentlessly maintains its embargo policy on Iran, which is experiencing a major health crisis as a country, gives no confidence to anyone. There is an image of an opportunistic hegemon who does not accept any humanitarian perspective as a reference, using even a deep health crisis as a leverage against opponents. With this approach, the image of the U.S., which does not trust even its allies, has been strengthened. It should not be forgotten that in this global health crisis, the U.S. failed not only its rivals like Iran but also an allies like Italy by ignoring their calls for help. Ironically, China rushed to Italy's aid, which gives some details about China's new hegemony politics.

The U.S. has for some time entered into a new nationalist foreign policy line with the Trump administration, with the motto “sharing costs” assigning responsibility to its allies in the face of international problems. The first consequence of this new form of governance is that the cost of being allied with the U.S. has increased. Until the recent crisis, the U.S. allies had not yet been able to test what gains they had in return from sharing costs. The first serious test took place in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the U.S. preferred to close its borders to them rather than supporting its allies (for example, in the face of Italy's dramatic calls for help). The “normality” of the American order, seeking a solution in greater isolation, has now vanished in the eyes of its allies. Moreover, the enormous incompetence and the indifferent approach to solving the COVID-19 crisis in his home country has greatly undermined the U.S.'s ability and legitimacy to be a superpower. How sustainable is the costly alliance of the U.S., which, despite its advanced technology and kits to test for COVID-19 disease, is incapable of supplying itself and its allies?

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic also signals a new hardening in China-U.S. global competition. In response to China’s deporting of U.S. journalists one by one, Trump’s America persistently describes the virus as a “Chinese virus,” preferring to take positions both inside and outside. However, even during the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union were able to set aside global competition and develop a common policy against problems such as smallpox. The experience of a new type of coronavirus outbreak therefore shows that in this new era, the competition between the great powers can be brutal and without exception. The rivalry of these two great powers, who are expected to carry out cooperation with global responsibility consciousness first-hand in times of crisis, is damaging to the whole world.