



The Global Pandemic and Its Lasting Impact on International Relations

Article

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most devastating events in recent history, impacting all aspects of human life, including international relations. While some scholars have argued that the pandemic will have a transformative effect on global politics, others, like Dan Drezner, suggested otherwise. However, as we emerge from the pandemic, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a lasting impact on international relations.

One of the pandemic's most significant impacts has been the shift in how political leaders think about economics. The rise in mercantilism, industrial policy, and homeshoring of production has become more prevalent. The pandemic highlighted the importance of self-reliance and domestic production in ensuring economic resilience during a crisis. This trend is expected to continue even after the pandemic has ended.

The pandemic also revealed the existing animosity between China and the United States. However, it did not change the countries' respective sources of power. The pandemic's impact on international cooperation was hugely underestimated, with vaccine nationalism and distribution inequities disrupting global efforts to contain the virus. This disruption highlighted the critical role of global governance in addressing global health emergencies.

One of the most significant challenges posed by the pandemic has been access to vaccines. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) forecasts that access to vaccines is the main fault line to global recovery. The pandemic's syndemic nature underscores the need to rethink global security and governance, and international law. The health emergency necessitates rethinking security given the multiple risks and threats centred around human beings. The pandemic has revealed the inefficiency of global governance, as vaccine diplomacy prevailed over the COVAX facility. The long and uncertain struggle for a waiver in the World Trade Organization by India and South Africa highlights the need for the global community to tackle the challenges of intellectual property.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and lasting impact on international relations. It has revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the global system and the challenges the global community must overcome to build a more resilient future. As we navigate the post-pandemic world, we must focus on learning from the pandemic's lessons to tackle the challenges it has exposed and build a more cohesive and equitable world. Only through international cooperation will we be able to meet these challenges and create a secure and prosperous future for all.



Agenda

Mercantilism

- Economic theory and practice that emphasizes government intervention in and regulation of the economy to promote national power, wealth, and security

- *"The pandemic has led to a rise in mercantilism as countries prioritize self-reliance and domestic production to ensure economic resilience."*

Industrial policy

- Government intervention in an economy to encourage the growth and development of particular industries or sectors

- *"The pandemic has led to an increase in industrial policy as governments aim to protect domestic supply chains and industries."*

Homeshoring

- The practice of bringing previously outsourced business processes or services back in-house or nearer to the company's headquarters

- *"The pandemic has led to a rise in homeshoring, with many companies bringing production back to their home country to ensure supply chain stability."*

Global governance

- The system of multilateral institutions and agreements established to address global challenges and promote cooperation among countries

- *"The pandemic has highlighted the importance of global governance in addressing global health emergencies like COVID-19."*

Syndemic

- A complex health issue that is influenced by multiple factors, including social, economic, and political factors

- *"The pandemic is a syndemic as it is influenced by multiple factors, including access to vaccines and global governance."*



Intellectual property

- Legal rights that protect people's innovative creations, including inventions, designs, literature, music, and art

- *"The long and uncertain struggle for a waiver in the World Trade Organization by India and South Africa highlights the need for the global community to tackle the challenges of intellectual property."*

Vaccine nationalism

- The prioritization of a country or a group of countries to access and distribute vaccines, which undermines global efforts to distribute vaccines equitably

- *"Vaccine nationalism disrupted global efforts to contain the virus by prioritizing a select few countries to access vaccines."*

COVAX facility

- A global initiative aimed at ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, particularly for low and middle-income countries

- *"Vaccine diplomacy prevailed over the COVAX facility during the pandemic, revealing the inefficiency of global governance."*

International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

- A global humanitarian organization that provides assistance to vulnerable communities affected by natural disasters, wars, and crises

- *"The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) forecasts that access to vaccines is the main fault line to global recovery."*

Waiver

- A temporary suspension of a legal requirement to allow certain actions or activities to take place

- *"The long and uncertain struggle for a waiver in the World Trade Organization by India and South Africa highlights the need for the global community to tackle the challenges of intellectual property."*

IGM Session

2023-06-11T08:42:48.000Z

Category: Politics & Global Affairs | Tag(s): COVID-19

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Discussion

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the global economy and what long-term consequences will we see in terms of trade relationships between countries?
2. What does the shift towards mercantilism and domestic production mean for international trade and cooperation? How can countries balance the need for self-reliance with the benefits of global cooperation?
3. The pandemic has highlighted the need for global governance and cooperation in addressing global health emergencies. What changes need to be made to international law and global security to ensure equitable access to vaccines and address future health crises?

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