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COVID-19 IN AFRICA: AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTERPRETATION (2019-2022)

Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of challenges to the globalized world. Globally, it has decimated over six million lives. Since 2019, it has shook the world in many respects, especially, it disrupted economies and societies and halted the majority of human endeavor. Commentaries and reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the media showed an alarming situation that could be damning in low and middle income countries. Economic pundits and global public health experts also anticipated doom and gloom for African countries. However, in terms of mortality, the Americas, Europe and Asia have suffered more losses. Irrespective of these loses in Europe, Africa's case needs better appreciation within our contemporary historical discourse. The burgeoning challenge of the COVID disease and mortalities arising thereby, among other things, necessitated the introduction of policies based on the WHO's historical understanding of how the world has dealt with pandemics in the past. Some of the strategies that were deployed to fight the pandemic included hand washing under running water with soap, the use of alcohol based hand sanitizers, the wearing of nose masks, social distancing, self-isolation as well as partial and complete lockdowns of states and communities. The major economic disruption really came about as a result of many lockdown policies that were implemented by several countries in Africa without proper reference to their own societal contexts. These issues notwithstanding, it is important to emphasize that the extent of the impact on different communities differed to a large extent, even though there were similar levels of the nature of the infection and the general economic outlook among the global community.*

This current contribution on the COVID-19 discourse used political economy and economic shock as bases to highlight the extent of the impact of the disease by highlighting examples from respective countries in Africa, namely, Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Algeria and South Africa. In particular, the impact of policies like lock-down on some of these African countries are highlighted for further discussions in future empirical research. The study relied on contemporary historical evidence from multidisciplinary sources on health, economics, policy, and other related studies on epidemiology, public health, health education and promotion, reports and sources from the World Health Organization (WHO). Specifically, the authors have used published research in Lancet, the International Journal of Infectious Diseases, BMJ Global Health, Frontiers in Public Health and the Pan African Medical Journal. The others were African Development Review, Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Africa Spectrum and International Journal of Financial Research including several other empirical research. In attempting a social and economic interpretation based on contemporary historical sense, the findings of this present study suggest that African political actors or leaders should make persistent or steady efforts to strengthen the economies of their states to lessen economic shocks and social costs that come about as a result of pandemics such as the COVID-19. It also identified the fact that within the globalized space, application of policies from other countries including international organizations should not be devoid of context.

Key words: *COVID-19, Pandemic, Political Economy, Economic Shock, Contemporary History, Africa.*

COVID-19 U AFRICI: EKONOMSKO I SOCIJALNO TUMAČENJE (2019-2022)

Apstrakt: *Pandemija COVID-19 izazvala je mnoge izazove globaliziranom svijetu. Globalno, desetkovao je preko šest miliona života. Od 2019. godine potresao je svijet u mnogim aspektima, a posebno je poremetio ekonomije i društva i zaustavio većinu ljudskih poduhvata. Komentari i izvještaji Svjetske zdravstvene organizacije (WHO) i medija pokazali su alarmantnu situaciju koja bi mogla biti pogubna u zemljama sa niskim i srednjim prihodima. Ekonomski stručnjaci i globalni stručnjaci za javno zdravlje također su očekivali propast i sumor za afričke zemlje. Međutim, u pogledu mortaliteta, Amerika, Evropa i Azija pretrpele su više gubitaka. Bez obzira na ove gubitke u Evropi, slučaj Afrike treba bolje uvažiti u našem savremenom historijskom diskursu. Sve veći izazov bolesti COVID-a i smrtnosti koji je iz toga proizašao, između ostalog, zahtijevao je uvođenje politika zasnovanih na historijskom razumijevanju SZO o tome kako se svijet nosio s pandemijama u prošlosti. Neke od strategija koje su primijenjene u borbi protiv pandemije uključivale su pranje ruku pod tekućom*

vodom sapunom, korištenje sredstava za dezinfekciju ruku na bazi alkohola, nošenje maski za nos, socijalno distanciranje, samoizolaciju kao i djelomične i potpune blokade država i zajednice. Veliki ekonomski poremećaji su zaista nastali kao rezultat mnogih politika izolacije koje je provodilo nekoliko zemalja u Africi bez odgovarajućeg upućivanja na njihov vlastiti društveni kontekst. Bez obzira na ova pitanja, važno je naglasiti da se obim uticaja na različite zajednice u velikoj mjeri razlikovao, iako su postojali slični nivoi prirode zaraze i opštih ekonomskih izgleda u globalnoj zajednici. Ovaj trenutni doprinos diskursu o COVID-19 koristio je političku ekonomiju i ekonomski šok kao osnove za isticanje obima uticaja bolesti naglašavajući primjere iz odgovarajućih zemalja u Africi, naime, Gane, Kameruna, Etiopije, Alžira i Južne Afrike. Posebno je istaknut utjecaj politika poput izolacije na neke od ovih afričkih zemalja za daljnje rasprave u budućim empirijskim istraživanjima. Studija se oslanjala na savremene historijske dokaze iz multidisciplinarnih izvora o zdravlju, ekonomiji, politici i drugim srodnim studijama o epidemiologiji, javnom zdravlju, zdravstvenom obrazovanju i promociji, izvještajima i izvorima Svjetske zdravstvene organizacije (WHO). Konkretno, autori su koristili objavljena istraživanja u Lancetu, International Journal of Infectious Diseases, BMJ Global Health, Frontiers in Public Health i Pan African Medical Journal. Ostali su bili African Development Review, Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Africa Spectrum i International Journal of Financial Research uključujući nekoliko drugih empirijskih istraživanja. U pokušaju društvene i ekonomske interpretacije zasnovane na savremenom historijskom smislu, nalazi ove studije sugerišu da bi afrički politički akteri ili lideri trebalo da ulože uporne ili stalne napore da ojačaju ekonomije svojih država kako bi smanjili ekonomske šokove i socijalne troškove koji nastaju kao posljedica rezultata pandemija kao što je COVID-19. Takođe je identifikovana činjenica da u globalizovanom prostoru primjena politika drugih zemalja, uključujući međunarodne organizacije, ne treba da bude lišena konteksta.

Ključne reči: *COVID-19, pandemija, politička ekonomija, ekonomski šok, savremena historija, Afrika***.**

Introduction

By the end of 2019, the new corona-virus pandemic (COVID-19) had become the number one global problem. The disease initially surfaced in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.[1] Since then, COVID-19 has been sweeping across the globe. The infection spreads mostly through contact

[1] Wang, C, Horby, P. W, Hayden, F. G, & Gao, G. F. (2020). *A novel coronavirus outbreak of global health concern. The lancet, 395(10223), 470-473. WHO. Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Technical Focus: Laboratory detection*.

with an infected individual. According to the World Health Organization, Severe Acute Respiratory Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2virus) is the coronavirus strain that causes COVID-19 illnesses.[2] In May 2020, there was no recognized cure or preventive vaccine for this strain. According to the epidemiological study of this virus, it is very contagious and deadly.[3]As a result, there has been an increase in the rate of infection and transmission, as well as the rate of mortality.

The World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, due to the coronavirus disease's rapid spread over the world. As of May 12, 2020, WHO statistics showed that there were over 4 million confirmed cases, 280,000 confirmed fatalities, and at least 215 nations, areas, or territories had confirmed instances of infection.[4] The cases spread quickly, causing panic and mayhem. Beginning in April, the United States had a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases, and by May 12, 2020, it was the country with the largest number of confirmed cases (approximately 1,300,000).[5] Several nations in Europe and North America recorded more cases in April and May, with 1,755,790 and 1,743,717 cases, respectively.[6] As of May 2020, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany were among the European countries with the largest number of confirmed cases.

The African continent was not spared, as the virus spread across the continent, affecting every country. In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), both imported and locally acquired cases increased.[7] The WHO African Region reported a total of 10,759 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 520 deaths across 45 affected countries by April 14th, 2020, with major cities recording the highest numbers of cases in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Algeria, and Cameroon.[8] The symptoms of the illness were fever, coughing, exhaustion, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, aches and pains, diarrhea, a rash on the skin, red or itchy eyes, difficulty in breathing, loss of speech, challenges with

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[2] Hamidouche, M. (n.d). (2020) *COVID-19 Epidemic in Algeria: Assessment of the implemented preventive strategy*. https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.21.20074443.

[3] Most notable in the continuous announcement and fight against covid-19 is WHO. (2020). *Novel Coronavirus (2019-Ncov).*

[4] World Health Organization. (2013). The World Health Report: Research for Universal Health Coverage

[5] World Health Organization. (2013). The World Health Report: Research for Universal Health Coverage

[6] Alfano, V, & Ercolano, S. (2020). The Efficacy of Lockdown against COVID-19: A Cross-Country Panel Analysis. *Applied Health Economics and Health Policy*, *18*(4), 509–517.

[7] Mboera, L. E. G., Akipede, G. O., Banerjee, A., Cuevas, L. E., Czypionka, T., Khan, M., Kock, R, McCoy, D, Mmbaga, B. T, Misinzo, G, Shayo, E. H, Sheel, M, Sindato, C, & Urassa, M. (2020). Mitigating lockdown challenges in response to COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa. In *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* (Vol. 96, pp. 308–310). Elsevier B.V. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.018

[8] WHO. (2020). Novel Coronavirus (2019-Ncov). https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.

movement, and chest pain. The list also includes an additional nine new symptoms.[9]-[10]

Human-to-human transmission was high due to encounters between people, resulting in severe respiratory disorders and multiple deaths. Over 7 million people had come into contact with the virus within six months when the first case was reported, which resulted in the death of nearly 434,796 people in 2020.[11] To prevent the spread of this highly contagious disease, governments around the world adopted different strategies such as quarantine, the use of nose masks, regular hand washing with soap under running water, as well as social isolation measures. Despite these precautions, COVID-19 persisted and metamorphosed into several variants.

According to the WHO, the virus was highly contagious, and there were no preventive vaccinations available as of May 2020. As an emergency response, many states around the world decided to implement partial or total lockdown measures.[12] There were widespread declarations of lockdown in over 100 nations between April and June 2020. The final purpose of a lockdown strategy in the case of COVID-19 was to straighten the curve of the unusual virus. However, according to some empirical studies, the quick implementation of lockdown measures by many regimes came with its own set of socioeconomic and political issues.[13] Again, the pandemic has been a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security with the potential of leading to an increase in social unrest and violence. According to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres[14], COVID-19 is also a threat to human growth and sustainability.[15] Scientists have confirmed that the COVID-19 virus could reach any age group quickly.[16] The sickness threatened not just global public health, but also socio-economic growth, sociological development, and traditional human interactions, as well as the political economy of states. The lockdown of borders and persons

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[9] WHO, Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) (May, 2021). https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.

[10] Harapan H., Itoh N, et al, (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): A literature Review, Journal of Infection and public health, 667-673.

[11] Worldometer, 2020, the site updates every new case that comes up globally https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/.

[12] Nwosu, C. A, Marcus, S. N, & Metu, A. G. (2020). Socialscientia Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities COVID-19 lockdown, supply disruptions and inflationary pressure in Nigeria. In *Socialscientia Journal*.

[13] Haider N, Osman AY, Gadzekpo A, *et al*. Lockdown measures in response to COVID-19 in nine sub-Saharan African countries. *BMJ Global Health* 2020.

[14] Murphy, M. (2020). Possible Implication of COVID-19 on International Peace and Security. What's in Blue: Insight on the work of the UN Security Council? As cited in Chukwufumnaya, C. E., & Oghuvbu, E. A. (2020). *The Corona-Virus Pandemic and its Impacts on Human Security in West Africa*.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Chukwufumnaya, C. E, & Oghuvbu, E. A. (2020). *The Corona-Virus Pandemic and its Impacts on Human Security in West Africa*.

being barred from participating in any social activities was a severe and potentially unpleasant measure implemented by government officials to protect civilians based on the advice of scientists.

In comparison with other Western countries, the number and proportion of reported cases in Africa remained low, with only 1,312,592 cases accounting for 5% of the global total at the time, yet, at least 42 African countries enforced partial or complete restrictions on their citizens' travels and activities. Increased concern, frustration, panic attacks, loss or rapid increase in appetite, insomnia, and sadness have all been reported during the coronavirus lockdown in Africa.[17] It has been reported by foreign press and some academics/scientists that due to under-detection of cases and under-reporting of detected cases, the reported figures from Africa are likely to underestimate the true magnitude of the epidemic. However, based on previous experience, Africa appears to be less affected than Europe, North America, Asia, and South America. The development of COVID-19 and the repercussions of its lockdown strategy revealed the reality of Africa's poor economy. Africa has a lot of social, educational, cultural, political, and economic dysfunction, according to critical research.[18]-[19]-[20] However, the lower rate of infection of COVID-19 and its new variants did not necessarily represent under-reporting of cases.

Using the concept of political economy, this research constructively highlighted some countries in Africa, including Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Algeria, with the goal of understanding and analyzing governmental policies, regarding lockdowns in Africa. During the first wave of COVID-19, countries that were inflicted with the disease depicted varying levels of economic instability at the time of the pandemic, different degrees of political freedom, and different lockdown restriction. Following COVID-19, the construction industry saw a drop in investment[21]. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to East Africa fell by 16 percent in 2019 to $6.5 billion, owing to restrictions imposed on businesses both locally and globally.[22] These initiatives define the severity of policy reactions and the extent to which previously planned policies were postponed owing to unexpected events. Furthermore, analyzing

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[17] Haider N, Osman Ay, Gadzekpo A, *Et Al*. Lockdown Measures in response to Covid-19 in nine Sub-Saharan African Countries. *BMJ Global Health* 2020. Doi: 10.1136/ Bmjgh-2020 003319.

[18] Kharroubi. S. & Saleh. F. (2020): Are Lockdown Measures Effective Against Covid -19? Frontiers in Public Health, Vol.8 (549692), pp.1-4

[19] Zemzem Shigute, Anagaw Derseh Mebratie, Getnet Alemu, Arjun Bedi, 2020: Containing the spread of COVID-19 in Ethiopia, Vol. 10(1), doi:10.7189/jogh.10.010369.

[20] Stein, H. (2020). 'Institutionalizing neoclassical economics in Africa: instruments, ideology and implications'. Economy and Society, 50(1).

[21] Mulu, A, Bekele, A, Abdissa, A, Balcha, T. T, Habtamu, M, Mihret, A, Beyene G.T, ... & Bayih, A. G. (2021). The challenges of COVID-19 testing in Africa: the Ethiopian experience. *The Pan African Medical Journal*, 38.

[22] United Nations Conference on Trade And Development, World Investment Report, 2021: *COVID-19 Slashes Foreign Direct Investment In Africa by 16%*.

low-income countries' policy responses improves our understanding of policymakers in emergencies such as COVID-19 and potential future pandemics.

Our contribution focuses on country-specific political economic decisions and how they have been deployed throughout the execution of various lockdowns. The implications and problems concerning lockdown techniques in combating COVID-19 in Africa are analysed, with an emphasis on the emergence and extinction of new strains and a succession of vaccinations and boosters. It examines the varied economic standards of five (5) different African countries, taking into account the growth and fall of gross domestic product (GDP) and the amount of inflation affecting goods and services without decoupling it from the period of the pandemic. The conclusion gives highlights on the key issues in the research.

Theorizing Political Economy and Lockdown Policy in Ghana, Ethiopia, Algeria, Cameroon and South Africa

The study employed political economy and economic shock as essential concepts for the discussion of the impacts of COVID-19 and lockdown policies on African countries. This section briefly discusses the concepts/theories and links them to lock-downs and related issues to generate a discourse highlighting examples from selected African countries.

Political Economy: A Brief Explanation of the Concept in Relation to Covid-19 and the Lockdown Policies

The term "political economy" refers specifically to the power dynamics that influence how resources are produced, distributed, and consumed. Political economy is the study of wealth and deals with human endeavors to meet needs and gratify desires.[23] Political economy used to refer to social custom, practice, and knowledge about how to run, first the home, then the community, before it was a science and provided an intellectual account for a system of production, distribution, and exchange.

Overtime, the definition of political economy has evolved. In its current form, political economy includes how a country is managed or controlled, taking both political and economic aspects into consideration. The mercantilist School (mercantilism is an economic practice in which governments exploited their economies to expand state authority at the expense of other countries), called for a strong role for the state in economic regulation, dominated political economy from the 16th through the 18th centuries.[24] The role of individuals over the state

[23] Eatwell, Milgate, and Newman, 1987, 907.

[24] See: Balaam. N. David and Vesseth A. Michael (2022): Political Economy. *Politics and the economy are interrelated for development.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-economy/International-political-economy.

was highlighted in several publications by political economists in the 18th century, and mercantilism was extensively challenged. Smith's concept of the"invisible hand," made it clear that governmental initiatives were typically less efficient in increasing societal welfare. Meaning these initiatives were associated with self-interested individual actions. Meanwhile, David Ricardo (1772–1823) a political economist acknowledged the benefits of free trade of which to him was the best for societal welfare and development. His theory of comparative advantage postulated among other things that states were only to create and export commodities they could purchase for a lower price and buy goods that other countries could produce more effectively.[25]

In order to give a more comprehensive framework for understanding complex national and international issues and events, like COVID-19, the concept of political economy has been reinvigorated. Current research on the topic of political economics includes the politics of economic relations, local political and economic issues, a comparison of political and economic systems, and global political economy. Weighing a range of social interests, global bargaining situations, development plans, and philosophical viewpoints, political economy best fits the current debate on the impact of COVID-19 and lock-downs in particular. Examining the social, political, and economic factors and interests that have an impact on tariff policies and how these influences affect the political process is also known as political economic analysis. Economic liberals, according to Balaam and Vesseth, limit the role of the state in the economy in order to allow market forces determine political and social consequences.[26] The above elucidation further foregrounds discussions on lock-down policies in the world and narrowly, the impact of COVID-19 on Ghana, Ethiopia, Algeria, Cameroon and South Africa. These are quintessential African countries that adequately mimic the burgeoning COVID-19 quandary in Africa from the North, South, Western, Central and Eastern Africa.

Applying Political Economy and Economic Shock Concepts to the COVID-19 Discussion

Political economy and economic shock are applied to explain the policies including lockdown, passed by political leaders to combat an unanticipated crisis like COVID-19 that challenged and continues to challenge the economies of most African states. Economic shock requires an unexpected event, whether it be a one-time or short-term occurrence, which has a significant unanticipated impact on the economy. Due to the fact that it produces profits or costs that have not yet

[25] Balaam. N. David and Vesseth A. Michael (2022): Political Economy. *Politics and the economy are interrelated for development.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-economy/International-political-economy.

[26] Balaam. N. David and Vesseth .A. Michael (2022): Political Economy. *Politics and the economy are interrelated for development.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-economy/International-political-economy.

been included into market prices, this occurrence by its very nature promotes instability.[27] Also, shock is applicable when an incident has the potential to disrupt the entire economy or a large portion of it, and the occurrence was neither planned nor anticipated. Such shock is applicable to the COVID-19 that occurred and manifested as a global pandemic. There are two main pathways for the shock: internal and external. Reduced labour market participation, poorer productivity, and higher domestic trade costs are all examples of the domestic shock. Higher international trade expenses, a decline in export demand and supply, a reduction in remittances and foreign direct investment (FDI), and an increase or decrease in the price of oil are examples of external shocks. With regards to the internal shock, it constituted among other things, the inability of persons to work due to restriction on movements, fear, business closures, and reduced capacity in terms of operations.[28] Economists believe that an economic shock must originate outside the economy, that is, from a scenario that does not arise from an existing problem or programme.

The policy directives initiated by western governments and their counterparts in Africa in particular, to battle the COVID-19, amounted to inconsistencies in socio-economic development, which caused loses in gross domestic products (GDP) and caused general fiscal deficits. Therefore, a substantial evidence based on the state of African countries is provided to highlight the lockdown policy arising due to the impact of the COVID-19 in the globalized world and Africa in particular, using political economy and economic shock as undergirding.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on the global economy, causing limitation on movement and travel,[29] as well as trade restrictions. This severely hampered normal economic activities especially in Africa. Africa's economies, faced a 348 dollar drop in average gross domestic product per capita for lower-middle-income countries and 50 dollar reduction for the continent's low-income countries.[30] This drop was as a result of the closure

[27] Reed Eric (2020): Economic Shocks: Definition and Examples, https://smartasset.com/financial-advisor/economic-shock.

[28] Beyene, L. M, Ferede, T, & Diriba, G. (2020). The economywide impact of the COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy and Recovery options.

[29] Maria Nicole et al (2020): The socio-economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic (CIVID-19) A review, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsu.2020.04.018.

[30] Maunganidze A. O and Abebe T.T (2020): Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Africa–EU Partnership Agenda on Migration and Mobility: *A Continental Perspective, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI*).

of businesses, in particular, entertainment businesses and tourist centers among others.[31]-[32]-[33]

Africa as a continent faced numerous challenges. They included governance challenges, reduction in global migration, and decline in economic growth, food security concerns and health care system challenges.[34]-[35] Factors underlying the drastic decline in trade included the slowdown in global demand; declining commodity prices, especially for crude oil; supply chain disruptions; and export restrictions. These countervailing factors led to increase in poverty in several countries affecting both citizens and governmental agencies. Poverty, lack of job opportunities, and food insecurity, as well as violence, have been the primary drivers that either devastate individuals or put countries in disarray. The epidemic has had a particularly negative impact on the rural economy of tropical low- and middle-income nations, where biodiversity is concentrated.[36] This resulted in an increase in the poverty gap in various African countries. Comparing poverty headcount between pre- COVID-19 and post- COVID-19 in Ghana in particular, the poverty headcount increased from 23.85% to 25.23% in each case, corresponding to a relative increase of 1.38 %.[37] Also, increasing mortality during the COVID-19 season raised significant concerns concerning health related issues in Africa. Scott Greer et al asserted that there could be another factor underlying the ultimate cause of death from COVID-19, such as pneumonia or heart attacks which were exacerbated by the virus. These mortality cases were mostly associated with COVID-19 as reported by some health professionals or governments whiles some other sources registered the cause of mortality to pneumonia or heart attack.[38]

Concerning public acceptance and adherence to COVID-19 laws, findings show that countries with high lockdown rules were willing to use military and police force to defend lockdown measures. Such use of force was exhibited in several countries including African countries like Ghana, South

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[31] Antwi-Boasiako, J, Abbey, C, Ogbey, P, & Ofori, R. (2021). Policy Responses to fight COVID-19; the case of Ghana. *Revista De Administração Pública*, *55*(1), pp 122-139.

[32] Aragie, E, Taffesse, A, & Thurlow, J. (2021). The short-term economywide impacts of COVID-19 in Africa: Insights from Ethiopia. *African Development Review*, *33*(S1). doi: 10.1111/1467-8268.12519.

[33] Ede C, et al (2021): Implications of COVID-19 Lockdown on South African Business Sector *International Journal of Financial Research*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp 12-23; https://doi.org/10.5430/ijfr.v12n4p12.

[34] Medinilla. A et al (2020): African Regional Responses to COVID-19, No. 272, pp. 1-29 https://www.ecdpm.org/dp272.

[35] Mangen, P. O, & Veale, A. (2020). Psychosocial Implications and Programming Responses against COVID-19 in Africa. *COVID-19 in the Global South*, pp. 127.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] UNU-WIDER: Policy Brief : Distributional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/distributional-effects-covid-19-pandemic-ghana.

[38]Scott L. Greer et al (2021) Introduction: Explaining Pandemic Response; The Comparative Politics and Policy of COVID-19; The Coronavirus Politics https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.11927713.3.

Africa and Uganda. Comparatively, there were efforts by African leaders to rigidly enforce lockdowns in their countries compared to some jurisdictions around the world. This notwithstanding, India also enforced strict lockdown rules and further deployed their police force to forcefully enforce same.

Governance Challenges

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, African politicians were forced to make most difficult judgments. This was as a result of the lack of fiscal capacity of African countries to adequately respond to the COVID palaver like some governments of industrialized states, especially concerning strategies to safeguard enterprises, jobs, and social safety nets for the most vulnerable sections of society in their respective countries. The prevailing challenges notwithstanding, governments of African nations took a number of steps to stop the spread of the COVID virus.[39] Governmental actions were connected to public health initiatives (e.g. awareness, isolation and quarantine, health screenings, testing, wearing protective gear)[40], limits on migration and economic measures such as tax exemptions, fiscal stimulus, liquidity injection, interest rate reduction, loan rescheduling[41] and social measures; for example physical distancing, public service closure, limitation on public gatherings and school closures among others.[42] It also included questions about governance and lockdown, which involved a partial or full lockdown, declaration of state of emergency, stay-at-home policies or strategies among others.[43]

Significantly, in considering government interventions, the sources of funding for implementing policies have always been crucial and critical, whether the funds were to be generated internally or externally. However, without any extra spending, the budget deficits of African countries exacerbated due to the loss of government revenue, during the pandemic.

The lockdowns being a factor to curtail the epidemic came at a high cost in terms of money, endangering lives, jeopardizing livelihoods, and exacerbating poverty.[44] The underprivileged majority, whose livelihoods were and are still

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[39] Degye Goshu. et al (2020); Assessment of COVID-19 Effects and response measures in Ethiopia: Livelihoods and Welfare Implications; Ethiopian Economics Association; Ethiopian Policy Research Institute, 1-42.

[40] Antwi-Boasiako, J, Abbey, C, Ogbey, P, & Ofori, R. (2021). Policy Responses to fight COVID-19; the case of Ghana. *Revista De Administração Pública*, *55*(1), pp 122-139.

[41] Aragie, E, Taffesse, A, & Thurlow, J. (2021). The short-term economywide impacts of COVID-19 in Africa: Insights from Ethiopia. *African Development Review*, *33*(S1). doi: 10.1111/1467-8268.12519.

[42] Bonful H. A, et al (2020): Limiting spread of COVID-19 in Ghana: *Compliance audit of selected transportation stations in the Greater Accra region of Ghana*, pp 1-13 doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238971.

[43] Beyene, L. M, Ferede, T, & Diriba, G. (2020). *The economywide impact of the COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy and Recovery options*.

[44] See: United Nation Conference on Trade and development (2020): *Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's Economic Development*, pp. 1-21.

acquired on a daily basis and whose living conditions was dependent on daily labor and communication, faced obstacles like social distancing, and found the stay-at-home directives particularly tough.[45] A particular challenge of African governments was the pressure from the population due to lack of resources and already ailing economies, which were adversely impacted.[46] Again, these restrictions sometimes fueled human right abuse including breaches by law enforcers, creating fear and panic within some unstable communities.[47],[48]

The challenge faced by governments in Africa especially the South African government, was the exacerbation of unemployment as a result of the pandemic. Stabilizing food prices and the demand of workers for salary increment were among several demands that came up as a result of the COVID scare.[49] Public problems rose significantly and the major factors that caused the fall of the African economy were the stay at home policies. African governments paid dearly for such policies because countries run on the daily output of production within the state.

Prior to the pandemic, citizens had lost trust in political leaders, therefore, during the phase of COVID-19, some African governments in particular found it difficult sensitizing the public concerning their adherence to COVID protocols. There was difficulty on the part of leaders to make citizens adhere to advice from scientists, because of the already poor performance of policymakers. Throughout this difficulty, circulation of false information of the virus were rampant. In view of that, the government sought to put up a fight against disinformation and conspiracy theories relating to how people interpreted and communicated the causes, nature, symptoms and general information about COVID-19. Empirical literature has reported that such misinformation and disinformation were predominantly pushed by opposition parties.[50]

Ghana made efforts to adopt the WHO recommendations to match its unique situation. In accordance with Ghana's innovative plan, public gatherings were prohibited, market facilities were cleaned, social distancing and personal hygiene were strictly enforced, all land, sea, and air borders were closed to human

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[45] Sibley et al (2020): Effects of the COVID -19 Pandemic and Nationwide Lockdown on Trust, Attitudes Toward Government and well-being, Vol. 75, No. 5, 618-630, https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000662.

[46] Kazeem Bello Ajide, Lanre Ridwan Ibrahim, &Olorunfemi Yasiry Alimi. (2020). Estimating the impacts of lockdown on Covid-19 cases in Nigeria. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2020.100217.

[47] Haider N, Osman AY, Gadzekpo A, *et al*. Lockdown measures in response to COVID-19 in nine sub-Saharan African countries. *BMJ Global Health* 2020. doi: 10.1136/ bmjgh-2020 003319.

[48] Many African countries used police and other security forces to excessively and lethally force people to abide by lockdowns and curfews. Some countries are; Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, etc.

[49] Ede C, et al (2021): Implications of COVID-19 Lockdown on South African Business Sector *International Journal of Financial Research*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp 12-23; https://doi.org/10.5430/ijfr.v12n4p12.

[50] Indranil Chakraborty and Prasenjit Miaty (2020) *COVID-19: Migration, effects on society, global environment and prevention*.

travel, and disease epicenters were locked down.[51] This unanticipated pandemic forced government to put aside already existing policies and focused solely on the health crises which significantly affected the lives of ordinary Ghanaians.

Another challenge of the government was how to pull the people from poverty due to the lockdown. During the seven-week lockdown, nearly 10.1 million Ethiopians were forced into poverty. Out of the 10.1 million Ethiopians that were pushed into poverty, 7.3 million live in rural areas and 2.7 million in urban areas.[52]

Decline in Economic Growth

A global economic collapse and high unemployment have been brought on by the COVID-19 outbreak. The finances of families were negatively impacted by COVID-19. Several people lost their jobs as a result of the decline of the size of the formal and the informal sectors. Many businesses have been struggling with rising expenses and declining profits. Numerous routine exchanges of locally produced and imported goods between merchants and customers in crowded areas were prohibited because they could hasten the spread of the COVID. Furthermore, a number of studies have indicated that the majority of the urban population in many African cities are employed by markets, which encourages the growth of employment in respective nations.[53]-[54]-[55]. However, COVID-19's indirect effects on businesses and families, not just on traders but also on underprivileged groups like head porters and truck pushers who depend on this work to support and sustain their livelihoods, meant that they lost their source of income and as a result, lost their capacity to provide basic needs for themselves and their families.[56]

The pandemic caused a substantial number of job losses in Ethiopia including the construction business, hotel and restaurant businesses, wholesale

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[51] Asante, L., & Mills, R. (2020). Exploring the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Marketplaces in Urban Ghana. *Africa Spectrum*, *55*(2), 170-181. doi: 10.1177/0002039720943612.

[52] Aragie, E., Taffesse, A., & Thurlow, J. (2021). The short-term economywide impacts of COVID-19 in Africa: Insights from Ethiopia. *African Development Review*, *33*(S1). doi: 10.1111/1467-8268.12519.

[53] Asante, L. A, & Helbrecht, I. (2020). Urban governance and its implications for the micro-geographies of market trading in Ghana: A case of the Kotokuraba Market Project in Cape Coast. *GeoJournal*, *85*(5), 1203-1225.

[54] Debrah, Y. A. (2007). Promoting the informal sector as a source of gainful employment in developing countries: insights from Ghana. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(6), 1063-1084.

[55] Goodfellow, T. (2012). *State effectiveness and the politics of urban development in East Africa: A puzzle of two cities, 2000-2010* (Doctoral dissertation, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)).

[56] Saasa, S, & James, S. (2020). COVID-19 in Zambia: Implications for Family, Social, Economic, and Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *51*(3-4), 347-359.

and retail, industry/manufacturing, transport and personal services.[57] The level of impact of the pandemic on income generated by household sources included a reduction by 58 percent of such household income, which has increased the poverty index on the continent of Africa in particular. Also, 27.8 percent people have lost their entire non-farm income since the outbreak of the pandemic.[58] Businesses have seen a decrease in demand for goods[59], while disadvantaged households frequently lacked food as well as access to basic education, healthcare, clean water, and energy. With the decrease in goods and services, an additional 9.2% of the population in these sub-Saharan countries immediately fell into extreme poverty, with about 65% of this increase resulting from the lockdowns.[60]

The second source of livelihood adversely affected by the pandemic was remittance from abroad from which about 39 percent of households lost their income.[61] Lower salaries dented domestic spending, and the most disadvantaged in society have seen the collapse of their incomes, and the heat was turned on African countries. There was disruption of international trade, reduced demand for tourism services and subsequent revenue loss, drop in copper prices, and high inflation rates.[62]

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a devastating impact on every aspect of the economy, especially agriculture, which continues to be a crucial economic pillar in the majority of West African nations. Among the agricultural products that West African nations export are cocoa, rubber, cashew nuts, cotton, coffee, and oil palm. For examples, in Ghana, the global cost of cocoa dropped by almost 20% in February 2020.[63] The impact on agriculture have also been significantly worse, due to the disruption in fertilizer and other chemical imports. Also, in Ethiopia, there have been a decrease in coffee export demand.[64] The virus brought about an economic crisis in West Africa through three main channels: (1) disruption in production and decreased demand as a result of countries' containment and mitigation measures to limit the spread of

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[57] Degye Goshu et al (2020): Economic and welfare effects of COVID-19 and Responses in Ethiopia: Initial Insights; Ethiopian Economic Association; *Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute*, 1-43

[58] Beyene, L. M, Ferede, T, & Diriba, G. (2020). *The economywide impact of the COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy and Recovery options*.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Teachout, M., & Zipfel, C. (2020). *The economic impact of COVID-19 lockdowns in sub-Saharan Africa Policy brief.* https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Ng'andu, B. (2020). *Statement by the hon. Minister of finance on the impact of the coronavirus (covid-19) on the Zambian Economy*.

[63] Bouraima, M. B, Ifred, B, & Zonon, P. (2020). *COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic and elections implications in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).* https://ssrn.com/abstract=3683816.

[64] Beyene, L. M, Ferede, T, & Diriba, G. (2020). *The economywide impact of the COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy and Recovery options.*

the pandemic; (2) a decline in global economic growth and tightening global financial conditions, which had a significant impact on the region and continue to do so; and (3) a sharp drop in the prices of basic goods, in line with the global average.[65]

Some banks and businesses operated within limited man hours. During these shortened hours of operation, banks and businesses lost money. The aviation business was not an exception, it was adversely impacted by the COVID. The industry practically came to a halt and made little to no money. Some aircraft companies like the Air Algerie in Algeria lost almost all of their business, while others worked within 70-80% capacity.[66] At the end of 2020, Air Algerie lost 40 billion dinars which is about 320 million dollars. Indeed employees of several of these companies were laid off indefinitely.[67]

Impact on Global Migration

The African Common Position on Migration and Development claims that properly managed migration has a major positive impact on the development of countries of origin and offers great benefits to destination countries.[68] When COVID-19 first appeared, these important benefits of migration ceased. It had a major impact on individuals who wanted to migrate during the heat of the COVID around the world. Ullah and Chattoraj (2018) have estimated that, excluding passengers travelling by rail and by car, there were around 3.6 million persons who travelled both short and large distances in the world in 2016.[69] Also, on average, about one million passengers flew per day by airplane.[70] This clearly shows that a lot of people travel across the world. The dynamic of international migration changed during the lockdown. The majority of airlines were grounded and travel restrictions were imposed which had a great impact on migration. Such restrictions on movements also affected individuals who were stuck in their home countries and could no longer work to provide foreign remittances to support their families and also for the benefit of their local economies within the African states.

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[65] Bouraima, M. B, Ifred, B, & Zonon, P. (2020). *COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic and elections implications in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)*.

[66] Othmane Touat & Amel Tebani (2020): The Corona Virus Crisis and Its Implications on the Air Transport Sector In Algeria A Comparative Study With Some Arab Countries, Vol. 36 (3), 475-499.

[67] Mayai, A. T, Awolich, A. & Tiitmamer, N. (2020). *The Economic Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Sudan*.

[68] Maunganidze. A. O and Abebe T.T (2020): *Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Africa–EU Partnership Agenda on Migration and Mobility: A Continental Perspective*, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).

[69]Ullah, A. A, & Chattoraj, D. (2018). *Roots of discrimination against Rohingya minorities: Society, ethnicity and international relations. Intellectual Discourse*, 26(2), 541-465.

[70] Ullah, A. A, & Chattoraj, D. (2018). *Roots of discrimination against Rohingya minorities: Society, ethnicity and international relations. Intellectual Discourse*, 26(2), 541-465.

According to Ullah et.al (2021), the outbreak of the diseases caused many migrants to move to their homes, clutching their meagre possessions which came with other problems, like crowding, and disrupted transport networks. They added that, the sudden lockdown added unto their existing problems as they faced hunger, destitution, the wrath of the police and others. During the lock-down, many countries were unwilling to assist foreigners or migrants in their countries, which meant that the foreigners had to bear all the costs when they were affected by COVID-19.

In Ghana, following the government's announcement of a lockdown, one of the most urgent and frequently reported crises was the tragedy of migrant workers. Internally, the lock-down of Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi compelled hundreds of residents to move back to Ghana's Northern Region. Over 200 migrants returned to Nanumba North Municipality after the lockdown was implemented.[71] The number of Ghanaians who were stuck in Niger and were supposed to be moved through different borders around Ghana, namely Aflao, Elubo, and Sampa, were estimated to be around 1800 persons. Due to the inaccessibility of the standard Ghanaian borders as a result of the closure of the official borders, there was an increasing use of illegal routes for both migrants entering and departing from the country. These migrants became vulnerable to traffickers and smugglers who operated these unapproved routes and profited from them. These stranded labour migrants were either from Ghana or from different African countries.[72]

Furthermore, due to labor migrant issues, marine fishing, fish processing activities, infrastructure development, manufacturing, and construction activities in urban areas were severely impacted, threatening Ghana's economic growth and development. The imposition of travel restrictions and lockdown policies in response to COVID-19, led to intense securitized migration management.[73] According to the World Bank, when examined through the prism of migration, the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 could be long, deep, and ubiquitous.[74]

According to Bisong, et. al, the implementation of lockdown measures in the host countries led to the loss of numerous migrant workers' jobs, decreased remittance flows to developing countries, and decreased productivity in the host countries. For instance, Ghana's economy was impacted by a decline in

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[71] David Tanoh Aduhene & Eeric Osei-Assibey. (2021). Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Ghana's economy: challenges and prospects. *The impact of COVID-19 on Ghana's economy*.

[72] United Nations Framework Report (2020), "A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19", available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_framework_report_on_covid-19.pdf (accessed August 2020).

[73] Akim, A.-M, Ayivodji, F., Bank, W, & Dc, W. (2020). *Interaction Effect of Lockdown with Economic and Fiscal Measures against COVID-19 on Social-Distancing Compliance: Evidence from Africa*. https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/.

[74] World Bank. (2012). The World Bank Annual Report 2012: Volume 1. Main Report. World Bank Annual Report; Washington, DC. World Bank.

remittances in addition to the drop in oil prices.[75] South Africa is one of the African economies that receives a significant amount of intra-African remittances from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Eswatini, and Zambia[76]. Following the implementation of lockdown measures, the majority of remittances reduced as migrants working in the informal sector lost their jobs and returned home.[77]

Food Security Concerns

The pandemic and the immediate lockdown in most African countries did not necessarily lead to famine. However, there are empirical shreds of evidence that show that the spread of Covid-19 and the related global recession have led to the rise in food insecurity across Africa.[78]-[79]-[80]-[81] This includes rising food prices, police brutality of some vendors, financial difficulties related to the lockdown order, and violent relocations and traffic-calming measures intended to encourage social segregation among traders. These were all indications of the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the local economy.[82]

The above issues highlight the shock African countries faced in the production of goods and provision of services. Ghana, for example, lifted some of its already modest lockdown measures in response to food security concerns, even though the country had some significant number of COVID-19 cases. According to Kamel Mouloudj et al; Algeria experienced a significant increase in demand for food commodities, particularly semolina, pasta, flour, and dry grains in March 2020[83]. These commodities further became almost unavailable and prices were still on the increase as the media also increased families' worries

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[75] Debuysscher, J. 2020. Ghana will struggle with impact of COVID-19 and oil price shock. Credendo. 2 April 2020.

[76] Statistics South Africa. 2016. Community survey 2016 – Statistical release.

[77] Cohen, M. and Vecchiatto, P. 2020. Migrant Worker Exodus Undermines South Africa Virus Lockdown. Bloomberg. 25 March 2020.

[78] See: Adjognon, G.S., Bloem, J.R., Sanoh, A, 2020. The Coronavirus Pandemic and Food Security: Evidence from West Africa. Policy Research Working Paper 9474. World Bank.

[79] Arndt, C, Davies, R., Gabriel, S, Harris, L, Makrelov, K, Robinson, S, Levy, S, Simbanegavi, W, van Seventer, D, Anderson, L, 2020. Covid-19 lockdowns, income distribution, and food security: an analysis for South Africa. Global food security 26, 100410.

[80] See: Kansiime, M. K, Tambo, J. A, Mugambi, I, Bundi, M, Kara, A, Owuor, C, 2021. COVID19 implications on household income and food security in Kenya and Uganda: findings from a rapid assessment. World Dev. 137, 105199.

[81] Mahmud, M., & Riley, E, (2021). Household response to an extreme shock: evidence on the immediate impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on economic outcomes and well-being in rural Uganda. World Dev. 140, 105318.

[82] Asante, L. A, & Mills, R. O. (2020). Exploring the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Marketplaces in Urban Ghana Asante and Mills. In *Africa Spectrum,*Vol. 55, Issue 2.

[83] Kamel Mouloudj, Ahmed Chemseddine Bouarar, Hamid Fecht. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Food Security. Les Cahiers du Cread, Vol 36.

about food scarcity. The agriculture and the commerce ministries had to implement measures to create market rebalancing as there was a likelihood of starvation or famine.[84]

Due to the fear of famine, some of these African countries avoided strict and prolonged lockdown measures. This occurred partly because several of these African countries depended on imported goods. Ghana's market trading for instance has continued to rely primarily on imported items from nations such as Burkina Faso, Nigeria, China, India, and Vietnam among others. There were price hikes for both imported foods and locally produced goods.[85] A drop in demand and/or direct supply shocks disrupted international and domestic supply networks[86]. Most newspapers in African countries reported that there were losses in income and thus access to food became a problem. The food security concerns were evident as countries like Ghana, Zambia, and Benin relaxed their lockdown policies and eventually lifted them. The partial lifting of the lockdown and other related decisions were instigated by the questions around food security. Meanwhile, in Uganda, the president, Yoweri Museveni, blamed price hikes on food sellers or traders and was ready to revoke the licenses of traders who were culprits.

Limitation of the Healthcare System

Most African countries have insufficient health-care capacity and have simultaneously been afflicted by many health challenges such as Ebola, malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, and pneumonia. According to the WHO, Africa accounts for half of all children under the age of five who die as a result of these diseases. Also, African countries find it difficult to coordinate their health-specific responses to arrest the spread of these viruses.

Typically, health systems in African countries are weak, with limited capacities to deal with pandemics: hospitals are few and far between, the number of medical doctors is low and there are few intensive care units that are equipped to deal with infections. Most African countries' health systems are known to be already overburdened and riddled with existing diseases and the rise and fast spread of the COVID-19 cases was anticipated to place tremendous strain on the few public health systems.[87]

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[84] Birner R. et al. (2021): We would rather die from COVID -19 than hunger- Exploring lockdown stringencies in five African countries, *Global Food Security 31 (2021) 10057* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2021.100571.

[85] Asante, L, & Mills, R. (2020). Exploring the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Marketplaces in Urban Ghana. *Africa Spectrum*, *55*(2), 170-181. doi: 10.1177/0002039720943612.

[86] See: Beyene, L. M, Ferede, T, & Diriba, G. (2020). The economywide impact of the COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy and Recovery options

[87] United Nation Conference on Trade and development (2020): Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's Economic Development, 1-21.

From the findings of Seidner et al (2020), South Africa initiated the 5th level lockdown on most public and private sectors with the exception of their health facilities[88]. Also, child health visits for immunizations reduced. There was a problem with balancing primary healthcare provision and the protection of vulnerable population from COVID-19 infection in South Africa. Fear of getting the virus through health-care institutions resulted in a significant decrease in the use of public hospital outpatient and inpatient treatments. In Ethiopia, the number of patients at Addis Ababa University's Black Lion Hospital decreased, and absenteeism among health personnel also increased.[89]

Again, in Ethiopia, the country's critical concern centered on dealing with the virus in inadequate health institutions. Ethiopia has a relatively large population but has few health facilities and medical equipment. Deducing from such information, it was a worry for health practitioners to help prevent and reduce COVID-19 in Ethiopia especially under lockdowns. These inadequate health institutions have overwhelmingly relied on fragile economies within the African states, which have been prompted to seek foreign assistance, from time to time. Similarly, Brenya and Adu-Gyamfi (2014) have asserted that the politics of management on healthcare is contingent on financing[90]. Thus, the healthcare system effectively works when there is monetary resource, yet, the political regimes in Africa have devoured the benefits that are to be derived from the health care system. It is often left in the realm of promises of better infrastructure tomorrow, than to take pragmatic steps to improve medical infrastructure and services, to support the citizens within the African states. This issue among others have made health care more or less dysfunctional with limited infrastructure and medical equipment including demotivated medical personnel who are quite often interested in seeking for what they perceive to be greener pastures somewhere in Europe or North America.

Although, there have been efforts made by NGO's and governmental bodies to promote and prepare the health systems in Africa, there have been difficulties in managing the hospital space and attending to patients. This is because the national health systems in several African countries are generally

[88]See: The 5th level lockdown means taking drastic measures to curb spread of the virus. These measures were allowing only essential services, limitation of public transport and no movement between provinces. Siedner MJ, Kraemer JD, Meyer MJ, et al. Access to primary healthcare during lockdown measures for COVID-19 in rural South Africa: an interrupted time series analysis. BMJ Open 2020; 10:e043763. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2020-043763.

[89] Zemzem Shigute, Anagaw Derseh Mebratie, Getnet Alemu, Arjun Bedi, 2020: Containing the spread of COVID-19 in Ethiopia, Vol. 10(1), doi:10.7189/jogh.10.010369.

[90] Brenya. E. & Adu-Gyamfi. S, (2014): Interest Groups, Issue Definition and the Politics of Healthcare in Ghana, *Public Policy and Administrative Research*, Vol. 4, No. 6, 88-96.

underfunded and understaffed.[91]-[92]-[93]According to some researchers, health care in Africa increased dramatically in the previous ten years due to the introduction of community-based health insurance programmes launched in various African countries. This notwithstanding, resources are still limited. For instance, Ethiopia has a population of 110 million people but has few health facilities and equipment in the country. It has 557 mechanical ventilators and 570 intensive care unit (ICU) beds[94], which became a big challenge to here, when she was battling against COVID-19 with its concomitant lockdown policy.

Ethiopia and South Africa are not the only countries that suffer from health fragilities and inadequate health facilities. Ghana, Cameroon, Algeria, Uganda, Congo and many other African countries are not exempted. Lockdowns and stay at home policies had the tendency or the proclivity to cause a reduction of human resource in several African countries. One aspect of the COVID-19 protocol was that, infected persons were to stay at home and call for medical assistance from the house. This initiative was a fiasco due to the nature of housing systems and town planning, which are exacerbated by the challenge of few and inefficient ambulatory services.

Political Economy and Economic Shock in a Covid-19 Africa

Political economy is concerned with how politics influences the economy and how the economy influences politics. Politics, in its broadest definition, is compatible with governmental proceedings in which the government seeks to alleviate societal discomfort through policy formulation. Thus, governments aim to boost their respective economies before elections, causing so-called political business cycles to create economic slump around election season. Economic conditions have a significant impact on elections. With regards to that, political economists were unsurprised by the rise in government expenditure during the election year. This resulted in conflicting policy responses, particularly in the face of a global pandemic.

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[91] World Health Organization (WHO) (2013). The World Health Report: Research for Universal Health Coverage https://www.afro.who.int/publications/world-health-report-2013-research-universal-health-coverage.

[92] The Universal Health Coverage was a report that sought to achieve full access to high-quality services for health promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, palliation, and financial risk protection. The report accounted for the necessary research, stating that nations should be both producers and consumers of research.

[93] Mboera, L. E. G, Akipede, G. O, Banerjee, A, Cuevas, L. E, Czypionka, T, Khan, M, Kock, R, McCoy, D, Mmbaga, B. T, Misinzo, G, Shayo, E. H, Sheel, M, Sindato, C, & Urassa, M. (2020). Mitigating lockdown challenges in response to COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa. In *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* (Vol. 96, pp. 308–310). Elsevier B.V. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.018.

[94] Zemzem Shigute, Anagaw Derseh Mebratie, Getnet Alemu, & Arjun Bedi. (2020). Containing the spread of COVID-19 in Ethiopia. *Journal of global health*, *10*(1).

Political economy and economic shock are significant tools in explaining the aftermath of lockdowns during the spread of COVID-19 in Africa. African states faced difficulties, considering the proper measures to ease COVID-19: what limits to apply and when to relax them, where to spend money and how to raise it, and what national concerns could be constrained to favour international collaboration. These contemplations raised lots of discussions concerning the challenges for governmental bodies both internally and externally. In this case, the epidemic exemplified the interaction of politics, economy, and other factors.

Public health experts have long issued warnings that a major pandemic was imminent, and emphasized the need for improved readiness. Politicians, particularly in African nations, who were preoccupied with upcoming elections, however, found it challenging to invest time, resources, and political capital in addressing the hypothetical prospect of a catastrophe in the future.[95] As a result, African countries in particular were unprepared for the new coronavirus which continues to pose a danger to several of the global population.

As the pandemic spread all over the world, policy responses were moderated by political bodies. Governments' inability to offer and supply all commodities and services for the population throughout the pandemic demonstrated how unprepared and unreliable several African countries were. The directives in battling the COVID-19 led to inconsistencies in socio-economic development which necessitated the loss in GDP and fiscal deficits. In Ethiopia, there was the loss of 14.3% in GDP, whiles Ghana experienced a sharp decline in commodity exports with an overall fiscal deficit of 5.1% GDP. Meanwhile, Algeria's service sector lost $273billion dollars of revenue, and the market prices of South Africa fell to 16.1% GDP. Lastly, Cameroon, which was known for it good response towards COVID-19 also was not spared, according to the International Monetary Fund, Cameroon was expected to suffer a drop of 24.5% GDP in 2019 to 24.1% GDP in 2020. All these drops were due to the impact of COVID-19 on investments, exports and bank liquidity of several African countries.

During the implementation of the lockdown, the prices of internal commodities spiked, causing an internal shock on the market. Economic difficulties resulted from this. The closure of various enterprises also contributed to a decline in labor force participation, poorer productivity, and higher domestic trade costs. This resulted from the implementation of stay-at-home instructions that affected regional trade, the free flow of food and money, and the importation of products. Certain members of the public, as well as some legislators, upon such realization, fought or better still, resisted some public health professionals' advice, hoping for relaxed limitations and a return to normalcy in the foreseeable future. Simultaneously, commercial interests have lobbied for exceptions for

[95] Bouraima, M. B, Ifred, B, & Zonon, P. (2020). *COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic and elections implications in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)*. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3683816.

their benefit especially hefty subsidies or bailouts to assist them get through the difficult times. [96]

The rising price of oil, limited investment, unemployment, high tariffs, and increased prices in other goods and services are all factors which contributed to the macroeconomic shock. Yet, under pressure from their constituents, governments have diverted resources away from other countries, prohibited the export of food and drugs, and stockpiled crucial supplies. This increased the external shock in higher international trade costs, dropped export demand, lowered import supply, dropped rate of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and remittances, and lowered import price of oil among other things.

Another factor is how the closure of schools affected instructors' income notably in private schools where salaries or payments of teachers are based on tuition. Closures of Public transport systems were also related to domestic shock. It made it difficult for people to commute between different locations and kept drivers from working as well. Workplace closures mostly affected persons employed in urban services including retail, transportation of people and products, lodging and food services, manufacturing, and construction among others.[97]

Summary

The global epidemic of the new corona-virus, is very contagious and deadly.[98] The unexpected discovery of a novel coronavirus had an extraordinary impact on the entire world because of the way the coronavirus spreads. Contact with infected persons aided the rapid spread of the virus over the world. In addition, the lack of rapid preventive immunizations or cures to combat the disease assisted its spread and even raised mortality rates. Lockdown was required, according to the WHO and other health-related organizations, to stop the spread of the virus. In an unexpected turn of events, the disease rapidly spread to almost every nation on the earth. However, the emergence of the disease and its responses especially lockdown, posed a challenge to the world especially Africa.

Majority of these countries that went into lockdown faced disruption in their economic, social, and political activities. Some of the sectors which faced challenges included the migration sector, which supplies labour and provide

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[96] Goshu. D. et al (2020); Assessment of COVID-19 Effects and response measures in Ethiopia: Livelihoods and Welfare Implications; Ethiopian Economics Association; Ethiopian Policy Research Institute, 1-42.

[97] Teachout, M, & Zipfel, C. (2020). *The economic impact of COVID-19 lockdowns in sub-Saharan Africa Policy brief.* https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty.

[98] Most notable in the continuous announcement and fight against covid-19 is WHO. (2020). *Novel Coronavirus (2019-Ncov.*

remittances for most countries. The migration sector has been mostly associated with tourist going on vacations and adding more income to the host country. All these advantages were severely affected due to the pandemic and the lockdown policy. Food security problems were readily apparent in the majority of African countries, prompting these countries to revise existing lockdown tactics. The spread of the virus and the lockdown directive had a big influence on politics, nationally and internationally. Due to the fact that fewer people were unable to work from home, economic growth slowed, leading to lower productivity, little to no remittances, and a higher reliance on the government to meet all basic needs. Even though the Lockdown was essential in halting the spread of COVID-19, it had an adverse effect on the economies of most African nations both globally and locally. This also had an impact on their political process. Implementation of these limits was limited due to lack of resources, but it also prompted concerns about excesses in law enforcement and human rights violations.

The idea that reinforced this conversation highlighted the argument that because illnesses have no regard for national boundaries, a global epidemic required a global response. As a result, the best course of action to handle an international public health disaster should undoubtedly be a coordinated global response. To achieve same, the primary goal of the lockdown to stop the spread of the disease could have been best achieved with proper local strategies that could help to maintain social, psychological and economic well-being of the people within the African states. The Lockdown policy alone thwarted or better still dwarfed global economic interdependence and fiscal growth with disruptions that cut across social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of human existence. Indeed, the push for economic growth among the community of nations has become paramount in the contemporary history of the world. The damning effect of the COVID shall continue to linger even in the foreseeable future, especially for countries whose economies have been mismanaged over a longer period of time.

Zaključak

Globalna epidemija novog korona virusa, veoma je zarazna i smrtonosna. Neočekivano otkriće novog korona virusa imalo je izuzetan utjecaj na cijeli svijet zbog načina na koji se koronavirus širi. Kontakt sa zaraženim osobama doprinio je brzom širenju virusa širom svijeta. Osim toga, nedostatak brzih preventivnih imunizacija ili lijekova za borbu protiv bolesti je pomogao njenom širenju, pa čak i povećao stopu smrtnosti. Prema WHO-u i drugim zdravstvenim organizacijama bilo je potrebno zaključavanje kako bi se zaustavilo širenje virusa. U neočekivanom preokretu, bolest se brzo proširila na gotovo sve nacije na zemlji. Međutim, pojava bolesti i njeni odgovori, posebno izolacija, predstavljali su izazov za svijet, posebno za Afriku.

Većina ovih zemalja koje su ušle u izolaciju suočile su se s poremećajem u svojim ekonomskim, društvenim i političkim aktivnostima. Neki od sektora koji su se suočili sa izazovima uključuju sektor migracija, koji obezbjeđuje radnu snagu za većinu zemalja i doznake koje strani državljani šalju u svoje matične zemlje. Sektor migracija je uglavnom povezan sa odlaskom turista na odmor i dodavanjem više prihoda zemlji domaćinu. Sve ove prednosti bile su ozbiljno pogođene zbog pandemije i politike izolacije. Problemi sa sigurnošću hrane bili su odmah očigledni u većini afričkih zemalja, što je navelo ove zemlje da revidiraju postojeće taktike izolacije. Širenje virusa i direktiva o izolaciji imali su veliki utjecaj na politiku, na nacionalnom i međunarodnom planu. Zbog činjenice da manje ljudi nije moglo da radi od kuće, ekonomski rast je usporen, što je dovelo do niže produktivnosti, malog ili nikakvog doznaka i većeg oslanjanja na vladu da zadovolji sve osnovne potrebe. Iako je blokada bila ključna za zaustavljanje širenja COVID-19, imala je negativan učinak na ekonomije većine afričkih nacija kako na globalnom tako i na lokalnom nivou. To je uticalo i na njihov politički proces. Sprovođenje ovih ograničenja bilo je ograničeno zbog nedostatka resursa, ali je takođe izazvalo zabrinutost zbog ekscesa u provođenju zakona i kršenja ljudskih prava.

Ideja koja je pojačala ovaj razgovor naglasila je argument da zbog toga što bolesti nemaju obzira na nacionalne granice, globalna epidemija zahtijeva globalni odgovor. Kao rezultat toga, najbolji način djelovanja za rješavanje međunarodne katastrofe javnog zdravlja nesumnjivo bi trebao biti koordiniran globalni odgovor. Da bi se to postiglo, primarni cilj izolacije za zaustavljanje širenja bolesti mogao se najbolje postići odgovarajućim lokalnim strategijama koje bi mogle pomoći u održavanju socijalnog, psihološkog i ekonomskog blagostanja ljudi u afričkim državama. Sama politika zaključavanja osujetila je ili još bolje umanjila globalnu ekonomsku međuzavisnost i fiskalni rast s poremećajima koji su zahvatili društvene, kulturne i psihološke dimenzije ljudskog postojanja. Zaista, pritisak na ekonomski rast među zajednicom nacija postao je najvažniji u savremenoj historiji svijeta. Pogubni učinak COVID-a nastavit će se zadržati čak i u doglednoj budućnosti, posebno za zemlje čijim se ekonomijama loše upravljalo u dužem vremenskom periodu.

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