



ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON GLOBALIZATION AND SPREAD OF “XENO-RACISM” IN PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the impacts of pandemics on the economic and social developments of countries from a historical perspective and exemplifies the issue with the Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. In this context, the article explains the nature of COVID-19, the counter-measures taken by countries to curb and eradicate the disease and tries to understand the socio-economic consequences of these measures by focusing on their adverse effects on the globalization phenomena. In this framework, the article dwells on the importance of the “supply chains” notion. The article also reviews the environmental repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic by referring to new earth science concepts such as “ecocide” and their relationship with globalization. Finally, the article explains the new discriminatory acts that have surfaced in the COVID-19 pandemic period, elucidates the xenophobic and racist behaviors faced in the previous pandemic periods, and introduces the concept of “xeno-racism” for explaining the discriminatory behaviors surfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article makes the claim that “xeno-racism” is currently one of the biggest challenges facing humanity.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Wars, famines, natural disasters and many other catastrophic events have affected societies, causing cities and civilizations to decline. Likewise, infectious diseases have played an important role in the rise and fall of societies.¹ In this regard, proliferation of contagious diseases as epidemics and pandemics has the potential to undermine the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in affected countries, and has often been associated with major transformations in development trajectories. Major pandemics can affect the social and political legacies of disease-stricken regions for centuries afterwards and can also generate new forms of social discrimination.² The Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19) is the first pandemic of the 21st century. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet ended, it is possible to say even at this stage that its economic, social and environmental impacts have already induced severe global consequences. In the context of the severe consequences, this article, within the framework of the current stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, intends to focus on the following twofold questions:

First, how has the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped globalization by disrupting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and what do these disruptions reveal about the strengths and weaknesses of existing frameworks for resilience in a globalized economy?

From the perspective of sustainable development, major pandemics such as COVID-19 simultaneously disrupt the economic, social and environmental dimensions that underpin the 2030 Agenda. Recent global assessments indicate sharp contractions in output and trade, unprecedented losses of working hours and employment, and a disproportionate deterioration in the situation of already vulnerable

¹ Andrew T Price-Smith, 'Disease and International Development' in Andrew T Price-Smith (ed), *Plagues and Politics: Infectious Disease and International Policy* (Palgrave 2001) 138.

² Daniel Gingerich and Jan P Vogler, 'Pandemics and Political Development: The Electoral Legacy of the Black Death in Germany' (2020) SSRN Working Paper 3578732 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3578732 accessed 28 November 2025.

groups, thereby jeopardizing progress towards poverty reduction, decent work and reduced inequalities. At the same time, temporary improvements in local air and water quality have been offset by rising medical and plastic waste, as well as by concerns that the crisis may delay or weaken long-term commitments to climate action and environmental protection. Situating COVID-19 within this three-pillar sustainable development framework allows a more systematic evaluation of how pandemic-related measures affect the trajectory of sustainable development at national and global levels and clarifies the relevance of the present analysis for debates on resilience and recovery.

Recent legal scholarship has similarly emphasised that without robust disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) frameworks to manage pandemic-related disruptions to critical sectors such as energy, global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals may be significantly undermined.³

Second, through which historical, socio-economic and political mechanisms has the COVID-19 pandemic reconfigured patterns of xenophobia and racism into ‘xeno-racism’ at the global level, and what do these dynamics imply for equality, social cohesion and the protection of vulnerable groups within the broader framework of sustainable development?

To answer these questions, the article examines the role of COVID-19 on the economic and social developments of countries through comparative historical analyses; especially how issues of economic exclusion, xenophobia and racism, surged during the pandemics. The article further assesses counter-measures by governments for disease control and their consequences.

In doing so, particular attention is paid to how gaps and weaknesses in disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) policies and institutions have intensified the adverse social and economic consequences of the

³ Damilola S Olawuyi and Victoria R Nalule, ‘Ensuring Universal Access to Modern Energy Services in Times of Pandemic Related Disruptions: Legal Challenges and Potential Responses’ (2021) 12(1) *The Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 49–71 <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jsdlp.v12i1.3>

pandemic and to the extent to which the COVID-19 experience can inform future reforms aimed at strengthening sustainable and equitable risk governance.

In addition to public health related measures, the analyses unpacks the socio-economic consequences of these measures by focusing on their adverse effects on the globalization phenomena and the “supply chains” of regional economies. Environmental repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic in relevance to concepts such as “ecocide” and their relationship with globalization are also part of the analysis. Finally, the article explains the new discriminatory acts and stigmatizations in the COVID-19 pandemic period, elucidates the xenophobic and racist behaviors faced in the previous pandemic periods, and introduces the novel 21st century concept of “xeno-racism” for explaining the discriminatory behaviors surfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the rich and growing literature on pandemics, globalization and their socio-economic and environmental consequences, there remains limited systematic analysis of how a major contemporary pandemic simultaneously affects the three pillars of sustainable development while also reshaping patterns of discrimination and ‘xeno-racism’ at the global level. By integrating comparative historical perspectives on past pandemics with an examination of COVID-19’s economic, social and environmental repercussions, this article seeks to fill this gap by elucidating the pandemic’s implications for sustainable development and by advancing ‘xeno-racism’ as an analytical lens for understanding emergent forms of exclusion in the current global context.

This article, in this regard, is divided in six parts. Following the introduction, the first section offers a literature-informed comparative analysis of selected major pandemics and their economic, social and environmental consequences as a foundation for understanding their implications for sustainable development. The second part dwells particularly on the measures against COVID-19 and their economic consequences. The third section then assesses the impact of these COVID-19 related measure on the global economy. The following fourth section further assesses the social consequences of the COVID-19 related measures, while the fifth section elaborates on the effect of COVID-19 on

the environment. The sixth and final part explains the naissance of concept of “xeno-racism” as the mélange form of racism and xenophobia, discusses how racism and xenophobia accompanied the previous pandemics, and dwells on the spread of “xeno-racism” in COVID-19 environment. The mentioned parts of the article are followed by the conclusion.

Taken together, these six parts provide an integrated examination of how the COVID-19 pandemic and earlier pandemics affect the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, while also illuminating the governance and policy challenges that underpin resilience, vulnerability and the emergence of new forms of discrimination in a globalized context.

II. COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MAJOR PANDEMICS

During pandemic periods, strict measures were taken to eradicate the relevant disease of that period. To that effect, quarantine measures were put into effect, and people were sought to be isolated. For example, “as early as the fourteenth century... city states established crude lazarettos, quarantine facilities for isolating sick passengers and sanitizing ships and goods.”⁴ The bubonic plague, later named the “Black Death”, was the reason for quarantine measures in the middle of the fourteenth century around 1350s. The Black Death was described by the scholarly sources as “a human disaster of appalling magnitude”, which “definitely began in Asiatic steps... thence spread south, to China and India, and the West”⁵. It is claimed that it caused tens of millions of deaths over the world with “about 25 million deaths only in Europe”⁶.

After the Black Death, influenza swept the world in two waves in 1918 and third one in 1919. The 1918 influenza in question is often associated

⁴ Simon Carvalho and Mark Zacher, ‘The International Health Regulations in Historical Perspective’ in Andrew T Price-Smith (ed), *Plagues and Politics: Infectious Disease and International Policy* (Palgrave 2001) 235.

⁵ Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester University Press 1994) 3, 8–9.

⁶ Paul R Epstein and Andrew T Price-Smith, ‘Climate, Ecology and Human Health’ in Andrew T Price-Smith (ed), *Plagues and Politics: Infectious Disease and International Policy* (Palgrave 2001) 27–58.

inaccurately with Spain, and is popularly referred to as the “Spanish Flu”.⁷ It was considered the worst pandemic in history since the Black Death⁸. It is estimated that it killed at least fifty million people⁹. A scholarly source states in this respect that “Global mortality from the influenza pandemic appears to have been of the order of 50 million. However, even this vast figure may be substantially lower than the real toll, perhaps as much as 100 percent understated”¹⁰. Although Asia has often been cited as the source of the virus, academic sources assert that “it is still not known where the virus originated”¹¹. It is claimed in this regard that the first known outbreak of the 1918 influenza pandemic surfaced at Camp Funston, Kansas, on March 5, 1918, and that in the first wave, the pandemic travelled the globe in four months. In the second wave, it is pointed out that the pandemic “had washed over nearly every inhabited place on the planet”, and after the milder third wave in the winter of 1919, it was over¹². The Black Death and the 1918 influenza have been regarded by the scholars thus far to be the two major pandemics humanity faced since the Medieval Age.

The world did not face a pandemic for nearly a century after the 1918 influenza up until “the first human cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, subsequently named SARS-CoV-2, were first reported by officials in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019.”¹³

⁷ 1918 influenza is often referred to as “Spanish flu”. However, all the scholarly sources agree on the point that it did not start in Spain. Expert opinions concur in this respect that naming this influenza in that way is a wrong stigmatization. With this point in mind, we avoided using this phrase as a direct name of the pandemic.

⁸ Christian W. McMillen, *Pandemics A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 89.

⁹ Jeffery K Taubenberger and David M Morens, ‘1918 Influenza: The Mother of All Pandemics’ (2006) 12(1) *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 15 <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1201.050979> accessed 24 March 2026.

¹⁰ Niall P A S Johnson and Juergen Mueller, ‘Updating the Accounts: Global Mortality of the 1918–1920 “Spanish” Influenza Pandemic’ (2002) 76(1) *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 105–15 <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.2002.0022>.

¹¹ McMillen, *Pandemics: A Very Short Introduction* 89.

¹² McMillen, *Pandemics: A Very Short Introduction* 89.

¹³ ‘Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 94’ (World Health Organization, 23 April 2020) <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf> accessed 28 November 2025.

Coronaviruses, a group of viruses common in different animals, may cause a multitude of diseases with varying severities. Some of them can cause colds or other mild respiratory (nose, throat, lung) illnesses. Other coronaviruses can cause more serious diseases, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Coronaviruses are named for their appearance: Under microscope, the viruses look like they are covered with pointed structures that surround them like a corona (a crown)¹⁴. Prof. Hotamisligil, in the context of the long historical background of the novel coronavirus, defines the novel coronavirus as “an unfamiliar member of a familiar virus family.”¹⁵

In a very short period of time, this virus has spread in 2020 all over the world and has been detected in over 190 countries. It has filled hospitals with patients suffering COVID-19 and has taken hundreds of thousands of lives. It has turned people’s lives upside down and has significantly weakened the economies of even the most developed countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) first declared COVID-19 as “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020, and afterward on 11 March 2020 made the following pandemic announcement:

“Deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction, WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.”¹⁶

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to WHO’s “COVID-19 Dashboard”, as of 1 September 2020, there have been around 25

¹⁴ Lauren M Sauer, ‘What Is Coronavirus?’ (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 17 June 2020) <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus> accessed 28 November 2025

¹⁵ Gökhan Hotamışlıgil, ‘Coronavirus and Its Effects on the Global Economy’ (DTİK, 1 April 2020) <<http://dtik.org.tr/UserFiles/Document/Coronavirus-and-Its-Effects-on-the-Global-Economy.pdf>> accessed 28 November 2025.

¹⁶ Gökhan Hotamışlıgil, ‘Coronavirus and Its Effects on the Global Economy’ (DTİK, 1 April 2020) <http://dtik.org.tr/UserFiles/Document/Coronavirus-and-Its-Effects-on-the-Global-Economy.pdf> accessed 28 November 2025.

million globally confirmed cases of COVID-19, including around 850,000 deaths, reported to WHO.¹⁷

In connection with the announcement of the WHO of COVID-19 first as PHEIC and then as pandemic, most countries, have step-by step enacted wide-ranging precautions such as closing borders to arrivals from countries with infections, shutting down borders, halting international and domestic flights, bringing domestic transportation restrictions and sometimes banning mass mobility, instructing their population to self-quarantine, announcing partial or full lockdown, and in some cases imposing curfews, closing schools, and banning mass gatherings. Additionally, responding to the calls of their expats, many countries have evacuated their citizens living abroad. These measures, in most cases, have led to a complete cessation of daily social life and economic activities. Thus, a steep worldwide economic decline has come into being along with traumatic social consequences.

Conventional wisdom¹⁸, both in the academic sense and relating to business practices, deems that COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted globalization. For some, globalization is waning or teetering on the verge of total collapse, whereas others argue that it is heading for the "intensive care unit."¹⁹ Some others are questioning whether COVID-19 has "killed" globalization²⁰. Inquiries in this direction have brought along evaluations of what could replace globalization if it indeed disappears. In

¹⁷ 'WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard' (World Health Organization, 2020) <<https://covid19.who.int/>> accessed 28 November 2025.

¹⁸ We consider this term in the meaning of ideas or explanations generally accepted as true by the public, experts, and scholars. The term was introduced by John Kenneth Galbraith in his book titled *Affluent Society*. Galbraith, explains the concept in Chapter 2 of his book as follows: "Because familiarity is such an important test of acceptability, the acceptable ideas have great stability. They are highly predictable. It will be convenient to have a name for the ideas which are esteemed at any time for their acceptability, and it should be a term that emphasizes this predictability. We shall refer to these ideas henceforth as the 'Conventional Wisdom'.

¹⁹ Stephen M Walt, 'The Realist's Guide to the Coronavirus Outbreak' (Foreign Policy, 9 March 2020) <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-economy-globalization-virus-icu-realism/> accessed 28 November 2025.

²⁰ 'Globalisation Unwound: Has Covid-19 Killed Globalisation?' *The Economist* (14 May 2020) <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2020/05/14/has-covid-19-killed-globalisation> accessed 28 November 2025.

this sense, globalization, setting aside public health, appears to be one of the most negatively affected global phenomena and needs to be subjected to scholarly evaluation in the COVID-19 pandemic period.

In connection with the pandemic periods, scholarly studies point out that, in addition to the devastating economic and social effects of pandemics, the ubiquity of large-scale health threats, and the uncertainty and fear that accompany them lead to new behaviors and beliefs. In this regard, attention is drawn to that fact people become both more skeptical and more naive, and are less willing to engage with anybody or anything that seems foreign or odd. Economic historian Harold Davidson directs attention to Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's book titled *Waning of the Middle Ages*. Davidson states that "the period following the Black Death in Europe turned out to be the 'waning of the Middle Ages'... not just (because of) the economic aftereffects of a pandemic, but the mysticism, irrationalism, and xenophobia that eventually brought an end to a universalist culture"²¹.

The following part, will first tackle the issue based on the economic consequences of the measures against COVID-19.

III. ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE MEASURES TAKEN FOR CURBING AND ERADICATING COVID-19

It is a generally accepted conjecture that the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound negative effects on the economies of individual countries and on the global economy, and that the scale and distribution of these effects are closely linked to the nature, timing and design of the policy measures adopted for curbing and eradicating the virus, including those related to broader disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) and economic risk governance.

Economic reports prepared by the leading international economic and financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary

²¹ Harold James, 'A Pandemic of Deglobalization?' (Project Syndicate, 28 February 2020) <<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/covid-19-deglobalization-pandemic-by-harold-james-2020-02>> accessed 28 November 2025.

Fund (IMF) point to the devastating effects of COVID-19 on economies. The latest World Bank June 2020 report describes this effect as “the largest economic shock the world economy has witnessed in decades, causing a collapse in global activity”²² The mentioned report, in order to describe the magnitude of the disruption caused by COVID-19 mitigation measures like the lockdowns, closure of schools and non-essential business, and travel restrictions, underlines that “the pandemic is expected to plunge a majority of countries into recession this year, with per capita output contracting in the largest fraction of countries since 1870”²³. IMF, back in April 2020 report, states that “This crisis is like no other... It is very likely that this year the global economy will experience its worst recession since the Great Depression, surpassing that seen during the global financial crisis a decade ago”²⁴. IMF, in its June 2020 World Economic Outlook Update, portrays a more grim future and expresses that “The COVID-19 pandemic has had a more negative impact on activity in the first half of 2020 than anticipated, and the recovery is projected to be more gradual than previously forecast”²⁵.

When the negative economic consequences caused by COVID-19 are expressed in numbers, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the world economy is projected to decrease by 3.2 percent in 2020. Furthermore, baseline scenario foresees a fall to 5 percent in developed countries.²⁶ Additionally lockdowns, closures or restrictions of national borders harmed economic activities and man key

²² World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* (World Bank 2020) 3
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects> accessed 28 November 2025.

²³ World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* 3.

²⁴ “World Economic Outlook: The Great Lockdown,” World Economic Outlook (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, April 2020), LCC HC10.W79, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>.

²⁵ *World Economic Outlook: A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery* (International Monetary Fund 2020)
<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/06/24/WEOUpdateJune2020> accessed 28 November 2025.

²⁶ *World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2020* (United Nations 2020)
https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESP2020_MYU_Report.pdf accessed 28 November 2025.

industries such as tourism. These resulted to negative economic impacts on society including slowdown of commerce and subsequent loss of employment which adversely affects incomes of the more vulnerable households. The negative economic effects are not merely to households but culminates to negative effects on national, regional and global economic relations. The next part will discuss these adverse consequences on Globalization.

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IV. EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 ON GLOBALIZATION

Before examining the effects of negative consequences of COVID-19 on globalization, it will be useful to clarify first what we understand from “globalization” in the present context, since globalization is a contested concept that political scientists, sociologists, and economists may offer differing explanations by putting emphasis on the particular aspect of this phenomenon.

Although there are differences of opinion on the real nature of globalization, the distinct features of the globalization processes can be classified under the three broad rubrics: political, economic, and cultural. A widely cited sociologist, Anthony Giddens, former director of the London School of Economics, defines globalization in a broad perspective “as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant

localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” He characterizes this phenomenon as “dialectical process”, since such local happenings “may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them”²⁷. Per the more predominantly economic descriptions of the globalization, as pointed out by Dani Rodrik, firstly “enhanced trade and financial integration” comes to mind²⁸. In the judgement of Rodrik, “Economists’ standard approach to globalization is to emphasize the benefits of the free flow of goods, capitals, and ideas and to overlook the tensions that may result.”²⁹ Rodrik stresses that when he refers to Economists, he is referring to mainstream economics, represented by neoclassic economists which he considers himself one of them³⁰. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson also touch on the “increased international trade”, “increased financial integration”, and “increased political integration” dimensions of globalization³¹. In this context, Acemoglu and Yared describe the age of globalization as “where technology, ideas, factors of production, and goods are increasingly mobile across national boundaries”³².

All the above explanations regarding globalization, in general terms or in the economic sense, point to an “interconnectedness” among the countries, nations, and people at the global level³³. This “interconnectedness”, as it was mentioned above in connection with the economic description of the globalization, involves “international

²⁷ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford University Press 1990) 64.

²⁸ Dani Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth* (Princeton University Press 2007) 195.

²⁹ Dani Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* (Institute for International Economics 1997) 3.

³⁰ Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*, 3.

³¹ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2006) 321.

³² Daron Acemoglu and Pierre Yared, ‘Political Limits to Globalization’ (2010) 100 *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 83–88.

³³ Harold James, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression* (Harvard University Press 2002) 1.

movements of goods, people, and capital, but is also associated with transfers of ideas and shifts of technology”³⁴.

Lawrence H. Summers, President Emeritus of Harvard University and former US Treasury Secretary, defines economic globalization as follows: “Globalization is the phenomenon of increasing interconnection between the world’s economies as reflected in the flow of goods, capital, people and ideas.”³⁵ As far as “flow of goods, capitals, people and ideas” is concerned, *prima facie*, the most important “flow” at the surface which affects the daily lives people around the world is “flow of goods.” This flow, no doubt, in large degree, is also affiliated with the “flow of peoples.” Flow of capital and ideas, on the other hand, might be considered as oceanic deep water currents that travel the globe like global conveyor belt. Elaborating on the scope of the “flow” in the context of globalization, Richard Baldwin considers the 21st century international commerce as “a richer, more complex, more interconnected set of cross-border flows of goods, investment, technology, services, technicians, managers and capital”³⁶.

The flow of goods is strongly associated with the “supply chain” concept. The expression “supply chain” might be referring to trade in value-added, production sharing, supply chains, outsourcing, offshoring, vertical integration, or fragmented production; however, “the core notion of internationally joined-up production is the same”³⁷. Global value chains (GVC), or in other idiomatic usage, “supply chains”, in this sense, “encompass the full range of activities that are required to bring a good or service from conception through the different phases of production—provision of raw materials; the input of various components,

³⁴ Harold James, *The Creation and Destruction of Value: The Globalization Cycle* (Harvard University Press 2009) 7.

³⁵ Larry Summers, ‘The Best Books on Globalization’ (Five Books, 2020) <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/larry-summers-globalization/>

³⁶ Richard Baldwin, ‘Global Supply Chains: Why They Emerged, Why They Matter, and Where They Are Going’ in Deborah K Elms and Patrick Low (eds), *Global Value Chains in a Changing World* (World Trade Organization 2013) 39.

³⁷ Pascal Lamy, Deborah K Elms and Patrick Low, ‘Foreword’ in Deborah K Elms and Patrick Low (eds), *Global Value Chains in a Changing World* (World Trade Organization 2013) xv–xix.

subassemblies, and producer services; the assembly of finished goods — to delivery to final consumers, as well as disposal after use”³⁸.

In relation to the negative economic consequences of COVID-19 on globalization, conventional wisdom overwhelmingly suggests that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused “the largest and fastest decline in international flows in modern history” and have had a devastating effect on global supply chains”³⁹. Back in April of this year, on the basis of the early assessments, due to response measures against COVID-19, it was forecasted that a 13-32% decline in merchandise trade, a 30-40% reduction in foreign direct investment, and a 44-80% drop in international airline passengers has occurred in 2020.⁴⁰

Latest forecasts by World Trade Organization (WTO) in June of this year point out that “world trade fell sharply in the first half of the year, as the COVID-19 pandemic upended the global economy.” However, the WTO also states that government responses helped temper the contraction. Accordingly, the WTO economists now believe that “while trade volumes will register a steep decline in 2020, they are unlikely to reach the worst-case scenario projected in April”⁴¹. This evaluation indicates a decline of around 13% in merchandise trade. In fact, the latest World Bank Report states in this respect that “The sharp fall in activity in the first half of this year is expected to contribute to a contraction in global trade of about 13.4 percent in 2020”⁴².

Subsequent firm-level analyses confirm that exporters embedded in global value chains were indeed more vulnerable to COVID-19-related supply disruptions, recording larger export declines and a slower recovery than

³⁸ Baldwin, ‘Global Supply Chains: Why They Emerged, Why They Matter, and Where They Are Going’ 3–4.

³⁹ Steven A Altman, ‘Will Covid-19 Have a Lasting Impact on Globalization?’ *Harvard Business Review* (20 May 2020) <https://hbr.org/2020/05/will-covid-19-have-a-lasting-impact-on-globalization>

⁴⁰ Roberto Azevêdo, ‘Trade Set to Plunge as COVID-19 Pandemic Upends Global Economy’ (World Trade Organization, April 8, 2020), https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm.

⁴¹ ‘Trade Falls Steeply in First Half of 2020’ (World Trade Organization, 22 June 2020) https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr858_e.htm.

⁴² World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* (2020) 11.

non-GVC exporters, although diversified sourcing networks helped to buffer some of these shocks. At the same time, recent supply-chain resilience reviews emphasise that firms and governments have responded by diversifying suppliers, investing in digital tracking and reassessing the balance between efficiency and robustness in global production networks, rather than abandoning globalization altogether.⁴³

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In the light of the above explanations, it is possible to claim that the most important effect of the negative economic consequences of COVID-19 on globalization is to disrupt its lifeblood, namely the global supply chain. A global pandemic has inevitably global consequences at multiple, economic, social and cultural levels. The next part will analyze the social consequences of the measures against COVID-19, in the backdrop of severe economic recessions.

a) Disaster risk reduction, governance and pandemics

The intertwined economic and globalization impacts of COVID-19 underscore the importance of disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) as a core element of governance for sustainable development. Pandemic risk is not an exogenous shock that can be treated separately from economic and social policy; rather, the scale and distribution of its effects are shaped by pre-existing vulnerabilities, the robustness of health and social protection systems, the flexibility of labour markets, and the

⁴³ European Central Bank, 'Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 Supply Disruptions on Firms in Global Value Chains' (ECB Research Bulletin, 21 March 2023) <<https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/research-publications/resbull/2023/html/ecb.rb230322~5c08629152.en.html>\ accessed 28 November 2025.

⁴⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD Supply Chain Resilience Review: Navigating Risks (OECD 2025) https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-supply-chain-resilience-review_94e3a8ea-en.html accessed 28 November 2025.

resilience of global and regional supply chains. Comprehensive DRRR frameworks therefore need to integrate epidemic and pandemic risks explicitly, adopt a multi-hazard perspective and be closely coordinated with economic planning and social policy.

Comparative work on energy security and oil and gas markets demonstrates how integrative DRRR frameworks, grounded in multi-level governance and resilience planning, can anticipate and mitigate disruptive events such as price volatility and pandemic-related shocks, offering useful analogies for broader pandemic governance.⁴⁵

Similar assessments of DRRR frameworks in the energy sector identify weak conceptualisation of pandemic-related risks in legislation, uneven access patterns, gaps in data collection and sharing, and inadequate cross-sectoral coordination as key legal and institutional challenges, underscoring the need for more holistic, integrative disaster management and resilience planning.⁴⁶

From a governance standpoint, effective DRRR for pandemics requires at least three interrelated elements. First, risk-informed decision-making demands reliable data, transparent communication and early-warning mechanisms that can trigger timely, proportionate and coordinated responses across sectors and levels of government. Second, institutions responsible for public health, social protection, employment and trade must be able to cooperate to design response measures that protect lives while minimising long-term damage to livelihoods, social cohesion and critical supply chains. Third, DRRR strategies must be grounded in principles of equality and non-discrimination, ensuring that measures do not stigmatise particular communities or reinforce xenophobia and ‘xenoracism’, but instead support vulnerable and marginalised groups in line

⁴⁵ Damilola S Olawuyi, ‘Advancing Resilience to Price Volatility in Oil and Gas Markets: Current Challenges and Ways Forward in the MENA Region’ in Catherine Banet and others (eds), *Resilience in Energy, Infrastructure, and Natural Resources Law: Examining Legal Pathways for Sustainability in Times of Disruption* (Oxford University Press 2022) 135–149; Damilola S Olawuyi and Victoria Nalule, ‘Ensuring Universal Access to Modern Energy Services in Times of Pandemic Related Disruptions’ (2021) 12(1) *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 49–51 <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jsdlp.v12i1.3>;

⁴⁶ Olawuyi and Nalule, *ibid*.

with sustainable development objectives. Recent international disaster risk governance guidelines similarly call for comprehensive multi-hazard legal frameworks, clear institutional mandates and stable, predictable funding as essential foundations for resilience.⁴⁷

The experience of COVID-19 suggests that gaps in these governance and DRRR components—such as underinvestment in health systems and social safety nets, limited preparedness planning for large-scale business interruptions, and insufficient attention to the social and discriminatory consequences of emergency measures—have intensified the pandemic’s economic, social and environmental impacts. Addressing such gaps will be essential for aligning pandemic preparedness and response with the long-term aims of sustainable development, including poverty reduction, decent work, reduced inequalities and environmental protection.

V. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE MEASURES TAKEN FOR CURBING AND ERADICATING COVID-19

As mentioned earlier, countermeasures taken by the governments against the outbreak, in most cases, have led to a complete cessation of daily social life and economic activities. A steep economic decline has come into being. As a result, according to International Labour Organization (ILO), “the number of working hours lost across the world in the first half of 2020 was significantly worse than previously estimated”, and even in the best scenario, it is highly unlikely to go back to pre-pandemic employment levels in the second half of 2020⁴⁸. ILO, in this regard, considers that large scale job losses will continue. As per ILO assessments, during the first quarter of 2020, an estimated 5.4 per cent of global working hours (equivalent to 155 million full-time jobs) were lost relative to the fourth

⁴⁷ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance: Strengthening Laws and Regulations for Resilience (IFRC 2023) https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2024-09/Guidelines%20on%20Disaster%20Risk%20Governance%20-%20Final%20Version.pdf accessed 28 November 2025.

⁴⁸ ‘As Jobs Crisis Deepens, ILO Warns of Uncertain and Incomplete Labour Market Recovery’ (International Labour Organization, 30 June 2020) https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_749398/lang--en/index.htm.

quarter of 2019. Working hour losses for the second quarter of 2020 relative to the last quarter of 2019 are estimated to reach 14% worldwide (equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs), with the largest reduction (18.3%) occurring in the Americas”⁴⁹.

In the context of negative social consequences of unemployment in COVID-19 pandemic, according to ILO data, it seems that special attention needs to be paid to young people and female workers. Regarding youth unemployment, in May 2020, the ILO underscored that young people are facing multiple shocks from the COVID-19 crisis, which could lead to the emergence of a “lockdown generation”. It is a generally accepted point that young people are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis with multiple shocks including disruption to education and training, employment and income losses, and greater difficulties in finding a job. A total of 178 million young workers around the world, more than four in ten young people employed globally, were working in hard-hit sectors when the crisis began. In this respect, for urgent and large-scale policy responses to prevent long-lasting damage to young people in terms of education/training and labor market prospects, the ILO stresses that in the post-COVID-19 period, support should be channelled to sectors that are able to create decent and productive employment.⁵⁰

As for the female employment in the COVID-19 pandemic period, it is stressed that COVID-19 crisis is disproportionately affecting women workers in many ways. As per the assessment of the ILO, “there is a risk of losing some of the gains made in recent decades and exacerbating gender inequalities in the labor market”⁵¹. In this vein attention is drawn to the important point that, in contrast to previous crises, women’s employment is at greater risk than men’s in COVID-19 period, particularly owing to the impact of the downturn on the service sector. At the same time, women

⁴⁹ International Labour Organization, ‘ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work – 5th Edition’ (International Labour Organization 30 June 2020) 11 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf

⁵⁰ International Labour Organization, ‘ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. 4th Edition’ (27 May 2020) 2.

⁵¹ International Labour Organization, ‘ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work- 5th Edition’

account for a large proportion of workers in front-line occupations, especially in the health and social care sectors. Moreover, the increased burden of unpaid care brought by the crisis affects women more than men.

The ILO's assessment of the unemployment that arose during the pandemic, especially for young and female workers, deserves careful attention. It seems highly likely that due to rise of unemployment in pandemic period, along with the governments, multinational corporations benefiting much from the blessings of globalization will be held responsible for this adverse development by the lower income groups of the societies. Considering the data declared by the ILO, it is possible to assert that this dissatisfaction would be higher in the most unfavorably affected groups like youngsters and women. In this context, the globalization phenomena, together with the multinational companies, is the most suitable candidate to be regarded as a "scapegoat". It should be kept mind that some steps were taken by the governments to reach the needy and strengthen social solidarity during the pandemic. For this purpose, most of the governments have allocated and provided considerable funds to the social assistance and solidarity foundations. Therefore, it can be said that in the period of COVID-19, governments might be in a position less to blame than multinational corporations.

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the COVID-19 outbreak affects all segments of the population and creates particularly detrimental effects for those social groups of living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples.⁵² UN further expresses the view that the health and economic impacts of the virus are being borne disproportionately by poor people including homeless, refugees, migrants, and displaced persons. UNDESA also underscores that refugees, migrants, displaced persons stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and the increased xenophobia. In this connection, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, during the launch of a COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan on 23 March 2020

⁵² United Nations, 'Everyone Included: Social Impact of COVID-19' (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Social Inclusion 2020) <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-covid-19.html>.

stated that “We must come to the aid of the ultra-vulnerable – millions upon millions of people who are least able to protect themselves. This is a matter of basic human solidarity. It is also crucial for combating the virus. This is the moment to step up for the vulnerable”⁵³.

As the foregoing reveal, negative social consequences of COVID-19 measures bring to the fore the phenomena like unemployment, poverty, desperation and expanded discrimination. These factors can be considered as fertilizers of social unrests. It is worth remembering that economic recession caused by the Great Depression was prepared the ground for rising fascism and racism across Europe. The economic difficulties arisen at the global level due to COVID-19, as referred above, are being compared with the economic recession of Great Depression. It is inevitable that such major depressions will have an effect on the earth.

In this context, the needs of the contemporary period urge us, alongside the economic and social consequences already discussed, to examine in the following section the environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as an integral component of the broader sustainable development challenges it poses.

VI. IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 ON ENVIRONMENT: IS THERE DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO GLOBALIZATION AND ECOCIDE?

As we noted earlier, the COVID-19 pandemic has dispersed expeditiously, and the lockdowns have put a high percentage of world under a kind of “house arrest”, which has resulted in the considerable restriction of human mobility. There is no doubt that restrictions imposed through governmental measures reduced human interaction, and these restrictions have helped to avoid greater suffering and death from the COVID-19 pandemic. As also elaborated above, these measures have also created notable socioeconomic hardship. Despite the deathful health problems and socioeconomic hardships, many environmental scholars find a “good side” in the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. They claim on the basis of

⁵³ António Guterres et al., 'Launch of Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19' (United Nations, March 25, 2020), <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2020-03-25/launch-of-global-humanitarian-response-plan-for-covid-19>.

scientific studies that the pandemic restrictions have caused the decrease in air and water pollution. However, at the same time, they point out that “very soon the massive amount of medical waste management could be a big issue” by referring to the masks which are made up of plastic based materials that are liquid-resistant and long lasting after the disposal⁵⁴.

Earth Science scholars, from their broader perspective, hypothesize the immediate and long-term Earth System responses to COVID-19 along two “multidisciplinary cascades.” These are “energy, emissions, climate and air quality; and poverty, globalization, food and biodiversity.” As per their assessment, “short-term impacts are dominated by direct effects arising from reduced human activity”, whereas “longer-lasting impacts are likely to result from cascading effects of the economic recession on global poverty, green investment, and human behavior”⁵⁵. They cite some obvious and immediate effects, such as reduced traffic congestion, clearer skies, cleaner waterways, reduced seismic noise, declining greenhouse gas emissions, and the emergence of wildlife into human settlements, and point out that some of these impacts might be considered beneficial to the environment. As mentioned above, these scholars identify negative consequences, including poverty, food security, mental health, disaster preparedness, and biodiversity.

Climate Justice has been a concept that is valued as part of business ethics and thus corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR plays an important role for further strengthening the sense of ‘climate justice’.⁵⁶ CSR norms and literature emphasize the importance of achieving economic and human development while respecting the environment. In that sense, there is great importance placed upon achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include environmental goals such as climate action and clean water, along with social justice goals such as zero

⁵⁴ Saeida Saadat, Deepak Rawtani and Chaudhery Mustansar Hussain, ‘Environmental Perspective of COVID-19’ (2020) 728 *Science of The Total Environment* 138870.

⁵⁵ Noah S Diffenbaugh and others, ‘The COVID-19 Lockdowns: A Window into the Earth System’ (2020) 1 *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* 470 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0079-1> accessed 24 March 2026.

⁵⁶ Damilola S Olawuyi, ‘Climate Justice and Corporate Responsibility: Taking Human Rights Seriously in Climate Actions and Projects’ (2016) 34 *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law* 27.

poverty, zero hunger, good education, and gender equality.⁵⁷ By contrast, greed driven and profit maximization often degrade the environment irreparably with impunity.

In the context of COVID-19-related environmental effects on globalization, it will be useful to also focus on the concept of “ecocide”. From an environmental sociologist’s point of view “ecocide” can be defined as; “Acts undertaken with the intention of disrupting or destroying, in whole or in part, a human ecosystem.” In this definition, the concept of “ecocide” includes the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). WMDs such as nuclear, chemical or biologic (including potentially bacteriological and viral) have consequences that disrupt the natural order of the environment as well as human society. Thus the attempts to provoke natural disasters such as volcanoes, earthquakes, or floods are also considered “ecocidal” acts. Military use of defoliants; bombs or chemical to impair soil quality, poison water supplies or contaminate underground water are other examples. Although a debate of many conspiracies about the COVID-19 virus, any attempt to enhance the prospect of disease are also ecocidal acts. Furthermore, if we consider the examples of wildfires or destructions of rainforests for creating grazing or farming lands, and thus bulldozing of forests or croplands, including acts for military purposes are also considered ecocide. In sum, attempts to modify the nature’s environment, flora, fauna, weather or climate are hostile acts; and, forcible removal of humans or animals from their habitual place of habitation to achieve political-military or other objectives are also ecocide.⁵⁸

As to the interrelationship between “ecocide” and globalization, proponents of the concept of “ecocide” characterize globalization as “a modern form of neo-colonization”, and consider it as a means of “intensified exploitation of the Earth.”⁵⁹ In such a critical thinking framework, they assert that “ecocide corresponds to the formal ending of

⁵⁷ UN’s 17 Sustainable development goals : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

⁵⁸ Franz Broschmmer, *Ecocide: A Short History of the Mass Extinction of Species* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 109.

⁵⁹ Julian E Kunnie, *The Cost of Globalization: Dangers to the Earth and Its People* (McFarland & Company 2015) 265.

the imperial era of capitalism” during which “the rich countries of the global North have embarked on the neo-liberal project of global deregulation and marketization”⁶⁰. This approach describes the ethos of globalization in a way that “economic production is paramount and resource extraction ultimate”, and explains the end result of globalization as the devastation of forests contamination of marine life by polluting oceans and fresh water rivers, lakes, and the degradation of air quality as the result of greenhouse gasses and air pollution. Considering that especially with ocean and air pollutants, the movement transcend boundaries.⁶¹ Climate change and global warming have adverse effect on polar ice caps, rising sea levels, and intensification of drought zones. Climate change and environmental issues have been a part of the main challenges of globalization, which are criticized.

It can be said that the COVID-19 global pandemic, in connection with the globalization phenomena and supply chains notion, has prepared a new fertile ground that gives more justification to the critical views expressed by environmental and earth science scholars. Under the dire environmental conditions and severe economic crisis, a major social challenge was to understand the consequences of rising discrimination, xenophobia, and racism, particularly in developed countries. The next part will further assess the question of why outbreaks are followed by racist and xenophobic reactions, particularly in industrialized societies.

VII. COVID-19 AND XENO-RACISM: WHY OUTBREAKS ARE OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA?

It is a fact that the priority to protect oneself from deadly infectious disease, blended with fears from people perceived as strangers and foreigners who have the potential to transmit the disease, has the potential to induce more intense xenophobic attitudes and behaviors in pandemic periods. This phenomenon, observed in the aforementioned spread of diseases, has reappeared during the COVID-19 pandemic in the 21st century as “xeno-racism”. The concept of xeno-racism is useful to explain

⁶⁰ Brosimmer, *Ecocide: A Short History of the Mass Extinction of Species*, 86.

⁶¹ Brosimmer, 268.

both racist and xenophobic type reactions directed to those considered by some as “the others” in the pandemic period. In this sense, xenophobia is a novel form of racism. It is not just directed at those with different skin colors, but against foreigners, strangers, asylum seekers, displaced, dispossessed, and marginal groups. It is an umbrella concept that includes various discrimination types whose roots basically go back to “racism” as the main body.

Racism, after developing in Western Europe in anti-Black and anti-Semitic forms, came to its climax in the Nazi rule of Germany from 1933 to 1945. The Nazi regime perpetrated the Holocaust and millions of victims suffered from Nazi violence. After the defeat of the Nazi regime in the Second World War and the Nuremberg trials against Nazi officials, racism was ethically and morally condemned and it lost much of its power in Western Europe. In the meantime, all racist regimes that marked the 20th century were defeated. Racism was abandoned into the depths of history to erase its agonizing memories. However, the violence against immigrants and asylum-seekers that occurred in some of the important Western European countries at the end of the 20th century revealed that racism had not disappeared. In order not to recall the bitter history of racism in Western Europe, the cause for these violent incidents was tried to be explained with “xenophobia”. Since then, much scientific research has been conducted to examine the true nature of xenophobia, especially in Western Europe. The main issue that needs to be clarified in these examinations and researches is whether these violent incidents can be explained only by the concept of xenophobia. The concept of xenophobia, in its basic meaning, is insufficient to explain these violent incidents on its own. The terminology that best describes this new situation is “xeno-racism” as coined by A. Sivanandan who is suggesting that “... it is racism in substance but xeno in form -a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white.” He calls this novel form as xeno-racism.⁶²

As stated above, none of us except scientists were aware of the coronavirus until it was detected in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019. The virus soon spread all over the world, seriously disrupting people's lives, and

⁶² .A Sivanandan, *Catching History on the Wing: Race, Culture and Globalisation* (Pluto Press 2008) 223–24.

significantly weakening the economies of even the most powerful countries. All the countries including the ones considered to be economically the strongest began to compete to supply personal protective equipment (PPE) against the virus, and some of them were even accused of resorting to "modern piracy" to procure PPE. The panic caused by the spread of the virus has generated new forms of discrimination and stereotyping.

In a panic environment, people of East Asian descent have been subjected to verbal abuse in various countries as the virus first appeared in China. Workers and businessmen from Africa who had traveled to and from China and lived there without any problems faced widespread social exclusion there. Tourists from Western European countries that once colonized Africa began to be treated as spreader of "plague" in some African countries.⁶³

Throughout history, spreading of diseases has often been one of the reasons for othering, and discrimination. As recent articles on the COVID-19 pandemic penned by the historians and medical sociologists suggest, it is typical that outbreaks are accompanied with, as noted above, a sense of fear, which is in and of itself a key ingredient to fuel racism and xenophobia. This is true for the spread of coronavirus. COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered social and political fractures within communities with racialized and discriminatory responses to fear, and induced a social environment prone to isolated societies.⁶⁴ However, in the meantime, commerce requires the opposite, more cosmopolitanism and exchanges among societies. In this vein, it should be underscored that epidemics and global commerce have been historically inextricably related.⁶⁵

⁶³ Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun and COVID-19 Working Group, 'COVID-19, Globalization and the Aftermath' (Analysis No 2020/18, Center for Eurasian Studies, 18 June 2020) https://www.academia.edu/43762128/COVID_19_GLOBALIZATION_AND_THE_AF_TERMATH accessed 24 March 2026.

⁶⁴ Delan Devakumar and others, 'Racism and Discrimination in COVID-19 Responses' (2020) 395(10231) *The Lancet* 1194 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30792-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30792-3) accessed 24 March 2026.

⁶⁵ Alexandre I R White, 'Historical Linkages: Epidemic Threat, Economic Risk, and Xenophobia' (2020) 395(10232) *The Lancet* 1250. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30737-6.

In the context of measures taken against spread of diseases, as per the generally accepted view, quarantine, cordon sanitaire, and other social distancing practices date back to 14th-century Europe. In 19th century the spread of epidemic diseases emerged as a problem that required an international, coordinated response. European colonial expansion brought smallpox and other diseases to the Americas and Africa from the time of Christopher Columbus to the 1800s. These epidemics wrought widespread devastation for the Indigenous peoples. Simultaneously, Europeans encountered new diseases in the newly discovered lands. A new system was needed to better manage the spread of infectious disease. From 1851 to 1938, 14 conferences were held to standardize international regulations for the establishment of quarantine and the sanitary management of plague, cholera, and yellow fever. At this point, a historical note should be made that Ottoman Empire was part of this process. In this respect, “Eleven European States and Turkey were represented at the first of the International Sanitary Conference” in Paris and the third Conference was held in İstanbul in 1866⁶⁶. It should be underlined that in the eyes of colonial health officials and the drafters of the first International Sanitary Conventions, the spread of cholera and plague was an economic, epidemic, and political risk to the long-term stability of the global economy.

Historical and medicine sociologist Alexander White draws the attention to the point that the framing of disease threats, in historical perspective, has largely been shaped by European priorities. As per this approach, epidemic threats that arose from colonial (or now post-colonial) sites which affected the trade had priority in evaluating precautionary measures. The target social groups of these precautionary measures were developed correspondingly. According to White, in a pandemic, the best option to response is the one which protect and take into account all members of the population, not some of them. He cautions that exclusions

⁶⁶ Norman Howard-Jones, *The Scientific Background of the International Sanitary Conferences 1851–1938*, History of International Public Health 1 (World Health Organization 1975) 12, 23–35
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/62873/14549_eng.pdf.

and stereotyping, in combination with economic difficulties, may generate racist or xenophobic responses in the societies.⁶⁷

The similar cautionary advice was also pronounced by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom during a press conference on March 2. According to Euronews, he said that “It’s so painful to see the level of stigma we’re observing ... stigma, to be honest, is more dangerous than the virus itself. And let’s really underline that the stigma is the most dangerous enemy. For me, it’s more than the virus itself.”⁶⁸

Recent empirical studies also suggest that pandemic threat can heighten prejudice and xenophobic attitudes in some contexts, while in others its effects are conditioned by political framing and institutional trust, indicating that discriminatory outcomes are not automatic but mediated by governance and discourse.⁶⁹

In the light of foregoing, we can state that COVID-19 did not resurrect already existing “everyday racism” and xenophobia.⁷⁰ It added a newly manufactured “stigmatization” type in accord with today’s conditions to the racist and xenophobic discrimination of which in fact fits very much to the description of xeno-racism.

⁶⁷ White, ‘Historical Linkages: Epidemic Threat, Economic Risk, and Xenophobia’ (n 2) 2.

⁶⁸ Jasmin Bauomy, ‘COVID-19 and Xenophobia: Why Outbreaks Are Often Accompanied by Racism’ *Euronews* (6 March 2020) <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/05/covid-19-and-xenophobia-why-outbreaks-are-often-accompanied-by-racism>.

⁶⁹ Yang-Yang Zhou, Daniel Rojas, Margaret E. Peters, ‘When Pandemic Threat Does Not Stoke Xenophobia’ (2024) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21565503.2024.2392240> accessed 28 November 2025.

⁷⁰ The notion “everyday racism” is used in the meaning introduced by Afro-Dutch academician and contemporary intellectual Philomena Essed in her seminal book “Understanding Everyday Racism”. She defines “everyday racism” on the basis of the experiences of a black woman who is living an “everyday life in a White-dominated society [which] involves a continual battle against the denial of racism, against Whitecentrism, against automatic ingroup preference among Whites, against constant impediments to their aspirations, against humiliations, against petty harassment, and against denigration of their cultures” Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*, SAGE Series on Race and Ethnic Relations (London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1991), 10.

VIII. WAY FORWARD: POLICY AND DRRR IMPLICATIONS

Within the framework of the above-mentioned explanations regarding the development of new types of stigmatization in the pandemic period, it can also be said that the COVID-19 has caused a diversity in discriminatory behaviours towards the people considered as "others" in societies. Additionally the variety of discriminatory behaviours accompanied following COVID-19 paved the way for the spread of "xeno-racism" at the global level as one of the humanity's greatest challenges in the 21st century. Further research inevitably needs to be conducted in the future regarding the post-COVID19 aftermath of the pandemic consequences to societies and to the phenomena of globalization.

8.1 Adopt comprehensive pandemic-inclusive DRRR framework laws and policies: National legal systems should enact or revise disaster risk reduction and management laws to explicitly include epidemic and pandemic risks as multi-hazard threats, with clear obligations for risk assessment, preparedness planning, and integration into national development strategies. Such framework instruments should define the scope of pandemic risk governance as cutting across health, social protection, labour, trade, energy and environmental sectors, thereby avoiding the fragmented, "health-only" approach that contributed to under-preparedness during COVID-19.

8.2 Establish or strengthen dedicated DRRR and pandemic-resilience institutions: To overcome coordination failures and institutional silos, states should create or upgrade permanent multi-sectoral bodies—such as national disaster risk reduction councils or pandemic resilience authorities—with a statutory mandate to coordinate ministries of health, social welfare, labour, trade, migration, environment and energy. These institutions should be empowered to develop integrated risk scenarios, oversee business-continuity and supply-chain planning, and monitor the equality and non-discrimination dimensions of emergency measures, including the risk of stigmatisation and xeno-racism.

8.3 Guarantee adequate and predictable budgetary allocations for preparedness, awareness and monitoring: Addressing the chronic underinvestment revealed by COVID-19 requires earmarked budget

lines for public health preparedness, social protection floors, early-warning systems and DRRR capacity-building. Medium-term expenditure frameworks should identify minimum levels of spending for these functions, supported where necessary by international finance and development cooperation. Increased budgetary allocations are also needed for public awareness campaigns, community-based risk communication and monitoring mechanisms, so that emergency measures are transparently implemented and their social and discriminatory impacts can be systematically assessed.

8.4 Embed equality, non-discrimination and anti-xeno-racism safeguards in emergency and migration law: Emergency powers, public health legislation and migration/asylum frameworks should be reviewed and amended to incorporate explicit clauses on equality, non-discrimination and the prohibition of racist and xenophobic conduct. These clauses should require that emergency measures be designed and implemented in ways that avoid disproportionate impacts on migrants, minorities and other vulnerable groups and that counteract the spread of xeno-racist narratives. Independent oversight bodies—such as national human rights institutions or equality commissions—should be mandated to monitor compliance, receive complaints and issue recommendations during health emergencies.

8.5 Strengthen international cooperation and data-sharing mechanisms for resilient and equitable globalization: At the international level, states and international organizations should cooperate to harmonise reporting standards, share real-time epidemiological and socio-economic data, and coordinate measures affecting global and regional supply chains. New or revised soft-law instruments and guidelines under the UN, WHO and other bodies can promote common minimum standards for maintaining trade in essential goods, protecting migrant workers and refugees, and ensuring that border and mobility restrictions do not legitimise or normalise xeno-racism. Such cooperation should be accompanied by technical and financial assistance to developing countries so that they can implement DRRR and resilience reforms without compromising other sustainable development priorities.

In light of these findings, the article underscores the urgency of strengthening disaster risk reduction and resilience (DRRR) frameworks and broader risk governance architectures at national and international levels, so as to better protect the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to prevent future pandemics from deepening existing inequalities and fuelling new forms of ‘xenoracism’. These recommendations are consistent with emerging proposals in disaster law and energy law scholarship, which call for clear and comprehensive legislation that recalibrates the scope of disruptions, improves data collection and cross-sectoral knowledge sharing by relevant institutional actors, and embeds resilience planning within broader sustainable development and energy-access frameworks.⁷¹

These recommendations are consistent with emerging proposals in disaster law and energy law scholarship, as well as with recent international guidelines on disaster risk governance, which call for comprehensive framework laws, clear institutional arrangements, predictable funding, and better alignment between disaster management, health emergencies and climate adaptation.

IX. CONCLUSION

All economic indicators point to a likely outcome that economic growth can only be restored once the pandemic is clearly brought under control. It is yet to be clear how and exactly when the crisis will be declared over. It should be accepted that probability of subsequent waves for the pandemic is real until a vaccine is found and effectively distributed around the world. In this vein, it seems to be a strong possibility that the vaccine issue will not be clarified until the middle of 2021. This uncertainty calls

⁷¹ Damilola S Olawuyi and Victoria R Nalule, ‘Ensuring Universal Access to Modern Energy Services in Times of Pandemic Related Disruptions: Legal Challenges and Potential Responses’ (2021) 12(1) *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 49–71 <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jsdlp.v12i1.3>; Damilola S Olawuyi, ‘Advancing Resilience to Price Volatility in Oil and Gas Markets: Current Challenges and Ways Forward in the MENA Region’ in Catherine Banet and others (eds), *Resilience in Energy, Infrastructure, and Natural Resources Law: Examining Legal Pathways for Sustainability in Times of Disruption* (Oxford University Press 2022) 135–149.

for utmost prudence both in political and economic decision making. It is necessary to move forward with caution.

It seems that supply chains policies will be on the top of the agenda in the coming period, and domestic self-sufficiency policies will most likely powerfully challenge international diversification. It should be expected that nationally and locally sensitive industries relating to health and national security, plus the industries employing a great number of domestic work forces will be at the center of attention for promoting domestic self-sufficiency policies. However, such policies should not be expected to bring an end to economic globalization. Although there will be a decrease in support for economic globalization, it is unrealistic to expect a sudden collapse in sophisticated global supply chains. At the end, there will be an equilibrium between these two rival thoughts.

As far as the blueprints developed by various business and management consultancy group are concerned, the most striking point is that nearly all of them approach to the problems caused by COVID on the basis of metric means. Since the final objective of these blueprints is to respond to the needs of the business world, this approach is expedient. Nevertheless, the depth of societal troubles caused by Corona-19 cannot always be identified by metric means. For example, providing unemployment figures of working groups as metrics is not enough to explain the desperation that employees face when they are unemployed. In this context, it is useful to seriously take into account the above-mentioned warnings of the ILO. Larry Summers states that “global integration won’t work if it means local disintegration. Unfortunately, that proved prescient. The essence of the solution has to be strengthening our systems of social insurance and preparation of people for a world that’s going to change more rapidly” ⁷².

All these suggest us that the globalization cannot come to an end with COVID-19. However, neglecting the "human factor" may cause more damage to globalization and economy than the measures taken against COVID-19.

⁷² Summers, 'The Best Books on Globalization' (n.35).

Building on the gaps identified in disaster risk reduction and risk governance, the recommendations set out in Section VIII provide a concrete roadmap for closing legal and institutional deficiencies that have intensified the socio-economic and environmental impacts of COVID-19 and enabled xeno-racism to flourish. By embedding pandemic preparedness into comprehensive DRRR frameworks grounded in equality and non-discrimination, governments and international organizations can better protect the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and prevent future crises from deepening existing injustices.