

Building the world in the post-pandemic era

Necessary changes for the creation of a better world

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Summary

The current pandemic has affected the entire globe causing a large effect on the living conditions of most people. These exceptional circumstances represent a change in several aspects such as education, work, tourism, and many others which have changed while governments took measures to stop the spread of the virus. Until now, vaccines are seen as a turning point of the pandemic which could take time to produce the desired effects of stopping the virus infections and deaths. Consequently, social distancing and travel bans are slowly being lifted while the global population wants to return to the previous 'normal' conditions. This essay argues that social, economic and political changes are required to ensure a world where most people can have good living conditions with wellbeing as the normal standard. Firstly, social priorities should be different where common welfare has more significance driven by the evolution of people in matter and thought. This same process of evolution has created technology which should create new ways of communication while also increasing fraternity bonds in society. Secondly, the economic system has demonstrated deficiency of support to the population throughout the pandemic because of the lack of values, innovation, flexibility and strength which are aspects that must change in the future world. An economy that is built in solidarity and justice should implement changes to benefit society while also having resilience in the moments of crisis. These arguments are compared with the explanation by Teilhard De Chardin of historical modification of the economy for adapting to the social circumstances. Thirdly, the political changes should develop international cooperation that promotes the wellbeing of the citizens based on the combination and complexity of individual consciousness. The policies that improve public health and environmental protection are key amendments which should apply the lessons learnt from last years and the experience of the pandemic. To conclude, the world cannot guarantee decent life conditions for the population if drastic changes in the social, economic and political aspects are not applied in the post-pandemic era.

Introduction

Most societies lived in a fast-pace globalized world until the first months of 2020 when the new virus SARS-CoV-2 started to spread around the world. As the amount of patients increased worldwide, on the 11th of March of 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the state of pandemic marking a change in the modern era. Cases increased and admissions to hospitals left the health system of several nations saturated in the following weeks. A large portion of the population was confined to lockdowns and other measures were taken as a response of the authorities to prevent the transmission of the virus which was not understood yet while scientists were analysing its origins and mechanisms. The effects of the pandemic have affected different sectors causing one of the biggest economic recessions, especially in the tourism industry because the amount of domestic and international traveling has been dramatically reduced. Also, education was greatly modified by forcing students to learn from online platforms while schools and institutions were closed. However, the development and administration of vaccines is currently allowing authorities to lift some of the measures taken in the pandemic such as social distancing or traveling restrictions. In addition with the approval of larger events; the opening of schools, businesses and venues, countries are driving an economic recovery. So, after almost two years from the first cases reported which have forced people in some ways to adapt to these challenging circumstances, the relevance of the concepts of evolution and consciousness must be included in the discussion of this paper considering the scientific and philosophical point of view of Teilhard de Chardin. While a large part of the global population is currently returning or wish to return to a prior-pandemic state, this essay will argue that the post-pandemic era requires drastic changes in the social, economic and political aspects for improving the condition of the world.

Social changes

The years after a stable control of the pandemic must develop social changes with the priorities of society, communication forms, and fraternity between people. Before explaining the arguments in this section, I want to clarify that the social changes consider globalization as the main representation for this point while acknowledging that there are differences and several factors to consider within and between each nation.

The priorities of societies of the new era should consider the wellbeing of the community as a whole. It should be different from the period before the pandemic where the priorities were driven by individual, corporative and political motivations. It is difficult to accept, in some instances, that the freedom of choice must be overcome by the imposition of

public wellbeing. However, if sectors such as health and education become the overall priorities, the general public will adapt to the changes the way it has happened through history for thousands of years. We know that society is constantly changing with the involvement of all the individuals who adapt to the current circumstances, not only for survival, but now for creating a better society by using the resources available. These resources are the advances in education, science, technology, medicine, and policy making which will drive the priorities of communities to reach a common goal. Humanity could use these resources for the process of evolution directing specific priorities for marking a new and better way for social direction. The pandemic could be the critical event that catalyses this evolution process where the phrase of de Chardin (1955) "Beneath a change of age lies a change of thought" brings the ideals of transformation while explaining that adaptation is a passive physical and mental process of change while humans keep evolving physically and socially according with the conditions. An example for this argument could be a ban of tobacco or alcohol consumption for prioritizing the community health considering how it has affected on individuals with high consumption during the pandemic. People who become conscious of prioritizing their health will adapt to the social changes leading to a higher wellbeing of the whole society.

Communication forms are another important aspect of the society which should change in the post-pandemic world. As the previous paragraph explained that the evolution process continues to shape society, the communication between different sectors of the society is constantly changing too. The internet and digital communications in the world before the pandemic were growing fast and support a large part of the population in activities such as work, studies, and communications. And one of the biggest changes during the pandemic was the self-isolation measures while social distancing and lockdowns entered in effect causing the modification of the communication between individuals. Social interaction became more distant or virtual which will stay in some work spaces and academic circumstances which access to technology and the availability of performing activities. However, the study by Cherubini (2020) indicates that the effect on mental health of teenager students have a great impact caused by isolation and lack of direct communication with peers. At the same time, the author expresses the problems that poor areas, especially indigenous communities suffered from the inefficient access to learning mechanisms that students cannot obtain for completing their education. Also the United Nations (2020) declared in their report that an essential factor to connect the world in the post-pandemic is the use and implementation of technology and communications such as internet and social media which in poor areas will develop education and labour. However, another big problem which arose

from the easier access to internet is the spread of false information which could cause harm and chaos in the society. For example the disbelief of a minority of the population in many countries towards vaccines was influenced by false information shared on social media platforms. Therefore, considering the circumstances of the post-pandemic society and the access of technology, people should move to a direct and efficient way of communication where academic, productive and leisure activities could be performed according with the requirements of socialization and scientific based information.

The social changes after the pandemic should promote a larger sense of fraternity between persons inside the community and worldwide. De Chardin (1955) compared humans with other species stating that humankind has been the only species capable of becoming cosmopolitan by the convergence work of people consolidating and completing one another. I want to analyse deeper this idea because society is constantly changing but throughout history there are several events which demonstrate the lack of togetherness of society. He explained the evolutionary process of a group of people or the entire society where the contribution of each individual helps the collective consciousness and development. With this prospect which is very close to the biological attributes of evolution, every individual is strongly related with the group of people in a form that help and aid from one to another cause the advance of ideas and physical development. But, comparing with the prior-pandemic world, cooperation between different sectors of society is a fundamental factor which should increase largely starting from the current situations. Therefore, humanity must cooperate together as a global community to solve the problems that constantly challenge the population where the union of several skills will contribute for solutions. So, the need to build a new society that will focus on combining the knowledge and resources of several disciplines for obtaining beneficial results. In this specific argument, the future of society should be strongly related with the bonds that communities could build to help each other at the moment of crises and to evolve together in physical and intrinsic characteristics.

Economic Changes

The second aspect to be discussed is the economic changes that the world must have in the post-pandemic era. As most countries around the world face economic difficulties because of the pandemic, private companies, governments and the general public should build the economy based on social values, innovation and strength.

The economic changes should contribute to the share of social values to build a world that embrace wellbeing of people. For the last century, the generation of income and

economic growth has driven the development of several countries which is a model that most of the nations are currently following. However, there are several disadvantages of this economic system which intensified the impacts of the pandemic limiting the management and response of governments and citizens. For example, the lockdowns and social distance imposition cause a large portion of small businesses to close since they had no income from customers. Another portion of them opened with the risk of infection because it was the only form of obtaining financial resources. At the same time, the richest part of the population felt very minimal effect of the pandemic while even having greater economic growth from investments. Therefore, the economy should have more values of solidarity, fairness and justice where the benefits of financial prosperity could also flow to the poor sectors. Campbell (2020) supports the idea that contribution from the businesses which have large incomes must be divided fairly to the employees generating more income to the working class. Solidarity to the struggling sectors should be prioritize and praised for a better recovery. And governments should consider the great effort done by workers of the health, cleaning and delivery sectors which have support the life conditions of most urban areas around the world in the pandemic. The economy should be fair to recognize with higher income the contributions made by the previously mentioned workers which under the current economic must become fairer.

The economy of the post-pandemic world requires innovative changes which generate a new system with the integration of creativity, new technology, social priorities, and the roles of the international market and the workforce. Humanity has the capability of designing the economy according with its needs because the current system was created from adaptations and modifications of the previous systems. De Chardin (1955) agrees that the changes that humanity implemented in its economy from the last centuries were adapted to the circumstances from a previous model hundreds of years ago which used a property-based economy. Then, he explains that the economy moved towards the generation of money which is more “impersonal” and mobile resulting in the current economic system which was combined with the industrial revolution and social changes. Currently, digitalization is one of the main drivers of the modern society and the labour force while the pandemic pushed a large part of it into the use of new technologies. For example education was delivered by online platforms along with other sectors such as finance and banking. So, virtual payments and money are more common while digital currencies are also gaining attention and represent an innovative idea to modify the economic system in the post pandemic world. However, a correct understanding and application of the technologies along with education to all sectors and groups of people could lead to a steady generation of jobs (Haleta et al, 2021). Thus,

changes in the economic system based on innovation and technology are necessary to progress permitting societies to lead development and reach wellbeing without the limitation of an economic system that constrains the changes.

The economic changes should aim to build a stronger economic system in the future world in the perception of resilience at the moments of crisis. There have been several moments of problems which cause the decline of jobs and development in several countries over the last decades. In the post pandemic era, this fragility of the system should change to become one that can resist and support when humanity needs it. The negative oil prices are one of the examples from the pandemic which has also created the worst economic recessions of the last decades. At the same time supply chain stopped around the world impacting on the supply of products; or the zero demand for the tourism industry causes a severe loss of jobs. The effects of the economic decline from the pandemic will have long term consequences in the poor regions affecting nutrition, education, employment, health and so many other important aspects of the wellbeing of people. Therefore we can infer that it is important to create a more flexible economic system that could integrate the needs of humanity and the environment while becoming less fragile of suffering repercussion from crises which only harm the vulnerable parts of society such as several sectors worldwide during the pandemic. Governments responded with monetary incentives and funds for helping their people which from the point of view of Campbell (2020) created a larger debt while many poor nations could not take such measures. So, the world of the post-pandemic era should be based on an economic system that do not show decline with subsidies for helping people, alterations of supply and demands of products and services, monetary flow decrease in moments of crises. A strong and flexible economic system can be created and it will be necessary to do so.

Political Changes

There must be a greater development on the political aspects of the post-pandemic world which can permit societies to thrive in this new era. Political leaders will have an essential role in building the so called “new normal” environment where cooperation, public health and environmental protection will be key aspects of the change which I will explain in the next paragraphs.

Cooperation between political leaders should strengthen the communication and the links of societies which facilitates the tackle of several global problems and manages the recover from the pandemic. As it was discussed on the social aspect, cooperation could generate greater chances for adaptation to the new conditions which de Chardin (2017)

identifies as the social evolution where each individual is more conscious of the world. Politically, from the first days of the pandemic, the world struggle to contain the virus and communication between nations was vital to understand the mechanisms of infection. However, the lack of cooperation between countries caused great impact on the management, response and recovery of many sectors of most of the countries around the world. The most recent example that I want to highlight is the supply of vaccines to poor countries in Africa. Developed nations reached the demand for vaccines even administrating a third dose at a faster rate than first doses in poor nations which causes an increase in the number of cases, deaths and vulnerability to new variants of the virus in those countries and indirectly to the other parts of the world. This example shows the lack of empathy for people outside the community which could not continue in the post-pandemic world, and even now, if we want a better response to the effects of the pandemic we need better political cooperation. In the future, nations should work together to establish links of wellbeing that benefit each other where wealthy countries could help the development of poor countries. In this way, with more cooperation and better communication between political leaders, the world could become stronger as a single entity in the moments of weaknesses.

The importance of public health is one of the biggest factors that should change in the political agenda of the world in the coming years. The impact of the pandemic accounts for the loss of lives and the effect on the health of the citizens which has been a main struggle for the government of the majority of countries, public health institutions and workers of hospitals. Therefore, it is vital that the measures for preventing the health crises and giving treatments must follow a more scientific and humanitarian perspective where the general population will obtain more benefits. There are several examples where the lack of funds, infrastructure and organization for the public health system could not cope with the pandemic and caused more complications to the victims. The beginning of the pandemic caused problems across Europe and South America where insufficient safety equipment such as facemasks or globes generate high risk of infection to health workers, while the capacity of hospitals were not enough to support the people who need access to intensive care units. The governments have learnt from these experiences and therefore it is their duty to create a more resilient health system where the general population could access in the moments that they require. Mays and Scutchfield (2010) agree that public policies that prioritize the vulnerable people should become more inclusive considering free health care for the people as the outcome without the limitation of economic shortage which creates more mental or physical issues to people of low

or medium income. Therefore, the new era requires policies for protecting the health of people at any time without any kind of discrimination.

The post pandemic world needs to change the view towards natural resources and should take strong actions to protect the environment. The moral responsibility from political leaders should reflect the public values to protect the environment creating policies and laws that drive changes from the perception to actions towards other living organisms and the natural resources for humanity. De Chardin (1957) explained that the process of evolution involves a greater awareness where individuals become more conscious and therefore obtains a greater sense of preservation for the environment because the linkage of humanity and the surroundings affects the living conditions of each other. At the same time, he discussed that the increase in consciousness will bring harmony between society, industry and environment in a meeting point which collects the evolution of human consciousness and the link to preserve the environment. If we applied the concept of de Chardin in the current situation, the growth of complex consciousness should be catalysed in the post-pandemic era where the impact on global environment is the one of the main focus. However, the lack of harmony brought by the economic development and high exploitation of resources has brought several drawbacks which harm nature and humans. One clear example is the current covid-19 pandemic which Yang et al (2020) describes as a virus with animal origins where the close contact and 'invasion' of humans into the ecosystems of wild animals influenced the infection and spread to humans. Moreover, the first days of November of this year, the COP26 event in Glasgow was held to propose the future goals that the globe will face in the protection of environment. However, one of the largest events did not show concrete changes that will result in a factual healthier environment. The article by Yin et al (2021) criticises the meeting as unproductive while leader of the nations showed 'greenwashing propositions'. This point could be contrasted with the ideals of de Chardin (1957) which understand the human evolution in the context of a universal evolution of complexity of consciousness where biogenesis is contained in homogenesis. Therefore, humankind and the natural environment cannot be protected separately one from the other because they coexist together and the future era should become more conscious of the conservation of the environment.

Conclusions

While the world keeps fighting to overcome the challenges that the current pandemic has caused, the vision of the new era should consider radical changes that will allow societies to guarantee better conditions for their citizens. Firstly, social changes need to promote

priorities with a more humanistic view; improve communication between people; and strength fraternity connection to ensure the wellbeing of the people. Secondly, economic changes must focus on values of solidarity, fairness and justice; integrate innovation and creativity for more improvement; and become stronger and resilient to crises. Lastly, the political changes should increase international cooperation; improve health care systems; and ensure policies to protect the environment. I believe that these changes are necessary to create a post-pandemic world where people could have a better quality of live.

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