Covid19: The Restriction Due to the Pandemic in Germany, France, and Italy

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Abstract:

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019 had a profound and unprecedented impact on the political systems of Germany, France, and Italy, three leading European Union powers. This study investigates the short and long-term effects of the pandemic on these nations' political landscapes. The pandemic led to the postponement of democratic activities, increased executive powers, and shifts in political support within these countries. It also strained relations between Germany and France and between Italy and the European Union, altering their international interactions. Additionally, the pandemic influenced economic policies and political discourse in each country. Looking forward, it is expected to reshape government structures, emphasizing the importance of transparency, public health systems, and potential shifts toward more populist and authoritarian governance. Overall, the Covid-19 pandemic had a far-reaching impact on the political systems of these three nations, with lasting consequences anticipated in the years to come.

In the late 2019, the whole world was taken aback by the sudden emergence of the global pandemic, the Covid-19 pandemic. The global pandemic spread with unprecedented speed, leaving governments across the globe scrambling to respond. Although the virus has devastated all countries, it is worth pointing out that it particularly severely affected the political systems of Italy, France, and Germany, three of the European Union's leading powers. Following the virus's outbreak, these countries had to take drastic measures to protect their citizens and manage its spread (Garca-Colón, 2020). As a result, it has had significant implications for the three countries' political landscapes, leading to changes in how governments are run and implement policies. Therefore, it is critical to investigate how the global epidemic has altered the political landscape of these nations (France, Italy, and Germany) in the short and long term by investigating the Global outbreak and its aftershocks on their political systems.

Referendums, elections, and other democratic activities have been postponed or canceled in all three countries (Italy, France, and Germany). Furthermore, each country was forced to respond to the virus with several emergency measures, including travel bans, public gatherings restrictions, and lockdowns. All these efforts have had a significant effect on these countries' political systems, particularly in terms of public opinion and the way the citizens responded to these measures in different scenarios.

Increase in the power of the executive branch of each of the three nation's government is among the most obvious change that the pandemic has brought about. In response to the pandemic, governments in all three countries quickly passed emergency legislation that granted their leaders more extraordinary powers, such as the ability to enact restrictions on movement and business activities and to allocate resources to address the crisis (Sheng, 2022). Generally, all these measures allowed governments to respond to the situation swiftly and decisively while avoiding traditional legislative streams.

Moreover, the pandemic also impacted each of the three countries' political landscapes. For instance, there has been a notable increase in the support of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) ever since the pandemic outbreak and even up today, months after the pandemic is gone, still the support continues to grow. In comparison, there has been some decrease in the support of center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD). President Emmanuel Macron has seen his approval ratings drop in France as he has sought to impose restrictions on movement and business activities (García-Colón, 2020). Comparably, it is also worth noting that in Italy, the pandemic has weakened the populist Five Star Movement. In contrast, the center-right coalition led by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has gained support.

The pandemic has also significantly affected the political dynamics between the three countries. Germany and France have traditionally been allies, but the pandemic has caused strains between the two nations as they have disagreed over the imposition of travel restrictions (Sheng, 2022). Meanwhile, tensions have arisen between Italy's government and the European Union (EU) as the country seeks to implement pandemic-fighting measures deemed too lax by the EU.

Also, the pandemic influenced or other changed the interactions between Germany, Italy, and France, which also affected the way the three countries interacted with the rest of the countries in the world. Germany and France have sought to strengthen ties with the EU, whereas Italy has sought to improve relations with the US (Garca-Colón, 2020). All three countries have also moved towards greater cooperation with China to secure access to medical supplies and other resources.

Additionally, one cannot ignore that the pandemic has significantly influenced the economy of all three countries; Germany, Italy, and France. In Germany, the pandemic has hit the economy hard, with unemployment rising and the government introducing a range of measures to support businesses and households (Sheng, 2022). In France, the economy has been less badly hit, but the government is still introducing measures to help businesses and families. Additionally, as argued out by Sheng (2022), the pandemic also had a particularly devastating effect on the economy of Italy, as experts project a 9.5% GDP decrease in the near future.

Furthermore, in all three countries, the global epidemic also significantly impacted political discourse. For instance, in Germany, the AfD has sought to capitalize on the crisis by attacking the government's response and accusing it of failing to protect its people against the dangers of the pandemic which also caused loss of many lives. In France, the government has sought to deflect criticism by highlighting its record of economic success before the pandemic. Similarly in Italy, the debate over the government's handling of the crisis was heated, with some criticizing it for failing to protect the Italian people and others claiming it did an excellent job under challenging conditions and helped to compact the pandemic.

Furthermore, following the pandemic, German public sentiment has been split. On the one hand, Chancellor Angela Merkel has been lauded for her ability to handle the crisis, with her favorability ratings remaining relatively stable throughout the pandemic (Garca-Colón, 2020). On the other hand, her government has been chastised for taking a more relaxed attitude to the pandemic, with many beliefs that the country should have implemented stricter measures earlier.

On the flip side, the France political landscape has shifted dramatically in the aftermath of the pandemic as compared to the other nations. The French public's praise for his government's approach to the crisis has increased President Emmanuel Macron's popularity. All that is reflected in the polls, with Macron's La République En Marche party sweeping the latest municipal elections (García-Colón, 2020). However, Macron has been chastised by the far-right National Rally party, which has criticized the

government for being excessively slow to respond to the global issue. Lastly, in Italy, the pandemic has profoundly affected the political landscape (García-Colón, 2020). Italy was among the first countries in Europe to be hard hit by the virus. The administration's approach was widely criticized by the citizens, especially in their attempt to curb the pandemic's spread, which claimed many citizens' lives. As a result, the anti-establishment Five Star Movement gained support, and the party won the Italian Parliament in recent polls. However, the party's popularity has since dropped as the public has grown increasingly dissatisfied with the government's approach to the after-pandemic measures.

The pandemic has changed how the three nations socialize with one another and the world as a whole. Whereas Italy attempts to enhance its relationship with United States, France, and Germany have tried to strengthen ties with the EU (Sheng, 2022). All three countries have also moved towards greater cooperation with China to secure access to medical supplies and other resources.

Thus, looking into the future, it is clear that the pandemic will continue to shape the political systems of the three countries. Arguably, in the short term, the crisis has emphasized the need for increased government transparency and accountability in crisis response programs to compact such global pandemics. However, in the long run, the pandemic is likely to increase the importance of public health systems, along with a shift toward more populist and authoritarian government structures in the future.

To sum it up, the global pandemic has had an unparalleled impact on Germany, France, and Italy's political systems. The pandemic has had a massive effect on the power of the executive government agencies, each country's political landscape, and its economic and political discourse. Furthermore, the global pandemic also significantly affected how the three countries nations interacted with each other and how they socialized with other countries. As different global pandemics continue to occur in the future, the effects on these three countries' political systems are likely to be felt more firmly in the years and months to come. However, the initial reaction to the crisis was one of disruption and division, but the lengthy repercussions are anticipated to be extensive and profound.

References
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