

Covid-19 Blog

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My favourite thing to come from the pandemic was a playlist on Spotify called 'COVID-19 Quarantine Party'. On this list, you have bangers such as Toxic by Britney Spears, Sicko Mode by Travis Scott and Stayin' Alive by the Bee Gees (1197901351, 2020). This was a playlist compiled by random strangers on the internet and primarily showed the significance of a cultural revolution that was about to begin. TV shows like Bridgeton and Tiger King became an overnight success on streaming platforms (Robinson, 2020). Tik Tok dances/videos gained millions of views and users since the beginning of March 2020, leading it to become one of the most popular social media apps. The Covid-19 pandemic was the beginning of a new form of connectedness that every human was in one way, or another affected by. This could be Microsoft teams, Zoom, TikTok or Netflix to say a few. In one way or another, the covid-19 pandemic created a 'new' every day where social interactions and daily life were put online for the whole world to see.

Initially, when the whisperings of a pandemic starting in China became an item in the news in January 2020, I thought nothing of it. This is because of previous epidemics like SARS, which started the same in 2004, and Ebola from 2013 to 2014 (Rogers, 2020). And covid spread, but life was still going on. In 2020, in my last year of university, I would get to do a study visit to Iran to collect research for my thesis, which meant I checked the news every day because of the 'supposed' World War 3 between the United States and Iran. The trip was postponed from February 1st to March 19th, 2020. And I kept thinking to myself, I'm cutting it close with the deadlines.

As you can tell from the above dates, the trip never happened. On March 13th, a Friday in the Netherlands, I was informed that I wouldn't need to come to work that night as the government had enforced a limit on people in cultural settings. March 14th, same thing. On March 15th, I was in the Airport as the Netherlands went into lockdown, and by the time I had landed in Ireland, they had done the same. Instead of boarding a plane to Iran the following days, I attended my first class on zoom, then exams being proctored at home and gym classes on YouTube.

As a young person, the issue with a pandemic was that I wrote my thesis sitting inside and reading the news every day, getting increasingly anxious and depressed. I graduated online via Zoom. And that's fine because I limited my contact and did what everyone else did to protect the community and the healthcare system. And I sure as hell was not the only person who did this. Hundreds of millions did the same, watching a YouTube graduation, isolated from friends and family. And whilst this is an issue, another one arises.

An injustice also came as the spread of covid was blamed on young people. The rhetoric of this is young people went inside, they missed important events like graduations, school, and friends, like every other generation. But young people had the slightest chance of dying or having severe implications of catching Covid compared to different generations.

I understand that writing this down is controversial and that there are always people of different ages spreading COVID. The implication of blaming this exclusively on people under 25 because we wanted to meet up with friends is incorrect. In the Netherlands, a politician who brought in the rule that people who broke covid rules and regulations would have this put on their permanent record went and got married to over 100 guests, violating covid laws (Schaart, 2020). The same happened when the King and Queen of the Netherlands went on holiday to Greece after cautioning citizens to not travel for holidays (BBC News, 2020). There were the same cases in Ireland, the United States and every other country. In South Korea, the first significant outbreak of Covid was from a Church (Sang-Hun, 2020). But the same rhetoric placed the blame on young people. In August 2020, Sky News published an article named "Are young people to blame for a new wave of covid?" (Whiteside, 2020). The simple answer is no one is. Who knew that this could have spiralled as much as it did?

The biggest realisation of Covid-19 was a change in communication and culture over the last two years. The primary basis of most communication has now switched online, something it had been leading up to for the previous few years. The COVID-19 pandemic gave it the final push to change the way we as a species communicated and acted. If over two years ago we could have imagined how much the world would have changed so dramatically, no one would have thought that. While we could focus on the mess ups and greediness that become common characteristics of the pandemic, we should continue to learn from this and focus on the benefits and joys.

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8

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