

Transcript of Interview with Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru

Interviewee: Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru

Interviewer: Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru

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Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Students Elizabeth Lattanzi and Uma Bhandaru interview one another and discuss the similarities between the COVID 19 pandemic and past pandemics. In this interview they also discuss social reaction to the current pandemics, wealth disparity, and differences between the current pandemic and past pandemics.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 0:00

This is our podcast interview, number two. My name is Elizabeth Lattanzi and I give consent to being interviewed.

Uma Bhandaru 0:06

Hi, my name is Uma Bhandaru, and I consent to being interviewed.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 0:10

It is the seventh of December and it is 1:38pm. So Uma has learning about past, pandemics affected your attitude or perception of the current pandemic.

Uma Bhandaru 0:20

Absolutely. I think this last semester has definitely helped me develop my perspective and knowledge of pandemics as a whole. I think I used to believe pandemics were a thing of the past, you know, I barely knew at the term meant, and now understanding how pandemics in the past had similar, if not worse consequences, it's definitely interesting to see how a pandemic is an environmental response from poor conditions from people themselves on the planet. And I definitely believe that I don't have as a detached perspective anymore, because now I know pandemics are unavoidable, they will continue to come and the most we can do is to minimize their effects, rather than fixate on the pandemic itself.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 1:05

Yeah, absolutely. I agree with you that during this pandemic, especially, I felt like I was somewhat detached too. And it was easy to because we were in quarantine. But I definitely think learning about pandemics has taught me that there are so many aspects of society that are affected all at once. One was responding to a pandemic. And I think that that's really important to emphasize, because so many things are being punished in a way, like, economic strength is being punished, and also our political responses, everything is being affected all at once. And that was

something that was difficult to realize, when you're in quarantine when you're isolated that so many things are happening during these pandemics, and they all kind of occur, no matter the pandemic and no matter the time period. So has learning about pandemics helped you put the COVID-19 pandemic into a better context?

Uma Bhandaru 2:01

Definitely. I think one of the pandemics especially was the Black Death, when we were studying that it was interesting to see the authoritative responses both from the Islamic officials and the Chinese officials because it's helped me put into perspective how a government's response, both implementing policy and supporting medical professionals how it impacts a country's overall response to pandemic, you know, how when we were studying how Islamic officials you know, they punished flight. And today, if we see how people definitely do play to still a response that could happen. I think it's really interesting to see how the government as a whole their authority grows during pandemics both in past and today's pandemic. So I thought that was one thing that definitely helped me understand the importance of the government and their role in implementing policy and supporting medical professionals to help us combat pandemics.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 2:56

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that another important thing to note is that COVID-19, even though America at first, the United States and many other wealthy countries were really confident at first, and we saw this too, with influenza as well. There was a lot of initial confidence going on, when this pandemic first hit. But I think that it's important to emphasize action over these, you know, beliefs of confidence, because we are, I would say, a more wealthy country in the world. And I've kind of noticed that no matter what a pandemic will end up affecting the population, no matter the country, no matter the wealth. So I think that no matter the hope that people tend to, to give off in these situations, it's important that to note that no matter what everyone will be affected in one way or another. So yeah,

Uma Bhandaru 3:55

Yeah. How do you think this pandemic compares or contrasts from previous pandemics?

Elizabeth Lattanzi 4:01

Yeah, absolutely. I feel like there's many contrasts, just because, you know, it was crazy to learn about cholera and the Black Death, just because the symptoms of those pandemics were so brutal and severe. And it was, it was hard to imagine living through times like that when sanitation was just not a priority for some people, and they didn't even know that that was the problem that was causing these diseases. So I definitely think that that's a sharp contrast between these two pandemics. But I also think that there's a lot of comparison as well in terms of racial inequity, financial inequity, political tensions, I feel like these three things particularly always are present, no matter the pandemic, and no matter the time period,

Uma Bhandaru 4:49

Definitely, I think, especially, you know, the wealth disparity, that in both in previous pandemics and today's it's very interesting, because in this course, it was emphasized as to how, you know, people in the poor classes, they feel the effects of the pandemic head on, from the conditions that are living in. So I think governmental assistance to help kind of bridge that division between

what the rich feel and what the poor feel is definitely interesting. And also, I think, in what's different with this pandemic, especially the highly politicized nature and the fact that there was an election, there was a lot of racial protests occurring, there was so much revolving around this pandemic that was brought forward to the surface, which I think has never happened to this level in past pandemics.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 5:37

Yeah, definitely.

Uma Bhandaru 5:40

So how based on all the things we did? How do you think? Have we learned from past pandemics and what could we expect in the future?

Elizabeth Lattanzi 5:49

Yeah, I definitely think past pandemics have allowed us to kind of learn but I also think that there's the tendency for history to repeat itself, no matter in any situation. And in terms of expecting for the future, I definitely think that pandemics, like you said, are inevitable in any case. So I definitely feel like it's very important that we prioritize public health infrastructure more than we do today. And, you know, no matter the political atmosphere, or the economic atmosphere, I always feel like public health is an utmost priority of any country in any situation.

Uma Bhandaru 6:26

I absolutely agree with that. Because I think we have this theme that of pandemics are truly unavoidable. And all we can do is really minimize the effects and one of those is changing our relationship with our environment around us. And, you know, definitely increasing those sanitary measures. And following the preparations before a pandemic even occurs, there are things we can do, whether it's reducing gas emissions, you know, pollution, there are very concrete things that if we start changing, it could definitely help minimize those effects that would come in the next pandemic, because it's not a matter of if it's a matter of when the next pandemic is gonna happen.

Elizabeth Lattanzi 7:03

Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you.

Uma Bhandaru 7:04

Thank you.