COVID-19: The Struggle Towards a New Normal

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ABSTRACT

As we enter what the UK Government medical experts call a "dangerous phase" of the COVID-19 crisis, it has become clear that lifting the constraints of lockdown is a complex and increasingly contentious process. Ranging across social distancing, re-bordering, and reviewing some of the early considerations on the shape of possible futures, this fourth paper in our series on COVID-19 explores how human behaviours have responded to shifting government messages.

The paper explores the complex and rapidly changing landscape where political priorities, social behaviours, and information are interacting, and it details an ongoing struggle to make sense of where we are and what a "new normal" might involve. Drawing on a wide range of media coverage, the aim here is to bring together a single narrative setting out markers for further debate on our futures.

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1.0 Short Term Policy and the Responses

1.1 Introduction: Vulnerability, security, and the struggle toward a new normal

So traumatic and worldwide has the experience of COVID-19 been, that a primary requirement after the initial lockdown is to prevent it happening again. In the short term, the key effort is to manage a return to some degree of post-lockdown normality in a way that does not risk large subsequent surges of infection and deaths. The risks are real, as seen in a secondary surge in Singapore (lauded as a positive example of initial virus control)[1].There are three elements that are important in managing lockdown: being able to understand that a surge is likely if unlocking takes place (the government SAGE advisory committee has seen some of its members worry that unlocking the UK too early could risk cases accelerating again[2]); reducing the surge; and, responding to the event with a robust and sustainable policy to mitigate against any future outbreak.

Towards the end of May, the process of emerging from lockdown in the UK revealed that stresses were beginning to emerge and that these varied across the population and from place to place. As it went on, the lockdown arrangement was already 'fraying at the edges' and becoming a trigger for acrimonious debate of the kind absent during the early emergency phase. On May 20, with summer sunshine and temperatures, and a dilution of the "*stay home*" message, many UK coastal resorts were flooded with people and traffic to them was often gridlocked[3], as it was also on the Bank Holiday Monday of May 25[4]. Anticipating the change in the rules for the following day, the weekend of May 30-31 saw large crowds at tourist locations. In the absence of open public toilets[5], leaving "*mounds of litter including used toilet roll and nappies at Yorkshire beauty spots[6]*" – in itself a coronavirus health risk. This was also an issue across other European countries[7].

There is much uncertainty about what the eventual social, economic, and political outcomes of the pandemic will be, but in the long run we need to consider how far human behaviour will change beyond responding to the needs of the immediate emergency and the subsequent recovery phase. In a crisis people can feel extremely vulnerable, often terrified[8], and look for anything that will make them feel less so. However, lockdown and keeping others at a distance (we discuss the confusing concept of 'social distance' later) comes with a high price. It also depends on commonly accepted behaviours to work. Should a vaccine be slow to emerge, only governments with strong enforcement powers could reasonably expect such an unnatural arrangement to be imposed without difficulty. Elsewhere, should it be needed, the willingness to shut down again may not see the same levels of compliance.

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[1] https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/14/asia/singapore-migrant-worker-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html
[2] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52858392
[3] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-52742519
[4] https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-police-called-to-large-group-gathering-as-britons-flock-to-beaches-during-hot-bank-holiday-11994363
[5] When and how can public toilets reopen? https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52774794
[6] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52867696
[7] 23 May: "Beach chaos threatens Europe as temperatures rise" https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/beach-crowding-intl-scli/index.html
[8] "*Consumers have been told for weeks it is safer not to leave the house — making them fearful about everyday activities, from shopping to drinking, that companies large and small depend upon*"
https://www.ft.com/content/074bf736-a874-42a4-9e08-041bad7faf83

So, thinking from the short into the long term, will our society be one where the discipline of social distancing becomes part of normality, or will it only be acceptable as a necessary but temporary fix? The answer is critical because for the economy the ramifications for the transport infrastructure, the hospitality industry, tourism, sport, entertainment, school and college education, and our political systems[9] are extraordinary.

1.2 'Social distancing' a policy in evolution

1.2.1 Issues of language and clarity

How far, then, is it going to be feasible to adopt centrally imposed 'social distancing' as something for the 'new normal? It is a policy instrument that has changed so many dimensions of economy and society and intrudes strongly on our regular life behaviours. To answer this question, more clarity is needed about the term *"social distancing"* itself. In strictly epidemiological terms it is about maintaining a safe physical distance between two categories of people - the infected, and those susceptible to infection. Even then, however, the science is not specific, hence it has been estimated at 2 metres for the UK, 1 metre in France[10], and 1.5 metres for Germany[11]. Adding the prefix 'social' to what is clearly understood as a distance measure, produces what Martin Bauer from the LSE has called an "*unfortunate choice of language*"[12]. The World Health Organisation (WHO), the originator of the concept of social distancing, has acknowledged the problem, declaring that while maintaining physical distance is "*absolutely essential*" amid the global pandemic; "*it does not mean that socially we have to disconnect from our loved ones, from our family*". Indeed, at a news briefing on March 20, WHO decided not to continue using 'social distancing', choosing to use 'physical distancing' from that point on[13].

Being much clearer about what is meant by the term in use (or changing it) is important in looking forward beyond the emergency phase. The recommended physical distance is scientifically and politically contested. This is significant, and if it could be reduced from two metres to 1 metre, it would significantly increase the carrying capacity of trains and buses and reduce the costs of changing the layout of offices. Unsurprisingly, businesses have been pressing for the promotion of 1 metre where; "*advocates say it could help businesses get back to work faster and help to kick-start the economy*"[14]. On May 28 it was reported that "*The Prime Minister said the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) would review the policy after suggestions halving it to one metre could help pubs re-open and save thousands of jobs*"[15]. In this case, the science should help us resolve this 'distance' question in time. But will the science prevail? Looking forward, the simple metric of distance separation, will make a substantial difference to what the future economy might look like.

Putting the adjective 'social' in front of 'distance', however, takes things to another level. The 'social distance' between A and B, in regular usage, is a concept that has no physical space involved. It may simply mean that two people feel comfortable in the company of each other. It may mean that one person who chairs a meeting can control how others contribute. Before seeing it be redefined for virus protection

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[9] https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/05/09/margaret-macmillan-on-covid-19-as-a-turning-point-in-history
[10] https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/coronavirus-covid-19
[11] https://www.thelocal.de/20200525/germany-plans-to-extend-social-distancing-rules-until-july-5th
[12] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/physical-distancing-social-distancing-200330143325112.html
[13] https://www.iflscience.com/health-and-medicine/why-the-who-is-now-using-the-phrase-physical-distancing-instead-of-social-distancing/
[14] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8339837/Government-scientist-says-2m-social-distancing-rule-based-fragile-evidence.html
[15] https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/boris-johnson-hopes-twometre-social-distancing-rule-can-be-halved-to-help-pubs-and-public-transport-to-reopen

it could relate to the social segregation between upper and lower 'classes' of people, or that between rich and poor. 'Social distancing', with this understanding, might make it sound as if people (groups) should stop communicating with one another and keep their 'social distance'.

Clearly, this was never the intention. In reality, there is a need to *preserve as much community as possible* in the crisis, even while keeping a physical distance between one another. The Thursday 'clapping for key workers' activity was a process by which people maintained physical distance from each other, while 'coming together' and being more 'socially close'. By this semantic means, the sharply defined instrument of 'physical distance' - keeping a certain measured distance from other individuals - sweeps into its orbit all those features that holistically configure life in a human society. Not least for young people whose lives depend so intensely on close interaction, this sanction is extreme. No wonder policies that require 'social spacing' by fiat have run quickly up against real life contexts where the social needs of a given situation might be deployed to justify some 'reasonable' or 'understandable' deviation from distancing rules. Going forward, this is going to be one of the hardest things to maintain.

1.2.2   The importance of the "demonstration effect"

Over the weekend of 23-24 May, lockdown tensions played out for real in the life of one of the architects of the policy, Dominic Cummings, and les to massively contested views about whether he broke the rules of social distancing or not. This led to diminishing public trust in the government, and an encouragement to the population to breach the general set of lockdown rules[16]. It resulted, on May 26, in hostile press coverage and the resignation of a junior minister[17]. Even before this event, on May 21, it was reported that "*Confidence in the government in England has dropped since the lockdown was eased, with more than half of young adults no longer sticking strictly to the rules, according to a new survey. Researchers questioned more than 90,000 adults and found those under 30 most dissatisfied*"[18].

Clarity of message and trust in those who design and enforce the rules is vital at every stage in a pandemic. Both have been significantly damaged by the Cummings episode[19]. Regardless of the media bonanza that has surrounded the event, it makes the population at large much more wary about central messages for handling the virus going forward. It will have rebound effects in managing those vital behaviours in common should there be a second wave. If people in general begin to discard the critical importance *epidemiologically* of the need for physical (that is spatial) distance[20], more cases and deaths may follow.

What has become clear is that the language and the clarity of the messages, and trust in those who are responsible for them, will be vital for moving forward into the 'new normal'. What is equally clear is that "*we are leaving it to the science*" will not play so strongly again – politics and power will infuse the entire process, and openness and trust will play more strongly than opacity and a willingness to manipulate things for political ends. This tension was highlighted on June 2 with the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority sending a scathing letter to the Secretary of State for Health regarding the statistics cited by the government about COVID-19 testing: "*the figures are still far from complete and comprehensible … The way the data are analysed and presented currently gives them limited value for the first purpose. The aim seems to be to show the largest possible number of tests, even at the expense of understanding. It is also hard to believe*

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[16] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52793991 and https://news.sky.com/story/scientific-experts-advising-government-criticise-boris-johnson-after-he-backed-dominic-cummings-11994132
[17] https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-minister-resigns-over-dominic-cummings-lockdown-trips-11994758
[18] https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-confidence-in-government-drops-as-under-30s-admit-defying-lockdown-rules-study-finds-11992057
[19] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8355181/Furious-Britons-pick-holes-Dominic-Cummings-story.html
[20] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-latest-social-distancing-metre-how-far-apart-guidance-who-study-a9543566.html

the statistics work to support the testing programme itself"[21]. It was reported on 4th June that fully operational track and trace will not be in place until September.[22] A lack of trust in evidence and policy administration means that the future is likely to be worked out through individual and group behaviours, rather than by science-based policies directed from the centre.

1.2.3 Differential scope for physical distancing in varying contexts

From the very beginning of the pandemic there were vast inequalities in the way the 'social distance' message played out in real local contexts. Social inequality and position in the labour market can select for high levels of contagion. To make the pre-virus urban economic system work, it needed the transport workers, the health care assistants, the waiters and kitchen staff of the restaurants, the Uber drivers, the Deliveroo cyclists, the cleaners, the janitors, and the refuse disposal workers. It needed them in large numbers and close to the centre of cities and towns. This found them living and working in and coming from close networks that involved regular physical contact. Many of these people were members of the BAME population.

For a high proportion of them, working in the precarious labour market, staying home, and avoiding contact was not a viable option. Often facing delays and falling through holes in the Chancellor's support system, they had to go to work. Large numbers were the lowest paid key workers in the NHS and the care economy generally. They found themselves living in those parts of the housing market that offered limited living space and little scope for physically distanced movement. Public transport was the predominant mode of travel. For this heterogeneous vulnerable group as a whole, the lockdown requirement of the emergency was experienced very differently by comparison with those who could work from home, travel by car and find their recreation in a garden or available public space that was not quickly overcrowded.

What the virus event has done is to shine a spotlight on this core of generally low paid workers, where they tend to live, their cultural and ethnic variety[23] and how they get to and from work. This appears to be where the virus started its deadly track early and most intensely with a higher rate of deaths among those who contracted it. COVID-19 selects for the economically marginal, those suffering health issues and the living-space constrained across the population.

These sorts of differentials were not just a feature of the major urban growth centres. They were to be found at other points down the population and network density scale and outside the metropolitan core. These are places that have been experiencing long term generalised social inequality. Whole communities find it hard to find well-paid sustainable employment, and a high proportion of them were attached to the precarious labour market. In the so called 'left behind places' the prospects for maintaining the government's requirement for social distance also fell into more challenging contextual circumstances. Here too, the emerging evidence showed a high incidence of both COVID-19 cases and deaths. The mapping of the ONS data for deaths from COVID-19 in early April[24] revealed a close visual correlation with high IMD

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[21] https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/sir-david-norgrove-response-to-matt-hancock-regarding-the-governments-covid-19-testing-data/

[22] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/04/nhs-track-and-trace-system-not-expected-to-be-operating-fully-until-september-coronavirus

[23] On June 2 Public Health England reported that "*An analysis of survival among confirmed COVID-19 cases and using more detailed ethnic groups, shows that after accounting for the effect of sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death than people of White British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had between 10 and 50% higher risk of death when compared to White British*". https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes

[24] https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/spatialanalysisondeathsregisteredinvolvingcovid19

(Index of Multiple Deprivation) scores in the older industrial regions of the north, and especially in the most deprived postcode areas within them. For people living in the poorest parts of the major cities, old industrial regions, cities of lower order in the urban hierarchy[25] and small towns and rural areas[26] the observed progression of COVID-19 has seen them as suffering greater exposure to risk.

The vulnerability of those living in multiply deprived towns and neighbourhoods matched that in the deprived parts of the major cities. On a global scale "*The worldwide lockdown of economic activity inflicts most pain on those who can afford it the least. The deep and sudden downturn will inevitably set back the emerging world's success in lifting people out of poverty and intensify the deprivation many rich countries have seen grow since the global financial crisis*"[27].

Going forward, the prospects for the infection continuing and a possible second wave in these areas remains undiminished, and the features of close quarters living and dependence on public transport will remain[28]. But on top of the direct effects of the virus, those places with an established history of unemployment and deprivation are also likely to have much less resilience to cope with increases in the scale of job insecurity and indebtedness that will follow. What we are discovering on a daily basis under the pandemic is that health inequalities and this lack of resilience to economic shocks have left large numbers open to infection and death, and also shockingly vulnerable to the forthcoming economic recession[29]. Further months of lockdown impacting on local economies will thrust them still deeper into difficulty. As we turn later to look into what things, after COVID-19, can change and what remain the same as before, allowing extreme inequality to persist as an embedded feature of the politico-economic system should be something that needs to change[30].

1.2.4   Shielding, lockdown and the older population

It has also become clear that COVID-19 discriminates significantly by age[31]. All the available data show that the over 65 group is both considerably more susceptible to infection and more liable to have serious outcomes. In some of the early modelling by the Imperial College group, chances of death from over-70s with COVID-19 were as high as 1 in 6. The curve of susceptibility declines sharply with decreasing age and children seem hardly affected at all. Reflecting this, the government advice to older people was more drastic. Two groups were identified: those known to the NHS as having serious co-morbidities[32] (including some younger people in this set); and the other was all people over the age of 70.

For the first group the requirement was to stay indoors (initially for a period of 12 weeks and there was a package of support available for them to do this) and for the second group there was advice to do the same and "*stay home*". All this remained in place until a relaxation at the beginning of June that came as a surprise

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[25] https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4648-rethinking-the-city-urban-experience-and-the-covid-19-pandemic

[26] https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-coastal-and-ex-industrial-towns-most-economically-at-risk-11977233

[27] https://www.ft.com/content/e851e3a2-8bbd-11ea-9dcb-fe6871f4145a

[28] https://www.ft.com/content/a25d7eb2-3ca8-40e1-95e5-cb885210f818

[29] https://www.economist.com/briefing/2020/04/30/the-90-economy-that-lockdowns-will-leave-behind

[30] Even the newspaper of big business, the Financial Times, argued in an editorial "*The worldwide lockdown of economic activity inflicts most pain on those who can afford it the least. The deep and sudden downturn will inevitably set back the emerging world's success in lifting people out of poverty and intensify the deprivation many rich countries have seen grow since the global financial crisis*". https://www.ft.com/content/e851e3a2-8bbd-11ea-9dcb-fe6871f4145a

[31] https://www.who.int/publications-detail/population-based-age-stratified-seroepidemiological-investigation-protocol-for-covid-19-virus-infection

[32] The fact that people who have one disease have one of more other diseases.

to the epidemiologists (albeit differentially across the 'United' Kingdom, with England[33] Wales[34] on June 1, Northern Ireland on June 8[35], and not at all yet in Scotland[36]).

For a significant number of older people – both with and without co-morbidities – the home that they would be required or advised to be "shielded" in has been a care home. A clear advantage of this was to place those most exposed to death in a safe environment "*shielded*" from the possibility of infection. However, this was an aspiration never adequately fulfilled in practice. Indeed, quite the opposite. In a very large number of care homes, the residents were directly placed 'in harm's way' as – in order to *"Save the NHS"* – plans were operationalised (under Guidelines still in place) to move older patients from the acute hospital service to the care homes[37]. This was done at the point where hospitals were already known to be hotspots for COVID-19. There was no provision (or even at this point much availability of prior testing) for the virus. The tragic results of this policy in the level of deaths in care homes are now there for all to see[38].

As noted earlier, a key component in having the population at large act in common to dramatically change their lives in response to a public health emergency, is the degree of trust they place in those who provide and enforce the rulebook. The history of the policy for vulnerable older people in the UK (not in terms of theory, but in the way it was operationally applied under the aegis of the government making the rules), has done considerable damage. There is also an issue of stigmatisation. As Michel Skapinker observed in the Financial Times "*Covid-19 has reinforced the idea of older people as frail and vulnerable … While there has been justified anger about high mortality rates in UK care facilities, the majority of older people are not in care homes. Lady Altmann points out that there are 13m UK pensioners and 400,000 care home residents*"[39]. Older people generally are being drawn, whether they are or not, to consider themselves as especially vulnerable and for many this can have negative emotional and behavioural consequences.

For older people outside the care home sector, compliance with the stay home and shield requirement has been high[40]. Their contribution to the spread of infection in the community has been minimal, but it must be also acknowledged that their isolation has also reduced their infection levels, and therefore their impact on emergency medical services. There is a story to be told about how vital local community support has been in supporting this group but – unlike other aspects of the pandemic experience – we have no data to reveal it. There are important lessons to be learned about how to support a vulnerable population from informal local networks. Looking to the longer term, protecting the old and isolated will surely rank more highly considering the political fallout of what has been revealed. But there are wider issues to address. The backlog of medical treatments[41] created by the early instruction to "protect the NHS" and the likely follow-

[33] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/01/easing-covid-19-shielding-in-england-risks-second-wave-

[34] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52867183

[35] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52874529

[36] https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/2227436/coronavirus-nicola-sturgeon-says-scotland-will-not-follow-englands-easing-of-shielding-rules/

[37] https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-nhs-prioritised-over-social-care-during-early-stages-of-outbreak-minister-says-11991378

[38] And this in spite of clear scientific warnings: "*Britain's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, has revealed he and other senior scientists warned politicians 'very early on' about the risk COVID-19 posed to care homes*" https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8261149/SAGE-warned-Government-early-care-homes-risk-COVID-19.html

[39] https://www.ft.com/content/9eb440b6-4519-43a3-aba9-99b87926dd74

[40] https://www.ft.com/content/1daf4e40-9046-11ea-bc44-dbf6756c871a

[41] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52461034

on of the mental health issues[42] caused by isolation have yet to be properly measured, but they will be considerable.

1.3 Bounding, re-bordering and legislative controls

1.3.1 From "stay home" to "stay alert"

Against the backdrop painted in the previous section, the State will retain its legislative powers to control the movement of people and how they can come together in groups. In effect, by government decree the original boundary for mobility was set as people's front door – the behaviours of Dominic Cummings show that this is one of the hardest constraints to sustain. Yet again, however, the picture is fluid. Evidence emerged from France, Germany and Spain, showing that people coming together in groups (even where they do their best to observe physical distancing) is allowing the virus to take off again[43]. Even during the emergency stage when the legislation was based on the strong "*stay home*" message, the difficulties of interpreting what might be exceptions was beginning to loosen compliance[44].

Beyond the emergency, as the general message shifted to "*stay alert*" and the clarity of what was required lost its sharpness, the boundary at the front door was progressively eased – throwing up inevitable fears that the public health message about distancing would be progressively weakened. By 1st June with government allowing groups of "*up to six*" to come together[45] and pressing for schools to open in a limited form (with essential workers already back at work), the tight legislative household bounding still recommended by many epidemiologists rapidly decaying. To the surprise of most and without a prior justification, even the "*shielding*" group were told they can leave their homes, although some in that group have become so concerned about contagion that they remain locked within their accommodation[46]. There has been a strong reaction from the epidemiology community[47] that this loosening has no scientific justification and will produce a second infection wave.

The sheer confusion now surrounding the messages has further induced a loss of confidence. People were on the move anyway, as we suggested earlier, and it looks to some as if the 'government has given up'. This is a dangerous message with around 1,500 new cases a day, and with track and trace only just underway early in June, and possibly not expected until July[48] or even September. In response to this, government has moved more firmly to suggest that; "*if there's any uptick in any particular locality or setting, we've got the ability to take targeted measures*"[49] This has been rebutted by the Association of Directors of Public Heath whose claim is that the staff, training and technology is simply not yet in place to suppress any hotspots that arise[50].

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[42] "*Grief, lockdown and coronavirus: a looming mental health crisis*" https://www.ft.com/content/7aa6a0b4-6607-47d3-8340-2b2c9fcacfa2

[43] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/28/covid-19-clusters-emerge-as-lockdowns-ease-across-europe

[44] It was this that pervaded the Cummings case discussed earlier – a draconian policy that became capable of ex-post justification on "reasonable grounds" according to the Prime Minister.

[45] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51506729

[46] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52879091

[47] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52858392

[48] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52938660

[49] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/31/local-lockdowns-could-be-used-coronavirus-cases-rise-says-raab

[50] https://www.adph.org.uk/2020/05/adph-presidential-blog-a-time-for-steady-leadership-careful-preparation-and-measured-steps/

1.3.2   Tightening cross-border and internal boundary movements

Stronger bordering is still very much part of the government policy package, if not so stringently now at the personal, household level - then more so at the international level. From June 15 all incoming passengers to the UK will, for example, be required to spend 14 days in quarantine[51], although the agreement with the Irish Republic that this will not be imposed on them could lead to a 'Dublin Dodge'[52]. Responding to the UK quarantine, many governments are demanding the same for travellers for the UK. This, in effect, closes the population of the UK into the national space. While enforcing re-bordering is complex, the logic is clear: inter-country transmission of COVID-19 remains a serious threat that could undermine domestic efforts to control contagion at home. In this respect, the UK has been a late starter with criticism about why it was not enforced much earlier[53].

Even within the UK itself, devolved powers have come into play to control movements between the autonomous regional spaces. Borders have appeared, for example between England and Wales[54], to control internal movements between jurisdictions that have a different view of lockdown. Even where there is no legislative power of enforcement, some of the more tourist-attracting counties and sub-regions of the UK (even though they are suffering serious economic hardships) have been actively seeking to dissuade travellers from visiting during the lockdown process[55]. There is a danger that as targeting hotspots becomes a more prominent dimension of policy and, as such areas are identified, more of these locally promoted 'keep away from us' behaviours may be seen to emerge. This is a trend being observed elsewhere and with potentially dark political ramifications:

> *"…colour-coded zones have been rolled out to control the virus in Malaysia, Indonesia, Northern Italy and France; the strategy was also considered as a model for biocontainment* in the White House *in early April[56]. As of early May, India has divided its 1.3 billion people into a patchwork of green, yellow and red zones, with different freedoms and restrictions based on each*".[57]

While, from a public health perspective, local action in areas targeted for intensive action represents an entirely sensible and well-tried epidemiological strategy, there is a danger that stigmatisation and exclusion might follow. This approach is already being picked up by some commentators on the libertarian right in terms that see; "*the colour-coded zones*" as "*the blueprint for a new political economy*" – one that allows the well-off people to avoid the contagious "*red zones*", and to pursue their (hopefully) virus-free lifestyles[58].

Overall, then, as the constraints on individual (but not yet family) movement and interaction are loosened, the barriers to movement at higher spatial scales are still in place. The population, instead of being housebound, is being 'boxed-off' (or in geographical terms 're-bordered') at other levels. Under the 'old normal', the holiday in the sunshine was, for a large share of the population and across most socio-economic groups, close to the top of the consumer preference schedule. The new border controls, along with the difficulties airlines and the travel industry[59] face in meeting the safety requirements for the virus,

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[51] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52907229

[52] "*There are claims that visitors or returnees may be able to make use of a "Dublin dodge," since arrivals from the Republic of Ireland will be exempt from the quarantine. In theory they could travel from anywhere and transit via the UK's near neighbour.*" https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/uk-quarantine-summer-vacations-coronavirus/index.html

[53] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/05/just-273-people-arriving-in-uk-in-run-up-to-lockdown-quarantined

[54] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52776581

[55] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-52742519

[56] https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/07/kushner-coronavirus-surveillance-174165

[57] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/01/coronavirus-libertarian-right-profit-coronavirus-pandemic

[58] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/01/coronavirus-libertarian-right-profit-coronavirus-pandemic

[59] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52917425

make this a more limited option going forward[60]. New social distancing practices mean that beaches may have space rationed for tourists[61]. For the summer of 2020, home-based holidays look to be the only option available, although "safe" corridors are being put in place bi-laterally by some countries to keep things going[62].

But here again there is the issue of physical distancing and crowds. To nobody's surprise, and anticipating the loosening due on 1st June, English beaches, beauty spots and holiday resorts were crowded in the last weekend of May. Absent the European resort holiday, this will possibly be the pattern for foreseeable future. While small family units will no doubt do their best to comply with the distancing rules, large numbers of discrete family groups coming together at what are, by definition, a selective group and often space-constrained, high tourism value locations will *constitute a crowd*. Perhaps the best that can be expected, epidemiologically, in a staycation[63] home summer, is the arrival of bad weather! But by the same token, who will be happy to queue for a long time outside a supermarket in the pouring rain? Pushing the infection rate to as low a level as possible before a loosening that would shift public behaviour to take on more risk was surely the only solution – though an increasingly challenging one. There is a need to plan immediately for a second wave.

1.3.3   Closing venues for audiences and avoiding crowds

There is clear evidence that coming together in crowds provides an environment of high contagion possibility. For example, there was the spinoff impact of the Cheltenham Race Meeting and the Liverpool Atletico Madrid football match on the rapid spread of infection in the early days of the pandemic[64]. In addition to crowded beaches, there are crowds where the coming together is a key part of the sought-after experience like football matches, pop concerts, cultural events, and other performances. There are crowds that simply arise from pinch points in movement flows – tube station platforms, congested trains, airport arrivals and departures, streets surrounding football grounds. There are crowds that are hoped for by their sponsors but not planned, such as political meetings, social groups around a particular agenda. There are crowds that simply happen, where individuals and small groups all independently choose the same location such as the country town high street in a tourist location.

This is a special challenge for infection control under any circumstances. The devices of "*stay home*", keep a physical distance and do not cross a border line are the key parts of the preventive armoury. But loosen one or all of these and crowding becomes possible. This is especially the case where prior closure has led to there being pent up demand for an event or service and where the alternatives are limited. We commented in our previous paper on the early attempts at opening refuse tips and fast-food outlets and have referred above to beaches on hot Bank Holiday weekends.

We are currently at the threshold of a new situation where, as lockdown is loosened, not just basic social distancing, but also the crowd will become a pressing issue. While football and cricket grounds and performance venues have remained closed, open air spaces with a potential to draw large crowds are increasingly becoming more open under the government's recognition of open-air leisure as a permissible activity. "*Going back to work where you can*" resulted in trains and platforms becoming crowded. The imposition of crowding controls immediately impacts the carrying capacity of the busiest parts of public transport. For example, Transpennine Express Trains, on May 28, were advising that "*Due to social*

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[60] https://www.economist.com/international/2020/05/30/what-awaits-tourists-when-they-re-emerge-from-lockdown

[61] https://www.ft.com/content/380f6cb4-d061-48f4-8150-d4bd593d312f

[62] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/31/greece-to-resume-flights-from-uk-on-15-june-with-strict-rules

[63] Stay in the UK and stay local … https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-52875612

[64] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52797002

distancing guidelines, capacity on our services will be greatly reduced and seating on board our services will be limited to around 15 to 20 people per carriage"[65]. Reducing capacity to around 15% has potentially insurmountable implications for revenue as well as for the convenience of such a slimmed down service for passengers.

The relaxation for coming together in open spaces has some epidemiological justification as having a low transmission potential, but not where crowds are drawn together in ways that make physical distancing impossible. The dilemma is obvious. Its resolution surely cannot be through legislative fiat from the centre. In the case of sports and entertainment venues there is activity to find crowd-reducing devices. Controlled pre-booking is one such and is becoming widely used where it can be successful, but not where 'buying ahead[66]' sees slots quickly foreclosed to new joiners[67]. Shifting the focus from coming together in place to video viewing formats is another, there is anguish from theatres when the need for physical spacing means they cannot fill enough seats to be commercially viable[68].

1.3.4 Moving to more local responsibility

Overall, then, this would suggest that a move in the next phase would be to preventive policies based on target groups and on certain local areas. This is also beginning to appear from the announcement on 27th May that the Public Health Directors in the Strategic Local Authority areas are to have a responsibility for track and trace (this came as a surprise, and most had no capacity or equipment in place to carry out the task[69]). Regardless of the miss-step, this shows the way things are likely to evolve for the longer run. Track and trace for both older people and for spatially targeted hotspots, many in the more deprived areas is likely to be a feature of the normal policy portfolio[70]. Should this turn out to be the case, it would be reasonable to conclude that, for most people, behaviours as close as possible to the 'old normal' would be likely to emerge – that is should no dramatic second wave overtake the population as a whole.

Should this be so, as just discussed, crowding and congestion will immediately become an issue, and despite people doing their best to "*stay alert*". A huge concern is that should the fears of the public health specialists be realised, a second or even third lockdown might become necessary. Re-capturing compliance on the basis of trust in government is going to be much harder to achieve.

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[65] https://tpexpress.co.uk/travelling-with-us/keeping-you-safe

[66] A process not dissimilar to the ticket agencies that purchased large numbers of theatre tickets and then resold them at a much higher prices: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-50494729

[67] News stores now speak of refuse tips being booked up until Christmas

[68] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/26/uk-could-become-cultural-wasteland-due-to-coronavirus-say-artists

[69] Tweet 28th May by Dominic Harrison Director of Public Health, Blackburn with Darwen. https://twitter.com/bwddph?lang=en

[70] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/27/hancock-local-lockdowns-will-be-used-to-suppress-infection

2.0 Transiting to the "New Normal"

2.1 Returning to work and travelling again

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is seeking to taper-off financial support for employees from August onwards[71], and employers will have to contribute an increasing share of the costs of furloughing their workers. This is the point, then, at which it looks like the 'new normal' will need to take shape. However, keeping even a defined *physical distance* between people will find itself running counter to so many normal human expectations about close contact between humans as social beings.

At a very personal level, how feasible it will be - beyond the emergency stage - to stop shaking hands or give a loved one a hug? How long will the fear of being near to people and to the virus override our cultural norms and instincts about our fellow citizens?[72] At some point the fear that it is not 'safe' to go on a bus, train, or plane will have to diminish[73]. The decision-making dilemma is imposed on each traveller – to delay arriving at work and travel in compliance with government rules for distancing or risk a crowded service and arrive at work on time. Images of crowded travellers[74] show how the need to work can override compliance, also with images of only a minority wearing the (now required) mask[75]. Such fears were further played out in the first week of June with terrified parents afraid to let their children re-enter a school[76]: a school is no longer a place of enjoyment and learning, but can look like a hostile battlefield with PPE-clad staff minimising contact between children.

For some groups within society, as just discussed, going back to work is not of the same order. Many in the lower paid jobs of the service economy have been going to work and travelling from the very beginning. For them, however, the return to work generally will only exacerbate the problems of crowding and congestion in the dense travel environment of the central cities. Over time, measures have been coming into place to try to control pressure points and overcrowded trains and buses – but at an additional cost to the providers that will have to come from somewhere. In the future people and providers will be doing their best to make a fundamentally unsafe system as usable and as safe as possible[77]. How this works out will depend heavily on what evidence emerges of second wave effects. Without a second wave, the expectation may be that normality will arrive in a modified form as behaviours alter choices of transport modes, times of travel and working arrangements between home and place of work wherever that choice is available.

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[71] https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/politics/uk-politics/2225948/analysis-rishi-sunak-takes-his-first-steps-towards-an-uncertain-destination/

[72] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52443108

[73] https://www.ft.com/content/a69afc14-904a-11ea-9b25-c36e3584cda8

[74] https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2020/mar/24/london-underground-packed-as-services-cut-to-curb-covid-19-spread-video

[75] In the week of May 18 this tension was being played out for real in London. There was an increasing return to work, with recommendations from the government not to use public transport but use cars (which are subject to both the congestion charge and often punitive parking costs in London). The rail and bus services set a challenge to those travelling – it articulates as; 'to conform to physical distancing our services will have only 10-25% capacity. It is up to you as a traveller to observe physical distancing, and not to travel if the service is crowded'. So how did it play out?. People discounted for the risk and largely 'got on with it'.

[76] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-52854688

[77] https://www.ft.com/content/a25d7eb2-3ca8-40e1-95e5-cb885210f818

2.2 Business taking greater responsibility

Across the board, businesses trying to survive will be doing their best to make us feel safer. This will range from shops detailing staff to manage spacing and queues to an expansion of pre-booking for 'slots' – in a shop, at the hairdressers, in a National Park car park and so on. Digital solutions by smartphone are in development to book, go away and come back at an agreed entry time. This scale of industry involvement in trying to make clients safe to keep revenues flowing is especially the case for the airlines[78]. The challenge of ensuring that passengers getting onto a plane feel they are not going to be infected is already being taken up. For example, passengers will be made aware that modern airplanes have air conditioning filters that are 'operating theatre standard'[79].

Maintaining distances respecting the 2.0 metre separation will be difficult to achieve and will have an enormous influence on load factors – but some reassurance to passengers would be essential. It would be the case that "*queues at security would also become painfully longer[80]. For example, an aircraft with 189 seats would result in a queue at least 380m for a single security lane*"[81]. But travellers did accept that and much more burdensome personal and baggage inspection after 9/11. Distance and the confidence of travellers will play powerfully into airline strategies for survival and there will no doubt be some form of consolidation in the industry. But people will want to travel by air and countries (especially those heavily dependent on tourism) will want border restrictions to move from the extreme to the reasonable as soon as possible.

2.3 Changing personal risk profiles

The lockdown experience has been extreme, and the population have responded remarkably well by taking it so seriously. But, as noted above, there will be a changed perception of risk and some sort of negotiated order as lockdown is eased. The extreme form still may appear again, but hopefully at a time when much more is known about what to do than appears to be the case at the moment[82]. Even then, it will probably be in a form significantly mediated by the first experience. An effective and available vaccine may arrive, as could therapies to reduce the most serious outcomes. People's risk profiles will shift. In the longer run, most may consign the event to memory, but others will carry the trauma throughout their lives, not the least being the hospital and care home workers who have been witnesses to the carnage[83].

For the long-run view, then, we need to ask whether COVID-19 (and its potential successors) can really be strong enough to sweep away a key part of our social makeup and allow physical spacing for all of us to be dictated by the threat of viral transmission? Given the systemic impact of the virus, and fears of massive long-term damage, there is, of course, an inevitable temptation to clutch at straws where there is a future free of the virus – say through a vaccine. However, we are in the era of contested scientific forecasts, with

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[78] For example, not just in the physical spacing challenges, but in the interpersonal relationships between passengers and cabin crew, where cabin crew are no longer dressed fashionably, but regard passengers as biohazards: https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/qatar-airways-full-body-cover-protection/index.html

[79] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jun/02/easyjet-resume-flights-european-routes-august-covid-19-restrictions-lift

[80] Something brought starkly into the public awareness with the long queues in the House of Commons where Members of Parliament had to socially distance when voting. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jun/04/uk-parliament-union-threatens-action-after-mps-queuing-chaos

[81] https://www.ft.com/content/abc6355a-3801-4e32-a992-f55e475d4454

[82] For example, consider four scenarios at https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/four-coronavirus-futures/

[83] https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14798

the forecasting models often being black boxes developed in previous epidemics that bear little resemblance to the current one.

In this situation, any positive message attracts instant attention. Hence headlines in the popular mass-readership press that "*Researchers in Singapore said that there will be no more cases of the deadly bug in the UK by September 30[84]*", and "*Coronavirus pandemic could be over in the US by November 11: Scientific model predicts virus will continue its steady decline with NO second wave[85]*" present (to the naïve reader) an unequivocal promise that it is almost over. Few readers will go further to consider the 'ifs and buts' that qualify the estimates of a statistical model. Reality may prove to be different. But, short of the techno-fix, there is a need to think carefully about physical distancing and what we might have to forego for it to be built into normality.

Given past experience of humans and risk, it is possible that - like those who farm on the flanks of volcanoes, they know will erupt sometime – many people will absorb the existential crisis and then go back to who we are, pushing the known risk to the back of the consciousness[86]: and (as of 5th June) there was no news of any major wide-spread secondary surge of infection emerging.

Each progression toward the 'new normal' is, then, an experiment with claims and counter claims about where we are on the COVID-19 path and what threats arise as lockdown is lifted. But already many risks are being discounted as sheer exhaustion and economic pressure becomes stronger as the call of something closer to normal life gets louder, or as the possibilities of a mobility-constrained future become too horrible to contemplate[87]. Hope for the vaccine is present but uncertainties about its timing[88], effectiveness and availability keep it as being uncertain as a fix. So, people are moving on. This is a process being played out by individuals, families, communities on the ground – but sadly without inadequate information, and in the face of a worrying loss of clear leadership from the government.

In the face of this, it might be sensible to anticipate more limited changes in people's general behaviour. There may be a risk of over-reading the extent to which the present phase of the pandemic will condition the shape of change for the long run future. This is not to say that there will not be a real impact going forward. We are yet to see the full extent of the damage the pandemic will have wrought on economies and societies across the globe, but it has already been an event of sufficient magnitude to suggest that this is a turning point in history[89], and the effects will be somewhere on a spectrum from substantial to cataclysmic.

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[84] https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/5627231/coronavirus-study-predicts-date-uk-coronavirus-free/
[85] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8350935/US-coronavirus-pandemic-early-November-predictive-model-shows.html
[86] For example, back in 2008 it was noted that our computer keyboards and mice etc. are toxic petri dishes of bacteria and viruses. However, it is unlikely that we sanitise such equipment on a regular basis. Add to that our ubiquitous smart phones which are perfect transmission devices for a virus. http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/may/01/computing.health
[87] For example https://news.sky.com/story/after-the-pandemic-britons-think-commuting-to-work-and-holidays-abroad-will-change-significantly-after-coronavirus-11998344
[88] A total lack of clarity exists about when (or if) a vaccine may be available: end of 2020? https://www.timesnownews.com/health/article/covid19-vaccine-could-be-ready-by-end-of-this-year-dr-anthony-fauci/597961 sometime in 2021? https://www.business-standard.com/article/health/coronavirus-vaccine-update-covid-19-vaccine-current-status-from-patanjali-to-moderna-china-oxford-gilead-more-120052800157_1.html not until 2022? https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-27/covid-19-vaccine-is-a-long-way-off-forecasters-say
[89] https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/05/09/margaret-macmillan-on-covid-19-as-a-turning-point-in-history

2.4 Realistic appetites for changing the system as a whole

Those who live in rich liberal democracies have become used to a world where (subject to financial capacity) they were able to mostly do what they wanted – shop this afternoon – no problem. Holiday in Barcelona – no problem. Go to a museum – no problem. This was an experience virtually across the whole population. As we emerge from the emergency phase, the recollection of this will come into play as people take a position on what we want the future to look like.

With the realisation that the prevailing economic system for the past 40 years might, of itself, be a powerful factor in perpetuating pandemic risk; *how far would people be willing to go in changing it*? What if the price of greater security really is far less international travel and holidays[90], a fear of travelling on public transport[91], a more limited range of goods on the supermarket shelves[92], higher taxes to support disadvantaged groups, a willingness to adopt behaviours that dramatically shift both work and social life and so on? Significantly, discourses that have centred on the power of market forces efficiently to get us what we want to have had little to offer when it has come to the pandemic impacts. For much of what we have learned to enjoy in our lives up to the crisis, market disciplines and globalisation have kept prices down and choices up. What appetite will there really be for major change across the population? What might we not want to lose from the "old normal" is a question still to be explored?

It may not just be those who put the economy at the centre of their concerns – from an investment and business point of view – that will want the old order still to be dominant. It may also be a generation of free-to-choose consumers who liked what they used to have. While the drive for less vulnerability, or to put it in the opposite sense, greater security, will play powerfully in defining the shape of the 'new normal'; it will be far from an uncontested position once the primary threat dies down. Some will press for a degree of necessary change but as far as possible for a re-boot of the previous system.

The shape of the short-term is going to have a powerful effect, but it may not turn out to be as powerful as was thought initially. It is too early to be sure that there will be a move towards an entirely new approach to economy and society for the next period. Some will be looking at nothing less than a revolution, where governments are mandated constantly to adjust things to mitigate against future viral surges, including the mobility of people, the capacity of the infrastructure to cope with socially distanced mobility, with potential economic effects. Others will see all this as too damaging to the machine for wealth creation, and others will look for the opportunities to move to a better future in a very different system[93].

After all, returning to the 'previous normal' means returning to the same depths of inequality, poverty, and societal divisions of before – that surely is not what is desirable. This will be further modulated by the behaviours and fears of people[94], and their willingness to conform to a new permissions-based society – leaving behind the entitlements and freedoms of the so-recent past – even if, as part of the price, inequality remains high.

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[90] https://www.ft.com/content/55cfbbd9-7a35-42d8-b769-495d912972cb
[91] With trains and buses largely re-nationalised with the government paying massive subsidies to keep services running for key workers. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52621747
[92] How many shoppers will return to the physical retailers? https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52804512
[93] https://www.ft.com/content/f35db8c6-a02f-11ea-b65d-489c67b0d85d
[94] For example, on 15 May the police were advising people not to rush into the road to avoid walking too close to other people. The risk of being run over by a car is greater than catching COVID-19 as you pass people. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8321511/Now-police-warn-NOT-step-road-dodge-fellow-pedestrians.html

3.0 Conclusions: The Emerging "New Normal"

3.1 Bringing forward and accelerating pre-virus tendencies

Given the enormous complexity that we face, what can we usefully say about the future? As pointed out in the first paper in the set that covered the COVID-19 experience[95], the pandemic will serve to *pick up trends already emerging* before its arrival and accelerate their entry into mainstream economy and society. One such is the rise in the importance of the Nation State. This was inevitable, of course. The State is where constitutional responsibility for the health of the people resides and where the levers of power exist to close down borders and have people 'locked down' and forced to stay indoors[96]. It was the locus of the first tool in the box to stop the rampant transnational and internal transmission of the virus. Before the pandemic struck, there were already tendencies toward greater nationalism. Politically, this was already in play on the US under Trump and in the UK with Brexit. What the virus has done is to lend greater emphasis to this and to the shift toward more protectionism, localisation of production and tougher frontier controls[97]. How far we should expect these to persist is a question of fluid political movements and too difficult to answer at this stage.

In concert with this inward-looking shift came a querulousness about globalisation. It seems already clear that the international supply chains we had before the crisis – now in close-down – will not be coming back in the same form we had in the past. Again, before the crisis, there was already a debate about the need to "re-balance" supply chains - driven increasingly by the geopolitical tensions between the USA and China. Critical shortages of key drugs and items of medical equipment on the arrival of the pandemic, served to highlight the existence of critical vulnerabilities. While just-in-time methods drove efficiencies into the global market economy, they also weakened the ability of national states to absorb major shocks like COVID-19. Globalisation is too embedded to disappear, but there will certainly be a significant amount of rebalancing coming in the future.

As part of the reaction to the crisis, personal liberties have been set aside in ways capable of challenging the entire political democratic order. Before the pandemic, we had already been warned to become wary of the arrival of what Shoshana Zuboff has called *Surveillance Capitalism*[98]. With the prospect of track and trace and potentially of immunity passports in response to COVID-19, we have seen an opening to what – if we are not very careful – could be a step jump in the ability of the State to see into our lives and control our basic freedoms. The ability of centrally controlled surveillance states like China to control the spread of the virus has captured widespread attention at a time when, as noted in this paper, it has been much harder for governments to control the behaviour of their citizens beyond the emergency stage. While targeted approaches to infection control for selected groups and "hotspot" places can be hugely effective, they can also be co-opted to political agendas that stigmatise and segregate. Going into the future, the watchword has to be vigilance that data security, the protection of individual privacy and natural freedoms of association and of movement should be returned to the status quo ante after the emergency has gone.

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[95] https://www.peter-lloyd.co.uk/papers-and-blogs/
[96] Although this is not always the case, and there is not (as of March 30) such severe lock-down conditions in Sweden https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-52076293
[97] https://www.ft.com/content/644fd920-6cea-11ea-9bca-bf503995cd6f
[98] https://shoshanazuboff.com/book/

3.2 Changing positions on trust and governance

What has happened is truly shocking, although for those who have retained jobs and financial well-being through the pandemic, the trauma may quickly recede in its intensity. The virus is affecting economy, society, and politics in significant ways, and in the short term. A real shock, however, has been to see how *powerless the established support structures have been* and how apparently irrelevant the politics of the immediate past have proved to be in facing the crisis. Left wing-right wing ideologies and leave-stay (membership of the EU) have looked like sideshows while government and politicians of all shades have sought to come to terms with COVID-19. One thing that can be expected to play through strongly, will be the need for more *responsive and effective government* at all levels of the politico-spatial system. In the UK case, the virus has, for example, starkly exposed the limitations of a highly centralised political system framed against the dominant perspective of the national capital[99].

The governments we rely on to protect us from challenging things have been found scrambling first to understand what is happening, and second to find and practically deliver ways to protect us from the ravages of an invisible, fast-moving biological predator. Confidence in being around other humans has been shaken by fear of infection, and people everywhere have been deluged with uncertainty about their jobs, their livelihoods, and their mortality. Governments of all hues across the globe have come under intense scrutiny to see how well they lead their people out of the event and there is considerable heterogeneity in national approaches to learn from. The same has been true of the transnational bodies. This is still ongoing and will be that way for the foreseeable future.

Now that it has our attention, the WHO[100] is emphasising that this virus may be around for a long time, and possibly may become endemic, as well as the possibility of other viruses and transmissible diseases 'waiting in the wings'. There will be more unprecedented global events and ongoing uncertainty. It is inconceivable that such an event would pass without provoking a substantial shift in the views of the population about what they would not want to see in the future and what they might imagine as topics for discussion about what that future should look like. Perhaps the biggest changes in relation to COVID-19 will be not so much in the 'virus-proofing' constraints on people, as in the arrival of new mindsets and new world views that will shape the politics of the future.

3.3 Re-valuing the State and public service

Some views, though, may have changed already. The pandemic has not been a context where governments could just 'leave it to the private sector, they will get us out of it' (though the UK government has tried this in some critical areas like testing – and now track and trace - with dubious results). While in the short term the business sector provided help in areas such as manufacturing ventilators, in the medium term the business community will (being innovative and entrepreneurial) see opportunities to profit from opportunities that arise. For example, in exploring how to produce internationally recognised coronavirus 'immunity passports'[101]. It has been down to the State, the NHS, and the public purse to rescue people from early disaster. Short term, it has fallen to the much-maligned public sector to take the lead. The concept of *public value* (in the sense of 'what the public values') is perhaps going to experience a much-needed revival as societies need to re-design a future with security and sustainability at its heart.

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[99] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/25/pandemic-failings-centralised-state-councils-coronavirus
[100] https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
[101] https://www.ft.com/content/a5721020-5180-4cb4-ac7e-a464c65f3028

On the other side of the pandemic, 'the public' will have had the opportunity to review more knowledgeably what it actually values and in what order of priority, and the outcome of an inevitable public enquiry into the pandemic may provide some salutary lessons. Clapping for the NHS and for care staff more generally will hopefully have shaped the way the public goes on to see where all the 'heroes' should be positioned in the hierarchy of rewards for contribution to the national good[102]. The list of 'heroes' has been expanding from the initial NHS workers, to care home workers, bus drivers, train staff, teachers, shopworkers, and more as we understand more how massively interconnected our society is. This is one area where it seems already reasonable to anticipate a ground swell of public support for substantial change.

As evidence of this, the first moral challenge emerged on May 20 when some of the NHS 'heroes', who were overseas workers and who had been at the forefront of emergency care in the hospitals, found that there was no clear 'thank you' from the government. Quite the reverse: "*It has emerged that the Home Office did not specifically review the charges beyond exempting on a one-year extraordinary basis both those whose visas were due to expire before October from that fee and the £400 surcharge, which will rise to £625 a year each later this year*"[103]. One day later and the government made a humiliating 'U-turn'[104]. What was more surprising than the U-turn was the 'tin ear' displayed by the government in promoting the charge and not realising the potential public backlash. We can expect more debates about just who is entitled to what and who will pay for the 'heroes' labour market – not least if a hard Brexit settlement is forced through.

3.4   Changes in consumer preferences

A little easier to grasp is that consumer preferences are going to change because some of what was readily available before will not now be on offer or will be prohibitively priced - cheap overseas holidays for example. Our consumer society will not disappear, but the shape of its component elements will surely shift. There will be cases where widely consumed past pleasures will be available only for those able to afford premium prices in a world where the production possibilities and revenue prospects for business have been profoundly re-modelled.

It is not just the consumers that might have become more risk averse, facing uncertain futures. Business too will have revised its risk profile to discover that some activities will lead them to exposure and where a very wide range of investment possibilities will be shrouded with uncertainly as the old economy gives stumbling way to the new. Cruise ships and hotels[105], tour companies[106], pubs and restaurants[107], theatres

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[102] On May 22 even the person who initiated the weekly clapping asked for it to be stopped because it was becoming too politicised: "*it has divided opinion: while some feel empowered and encouraged by the gesture, others think it is patronising*" https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/22/lets-stop-clapping-for-the-nhs-says-woman-who-started-the-ritual

[103] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/may/16/home-office-priti-patel-failure-to-scrap-nhs-migrant-surcharge-sparks-anger

[104] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52761052

[105] https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/13/business/travel-and-tourism-recovery-coronavirus/index.html

[106] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-52776657

[107] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/may/22/more-than-30000-pubs-and-restaurants-could-stay-shut-after-lockdown-coronavirus

and concert halls[108], airlines[109] and airports[110], shopping centres[111] (and consumer retail behaviours[112]), have been failing, or scrambling to survive. Many businesses are being seen to take the opportunity to restructure and shed labour against a general redundancy backdrop that avoids them being singled out, such as 9,000 jobs shed by Rolls Royce[113], P&O Ferries (1,100 jobs[114]), Virgin Atlantic (3,000 jobs[115]) and British Airways (12,000 jobs[116]). Others will follow.

GDP growth at a compound rate of 3 percent per annum – the desired norm of the past liberal marketplace – may have to give way to something more modest but hopefully still positive (or even be reappraised as an indicator). The global reach of opportunity that powered the past four decades is going to experience significant change and standard business practices like just-in-time across global sourcing networks are not going to be the same. Much of what is going to change for business and for people as consumers is about wholly new geographies of production, trade, consumption, and the movement of people in their work and home lives.

3.5   Re-thinking the city

The big cities were 'where it was at' for the modern world - *in two contrasting senses,* as it has now turned out. The city was accepted to be the driving engine of creativity for the new economy. Theory provided the rationale. Coming together in dense interconnected networks to achieve economies of agglomeration and interaction, was seen as the engine of big city creativity and growth. The national economy would be driven forward by these integrated city hubs. Over the 19th and 20th centuries, cities continuously sucked in people and power from the regions, with the electronic telegraph that spawned the development of the head office[117], and then with high-speed trains that pulled the long-distance travellers into the orbit of the primate city. In turn, the global head office further empowered the mega-city, with corporate headquarters being in close proximity to major aviation hubs. Cities then became 'smart[118]', 'sustainable[119]' and 'knowledge intensive' in the era of the Internet of Things … and then, suddenly; they became 'where COVID-19 is at'[120].

With hindsight, we discover that the mega-city - the driving geographical heart of the Neoliberal world order - turned out to be a *perfect propagation chamber* for COVID-19 and that systemic inequality within it predisposed a large share of the population to the worst outcomes. What until recently was seen as a 'smart city', using the Internet of Things to manage the compressed and crowded spaces of the city, has suddenly become a 'contagious city'. This is something unlooked for that - as we move to the 'new normal' - we will have to take on board. Already some of the bright new ventures of six months ago have been swept away.

[108] https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/04/29/musi-a29.html
[109] https://www.ft.com/content/abc6355a-3801-4e32-a992-f55e475d4454
[110] https://www.ft.com/content/9ed51afc-ebbd-41a7-8653-3e5aceda9d07
[111] https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/news/news-articles/2020/04/future-of-uk-shopping-centres-in-doubt-covid-19-impact
[112] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52724901
[113] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52723107
[114] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-52625025
[115] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52542038
[116] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52462660
[117] https://tomstandage.wordpress.com/books/the-victorian-internet/
[118] http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2017.1327166
[119] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/43b8d548-49bb-11ea-8aa5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[120] https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4648-rethinking-the-city-urban-experience-and-the-covid-19-pandemic

For example, "*Google's sister firm Sidewalk Labs has scrapped a plan to build a smart city in Canada, citing complications caused by the Covid-19 pandemic*"[121].

Even this early, movements are afoot within the cities to re-think things - as people have tasted working from home, have taken to bicycles, have seen what clean air looks and feels like, have experienced traffic free spaces. In the case of New York:

> "*Amid the wreckage there are shards of hope. Some are warming to the possibility that a city that became so overheated in this cheap-money era — a bastion of billionaires, ensconced in Hudson Yards — might now undergo a pandemic-induced reset. Cheaper rents may eventually make the city more accessible for a new generation, who will put spaces to use in ways their elders can scarcely imagine*"[122].

This is far too big for us to take on board here, and it will be the subject of a future paper. We can be sure that in the emerging 'new local' there is certain to be a major debate about where the mega-city sits in the overall economy, how its massive internal inequalities can be addressed, what it should look like aesthetically and ecologically, and what role it can or cannot be expected to play in moving toward a more inclusive, sustainable world.

3.6   Taking the global and sustainability dimensions seriously

Global events and global outcomes demand globally coordinated responses. This is where the understandable national and local emergency actions need to morph into a globally coordinated effort as things develop. This is not just about the virus but about the potentially devastating economic collapse that will follow it. Pulling up the drawbridge nationally (as seen with the chaotic nature of countries with different approaches to quarantining travellers[123]) will not save humanity from future biohazards any more than from the world in economic turmoil that lies ahead.

To this point, the international bodies that so quickly stepped up to address the Financial Crisis of 2008-9 have been particularly challenged to respond. The breakdown in trust in multilateral organisations led to the US withdrawing its support for the WHO, with the WHO not willing (for fear of what China would do) to acknowledge that Taiwan was a world leader in its response to COVID-19[124]. The United Nations has made little visible impression. As the pandemic progresses around the world, we are already in a situation where many countries in the Global South are finding that the *economic shock has arrived before the virus has taken hold* facing populations that have no economic resilience with an existential threat to their very survival. Coronavirus for them is just another disastrous event that may undo decades of poverty reduction[125]. As of 5th June 2020, the official estimates showed 6.66 million cases of COVID-19 and 392,000 deaths worldwide[126]. Compare these to Malaria (in 2018 there were 228 million cases and 405,000

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[121] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52572362

[122] https://www.ft.com/content/a313a40c-b046-4b11-b302-41d9f347cddb

[123] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52781812 and https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52900531

[124] https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/taiwans-covid-19-diplomacy-and-who-participation-losing-the-battle-but-winning-the-war/

[125] https://www.economist.com/international/2020/05/23/covid-19-is-undoing-years-of-progress-in-curbing-global-poverty

[126] https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6

deaths[127]), deaths in wars[128], deaths from starvation (9 million in 2019[129]). Against these, COVID-19 does not rank as such a major issue, but it came with the shutdown of the world economy, making it potentially far more lethal in its overall impact. So, from the global viewpoint, we are in one sense all in this together, and in another not at all.

And then there is global warming and the climate emergency. Disastrous as COVID-19 may be, it is surely unthinkable that ordinary citizens everywhere will not begin to grasp how fully integrated we all are in a globally connected ecosystem and how neglecting the health of the planet can follow through into each and every household. We have seen in the air quality everywhere, the observable effects of reduced vehicle and aircraft emissions. However, while there was brief celebration at the massive reductions in pollution in China[130], the pollution rapidly reappeared as the Chinese economy was unlocked, and assessing the balance of pollution gains is complex:

> "*Distinguishing the pollution changes caused by the lockdowns and their subsequent relaxations from other factors, such as weather and chemical interaction of pollutants, is complex. Spring is the most polluted season in western Europe in normal years, owing to the start of the agriculture cycle which causes ammonia emissions that go on to form particles over cities*"[131].

Economic and social practices are not all becoming a 'new normal' in a simplistic manner. Even a switch to more online activity may even *increase pollution* unless it is managed well. The online society and economy is a voracious user of energy for their massive data centres[132]. A switch to online clothes buying may save in our fuel costs travelling to a shop, but delivery (usually in vans with dirty diesel engines) also consumes fuel. We need, then, to understand better the energy and environmental impact of changing consumer behaviours before we can make any claim that we are being environmentally friendly.

Will the fear of coronavirus contamination drive us back, for example, to single use plastic bottles, or can an innovator find a compound for drink bottles that is both compostable and clinically clean (resistant to bacteria and viruses)? There are already concerns over rising levels of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as face masks in the seas[133], which has stimulated the innovators to develop compostable PPE[134]. There is a huge potential in the innovative power of business, society, and community to address the multiple problems in front of us[135].

We have just learned in a very direct way through the COVID-19 experience that our neighbour's health affects us – whether locally; nationally or globally. Global health, it turns out, contributes to our own health. We need to take this lesson further to address the health and sustainability of the *global ecosystem* – on which we all ultimately depend[136]. After the pandemic experience, there would hopefully be greater support

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[127] https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/world-malaria-report-2019

[128] https://www.statista.com/chart/20699/estimated-number-of-deaths-in-selected-warzones/

[129] https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/people-and-poverty/hunger-and-obesity/how-many-people-die-from-hunger-each-year

[130] https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30107-8/fulltext

[131] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/03/air-pollution-in-china-back-to-pre-covid-levels-and-europe-may-follow

[132] https://www.ft.com/content/402a18c8-5a32-11ea-abe5-8e03987b7b20 and
https://www.technologyreview.com/s/613779/icelands-data-centers-are-booming-heres-why-thats-a-problem/

[133] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-52807526

[134] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8380879/Worlds-plastic-free-PPE-composted-garden.html

[135] https://theecologist.org/2020/may/19/mutual-aid-global-solidarity-and-techno-fixes

[136] The work that the our zoos undertake in maintaining biodiversity is under extreme threat as some of the major zoos risk going out of business: https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/animals/2020/05/british-zoos-are-starving-to-death-and-the-most-iconic-of-all-may-be-about-to-slip

for massive State supported strategic investment, adding up across nations to a global response - a Green Deal or, in Mazzucato's terms, a Green Direction with Green Innovation[137].

COVID-19 has reinforced how socially interdependent we are. There have been some positives. For young people, if for nobody else, it must surely be clear that the 'old normal' in relation to health, social inclusion and the global environment will get us into trouble in all sorts of ways. Perhaps following the disaster of the virus, the threat to us cannot be dissected into climate, marine, atmosphere, or food supply. These are all massively interdependent. The progression to some form of 'new normal' involves an incredibly complex set of issues not something solved by just 'less travel' or 'less food waste'. The need is for a mobilisation of all our learning and skills in a concerted and co-designed programme that acknowledges the complexity and dynamism of the system we are trying to influence and finds those domains within it where we know enough to be creative and entrepreneurial in fixing them.

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[137] https://marianamazzucato.com/research/green-innovation/