

# WordPress English

---

## Covid-19

As the Coronavirus continues to spread in other countries, it may seem like that it has stopped almost entirely in the country where it started. I stress "seem", because the media in China is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, and for an authoritarian nation, the image is the most important thing. However, despite the apparent success of China to contain the virus - at least in its own nation, after it had slept [for three weeks](#) and silenced doctors -, there are now many [Chinese](#) official who spread the rumour that US troops have brought it to Wuhan. The question which one may ask him- or herself is: **Why would they do it?**

Some of you may have heard about the wet markets in China; on these markets, natives sell different types of animal meat. Exotic animals like bats as well. However, what is problematic are the conditions under which the animals are held - often in small cages and close on top of another. This makes it easier for a virus to wander from one animal to another, like it was the case with H1N1 pandemic in 2009 which may have originated from China as well. This time, the virus needed an additional intermediate host. Currently, it points to pangolins being the link between bats and humans. [As it is explained in this scientific article](#). The most important part, at least in my opinion, is:

*"The researchers identified protein sequences in sick animals' lungs that were 91% identical to the human virus' proteins. Moreover, the receptor binding domain of the spike protein from the pangolin coronavirus had only five amino acid differences from SARS-CoV-2, compared with 19 differences between the human and bat viral proteins. This evidence points to the pangolin as the most likely intermediate host for the new coronavirus, but additional intermediate hosts could be possible, the researchers say."*

Next to its importance to find the origin of the novell Corona, it also shows that a consequence of the consumption of a pangolin could be the infection with SARS-Cov-2. These animals, which are exotic, are sold on wet markets - as I mentioned previously. Of course, most Chinese do not consume them, it's only a tiny but powerful minority. And unless they are either prohibited or very strictly regulated (i.e. some animals, especially those which are endangered, shouldn't be sold or eaten), it's very likely that in 10 years a new virus breaks out. This also means that the Chinese government has to act on the minority which threatens the vast majority - both of China and the rest of the world.

### To Summarize

Covid-19 may have originated from China, and pangolins are possibly the link between bats and humans. The wet markets in China operate under unhygienic and unsafe conditions; they either have to be prohibited or strictly regulated (-> the regulations must also be enforced). Chinese officials spread rumours about US-Troops having brought the novell Corona to China, but not citing any evidence to reinforce their accusations.

(Released: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, 22:19 Uhr/10:19 pm)

## Science News

### Traces of an Ancient Rainforest in Antarctica?

An interesting discovery was made in the Antarctic, after a team from the UK (Imperial College London) and Germany (Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research) analysed preserved roots, pollen and spores from the Cretaceous period (145.5 million years ago to 66 million years ago).

The article of Science Daily elaborates:

*"The mid-Cretaceous was the heyday of the dinosaurs but was also the warmest period in the past 140 million years, with temperatures in the tropics as high as 35 degrees Celsius and sea level 170 metres higher than today."*

This is insofar significant, because prior to the finding it was assumed that the global carbon concentration was roughly 1,100 ppm (parts per million). The researchers have concluded that the average temperatures were around 12 degrees Celsius (for comparison: the mean temperature in today's Germany is about 10°C).

Now, with this experiment, it can be corrected. The global carbon concentration must therefore have been between 1120 ppm and 1680 ppm, in order for the Antarctic to reach such high temperatures (relatively high, depending on the perspective).

More details: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200401130825.htm>

### Warming Oceans as a driving force behind marine species relocation?

Since the industrial revolution, the temperature of the world's oceans have warmed by 1°C. Although that may not sound much to a human, it is a significant change for marine life. One result of this change seems to be the relocation toward the poles.

As the article explains:

*"The findings show that large-scale changes in the abundance of species are well underway. They also suggest that marine species haven't managed to adapt to warmer conditions. The researchers therefore suggest that projected sea temperature increases of up to 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels by 2050 will continue to drive the latitudinal abundance shifts in marine species, including those of importance for coastal livelihoods."*

Why is it important? Because it also affects the performance of a species locally. For instance, European seabass is thriving at their poleward edge where they historically were uncommon. This in turn means that the European seabass may relocate entirely to their poleward edge. In turn, it would mean that the ecosystem may change as well.

There are many other questions which we need to find answers to, as Glenn said:

*"We aim to get a better understanding of precisely how marine climate change drives abundance shifts," Genner says. "Is this mainly related to the physiological limits of the species, or instead due to changes in the species with which they interact?"*

More details: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200326124155.htm>

### **Covid-19 has a natural origin**

Accusations have been made that the virus is actually a bioweapon, but an analysis of public genome sequence data from SARS-CoV-2 and other related viruses have found no evidence that the virus was made in a laboratory or has otherwise been engineered.

As the article goes on, it points out two main evidences:

1. The RBD portion of the SARS-CoV-2 spike proteins had evolved to effectively target a molecular feature on the outside of human cells called ACE2, a receptor involved in regulating blood pressure. The spike proteins of Covid-19 were even so effective at binding the human cells, that the scientists concluded it was the result of natural selection and not the end-product of genetic engineering.
2. "If someone were seeking to engineer a new coronavirus as a pathogen, they would have constructed it from the backbone of a virus known to cause illness." However, the backbone of SARS-CoV-2 differed substantially from those of already known Coronaviruses. It also mostly similar to other viruses found in bats and pangolins.

Therefore, it can be ruled out that the virus was made in a laboratory.

### **Also important**

*"If the SARS-CoV-2 entered humans in its current pathogenic form from an animal source, it raises the probability of future outbreaks, as the illness-causing strain of the virus could still be circulating in the animal population and might once again jump into humans. The chances are lower of a non-pathogenic coronavirus entering the human population and then evolving properties similar to SARS-CoV-2."*

More details: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317175442.htm>

(Released: 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, 20:19 Uhr/8:19 pm)

## Scientists have Discovered Six new Coronaviruses in Bats



**Clarification:** In order to avoid a misunderstanding and the spread of misinformation, it is important to know that neither of these viruses are closely related to SARS-Cov-1, MERS or Covid-19 (all of them caused wide-spread disease in humans).

More research is required to evaluate the risk of a spillover to other species and to understand how big of a threat it is to human health - if at all.

### How were they found?

A PREDICT team in [Myanmar](#) detected these viruses while they were conducting bio-surveillance of animals and people. The work serves as a means to better understand the circumstances of how a disease spreads from one species to another.

Info: PREDICT is an initiative founded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID supports the discovery and surveillance of pathogens which have the potential to spread from animals to humans. The research was part of their project.

### Method of Research

The research was conducted in locations in Myanmar where humans are more likely to come into contact with local wildlife, because of changes in land use and development. The scientists collected more than 750 saliva and fecal samples from bats within these areas. Then, the researchers tested and compared the samples to known coronaviruses. Thus they were able to identify six new coronaviruses [for the first time].

### Importance of Findings

The author of these findings told ScienceDaily that their result "*underscore the importance of surveillance for zoonotic diseases as they occur in wildlife*". It will guide future surveillance of bat populations to better detect potential viral threats to public health, as well.

Marc Valitutto, a former wildlife veterinarian with the Smithsonian's Global Health Program and lead author of the study, said: "Viral pandemics remind us how closely human health is connected to the health of wildlife and the environment," and since the frequency of humans interacting with wildlife

increases, it is also very beneficial to humanity to better understand how a virus spreads from one species to another.

The better we understand how it works, the better the chances are to reduce the pandemic potential of such viruses.

An important paragraph of the article:

*"Many coronaviruses may not pose a risk to people, but when we identify these diseases early on in animals, at the source, we have a valuable opportunity to investigate the potential threat," said Suzan Murray, director of the Smithsonian's Global Health Program and co-author of the study. "Vigilant surveillance, research and education are the best tools we have to prevent pandemics before they occur."*

### **More**

If you want to know more about the Smithsonian's Global Health Program or PREDICT, then you can read the article [here](#). The article is also more detailed, and it takes less than 15 minutes to read it.

(Released: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 22:59 Uhr/10:59 pm)

## **Urban Land: A New Source for Fruits and Vegetables?**

**Study:** Published in Nature Food

**Source:** University of Sheffield (Great Britain)

**Summary of ScienceDaily:** *"Growing fruit and vegetables in just 10 per cent of a city's gardens and other urban green spaces could provide 15 per cent of the local population with their 'five a day', according to new research."*

### **Method of Research**

The interdisciplinary team used data from Ordnance Survey (national mapping agency for Britain, founded in 1791) and Google Earth.

### **Findings**

- 45% of Sheffield is covered by allotments, parks, gardens and woodland
- Allotments cover 1.3% while 38% are comprised of domestic gardens
- An extra potential of 15% of Sheffield's greenspace has the potential to be converted into garden communities
- Allotments and suitable green spaces, if put together, would open up 98m<sup>2</sup> per person in Sheffield for growing food, that's four times more per person than currently used

## Hypothetical and Realistic Scenario

**Hypothetical 100%:** approximately 709,000 people could be fed (per year their "five a day"), or in other words: 122 per cent of Sheffield's population

**Realistic 10%:** 15 per cent of the population (87,375 people) of the city could be provided with a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables.

## Additional Info

The potential for soil-free farming on flat roofs using methods such as hydroponics, was also investigated by the study. Hereby, plants are grown in a nutrient solution. Another option is aquaponics, a system combining fish and plants.

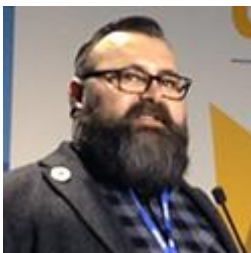
## Meaning for the UK...

As the article puts it: *"The UK currently imports 86 per cent of its total tomato supply -- but if just 10 per cent of the flat roofs identified within the centre of Sheffield became soil-free tomato farms, it would be possible to grow enough to feed more than eight per cent of the population one of their 'five a day'. This increases to more than 60 per cent of people if three quarters of the flat roof area is utilised."*

This, in turn, is also environmentally friendly since less transportation is needed. To some extent, the UK would also become more independent from the complex international supply chain. However, Professor Duncan Cameron, the co-Author and Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food at the University of Sheffield, said:

*"It will take significant cultural and social change to achieve the enormous growing potential of our cities -- and it's crucial that authorities work closely with communities to find the right balance between green space and horticulture."*

*"But with careful management of green spaces and the use of technology to create distribution networks, we could see the rise of 'smart food cities', where local growers can support their communities with fresh, sustainable food."*



Duncan Cameron is Professor of Plant and Soil Biology in the Department of Animal and Plant Sciences at the University of Sheffield



### ...Meaning for the Rest of the World

These findings, although very specific for the UK, highlight the potential of urban farming. Next to the farming on flat roofs, allotments, parks, or other green spaces, vertical farming could be an option for highly populated cities - even in regions which are dry and not suitable for conventional farming. Thus, a similar percentage could be provided with food as well. Since vertical farming takes place inside, it isn't susceptible to weather and other environmental factors. Thus, an all-year supply is possible.

However, these changes, as Professor Duncan Cameron pointed out, need significant cultural and social change in order to reach their potential.

### Source

Science Daily: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200317130713.htm>

(Released: 14 April 2020, 00:11 Uhr/11 Minutes past Midnight)

## Taxation – A Necessity



Taxes are quite a controversial issue, politically and economically seen. There are arguments which can be made for high taxes and vice versa for low taxes. However, today I don't want to look just at the economic impact of taxes, but the general affect it has on the people, companies, and so on. Another factor are the circumstances under which the taxes are collected, e.g. the form of government and accountability.

## A Necessary Evil

Taxes do not just affect the costs of a company or the net salary of an individual; it also has an impact on society and the opportunities of others who are less fortunate. From the physical infrastructure to education, each investment of the government reflects directly upon the citizens of a nation. A healthcare system which is underfunded isn't able to get a lot of good equipment, i.e. the hospitals either have to buy cheaper and low quality equipment or they only buy a few of the expensive but high quality equipment.

The decision they make, in turn, may decide the outcome of an illness, injury, or else. Option A means that patients do not recover as fast, or not at all; Option B means that some patients can quickly recover while others have to wait, if their conditions haven't worsened by then.

Consequently, not recovering quickly from a disease or only curing/treating a few results in the loss of productivity of the work force - the engine of the economy -. A loss of productivity means that the employer faces more costs, and in a highly competitive market that is sometimes a death sentence for the company owner.

Profit-orientated healthcare systems, like in the US, got another problem: they have to make profit, otherwise they cannot operate within the market and get crowded out. On the other hand, focusing on profit leads to the negligence of patients, and they in turn have to be charged more. Some may not be able to afford it and [end up in debt](#) or are [not covered](#) at all. No coverage and a missing social security net, as well as worker protection, leads to unemployment, a decrease in productivity, and so on.

This example shows us the bigger picture of what happens when the healthcare system is insufficient and/or inefficient.

Equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. is also an important aspect of democracy, yet only in theory everyone got the same chances. Probably a major reason for that is the unequal distribution of wealth and income in society - a phenomenon which is visible in many nations. Poverty is, of course, also an economical issue as one of my other articles has pointed out ("An Economy for the Future"), a [report](#) from the US Government Accountability Office from 2007:

*"Research shows that poverty can negatively affect economic growth by affecting the accumulation of human capital and rates of crime and social unrest. Economic theory has long suggested that human capital--that is, the education, work experience, training, and health of the workforce--is considered one of the fundamental drivers of economic growth. The conditions associated with poverty can work against this human capital development by limiting individuals' ability to remain healthy and develop skills, in turn decreasing the potential to contribute talents, ideas, and even labour to the economy."*

That's just the economic side of the coin, but there's also the societal impact: people who live in poverty, or are near poverty, are often unable to get out of the vicious cycle of poverty. For one, because they may need to educate themselves further which is impossible for people who have to work full-time just to stay afloat. And another factor could be the location, and since moving to cities is quite expensive, they aren't able to lift themselves up from the situation they are in. A consequence of that is also less leisure time and therefore a minimum of social activity - if any. Other side effects, among them the [increased risk](#) of addiction, are:



- **Poverty increases stress.** Stress is well recognized as a risk factor for substance abuse and relapse after treatment. Worrying about how to afford shelter, food, and other basic needs causes a tremendous amount of stress. When you're struggling to make ends meet, there is a great temptation to turn to drugs or alcohol to temporarily escape from your problems.
- **Poverty increases feelings of hopelessness.** When meeting daily expenses is difficult, dreams of attending college, buying a home, opening a business, or traveling the world seem impossible. Feeling as though you are powerless over your own future creates a vulnerability to substance abuse.
- **Poverty decreases self-esteem.** In a culture that values material possessions and financial success, being poor can feel like a moral failing. This can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and diminished self-worth. According to Psychology Today, people struggling with low self-esteem have an increased vulnerability to developing substance use disorders.
- **Poverty decreases social support.** Having the emotional support of friends and family helps people cope with difficult situations in their lives. However, lower income adults are less likely to have strong social support networks simply because they are expending all of their energy on trying to survive from day to day. For example, a UCLA survey\* found that lower income adults are less likely to be married even though they value marriage just as much as their higher income peers.
- **Poverty decreases access to healthcare.** Although the number of uninsured adults has decreased in recent years, the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation found that 45 percent of uninsured adults lacked coverage simply because the cost was too high. Despite the fact that most of these individuals had at least one working adult in the family, 1 in 5 admitted to foregoing recommended medical treatment due to cost. Access to preventative health care is also severely limited for members of this group. Untreated mental health conditions or chronic illnesses that are poorly controlled can lead to the use of drugs or alcohol to self-medicate symptoms.

Then, there's also the result of less political activity and the possibility to engage actively in politics to fight for one's rights, promote ideas or engage in discussions. Something that is essential to a democracy can thusly be not accessed.

It's a lot of talk for a simple statement, but to me the whole picture must be clear to understand how one - in this case me - comes to the conclusion and argues for the necessity of taxation and a fair distribution of health, as well as strong social security net and other social policies. Of course, how high it should be is also worth a discussion, but I won't explore it here.

### **Circumstances of Tax Collection**

The circumstances under which the taxes are collected is also important, since it allows an insight into the government and how the taxpayer money is used. However, I don't know from which country you are, but I argue from a western point of view regarding the circumstances of taxation and what, in my opinion, should change.

In democracies, there's usually known what the government spends the taxes on. Governments release a budget and inform the public about it. In the golden age of the internet, there could happen an improvement though. For more transparency, there could be a website for local, state and national governments which tracks where specifically the money flows into (e.g. repairing a bridge). This would allow citizens to learn more about the taxpayer money and, in case a project gets

too expensive and the deadline is always delayed, a vote could take place to determine whether it is cancelled and the taxpayer money otherwise used or the project continues.

Next to more visibility, it also increases transparency and may help prevent the misuse of taxpayer money. It basically is more democratization, if you will.

However, in order for all people to get access to it, investments in digitalization must increase. As it is with the other examples I have given, the economy also benefits from it, but I don't want to write a novel here.

Hint: Estonia

(Released: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 01:13 Uhr/01:13 am)

## Healthline Europe

If the Covid-19 pandemic has shown me something, then it is the lack of actual European solidarity. Italy and Spain suffered the most, yet help arrived very late.

For me personally it was extremely frustrating, since I couldn't do anything besides contacting my representatives in the [European Parliament](#) and write a [Citizen's enquiry](#) to the European Parliament directly (I show the response in this article as well).

So, I sat there one night and didn't know what else I could do. Then, I've suddenly got an idea: a stronger healthcare system, but one that provides service to all European countries. Since nature catastrophes and pandemics are continue to happen, the best we can do is to be well-prepared and ready to act as soon as they occur in a country.

Even during times which are not plagued by a crisis, there's still need for it (e.g. nursing staff who care for the elderly). My idea, for this political endeavour, is now what I present to you. Of course, it needs more time to mature, and it is far from being fully implementable, but it is a beginning - or, at least I hope it is.

### European-wide Healthcare

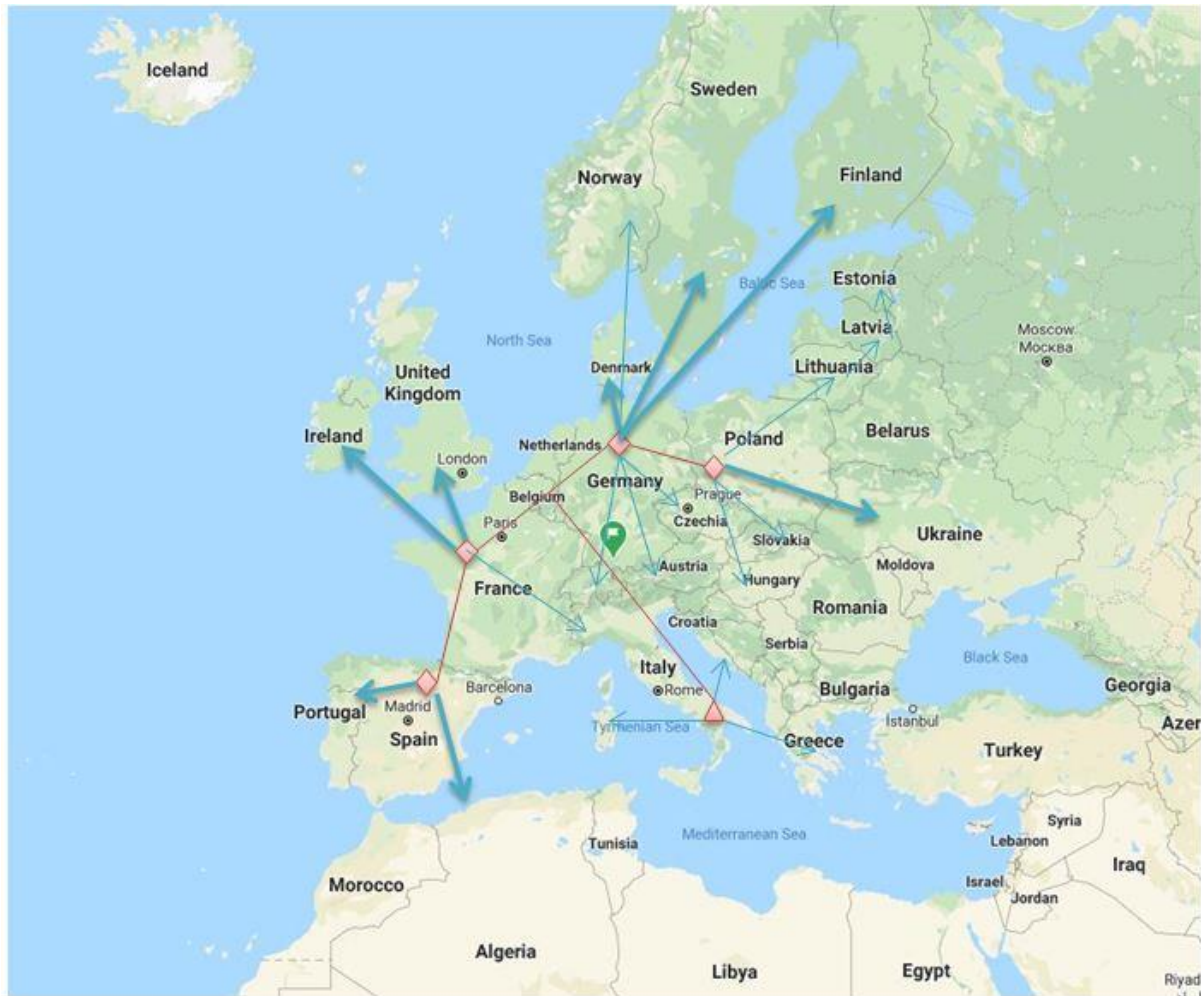
Here's what I noted in my word document (including the visualizing), word for word:

*"In order to provide everyone in Europe with best quality healthcare, a high-speed train connects Spain, France, Germany and Poland. Doctors, nurses, and other personnel can thus quickly arrive in a region and go from there to another country or stay in the country. Italy would also be connected to the railway [system], or if that's not possible, then via airport travel.*

*The system has to be coordinated, of course, and either a new institution provides this service or the already-existing institutions in each country establish a network between them to control and coordinate everything.*

*Other functions of the health-line, or what else it can be called, can be added at some point.*

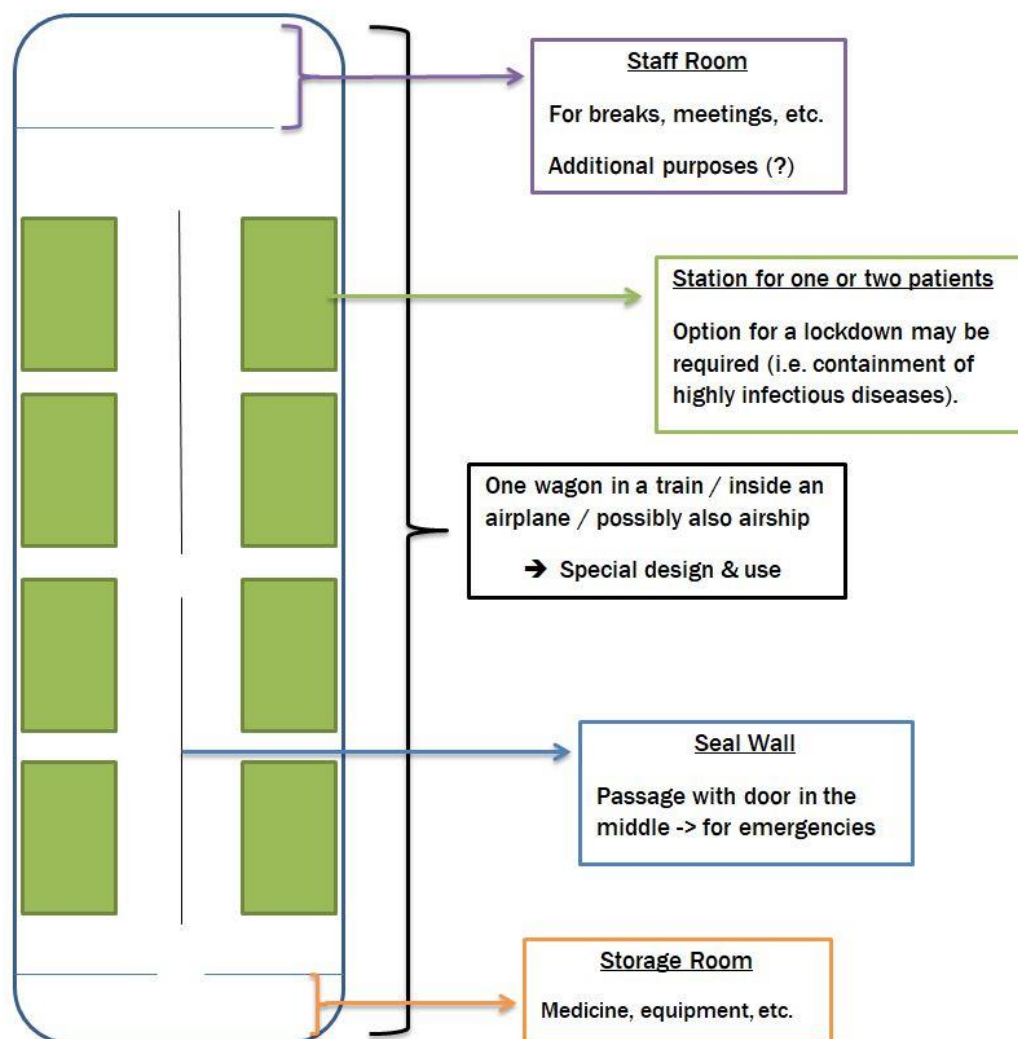
*Our neighbouring continent, Africa, could also benefit from it. Perhaps, it could be used as a mean of educating personnel in developing countries (2nd or 3rd world)."*



The red lines shows the main railway system, and the blue arrows where the staff could travel from there. Italy got a triangle, because it could host an airport with the same function. It isn't limited to Italy, though. If other countries are interested, they can host an airport as well.

PS: Just because the arrows don't point to every country, doesn't mean that they are being excluded. Anyone who wants to join should be able to join.

Now you have a rough overview over the transportation system, but there's also a design - one which probably has been thought of already - I had in my mind:



In my document, following has been written down:


### Requirements:



- The wagons/rooms must always be intensively cleaned and disinfected after they have been used -> standard procedure
- Medical Aid must be quickly delivered to a country without bureaucratic obstacles
- Each country has a set amount of these wagons/rooms of special airplanes/airships, either for own use or in cases of an emergency in another country as a mean to quickly deliver aid
- A well-functioning digital and physical infrastructure (e.g. railways, airports) are absolutely essential to such a network
- All medical research, if not already done so, must occur on a European-wide level and publicly funded -> everyone shall benefit from it
- Automation makes it possible to produce medicine and medical tools in Europe, this shall be used to cover the minimum during normal times (i.e. no crisis)
- The right to healthcare shall not be infringed

If I have forgotten anything, or you want to add a task of the healthline, then feel free to write a comment.

## Answer of the European Parliament

**AskEP reply to your message**

 Von: [AskEP@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:AskEP@europarl.europa.eu)

  [Vollansicht](#)

25.03.2020 um 13:33 Uhr

Dear Sir,

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit of the European Parliament has received your request sent to EP President and regarding the corona virus crisis in Spain and Italy.

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit is an administrative unit whose mission is to provide citizens with information on the activities, powers and organisation of the European Parliament.

About Corona crisis, MEPs debated the situation on [Tuesday 10 March](#) in plenary. Many MEPs highlighted the need for EU solidarity and for more funds to be put into researching the virus. Necessary medical supplies such as testing kits, masks and respiratory machines should be produced inside the EU and be made available to all EU countries.

On [29 January 2020](#) and [12 February 2020](#), Members of the European Parliament debated the situation on the coronavirus outbreak and efforts to stop it spreading. The second debate focused on a coordinated European response to protect European citizens from the coronavirus outbreak and ensuring fundamental rights.

The European Parliament has taken a number of practical steps, based on medical advice, including shortening of plenary sessions and relocating them from Strasbourg to Brussels, and cancelling all non-essential meetings and events in the Parliament premises.

The European Commission has set up a response team of five Commissioners. Their work is focussed on three areas: medical impact, mobility and the economy.

First, on the medical impact the Commission can provide outbreak response advice. This is done in support of countries or international organisations and is based on information in cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) which produces rapid risk assessments and epidemiological updates.

Second, on mobility and Schengen borders, the Commission aims to ensure that relevant border control measures are coordinated amongst countries at EU level and that measures are based on sound scientific advice, as well as on the principles of necessity and proportionality. More specifically on aviation, the Commission will put forward legislation enabling airlines to keep their 'airport slots', even if they do not operate flights in those slots because of the declining traffic.

Third, on the economy, the Commission has [mobilised](#) €140 million of public and private funding for promising research on vaccines, diagnosis and treatment. The Commission will set up a Corona Response Investment Initiative aiming to channel €25 billion worth of investment to directly support the national health care systems, small and medium businesses, labour markets and other vulnerable parts of the EU economy.

EU countries are [coordinating daily on the actions to take](#). The leaders of EU countries have prioritised four main areas, namely: limiting the spread of the virus; ensuring provision of medical equipment; promoting research, including for a vaccine; and tackling socio-economic consequences.

- [Coronavirus outbreak](#), World Health Organisation
- [COVID-19](#), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#), European Parliament At a Glance note, February 2020
- [European Commission response](#)- The coronavirus response team
- [Council response](#)- Timeline

We thank you for contacting the European Parliament.

Citizens' Enquiries Unit  
[www.europarl.europa.eu/askEP/en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/askEP/en)

**Disclaimer:** Please note that the information given by the Citizens' Enquiries Unit of the European Parliament is not legally binding.

Please also note that this email box is used for sending emails only. Incoming emails are not treated. If you wish to contact the Citizens' Enquiries Unit, please use our [webform](#).

If the screenshot is hard to read, here copy & paste:

Dear Sir,

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit of the European Parliament has received your request sent to EP President and regarding the corona virus crisis in Spain and Italy.

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit is an administrative unit whose mission is to provide citizens with information on the activities, powers and organisation of the European Parliament.

About Corona crisis, MEPs debated the situation on Tuesday 10 March in plenary. Many MEPs highlighted the need for EU solidarity and for more funds to be put into researching the virus. Necessary medical supplies such as testing kits, masks and respiratory machines should be produced inside the EU and be made available to all EU countries.

On 29 January 2020 and 12 February 2020, Members of the European Parliament debated the situation on the coronavirus outbreak and efforts to stop it spreading. The second debate focused on a coordinated European response to protect European citizens from the coronavirus outbreak and ensuring fundamental rights.

The European Parliament has taken a number of practical steps, based on medical advice, including shortening of plenary sessions and relocating them from Strasbourg to Brussels, and cancelling all non-essential meetings and events in the Parliament premises.

The European Commission has set up a response team of five Commissioners. Their work is focussed on three areas: medical impact, mobility and the economy.

First, on the medical impact the Commission can provide outbreak response advice. This is done in support of countries or international organisations and is based on information in cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) which produces rapid risk assessments and epidemiological updates.

Second, on mobility and Schengen borders, the Commission aims to ensure that relevant border control measures are coordinated amongst countries at EU level and that measures are based on sound scientific advice, as well as on the principles of necessity and proportionality. More specifically on aviation, the Commission will put forward legislation enabling airlines to keep their 'airport slots', even if they do not operate flights in those slots because of the declining traffic

Third, on the economy, the Commission has mobilised €140 million of public and private funding for promising research on vaccines, diagnosis and treatment. The Commission will set up a Corona Response Investment Initiative aiming to channel €25 billion worth of investment to directly support the national health care systems, small and medium businesses, labour markets and other vulnerable parts of the EU economy.

EU countries are coordinating daily on the actions to take. The leaders of EU countries have prioritised four main areas, namely: limiting the spread of the virus; ensuring provision of medical equipment; promoting research, including for a vaccine; and tackling socio-economic consequences.

- Coronavirus outbreak, World Health Organisation
- COVID-19, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- Novel Coronavirus Outbreak, European Parliament At a Glance note, February 2020
- European Commission response- The coronavirus response team
- Council response- Timeline

We thank you for contacting the European Parliament.

Citizens' Enquiries Unit

[www.europarl.europa.eu/askEP/en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/askEP/en)

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that the information given by the Citizens' Enquiries Unit of the European Parliament is not legally binding.*

*Please also note that this email box is used for sending emails only. Incoming emails are not treated. If you wish to contact the Citizens' Enquiries Unit, please use our webform.*

(Released: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 23:31 Uhr/11:31 pm)



## Volcanic Activity at the End of the Triassic Period



**Study:** For Nature Communications

**Source:** McGill University

**Summary of ScienceDaily:** "A new study finds volcanic activity played a direct role in triggering extreme climate change at the end of the Triassic period 201 million year ago, wiping out almost half of all existing species."

### Method of Research

The international team of researchers, including McGill Professor Don Baker, investigated and analysed volcanic rocks.

### Findings

The researchers found evidence of bubbles of carbon dioxide trapped within volcanic rocks which were dated to the end of the Triassic period (Triassic period: 251 million to 199 million years ago). Further analysis of the bubbles preserved within the rocks led to estimations of the amount of carbon dioxide which was released in a single eruption, as the article states it:

*"[...] is likely equivalent to the total produced by all human activity during the 21st century, assuming a 2C rise in global temperature above pre-industrial levels."*

### Result

The finding supports the theory that volcanic activity contributed to the disastrous climate change which is believed to have caused the mass extinction. It wiped out half of all existing species back then.

### Researcher's Suggestion

According to the researchers, the volcanic carbon dioxide emissions at the end of the Triassic period may have been similar to those predicted in the future.

Lastly, Professor Don Baker said at the end of the article:

*"Although we cannot precisely determine the total amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere when these volcanoes erupted, the correlation between this natural injection of carbon dioxide and the end-Triassic extinction should be a warning to us. Even a slight possibility that the carbon dioxide we are now putting into the atmosphere could cause a major extinction event is enough to make me worried."*

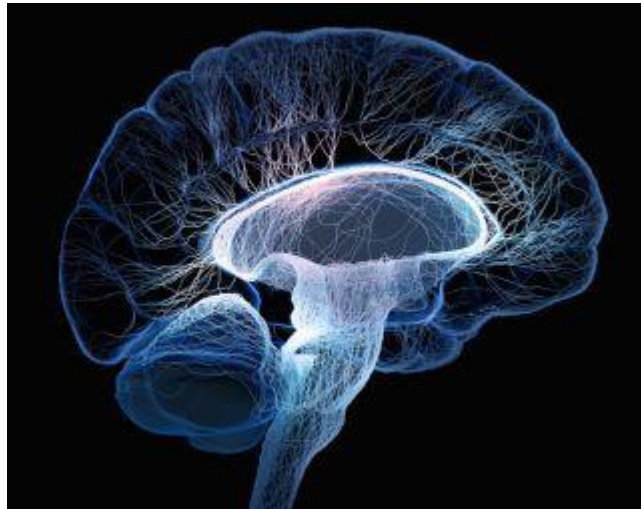


The article is relatively short, that's why sometimes I just phrased it a bit differently.

Source: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200414125752.htm>

# Math is not a Question of Gender

Article translated from German to English



Although we live in the 21st century, and much has been achieved regarding female emancipation, there exist still many prejudices. In order to progress as a nation and society, we have to face these prejudices and put an end to them.

Whether you are a feminist or egalitarian; true equality can only be achieved after all prejudices have disappeared. That's why today, I want to focus on the myth that women are apparently worse at math than men.

## Why does the Myth exist?

The reasons for the false perception are mostly societal and cultural expectations. As a [research](#) of the American Psychological Association (APA) pointed out:

*„The research suggests that perceived or actual differences in cognitive performance between males and females are most likely the result of social and cultural factors”*

However, there's more: the website lists different studies which have been done over the decades:

Nr 1: *"In 1990, Janet Shibley Hyde, PhD, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin, and colleagues published a groundbreaking meta-analysis that compiled data from 100 different studies of math performance. Synthesizing data collected on more than 3 million participants between 1967 and 1987, the researchers found no large overall differences between boys and girls in math performance."*

Nr 2: *"As for verbal ability, in 1988, Hyde and colleagues reported that data from 165 studies revealed a female advantage so slight as to be meaningless, despite previous assertions that girls are more verbally adept."*

Nr 3: *"In a 2005 report, Hyde reviewed 46 different meta-analyses on sex differences, not only in cognition but also communication style, social and personality variables, motor behaviors and moral reasoning. In half the studies, sex differences were small; in another third they were virtually nonexistent."*

Nr 4: Elizabeth Spelke, PhD, a psychologist on the Harvard University, reviewed with her colleagues at the same year (2005) 111 studies and came to the conclusion "that gender differences in math and science ability have a genetic basis in cognitive systems that emerge in early childhood", and furthermore: "In fact, boy and girl infants were found to perform equally well as young as 6 months on tasks that underlie mathematics abilities."

Finally, Nr 5: "And in 2009, Hyde and Janet Mertz, PhD, reported that while more boys than girls score at the highest levels in mathematics, that gender gap has been closing over time. In fact, they reported that the gap is smaller in countries with greater gender equality, suggesting that gender differences in math achievement are largely due to cultural and environmental factors."

Another study, this time not from the APA website, is also worth mentioning:

Jessica Cantlon and her team of the [Carnegie Mellon University](#) came to the same conclusion. 104 children have participated in the [study](#) (from 3 to 10 years: 55 girls) and had to do a test. There, they were shown informative videos about early math topics.

Additionally, they also compared adult brain scans to children brain scans, as the article points out:

*"In addition, the team examined brain maturity by comparing the children's scans to those taken from a group of adults (63 adults; 25 women) who watched the same math videos."*

The Result: *"They found that math ability was equivalent among the children and did not show a difference in gender or with age. Nor did the team find a gender difference between math ability and brain maturity."*

## **Meaning of the Findings**

As one may expect, these findings are quite important. To quote the American Psychological Association: *"If males and females were truly understood to be intellectual equals, things might change in schools, colleges and universities, industry and the workplace in general."*

However, for that change to happen, the myth of the disadvantage must disappear. Awareness campaigns may be the key to it.

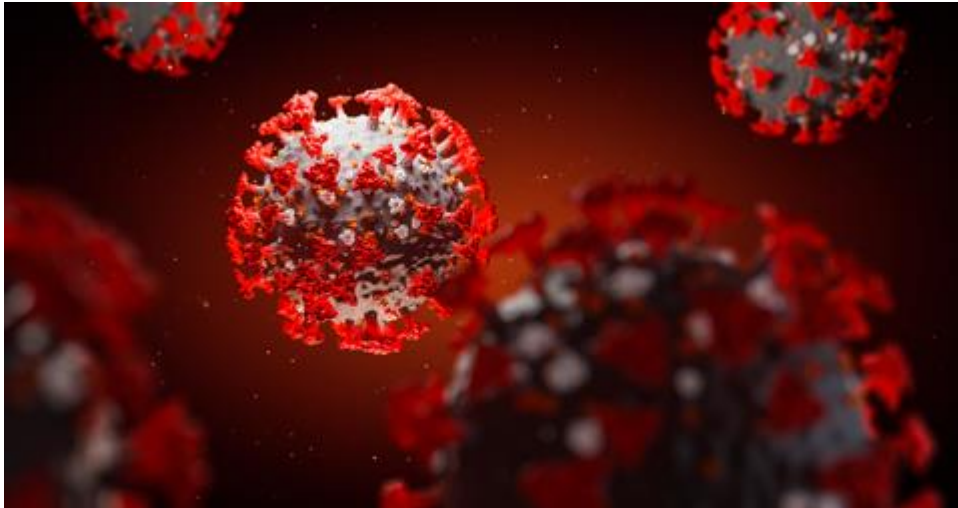
Stereotypes and false perceptions of a group are not just harmful to the individuals within this group, but also to the society as a whole. Prejudices, like the one above which are scientifically inaccurate, impair on the freedom of self-development. And that's an essential pillar in a liberal-democratic society.

## **Note**

The German article is much shorter, because originality it was meant to be a reader's letter. However, I will change it soon.

(Released: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, 18:24 Uhr/6:24 pm)

## Covid-19 Targeted Cells May Have Been Identified



**Date:** April 22, 2020 (SD article)

**Date:** April 27, 2020 (Release of this Article)

**Source:** Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Summary of ScienceDaily:** *"Researchers have identified specific types of cells that appear to be the targets of the SARS-Cov-2 coronavirus that is causing the Covid-19 pandemic."*

### Method of Research

A team consisting of MIT, Ragon Institute of MGH, Harvard and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard researchers; as well as their colleagues from around the world; used a dataset which included hundreds of cell types from lungs, nasal passages and intestine.

Data has been gathered from large-scale studies around the world on thousands of human, non-human primate, and mouse cells. There, they used a single-cell RNA sequencing to determine which genes are turned on in a given cell type.

A dataset, which was built by Nyquist and its partners, allowed researchers to study potential roles for particular cells in a variety of infectious diseases.

Lastly, the researchers also had access to the [Human Cell Atlas](#) project.

The reason for choosing those organs was because of evidence which indicated that the virus can infect each of them. Then, they compared their results to the cell types from unaffected organs.

One of the researchers commented:

*"Because we have this incredible repository of information, we were able to begin to look at what would be likely target cells for infection," Shalek says. "Even though these datasets weren't designed specifically to study Covid, it's hopefully given us a jump start on identifying some of the things that might be relevant there."*

## Findings

- **nasal passages:** goblet secretory cells, which produce mucus (mucus is a slippery aqueous secretion), express RNAs for both of the proteins that SARS-CoV-2 uses to infect cells
- **lungs:** the RNA for these proteins were mainly found in cells called type II pneumocytes (explanation from the article: "These cells line the alveoli (air sacs) of the lungs and are responsible for keeping them open.")
- **intestine:** cells, called absorptive enterocytes (explanation from article: "[they] are responsible for the absorption of some nutrients") , express these two proteins more than any other intestinal cell type

While this may not be the last discovery, it does provide a clearer picture of the disease. And as Ordoñez-Montanes said: "Now we can say with some level of confidence that these receptors are expressed on these specific cells in these tissues."

## More

The article goes on and informs about an experiment with the protein interferon which could be a possible weapon against the Coronavirus. However, it is probably not entirely safe:

*"Because interferon has so many beneficial effects against viral infection, it is sometimes used to treat infections such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The findings of the MIT team suggest that interferon's potential role in fighting Covid-19 may be complex. On one hand, it can stimulate genes that fight off infection or help cells survive damage, but on the other hand, it may provide extra targets that help the virus infect more cells."*

If you want to know more about it, the link to the ScienceDaily article is at the end of this article.

## Note

I try to be as objectively as possible while writing these articles about scientific findings (i.e. that all of the important information was mentioned). Since I'm not a journalist of any sort, and thus only know to some extent how to summarize scientific articles, some sentences may repeat both in my articles and the original ones or are just slightly changed. However, I'll always link the original article at the end.

## Source

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200422132556.htm>

(Released: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 14:45 Uhr/2:45 pm)



## International Companies in the Future

[This is] a political/economic idea of mine regarding the future of multinational companies.

**Disclaimer:** The ideas are still in development, and it isn't as detailed yet, but in the future I'm planning to elaborate on them. It could be in a few weeks, months, or even take one year or more. Constructive criticism is welcome.

### Changing Goals & Perspectives

As past events have shown, ethics and environmental protection are not a priority in the current economic system which is shaped by neoliberalism. That's why, in this article, I talk about the future of companies and what needs to be done to smooth the way to a sustainable system.

First of all; corporations' mustn't focus on profit as a primary goal. Now some would say that this mindset is the complete opposite of the sole principle of capitalism and they are right in some ways. However, it is a necessary sacrifice to abandon the concept of maximum profit to build a sustainable system. The task is not to completely relinquish profit; in fact that's not the case at all. They'd just have to consider environmental concerns and human rights regulations before making decisions.

These new objectives are from social and environmental nature. Whereas the adherence to human rights should be more than an issue that needs consideration (not as the last sentence of paragraph above may imply). Moreover, during the education on economy as a subject of study or in schools which teach economics, ethics should play a role as well. As a student of an economy school, I have experienced it firsthand that ethics are not something that is considered to be that important.

And, according to my substitute ethic teacher of my school, ethics isn't a fixed subject in German schools (i.e. like math or religion). I don't know how other countries do it, but the overall school system [in Germany] is also in dire need of reforms. But that's a topic for another time.

A page in my school book "Betriebswirtschaftliches Handeln international - International Business Management", the 3rd edition from the publisher "Europa Lehrmittel", explains the ecological objectives and social objectives:

## Ecological Objectives

### 2.2.3 Ecological objectives

In times of increasing environmental pollution, more and more companies include environmental protection as an additional subordinate objective in their mission statement.

2.3 Relationship between objectives

499

F

Task 2.5  
p. 504

Setting ecological objectives implies minimising or even excluding environmental pollution.

Environmentally conscious purchasing	Environmentally conscious production	Environmentally conscious sale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Purchasing (environmentally) sustainable materials</li><li>■ Preferring ecologically oriented suppliers</li><li>■ Short transport routes and environmentally friendly means of transportation</li><li>■ Environmentally friendly storage of hazardous materials</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Preferring renewable raw-materials</li><li>■ Low-emission manufacturing processes</li><li>■ Returning production residues into the manufacturing process (internal recycling)</li><li>■ Environmentally compatible ways of waste disposal</li><li>■ Manufacturing environmentally friendly and recyclable products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Using environmentally friendly packaging</li><li>■ Reducing packaging</li><li>■ Using environmentally friendly routes and means of transportation for the dispatch of the products</li><li>■ Using the eco-friendliness of products in advertising</li></ul>

### 2.2.4 Social objectives

Social objectives refer to the employees of a company and focus on job security and on granting voluntary employee benefits.

**Social objectives** referring to the employees can be subordinate or additional objectives (in relation to the superior objective of profit maximisation). Social objectives have the following intentions:

- to increase the **performance** of employees by taking measures that exceed the legal regulations on worker protection and accident prevention;
- to increase the **motivation** of employees by granting them higher pay and extra payments as well as granting them right to a say;
- to increase the **loyalty** and **commitment** of employees to the company by improving the working atmosphere;
- to improve the **company's image** and reputation in order to become an even more attractive employer.

the company emphasises the fact that it

## Social Objectives

	production	Environmentally conscious sale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Purchasing (environmentally) sustainable materials</li><li>■ Preferring ecologically oriented suppliers</li><li>■ Short transport routes and environmentally friendly means of transportation</li><li>■ Environmentally friendly storage of hazardous materials</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Preferring renewable raw-materials</li><li>■ Low-emission manufacturing processes</li><li>■ Returning production residues into the manufacturing process (internal recycling)</li><li>■ Environmentally compatible ways of waste disposal</li><li>■ Manufacturing environmentally friendly and recyclable products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Using environmentally friendly packaging</li><li>■ Reducing packaging</li><li>■ Using environmentally friendly routes and means of transportation for the dispatch of the products</li><li>■ Using the eco-friendliness of products in advertising</li></ul>

### 2.2.4 Social objectives

Social objectives refer to the employees of a company and focus on job security and on granting voluntary employee benefits.

**Social objectives** referring to the employees can be subordinate or additional objectives (in relation to the superior objective of profit maximisation). Social objectives have the following intentions:

- to increase the **performance** of employees by taking measures that exceed the legal regulations on worker protection and accident prevention;
- to increase the **motivation** of employees by granting them higher pay and extra payments as well as granting them right to a say;
- to increase the **loyalty** and **commitment** of employees to the company by improving the working atmosphere;
- to improve the **company's image** and reputation in order to become an even more attractive employer.

With its involvement in different social areas the company emphasises the fact that it considers itself as being a part of society as a whole. This involvement shows the responsibility of a company and improves its image in society.

## 2.3 Relationship between objectives

### Harmony and conflict of objectives

Every company pursues a multitude of objectives. There may be different relationships between the objectives.



Of course, in order to develop the potential fully of these new objectives, the social awareness and environmental awareness have to rise as well in the society. And, as it was observable during the Friday for Future protests, we may be on a good way.

Note: the core message, at least as I interpreted it, is to shift the focus on climate change as an environmental issue and demand from the economy and politics to act more determined and quicker on the problem.

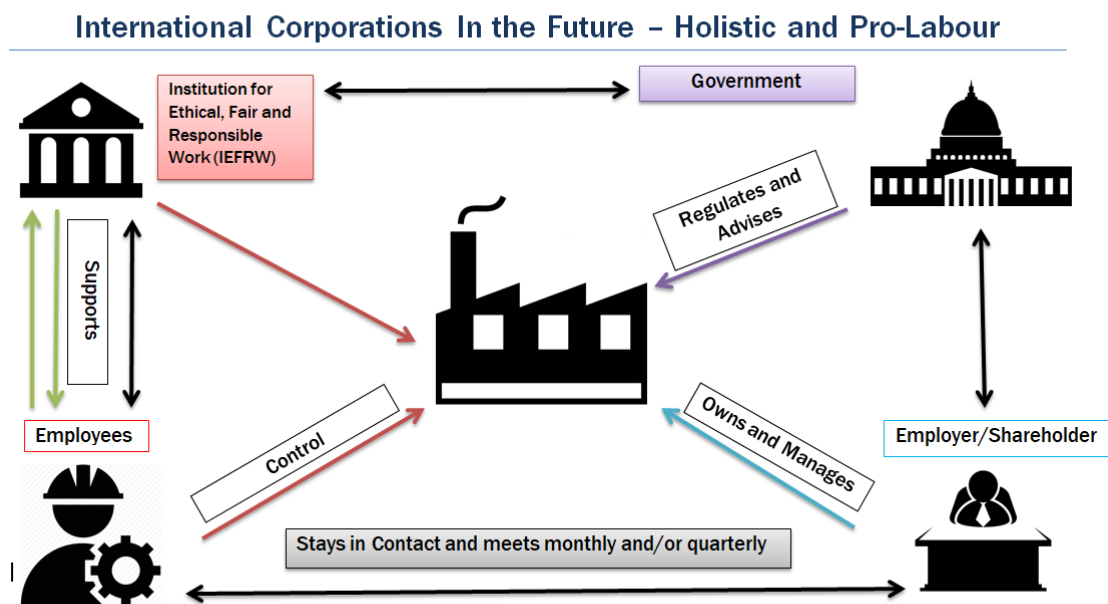
Since the world of today is through and through connected, from trade routes to production lines, this was a more general approach that can not only be applied to large multinational companies, but also smaller ones which only operate within the country or in a region. However, and I want to make it clear: the smaller ones may need more time than the international ones, and sometimes assistance from the government.

After all, they do not have as much capital at hand as companies like Apple.

Next to that, they also aren't responsible for the reckless acts of larger companies. Neglecting them would result in a significant increase of unemployment.

And now to the second point, my idea for international companies.

### International Companies in the Future- Holistic and Pro-Labour



In the future as I have imagined it, all international companies must have a control council which consists of the workers who are employed there. They get informed about the decisions in a company and also have say in the matter. A democratization of the workplace, if you will.

Along with the control council, there's an institution outside which supports the workers internationally, and as the names gives away, it ensures that the workers are treated ethically (e.g.

no hazardous environment or lack of protection) and that the companies do not undermine the function of the control council. The IEFWR also stays in contact with the government and acts as an advisor, and for the representatives as a source of information. The red arrow (control) is meant to indicate that they are constantly observing the company but do not interfere directly.

For the employer, the tasks stay pretty much the same: he still owns and/or manages the company. However, monthly or quarterly meeting with the control councils are required to stay informed how the employees do and to discuss strategies. Internal issues can also be the subject of this discussions. As it is with the IEFWR institution, the employer(s)/owner(s) also stay in contact with the government and, in case of a disagreement, a government agency may act as the mediator to solve the conflict.

As for the government: its tasks have expanded as well, and now they can also advise the company if there's a need to. Regulations work as they did before (no change yet).

The regular contact to employers/owners and the institution have already been explained. Regarding the IEFWR, it may be the best choice to send both workers and representatives of the institution to ensure a fair representation.

There's also space for closer cooperation between multinational companies and governments, e.g. research for green technologies or environmentally friendly production. However, transparency and the involvement of the workers must be guaranteed.

And, ideally, the results are shared to some extent or another with smaller companies. After all, the cooperation of the government will very likely cost money and isn't just an advisory function. Since money doesn't grow on trees, and small and middle-sized companies have to pay for it as well, they deserve to gain from the knowledge as well.

**End**

As mentioned in my introduction, my English skills are far from perfect, so I want to apologize beforehand if a section is hard to understand or if grammar mistakes occur.

(Released: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 18:25 Uhr/6:15 pm)

## Freedom of the Press - The Enemy of the Chinese Government



### Censorship in China

The Chinese government has been oppressive for decades, ever since Mao Zedong and his communist party won the civil war. However, now in the modern era, after Xi Jinping's takeover, a new wave of strict censorship and control flooded the country.

Currently, China ranks 177 out of 180 in the [2020 World Press Freedom index](#). The description goes as follows:

*"By relying on the extensive use of new technology, President Xi Jinping has succeeded in imposing a social model in China based on control of news and information and online surveillance of its citizens. At the same time, he has been trying to export this oppressive model by promoting a "new world media order" under China's influence. China's state and privately-owned media are now under the Communist Party's close control while foreign reporters trying to work in China are encountering more and more obstacles in the field. More than 100 journalists and bloggers are currently detained in conditions that pose a threat to their lives. **Liu Xiaobo**, a Nobel peace laureate and winner of the RSF Press Freedom Prize, and **Yang Tongyan**, a dissident blogger, both died in 2017 from cancers that were left untreated while they were detained. Under tougher Internet regulations, members of the public can now be jailed for the comments they leave on news items posted on social media or messaging services, or even just for sharing content."*

Furthermore, a citizen journalist called **Li Zehua** [disappeared for two months](#) after revealing that the hospitals in Wuhan were ill-equipped, among other things. As the article of the Guardian explains:



*"In his videos, he reported on a local neighbourhood committee's efforts to cover up new infections and interviewed sick residents. He visited a crematorium where a worker said people were being paid more to transport bodies."*

Before his disappearance Li Zehua said: *"I don't want to remain silent, or shut my eyes and ears. It's not that I can't have a nice life, with a wife and kids. I can. I'm doing this because I hope more young people can, like me, stand up."*

Then, after he re-appeared, his tone changed considerably. He praised the procedure of the police and didn't seem to be a critic of the crisis management anymore.

That's not the first time that a citizen journalist disappeared, as the Guardian elaborates:

*"Li, who had worked for the state-broadcaster CCTV, travelled to Wuhan to report on the crisis after another citizen journalist and activist **Chen Qiushi** disappeared."*

The censorship was already bad in China before the crisis, but it may become worse after the crisis. Not just nationally, also internationally they will try to influence western news outlets. A worrying development which must be fiercely opposed.

### **Attempt to Influence Foreign Countries**

Chinese officials didn't stop in their own country. As the German newspaper Die Welt reported, in an article from Hong Kong Free Press:

*"Senior officials and staff at German government ministries were invited "to speak in positive terms about China's management of the coronavirus," Die Welt said, citing a confidential foreign ministry document."*

And it goes on:

*"However a German intelligence source told Die Welt that "Chinese officials are pursuing an intensified information and propaganda policy with regard to the coronavirus".*

Beijing has sought to counter the narrative that the outbreak began in China and highlighted its assistance to Western countries *"in order to present the People's Republic as a trustworthy partner,"* Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution said.

It is to be expected that the Chinese government continues to push for their narrative and try to cover-up their missteps in the beginning (i.e. silencing Doctor [Li Wenliang](#)).

*"Even before his death, Dr. Li had become a hero to many Chinese after word of his treatment at the hands of the authorities emerged. In early January, he was called in by both medical officials and the police, and forced to sign a statement denouncing his warning as an unfounded and illegal rumor."*

Word of his death unleashed an even greater upsurge of emotion.

*"We will not forget the doctor who spoke up about an illness that was called rumor," one commenter posted in reply to the hospital's announcement. "What else can we do? The only thing is not to forget."*

As previously mentioned, that wasn't the last time Beijing censors investigative journalists and news outlets which criticized the downplaying of the virus in its early stages:

*"In recent days, China [stepped up censorship](#) after a rush of online criticism and investigative reports by emboldened Chinese journalists exposed missteps by officials who underestimated and underplayed the threat of the coronavirus."*

It's important to keep the Chinese government accountable for their mistakes, and they should be intensively criticized for their censorship inside and outside of China. Their attempt of spreading misinformation and false accusations must be countered.

### **Independence from China**

Since China won't change their course for the time being, it is of great importance for western countries - as well as others - to move their productions out of China and, with the help of automation, may create new jobs in their own or neighbouring nations. There's no reason to stay in China, and with the change to automation and turning the back to China, it is also a start to produce goods more ethically and combat child labour in all forms.

However, we shouldn't stop there. People working in the service industry (e.g. delivering packages, cleaners) also need to be appreciated more and treated fairly. A re-assessment of the economy and how it works will be essential for the future.

Lastly, it also includes the betterment of people working in the healthcare industry - from hospitals to nursing homes, and everything inbetween.

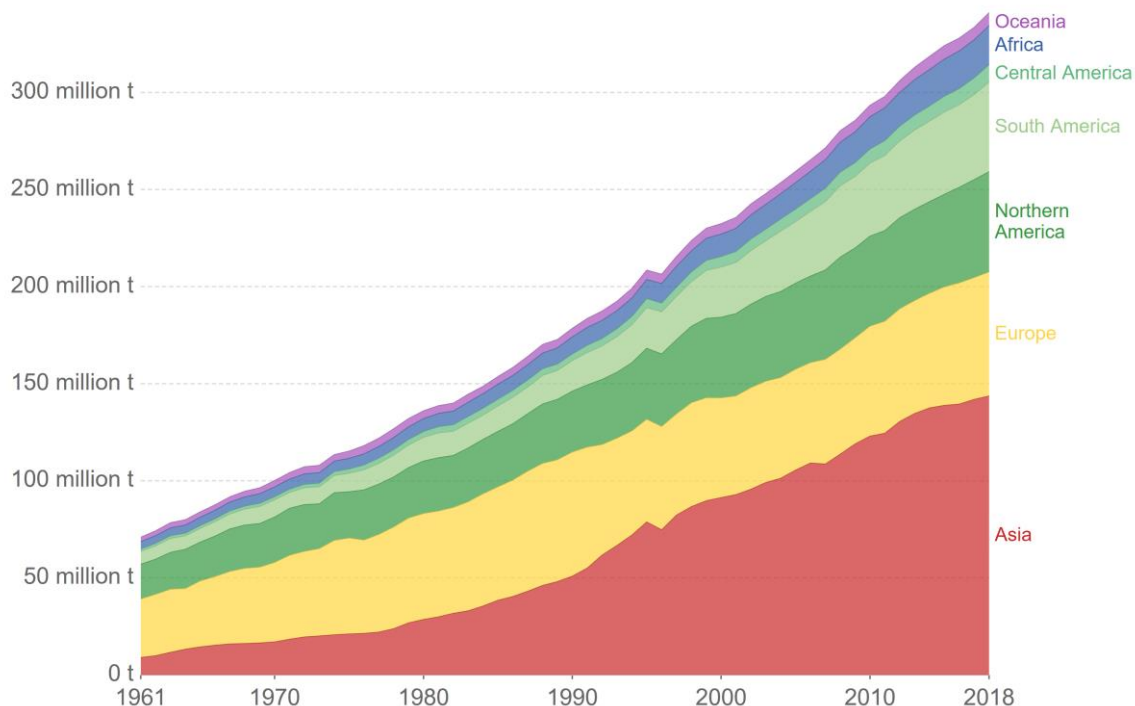
If China follows this path, and stops to act in self-interest - what other nations like the US should also do -, then there's a reason to sit with them on the negotiation table again.

(Released: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020, 14:21 Uhr/2:21 pm)



## Global meat production, 1961 to 2018

Our World  
in Data



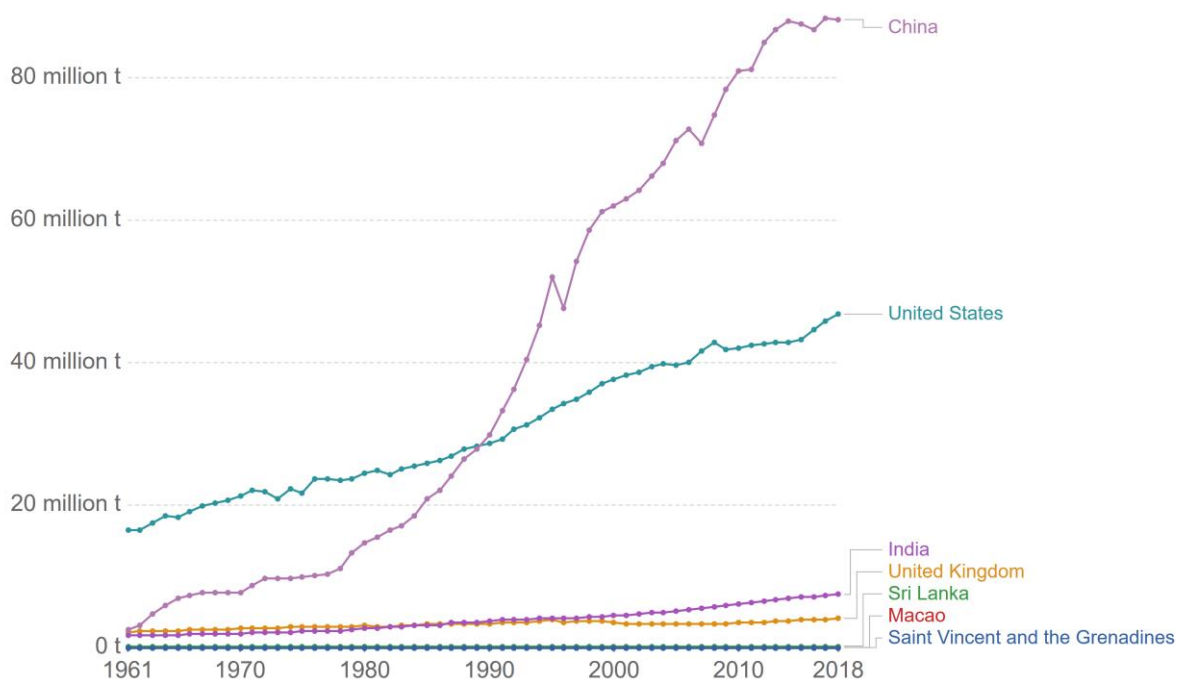
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

OurWorldInData.org/meat-production • CC BY

## Meat production, 1961 to 2018

Meat includes cattle, poultry, sheep/mutton, goat, pigmeat, and wild game.

Our World  
in Data



Source: UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Note: Figures are given in terms of dressed carcass weight, excluding offal and slaughter fats.

OurWorldInData.org/meat-production • CC BY

The article of [Our World in Data](#) also explains it:

*"Global meat production has increased rapidly over the past 50 years – as we see, total production has more than quadrupled since 1961. The chart shows global meat production by region, measured in tons."*

But since it is a longer article, here are other facts they have summarized about the global meat and dairy production:

## Summary

- The world now produces more than four times the quantity of meat as it did fifty years ago. In 2013, production was around 320 million tonnes. [↓ jump to section](#)
- Pigmeat is the most popular meat globally, but the production of poultry is increasing most rapidly. [↓ jump to section](#)
- 80 billion animals are slaughtered each year for meat. [↓ jump to section](#)
- The average person in the world consumed around 43 kilograms of meat in 2014. This ranges from over 100kg in the US and Australia to only 5kg in India. [↓ jump to section](#)
- Meat consumption increases as the world is getting richer. [↓ jump to section](#)
- The world now produces around 800 million tonnes of milk each year – more than double the amount fifty years ago. [↓ jump to section](#)
- Richer countries tend to consume more milk per person. [↓ jump to section](#)
- The amount of meat produced for a given animal varies significantly across the world based on production systems. [↓ jump to section](#)
- Livestock production has large environmental impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, land and water use. Beef and lamb have much larger environmental impact than pigmeat and poultry. [↓ jump to section](#)

We can conclude from the data that factory farming is used to satisfy the growing demand by making it cheaper to produce, and it is also a method of maximizing profit. Due to the closeness of animals within these farms, questions also have arisen about the [negative health effects](#) it has on humans. Bacterial infections which can be transmitted to humans, such as salmonella and campylobacter, can spread more easily on the farms. From time to time, there are also scandals which reveal the terrible



conditions under which the animals are kept. Thus, the ability of pathogens to enter the environment around farms and slaughterhouses is a clear threat to both animals and humans.

Next to factory farming, there's also the case of environmental destruction, and therefore the destruction of natural habitats of many animal species, which endanger certain animals or even went extinct. An article of [Sciencing](#) explains it:

*"When an animal loses the natural home or habitat that it needs to survive, its numbers decline rapidly, and it moves toward extinction. It's estimated that 14,000 to 35,000 species are at risk of becoming extinct, and habitat destruction is one of the main causes."*

I recommend reading the article, it is short and informative (takes 5-10 minutes to read).

Deforestation is one example of environmental destruction, and I will elaborate why forests are so important to both animals and humans.

### **Importance of Forests**

According to data of the World Wildlife Organisation ([WWO](#)), forests cover 31% of the land area of our planet. For instance, the forests help by purifying water and air, as well as providing people with jobs (13.2 million people across the world are occupied in the forest sector, and another 41 million have a job that is related to the sector).

Regarding animals: a vast majority of 80 per cent of the world's land-based species, like elephants and rhinos, live in forests.

Environmental importance: forests act as a carbon sink, which means that they absorb CO<sub>2</sub> that would otherwise be free in the atmosphere and contribute to the ongoing changes in climate patterns. Therefore, forests play an important role in mitigating climate change.

The article of the WWO also explains why deforestation is a problem in the first place:

*"The main cause of deforestation is agriculture (poorly planned infrastructure is emerging as a big threat too) and the main cause of forest degradation is illegal logging. We're losing 18.7 million acres of forests annually, equivalent to 27 soccer fields every minute."*

Moreover, rain forests host much of the world's biodiversity; but they are, too, the target of deforestation: "[...] in the Amazon around 17% of the forest has been lost in the last 50 years, mostly due to forest conversion for cattle ranching."

If nothing is done, then you can expect following:

- ~ 420 million acres of forest could be lost between 2010 and 2030
- 11 of the world's most ecologically important forest landscapes will account for over 80 percent of forest loss globally by 2030

The Hotspots are the Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and Gran Chaco, Borneo, the Cerrado, Chocó-Darién, the Congo Basin, East Africa, Eastern Australia, Greater Mekong, New Guinea, and Sumatra.

On the issue of expanding agriculture due to an increasing population, the WWO states following: *"In addition, agricultural products, such as soy and palm oil, are used in an ever-increasing list of products, from animal feed to lipstick and biofuels. Rising demand has created incentives to convert forests to farmland and ranch land. Once a forest is lost to agriculture, it is usually gone forever—along with many of the plants and animals that once lived there."*

Fires, while naturally occurring, are usually a beneficial element of many forest landscapes. However, if they occur in the wrong place, at the wrong frequency or at the wrong severity, then they become problematic. Fires are also used to clear land for other usages, such as planting crops or cattle breeding.

The WWO on the danger of it: *"These fires not only alter the structure and composition of forests, but they can open up forests to invasive species, threaten biological diversity, alter water cycles and soil fertility, and destroy the livelihoods of the people who live in and around the forests."*

### **A Necessary Change**

Consequently, it would be irresponsible to continue with the status quo. It is essential for humanity to change their habits and willingly and actively protect the environment and animals. The protection of animals requires the preservation and protection of their habitats, and therefore the environment.

A reduction of meat consumption is one effective way to start it, because it will also result in a decreasing demand of meat and therefore make factory farming unprofitable. Other ways of protecting animals, i.e. wildlife, is through laws and the enforcement of these laws through controlling and observing.

The status quo, as it currently is, is unsustainable and also dangerous to humans. Plastic pollution, for example, also pollutes the environment and the microplastic is eaten by marine life which in turn is another source of food for many people around the world. Microplastic that is consumed by them cannot be digested, thus some of them starve with a "full stomach".

Humanity can still avoid the worst path, but it takes the political, economical and social will to do so. The consequences of doing nothing will be worse than the costs of protecting and preserving the animals and environment now.

### **From an Absolutist Monarchy to a Constitutional Monarchy (in the animal kingdom)**

Since animals are not sentient, they can neither organize a revolution nor protest against the conditions they exist within. There's no uprising like in the US during the American Civil War (April 12, 1861 - April 9, 1865), the German Revolution (1848 - 1849), the Hungarian Uprising (Oct 23, 1956 – Nov 10, 1956), or the French Revolution (May 5, 1789 – Nov 9, 1799); the animals suffer mostly silently.

However, the animals do have people on their side who fight for a better treatment or even the abolishment of meat consumption. They range from moderate groups which protest peacefully and act lawfully to radical groups which break the law and act as provocative as possible to get wide media coverage.

The moderate groups are hereby what I want to focus on, for obvious reasons like the willingness to compromise if necessary. A democracy is not possible with animals, that's for sure since they don't

have the mental capacity to participate in the system. That's why a "constitutional monarchy", with humanity as the un-elected "Monarch", is the ideal system. In this system, the moderate animal rights group (also organisations like the WWO) serve as the parliament of the animals. Not a literal parliament, but they have an advisory function at the very least.

During the process of making laws, the "Parliament of the Animals" is called in and they advise how to protect animals and their habitats. At the same time, real democracy takes place too by working together with the people in the region and ensuring that the regulations and laws do not harm them either. With all these things taking into consideration, a sustainable system can be created.

Through environmental awareness campaigns the attitude towards wildlife and livestock, as well as everything inbetween, can be changed effectively.

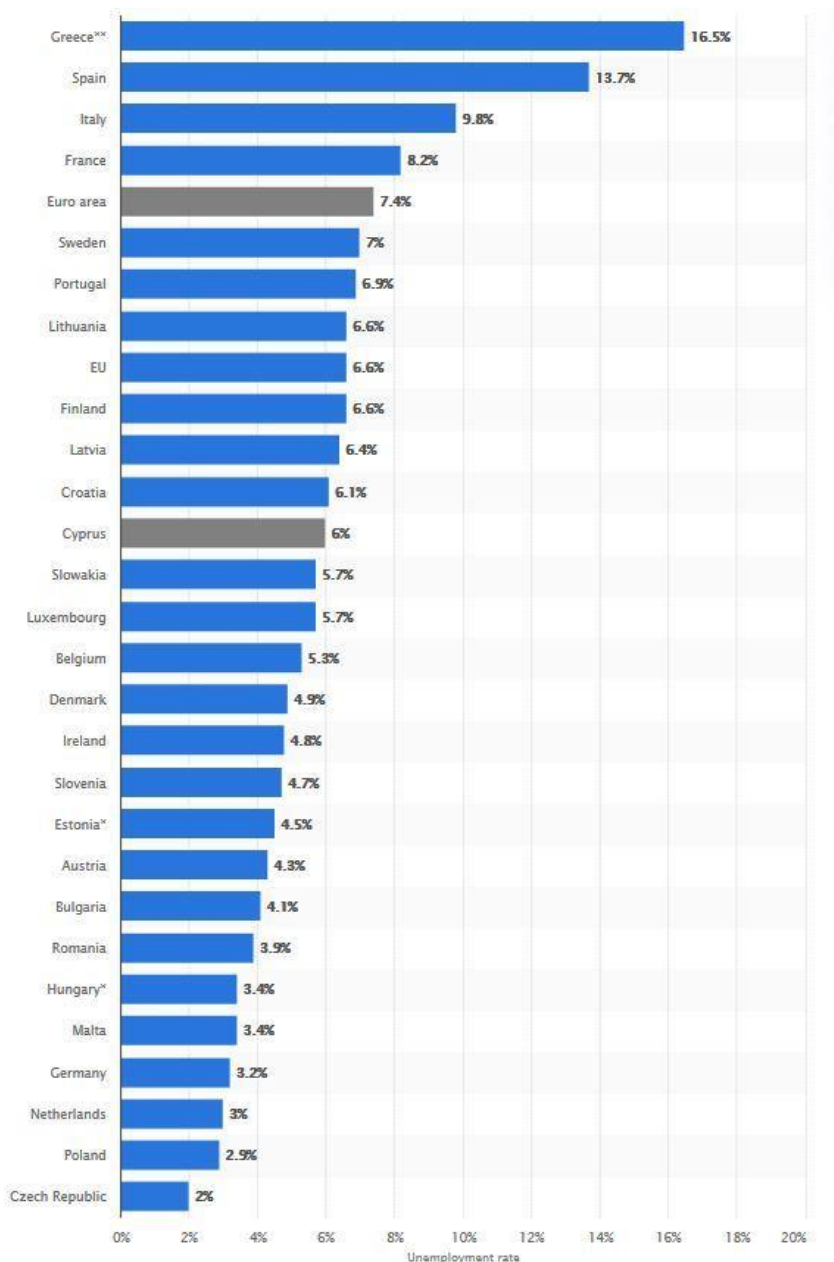
On the other hand, that all may be just wishful thinking....

(Released: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020, 21:38 Uhr/9:38 pm)

## Economic Revival

Many regions in Europe have faced economic hardship even before the crisis; especially the Southern nations had to go through a lot of struggle. Greece, Spain and Italy may come into one's mind when thinking about high unemployment and economic struggle.

And, as the statistics show, it is a factual truth:



Unemployment is not just an economic problem, but also a societal and individual. Behind the numbers are people whose struggle goes beyond the economy: hopelessness, exclusion (due to financial inability to participate in normal activities like going to restaurants), depression, etc.

In cases of long-term unemployment, political negligence, and several other factors, it can also result in higher crime rates and suicides. A result of hopelessness is also political radicalization, and/or a decreased participation in the democratic process (i.e. elections).

## **Return Jobs to Europe with the help of Automation**

The solution not only to unemployment, but also more independence from countries like China, is by returning the production to European nations. With the help of automation the costs can be kept low, and within the borders of Europe a fair and equal treatment of workers can be guaranteed.

The new factories are then build in countries like Greece, Italy and Spain to create jobs. Unemployed who already have expertise and job experience can be quickly hired, others who lack the education should receive advanced education to gain the skills they need to fulfil their jobs. However, it is also important that the government - with financial aid of the EU - provides the infrastructure needed by investing in roads, schools, fiber optic cable (digitalization) and so on.

Financial security is also needed, and a strong social safety net ensures exactly that. Next to creating jobs, the occupations should also be maintained - which requires a strong focus on social objectives and an abolishment of profit maximization - and protected. My idea of a healthline Europe, which I explained in an earlier article, would need a stable supply of medical equipment and medicine which in turn is guaranteed through production in Europe. Along with the relocation of production, and hopefully the project of healthline Europe, other jobs are created through investment in green energies, sciences, and many other sectors - public and private.

Some European countries can also specialize in a certain branch and offer special schools and/or skill centers to the other nations.

Of course, the political plan to develop and implement the plan would need to be more detailed. This is merely the beginning of an idea.

A second part may follow to this article, or I add ideas to this one through addendums. In order to fully understand the entry, I'd recommend reading my other articles which focus on economy and politics.

(Released: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 13:25 Uhr/01:35 pm)



## Unity through Continuous Exchange



Self-made image

### The Importance of Exchange

Exchange is always needed and occurs in different forms: it can be done vocally on a conference, for instance; or information is exchanged digitally through emails. It's obvious that our society couldn't work without it, and neither would western democracies. However, as the past decades have shown, it does seem to be neglected and barely anything is done to change it. Consequently, the time to push for more exchange by the people may have come.

This time a lot more has to happen to ensure that the contact to the people doesn't flatten out over a longer period of time. And luckily, the internet makes it easier than ever to communicate and talk with each other about politics, the economy, society, and other topics. Not just on a national level, but also on a global scale.

It is a golden opportunity to democratize the system further, and through the exchange with the different groups, certain issues can be fixed quicker and more effectively (since individuals within a community recognize the full extent of the problems their group faces).

### **Together instead of Side-By-Side**

Exchange on a political level is important, but so is it in our society between the different groups (religious, ethnicity, occupational, etc.). There are already organizations and groups who advocate and support it, and there's possibly already a basic structure on which can be built upon and expanded.

And as mentioned earlier, the internet allows for a greater freedom to discuss and talk with others, and it can be used here as well. Perhaps, a platform made for this purpose with clear rules which also coordinates events would be ideal.

Prejudices, on the other hand, could be dismantled this way and increase the understanding of each other. Next to the decrease to stereotypical thinking, cultural awareness could also be spread - both of the native and of immigrants. It's a good way to avoid misunderstandings and adults/youths who want to go to another nation learn about no-goes as well as respectful behavior. Immigrants, on the other side, learn about the culture and country they immigrated to - thus accelerating the integration process and forming a new identity to identify with their new home.

All of these measurements combined brings the groups together and results in greater unity. Alongside the political exchange a lot of positive change can be achieved.

Well, that's at least what I hope for.

(Released: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 14:48 Uhr/02:48 pm)

## Humidity and Heat: A Potentially Fatal Combination



High temperature on a thermometer with the sun in the background

Source: [WDB7](#)

**Date:** 15 May, 2020

**Date:** (SD): 8 May, 2020

**Source:** Earth Institute at Columbia University

**Summary of ScienceDaily:** *"A new study has identified thousands of incidents of previously rare or unprecedented extreme heat/humidity combinations in parts of Asia, Africa, Australia, South America and North America, including in the U.S. Gulf Coast region."*

### Method of Research

The authors of the study which appeared last week in the journal Science Advances, analyzed data from weather stations from 1979 to 2017.

Colin Raymond (the lead author of the study) and his colleagues examined the hourly data from 7,877 individual weather stations which allowed them to pinpoint short-lived extreme heat/humidity combinations.

### Findings

- Repeated incidents appeared in much of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan; northwestern Australia; and along the coasts of the Red Sea and Mexico's Gulf of California
- The highest, and potentially fatal ones, were discovered 14 times in the cities of Dhahran/Damman, Saudi Arabia; Doha, Qatar; and Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates (all of them have a - combined - a population of over 3 million people)
- Other countries which were hit are South China, subtropical Africa and the Caribbean

- In the US, the Southeast experienced these conditions "dozens of time", and the worst incidents occurred in New Orleans and Biloxi, Miss.

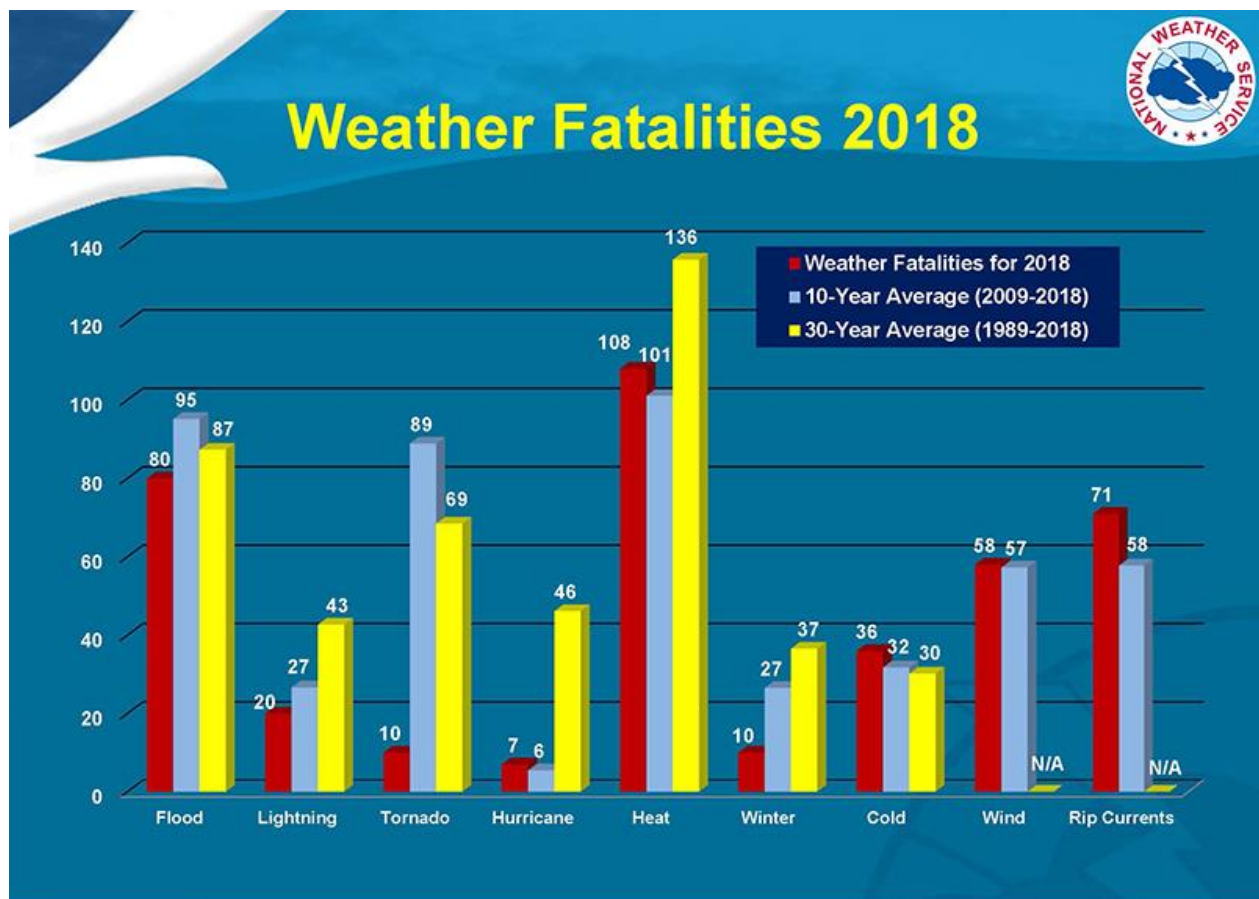
### Why is extreme heat/humidity so dangerous?

As the article of Science Daily explains it very well:

*"Humidity worsens the effects of heat because humans cool their bodies by sweating; water expelled through the skin removes excess body heat, and when it evaporates, it carries that heat away. The process works nicely in deserts, but less well in humid regions, where the air is already too laden with moisture to take on much more. Evaporation of sweat slows. In the most extreme instances, it could stop."*

One result of long exposure to extreme heat/humidity is organ failure, because the body overheats and without a place to retreat - such as an air-conditioned room - there's no way to cool down. Even if you are a physically fit and strong, you could only survive for a few hours (given that you have an unlimited supply of water, no clothes on and rests in the shade).

In the US, heat-related illnesses already kill more US residents than any other weather-related hazard including cold, hurricanes or floods. As the graph also shows:



Weather Fatalities in 2018

Source: [National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov/media/national_weather_service/2018_weather_fatalities.pdf)

## Currently

For now, the extreme heat/humidity combination only appears within localized areas, as the article elaborated on earlier: "The outbreaks have so far been confined to localized areas and lasted just hours, but they are increasing in frequency and intensity, say the authors."

There's also a reason why previous climate studies have failed to recognize most past incidents: "[...] *climate researchers usually look at averages of heat and humidity measured over large areas and over several hours at a time.*"

What has been thought to come in one or two decades, may increase quicker - on the basis of the new findings -.

## Problems

- Rich nations can also be affected economically by it, since the extreme heat/humidity may be forced to stay inside for longer periods of time which could force farming, commerce and other activities to a halt (similarly to what we experience now with the collapse of economies due to the SARS-CoV-2)
- Poorer countries are at most risk since they do not have electricity (and thus no air conditioning) and rely on subsistence farming which requires daily outdoor heavy labour -> those regions could turn to uninhabitable areas

## Source

ScienceDaily: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/05/200508145333.htm>

(Released: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 21:49 Uhr/9:49 pm)



# The Future of Space Travel

## Opinion on the Future of Space Travel



A SpaceX Falcon 9, with NASA astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken in the Dragon crew capsule, lifts off from Pad 39-A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Saturday, May 30, 2020. The two astronauts are on the SpaceX test flight to the International Space Station. For the first time in nearly a decade, astronauts blasted towards orbit aboard an American rocket from American soil, a first for a private company. (AP Photo/Chris Meara)

### Introduction

It is very likely that the majority of the readers already have read or heard about the successful SpaceX mission in cooperation with NASA to the International Space Station (ISS). Therefore, here's only a very short summary:

- The Space Shuttle retired in 2011
- SpaceX was founded in 2002
- It was the first time, that NASA asked the private sector to design vehicles for transportation to the ISS
- Before the mission, NASA already had partnered with the private sector, but not to the same extent
- The success of the mission is a huge win for SpaceX
- On board were two astronauts: Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley



Douglas Hurley (left) and Robert Behnken on their way to Launch Pad 39A before the launch on Wednesday was cancelled

Information and images from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/31/tech/crew-dragon-docks-with-space-station-scn/index.html>

### **Optimistic, but Cautious**

It is without a doubt a enorm success for both NASA and SpaceX, and thanks to modern technology, space travel could be made less expensive (e.g. reusable launch system). This in turn means that it may occur more regularly in the near future and decisions made today and then will decide about the future of humanity's era in space.

In consideration of the past, and how the private sector is currently managed (i.e. maximization of profit), it is also worth reflecting on the role the private sector should play in space travel. If not carefully overseen and regulated, it may end in a few oligopolies or even one monopoly due to the high costs. As with railway systems, real competition can't really exist in the first place. Even if it did, then it would be dangerous to let the market decide (e.g. cheaper martials may increase the profit margin, but it also puts the astronauts or space tourists at risk).

Therefore, international cooperation should at one point extend to space travel to not only allow more funds from flowing in, but also expertise and control. Moreover, it gives nations which work together on the project a clear oversight and thus decreases the threat of a violation of the [Outer Space Treaty of 1967](#). However, to ensure that the principles are followed, a third-party body is required to keep track of each decision made by the international organization responsible for the transnational cooperation. Transparency is very important as well, because the citizens of each country very likely want to know what is done and why decision X was made.

## **Exchange Beyond Politics and Economy**

Since the cooperation between nations is very intensive and goes beyond political exchange and economic trade, there should also be a channel for cultural and societal exchange. After all, not only the astronauts work together, but also the scientists, companies, and many other branches and people from each nation.

The internet can hereby be utilized as the perfect service to provide the platform for international exchange. Through this measurement, it also allows people who live in a village to talk to people from another country who live in a village as well.

This kind of intense cooperation and mutual learning strengthens the project and reduces prejudices as well.

## **Why It Is Important**

I may have rambled a bit in the third part, but I consider it important due to the fundament the current space travel is built on. Conflicts between nations, or mutual dislike, are also often a result of a lack of conversations between each group. Prejudices are used to justify it and treated like real facts, which in turn may make long-term cooperation difficult to manage (e.g. change in leadership could end in a radical different course due to a persistent hostile sentiment within a country).

Consequently, the decisions which are made today will determine the success or failure of future undertakings. Whether we allow private companies to fully engage in the new economy of space or strictly regulate it and oversee it with transparency; a decision between international cooperation and prioritizing the power of one's own nation. It goes on and on, and since it will affect all of us in the future - as well as the generations which follow afterwards -, it is of immense importance to have an open discussion about space travel and everything that is connected to it.

The variety of issues is much bigger than one may think, because of the sheer complexity such system is built upon. However, in order to fully explore the complexity, a discussion has to be opened on the issue.

A fundament has to be chosen, and future generations have to live with the decisions we make today.

(Released: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, 14:28 Uhr/02:28 pm)

## Science News

A short summary of news from the science world

### New Study regarding the Barents Sea: Cracks beneath giant, methane gushing craters

**Date:** 06/06/2020

**SD-Date:** 04/06/2020

**Source:** CAGE - Center for Arctic Gas Hydrate, Climate and Environment

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"250-million-year-old cracks in the seafloor feed greenhouse gas methane into giant craters in the Barents Sea. More than 100 craters, presently expelling enormous amounts of the greenhouse gas into the ocean, are found in the area."*

#### Method of Research

The discovery of the origin of craters and mounds was made possible through cutting edge 3D seismic technology which is able to penetrate deep into the ocean floor. It helped scientists to visualize the structures in the hard bedrock underneath.

#### Elaboration on the Origin of the Craters

Malin Waage, the first author of the study and a postdoc at CAGE, Centre for Arctic Gas Hydrate, Environment and Climate, explains it as following:

*"This study, however, adds several layers to that picture, as we now see that there has been a structural weakness beneath these giant craters, for much longer than the last 20,000 years. Deep below the seafloor, the expansion of gas and release of water build up a muddy slurry which eventually erupted through the fractures and caused seafloor collapses and craters in the hard bedrock. Think of it as a building: A roof of a building can cave in if the ground structure is weak. We believe that this is what happened in the crater area after the last glaciation."*

Previous studies, according to Waage, have hypothesized that climate warming and the retreat of the ice "some 20,000 years ago" caused the gas hydrates (a solid form of methane that is stable in cold temperatures and immense pressure, which the ice sheets provides) beneath the ice to melt which led to abrupt methane release and created the craters.

#### The Barents Sea - Still Not Well-Understood

There are still many questions regarding the area's geological system, because it is poorly understood. Some of the questions to which scientists, society and the industry do not know the answers to:

- Will these weak structures lead to unpredictable and explosive methane release?
- Can such release and related geohazards be triggered by drilling?
- And can the gas reach the atmosphere in case of abrupt blow-outs, adding to the greenhouse gas budget?

However, Waage added at the end: "There is still very much that we don't know about this system. But we are currently collecting and analyzing new data in the Barents Sea, dominated by similar crater structures. This can help us map in bigger detail the fault systems and associated weakness. "

Full article: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/06/200604111619.htm>

## Study regarding sustainable behaviour - Increasing the Opportunities

**Date:** 06/06/2020

**SD-Date:** 24/01/2020

**Source:** International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"To mitigate climate change and safeguard ecosystems, we need to make drastic changes in our consumption and transport behaviors. A new study shows how even minor changes to available infrastructure can trigger tipping points in the collective adoption of sustainable behaviors."*

### Method of Research

The IIASA-researchers used an agent based model - a computational method for simulating interactions between individuals and environments - for the study which was published in the journal One Earth.

The study illustrates how personal aspects like attitude and habits, social networks, and available structure shape the way sustainable behaviours are collectively adopted.

Copenhagen was used by the researchers as a case study due to the city's well-developed cycling culture.

### Findings

- ➔ Even a linear increase in opportunities for pro-environmental behaviour - such as adding more bicycle friendly infrastructure, in Copenhagen's case - can have much larger effects on the adoption of sustainable behaviour than often assumed

### Elaboration

When the environment makes it easier for an individual to adopt certain behaviour, this not only has an effect on the person's own habits, but the behaviour can also be copied and learned by others.

Copenhagen, for instance, experienced a rapid increase in the proportion of cyclists in the city since the 1990s that has been attributed not only to the emergence of a cycling culture, but also to heavy investment into cycling infrastructure



## More

The authors point out that, for large-scale behaviour to occur, simply relying on changing people's attitudes or increasing environmental awareness isn't enough.

*"We need to understand how behavior patterns emerge from a systems perspective, and learn to locate the leverage points in these systems. The importance of infrastructure that make pro-environmental behaviors easy and the "path of least resistance" is crucial in this regard and must form part of governments' action plans in terms of sustainable future urban planning and development,"* says study supervisor and coauthor Nikita Strelkovskii -- a researcher in the IIASA Advanced Systems Analysis Program.

Full article: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/01/200124112929.htm>

## Severe Covid-19: Potential Approach to Treat Patients

**Caution:** *These findings should not be considered clinical advice but are being shared to assist the public health response to COVID-19. While BTK inhibitors are approved to treat certain cancers, they are not approved as a treatment for COVID-19. This strategy must be tested in a randomized, controlled clinical trial in order to understand the best and safest treatment options for patients with severe COVID-19.*

**Date:** 06/06/2020

**SD-Date:** 05/06/2020

**Source:** NIH/National Cancer Institute

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Early data from a clinical study suggest that blocking the Bruton tyrosine kinase (BTK) protein with the cancer drug acalabrutinib provided clinical benefit to a small group of patients with severe COVID-19."*

### BTK-Protein – Explanation

*The BTK protein plays an important role in the normal immune system, including in macrophages, a type of innate immune cell that can cause inflammation by producing proteins known as cytokines.*

Cytokines (a broad and loose category of small proteins which are important in cell signaling) act in the human body as chemical messengers that help to stimulate and direct the immune response. In some patients who suffer from severe Covid-19, a large amount of cytokines are released into the body at once, this causes the immune system to damage the function of organs such as the lungs, in addition to attacking the infection. This hyperinflammatory state is dangerous and known as "cytokine storm".

Currently, there are no proven treatment strategies for this phase of the illness.

## Execution of the Study

The study aimed to test whether blocking the BTK-protein with acalabrutinib (a medication used to treat a type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma known as mantle cell lymphoma) would reduce inflammation and improve the clinical outcome for hospitalized patients with severe COVID-19.

- 19 Patients with a confirmed severe Covid-19 diagnosis which required hospitalization
- And: low-blood oxygen levels and evidence of inflammation

11 Had been receiving supplemental oxygen for more than two days.

8 others had been on ventilators for a median of 1.5 (range: 1-22) days.

### Within 1 of 3 Days after starting to receive acalabrutinib...

The majority of the patients in the supplemental oxygen group had experienced a substantial drop in inflammation; their breathing improved.

8 out of these 11 came off the supplemental oxygen and were discharged from the hospital.

4 out of 8 came off from the ventilators, two of whom were eventually discharged.

However, the benefit of acalabrutinib was less "dramatic" in this group.

2 out of 8 patients in the group died. (**Note:** some in the group have been on ventilators for prolonged periods of time and had major organ dysfunction).

### Result as explained in the article:

*"Blood samples from patients in the study showed that levels of interleukin-6 (IL-6), a major cytokine associated with hyperinflammation in severe COVID-19, decreased after treatment with acalabrutinib. Counts of lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell, also rapidly improved in most patients. A low lymphocyte count has been associated with worse outcome for patients with severe COVID-19. The researchers also tested blood cells from patients with severe COVID-19 who were not in the study. In comparison with samples from healthy volunteers, they found that these patients with severe COVID-19 had higher activity of the BTK protein and greater production of IL-6. These findings suggest that acalabrutinib may have been effective because its target, BTK, is hyperactive in severe COVID-19 immune cells."*

Full article: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/06/200605140516.htm>

## Baroques Note

The last article was quite difficult for me to re-formulate, that's why it is very similar to the original. I didn't want important information to get lost, and hope that I was successful in doing so.

Kind regards, Baroque.

(Released: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 14:05 Uhr/02:05 pm)

# The Council of the People's Deputies (CPD)

Another political idea of mine

## Background

In democracies, the people vote for a party which then represents them in the parliament, congress and/or other institutions. Depending on the system, either a coalition is formed, or a party has to get the majority of seats.

However, it is not uncommon that politicians neglect their duty of representing the people either for own political gains or due to outside influence (e.g. corporations funding campaigns of candidates, or parties in general). Probably the most wide-spread method is lobbying. This is a problem, because it undermines the democratic systems and instead of representing the people, the supposed representatives pursue the interests of a few companies and/or very wealthy elite. Two-party systems may struggle even more with it, due to the choice between party A and B. A new party could be founded, and there are indeed third parties, but they have a very slim to no chance to get seats or gain a considerable amount. The voters are worried that, if they vote for the third party, that the long-established party A is weakened and party B can reign with less interference. Multi-party systems face a similar problem, although here a greater chance exists to get out of the deadlock. Unfortunately, as the past decades have shown, the lobbyist forces of large companies and wealthy individuals can easily overshadow it.

Next to the negligence due to selfish and corrupt reasons, the representatives might lose the contact to the concerns of the common man due to the lack of contact to the people in general (which may only occur during elections). More bureaucratic-minded politicians face the threat of falsely perceiving the priorities of the people, or assess a situation wrongly which leads to policies that are counterproductive either because they are very limited in their extent or insensitive measurement.

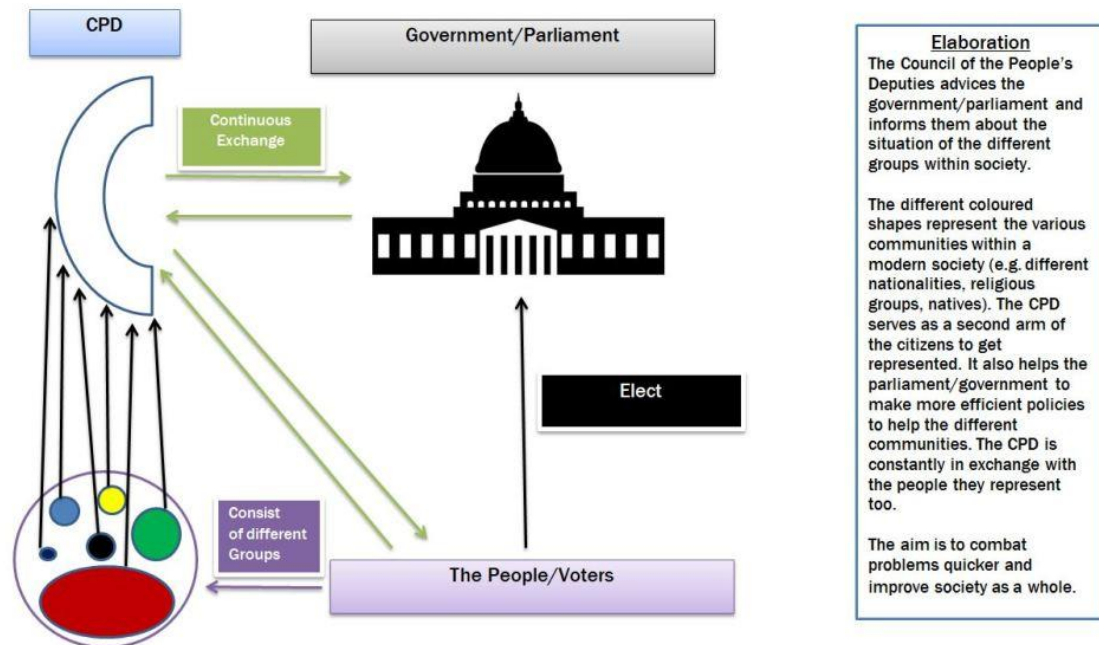
Of course, and I want to mention it here, it isn't a natural law that representatives are going to become corrupt. There always exist individuals, or even groups within a party or the party itself, who actually want to help the people. And they have existed, and still exist. With that in mind, it is still desirable that at least a large majority of the parties/representatives make the right decisions and introduce policies which are effective and increase the general welfare of the people and thus the nation.

## The CPD

In order to realize it and ensure that the interests of all are served, as well as providing a stronger connection between society and their representatives, I came up with the Council of the People's Deputies:

(Image on the next site)

## The Council of the People's Deputies (CPD)



As the elaboration on the side already explains, the CPD is basically a second arm of the people. The council has the task to stay in touch with their communities and inform the government/parliament/or else about problems which the group faces and what can be done to combat the issue. Through this new tool, the government is able to make more precise decisions and on a societal level, the council can also combat prejudices and strengthen the sense of togetherness and community within a nation.

Constantly being in exchange with the people on a federal level means that they will travel around a lot and talk to the people, what they are worried about, which issues they face, and what they think the government and/or parties should do to improve the situation. The CPD should also be allowed to propose bills, and the advisory role must be taken seriously by the parties and the government. Mechanisms, such as registers to whom a party/government has talked to and how it influenced a bill/law/legislation, will be therefore of great importance to hold both the new institution and the old institutions accountable. Transparency, in that regard releasing and updating the register on an official website, needs also to be implemented to give the people the chance to look whether their concerns were addressed or not. On a state level, a smaller version of the CPD would be implemented with the same tasks - the exception here is that they just need to travel within their region. Regular meetings between the parties, the council representatives, and the people could be established as well.

In contrast to normal elections, the representatives don't have to promise anything; rather the people need to choose members of their community who are willing to listen to problems, care for others, and have other social skills. The task is to represent the people, improve the relations between the different groups within society, and to let the politicians be informed about the issues. **Transparency and Accountability have to** be key components, there's no way around it!

If a nation indeed chooses to form it, then they will ask themselves how the election works in the CPD. I introduce here three different ways how it can be done, the decision would lie ultimately in the hand of the people within a nation.

1. Proportional: In this system, the members are elected proportionally. This means that their seats in the CPD correspond with their percentual size in the population (e.g. 2.5% of group Y get 2.5% of the seats in the council).
2. Degressively Proportional: Here, the members are elected degressively proportional which means that more seats are allocated to smaller divisions of the populace than under a proportional system (e.g. each group has 3-6 seats; smaller groups with only around 500,000+ people get 3 seats, while the majority of the population gets 6 seats).
3. Equal Distribution: In this case, each group has the same amounts of seats and therefore the same amount of influence as the majority of the population and smaller ones.

### Other Councils

I also had the same thing in mind with an economic council that is divided into the Industry council (subcategories of small, middle-sized, and large companies) and the Worker council (subcategories of the many different jobs, or an overall term for several jobs), freelancers may get an extra council or affiliate with one of the two councils.

The same idea exists for a Council of Science, to ensure that the right measurements are taken (e.g. climate change) which are based on scientific evidence and pragmatically.

All of them would work together as well, and thus ensure that no one is preferred. Some sort of "lobby register" would be established which is open to all people, as it is with the CPD. However, lobbying in itself is outlawed at this point, and the new institutions make sure - along with the transparency and accountability - that everyone gets a say in the matter. Thus, society, economy, the sciences and the different religious groups work hand in hand while at the same time closing the gap between each other (e.g. the average person learns more about economy and science; the economic sectors and politics adopt scientific approaches; and the sciences find their way into politics, the economy and society to spread their ideals like curiosity and a healthy amount of skepticism/scientific way -> from thesis to proven theory, for instance).

**Note:** It is possible that you may have heard of the Council of the People's Deputies (Rat der Volksbeauftragten) at some point in a history or lesson, documentary or else. And yeah, I liked the name because it is exactly what it means. Just in case you were wondering).

(Released: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 22:29 Uhr/10:29 pm)

## Workers Are Not Tools!

**Note:** The article at hand is an opinion and therefore may contain loaded words. It's possible that entries like this one share some characteristics with, or are, polemic. Lastly, the article is translated from German to English ("Arbeiter sind keine Werkzeuge!").

### Elaboration

The labour movement has now existed for over a century, and a lot has been achieved: health insurance, occupational accident insurance, improved working conditions, the right to found a trade union, and much more.

However, despite these accomplishments, the way how workers are viewed hasn't changed much. The main focus is on multinational companies which have thousands of employees and a foothold in several nations. It's not uncommon either that large corporations integrate forward or backward along the value chain (e.g. an oil refinery acquiring a supplier of petrol stations) to save costs or increase their overall market share. Their size also increases the distance between management and employees, unlike in small or middle-sized companies where exchange is from face-to-face and both are aware of the importance of the other. However, we shall return to the original topic.

The size of these companies, as well as the goal to maximize profit, result in a cost pressure which is reflected by low-wage jobs, child labour in third world countries, a lower quality of the goods, and other measurements.

During phases of an economic boom and a recession, as well as inbetween, most corporations focus on displaying a large amount of profit. Result of the fixation on profit maximization is visible in job loss, reduction of working hours or further division of labour which can result in reduced working hours as well. Major corporations get rid of their employees like tools they no longer need. National governments are limited in their actions due to the possibility of the companies leaving the nation - thus using their economic power to put pressure the government.

Of course, and I want to stress that, profit is not inherently immoral. Ideally, it is used to re-invest in the business and/or used to increase the salary of the employees (or a bonus payment once a year/month). However, it becomes exploitative as soon as it is increased at the cost of the workers, a reduction in quality of the goods and/or services, as well as an increase of environmental pollution.

The intention behind it is also important: is the profit used to preserve the jobs, and/or to reward the employees for delivering a better performance (social perspective), or does the profit serve the purpose of achieving the highest dividend payout possible (economic-neoliberal perspective)?

It doesn't require a lot of research to come to the conclusion, that the economic-neoliberal perspective is the dominating force in the world. In the USA, it is easily to recognize due to hyper-individualism and a lack of a social safety net (which there's not just a lack of, but it is pretty much non-existing). As a consequence, and since it is the greatest economic powerhouse in the world, the perspective mentioned spread across the world. It has led to continuous global warming, environmental pollution, and bad working conditions in other countries.



## **Human-social Perspective**

Since the economic-neoliberal perspective is unsustainable and results in damage to the environment (-> global warming), society (-> poverty), politics (-> lobbyism) and economy (-> crowding out of smaller businesses), an alternative is needed.

The alternative model I'm talking about is the human-social perspective. Employees are seen as more than merely a resource/workforce.

Without a doubt will the vast majority of humanity, and indeed already is, be part of the working class; the jobs, responsibility, as well as the salary may vary, but everyone is an employee. From the cleaner and janitor to the accountant and teacher - all are relevant to the system. However, what all of these people with jobs have in common, or going to have in common, is that they are

### **Individuals with interests/hobbies, a private life, worries and desires.**

A worker, for instance, who works 40-hours each week, but is barely able to make a living, is very limited in pursuing his interests and shape his/her private life. In liberal-democratic countries it also robs him/her the chance of participating actively in politics and thus inform themselves adequately about topics and parties. Moreover, the constant fear to survive financially robs them of the opportunity to educate themselves further - in the worst case it results in job loss through the emergence of new economic branches and jobs which crowds out the elderly. Unemployment, especially if it is long-term, can lead to other problems such as an increased consumption of alcohol, or psychological consequences like depression.

A large corporation which is occupied with maximizing their profit or in politics where the biggest concern is market growth, such things do not play a role. Consequently, the liberty is being unconsciously limited and great suffering is caused - not just in one's own nation, but also in others where this mindset is dominating.

## **Change**

Of course, mass consumption also plays a role: goods are produced as cheap as possible which leads to outsourcing in third world countries or a unhealthy production method (e.g. meat production -> factory farming). The durability of goods is also being neglected which in turn results in a throw-away society and a lot of waste.

Another problem is the alienation of the worker from the product and the alienation of the consumer from the manufacturing process. Take milk as an example:

For the farmer it is necessary to produce as much milk as possible, in order to cover the expenses; but the end product still has to be very cheap so that the consumer buy it, despite the costly production. Overproduction is therefore required, and afterwards the turnover is all that matters.

The consumer, on the other hand, only sees the product and decides for the cheaper alternative (although that slowly changes due to increased awareness, and hopefully continues). The well-being of the farmer and the animals only play a minor role - if at all.

In the current dominating system that may be the right attitude, but that's exactly why it is neither sustainable nor suitable for the future. Other resources, such as metals for electronics, are finite. At some point, the reserves would be exhausted.

In order to change from the economic-neoliberal mindset to the human-social perspective, awareness campaigns are required to reveal the social and ecological impacts the current system caused to happen.

Goals like an ongoing, or "never-ending" economic growth are also irrational, since we live on a planet with finite resources, and therefore an inherent limit exists.

Thus, instead of pursuing an illogical goal which has clearly visible negative consequences on the world and its inhabitants, the focus should be on economic stability within the current framework of wealth. After all, the widening gap between the rich and poor is also a problem.

Western countries, at least some of them, have very likely already achieved their maximum potential and have gathered enough wealth to create a stable economy with solid jobs (some western countries are still in a crisis, or several crises, which prevents them from achieving their maximum potential -> need help). Life shouldn't revolve around work all the time, and for the democracies it is also healthy if all people are able to educate themselves further and actively engage in politics.

Other countries, like India, Mexico, and Nigeria, would then have the possibility to develop further and reach the same level.

Instead of eternal competition which exploits weaker countries for own interests, cooperation should take place to help the weaker countries.

### **Summarized:**

- ❖ Workers/Employees are not tools whom one can get rid off, if they are no longer needed; all of them are people with own interests/hobbies, a private life, worries and desires
- ❖ Both the economy and politics should focus on stability and financial equality for all citizen; for one to strengthen strengthen democracy (through more training opportunities and participation) and to create long-lasting products
- ❖ The economic-neoliberal mindset is harmful to both the planet and humanity (e.g environmental pollution, unjust distribution of wealth and income, bad working conditions in third world countries) and the human-social perspective should replace it (focus on the individual and his/her well-being)
- ❖ Some western countries may already have achieved their maximal wealth potential; therefore it is now important that they help everyone within their country by coordinating the justly distribution of wealth and ensure economic stability
- ❖ Countries which are still in a crisis, or are otherwise economically underdeveloped, should receive help through cooperation (e.g. setup of an own industry or other economic improvements) in order to reach the same level

(Released: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020, 18:47 Uhr/06:47 pm)

## Scientification of Politics, Economy and Society

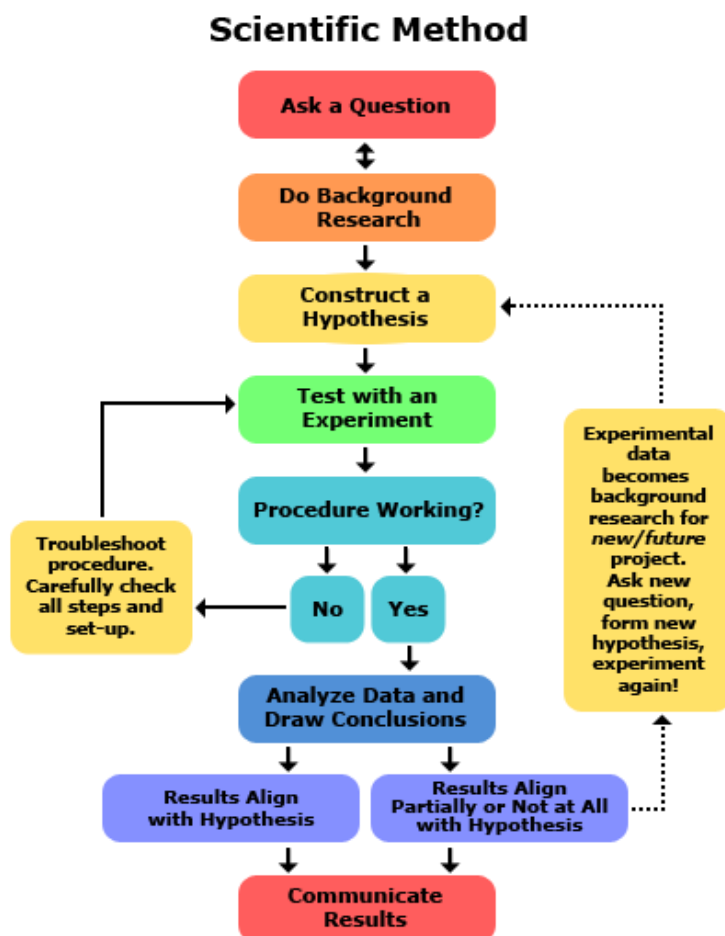
**Definition:** Scientification is the process of convergence to the sciences by supporting scientific institutions, the education on the scientific method, as well as other approaches which aim to explain the fundamental structure and provide basic understanding of the sciences.

**Reason:** Despite the tremendous successes over the centuries, and even millennia, in science, it still seems to be seen as merely an academic field. Of course not unfoundedly, but that's a flawed view which limits the potential of humanity.

A well-known example is anti-vaxxers; and as everyone was able to witness in the still present corona-crisis, the political sphere expects quick solutions from the scientific community and thus completely disregards the scientific method. For some it may also be confusing that different parameters are used (however, depending on the situation it is advantageous to use one over the other), or that there are seemingly contradictory statements from different scientists (the varying context and the overall uncertainty regarding SARS-CoV-2 require to accept some degree of uncertainty, though).

The media (e.g. newspapers, online news websites) on the other hand seem to project some sort of competition or rivalry onto science, but that is fatal and has nothing to do with the scientific reality.

**The First Step:** This entry will only give a small insight into the scientific method, but hopefully contribute to the awareness. For an easier understanding, and to serve as some sort of entry point, here's the scientific method displayed graphically:



In today's news world the latter is mostly reported on, one reason is the pressure of time under which qualitative journalism suffers too. That's not the only problem: it's not uncommon that the results are presented in a sensationalistic manner in order to get as many clicks (hence clickbait) or sells as possible. As someone who prefers articles from Spektrum der Wissenschaft, Science Daily and Nature I struggle from time to time to understand it fully (which is why I have to read it more than twice or focus entirely on the article). This rather complicated wording (due to the needed usage of technical terms and technical terminology) is difficult to "translate" in a more simplified language which can be understood by all people. But it is not impossible.

And if everyone has internalized the scientific method, then the view on science will change as well.

Competition and dogmatic approaches have no place in science. It is about extending knowledge (curiosity as an incentive), moderate skepticism, and the willingness to cooperate. At least that's the impression I've got from one decade of interest in science.

Lastly: the sciences won't always give clear answers - or the answers one may like to have -, and it often takes a while until a clear result is available and a consensus formed. However, it is worthwhile and **must** be calculated in. Even if the economy and politics demand definite actions, the pressure shouldn't be succumbed to.

(Released: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, 13:26 Uhr/01:26 pm)

# Space Weather and the Modern World

## Introduction

When we think about threats to our modern civilization, many will point to terrorism, nuclear war, global warming, and else. However, due to the reliance on technology which drastically increased over the last decades, few may be aware of the threat which space weather poses to our modern world.

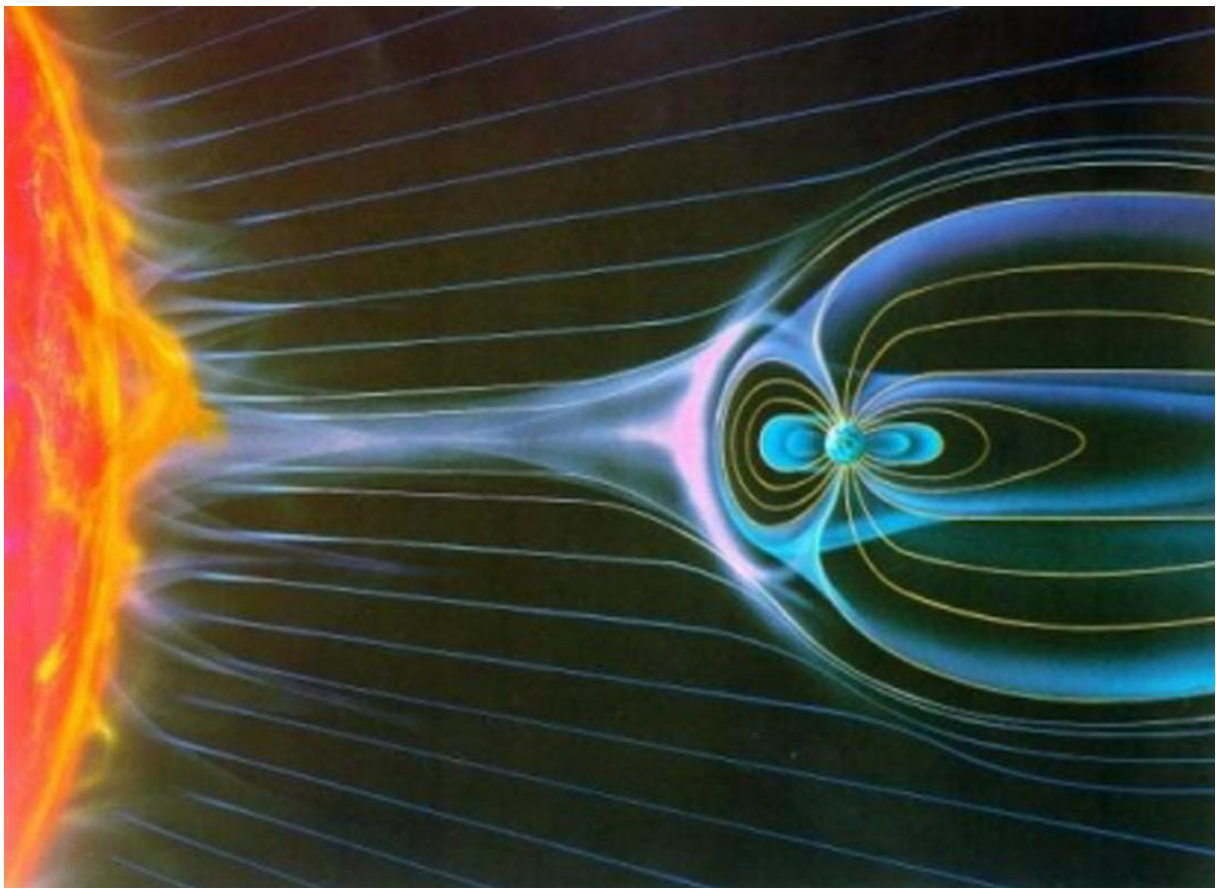
In this article, we are going to explore what Space Weather is, why it is a threat to us and and what can possibly be done to prevent the worst.

## Space Weather - As Defined by NASA

According to [NASA](#), space weather describes the dynamic conditions in the Earth's outer space environment, in the same way that "Weather" and "Climate" is used to describe the conditions in Earth's lower atmosphere.

It includes any and all conditions and events on the sun, in the solar wind, in near Earth-space and in our upper atmosphere 'that can affect space-borne and ground-based technological systems and through these, human life and endeavor'.

The science of space weather is called Heliophysics (from Attic Greek *hēlios* which means "sun", and the noun 'physics' which is the science of matter and energy and their interactions).



Artist concept of the dynamic conditions in space (from the NASA Website)

## Space Weather Effects on Earth

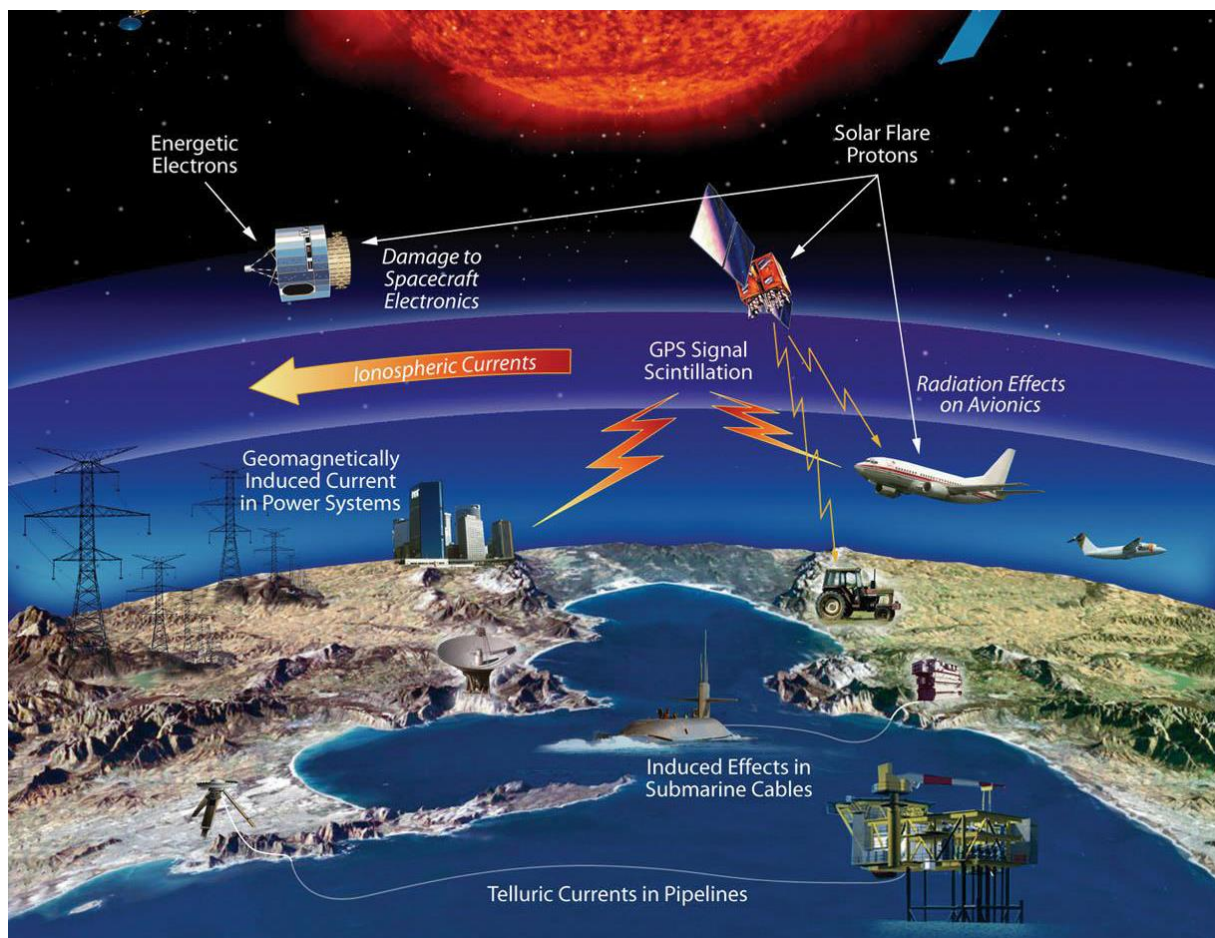
Our modern society depends on a variety of technologies which are susceptible to the extremes of space weather. During auroral events, strong electrical currents are driven along the Earth's surface which disrupts electric power grids and contribute to the corrosion of oil and gas pipelines.

Geomagnetic storms cause changes in the ionosphere which then interfere with high-frequency radio communications and Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation.

Polar cap absorption events caused by solar protons, results in compromised radio communication for commercial airliners on transpolar crossing routes.

Spacecraft exposed to energetic particles during solar energetic particle events and radiation belt enhancements result in temporary operational anomalies, damage critical electronics, degrade solar arrays, and blind optical systems such as imagers and star trackers. Explorers - whether human or robotic - across the solar system are also affected by solar activity. As the NASA website explains:

*"Research has shown, in a worst-case scenario, astronauts exposed to solar particle radiation can reach their permissible exposure limits within hours of the onset of an event. Surface-to-orbit and surface-to-surface communications are sensitive to space weather storms."*



Space Weather Effects on Modern Technology by NASA



## Geomagnetic Storm Scale

**Definition:** Geomagnetic storms (aka solar storms) are temporary disturbances of the Earth's magnetosphere that are caused by a solar wind shock wave and/or cloud of magnetic field that interacts with the magnetic field of the Earth.

The Geomagnetic storm scale, from the NOAA, shows the different levels of severity. It is denoted by a G followed by a number from 1 to 5 (1 = minor event; 5 = extreme event).

The scale uses the planetary K-Index (Kp as its physical measure). A short explanation on the Planetary K-index from the NOAA/NWS:

*"The K-index, and by extension the Planetary K-index, are used to characterize the magnitude of geomagnetic storms. Kp is an excellent indicator of disturbances in the Earth's magnetic field and is used by SWPC to decide whether geomagnetic alerts and warnings need to be issued for users who are affected by these disturbances. The principal users affected by geomagnetic storms are the electrical power grid, spacecraft operations, users of radio signals that reflect off of or pass through the ionosphere, and observers of the aurora."*

Category	Possible Effects
<b>G1</b> Minor K <sub>p</sub> = 5	<b>Power systems:</b> Weak power grid fluctuations can occur. <b>Other systems:</b> Migratory animals are affected at this and higher levels; aurora is commonly visible at high latitudes.
<b>G2</b> Moderate K <sub>p</sub> = 6	<b>Power systems:</b> high-latitude power systems may experience voltage alarms, long-duration storms may cause transformer damage. <b>Other systems:</b> HF radio propagation can fade at higher latitudes, and aurora has been seen at 55° geomagnetic lat..
<b>G3</b> Strong K <sub>p</sub> = 7	<b>Power systems:</b> voltage corrections may be required, false alarms triggered on some protection devices. <b>Other systems:</b> intermittent satellite navigation and low-frequency radio navigation problems may occur, HF radio may be intermittent, and aurora has been seen at 50° geomagnetic lat..
<b>G4</b> Severe K <sub>p</sub> = 8	<b>Power systems:</b> possible widespread voltage control problems and some protective systems will mistakenly trip out key assets from the grid. <b>Other systems:</b> induced pipeline currents affect preventive measures, HF radio propagation sporadic, satellite navigation degraded for hours, low-frequency radio navigation disrupted, and aurora has been seen as low as 45° geomagnetic lat..
<b>G5</b> Extreme K <sub>p</sub> = 9	<b>Power systems:</b> widespread voltage control problems and protective system problems can occur, some grid systems may experience complete collapse or blackouts. Transformers may experience damage. <b>Other systems:</b> Pipeline currents can reach hundreds of amps, HF (high frequency) radio propagation may be impossible in many areas for one to two days, satellite navigation may be degraded for days, low-frequency radio navigation can be out for hours, and aurora has been seen at 40° geomagnetic lat..

The Geomagnetic Storm Scale (Source: [SANSa](#))

## Real-Life Examples

A strong solar storm has once hit the world, but that was on [September 2, 1859](#). It caused the disruption of the telegraph service in the United States and Europe, igniting widespread fires as well. Colorful auroras, which are usually visible only in polar regions, were seen as far as Cuba.

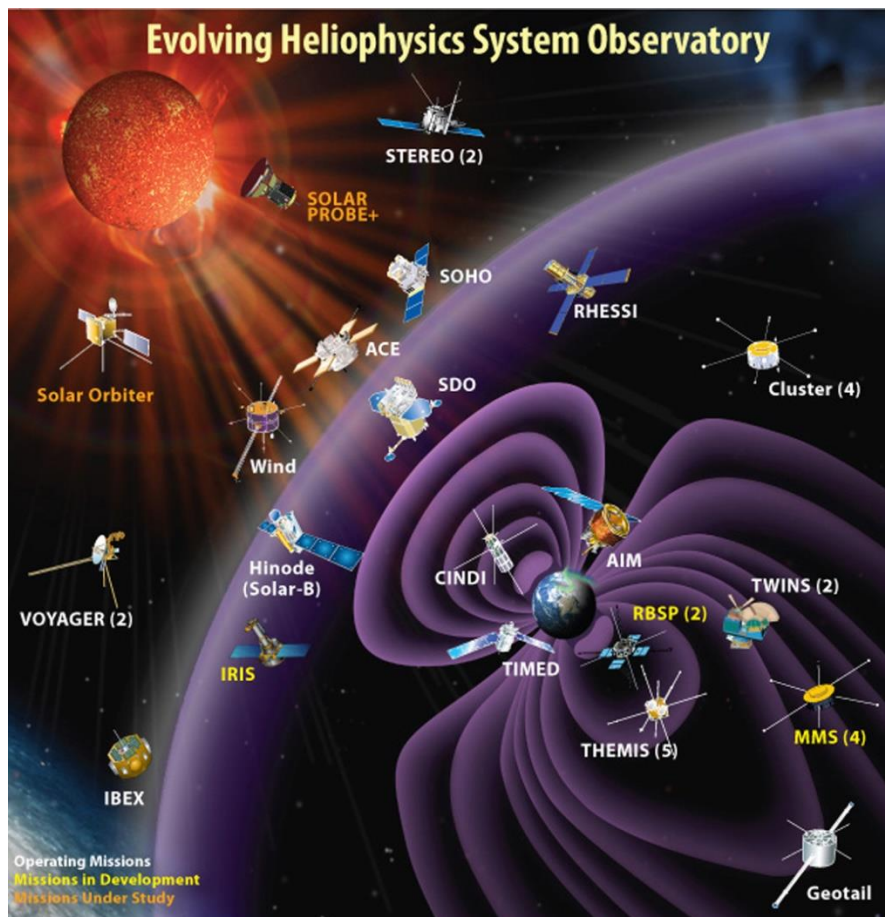
It is important due to the severe consequences such solar storm would have today, as elaborated in the Space-dot-com article:

*"The solar storm of 1859 was three times more powerful than one that cut power to an entire Canadian province in 1989. Experts say if it happened today – and it could – the result might be unthinkable. If a storm that severe occurred today, it could cause up to \$2 trillion in initial damages by crippling communications on Earth and fueling chaos among residents and even governments in a scenario that would require four to 10 years for recovery, [according to a report](#) earlier this year by the National Academy of Sciences. For comparison, hurricane Katrina inflicted somewhere between \$80 billion and \$125 billion in damage."*

## What can be done?

For one, the focus on space weather prediction should increase and more funding allocated towards the endeavor, if necessary. Additionally to its science program, NASA already works together with other agencies to fulfill the space weather research or operational objectives [of the nation].

*"Presently, this is accomplished with the existing fleet of NOAA satellites and some NASA scientific satellites. Space weather "beacons" on NASA spacecraft provide real-time science data to space weather forecasters. Examples include ACE measurements of interplanetary conditions from the Lagrangian point L1 where objects are never shadowed by the Earth or the Moon; CME alerts from SOHO; STEREO beacon images of the far side of the Sun; and super high-resolution images from SDO. NASA will continue to cooperate with other agencies to enable new knowledge in this area and to measure conditions in space critical to both operational and scientific research."*



The Heliophysics System Observatory (HSO) showing current operating missions, missions in development, and missions under study (by NASA/Goddard)

Next to science, the public should be also made aware of space weather as a potential threat. Ideally, the government works on a plan to ensure order in case of a worst-case scenario (like in 1859). It should be done objectively and not used to make the people unnecessarily anxious; simply rising awareness is the goal.

There should also be a training program regarding the worst-case for civil servants, the police, military, etc. to avoid chaos in such an event.

On an economic level, measurements can also be taken. For instance, power generators and other elements of our infrastructure which are susceptible to space weather, especially geomagnetic storms, should be easily replaceable. This, in turn, means that additional generators and else have to be built and stored underground (plus monthly, quarterly, or annual inspections to ensure that they work if needed).

While all of these measurements do not prevent a solar storm from occurring, they do help a lot in case we experience severe space weather (in my opinion, at least). If you have more questions regarding space weather, then visit the following link of NASA:

[https://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/sunearth/spaceweather/index.html#q14](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/sunearth/spaceweather/index.html#q14)

(Released: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 14:03 Uhr/02:03 pm)

## Covid-19: Experimental vaccine safe, generates immune response



Image also used by ScienceDaily: "Coronavirus vaccine photo concept (stock image)"

(Origin: @ myskin / stock.adobe.com)

**Date:** July 14, 2020 (SD article)

**Date:** July 19, 2020 (release of this article)

**Source:** NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

**Summary of ScienceDaily:** *"An investigational vaccine, mRNA-1273, designed to protect against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), was generally well tolerated and prompted neutralizing antibody activity in healthy adults, according to interim results."*

### Method of Research

45 Participants ranging from the ages 18 to 55 years enrolled at the study sites in Seattle and at [Emory University in Atlanta](#). The 45 participants were divided into three groups, each group consisting of 15 individuals. They received two intramuscular injections (injection directly into the muscle), 28 days apart, of 25, 100 or 250 micrograms (mcg) of mRNA-1273 (the investigational vaccine).

All participants received one injection; 42 received both scheduled injections.

The first participant received the experimental vaccine on March 16.

**Note:** The article also mentions that in April the trial was expanded to enroll adults older than the age of 55, which means it has now 120 participants. However, the results only cover the first 45 participants.

## Findings

- ❖ After the second injection, tests measured levels of vaccine-induced neutralizing activity through day 43
- ❖ Two doses of vaccine led to high levels of neutralizing antibody activity which were above the average values seen in convalescent sera\* obtained from persons with confirmed COVID-19 disease.

**\*Convalescent sera:** *"serum obtained from one who has recovered from an infectious disease and considered to be especially rich in antibodies against the infectious agent of the disease"* (as defined by [Merriam-Webster](#))

## More

The ScienceDaily article also elaborates on the safety of the experimental vaccine:

*"Regarding safety, no serious adverse events were reported. More than half of the participants reported fatigue, headache, chills, myalgia or pain at the injection site. Systemic adverse events were more common following the second vaccination and in those who received the highest vaccine dose."*

The data collected from this first clinical trial (side effects and immune responses of various vaccine dosages) *"informed the doses used or planned for use in the Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the investigational vaccine"*.

Phase 2 clinical trial of mRNA-1273 - sponsored by Moderna - began in late May.

Phase 3 is planned to be launched in July 2020.

**Note:** As it is with the other science articles, some sentences and even paragraphs may be transferred 1:1 due to my still not-so-excellent English skills. I want to avoid information loss and similar things, I hope it is understandable.

## Source:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200714171338.htm>

(Released: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 23:10 Uhr/11:10 pm)



## Culture, History and Modernity

An opinion on how the modern world, with its ongoing progress in technology, can help us in exploring the past and our cultures from all different perspectives across the different times of the past.



Photo of St. Petersburg, Russia, in the 19th century

Source: [Monovision](#)

### Introduction

The landscapes of our countries have changed over the long course of history - from the earliest communities in the Stone Age to the modern cities and villages of today. Photography hasn't always existed, but archaeological findings and historic surviving buildings give us insight into a world of our ancestors.

There's been certainly a point where a lot of people asked themselves: how did the people live back then, and how did it look like?

Answers to these questions were given in the form of movies and books (not always accurate, though); later on through more research on it from a objective and scientific view which slowly complete the whole picture of the past.

Technology, as it progressed over time, tremendously helped in the research, discovery and (sometimes) restoration of historic findings. In the current day and age, it could help us to understand the past better through devices like VR (Virtual Reality).



Archeological excavation site in Crete - with VR, we may be able to recreate it virtually and explore it

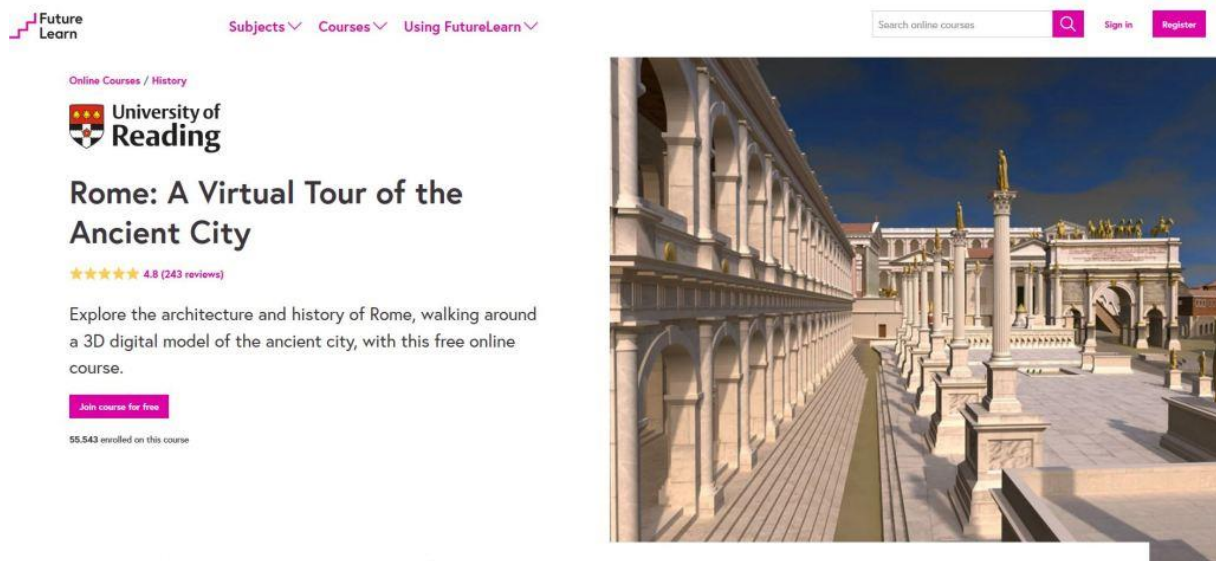
### Procedure



In order to realize the correct visualization of the different time periods, the help of archaeologists, historians, and other experts is required. It may take a while, but it ensures that a historic accurate version is displayed in the virtual world.

The VR world would not only be interesting for experts on the issue and students who study culture and/or history, but also for the whole of society to experience the past and how their country and culture came to be. Whether it is done by releasing it as a game accessible to everyone that way, or implemented as a leisure facility, can be along the way.

A similar simulation already exist, but by developing virtual reality further it can be improved and allow for greater accessibility.



Virtual Tours already exist (source: [future learn](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/rome-a-virtual-tour-of-the-ancient-city))

Making it accessible to the public means greater appreciation and understanding of our ancestors - from new to old history

## Education and Understanding

A guide within the simulation, or some sort of information retrieval through a different function, contributes to the overall education of the period and leads to historic understanding. Some may want to go to London during the first industrial revolution and learn how it looked like, what the living conditions were, and meet some historic figures.

Furthermore, game developers can use the information and implement it in their games - as well as screen writers and authors. Perhaps, to put it in an optimistic view, there's going to be a revolution in historic thinking and cultural understanding.

In a globalized world, which is stronger connected than it was in the past through tourism - trade, exchange and else existed for centuries -, this may even be ideal.

(Released: 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020, 15:18 Uhr/03:18 pm)

# Science News

News from the Science World

## Study on Social Isolation during Childhood on Mice

**Date:** 04/09/2020

**SD-Date:** 31/08/2020

**Source:** The Mount Sinai Hospital / Mount Sinai School of Medicine

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Researchers have identified specific sub-populations of brain cells in the prefrontal cortex, a key part of the brain that regulates social behaviour, that are required for normal sociability in adulthood and are profoundly vulnerable to juvenile social isolation in mice."*

### Method of Research

A research team from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai studied social isolation on juvenile mice, in order to better understand the mental health consequences of social isolation and loneliness.

### Findings

- A specific sub-population of brain cells in the prefrontal cortex (which plays an important role in regulating social behaviour) has been identified
- The study uncovered a previously unrecognized role of the medial prefrontal cortex neurons
- If replicated in humans, it could lead to treatments for psychiatric disorders connected to isolation
- In male mice, two weeks of isolation immediately followed by weaning led to "a failure to activate medial prefrontal cortex neurons projecting to the \*paraventricular thalamus during social exposure in adulthood" (\*paraventricular thalamus: area of the brain which relays signals to various components of the brain's reward circuitry)

### Elaboration

Despite the increased connectivity through digital platforms, young people in our society are feeling a growing sense of isolation. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent implementation of social distancing and school closers by many countries, magnified the need to understand the mental health consequences of social isolation and loneliness.

Research in the past has shown that social isolation, especially during childhood, is detrimental to adult brain function and behaviour across mammalian species; however, the underlying neural circuit mechanisms have remained poorly understood.

In the study at hand, optogenetics (use of light to stimulate particular neurons) and chemogenetics (non-invasive chemical control over cell populations) were used to quickly increase social interaction in these mice.

As Dr. Morishita is quoted in the article: *"We checked the presence of social behavior deficits just prior to stimulation and when we checked the behavior while the stimulation was ongoing, we found that the social behavior deficits were reversed."*

The identification of these specific prefrontal neurons will also *"point toward therapeutic targets for the improvement of social behaviour deficits shared across a range of psychiatric disorders"*.

## Source

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200831112345.htm>

## Many Animal Species may be vulnerable to SARS-Cov-2 infection, according to a genomic analysis

**Date:** 10/09/2020

**SD-Date:** 21/08/2020

**Source:** University of California - Davis

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Analysis of ACE2, the main receptor that SARS-CoV-2 uses to bind and enter cells, across 410 vertebrate species reveals that many are potentially susceptible to infection by the novel coronavirus. They include a number of endangered and threatened species, notably apes and old world primates. The study could also reveal potential intermediate hosts and animal models for the virus."*

## Method of Research

Genomic analysis was used by an international team of researchers to compare the main cellular receptor for the virus in humans - ACE2 = angiotensin converting enzyme-2 - to 410 different species of vertebrates, including birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

Normally, ACE2 is found on various types of cells and tissues, including epithelial cells\* in the nose, mouth and lungs. 25 amino acids of the ACE2 protein are important for the virus to bind and gain entry into cells (in humans).

"The researchers used these 25 amino acid sequences of the ACE2 protein, and modeling of its predicted protein structure together with the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, to evaluate how many of these amino acids are found in the ACE2 protein of the different species."

\*More information about epithelial cells (what they are, where they are, and how they work) can be [read here](#)

## Findings

- Highest risk of contracting SARS-CoV-2 via ACE2: animals with all 25 amino acid residues matching the human protein
- Risk is predicted to decrease the more the species' ACE2 binding residues differ from humans
- ~ 40% of the species potentially susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 are classified as "threatened" by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (and they may be more vulnerable to human-to-animal transmission)

## Meaning

In the article, Harris Lewin (lead author of the study and a distinguished professor of evolution and ecology at UC Davis) told Science Daily: *"The data provide an important starting point for identifying vulnerable and threatened animal populations at risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection. We hope it inspires practices that protect both animal and human health during the pandemic."*

It's also important to mention that endangered species are predicted to be at risk, among them are:

**Very High Risk:** the Western lowland gorilla, Sumatran orangutan and Northern white-cheeked gibbon. Other animals flagged as high risk are marine mammals such as gray whales and bottlenose dolphins, as well as Chinese hamsters.

**Medium Risk:** domestic animals such as cats, cattle and sheep.

**Low Risk:** dogs, horses and pigs.

However, it is yet unknown how it relates to infection and disease risk (reminder: it is about risk for ACE2 binding). As the article points out: How this relates to infection and disease risk needs to be determined by future studies, but for those species that have known infectivity data, the correlation is high.

For more information, I will link to the article, but remember as it is stated there:

*"The authors urge caution against overinterpreting the predicted animal risks based on the computational results, noting the actual risks can only be confirmed with additional experimental data. The list of animals can be found here."*

#### Source

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200821161423.htm>

### High-fidelity record of Earth's climate history puts current changes in context

**Date:** 11/09/2020

**SD-Date:** 10/09/2020

**Source:** University of California - Santa Cruz

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Scientists have compiled a continuous, high-fidelity record of variations in Earth's climate extending 66 million years into the past. The record reveals four distinctive climate states, which the researchers dubbed Hothouse, Warmhouse, Coolhouse, and Icehouse. These major climate states persisted for millions and sometimes tens of millions of years, and within each one the climate shows rhythmic variations corresponding to changes in Earth's orbit around the sun."*

#### Method of Research

The findings, as outlined in the article, were the result of decades of work and a large international collaboration.

While not the exact method is explained, which would probably be too long due to the great length of the research, the article mentions that "[c]ritical to compiling the new climate record" were the high-quality sediment cores from deep ocean basins. The International Ocean Drilling Program (ODP, later the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program, IODP, succeeded in 2013 by the International Ocean Discovery Program) was responsible for getting these sediments. Information was able to be gathered from the sediments by analyzing them, as the article points out: *"Signatures of past climates are recorded in the shells of microscopic plankton (called foraminifera) preserved in the seafloor sediments."*

After analyzing it, the researchers developed an "astrochronology" by matching the climate variations recorded in sediment layers with variations in Earth's orbit (known as Milankovitch

cycles)<sup>1</sup>. On this data, the researchers then reconstructed past climates and were able to see long-term coarse changes as well.

## Findings

- Discovery of 4 different climate states: Hothouse, Warmhouse, Coolhouse, and Icehouse
- Past 3 million years: Icehouse (during this time humanity evolved)
- Eocene epoch (56 million years ago to 34 million years ago): In the early Eocene there were no polar ice caps, average global temperature: 9-14 °C higher than today, presumably the "Hothouse" state before changing to "Warmhouse"
- Climate record of the past 66 million years reconstructed -> finding: climate's response to orbital variations depends on factors "such as greenhouse gas levels and the extent of polar ice sheets"
- Human activities and greenhouse gas emissions are driving the planet toward the Warmhouse and Hothouse state (not seen since the end of the Eocene epoch)

## Meaning

To quote a paragraph of the article: *"Most of the major climate transitions in the past 66 million years have been associated with changes in greenhouse gas levels. Zachos has done extensive research on the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM), for example, showing that this episode of rapid global warming, which drove the climate into a Hothouse state, was associated with a massive release of carbon into the atmosphere. Similarly, in the late Eocene, as atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were dropping, ice sheets began to form in Antarctica and the climate transitioned to a Coolhouse state."*

Lastly, Zachos mentions IPCC projections in the year 2300, if nothing is done to combat climate change: *"The IPCC projections for 2300 in the 'business-as-usual' scenario will potentially bring global temperature to a level the planet has not seen in 50 million years."*

## More

<sup>1</sup> from the article 1:1 taken over

Due to the importance, and still my lack of fluently speaking English, a lot of it has only been midly changed or quoted directly from it. I sincerely hope that I haven't missed any findings, otherwise let me know. As always, I'll link to the original article to read for yourself and ensure that you get all of the information.

## Source

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/09/200910150313.htm>

(Released: 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 14:46/02:46 pm)



# The Political Struggle

Opinion



Pictured: The American Civil War (1861-1865)

Source: SkyMinds

## Introduction

As I wandered on the paths of different social media networks, I've noticed a rather interesting concept of the visualization of the political discourse. There, I learned about the "marketplace of ideas" which argues that every and all political ideas have a "market stall" where they advocate for their ideas. In their economic-orientated mindset, they claim that the "best ideas", which are decided by the "customers" acting within the market, reach the top and dominate the others. Looking deeper into it, the metaphor does reveals its weaknesses and a fundamental law: the marketplace can only exist in countries which allow the freedom to express one's opinion and political affiliation freely without the fear of government reprisals. In other words: a lot of nation states in the modern world do not fulfil the requirement and are therefore excluded from the metaphor. The government has a monopoly which, if questioned, results in a variation of punishments - in the worst case: death.

Secondly, the concept assumes that there exists a similar demand and supply mechanism. Whatever idea appeals to the people experiences an "increase in demand", but that's a fallacy in itself: what about the people who are interested in another political idea, but due the circumstances they are just slightly in the minority (e.g. 48% against 52%, as it was with Brexit the case)? Moreover, not all "customers" have access to the market either (i.e. the youth who is not eligible to vote, because they are 16 or 17 years old) which raises the question over the accurate representation of the "demand curve". And, most importantly, if a perfect market is given as an imaginative place, then all information should be available to the people. The slightest distortion or limitation of access can have a dramatic impact on the outcome of either the election, popular referendum, or else. In the real world, the concept simply is not a good metaphor.

Lastly, if we assume that a perfect market would indeed exist - a thought experiment -, should some ideas then only be available as soon as the "demand" increases or when it reaches a majority? After all, the current "suppliers" may have a quasi-monopoly on the system that is in place right now. Consequently, new "market stalls" find it either very hard or impossible to gain a "market share". During the first phase, the very early one, they are in the minority and are possibly looked down upon by most of society or ignored (e.g. civil rights movement in the US and women rights movement in western countries). I'm sure that a majority of the people who went to an economic



school once - as I did - are aware that entering the market with an unfavourable good is pretty much economic suicide. Following that logic, putting up a fight - probably called "marketing" in this metaphor - is the only option, but that doesn't lead to immediate success either. Naturally, the problem of "is it worth it" emerges and, as the contemporaries would surely have said: "things, as they are now, are fine and do not need to be changed".

Perhaps, I miss something here, but I find it hard to believe that it could accurately describe how political ideas work and how they are spread. That's why I propose a different view on the topic: the political struggle. In the following paragraphs I'll elaborate on the idea.

## **1st Phase: Wars and Revolutions**

Political ideas can be better described as a struggle, because they face a variation of obstacles to get into the public eye. Whether these ideas are democratic or authoritarian, right or left, religious or atheistic - it doesn't matter. As a new ideology it may not only have to fight against the current status quo, but also against other movements which seek to set up a different political and economic structure in the nation and/or worldwide.

Revolutions are one way to achieve political change, if everything else has failed before. In this case, I'm talking about violent revolutions like the [French](#) (1787-1799), the German (1848-1849), or the [Haitian](#) (1791-1804). The first two instances have failed; one ended in the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and the other was [crushed within a year](#). The Haitians, on the other hand, emerged victorious and were the first former slaves to found their own nation. In their struggle for freedom they waged war on the status quo at that time, and successfully overthrew it. As slaves, there was never a "marketplace of ideas" for them to formulate their demands and rights, because they weren't seen as equal. A different - yet similar and peaceful - revolution would later gain foothold among women to fight for equal treatment and rights.

The revolutions were a political struggle against the old order, and many of them occurred across the globe. There are two more well-known revolutions: the Russian (1917-1923) and the US-American (1775-1783). Both ended in a success for the revolutionaries.

## **2nd Phase: A Young Democracy and the Struggle to Survive**

After the First World War (1914-1918), Germany was forced to abolish its monarchy under Wilhelm II. and establish its first democracy. Very early on, it faced coup attempts from the far left (Spartakusbund/KPD) and the far right (monarchists/militarists) which resulted in a failure. The Weimar Republic (1918/1919-1933) was seemingly built on a shaky ground, and during its existence it was plagued by several economic and political crises. In 1923, the occupation of the Ruhrgebiet in Germany led to the Ruhrkampf (1923-1925) which started due Germany being unable to pay back war reparations. As a consequence, occupation armies of France and Belgium started to occupy the Ruhrgebiet. The German government was angered by it and ordered the workers to go on a strike and they promised them that they are still getting paid.

As the Ruhrkampf went on, more and more money was printed by the national banks which then led to a depreciation and hyperinflation. During this turmoil the national socialist worker party (NSDAP) under Adolf Hitler tried to gain power in the same way as Mussolini did (March on Rome) by marching on Berlin. However, for them it ended in a complete and utter failure. Hitler was imprisoned and his henchmen had to go into hiding.

Meanwhile, the government of Friedrich Ebert (Reichspräsident; 1871-1925) was able to put an end to the crisis along with Gustav Stresemann (Reichsminister des Auswärtigen; 1878-1929). For now, the political struggle between democracy and its enemies was over. And from 1925-1929 the

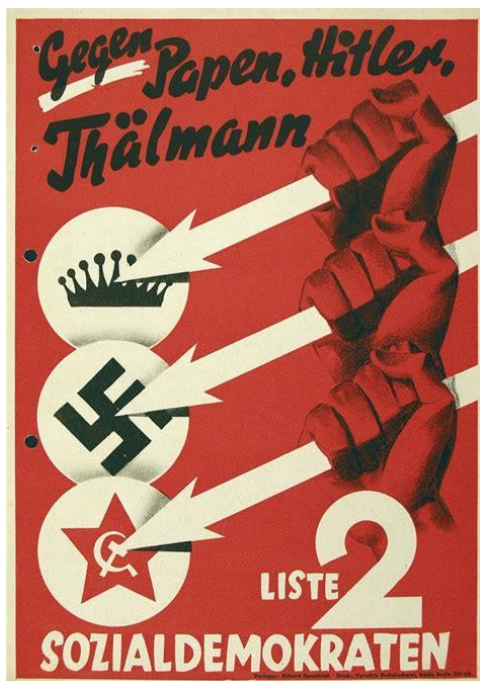
government was relatively stable with a minority government called the "Bürgerblock" tolerated by the SPD.

Then, in 1929, the economic crisis which started in the US swapped over to Germany and other countries around the world. Germany was hit the hardest, because it took many loans from US-banks for economic purposes. With the death of Friedrich Ebert in 1925, Gustav Stresemann in 1929, and the election of Paul von Hindenburg to the role of the Reichspräsident (1847-1934) a few years earlier, a supporter of the monarchy was in the highest position of the young German democracy. Heinrich Brüning (Zentrumspartei; 1885-1970) was the Reichskanzler from March 30th 1930 to May 30th 1932. Despite some political successes, the economic and political situation in Germany still got worse.

On June 1st 1932 he was replaced by Franz von Papen (Zentrumspartei; 1879-1969), he governed until 17th November 1932 and was responsible for the Preußenschlag (removal of the SPD led government in Prussia) and failed with a coup attempt due to the resistance of the Reichswehr under General Kurt von Schleicher.

Kurt von Schleicher (1882-1934) was Reichskanzler from 3rd December 1932 to 28th January 1933. He tried to be a "social General" and approached the moderate forces (social alliance); an attempt by him to internally divide the NSDAP which was the largest party in the parliament failed. His supporters turned the back on him and under pressure from conservative forces appointed Hindenburg Hitler to Reichskanzler on the 30th January 1933.

During the time from 1929 to 1933, the violence on the streets also erupted between the communists (Roter Frontkämpferbund, paramilitary force of the KPD) and the national socialists (Sturmabteilung/SA, paramilitary force of the NSDAP). The *Reichsbanner - Schwarz-Rot-Gold* was the paramilitary organisation of the SPD founded in 1924 to fight against both the communists and national socialists. In 1931, the *Eiserne Front* was founded by the *Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, the *Allgemeinen freien Angestelltenbundes*, the *SPD* and the *Arbeiter-Turn- und Sportbundes*.



Poster of the Iron Front, reading: "Against Papen, Hitler, Thälmann"

The struggle of the different groups ended with the victory of the national socialists, as it is now well-known history.

Why is it important that you know it? Because this example shows how the fight for political dominance between different political parties and their ideas can look like. In this example in a young democracy. Political violence was in the early 20th-century not uncommon, as revolutions and street fights appearing at that time across the globe had shown. It can be best encompassed with the term "struggle", because the parties and the ideas they stand for have to face battles over battle - either vocally through elections and approval, or physically through violence on the street - in order to arrive at the top.

Alliances and partnerships were formed, and the status quo viewed Hitler and his party as the ideal tool to maintain their power. In their mind, they were convinced that they could tame the revolutionist on the far-right and wear down the NSDAP through parliamentary paperwork and the system itself. In 1934, during the Night of the Long Knives, Hitler annihilated the last internal opposition within the party - the SA-leadership and Ernst Röhm - as well as other potential opposition forces.

### **3rd Phase: The Struggle in the Modern World**

Now, with all that in mind, we see that new ideas always faced a political struggle. Some lost during the early phases while others emerged victorious. Nowadays, it is luckily not that violent anymore, at least in western democracies and probably also in most 2nd-world countries. Only a few ideologies on the far-left and the far-right are still stucked in the early 20th century and often seek to either implement or drive towards a situation which is internally so bad for a nation, that they can go on the street and violently force a change.

However, that doesn't mean that there isn't a struggle going on for moderate ideologies which follow the rule of democracy and play the game. It has become a metaphorical battlefield, and on some issues the one or other side wins. Not necessarily due to the popularity of the position, but also due to a pragmatic and realistic approach.

Through intern and extern exchanges; a party, group or organization is also able to make its proposals more attractive and feasible. Thus, they increase the chance of victory. If the policy works and actually improve lives, it will also make future proposals more likely to succeed and the popularity of the party, group or organization increases. Unfortunately, deceptions and lies by either governing parties or misinformation from other participants lead to a distorted perception of reality by the closest followers who may be able to gather more support and still maintain their power or become the ruling party or part of the ruling establishment. This negative side is what stops real progress from being done, and it paralyzes the system as a whole and is potentially dangerous in times of crises.

In two-party systems like the UK or USA, it even takes longer for popular positions to be implemented or recognized at all. In this case, it is a systematic issue which is caused by the power dynamics: if both parties receive money from private donors who then benefit from policies shaped for them, the people have little to no say. They can only change the government and hope for slight improvements and a different face representing them on the international stage. In order to change the system, a strong and widely organized movement is required which has to win the system war - metaphorically, of course - to finally progress further and exit the jo-jo effect once and for all.

In a multiply-party system which governs with coalitions, there's also something dangerous: lobbyism. While itself is not inherently dangerous (different interest groups from workers to industry giving their expertise on various issues), it becomes dangerous when a few are preferably treated

and have economically a lot of power to put more pressure on politicians. This dynamic also halts or slows down progress, and changes - which are also systematically - have to be made to prevent such things from occurring over and over again.

It all comes down to the struggle of political ideas. A war cannot be won in a day, but the movements have the power to win battle after battle, and then finally emerge victorious in the war and end the oligarchic-like influences and power structures.

### **The Final Chord**

A market is about competition, while the political struggle is about the annihilation of the others ideologies either through peaceful and morally defensible methods or through hawkish and immoral methods (as history has shown).

The anti-democratic elements of western democracies need to be destroyed through education, social policies and further democratization to ensure that they never win again in their struggle for power.

Modern democracies are a struggle of ideas as well; here, the battles are decided through discussions, exchange, availability of and access to information, pragmatism, scientific reality, but also negative sides such as misinformation, lies and deception.

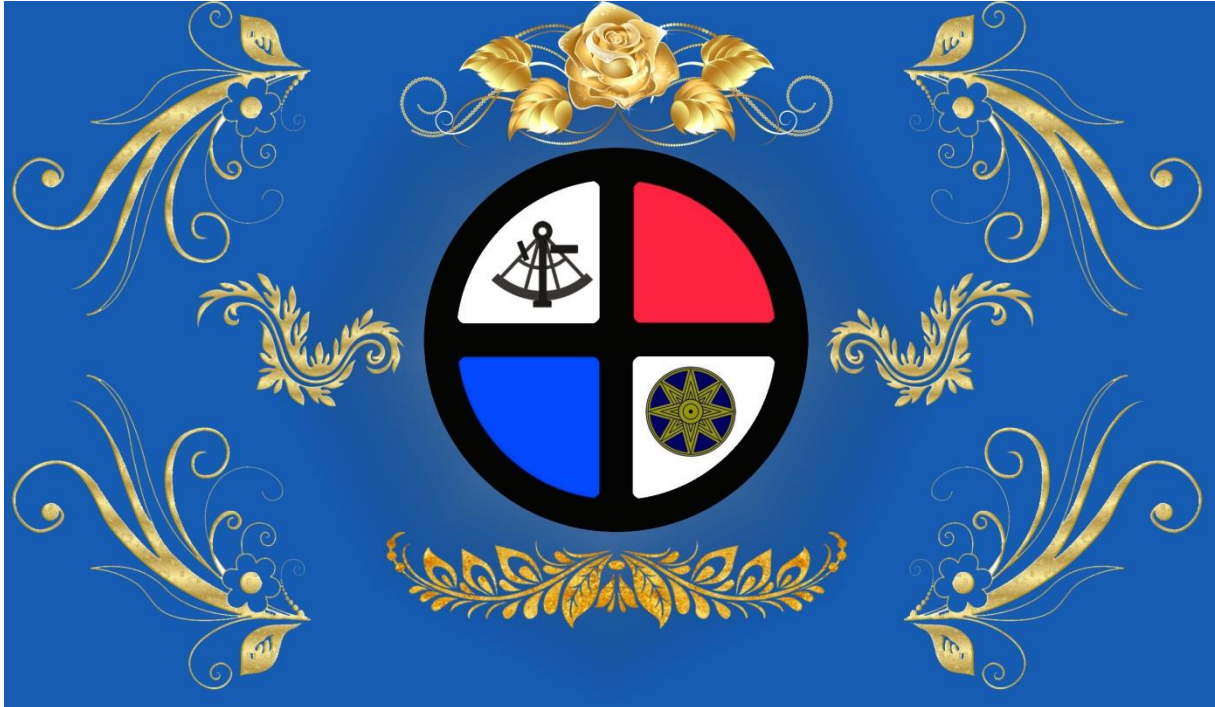
### **Concluding Sentence**

Systematic changes require strong movements and a widely organized network, but like revolutions and wars in the past, battle after battle has to be won - some battles lost don't mean that the war is lost either.

(Released: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 20:25 Uhr/08:25 pm)

## Holistic-Futurism

Introducing my ideology which officially exists since the 1st January, 2020 (it has been in development since 2019)



The flag of the new ideology with ornaments

### How did it come to the creation of a new ideology?

I've been politically interested since mid-2014/2015, and during the five years I went from a peace-orientated pension reformer (2014-2016) to a social liberal (economically and socially liberal, 2016-2018) to a social democrat (2018-2019).

As I learned more about the positions of social liberalism and social democracy, as well as the issues my country and humanity faces in the modern world, I soon realized that there's missing something.

Firstly; it was the neo-classical/neoliberal status quo which worsened global warming, societal problems and environmental pollution. At best, there are attempts to reform the old system without questioning it overall (e.g. the main focus on economic growth despite finite resources and profit maximization) and trying to improve the situation bit by bit. While I consider reforms necessary, the framework as it exists now, makes it very hard to so (as environmental protection laws and combatting climate change has shown, or the very recent and still ongoing pandemic which destroyed much of wealth the middle-class and lower-classes have accumulated).

Secondly; the lack of advanced planning - whether it is a natural catastrophe, a pandemic as it is now, or sustainability in general - is also problematic. Politics shouldn't just revolve around elections and short-term solutions/policies which help to get re-elected. In fact, I consider it very problematic to not think in decades and centuries, or even millennia. My second point is intertwined with my first, due to it being a systematic issue.

*Who's going to store, regularly examine, maintain and replace masks and ventilators - for instance - in an economy which punishes anything that isn't profitable?*

Naturally, we are underprepared and it has never been as clear as during this devastating pandemic which cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Moreover, what happens when there's a solar storm incident - which I also already have written about -? The system, as it exists now, simply isn't prepared for countless challenges of the future and the present. That's why there needs to be an alternative.

Thirdly; science and pragmatism are still underappreciated, but both are essential for the future. We need to listen to the scientists to effectively combat issues like climate change, and we need to be pragmatic in the implementation of policies (expertise and realism). Furthermore, I advocate for the requirement of expertise in the ministries of a government. In other words: the minister of agriculture must have either been a farmer and/or studied agriculture. After all, you wouldn't employ an engineer as a doctor in a hospital.

This technocratic framework ensures that the ministers are not just experts on their field, but also act in a responsible manner and admit mistakes instead of playing the political game.

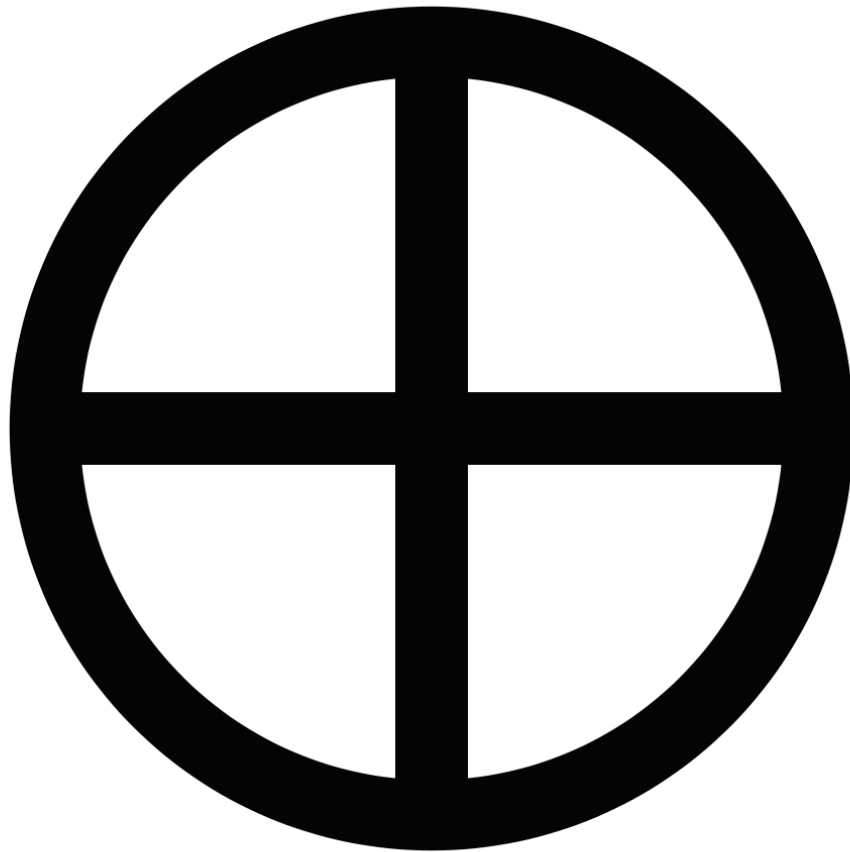
Fourthly; the economy should center around the culture and the people of a country, merely pursuing economic growth hurts both the culture (e.g. music, arts, literature) and the people (burnout, depression, etc.). An achievement-orientated society not only neglects mental well-being, but also underappreciates essential jobs such as cleaners, garbage collectors, healthcare workers, and many other low-paid occupations. Instead of looking down upon so-called "lesser occupations", we as a society should finally realize that these jobs are absolutely necessary for a functioning modern civilization. **Compassion and cooperation over contest and egoism, if you will.** That's also the reason why I think that every job, regardless of the skills needed, should be enough for a person to live financially stable and pursue other interests (from enjoying more leisure time to culturally enrich oneself by reading about poets, writers, or else).

Lastly; while the western democracies are not perfect, they are still the best system for groups and individuals alike. There, you have the freedom of self-development and freedom of assembly, and there's no limit of knowledge either (e.g. libraries). The protection, enhancement and participation must be guaranteed to maintain a vivid democracy. Democratization is an ongoing process which requires the people to be a part of it. International exchange, as well as exchange on a national level between the various groups (religious, political and economic), is very important. In both cases, the people need to be given the opportunity to get involved - easily and without bureaucratic obstacles. Especially when it comes to trade agreements, which affect millions of people, there needs to be more transparency. Additionally, a cultural exchange - in Europe between the different EU-members, for example - contributes to a better understanding of the other side and also improves the democracy appreciation to some extent (i.e. comprehend and accept other points of view to improve the overall situation).

These are the main reasons which I either already have elaborated on (e.g. scientification) or going to write about in the future to further understand my position.

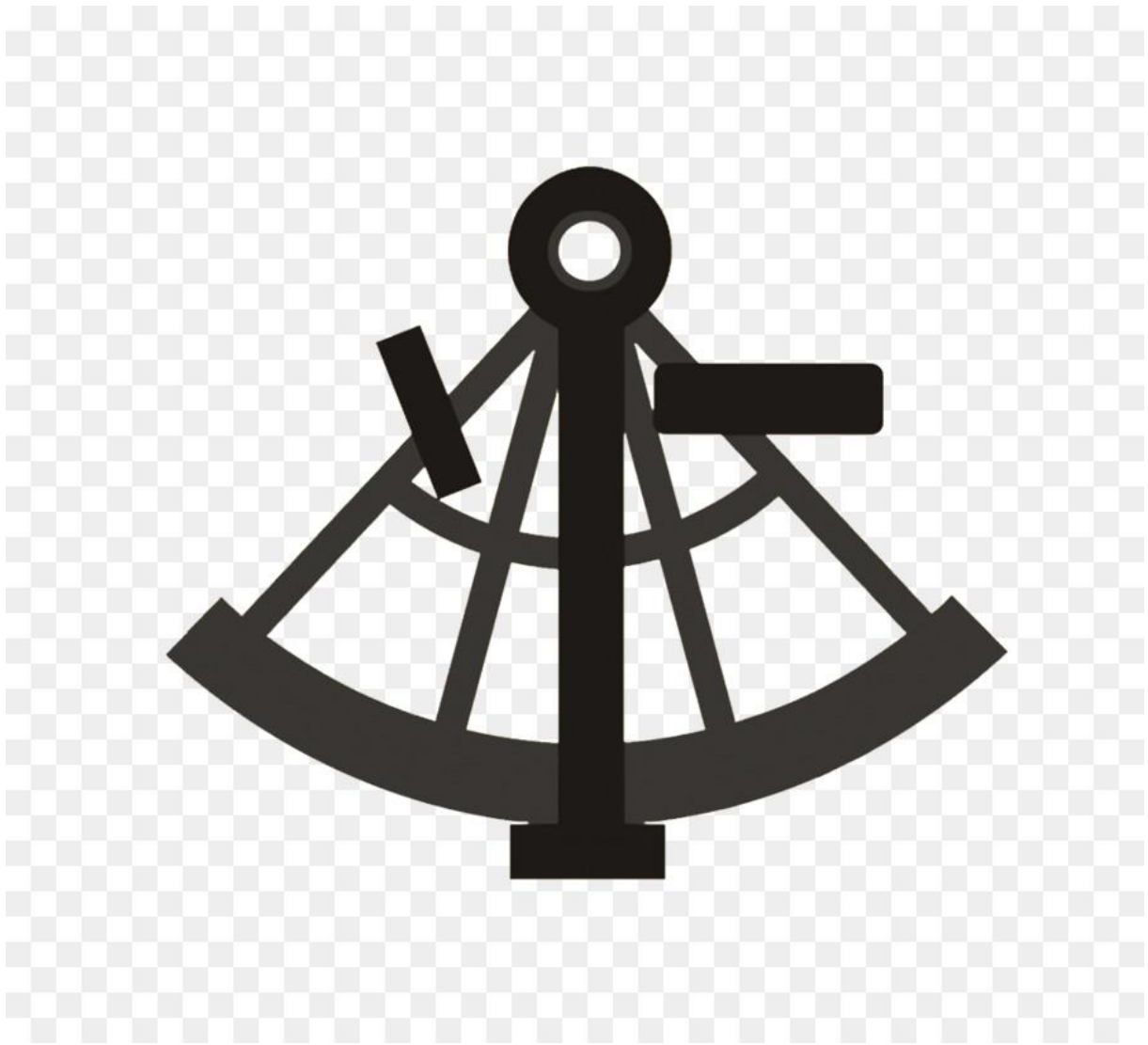


## Symbols and their Meaning



Symbol of Planet Earth

This symbol encompasses all the others and emphasizes the importance of it. Holism, a nature ethics, considers ecosystem as a whole of being worth to preserve. The question is not whether they are useful to humans or their already-proven positive effects if maintained; the mere existence justifies the right for a forest, for example, to exist. If wood is taken from the forest, it must be ensured that new trees are planted and that it is done in a sustainable fashion. The same goes for farming and everything else.



The Sextant symbolizes Science

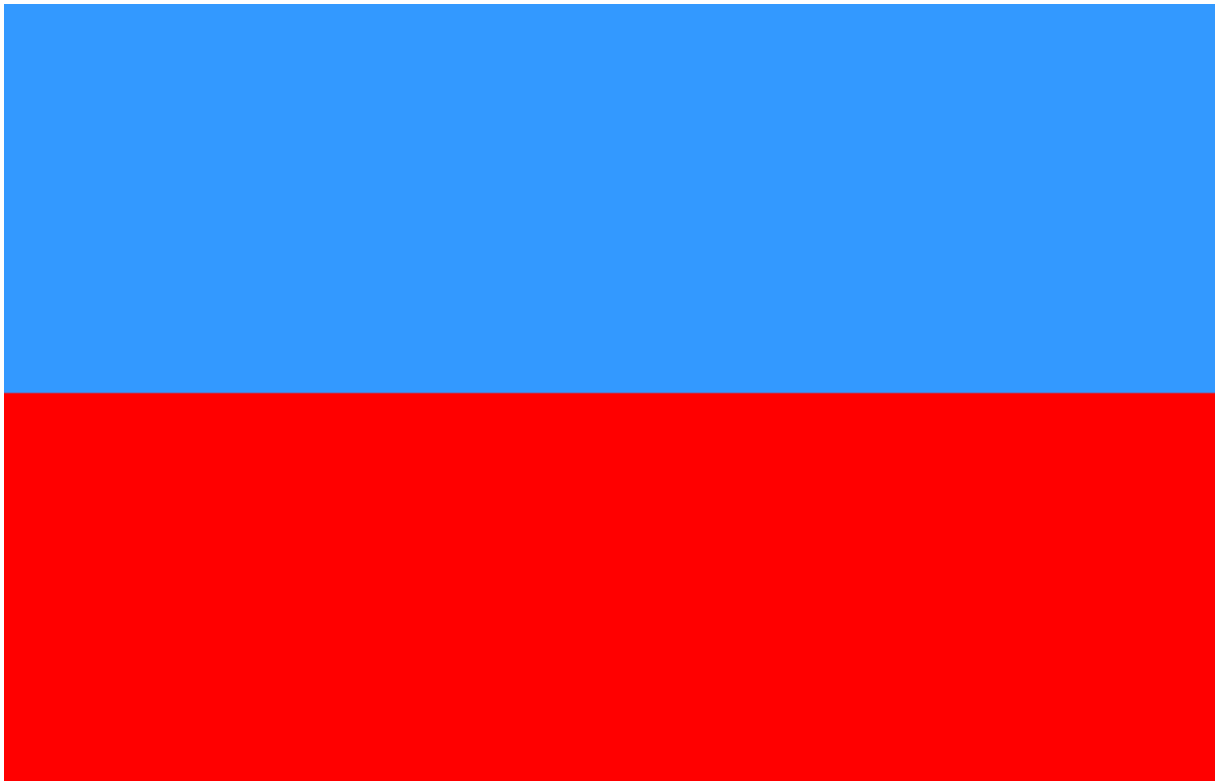
In the first section, I already elaborated on the importance of science. The sextant is a well-known scientific instrument, and our modern world wouldn't exist without the scientific progress over centuries and even millennia. Therefore, there's no doubt that it is essential for the future. Important to remember: neither politics nor the economy should interfere with the scientific method. The scientific institutions must be supported, protected and respected; the scientific worldview made comprehensive to the wider public (i.e. scientification), politics and the economic players. Once everyone is aware of it, and adheres to the scientific ideals, the ignorance which plagues us to this day will vanish completely.



Star of Ishtar

The Star of Ishtar is an ancient symbol of the Sumerian civilization; it represents the goddesses Inanna and Ishtar. In this particular case, the outer circle represents the past which is worth remembering. The 8 triangles of the star have a different meaning in holistic-futurism (since the original was seemingly lost in time anyway): human dignity; past, present, future; culture; the people; knowledge and community spirit. The inner circles represent the planet we live on - it is the smallest common thread on a global scale.

Our history, cultures and achievements all formed on this planet. It is our home.



Gif by [Rafael Rozendaal](#)

The blue colour represents democracy; the importance of it has already been described in the last section. In short: democracies allow freely exercising our civil rights without the fear of consequences from the government (e.g. imprisonment for criticizing the government or joining a different party) and also ensuring that groups (like workers) have the right to unionize and protest. For the future, this is very important which is why further democratization should be a goal of society - that includes more transparency and decentralization, when possible.

The red colour symbolizes social policies and the well-being of the people. Economic growth shouldn't be more important than the physical and mental well-being of the people; moreover, leisure time is needed both to recover from work and engage in political or cultural activities (or just doing a hobby/hobbies). A work-life-balance is to be strived for, and that looks different for each person.

### **Concluding Sentence(s)**

I hope that my articles, and especially this one here, explain my new ideology well. If you have any questions, just ask me. Remember, though, that I have yet to write articles about some issues. The more people are interested in it, the quicker I write about it (depending on the level of research needed).

## Guardians of Democracy



Guardians of Democracy Flag

### Formation

The Guardians of Democracy originated from my original idea of forming a network between various democratic institutions, democratic-minded political parties and other organizations/groups dedicated to educate, protect and/or extend democracy.

It is a separate organization from Holistic-Futurism, but works closely together with it. The leader of the organization is called "Coordinator".

Important aspects are regular festivals or gatherings of some sort (e.g. weekly meetings, and a festival of democracy once a year) where people can connect with each other and exchange ideas, arguments, and so on. Next to physical events, online places to come together shall also be formed (preferably with strict rules to ensure civility).

The digital presence on websites, social media and else is also very important. There, it doesn't matter whether one lives on the countryside or in a city. This network basically serves as a contact partner (for everyone), mediator and organizer.

### Symbols

The dark red colour stands for the countless lives it took to establish our democracy. It serves as a reminder that our democratic system should not be taken for granted, and therefore the necessity emerges to protect and defend our values and democracy as a system itself. It ranges from individual liberties such as freedom of speech and freedom of self-development to collective freedoms like the freedom to assembly. A healthy public discourse is a requirement, as well as giving everyone the chance to get access to educational materials from trusted and serious sources.

The wreath of laurel represents confidence in victory (as history has shown) and shows the certitude in the democratic cause. Battles were lost in the past – in France, Germany, and other countries where revolutions once broke out to abolish monarchic rule. However, in the long run, the war of the systems ended with democracy emerging victorious over the monarchies and dictatorships.

**The shield** emphasizes on the role as defenders and protectors – the guards – of democracy - whether it is anti-democratic political extremism, theocratic religious radicals or oligarchic individuals with a lot of power and economic might. The guards are ready and willing to fight on all fronts.

The owl symbolizes knowledge (which is limitlessly accessible in democracies), foresight (always looking to the future and making decisions based on the consequences it has on those living several generations later) and patience (some procedures and plans may take longer, but no rush decisions are made to avoid mistakes). All three of these characteristics are important for sustainability.

The sun is a symbol of life and that it in itself is valuable. It is also a symbol of power; power which is needed to stop and destroy inhumane ideologies and enemies of democracy.

### **Concluding Sentence**

This organization is hopefully going to play a big role in western democracies, because only through large participation we will be able to protect our democratic values from the three dangerous elements: anti-democratic political extremists, religious extremists and oligarchs.

(Released: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 20:49 Uhr/08:49 pm)



## Adding my Two Cents

An opinion article on the night before the first results of the US-election



### Background

I've been actively following US-politics since 2016, and during that time I also learned about the past of a country I once admired. From great deeds such as liberating Europe and my country from Nazi rule to misdeeds in countries like Iran (1952) which would later lead to the revolution in 1979.

However, today it is just about the election and the two candidates.

### The Candidates

I think I don't have to introduce anyone to Joe Biden and Donald Trump, they are well-known at this point. One for being the former Vice-President of Obama and the Democrat challenger, and the other being the incumbent President of the United States.

I'm not particularly a fan of Biden, since he merely reflects the status quo from 2008-2016. In comparison to the unpredictability and chaos of the Trump administration, as well as their horrendous record on environmental policies, it is an improvement though.

What I exactly mean? Here's a list of 75 anti-environment policies (made by the Guardian):

Made it easier to lease public land for oil and gas drilling. Enabled the expansion of offshore drilling. Proposed making 85% of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska available for drilling. Amended rule that reduced toxic air pollutants from petroleum refineries. Rejected science calling for tougher air pollution rules. Rolled back rules prohibiting the hunting of bears in Alaskan national preserves. Removed protections for the endangered Atlantic bluefin tuna. Lifted restrictions on mining in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Declined to ban a toxic pesticide. Changed the way the Endangered Species Act is applied, making it harder to protect animals and plants. Exited international climate cooperation. Reversed a rule against taking sand from protected areas to replenish other beaches. Weakened a rule that directs states to improve visibility at national parks by controlling pollution. Proposed opening most US coastal waters up to oil and gas drilling. Weakened the Clean Water Act. Proposed speeding up the review process for companies seeking oil and gas drilling permits in national forests. Opened up drilling on 9m acres of public land in the west, home to greater sage grouse. Abandoned efforts to reduce emissions from large sewage treatment plants. Delayed rule intended to limit pesticide exposure to agricultural workers. Proposed amended emissions standards for brick kilns and clay products manufacturing based on concerns from industry. Weakened regulations on pesticide use in National Wildlife Refuges. Delayed issuing and enforcing new ozone pollution standards. Weakened climate standards for new vehicles. Withdrew a proposed rule to protect groundwater near uranium mining sites. Lifted a moratorium on new coal leasing on public lands. Loosened enforcement of an air quality rule for states that pollute across state lines. Approved the building of the Keystone XL pipeline. Proposed rescinding a rule that required companies using federal land to prove they will have the financial means to decommission a project. Approved the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Weakened monetary penalties for automakers who fail to meet fuel efficiency standards. Proposed opening the protected Tongass national forest in Alaska to logging and road construction. Authorized oil and gas leasing on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain. Changed the process for setting energy conservation standards for consumer products. Proposed weakened regulations on the type of equipment required for exploratory drilling operations in the Arctic. Rolled back fracking regulations that protect drinking water on federal and tribal lands. Withdrew a proposed rule to protect whales, turtles and dolphins in the Pacific. Reduced oversight of the air pollution that can result when a company builds a new facility or modifies an existing one. Rescinded policies requiring companies to offset environmental harms to public lands. Reversed climate rules for the electricity sector. Proposed changes to rules on high emissions from power plants. Discontinued a National Parks Service policy discouraging the sale of plastic water bottles in parks. Announced, and then walked back, a repeal of a cap on gliders - older, dirtier engines installed into new truck bodies. Proposed a repeal of emissions standards for gliders. Suspended use of an Obama-era calculation of the money spent and lives lost due to climate change. Repealed a rule to prevent coal mining companies from dumping waste in streams. Repealed a rule updating Bureau of Land Management processes to better resolve ecological pressures on public lands. Delayed rules to cut methane emissions from landfills. Ordered federal agencies to review rules impeding energy production, resulting in numerous rollbacks. Weakened protections on hunting migratory birds. Reversed rules for methane pollution from oil and gas operations. Proposed subsidizing coal-fired and nuclear generation in markets where other sources were more economic. Proposed cutting funding to clean up the Chesapeake Bay to meet EPA water quality standards. Proposed relaxing rules on how much states can send pollution downstream to neighboring states. Opened the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine national monument to commercial fishing. Rescinded requirements limiting super-polluting refrigerants. Exempted farmers and ranchers from requirements to report emissions from animal waste. Attempted to rescind a rule meant to ensure the public gets a fair return from minerals recovered on public lands. Proposed to weakened grazing restrictions on public lands. Halted a rule that tightened air pollution standards for offshore drilling operations. Approved seismic air gun surveys for offshore oil and gas exploration, a technique that can harm marine wildlife, in new areas of the ocean not yet available for leasing. Weakened offshore drilling regulations designed to prevent system failures that would result in oil or gas being released into the water. Weakened environmental reviews for major projects and exempted projects from review. Invited the public to provide input on which rules and regulations DOI should target for rollback. Abandoned an effort to shift financial responsibility for hardrock mining cleanup from taxpayers to industry. Transferred the authority over cross-border infrastructure permits from the state department to the president, thereby shielding such decisions from environmental and judicial review. Eliminated a rule to prevent waste by requiring oil and gas operations on federal lands to limit venting and flaring of methane. Proposed easing rules that regulate where companies can mine for hardrock minerals. Narrowed pollution safeguards for lakes, rivers, tributaries and wetlands. Proposed weakening pesticide regulations meant to protect agricultural workers. Proposed revisions to carbon dioxide emissions standards for new or retrofitted power plants. Weakened toxic pollution and water rules for coal plants. Rolled back rules designed to prevent accidents at chemical facilities. Reduced the territories of two national monuments and opened the removed lands up to mining and drilling. Revoked an executive order protecting oceans, coastal areas and the Great Lakes. Loosened controls on emissions of hazardous air pollutants from facilities like power plants and petroleum refineries.

Nature, a scientific magazine, also elaborates on it and [how they view it](#).

To someone who holds science in high regard and is a staunch environmentalist, this alone is a reason why I don't consider Donald Trump a good candidate. Not to mention his [latest executive order](#) that would jeopardize the independence of government scientists.

His disregard for science and public health measures also led to over 200,000 US-Americans dying due to Covid-19. Many of whom could have saved, if the president had either issued mandatory mask wearing in public places or by declaring it a patriotic duty to wear masks - perhaps both. In times like these, it is better to let scientists and public health experts handle it. This should never have become a political issue in the US.

Then there's his admiration for authoritarian leaders like Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin and Kim Jung-Un II. It's one thing to have good relationships with other leaders, but praising them or otherwise showing admiration for them as a leader of a country which is supposed to represent the "free world", simply signals to these authoritarian leaders that the western democracies are weak and fragile. Moreover, Trump also fired countless government officials - or made them resign - when they disagreed too often with him (John Bolton shouldn't have been an advisor in the first place, though, but this "special" individual deserves his own little article). The mismanagement of the BLM-protests left the country also more divided, especially since Trump is blind in the right eye.

While he admired "strong" leaders, he alienated old allies in Europe and reduced the softpower of the US by retreating from agreements like the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal. The latter one led to escalation over escalation and worsened the relations between the US and Iran. In a real bad scenario, the bad relationship may also continue under a different administration.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture now.

Joe Biden, as I said earlier, is only the ticket back to 2008-2016. That's certainly a change from the wild rollercoaster we had the previous four years under Trump, but everyone has to realize that this jo-jo effect in US politics cannot go on forever. Eventually, the constant back and forth would result in more frustration and political apathy. This, as more and more US-citizen realize, is a systematic problem and they have to solve it themselves. Outside help is always there for advice (e.g. Switzerland to reform democracy in the US).

There's not much I can say about him, since he only was Vice-President. Only that it is a slight improvement overall, but definitely not someone I back if I had a more left-wing choice.

If Biden wins (!), however, I'll watch his policies as closely as I did Trump's. Just because there's now a more polite administration, doesn't mean that they don't make mistakes or only try to cure symptoms instead of the illness. In fact, in case of a victory, the Biden-administration must be scrutinized thoroughly and constructively. Protests for change may have a greater potential to change the course of the new administration.

Since I have a job, I may review Biden's presidency - if he wins - each weekend. Then I have enough time to scrutinize and criticize, and writing an article of course.

### **Who Do I Expect to Win?**

I'm a pessimist, always have been. So the future looks dime to me, despite what the polls say. Voter suppression by the Republicans is one part, but also the legitimate possibility of the 10-87 chance from 538. We will see how it goes...

## **Addendum #1**

A Trump victory would most definitely result in an emboldened of the authoritarian right; and encourage politicians like Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil) and Viktor Orban (Hungary).

Countries like China, Russia and North Korea could interpret it as a signal of the weakness of western democracies, since Trump so openly attacks the election process, transparency, and calls press organizations which don't report positively about him all the time "fake news". A new wave of authoritarianism is going to follow, and only active participation and organization can effectively oppose and defeat it. If not done, then it will have disastrous consequences for our democracies.

(Released: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, 23:07 Uhr/11:07 pm)



## Connect, Combine and Grow



Democracies only survive through the combined effort of the people in their battle against the anti-democratic forces - on a national and international level.

However, that isn't enough. We also have to strengthen and improve our democracy by relentlessly advocating for more active involvement (direct democracy, reduction of bureaucracy), transparency and easier access to education (from books to universities).

You, the person who reads this entry, you've got the power to push for more democracy too. Be it through political exchange with existing parties, establishing new contacts, convincing others to engage more actively in politics, or else.  
The internet makes it possible!

### Connect

Speaking of establishing new contacts; it is of great importance to build up a democratic network which is easily accessible. Those who want to participate must be made aware that there's a contact point waiting for them. As someone who lives in a village far away from the big cities, and even the smaller towns, I know how frustrating it is to engage in politics. When there's no one who listens, then the enthusiasm quickly erodes.

**The internet opens up a possibility for a democratic revolution the world has never seen before!**

Connect through Discord, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, MySpace, WhatsApp, Internet Forums and slowly, but surely, cement a strong network.

Connect in the non-digital world by organizing meetings (during the pandemic you shouldn't forget to wear masks and adhere to social distancing rules, as well as other safety measurements regarding group sizes), discussion rounds, and else.

After the pandemic, it will be easier to do it (we may have to wait until late-2021 though) and then festivals could be organized too.

Perhaps, there's something I forgot that one can also do. That's it from my part on this point.

### **Combine and Grow**

Through combined knowledge, resources and talents the democratic movement is able to grow larger and larger. A healthy public discourse is ensured by being respectful and polite (it doesn't mean that heated arguments don't occur, but merely that it should always stay in a civilized framework), as well as admitting when one does not know enough about a topic or was wrong. It shouldn't be considered weak or shameful; we constantly learn, and making mistakes or being in the wrong is part of it.

Topics like climate change and international relations are complex, but we have to embrace the complexity in order to fully grasp it and argue reality-based. Experts who have studied a certain field are of great help to understand the world around us (e.g. climate scientists explaining how global warming affects us and what the main causes are; or mathematicians showing how statistics work, what is important to remember and the criteria for a good one). Questions should be asked! Let your curiosity reign free!

The larger the network grows, the better it is to remain open-minded and uphold the constant exchange between various group - whether they are politically different or simply have a different religion or ethnicity. Talking about ethnicity: cultural understanding is very important to better comprehend the position of the counterpart and avoid sandtraps.

Many, if not all, prejudices can be tackled this way and thus slowly wither away.

### **Conclusion Sentence**

At the time of writing this article I had barely success with in-real life connections and online connections. I do not know how it is going to develop - if at all.

And, who knows, maybe my WordPress website simply doesn't get out there and drowns in the flood of information and offers.

On the other hand, six to seven years ago I only had science in mind and never thought I would get politically active. Life is unpredictable.

(Released: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 23:17 Uhr/11:17 pm)



## Working Class of the USA, Mobilize!



The working class of the United States of America has been exploited for decades, and the current pandemic shows the cold truth crystal clear. Change is long overdue, and now more than ever the time is right to demand it. Temporary change is not the goal, it must be stamped in and leave a long-lasting imprint!

### Deliberately Neglected

As the Covid-19 pandemic has shown, the government of the United States cares little about its citizens. [Over 250,000](#) people have died to this point, but it won't stop there. Thousands of more innocent lives will be taken due to the incompetence of Donald Trump and his administration.

Moreover, a stimulus bill [may not pass](#) until next year in January, despite thousands - if not millions - of US-Americans [facing an eviction](#) due to losing their job and therefore receiving no income anymore. Not to mention that [30.7 million](#) are not covered by health insurance (up by 7.34% from 2015).

And while the working class of the US suffers from the 100-year pandemic and the unemployment hit 40 million, the billionaires got wealthier. That's not the first point, as the interesting article of [Business Insiders](#) points out:

*"This isn't the first time billionaires have seen gains while a large portion of Americans were feeling losses. When the housing bubble burst in 2007, home prices fell 21% and roughly 3.1 million homes were foreclosed on in the United States. The stock market plummeted by over 50%. And by the end of 2009, 8.8 million Americans had lost their jobs. And the effects lingered. From 2009 to 2012, the incomes of the bottom 99% grew by only 0.4%, but the income of the top 1% grew by a staggering 31.4% in the same time span. And it all ties back to two things."*

It doesn't end there, because even small businesses suffer, as the article elaborates on it:

*"Which brings us back to the moment when the coronavirus pandemic rocked the economy. In 2019, the Fed reported that four in 10 Americans didn't have enough cash in their bank accounts to cover a \$400 unexpected expense. And in the first few months of 2020, 40 million Americans found themselves unemployed due to COVID-19. Many small businesses had to close due to lockdowns and social distancing, while others were forced to try to operate with entirely remote staff."*

*The Small Business Administration made \$349 billion available to small businesses with the Paycheck Protection Program. But like in 2008, \$243 million of that was snapped up by large, publicly traded corporations, some of which were valued at over \$100 million. Even hedge funds submitted claims to try to tap into what they saw as free money."*

Then, there's the tax problem which is pointed out by Woods as well:

*"And it's not just Amazon. Taxes paid by billionaires have decreased 79% since 1980. And those are just the legal avenues that the wealthy take to avoid paying taxes. In 2017, researchers estimated that about 10% of the world's GDP was stashed in offshore tax havens. A study in 2012 found that as much as \$32 trillion was being held offshore by the world's wealthiest people."*

The decrease in taxes aligns with the election of Ronald Reagan and his neoliberal policies which crushed worker unions and contributed to the inequality we see today. Trump's tax cut is another contributor to the income and wealth inequality. His deregulation wave and anti-environment policies are designed to help the big industries. Here are 75, many of whom directly impact the people (e.g. polluted water and air which decreases life expectancy):



While Biden can repeal some of these, it is unlikely that the general course of the US-government will change. The Democrats may be better on environmental policies, but there's no real interest to go much further than during the Obama years (except for the progressive Democrats like AOC). That's unfortunate, because the article of Business Insiders says that there's a solution to the problem with the taxes:

*"So, after reviewing all this, what can be done to help level the playing field? A recent report by the Institute for Policy Studies lays out several action items. It suggests forming a pandemic profiteering oversight committee that would go beyond the oversight of federal stimulus money. It also supports the Corporate Transparency Act, which would create stronger regulations to prevent US billionaires from using shell corporations to hide their income. After the House passed the bill in 2019, it was introduced in the Senate but has not been brought to a vote.*

*Other suggestions include an emergency 10% millionaire income surtax, a stimulus package aimed at funding charities, instituting a wealth tax, and reducing the amount allowed by the gift and estate tax. Last, and perhaps most importantly, the report underscores the need to shut down the global hidden-wealth economy. The US alone is estimated to lose nearly \$200 billion in tax revenues to offshore havens each year. That's roughly three times the amount of all the money budgeted for the Department of Education in 2021.*

*Changes like the ideas above are global in scale and require political cooperation to become reality. If the relationship between wealth and income inequality are ever going to change, it's going to require all of us."*

Climate change, a scientifically undisputed that it occurs due to the greenhouse gas emissions of humanity, is also going to affect humanity - and it will hit those the hardest who have less resources (both in the US and worldwide).

The [executive summary](#) of the Climate Science Special Report of 2017 states:

*"This assessment concludes, based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that **human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century**. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence."*

Therefore, tackling the environmental crisis also means combatting poverty and drastically reduce income and wealth inequality. Naturally, the government needs to step in to fund public transport, [healthcare](#) (which would actually save money for the US) and implement a progressive tax policy. International cooperation is required to get the tax havens under control and ensure that the top 1% doesn't flee from their social responsibility. After all, they didn't get rich by sitting on the couch and doing nothing. They employ people who need a way of transport to get to their job; they need shelter, food and water to survive; infrastructure - both digital and physical - is necessary to communicate and get from A to B without problems; the working people also need healthcare coverage without having to fear bankruptcy or medical debt (= less stress and better access to healthcare also improves chances to survive more severe illnesses, or in this case also a deadly virus like SARS-CoV-2); and so on and so on.

Investing in a green economy would not only ensure a smooth transitioning to cleaner energies and a less polluted planet for future generations, but it could also add [\\$26 trillion](#) to the world economy by 2030. Of course, that means a program for workers to go from one economic branch to another must exist to make sure that no one is being left behind.

For that to happen, the working class must realize that they have the power to change the system. While the participation in elections is of great importance, likewise is the activity in political organizations, further educating oneself on various topics, or doing community work. There are various ways to be active in a democracy, and it is good to induce change whether it is on a local level (a village, town or city), on state-level or nation-wide.

**No one should be neglected!**  
**Neoliberalism must end!**

(Released: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020, 01:39 Uhr/01:39 am)

## Science News

Effective approaches to reduce Covid-19 spreading and the consequences of decades of global nutrition transition which impacts both humanity as a whole and our planet in today's science news.

### **Article 1: Researchers examine which approaches are most effective at reducing COVID-19 spread**

Before you read, here's an important aspect mentioned at the end of the article:

*"The novel coronavirus is relatively new but the science continues to evolve and increase our knowledge of how to effectively treat and prevent this highly contagious virus. There is still much that we do not know and many areas requiring further study."*

**Date:** 22/11/2020

**SD-Date:** 20/11/2020

**Source:** Simon Fraser University

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Researchers have found that physical distancing is universally effective at reducing the spread of COVID-19, while social bubbles and masks are more situation-dependent. The researchers developed a model to test the effectiveness of measures such as physical distancing, masks or social bubbles when used in various settings."*

### **Method of Research**

The professors Paul Tupper and Caroline Colijin from the Simon Fraser University looked at key factors like transmission intensity, duration of exposure, the proximity of individuals and degree of mixing -- then they examined what methods are most effective at preventing transmission in each circumstance.

The data incorporated by the researchers were from reports of outbreaks at a range of events, such as parties, meals, nightclubs, public transport and restaurants.

The events were categorized into 'saturating' (high transmission probability) or 'linear' (low transmission probability).

### **Findings**

- Physical distancing was effective in reducing Covid-19 transmissions in all settings
- The effectiveness of social bubbles depended on whether the chances of transmission were high or low
- [strict] Social bubbles were able to reduce the spreading of Covid-19 in setting where there is mixing and the probability of transmission is high, such as crowded indoor places, bars and night clubs, high schools,
- Social bubbles were less effective in low transmission settings or where there is mixing such as engaging in outdoor activities, working in spaced offices or travelling on public transportation wearing masks
- Masks and other physical barriers may be less effective in saturating, high transmission settings (like parties, choirs, restaurant kitchens, crowded offices, nightclub and bars); if they halve the transmission rate, it may have not much of an impact on the transmission probability (and thus on the number of infections)

**Source:** <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201120150726.htm>

## Article 2: Starved, stuffed and squandered: Consequences of decades of global nutrition transition

**Date:** 22/11/2020

**SD-Date:** 18/11/2020

**Source:** Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

**ScienceDaily Summary:** *"Just a handful of rice and beans - a part of our world is starved. Hawaiian Pizza and ice-cream - another part of our world is stuffed, throwing away food every day. This gap is likely to worsen, while food waste will increase and pressure on the environment will go up, a new study shows."*

### Method of Research

*"Researchers from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) assessed the consequences if the current nutrition transition, from scarce starch-based diets towards processed foods and animal products, continues -- the calculations combine, for the first time, estimates for under- and overweight, food composition and waste."*

An open-source model was used that forecasts how much of the food demand can be attributed to factors like population growth, ageing, increasing height, growing body mass index, declining physical activity and increasing food waste. The study provides a consistent, long-term view on a continued global nutrition transition from 1965 to 2100.

### Findings

- By 2050, more than 4 billion people could be overweight and 1.5 billion of them obese
- 500 million people would continue to be underweight
- That amounts to 45% of the world population where 16% of which is obese
- That's an increase by +16% and +7% respectively, compared to 2010
- An increased demand of animal proteins means that there will be less space for plant-based food, and the environmental impact of the agricultural system "will spiral out of control"
- If current trends continue, then the global food demand will increase by 50% between 2010 and 2050
- The food system is responsible for 1/3rd of global greenhouse gas emissions, an increase in animal protein demand requires more animals and more space (trees that store Co2 are cut down and release it to the additional Co2 emissions of the animals)

### Problems

The Co-author Prajal Pradhan from PIK explained in the article:

*"There is enough food in the world -- the problem is that the poorest people on our planet have simply not the income to purchase it. And in rich countries, people don't feel the economic and environmental consequences of wasting food."*

Moreover, a distribution of food alone doesn't solve the problem, because both the rich and the poor eat poorly. This is due to a lack of knowledge about a healthy way of life and nutrition.



## Solutions

Sabine Gabrysch, also a Co-author of the study and head of the PIK's Research Department on Climate Resilience, said that the study *"could provide valuable orientation about the potential development pathway of different countries and regions. It could also support much-needed proactive policies for a qualitative transition towards sustainable and healthy diets"*.

In order to promote healthy eating, she advises to pass binding regulations for unhealthy snacks which limit their marketing while promoting sustainable and healthy meals in schools, hospitals and canteens.

Furthermore, there should be a stronger focus on nutrition education - from early education in kindergarten to counseling by medical doctors and nurses.

I conclude the article with the last sentence of Ms Gabrysch: *"What we eat is of vital importance -- both for our own health and that of our planet."*

## Source

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201118080754.htm>

# A Sustainable System

Opinion: What I view as important for a sustainable system



source: annapictures via Pixabay

## Introduction

The modern world faces many issues, such as climate change, wealth and income inequality, poverty, hunger and wars. There are solutions to these problems, and I'm certain that a vast majority of those who read this already know about a public figure that is known for either proposing solutions or pointing out the problems we face.

In this article, I will give an insight into my mindset and what I consider to be important for a sustainable system. As I've said before in other entries, English isn't my native language, so I apologize in advance for any mistakes I make.

## Embracing the Complexity of the Issues We Face to Solve the Problems



source: geralt via Pixabay

One of the most important things is to address the complexity of the issues we face. There aren't simple answers to the problems I mentioned in the introduction, and that means that we have to view the problems from various perspectives (e.g. climate change from the scientific, economic and societal position). In the example I mentioned in the brackets, it is of utmost importance to listen to the scientific evidence and scientists who worked and studied in their respective field for decades. Then, the knowledge we've gained must be applied to the economy (*i.e. what can be done right now? What is feasible? Where does the government need to invest or incentivize? How do the tasks of private companies change?; How do we protect the workers? How is the re-education of workers from a dying industry (e.g. oil) managed? What needs to be done to address and reduce the psychological problems that unemployment brings with it?) and society (How does the individual benefit from an environmentally friendly economy? What price would the average citizen pay if nothing is done (e.g. air and water pollution)? How can the wealth be distributed to eliminate poverty and thus make an environmentally friendly living style possible? etc.)*

As you can see, there are a lot questions that need to be answered - some of which may already have answers which didn't reach the public yet. The task of the politicians and parties is to implement long-term solutions and find a common ground to avoid major changes on the way to a sustainable system. Moreover, the public should be included in these discussions and regional differences taken into consideration. Sure, it will take longer than just pushing policies through, but this procedure ensures that no one is being neglected and mistakes largely being avoided. After all, we should plan ahead for seven generations at the very least and improve the life of the future citizens of our country (and around the world).

### Continuity in Policy



source: FelixMittermeier via Pixabay

Of course, a good plan is of no use if the next government scraps it and implements something entirely different, that's why continuity like clockwork is extremely important.

As I have mentioned in the section before, the politicians and parties need to meet on a common ground - a strategy they all can follow along with. They may have slightly different priorities, but all of them internalized the same goal: sustainability.

Some may argue now that the parties would ultimately melt together and there would exist hardly any differences, but that's not the case at all. In fact, the policies set must be regularly examined to ensure that they are still up-to-date and working as they were intended too. It's also entirely possible that the approach of one party (e.g. a more liberal-minded) is good at one point in time, while the approach of the opposing party (e.g. more centralized) is useful at other times. There are still going to be conservatives, liberals, progressives, capitalists, socialists, etc. - a change of the mode of production, how we consume goods, and else won't have a major impact on these ideologies (exception is neoliberalism which is an unsustainable system, as we were able to see for 40 years).

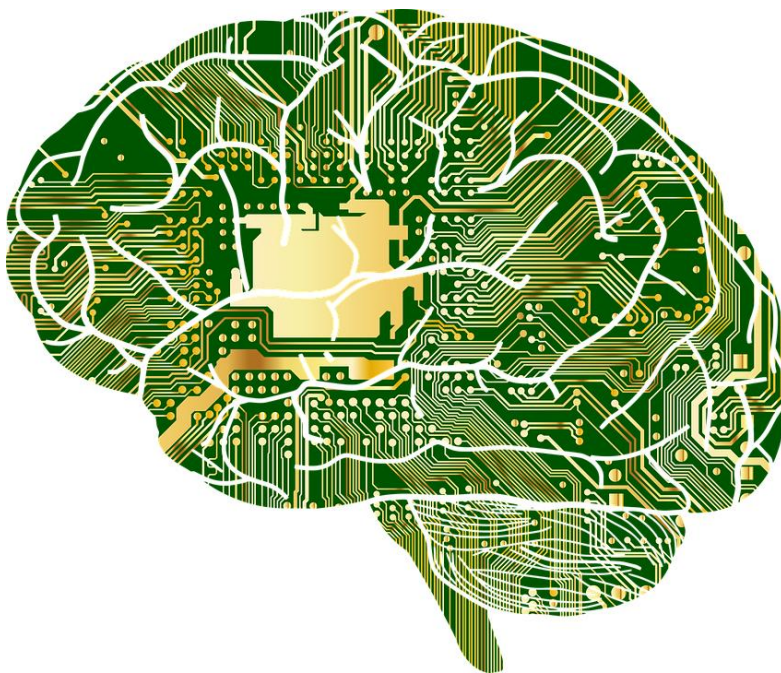
During the process of finding solutions for the various problems we face, the different politically-minded groups actively engage in constructive discussions. Perhaps, it may even increase mutual understanding and why some want to live more traditional lives and others modern lives. In the liberal democracies of today, both should be possible and acceptable.

Of course, it always needs to occur on a voluntary basis.

Take the example in Germany: in the post-ww2 era, Chancellor Willy Brandt (SPD, social democrats) started "Die neue Ostpolitik" ("New East politics") to normalize the relations between the Federal Republic of Germany (West-Germany) and Eastern Europe. The conservative government of the CDU continued these policies instead of making a U-turn. This continuity would later make it easier for a unification of East and West Germany.

In short: the political willingness for a sustainable system must exist on both sides.

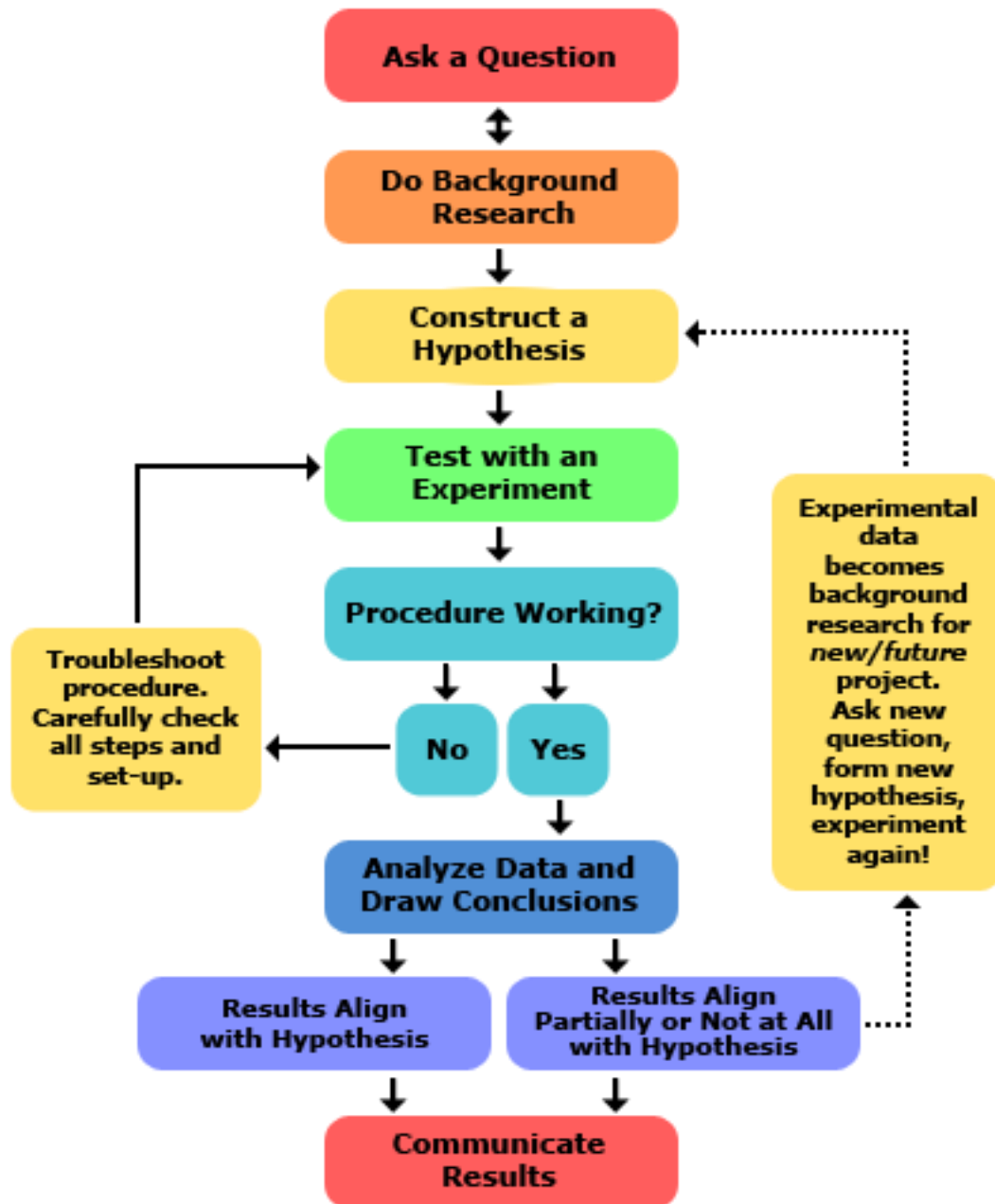
## **The Role of Science and Involvement of Society**



source: GDJ via Pixabay

In a previous article, I wrote about the importance of science and that it is necessary to understand its fundamentals. The scientific method is self-correcting and, if new data comes in that contradicts old information, self-updating. For that to work, the scientists and the scientific institutions should not be politicized under any circumstances. And the more people know about the procedure, the less ignorance is going to exist.

## Scientific Method



The Scientific Method

That requires the press to not just communicate results and shift the spotlight also on the research. Politicians and the economic players need to understand it as well to make the right decisions, and - as I said before - to keep in mind **to not politicize science**.

Only through the scientification of the economy, society and politics we will be able to overcome many of the ills we see nowadays (e.g. creationism and anti-vaxxers).

Scientific articles should be made publicly available, albeit in a compact and comprehensible manner. A more active engagement of and with the scientific community also reduces misconceptions and prejudices. Something that is hopefully also going to happen when the various parts of society engage more with one another - from immigrants to religious groups.

Furthermore, society needs to appreciate "low-skilled" jobs as well and understand that jobs like garbage collectors and health workers are essential to a civilized world. That's why a network of exchange and information needs to be created to make not just political discussions easier, but also the internal-societal exchange between the various groups our nation is made up of.

As you can see, it is going to be a mammoth task for all nations to change the system we currently live in, but it will be worth it. As long as it is done in a controlled and coordinated manner, with all aspects and views considered, there are going to be only minor problems in our way to a sustainable system.

### **Summary**

1. We need to embrace the complexity of the issues we face to find adequate answers
2. A continuity in policies is required to keep the course, that means one party mustn't nullify the common ground strategy that was set up by the others
3. The scientific method and the fundamentals of science must be spread to reduce ignorance and increase the appreciation - our modern world is built upon science, therefore it is a necessity to do it
4. There needs to be a network for not just political exchange and reliable information, but also exchange between the various groups (e.g. Christians and Muslims)
5. All of it needs to be strictly controlled and coordinated, and everyone needs to be involved for the best possible outcome

### **Last Sentence**

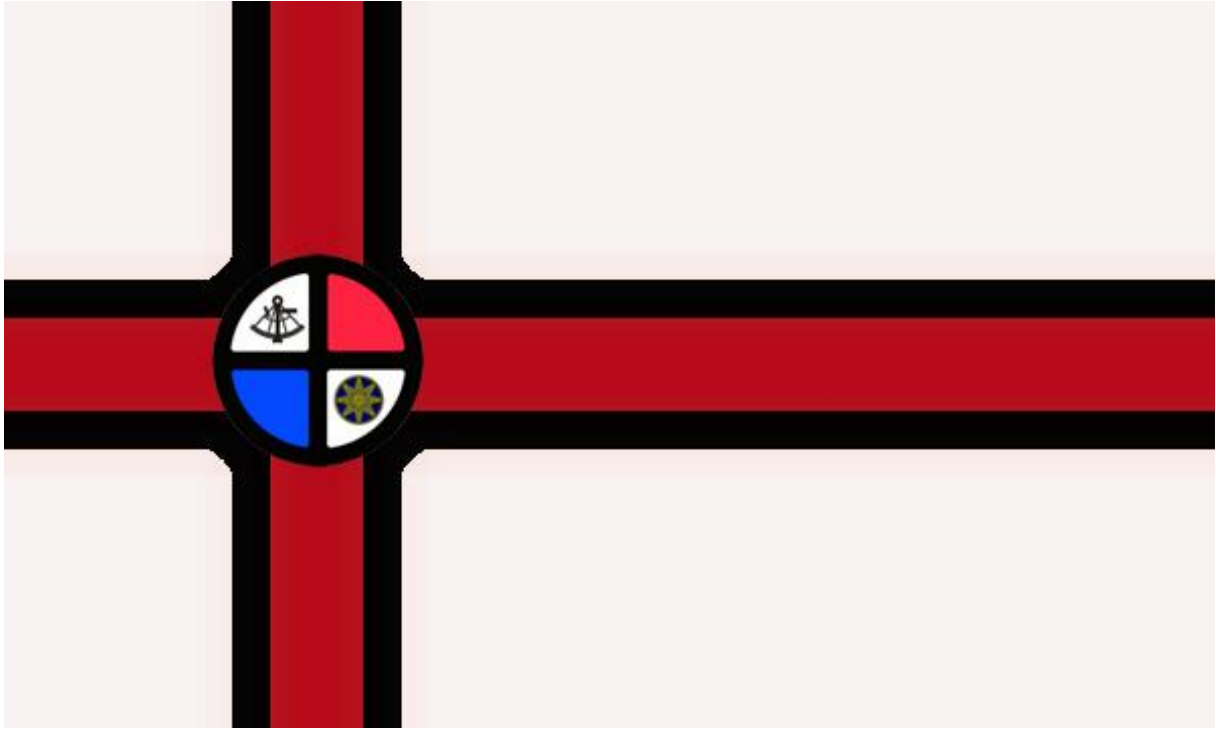
It is also important to view health measures, such as vaccination, as a public good rather than a personal choice (after all: it affects a lot of people if one isn't vaccinated).

(Released: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 15:55 Uhr/03:55 pm)



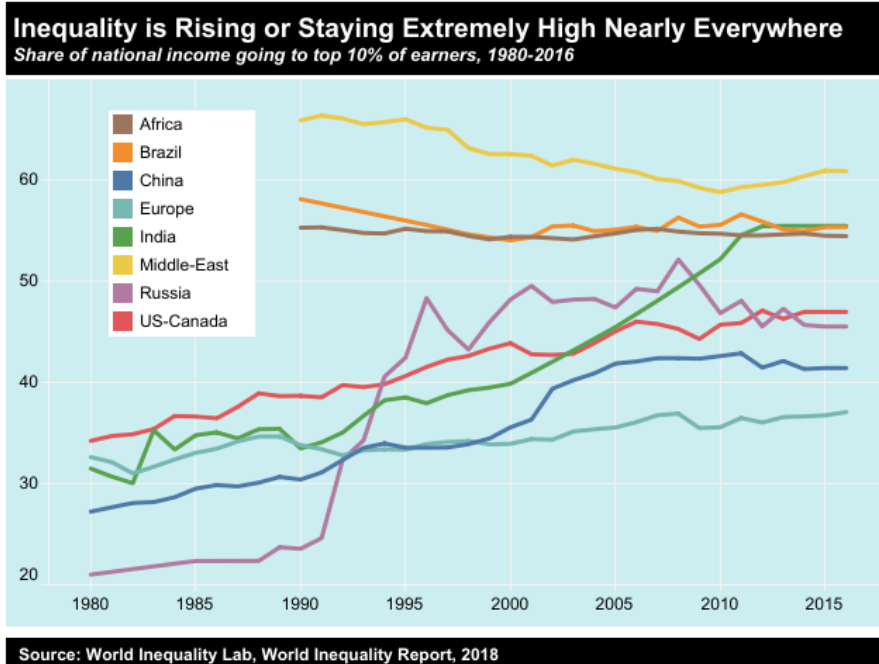
## The Political Struggle of Holistic-Futurism

Neoliberalism has failed and the order of the post-world war 2 era is now falling apart in its entirety; a new era has begun and we are able to shape it. (In order to understand the title and philosophy behind it, it is helpful to read the article I wrote about the political struggle).



Battle Flag with all symbols inside of the logo

As 2020 nears its end, we look back at 40 years of neoclassical aka neoliberal economic policies which led to [more income and wealth inequality](#), environmental [pollution](#), erosion of western democracies through lobbying, and continuous exploitation of third world countries.



*"Since 1980, the [World Inequality Report data](#) has shown that the share of national income going to the richest 1 percent has increased rapidly in North America (defined here as the United States and Canada), China, India, and Russia and more moderately in Europe. World Inequality Lab researchers note that this period coincides with the rollback in these countries and regions of various post-World War II policies aimed at narrowing economic divides. By contrast, they point out, countries and regions that did not experience a post-war egalitarian regime, such as the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Brazil, have had relatively stable, but extremely high levels of inequality."*

From the LiveScience article:

*"Air pollution kills more than 2 million (2,000,000) people each year, according to a study published in the journal of Environmental Research Letters."*

The ongoing change of the climate is also the result of the government interfering less and less by reducing regulations or prevent regulations from passing (prime example: the USA).

Lobbyism plays a big role as well, since those with greater wealth (the top 1% and multinational companies) are able to get more lobbyists. In return for their expertise they demand that any laws affecting them are biased towards them, naturally it destroys the core principle of democracy: representatives are elected to implement policies that the people want. International trade agreements like TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement), TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) and CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) were made by and are for the large corporations. Despite the importance and impact it will have on the people, they rarely or get no say at all in the matter. Due to the onesidedness there's little consideration for the working class in a country, or the existing regulations and legal framework (e.g. arbitral courts). However, some countries don't even have a choice (like in Africa) and economic powerhouses like the USA, the EU and China are exploiting the weakness (-> resource exploitation and little gain for the African nation).

The current economic and health crisis, which was caused by SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19), is also evidence for the fragile system we are living in. Businesses had to close and the smaller and middle-sized fear to this day for their existence, many people lose their jobs (although there's a difference depending on the country; the working people in the US, for instance, only received one stimulus check and are not protected by a strong social security net like in Europe) and the wealth of the middle and lower classes decreases. Meanwhile, the billionaires increased their wealth (In the US by [\\$637,000,000,000 \(billion\)](#)). This is not the first time either that the very wealthy gained while the vast majority made losses and/or suffered otherwise, as the Business Insider article points out that I linked above.

Climate change, if not combatted, will also [hurt the poor the most](#):

*"Heart and lung disease, heat stroke and bacterial infections are just a few of the health consequences associated with climate change. Low-income populations "typically have less access to information, resources, institutions, and other factors to prepare for and avoid the health risks of climate change," the report says, leaving them especially vulnerable. Lack of health insurance among the poor will also intensify the risks of illnesses caused by climate change."*

While the article focuses on the poor in the US, the findings apply to people living in poverty worldwide. In general, they have less resources (especially money) and knowledge. Only by lifting them from poverty and ensuring that they have the same access to quality education, good infrastructure and healthcare, technology, etc. the global community will be able to fight against the [man-made](#) environmental changes.

The economic system, as it exists now, is incapable of solving the problems it has caused. It's the same with the "trickle-down economics" which, as we have seen at the beginning, [didn't work at all](#) and instead trickled the wealth from the bottom to the top.

It is long overdue for an alternative system, and that's what holistic-futurism is about. Not just in an economic sense is it different from the current system, but also in a political sense (e.g. throughout democratization and technocracy).

## **A New Economy**

Holistic-Futurism does not orientate itself on a strict economic system (i.e. capitalism or socialism), instead it assesses the situation by analyzing the problems. This can be done through regular exchange with the people and the communities living within a region/country, as well as experts on the subject (i.e. a stronger connection to the scientific community). Moreover, it is time that the economy adapts to the culture of the people - we do not need the destructive spiral of profit maximization, lower and lower prices, and higher performance of the workers (while their wages stay stagnant or barely increase).

As explained above, the focus on economic growth incentivized by the neoliberal system led to the problems we see today. And, before anyone asks, it doesn't mean that economic growth is going to be ignored entirely. Merely the main focus shifts to the well-being of the people and the environment. Our world was perfectly capable of thriving before the 1980s, this time we have the chance to improve the living conditions of all people across the globe. It may take a while, but it is worth it.

### **If neither capitalism nor socialism is endorsed, how exactly are the policies being shaped?**

As mentioned earlier, there needs to be more exchange with the people and experts to tackle various problems. Closer cooperation between the economic players, the working class and the government is also required. Some policies have shown that they already work very well (e.g. universal healthcare, universal education, a solid and well-funded infrastructure, economic freedoms to found a business), others have yet to be tried (e.g. universal basic income, 4-Day working week). In a way, the scientific method could be used to find out what works and what doesn't work.

Psychologists, for example, can also make their voice be heard through a science council and point out what must be fixed to increase the mental well-being of the people (see also my article: Council of the People's Deputies).

**In short:** there needs to be more exchange between the scientific community, the various religious and ethnic communities that make up the people of a nation, the industry (+ the working class) and politicians.

By not focusing on a specific system, it is also possible to think more unorthodox while trying to find solutions. Sometimes, the government has to interfere more and other times the private sector needs more freedoms. Pragmatism is key.

### **Mass consumption is a major issue in western societies, what happens to that?**

For one, we need to raise environmental and social awareness to let the people know how their consumption impacts nature (e.g. plastic pollution of the oceans), people in other countries (e.g. child labour) and the mental damage it causes us (e.g. no satisfaction and the need to constantly consume; as well as the plastic pollution that returns on the plate by eating fish and other marine life that accidentally ate micro plastics). That way, the people realize that something must be done - it is going to improve their quality of life too, after all.

Secondly, politics mustn't focus on economic growth anymore, and private companies shouldn't just focus on profit maximization. Instead, the government and political parties must create incentives to live environmentally friendly (e.g. building cycle ways to increase the use of bicycles inside cities). Companies, on the other hand, must take human rights and the environment into consideration before making a decision. The price of the goods is going to increase, but so is the quality and the wages overall. One must keep in mind, while reading this, that I do not seek to change to just change one part of the system, but replace the system entirely. Anyway, more transparency in politics and democratization of the working place in the private sector ensure that both are held accountable by the people. If the government and private companies work together to create a new and environmentally friendly way of transport (or else), smaller businesses should also be able to gain from it (ultimately, they paid partially for it through taxes). Increasing the strength of worker unions is also part of the democratization and transparency process.

Thirdly, the "throw-away-society" must transform into a "repair-and-keep-society". I mentioned in the second point, but here I'm going to elaborate on it.

As you may know, our modern societies suffer from the cheap and short-lasting goods which cause a lot of trash - as well as the overuse of plastic. Both for the environment and humanity, the impacts are disastrous: wildlife accidentally eats microplastics or absorbs it by drinking, and then it is returned to us when we eat fish or other animals. Electronic devices don't last that much longer as well, or some of us tend to buy something new instead of repairing it (either due to unwillingness or too high costs). There's no question about it that it has to change, and here all actors come into play: The government needs to regulate where it is necessary to ensure that electronic devices are not built short-lived, and in third world countries there must be investments made into garbage disposal infrastructure and recycling in general.

Companies, on the other hand, need to make their devices easily repairable and reduce the cost of repairing it (e.g. no unnecessary tiny screws which need to be opened with a special tool).

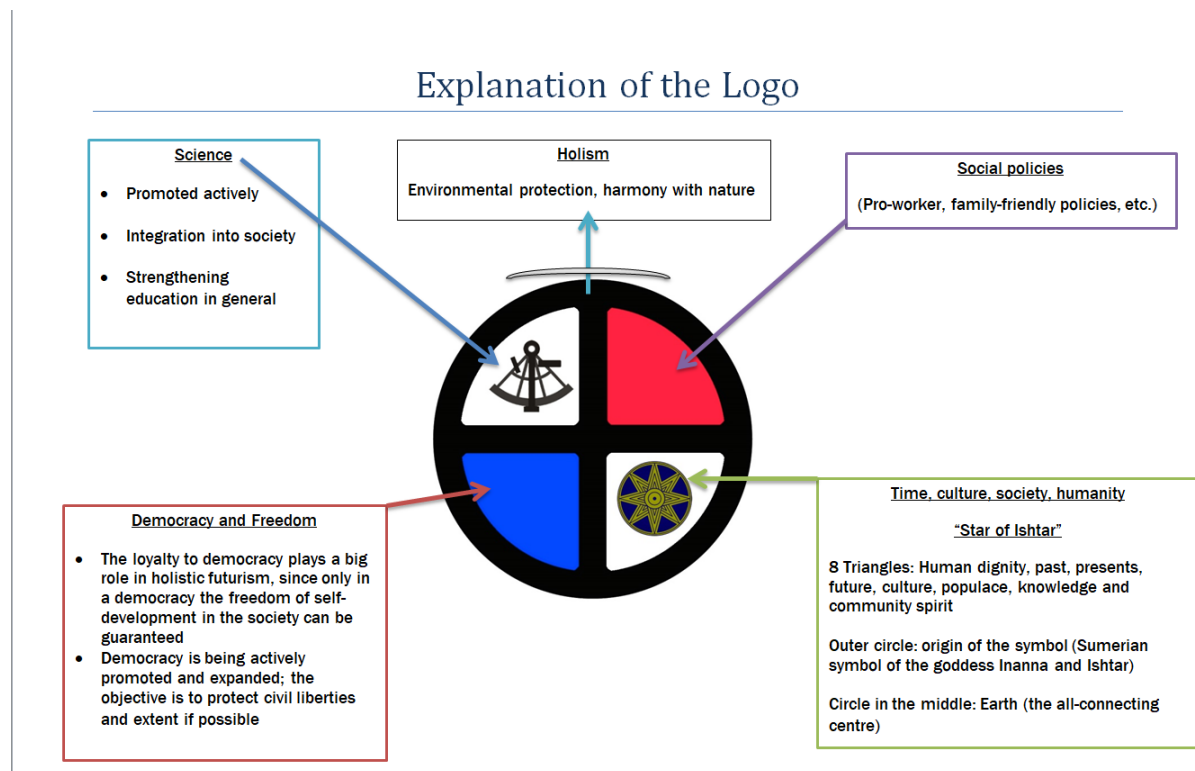
We, the people, also need to change our mentality. Whenever possible, we have to think about a way to fix it rather than throw it away and use something different. At the moment, it is limited depending on the goods we use (I, for one, use a Fairphone 3 and thus have it easier to repair; but using older mobile phones is also an excellent way of reducing waste, and in some countries there's even a service where you can send your old mobile phone to which is then recycled, and the money is used for a good cause).

Our food consumption also needs to change, and some of you may already have made a change. This issue is also a complex one, because poorer families and individuals don't have as much time and money as those living in a wealthier middle class, for example.

Any program and/or policy must therefore also help the poor and ensure that everyone is given the same access to high quality food and guidance to a balanced diet.

Due to the complexity of the issue, I cannot say that much about it, but I hope that my answer makes sense to you given the circumstances.

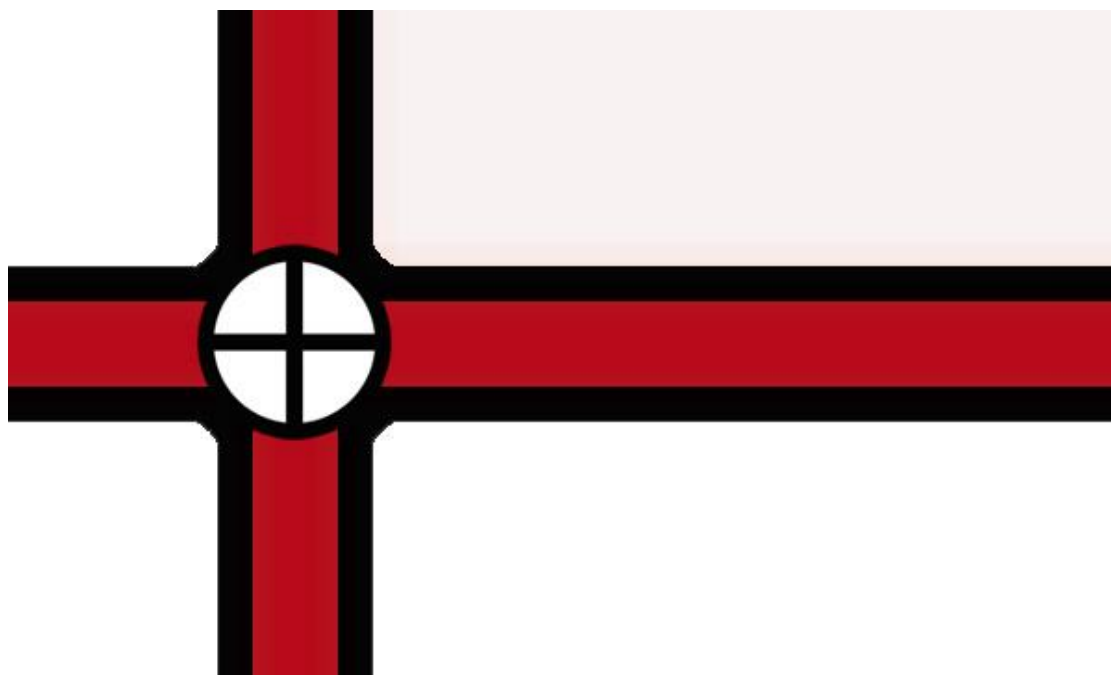
## What are the core values of Holistic-Futurism?



Other values are:

- **Pragmatism**: dealing with a problem in a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas or rules (Cambridge Dictionary)
- **Technocracy**: importance of scientific and technical knowledge in governing positions (i.e. especially in ministries)

## The Battle Flag



The Battle Flag of Holistic-Futurism

The battle flag represents with the white colour the mercilessness of the winter which we also let the anti-democratic forces experience on a political level (e.g. neo-Nazis), religious level (i.e. religious fundamentalists) and economic level (e.g. lobbyists trying to undermine the people's vote by pushing for their views); the red colour symbolizes the blood that was spilled for our democracies to form and the ongoing battle in other countries and places (e.g. HongKong, Thailand, Belarus) for democratic values; the black colour signals the seriousness and determination of the cause; finally, the simplified version of the holistic-futuristic logo represents the ideology that is being fought for.

While we were likely won't need to go on a real battlefield to fight for these ideas, at least in the western democracies, there's still the political struggle consisting of making one visible through speeches, events, articles, and else. First and foremost, we need to make ourselves present in the real world and not just the internet (preferably not on Anti-Corona protests, which are in itself filled with anti-science attitudes (-> not wearing masks and no social distancing) and where political enemies (such as fascists) also participate in).

If you want to, then you can also add the flag of your country in the battle flag to signal that you are fighting for your nation:



The Battle Flag with the German Flag (example)

### Ending Sentence

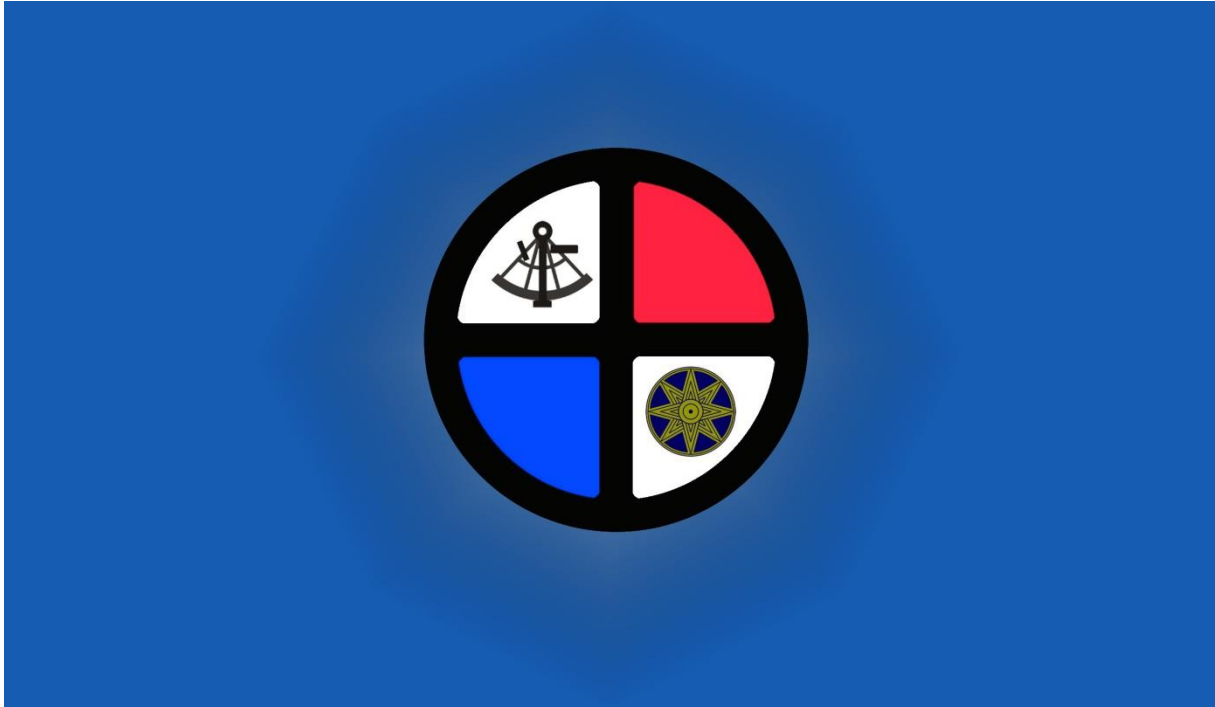
If you've got any questions, then you can visit my Twitter (@EviOmega), comment on this article below, or ask me questions per E-Mail address ([alphamasterevi@gmail.com](mailto:alphamasterevi@gmail.com)).

(Released: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020, 19:23 Uhr/07:23 pm)



# Compact Holistic-Futurism

The main ideas of holistic-futurism summarized  
A translation from the German version



The Flag without ornaments

## The 5 Fundaments of Holistic-Futurism

- **Pro-Science:** Without the progress in the sciences (from astronomy to zoology, and theoretical and practical mathematics), our modern world wouldn't be possible. Hence holistic-futurism dedicates itself to spread the ideals of science, the scientific method and a basic understanding of science.
- **Democratic:** Another key aspect of holistic-futurism is the defence and expansion of democracy, as well as the education on democratic rights and aktiv participation through already-existing institutions (e.g. bpb in Germany) and newly founded organisations (e.g. Guardians of Democracy). More participation and less bureaucracy revives democracies and makes them more vivid. Furthermore, there must be a trustworthy and serious information network - controlled by experts of their respective fields and overseen by independent organisations - which is accessible to all citizens; a strong and constructive exchange between the various groups within society is also a necessity.
- **Social Policies:** Freedom can only be thoroughly enjoyed and lived out, if there are no more financial and existential fears/concerns anymore. That's why it is the task of the government to provide a watertight and high-quality healthcare system. In addition, the opportunity for further education and re-education should be guaranteed by extending the education system; along with it has the extension of social security the highest priority. Everyone has a right to humane housing, food, clean water, electricity, education, healthcare, and else (in short: a life lived with dignity).
- **Humanity:** Every individual has the right to exist. Each culture and nation has a right to exist. There's no such thing as "inferior cultures", neither do "races" exist. Humans are one species - the homo sapiens. Cultural differences can be overcome or mitigated through exchange (-> mutual understanding) - good cooperation is only possible by ensuring that there's

understanding. Moreover, the exchange between cultures is beneficial to all of us, because it widens our own horizon.

The Past, Present and Future play important roles: we learn from the past, we influence the presence, we build the future.

- **Holism:** Holism is a nature ethics which gives ecosystems and their inhabitants the right to exist. These ecosystems must be protected, or given the opportunity to recover from human influences. The current out of control exploitation must be rejected! Animal suffering must be prevented; therefore factory farming must be discontinued! If the nature suffers, then humans suffer as well (and vice versa). It is long overdue to adjust the economy to be environmentally friendly and align with the culture of a people's nation - not abstract economic theories (such as neoliberalism).

## Other Guiding Ideas

- **Pragmatism:** Policies must be realistic and feasible. However, that doesn't mean that the fundamental ideas - as the 5 fundamentals lay out - are shoved aside; they are being merely implemented in a thoughtout and practical manner to achieve the desirable goal. Compromises for political goals are normal and acceptable, as a rule. They are necessary and required to satisfy all voices to some extent, that's what a democracy is about. Longterm objectives (e.g. 100% renewable/zero-emission energy sources) shan't give away to that, though.
- **Technocracy:** The technocratic aspect will also be of great importance, because expert knowledge is needed in the ministries to make realistic and efficient policies. Consequently, a ministry is only occupied by people who either have theoretical experience (e.g. studied the subject), practiced it (e.g. had a job in the sector), or got both. The economic players and politics mustn't twine with each other (-> conflict of interests)! Moreover, the technocrat is still required to regularly stay in contact with the people of the sector (e.g. the Minister of Defence regularly visits the army and talks to them) and the people (see: the Council of the People's Deputies, the article I wrote).

## Fundament and the guiding Ideology

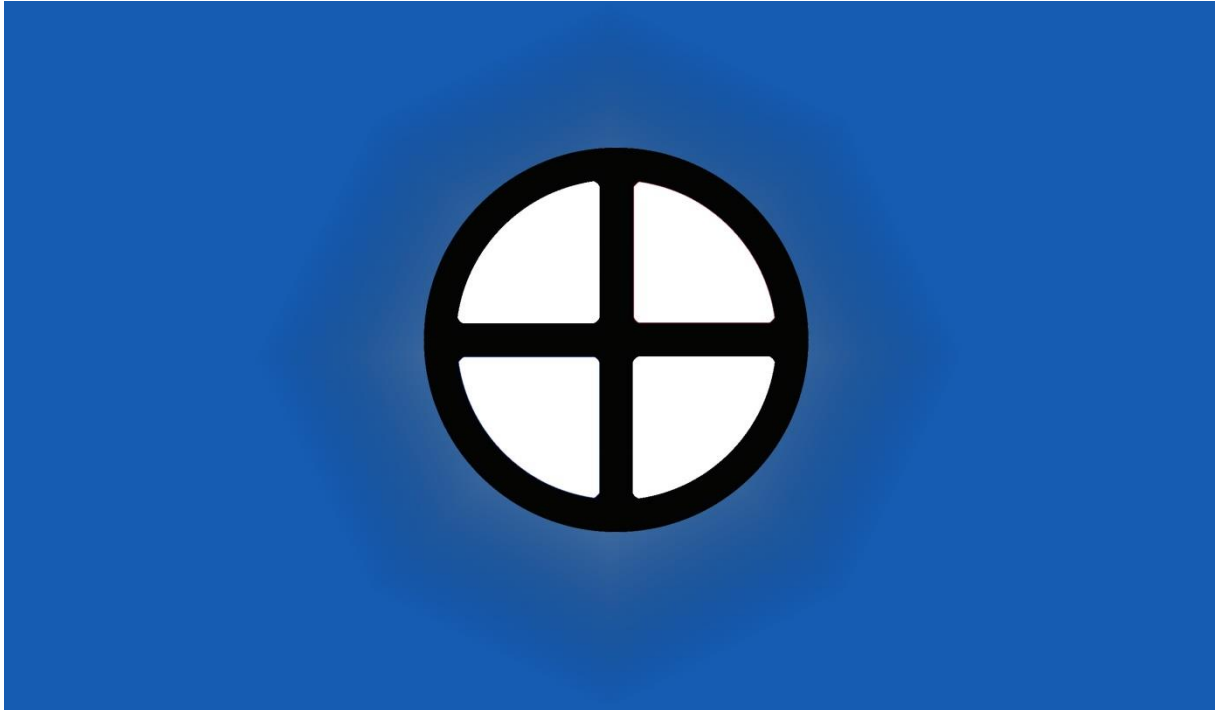
As you may have noticed, this ideology is mainly economically on the left (due to strongly emphasizing social policies). That's also considered to be important, since everyone should be free to live conservatively or liberally. Holistic-Futurism views itself as a fundament of a future for all people, one that opposes inhumane and anti-democratic enemies and knows how to defend itself.

In a way it is like a frame of a painting: it shows the limits and prevents the painting from falling down. The strong emphasizes on the cultures of humanity represent the rich ornaments of frames from the Baroque era, the picture is going to be painted by the people.

In other words: the frame exists now, the only thing missing are the artists who paint the picture of the future. These artists, at least I hope so, are the readers of this article.

**Swing your brushes, for only you are those who can change the world!**

And do not forget: The journey is its own reward.



Simplified Flag of Holistic Futurism

(Released: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 00:50 Uhr/12:50 am)

## Taxation in a Holistic-Futuristic Economy

Due to the complexity of the actual issue, I'll only be able to talk on a surface level which is why this entry is going to be quite short



I made this picture on photoshop, because why not

### Introduction

Taxation is an issue which is essential to any political system; therefore it comes to no surprise that I have to talk about it as well. It won't be much, as I've said in the short description in the title, but I love to talk about it and think that a little insight is helpful.

Without any further ado, I shall begin now.

### What You Can Expect

As you know from the manuscript I released about my ideology, social policies and environmentalism play a key role. The first one means that there needs to be a strong social security net, high-quality healthcare accessible to everyone (universal healthcare) and - in Europe - a healthline that strengthens and benefits all participants, and else.

Environmentalism is not just about regulations and prohibition of certain ecologically damaging materials either; for instance, the government needs to invest in green technology and fusion/nuclear energy. Moreover, the infrastructure for electric and/or hydrogen cars must be built as well, thus old streets need to be still maintained and repaired, but new service stations have to be built. Not to mention that public research and scientific institutions should also receive greater support.

Depending on the size of your country, the taxation may be as high as in Scandinavian nations. There's a lot to pay, but in return you get services like education and healthcare at excellent quality and you do not have to worry about being stuck with medical debt or not being able to get the job

you want (e.g. higher education accessible to everyone). Furthermore, the nursing homes need to be stronger funded to both support the elderly who have worked all their life and the caregivers who ensure that they are being treated well. Those without a job shouldn't have to suffer the consequences (e.g. social isolation due to less money available) and helped through unemployment insurance as well as agencies and institution which show the individual a way to get a new job (i.e. re-education programs to learn a new job) or learn new skills to get an old job back that was lost due to the changing requirements (e.g. automation).

In order to make that all possible, a [wealth tax](#) needs to be introduced:

- Wealth tax is a tax levied on the value of held assets
- A wealth tax is applicable to a variety of asset types including cash, bank deposits, shares, fixed assets, personal cars, assessed value of real property, pension plans, money funds, owner-occupied housing, and trusts
- France, Portugal, and Spain all have wealth taxes

All of these assets can be taxed differently and depending on the circumstances, because as the article points out: *"A farmer who earns little but whose land is highly valued, for example, may have trouble coming up with the money to pay a wealth tax."*

Hence it is important to have an honest and constructive discussion about it. The distribution of wealth benefits society overall and if the capital keeps flowing, then there's no chance of wealth accumulation by a few. And sure, some may say that it will discourage any accumulation of wealth and could stop market growth, and to them I say:

A) The current system, which centers around profit maximization, creates the incentive of accumulating as much wealth as possible in the first place and leads to the various inequality issues we see today. Instead of focusing on endless economic growth (which isn't possible in a world with finite resources) and profit maximization (which also incentivizes companies to pay their workers less and use more than questionable sources for their materials), a sustainable system and the well-being of the people should play the biggest role. It also won't stop economic growth entirely - it may be slowed down, but that is to be expected when the priorities shift - since the incentive to gather a bit more wealth than others to buy certain goods will still exist. It is just not going to exist in the excessive way it currently is.

B) Market growth is still going to occur, but just at a lower pace. And I don't see what's wrong with it: do you prefer a slow and stable market growth over decades, or a quick market growth which - in case of a Great Depression (2007-2009 and 1929) - destroys the wealth of millions of people? This step also needs to be done to allow third world countries to flourish, at the moment they are mostly being used as places for cheap labour and resource warehouses for the wealthier countries.

It doesn't stop there, of course. If tax loopholes are being closed and international treaties and organizations made to combat tax evasion, then some taxes will surely be able to be reduced or some entirely cut - as I stated previously, though, I can't go into specifics here because the tax codes are quite large and I'm only able to say what may happen. Experts are needed here, that's for sure.

## Tax Idea: Flexible Taxes

Flexible Taxes			
Income Bracket		Tax	
Stable Economy	Crisis	Stable Economy	Crisis
\$0 - \$ 2,000	-	Tax Free	-
\$2,001 - \$18,450	+ \$369.00	10 %	8 %
\$18,451 - \$74,900	+ \$369.01 – \$1,498	15 %	13 %
\$74,901 - \$151,200	+ \$1,498.01 – \$3,024	25 %	23 %
\$151,201 - \$230,450	+ \$3,024.02 – \$4,609	28 %	25 %
\$230,451 - \$250,000	+ \$4,609.02 – \$5,000	33 %	30 %
\$250,001 - \$500,000	+ \$5,000.02 – \$10,000	37 %	34 %
\$500,001 - \$2,000,000	+ \$10,000.02 – \$40,000	43 %	40 %
\$2,000,001 - \$10,000,000	+ \$ 40,000.02 – \$200,000	48 %	45 %
\$10,000,001	+ \$200,000.02	52 %	49 %
\$20,000,000	+ \$400,000	55 %	52 %
Corporation Tax			
Stable Economy	Crisis	Stable Economy	Crisis
Local: ex: \$150,000 = \$25,500	Local: \$22,500	17%	15%
National: ex: \$500,000 = \$165,000	National: \$165,000	25%	22%
International: ex: \$8,000,000,000 = \$3,120,000,000	International: \$2,960,000,000	39%	37%

The tax plan is based on Bernie Sander's, except for the local-national-international companies which signals that distinctions will be made. Additionally: the -2% is also just an example, not an actual proposal.

No human-made system is completely free from a potential crisis, from severe to mild, therefore I worked on a tax plan which is able to react to the ever-changing world around us. As you can see, in this hypothetical scenario the income brackets are being taxed less while the crisis is still going on without the government having to pass extra legislation or laws for that to happen. If more money is available, then the people may spend more and thus prevent a larger crisis from happening (i.e. downwards spiral). Companies are going to have more money at hand as well, and while it will not magically return to investments, it may help the business in one way or another. The proposed wealth tax can also be subject to a very small change, but that is up to discussion as the others.

I'm not familiar with the taxation of businesses in other countries, but in Germany we differ between "Kleinst-, Klein-, Mittel- und Großunternehmen" ("smallest, small, middle-sized and large corporations") when it comes to taxation and other things. That makes sense, obviously, but just that you know what the simplified flexible tax plans wants to tell.



## Summary

- Much of the goals of holistic-futurism will require a tax increase on the wealthy and closing of loopholes on a national level and preventing tax evasion on an international level through treaties
- The taxes may be as high as in Scandinavian countries, but in return the citizens have universally access to education, healthcare, transportation, and much more
- A wealth tax is required to distribute the accumulated wealth and thus eliminate poverty, as well as funding the various programs
- Incentives are not being abolished: if one wants to buy more luxury goods, he/she will be able to do that by working more or found a new business
- Profit maximization and economic growth: the first is to be abolished, the latter not as important (sustainability and the well-being of the people need to be the focus of the body politics, economic growth isn't neglected and still overseen)
- The flexibility tax may be of some use and doesn't require the government to pass a change to the tax code as soon as there's a crisis

(Released: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 21:38 Uhr/ 09:38 pm)

## The alternative Stimulus Check for the USA

In this entry, I'll explain how I calculated the stimulus check and why I included the unemployment benefits as well. However, please note that it is a simplified version and that some modifications may have to be made to fully implement it.



### How it Started

As it is with some of my ideas, they begin to develop when I tweet about it. The same thing happened this time, and the reason for it was the recently passed stimulus check by Congress which included \$600 for the people (after 9 months of no stimulus check).

**Baroque\_Evi** @EviOmega · Dec 23

If I had the ability to pass a stimulus check, then I'd calculate following factors in (USA):

- 1) Average Rent (among them the highest, in this case: Hawaii with \$1,566)
- 2) Basic Necessities, i.e. food (highest with family of four, 6-11 y: \$1284.30)

That equals to \$2,850.30  
(1/2)

**Baroque\_Evi** @EviOmega · Dec 23

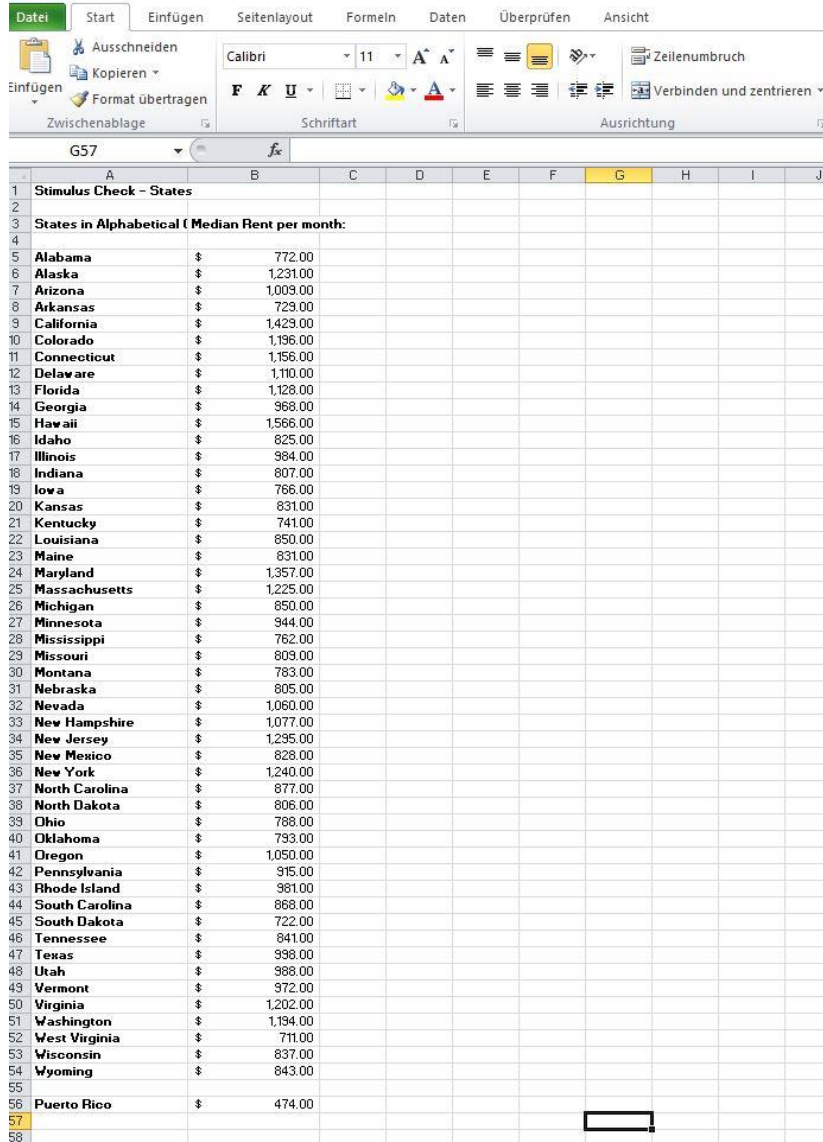
It should be funded by charging a one-time tax increase on those who benefited the most during the pandemic and still do (e.g. 10-40% or more if necessary).  
(2/2)

sources:  
Average Rent: [worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings...](https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/)  
Average Cost of Food per month:



The Average Cost of Food Per Month Might Surprise You!  
How much are you spending on food each month and how does it

When I looked up the [median rent in each state](#), I saw that \$600 isn't enough. West Virginia, the "cheapest" state regarding that, is \$111 above the sum the US-citizens received. That's why my first factor included in the state-by-state approach (*here I want to thank my Swedish friend for advising me for taking the more specific approach*) for the stimulus check was the median rent. No one should be evicted during this massive crisis, which is why the check I designed includes the median rent cost.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Stimulus Check - States									
2										
3	States in Alphabetical ( Median Rent per month:									
4										
5	Alabama	\$	772.00							
6	Alaska	\$	1,231.00							
7	Arizona	\$	1,009.00							
8	Arkansas	\$	729.00							
9	California	\$	1,429.00							
10	Colorado	\$	1,196.00							
11	Connecticut	\$	1,156.00							
12	Delaware	\$	1,110.00							
13	Florida	\$	1,128.00							
14	Georgia	\$	968.00							
15	Hawaii	\$	1,566.00							
16	Idaho	\$	825.00							
17	Illinois	\$	984.00							
18	Indiana	\$	807.00							
19	Iowa	\$	766.00							
20	Kansas	\$	831.00							
21	Kentucky	\$	741.00							
22	Louisiana	\$	850.00							
23	Maine	\$	831.00							
24	Maryland	\$	1,357.00							
25	Massachusetts	\$	1,225.00							
26	Michigan	\$	850.00							
27	Minnesota	\$	944.00							
28	Mississippi	\$	762.00							
29	Missouri	\$	809.00							
30	Montana	\$	783.00							
31	Nebraska	\$	805.00							
32	Nevada	\$	1,060.00							
33	New Hampshire	\$	1,077.00							
34	New Jersey	\$	1,295.00							
35	New Mexico	\$	828.00							
36	New York	\$	1,240.00							
37	North Carolina	\$	877.00							
38	North Dakota	\$	806.00							
39	Ohio	\$	788.00							
40	Oklahoma	\$	793.00							
41	Oregon	\$	1,050.00							
42	Pennsylvania	\$	915.00							
43	Rhode Island	\$	981.00							
44	South Carolina	\$	868.00							
45	South Dakota	\$	722.00							
46	Tennessee	\$	841.00							
47	Texas	\$	998.00							
48	Utah	\$	988.00							
49	Vermont	\$	972.00							
50	Virginia	\$	1,202.00							
51	Washington	\$	1,194.00							
52	West Virginia	\$	711.00							
53	Wisconsin	\$	837.00							
54	Wyoming	\$	843.00							
55										
56	Puerto Rico	\$	474.00							
57										
58										

The median rent by state

I also included Puerto Rico, because it is kind of part of the US but not a fully recognized state.

They also deserve to be helped during this 100-year pandemic.

However, shelter is not of much use when you starve. That's why I looked up the [average spending on food](#) per month to ensure that every American is able to buy food.

I noticed that, **on an individual basis**, the highest was among 19-50 year old males (\$185.90–\$368.30) and among women it was also 19-50 years old (\$164.90–\$327.30).

I decided to pick \$370.00 for male and female, because the basic necessities also clothes and other things that accumulate over the month (especially during a health crisis).

**Then families without children**, the highest there were also the 19-50 years old (\$385.80–\$765.20). The 51-70 years old are not that much behind, which is why I choose \$600 (nearly twice as much as singles).

Lastly, **families with children** (age 2-5 years and 6-11 years) need way more money and the \$800 aren't set (as the article points out: *"However, there are other factors to consider. We live in an area of the U.S. where grocery costs are low to moderate. If you live in an area where groceries are costlier you will likely be forced to spend more. The East Coast, for example, is one area where grocery costs are higher than in other parts of the U.S."*) and can be adjusted if deemed necessary. Modifications in each state may happen, if it were to be implemented.

G4								
1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	Stimulus Check - States							
3	States in Alphabetical ( Median Rent per mo		Basic Necessities (e.g. food)			Stimulus Check		
4			Individuals	Families (two, without children)	Families (with children)			
5	Alabama	\$ 772.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
6	Alaska	\$ 1,231.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
7	Arizona	\$ 1,009.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
8	Arkansas	\$ 723.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
9	California	\$ 1,429.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
10	Colorado	\$ 1,196.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
11	Connecticut	\$ 1,156.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
12	Delaware	\$ 1,110.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
13	Florida	\$ 1,128.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
14	Georgia	\$ 968.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
15	Hawaii	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
16	Idaho	\$ 825.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
17	Illinois	\$ 984.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
18	Indiana	\$ 807.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
19	Iowa	\$ 766.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
20	Kansas	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
21	Kentucky	\$ 741.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
22	Louisiana	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
23	Maine	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
24	Maryland	\$ 1,357.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
25	Massachusetts	\$ 1,225.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
26	Michigan	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
27	Minnesota	\$ 944.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
28	Mississippi	\$ 762.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
29	Missouri	\$ 809.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
30	Montana	\$ 783.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
31	Nebraska	\$ 805.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
32	Nevada	\$ 1,060.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
33	New Hampshire	\$ 1,077.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
34	New Jersey	\$ 1,295.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
35	New Mexico	\$ 828.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
36	New York	\$ 1,240.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
37	North Carolina	\$ 877.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
38	North Dakota	\$ 806.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
39	Ohio	\$ 788.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
40	Oklahoma	\$ 793.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
41	Oregon	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
42	Pennsylvania	\$ 915.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
43	Rhode Island	\$ 981.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
44	South Carolina	\$ 868.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
45	South Dakota	\$ 722.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
46	Tennessee	\$ 841.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
47	Texas	\$ 998.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
48	Utah	\$ 988.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
49	Vermont	\$ 972.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
50	Virginia	\$ 1,202.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
51	Washington	\$ 1,194.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
52	West Virginia	\$ 711.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
53	Wisconsin	\$ 837.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
54	Wyoming	\$ 843.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
55								
56	Puerto Rico	\$ 474.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00			
57								
58								
59								

The next step was to calculate the stimulus check for each state and the three categories:

Stimulus Check - States										
States in Alphabetical Order	Median Rent per month	Individuals	Families (two, without children)	Families (with children)	Individuals Check	Family w/o Check	Family w/c Check			
Alabama	\$ 772.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,142.00	\$ 1,372.00	\$ 1,572.00			
Alaska	\$ 1,231.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,601.00	\$ 1,831.00	\$ 2,031.00			
Arizona	\$ 1,009.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,379.00	\$ 1,609.00	\$ 1,809.00			
Arkansas	\$ 729.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,099.00	\$ 1,329.00	\$ 1,529.00			
California	\$ 1,429.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,799.00	\$ 2,029.00	\$ 2,229.00			
Colorado	\$ 1,196.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 1,796.00	\$ 1,996.00			
Connecticut	\$ 1,156.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,526.00	\$ 1,756.00	\$ 1,956.00			
Delaware	\$ 1,110.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,480.00	\$ 1,710.00	\$ 1,910.00			
Florida	\$ 1,128.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,498.00	\$ 1,728.00	\$ 1,928.00			
Georgia	\$ 968.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,338.00	\$ 1,568.00	\$ 1,768.00			
Hawaii	\$ 1,586.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,936.00	\$ 2,166.00	\$ 2,366.00			
Idaho	\$ 825.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,195.00	\$ 1,425.00	\$ 1,625.00			
Illinois	\$ 984.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,354.00	\$ 1,584.00	\$ 1,784.00			
Indiana	\$ 807.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,177.00	\$ 1,407.00	\$ 1,607.00			
Iowa	\$ 766.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,136.00	\$ 1,366.00	\$ 1,566.00			
Kansas	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,201.00	\$ 1,431.00	\$ 1,631.00			
Kentucky	\$ 741.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,111.00	\$ 1,341.00	\$ 1,541.00			
Louisiana	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 1,650.00			
Maine	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,201.00	\$ 1,431.00	\$ 1,631.00			
Maryland	\$ 1,357.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,727.00	\$ 1,957.00	\$ 2,157.00			
Massachusetts	\$ 1,225.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,595.00	\$ 1,825.00	\$ 2,025.00			
Michigan	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 1,650.00			
Minnesota	\$ 944.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,314.00	\$ 1,544.00	\$ 1,744.00			
Mississippi	\$ 762.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,132.00	\$ 1,362.00	\$ 1,562.00			
Missouri	\$ 809.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,179.00	\$ 1,409.00	\$ 1,609.00			
Montana	\$ 783.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,153.00	\$ 1,383.00	\$ 1,583.00			
Nebraska	\$ 805.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,175.00	\$ 1,405.00	\$ 1,605.00			
Nevada	\$ 1,060.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,430.00	\$ 1,660.00	\$ 1,860.00			
New Hampshire	\$ 1,077.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,447.00	\$ 1,677.00	\$ 1,877.00			
New Jersey	\$ 1,295.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,665.00	\$ 1,895.00	\$ 2,095.00			
New Mexico	\$ 828.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,198.00	\$ 1,428.00	\$ 1,628.00			
New York	\$ 1,240.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,610.00	\$ 1,840.00	\$ 2,040.00			
North Carolina	\$ 877.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,247.00	\$ 1,477.00	\$ 1,677.00			
North Dakota	\$ 806.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,176.00	\$ 1,406.00	\$ 1,606.00			
Ohio	\$ 788.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,158.00	\$ 1,388.00	\$ 1,588.00			
Oklahoma	\$ 793.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,163.00	\$ 1,393.00	\$ 1,593.00			
Oregon	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 1,850.00			
Pennsylvania	\$ 915.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,285.00	\$ 1,515.00	\$ 1,715.00			
Rhode Island	\$ 981.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,351.00	\$ 1,581.00	\$ 1,781.00			
South Carolina	\$ 868.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,238.00	\$ 1,468.00	\$ 1,668.00			
South Dakota	\$ 722.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,092.00	\$ 1,322.00	\$ 1,522.00			
Tennessee	\$ 841.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,211.00	\$ 1,441.00	\$ 1,641.00			
Texas	\$ 998.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 1,598.00	\$ 1,798.00			
Utah	\$ 988.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,358.00	\$ 1,588.00	\$ 1,788.00			
Vermont	\$ 972.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,342.00	\$ 1,572.00	\$ 1,772.00			
Virginia	\$ 1,202.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,572.00	\$ 1,802.00	\$ 2,002.00			
Washington	\$ 1,194.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,564.00	\$ 1,794.00	\$ 1,994.00			
West Virginia	\$ 711.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,081.00	\$ 1,311.00	\$ 1,511.00			
Wisconsin	\$ 837.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,207.00	\$ 1,437.00	\$ 1,637.00			
Wyoming	\$ 843.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,213.00	\$ 1,443.00	\$ 1,643.00			
Puerto Rico	\$ 474.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 844.00	\$ 1,074.00	\$ 1,274.00			



On the next day, I added the [unemployment benefits of each state](#):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Stimulus Check - States												
2													
3	States in Alphabetical	(Median Rent per mo)		Basic Necessities (e.g. food)									
4			Individuals	Families (two, without child)	Families (with child)	Individuals	Family w/o child	Family w/c child					
5	Alabama	\$ 772.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,442.00	\$ 1,372.00	\$ 1,572.00				\$265	
6	Alaska	\$ 1,231.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,601.00	\$ 1,831.00	\$ 2,031.00				\$370	
7	Arizona	\$ 1,009.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,379.00	\$ 1,609.00	\$ 1,809.00				\$240	
8	Arkansas	\$ 723.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,099.00	\$ 1,329.00	\$ 1,529.00				\$451	
9	California	\$ 1,423.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,799.00	\$ 2,029.00	\$ 2,229.00				\$450	
10	Colorado	\$ 1,196.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 1,796.00	\$ 1,996.00				\$542	
11	Connecticut	\$ 1,156.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,526.00	\$ 1,756.00	\$ 1,956.00				\$631	
12	Delaware	\$ 1,170.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,480.00	\$ 1,710.00	\$ 1,910.00				\$330	
13	Florida	\$ 1,128.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,498.00	\$ 1,728.00	\$ 1,928.00				\$275	
14	Georgia	\$ 968.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,338.00	\$ 1,568.00	\$ 1,768.00				\$330	
15	Hawaii	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,936.00	\$ 2,166.00	\$ 2,366.00				\$630	
16	Idaho	\$ 825.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,195.00	\$ 1,425.00	\$ 1,625.00				\$414	
17	Illinois	\$ 984.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,354.00	\$ 1,584.00	\$ 1,784.00				\$471	
18	Indiana	\$ 807.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,177.00	\$ 1,407.00	\$ 1,607.00				\$390	
19	Iowa	\$ 765.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,136.00	\$ 1,366.00	\$ 1,566.00				\$455	
20	Kansas	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,201.00	\$ 1,431.00	\$ 1,631.00				\$474	
21	Kentucky	\$ 741.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,111.00	\$ 1,341.00	\$ 1,541.00				\$502	
22	Louisiana	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 1,650.00				\$247	
23	Maine	\$ 831.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,201.00	\$ 1,431.00	\$ 1,631.00				\$445	
24	Maryland	\$ 1,357.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,727.00	\$ 1,957.00	\$ 2,157.00				\$430	
25	Massachusetts	\$ 1,225.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,595.00	\$ 1,825.00	\$ 2,025.00				\$769	
26	Michigan	\$ 850.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,220.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 1,650.00				\$427	
27	Minnesota	\$ 944.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,314.00	\$ 1,544.00	\$ 1,744.00				\$717	
28	Mississippi	\$ 762.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,132.00	\$ 1,362.00	\$ 1,562.00				\$235	
29	Missouri	\$ 809.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,179.00	\$ 1,409.00	\$ 1,609.00				\$320	
30	Montana	\$ 783.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,153.00	\$ 1,383.00	\$ 1,583.00				\$527	
31	Nebraska	\$ 805.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,175.00	\$ 1,405.00	\$ 1,605.00				\$426	
32	Nevada	\$ 1,080.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,430.00	\$ 1,660.00	\$ 1,860.00				\$450	
33	New Hampshire	\$ 1,077.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,447.00	\$ 1,677.00	\$ 1,877.00				\$427	
34	New Jersey	\$ 1,295.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,665.00	\$ 1,895.00	\$ 2,095.00				\$636	
35	New Mexico	\$ 828.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,198.00	\$ 1,428.00	\$ 1,628.00				\$433	
36	New York	\$ 1,240.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,610.00	\$ 1,840.00	\$ 2,040.00				\$450	
37	North Carolina	\$ 877.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,247.00	\$ 1,477.00	\$ 1,677.00				\$350	
38	North Dakota	\$ 806.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,176.00	\$ 1,406.00	\$ 1,606.00				\$535	
39	Ohio	\$ 788.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,158.00	\$ 1,388.00	\$ 1,588.00				\$538	
40	Oklahoma	\$ 793.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,163.00	\$ 1,393.00	\$ 1,593.00				\$520	
41	Oregon	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 1,850.00				\$624	
42	Pennsylvania	\$ 915.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,285.00	\$ 1,515.00	\$ 1,715.00				\$561	
43	Rhode Island	\$ 981.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,351.00	\$ 1,581.00	\$ 1,781.00				\$576	
44	South Carolina	\$ 868.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,238.00	\$ 1,468.00	\$ 1,668.00				\$326	
45	South Dakota	\$ 722.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,092.00	\$ 1,322.00	\$ 1,522.00				\$402	
46	Tennessee	\$ 841.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,211.00	\$ 1,441.00	\$ 1,641.00				\$275	
47	Texas	\$ 998.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 1,598.00	\$ 1,798.00				\$507	
48	Utah	\$ 988.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,358.00	\$ 1,588.00	\$ 1,788.00				\$496	
49	Vermont	\$ 972.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,342.00	\$ 1,572.00	\$ 1,772.00				\$498	
50	Virginia	\$ 1,202.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,572.00	\$ 1,802.00	\$ 2,002.00				\$378	
51	Washington	\$ 1,194.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,564.00	\$ 1,794.00	\$ 1,994.00				\$790	
52	West Virginia	\$ 711.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,081.00	\$ 1,311.00	\$ 1,511.00				\$424	
53	Wisconsin	\$ 837.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,207.00	\$ 1,437.00	\$ 1,637.00				\$370	
54	Wyoming	\$ 843.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,213.00	\$ 1,443.00	\$ 1,643.00				\$489	
55													
56	Puerto Rico	\$ 474.00	\$ 370.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 844.00	\$ 1,074.00	\$ 1,274.00				\$133	

The benefits remained unchanged, since that is a topic which deserves an article for itself.

Before and during the pandemic, the lower class and working class experience the hardest time, because they don't really have an option to not go to work (since there's a severe lack of social security and other measurements to secure jobs while minimizing the spread of SARS-CoV-2). And since millions of US-Americans have been left on their own for 9 months, it is only fair that they get the full benefits if they are unemployed.

After all, **both of these classes make up 57% of the US**, as [lumenlearning](#) explains it:

"The working class (30%) earns \$19,000 to \$45,000 per year. The lower class (27%) is divided into working poor (13%, earning \$9000 to 18,000 per year) and underclass (14%, earning under \$9000 per year)."

Meanwhile, **the middle class makes up 40% of the US**:

"The middle class (40%) is divided into upper-middle class (14%, earning \$76,000 or more per year) and the lower-middle class (26%, earning \$46,000 to \$75,000 per year)."

CEOs, politicians	\$200,000	
	\$100,000	
Professionals	\$72,500	Graduate Degree
	\$50,000	Bachelor's degree
Professional Support & Sales		
	\$32,000	
		Some college
Clerical, Service & Blue collar	\$25,000	
	\$20,000	
	\$15,000	
Part time & unemployed	\$7,000	High School

Sources: Thompson & Hickey, Society in Focus, 2005;  
US Census Bureau Personal income & education of individuals 25+, 2005



As mentioned earlier, there should be no cuts to the benefits of the working class and lower class if they get unemployed. So, stimulus check + unemployment benefits (unemployed middle class either receives the same or a similar amount; I don't know if there exist special rules in the USA though):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	Stimulus Check - States														
2															
3	States in Alphabetical (Median Rent per mo)		Basic Necessities (e.g. food)			Stimulus Check			Unemployment Benefit			Lower Class and Working Class			
4			Individuals	Families (two, without children)	Families (with children)	Individuals	Family w/o Check	Family w/ Check				Individuals	Family w/o	Family w/	
5	Alabama	\$	772.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,422.00	\$	1,372.00	\$	1,572.00	\$	265.00	\$	1,407.00
6	Alaska	\$	1,231.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,601.00	\$	1,831.00	\$	2,031.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,371.00
7	Arizona	\$	1,009.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,373.00	\$	1,603.00	\$	1,803.00	\$	240.00	\$	1,619.00
8	Arkansas	\$	729.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,099.00	\$	1,329.00	\$	1,529.00	\$	451.00	\$	1,550.00
9	California	\$	1,423.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,793.00	\$	2,023.00	\$	2,223.00	\$	450.00	\$	2,249.00
10	Colorado	\$	1,196.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,566.00	\$	1,796.00	\$	1,996.00	\$	542.00	\$	2,108.00
11	Connecticut	\$	1,156.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,526.00	\$	1,756.00	\$	1,956.00	\$	631.00	\$	2,157.00
12	Delaware	\$	1,110.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,480.00	\$	1,710.00	\$	1,910.00	\$	330.00	\$	1,810.00
13	Florida	\$	1,128.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,498.00	\$	1,728.00	\$	1,928.00	\$	275.00	\$	1,773.00
14	Georgia	\$	968.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,338.00	\$	1,568.00	\$	1,768.00	\$	330.00	\$	1,668.00
15	Hawaii	\$	1,596.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,936.00	\$	2,166.00	\$	2,366.00	\$	630.00	\$	2,596.00
16	Idaho	\$	825.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,195.00	\$	1,425.00	\$	1,625.00	\$	494.00	\$	1,609.00
17	Illinois	\$	964.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,354.00	\$	1,584.00	\$	1,784.00	\$	471.00	\$	1,825.00
18	Indiana	\$	807.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,177.00	\$	1,407.00	\$	1,607.00	\$	390.00	\$	1,567.00
19	Iowa	\$	766.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,136.00	\$	1,366.00	\$	1,566.00	\$	455.00	\$	1,531.00
20	Kansas	\$	831.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,201.00	\$	1,431.00	\$	1,631.00	\$	414.00	\$	1,676.00
21	Kentucky	\$	741.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,111.00	\$	1,341.00	\$	1,541.00	\$	502.00	\$	1,613.00
22	Louisiana	\$	850.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,220.00	\$	1,450.00	\$	1,650.00	\$	247.00	\$	1,467.00
23	Maine	\$	831.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,201.00	\$	1,431.00	\$	1,631.00	\$	445.00	\$	1,646.00
24	Maryland	\$	1,357.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,727.00	\$	1,957.00	\$	2,157.00	\$	430.00	\$	2,167.00
25	Massachusetts	\$	1,225.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,595.00	\$	1,825.00	\$	2,025.00	\$	769.00	\$	2,364.00
26	Michigan	\$	850.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,220.00	\$	1,450.00	\$	1,650.00	\$	362.00	\$	1,562.00
27	Minnesota	\$	944.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,314.00	\$	1,544.00	\$	1,744.00	\$	717.00	\$	2,031.00
28	Mississippi	\$	765.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,135.00	\$	1,365.00	\$	1,565.00	\$	235.00	\$	1,367.00
29	Missouri	\$	809.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,179.00	\$	1,409.00	\$	1,609.00	\$	320.00	\$	1,439.00
30	Montana	\$	793.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,163.00	\$	1,393.00	\$	1,593.00	\$	527.00	\$	1,680.00
31	Nebraska	\$	806.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,176.00	\$	1,406.00	\$	1,606.00	\$	426.00	\$	1,601.00
32	Nevada	\$	1,060.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,430.00	\$	1,660.00	\$	1,860.00	\$	450.00	\$	1,880.00
33	New Hampshire	\$	1,077.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,447.00	\$	1,677.00	\$	1,877.00	\$	427.00	\$	1,874.00
34	New Jersey	\$	1,235.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,605.00	\$	1,835.00	\$	2,035.00	\$	696.00	\$	2,361.00
35	New Mexico	\$	826.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,196.00	\$	1,426.00	\$	1,626.00	\$	423.00	\$	1,631.00
36	New York	\$	1,240.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,610.00	\$	1,840.00	\$	2,040.00	\$	450.00	\$	2,060.00
37	North Carolina	\$	877.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,247.00	\$	1,477.00	\$	1,677.00	\$	350.00	\$	1,537.00
38	North Dakota	\$	806.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,176.00	\$	1,406.00	\$	1,606.00	\$	595.00	\$	1,771.00
39	Ohio	\$	766.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,136.00	\$	1,366.00	\$	1,566.00	\$	599.00	\$	1,756.00
40	Oklahoma	\$	793.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,163.00	\$	1,393.00	\$	1,593.00	\$	520.00	\$	1,683.00
41	Oregon	\$	1,050.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,420.00	\$	1,650.00	\$	1,850.00	\$	624.00	\$	2,044.00
42	Pennsylvania	\$	915.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,285.00	\$	1,515.00	\$	1,715.00	\$	561.00	\$	1,846.00
43	Rhode Island	\$	961.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,331.00	\$	1,561.00	\$	1,761.00	\$	576.00	\$	1,927.00
44	South Carolina	\$	868.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,238.00	\$	1,468.00	\$	1,668.00	\$	326.00	\$	1,564.00
45	South Dakota	\$	722.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,092.00	\$	1,322.00	\$	1,522.00	\$	402.00	\$	1,434.00
46	Tennessee	\$	841.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,211.00	\$	1,441.00	\$	1,641.00	\$	275.00	\$	1,496.00
47	Texas	\$	998.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,368.00	\$	1,598.00	\$	1,798.00	\$	507.00	\$	1,875.00
48	Utah	\$	988.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,358.00	\$	1,588.00	\$	1,788.00	\$	496.00	\$	1,854.00
49	Vermont	\$	972.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,342.00	\$	1,572.00	\$	1,772.00	\$	498.00	\$	1,840.00
50	Virginia	\$	1,202.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,572.00	\$	1,802.00	\$	2,002.00	\$	378.00	\$	1,950.00
51	Washington	\$	1,194.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,564.00	\$	1,794.00	\$	1,994.00	\$	790.00	\$	2,364.00
52	West Virginia	\$	711.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,081.00	\$	1,311.00	\$	1,511.00	\$	424.00	\$	1,505.00
53	Wisconsin	\$	837.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,207.00	\$	1,437.00	\$	1,637.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,577.00
54	Wyoming	\$	843.00	\$	370.00	\$	1,213.00	\$	1,443.00	\$	1,643.00	\$	469.00	\$	1,702.00
55															
56	Puerto Rico	\$	474.00	\$	370.00	\$	844.00	\$	1,074.00	\$	1,274.00	\$	133.00	\$	977.00
57															

The Covid-19 relief checks, as I mentioned in my Tweet, should be funded by taxing the income of [the rich who benefited from the crisis](#) - and still benefit from it -. It is only fair that in return for the workforce and risk that the people take each day, they also deserve to live more comfortably without having to fear evictions and/or hunger. The sum mentioned in the article (**\$637,000,000,000**) could be taxed with 10% (**\$63,700,000,000**) or 40% (**\$254,800,000,000**) for instance (which either then funds it completely or helps funding it). **Note:** The percentages were chosen arbitrary and serve as an example.

## Concluding Sentence

Thank you for reading my article! I hope each step is comprehensible, and if you've got any questions just ask me. Constructive criticisms are allowed, but remember: I'm aware that it is far from perfect, it merely serves as a reminder what I think should be done.

(Released: 27<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 01:25 Uhr/01:25 am)



Thank you for reading my articles! You can find them all on [baroquecom.wordpress.com](https://baroquecom.wordpress.com)

I wish you all a Happy New Year  
and hope that 2021 is going to be a better year for all of us!  
~with kind regards, Thomas Baroque