

What can we do out of this hardship?

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But what hardship? Whose hardship? Who is “we” and what does it mean to “do” something out of it?

Why answer such difficult questions, especially now, in times of hardship? By the way, how long will this last?¹ But why is nobody asking this other question, i.e.: how long people expected the previous socio-economic situation to last? How long did **you** expected the previous situation to last? Why is nobody asking this question? Why? Or why do we start asking questions only when the hazards materialize closer to us (closer in space, time, significance, relevance...)?

Why in the current situation, among the “blessings” of social networks, internet communications, enhanced connectivity are there so (too) many radical statements or expressions, e.g. “life will never be the same again”, “end of an era”, “paradigm shift”, “crisis with an I-shape” etc.? Although impressive, what are these expressions **exactly** about? It looks like experts and analysts evoke things very well-known to them, but what are they actually speaking about? Why not acknowledging that such an effort, of being specific and ALWAYS REINVENTING THE WHEEL, is an essential part of the change we (“we” = people that still have questions) most need today?

Did you ever encounter attitudes like “Yes, indeed, we need to decide thoroughly, but why re-inventing the wheel, since we are in a big hurry, to produce more, more, more, more, and more – since actually, economic growth, political will and social stability growth are our fundamental principles.”? But what growth? Growth of what? “Is there **anybody** out there”, still asking such questions?

Are we in the lifelong process of understanding that “every stick has to ends”? If yes, would it be possible, in our specific case, to rephrase this finding, while stating that **everything (known)** is supposed to end at some point? What would this “**everything (known)**” be and mean?

¹ Robin Pomeroy, *How long does a coronavirus lockdown last? A WHO expert explains*. World Economic Forum, March 28, 2020

Therefore, **what** was/is supposed to grow without limits, indefinitely? Would the growth of “**everything (known)**” refer to the economy, the human population, the GDP, mobility, healthcare, the economic profits of whatever venture, the digitalization, the percentage of world population that has access to the internet (as one million additional people join the internet daily), the progress in reduction of poverty? Could “**everything (known)**” grow like this, simultaneously, at the fastest pace possible? If not, what was/is/ will be supposed **to grow** and what was/is/ will be supposed **not to grow**, have a slower - limited growth, or even be destroyed?

Who decided/ decides/ will decide this? Are there any humans (?) in charge of this type of decisions? And, by the way, are they aware of the complexity related to these types of decisions? Are they still “solving problems” through offering candies for those in need of classical music? And, after the obvious failure, do they still keep offering to those in need of even more classical music, candies and some chicken soup (as a bonus), since “more is better”?

On the one hand, **in case there are such decision-makers**, how could they made/ make such poor decisions, under the reasonable cover of the “delay effects”²? Do these decision-makers share the same hardships like those who were not part of the decision-making? Whose decision-making is this and about what?

On the other hand, of course, **if there is nobody making such decisions**, why is this so? Then why are we puzzled by the sudden hit of some pandemics and the domino effects on the markets, such as the drop in demand levels (this being a strong and “contagious” one) and upset of the supply chains? And why should we be surprised that although the issues were already well-known (e.g., without being restrictive, “[...] no country is fully prepared to handle an epidemic or pandemic. Meanwhile, our collective vulnerability to the societal and economic impacts of infectious disease crises appears to be increasing.³”, or **more than one year ago**, “[...] Infectious disease risk can no longer be thought of exclusively as the threat of low-probability, high-impact events.”⁴ and **even earlier** “[...] The emergence of new infectious diseases is unpredictable but evidence indicates it may become more frequent...

²Klinke, A. and Renn, O., (2004) *Systemic risks: A new challenge for risk management*, EMBO., Reports, Science and Society, Vol. 5, Special Issue 2004, p.239. Delay effects: Latency between initial event and actual damage.

³ World Economic Forum, *The Global Risks Report 2020*, p.81.

⁴ World Economic Forum. In collaboration with Harvard Global Health Institute. Outbreak Readiness and Business Impact. Protecting Lives and Livelihoods across the Global Economy. January 2019. p.13.

No country is immune to an infectious disease in another part of the world.”⁵) the priorities were very much different? Whose priorities? Who owns these risks and their treatment?

After all, coming back to ourselves, why do we keep forgetting and neglecting Pandora’s and Cassandra’s mythical tragedies? Why do we forget so easily the consequences of wars, plagues, famines, crises, depressions, despotic terror and mass hysteria? Basically, why do we prefer to remain “comfortably numb”? Are these **known** consequences and events – today, when we are again in front of the **unknown** - not close enough in terms of space, time, significance, relevance...? How could it be that “we somehow forget”? Will this time be different, or not? Numb again... why not?

Besides all these, why not challenging ourselves intentionally, instead of falling prey to our helplessness and be animated by fear only? Why should we keep fearing some **uncertainties**, while complacently enjoying other **uncertainties**? Is it true that Growth (together with, alas, the accompanying Destruction) are the only processes we could be aware of, on our level of reality? How could we still deliberately and stubbornly believe that what happens in our immediate proximity has no impact and was not impacted by another level of reality? While describing and pursuing our **yet unknown** possibilities, could we **reinvent the wheel** and be specific, rigorous and as concise as possible (since humans are now very busy with producing more, more, more, more and more coffins, vaccines, masks and protective gears)?

⁵ UK National Risk Register Of Civil Emergencies, September 2017. In Matrix A, pandemic influenza is indicated as the top risk, of the highest consequence severity (5) and highest likelihood (4), p.9.