

The Panopticon

See all. Hear all. Know all.

#1, November 2020



SURVEILLANCE AND
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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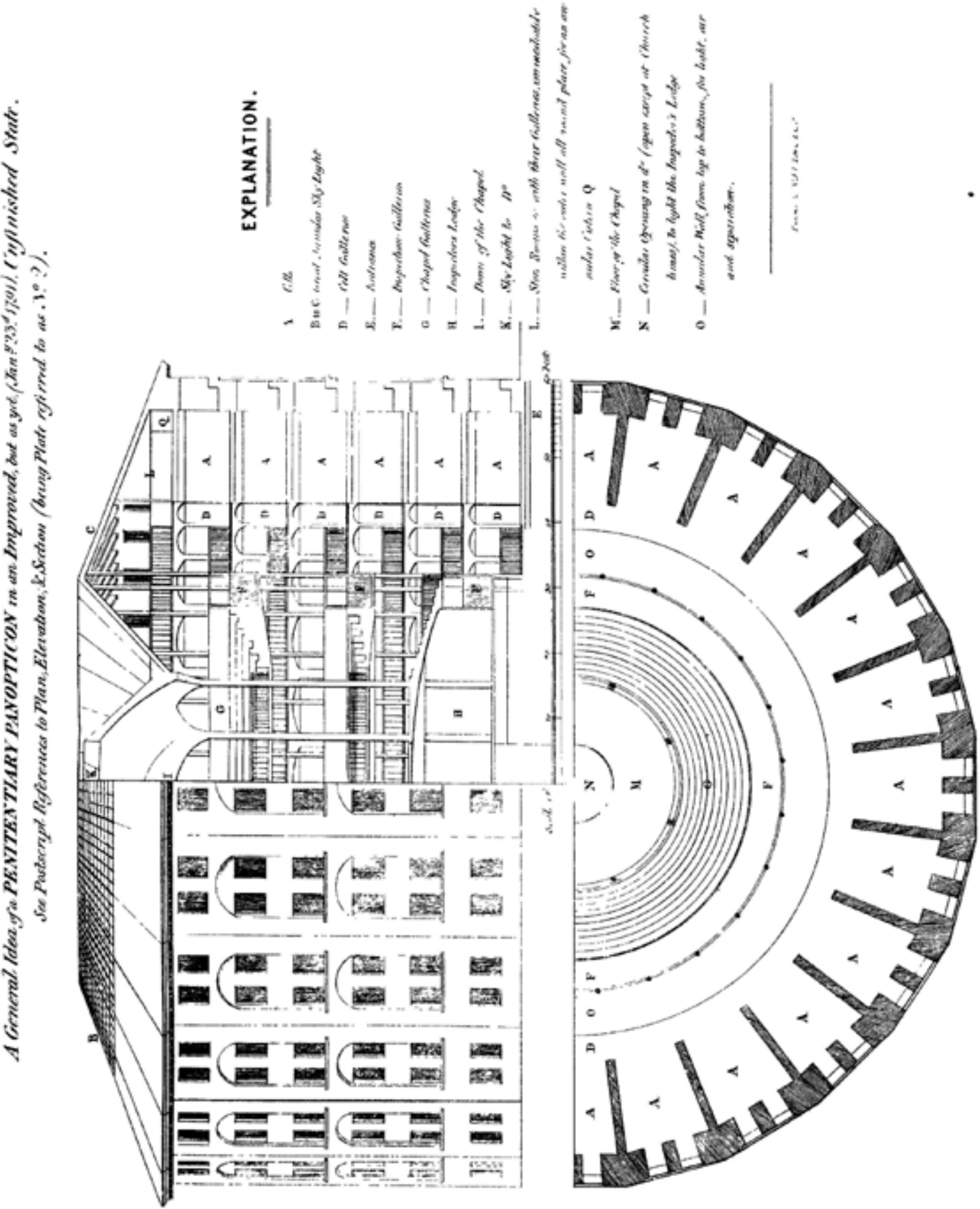
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The Ethics of Surveillance, or: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Became a Study in Exceptionalism



Christopher Wijono

The Panopticon and the Dynamics of Observation

The magazine adopted the name ISAD Panopticon from the architectural concept proposed by Jeremy Bentham, itself named after the Greek term *Panoptes* (“pan-”: all, “optes”-: vision; seeing.). Initially, Bentham proposed the building as a facility empowering wardens and security guards to achieve surveillance on every single prisoner contained within, without the prisoners knowing whether they are being watched at a given moment.

Following its inception, Bentham’s idea has gone beyond the proposed structure and has encompassed thoughts and elicited (philosophical) discussion on the nature of politics, power, humanity, and surveillance. Of importance is the question of ethics regarding the raucously utilitarian ideal Bentham envisions through his structure, with plenty of latter scholars (Letwin, Manning, etc.) raising questions regarding its disregard of human elements. Reminiscent of the ages-old adage *quis custodiet ipsos custodes* (Latin: who watches the watchman) are the ideas of French philosophers Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, who used the pan-

opticon as the epitome of power relations; a relationship between disciplinarian and the disciplined, the relation between the observer and observed which allows the former to influence the latter’s thoughts, actions, and behaviors.

It is this particular brand of hierarchy-derived power relations and its (ethical) implications that will serve as the main focus of this article, especially if we equate the observer-observed dynamic towards statehood/government and the citizenry. To what extent are the government allowed to influence the lives of its citizens? Which measures are acceptable or otherwise? And what factors influence the ability of the government to do so?

The Theory of Exceptionalism

I propose that one avenue to gauge it is the theory/doctrine of exceptionalism, where certain factors (time, space, event, etc.) are deemed exceptional enough to warrant/justify deviations or otherwise different approaches. Exceptionalism has plenty of historical precedents; for example, the Roman Republican system of dictatorship, where supreme power and decision-making capacity is hand-

ed to a single consul during specific situations deemed dire enough to necessitate its institution. While perhaps the ascent of Julius Caesar to the position is the most famous, a more apt example would be that of Quintus Fabius Maximus, who was appointed to the office in 221BCE and 217BCE during the period of the Second Punic War, when the Carthaginian army under Hannibal Barca threatened the Italian Peninsula, if not Rome itself. A more recent example fresh in people’s memory would be the adoption of the PATRIOT act, written and signed following the September 11 Attacks. The act empowered the US government to expand the capacity of law enforcement agencies to halt and deter terrorist activities, by giving them more power to surveil domestic and international communiques, greater access to resources, and expand upon the definition of terrorism and what it encompasses. Public fears and sentiment following the September 11 attacks, branding it an “exceptional” event due to its unprecedented rate of fatality and damage incurred, allowed the adoption of the Patriot act, still a point of contention in American politics today due to assumed constitutional violations.

*I'm made of
metal
My circuits
gleam
I am perpetual
I keep the
country clean
I'm elected
electric spy
I'm protected
electric eye*

Judas Priest, *Electric Eye* (Columbia Records, 1981)

Exceptionalism and the Dynamics of State-Citizenry

However, exceptionalism on the domestic level (in regards to the government-citizenry dynamic) relies not only upon the government’s capacity to declare specific situations as an exceptionality, but also of the citizens; whether they also consider such situations an exceptionality and whether they can accept the governments’ attempts to address these exceptionalities. The government may also, in turn, attempt to convince or inform the citizenry that a given situation is an exceptionality requiring special measures. The relationship becomes a reciprocity between the state/government and the citizens for them to cooperate and act accordingly. Herein lies the first ethical challenge; the state may not

necessarily have benign objectives/intentions when declaring an exceptionalism, and its institution may provide several exploitable loopholes that those in power may abuse towards achieving unpalatable objectives.

The COVID-19 Pandemic as an Exceptionalism

Looking at the above, it isn’t difficult for the citizenry (and the gov-

ernment) to classify the COVID-19 Pandemic as an exceptionality. Compared to past viral epidemics, which are deadly yet contained in specific geographical locations (Zika virus, Ebola), endangers specific parts of the population (Swine flu, avian flu), or otherwise difficult to transmit outside specific circumstances (AIDS, etc.), the COVID-19 pandemic is deemed unique due to the rapidity of its distribution, its innocuous 2-week incubation period, and the intensive treatment procedure requiring specific facilities. A number of measures has generally been imposed around the world; mandating masks in public places, imposition of social distancing, travel bans, and provisions on remote working. While they have come to be accepted in fact by a majority of the world, here remains parts of the population with differing reactions, from apathy and backlash to reactionary feedback, such as quasi-movements such as anti-maskers to the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories regarding the pandemic.

Here we arrive at the other side of the ethical challenge: how do we appropriately facilitate and inform the public of the necessity of these measures, ensuring its proper implementation?

The state should not look to leverage its influence to intimidate, cow, or force its citizens to toe along its decisions, but it should seek to inform and educate, with as much transparency, solutions pertinent to the exceptionality at hand. At the same time, the state shouldn’t also turn disregard citizen input or close off their avenues to do so.

One of the main goals of the ISAD Panopticon is derived from this desire to bridge and connect the two sides of the aforementioned reciprocity; the state and the citizens, how proper communication and connection between the two is vital to their well-being. Rather than being an “unequal gaze”, the ISAD Panopticon seeks to instead become an equalizing gaze, connecting and informing its readers on politics and international relations through informative journalistic pieces and thought-provoking academic explorations. We hope that this issue, and by extension this magazine and its following releases, will be able to achieve that.

The New Wave

Khrystyna Hvozdovska

There is a saying: *sore upon sore is not salve*. It is used to be said when trying to cure one thing, people tend to damage the other. But what does it have in common with the current state of pandemic we are living in?

The new COVID-19 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) belongs to the group of RNA viruses. Being harmful for mammals and birds they cause respiratory tract infections, which can range from mild to - mostly caused by SARS - lethal. And while waiting for a vaccine to be discovered, to protect ourselves and our loved ones, the best decision so far is simply wearing a mask.

2020 Trend Throughout the History

According to Oxford dictionary, mask – is something that you wear over part or over all your face in order to protect or hide it, frighten, or entertain others. Throughout the centuries priests of different beliefs used to wear masks during ceremonies or rituals.

Today the oldest pre-

served mask is from the preceramic age and dates to 7000 BC. Even though archeologists believe that the first masks were actually much older – between 30 000 – 40 000 years old – they unfortunately can't be found. Made of leather or vegetative materials, maybe wood, they simply could not have preserved till our days. The images of one is although stayed crafted in Paleolithic caves drawings.

The plague masks

Speaking of mask as a mean of protection the first ones were known since the Black Death or the Plague times, the deadliest pandemic in our history, which lasted for 6 years – between 1347 and 1353. It was the second pandemic of a plague, brought to Asia, Europe and partly Africa from the east part of China. The causative agent of the Plague was different from the one which caused the first plague and later



covered the Europe – the Plague of Justinian (541 AD). *Medievalis* became the reason of 75 to 200 million deaths according to various estimates. During those times, the history found a new character in the face of a plague doctor. An image of a man dressed in a long coat, to cover the whole body, a hat and a mask with a bird's beak is widely known, but little of us know what the purpose of such a mask was.

The medieval medicine was poorly developing due to the high au-

20th century Manchurian plague and Spanish flu.

The Manchurian plague took place between 1910 and 1911 in the area of today's north-east of China.

The number of deaths varies between 60 and 100 thousand of people. The interesting thing about that plague was that the autopsy, done secretly by Doctor Wu Lien-ten, stated death from the plague in its most dangerous – pulmonary – form. The

opened in 1918 and took a life of up to 50 million people worldwide. The duty of wearing a mask was mandatory and some newspapers, like The Ogden Standard, contained guides on how to make a protective mask on your own

Take a piece of gauze, eighteen by twenty-four inches, fold it four times since evenly, attach four taps to the corners and you are provided with the best preventive against Spanish influenza yet devised.

What inside matters

As the pandemic has reached the Europe the first mean of protection became a medical face mask. They are usually dark blue or green color and comparably cheap, used commonly to create

the physical barrier between mucous membranes and microparticles or impurities. They also limit the release of infectious particles to the outside, thus contaminating the environment and infecting other people.

But quoting the energylivenews.com the benefits of wearing a mask for us, people, can turn a disaster for the environment.

pneumonic plague was transmitted by airborne droplets and could resist to the vaccine developed in 1896 against bubonic plague. So, Wu Lien-ten ordered to wear a thick protective mask made of cotton and wadding.

In some pieces Spanish flu is called the virus that changed the world. One of the biggest pandemics in human history hap-

thority of the Church, so doctors used to look for a treatment in different mixtures of herbs. The long beak was filled with approximately 20 different kinds of herbals, which as it used to believe, should have protected the doctor's airways by cleaning the air. Usually plague doctors were newcomers in the profession or simply a charlatan.



Source: CNN.com

"Most of these masks contain or are made of polypropylene, which does not break down quickly. Marine plastic pollution is a serious problem. It is estimated that every year, over eight million tonnes of plastic enter our oceans. This plastic does not disappear but rather slowly breaks down into micro-plastic, which enters food chains, with devastating effect".

Éric Pauget, a French politician whose region includes the Côte d'Azur points that: "With a lifespan of 450 years, these masks are an ecological timebomb given their lasting environmental consequences for our planet".

The first concerns towards masks appeared in Hong Kong. As Gary Stokes of OceanAsia reported on a quantity of ones found:

"On a beach about 100 meters long, we found about 70"

Another thing is that experts believe that recycling of masks can also be very dangerous. Stockton Recycles calls out to people not to recycle their face masks and gloves. Why?

Face masks, gloves and other PPE items can transport the coronavirus. When these items are tossed into the recycling, they are taken to a Materials Recovery Facility to be sorted by material type. Sanitation workers at these facilities must remove these items from the sorting line — often by hand — because they are not recyclable. In addition, disposable masks with their elastic bands are more likely to get snagged in machinery where they will have to be removed by workers.

These points of physical contact unnecessarily increase the chance of workers contracting the virus.

A mask is a "perfect" way for humans to protect ourselves in this terrifying period of our history. And the word "terrifying" was not chosen by me for no reason. As the state of pandemic lasts more and more people tend to feel anxious and uncertain about the future

or even about the present, we live in. The period when the government can't subdue the virus, people arise from inability of the authorities to protect them and the additional mixture of critical tasks the mankind has faced in 2020 we should not forget that the future still depends on us. So, let's not cure one thing and because of the fear damage the other one. There are a lot of ways to prevent the massive wave of masks from getting to the Ocean or damaging the surrounding Flora and Fauna.

Here are some tips for those, who wants to reduce an impact of wearing a face mask:

1. Use reusable masks without disposable filters. Machine wash them regularly following the instructions for the fabric.
2. Try to carry a spare so if something goes wrong with the one, you are wearing you do not need to use or buy a disposable mask.
3. If you do need to use a disposable mask, take it home (maybe in a bag if you have to take it off) and then put it straight into a bin with a lid. If this is not possible, place it in a proper public bin.

Featurette: This Month in History

1 November 1179

Philip II 'Augustus' was crowned King of France. Credited with greatly consolidating the Kingdom of France and expelling the English from their Angevin holdings, his popularity in public knowledge is unfortunately overshadowed by the fame of his contemporary English counterpart; Richard I the Lionheart of England, who Philip would join in the Third Crusade.

2 November 1949

The Dutch-Indonesian Round Table Conference ended with the Kingdom of Netherlands fully recognizing Indonesian sovereignty on the former East Indies. While Indonesians celebrate Independence Day on 17th August, the day of the Proclamation of Independence, 2 November 1949 can be argued as the day Indonesia is truly independent.

8 November 1519

Hernan Cortes was welcomed by Aztec emperor Moctezuma to its capital Tenochtitlan. Cortes was perhaps the most famous of the *Conquistadors*, the explorers and conquerors of Spain that set out to the New World(s).

9 November 1867

The Meiji Restoration begins through the surrender of power back to the emperor. Prior to it, the Tokugawa Shogunate had maintained supreme control of Japan for around 260 years. Suppression of Shogunate loyalists would not end until 1869; the end of the Boshin war.

13 November 1947

The Soviet Union finishes the development of the AK-47, perhaps the most iconic and recognizable assault rifle ever. While it has been phased out for newer models, it remains prolific as illicit trade, availability, and durability of the weapon made it a favored choice for insurgents, terrorists, etc.

20 November 1962

The Cuban missile crisis ends as the USSR agrees to withdraw and remove its missiles from Cuba. The crisis has been widely described as the closest that humanity has ever been to nuclear annihilation.

23 November 1174

Saladin conquers Damascus, signaling the end of the rule of Nur ad-Din. With this, Egypt and Syria are now under his control and presents a united front against the Crusader states, culminating with his capture of Jerusalem in 1187.

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The US Response to COVID-19 Pandemic. Analysis and Comparison



Source: gisgeography.com

Artyom Ermakov

The year of 2020 was marked by enormous amount of tragic and disturbing events, but one of the longest lasting is COVID-19 pandemic, that started in Wuhan, China, and spread across the globe.

In 2018 Trump administration issued its own National Bio-defense Strategy, that was supposed to replace the similar document of Obama administration. This strategy assigns agencies and government officials, that participate in all relevant capacities in federal biodefense. Particularly the strategy leaves chief role to

the President, that acts in coordination with National Security Council, the decisions are to be executed by the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). The strategy also establishes Biological defence Steering Committee, that includes secretary of HHS, Secretary of State, Defense, Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Veteran Affairs, Secretary of Homeland Security, Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency, the committee is responsible for overseeing and coordinating execution of strategy. One of the goals set by this strategy is to set a "lead federal department or agency to provide overall coordination for the United States Government response to a national or international bio-incident".

What were the tactics of response to pandemic?

There are currently approximately 190000 deaths in the US from COVID 19. Critics say that number of cases and deaths are big, because of the failure of Trump administration. However, looking at the statistics, we will see that the UK, having more severe lockdown terms, had more deaths per million (625.79) than the US (584.52). The distinct features of the US federal government response (federal response should not be confused with state response) are recommendations to stay home, wear masks, avoid public gatherings and keep social distancing, national lockdown was not in place (there were 42 state full lockdowns with their own regulations), FDA and CDC relaxed regulations to accelerate medical research. Skeptics argue that Trump could implement stricter policies earlier, particularly travel ban from China and national lockdown (Trump has no authority for that), however, the WHO itself warned against travel ban on China, due to alleged stigmatization. Skeptics selectively accuse Trump of downplaying coronavirus based on tapes of talks between Trump and Bob Woodward of March 2020, because he did not want to create panic, however the same tactic was used by NY governor, Andrew Cuomo and Doctor Fauci. Some accuse Trump of hiding information about COVID-19; however, the Congress receive all information in Intelligence Committee, that keep Intelligence Community in check.

Ideas behind tactics and collateral damage

Behind different policies there are different rationales. We can look at countries, like Italy, the UK, France, etc., they imposed severe lockdown rules and fines for violating them, in France you had to submit a document which would explain the reason to leave your house. The rationale behind severe restrictions was if we diminish the number of contacts, isolate diseased, cure them,

the virus will go extinct. However, the proponents of this approach did not consider serious consequences of strict lockdown, i.e. economic recession and depression of people, difficulties to track all COVID 19 carriers.

Sweden adopted similar to the US federal government approach. One important motive behind that policy was preventing economy from crisis, while in three months to June 2020 Sweden GDP shrank only by 8.3%, the UK GDP shrank by 20.4% in the second quarter of 2020. The UK opted for stricter response to COVID 19 pandemic than Sweden and applied pro-lockdown way of thinking, while omitting collateral damage of lockdowns. In the US, states which implemented lockdowns on their own caused 31.7% shrink of GDP in the second quarter of 2020. Critics blame Trump for economy crisis, however, Trump rejected lockdowns for economy concerns.

Important reason for liberal response to COVID-19 pandemic is Herd Immunity – common immunity in other words. The idea of this thing is that when a certain percentage of population becomes immune to the virus, the spread of it from person to person becomes less possible. The chance for individuals susceptible to the virus to get ill reduces as well.

About 8000 people have died in their own homes since the start of the coronavirus pandemic prior to 8th of May in the UK, according to deaths certificates 80% of that number died of unrelated to COVID 19 conditions. Doctors said dismissal of non-COVID patients increases the death toll of non-COVID cases. Doctor Chaand Nagpaul argued that the excessive focus of the UK, Italy, and other countries with similar strategy on coronavirus is “worsening the care of non-COVID patients”, - patients with heart attacks attending hospitals dropped by half. Andrew Goddard, gastroenterology consultant, noticed that big toll of non-COVID-19 deaths was seen all over Europe. A report concluded in May revealed that in Italy there had

been approximately 11 600 unrelated to COVID deaths. Jason Oke, statistician at Oxford University, claimed that another reason of people dying from other causes is collateral damage of the lockdown, that includes absence of social contacts. The other reason is people's reluctance to go to the hospitals, while hoping for the self-recovery. The same situation occurred in states under full lockdown in the US - in NY state there was 6000 deaths surge from heart disease and 800 surges of deaths from diabetes from March to May.

So severe lockdown strategy leaves certain percentage of population not immune to the virus, that is in combination with difficulty to track all carriers, brings economic devastation, depressive disorders, reluctance to take a professional medical treatment, potential lack of it for non-COVID patients, all that results in rise of non-COVID deaths.

Counting of cases and deaths

Vital detail is how the US counts cases and deaths. Antibody tests determine if you previously had COVID 19 and have antibodies. If positive, it is possible that you got antibodies from another virus of the same family. Positive antibody tests are included in coronavirus case numbers. There is a term called “probable case” - a case without test, but the one, which is added to the total number of cases and potentially deaths, it must fit at least one of criteria below, which are according to CDC:

- **Clinical criteria AND epidemiological evidence;**
- **Presumptive laboratory evidence AND either clinical criteria OR epidemiological evidence;**
- **A person meeting vital record.**

Clinical criteria suggest that you must have certain symptoms, e.g. cough - if you cough, you reached clinical criteria. Epidemiological evidence suggests that 14 days before symptoms appeared you

must have contacted a confirmed or probable case of COVID 19 or travelled to residence with ongoing epidemic. Vital record criteria is a death certificate, where COVID is listed as a cause of death or a significant condition. Presumptive Laboratory Evidence means that you have specific antigen or antibody in a clinical specimen. When it comes to deaths counting, US counts all people who died, having COVID 19, even if they died from clear alternate cause, they would be listed as COVID deaths.

Proponents of lockdown omit its collateral damage, that results in big rise of non-COVID deaths. This approach leaves population without an opportunity to form herd immunity, thus vulnerable to second wave. Flu and cold have existed for many years and are restrained by mentioned above herd immunity, which is maintained by vaccination and natural infection. Countries, which adopted that approach (UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Peru, etc.), suffered severe economic consequences and had higher number of deaths per million. Peru with its strict lockdown policies had the highest deaths per million rate, - 899.93. Sweden and the US had lower deaths per million rates, that are 573.79 and 584.52 accordingly. The US is constantly condemned for its response to coronavirus. Sweden with similar approach did not suffer severe economic consequences and did not face surge in non-COVID deaths, apparently their strategy was relying on herd immunity, backed up by not overwhelmed national medical capacity. We must consider that states in the US acted on themselves. 42 of 50 states implemented full lockdowns and suffered from big collateral damage. Generally, US federal approach was designed for long term use, relying on herd immunity, medical capacities and relaxed medical regulations (US case), since even the richest countries in the world cannot afford long-lasting lockdown and not only due to economic reasons, but due to needs of any human being in any country.

Public Information for *All* the Public?

Andrea Mauricio

For about seventy years now, as a recent NATO Review article points out, the concept of nuclear deterrence has been blooming in academic circles and sporadically circulating the news and our minds.

It is now, more or less, an accepted concept: when several countries possess nuclear weapons capable of destroying the world and thus each other, not one of them will use it without repercussions and there is not one sole power who will intimidate others into its own agenda. War does not ensue in the way it used to before nuclear deterrence. It takes other forms: economic sanctions, targeted killings, proxy wars and “diplomatic tools”. The ethics of nuclear deterrence will not be discussed in this article, nor will the effectiveness or morality of the alternative “diplomatic tools” now used, but, see, hyper-surveillance and its son: data, or information, or intelligence, or “big data,” is as powerful

today as a nuclear weapon in the past and just like nuclear weapons were born in the USA, data shares the same citizenship.

The number of nuclear threats made between North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong Un, and President Donald Trump is high... And yet, no drone strike has landed on North Korea because of a clear fear of the consequences that would ensue. An anti-US or anti-West leader with nuclear weapons and opposing views being attacked is a recipe for world destruction, or so we are told. Regardless, that is the premise of nuclear deterrence.

Nuclear weapons should not be owned by anyone, a pacifist will say, but the realist will argue that nuclear weapons already exist. Today, nuclear weapons are possessed by a number of states - states that disagree with each other economically, socially, and politically, but nonetheless,

treat each other with a certain level of respect and fear. I believe that the same should be the case with data.

What is it – data?

The Cambridge Dictionary defines data as: information, especially facts or numbers, collected to be examined and considered and used to help decision-making, or information in an electronic form that can be stored and used by a computer.

We, as a society, as every-day internet users, were recently informed –through notorious trials and updates to data processing laws in our respective social media - just about how much data our governments, tech-genii and other business-owners gather. Depending on your settings, Google probably knows where you are since you first used it,



Source: coopernewitt.org

how long it takes for you to go from point A to point B, and it certainly knows where you live and how much time you have spent in several places. Every search you have ever made, even the deleted ones, are all stored as data.

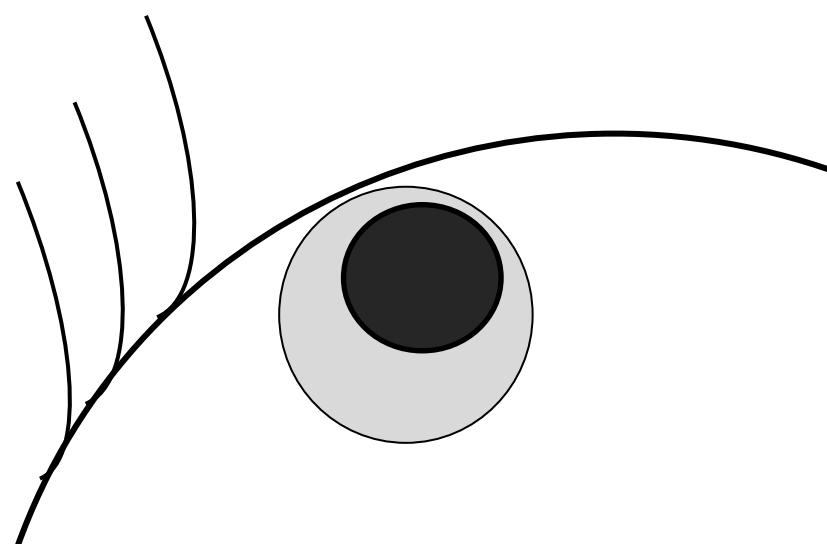
These searches - your movements, your bank details and information - are all data possessed by whatever medium of communication you use. Whether it is Google, Bing or Safari, there is a file with a profile linked to your IP (or every IP ever used), and your name too - possibly, unless it's a shared device - that *has* this information. Google Takeout will offer you the possibility of accessing all the data it has on you. My file is about 6GB: the equivalent of several million Word Documents. Google will not "sell your personal information" as it disclaims, but it will tailor ads to your profile. If you have ever googled "how to become a terrorist," this search could probably have been flagged down and linked to your file. The Patriot Act in the US allows the CIA and FBI to *warrantlessly* access your browsing history, for instance.

These tech giants, not only have every picture, sentence, word and comma that we have ever decided to put down on a gadget, but also access to our very own hobbies, pictures, texts, audios, videos, contacts and every application and location that we have ever used. Also, let us not forget Facebook's advanced facial recognition system that was initially launched and widely used without requesting users' consent. Tristan Harris, the president of the Center for Humane Technology and ex-design ethicist at Google, explains how the algorithms of data collection are so advanced, that they are able to predict our behavior. For example: auto-filling an email or comment on social media, advertising a craving or a purchase that is tailored to our profile and suggesting the movies, videos and music that we would be interested in.

The list goes on: our shopping history, our grocery list, our faces, our medical history, YouTube and music preferences - they are not exactly public knowledge, but still they are *knowledge*, and if you were under investigation by any government,

your data would be shared.

The West has a monopoly on our data: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google, Microsoft, Apple, Clearview AI (the Australian application where you upload a person's picture and it then proceeds to find all the public pictures of said person with the links to their source). What do these all have in common? Western owners, actually, mostly US-born owners who abide by their respective countries' legislations.



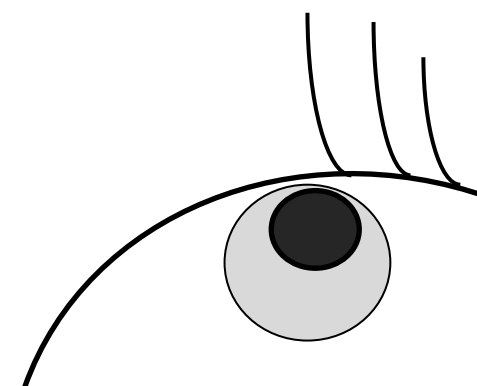
London has more CCTV cameras than Beijing

London has around 630 000 CCTV cameras installed: around 67 cameras per 1000 people - a quantity higher than the one present in Hong Kong, Beijing or Shanghai. Nevertheless, it is Chinese-state mass surveillance that Western media tends to focus on. Neither defending nor arguing against it, but it is to be highlighted to the degree to which mass data surveillance has been and is continuously increasing, all over the world, and how technology has facilitated this.

Huawei and TikTok are being fought with all the aggression and violence that bureaucracy, business deals and economic sanctions are capable of fostering. The public is divided on the issue, some panicking, some not- but the truth is that our

Data *is and has been* collected for a while now....

Choosing to delete any Chinese-owned app perhaps depends on where your allegiances stand. For instance, if you are a Hong Kong citizen with TikTok installed commenting something even remotely critical of the



Chinese government, you will be in trouble. Nonetheless, TikTok is not the only Chinese application that a government may use to "spy" on you. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive as US citizen, what sort of data you may have that you wish to conceal from the Chinese government and not from the US government, or any other government.

Whether 'your data' is gathered by President Xi Jinping or Donald Trump, China or the USA, and the entities and corporations and individuals that are represented by them, "our data" it does not belong to us is not ours. This is a reality from the second when we decided to create any identity in today's technology.

If there is something that the ongoing pandemic has shown us, it is that we are dependent on technology and that countries with hyper-surveillance, e.g. China, South Korea and Singapore had the benefit of technological accuracy and enough data on its citizens to control the spread of COVID-19. The same cannot be said for the West,

where even the rumor of a mobile application whose task would be to "save us" was deemed an immediate violation of privacy laws and an attempt to establish an authoritative and invasive government.

The other side of the screen, however, does explain the West forbidding China to gather data on its citizens as a means of protection and retaliation. China's internet firewall is impenetrable. While the use of VPNs is extensive, officially, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Quora, WhatsApp, Microsoft, Tinder, Instagram and Twitter are banned in mainland China. Thus, all of these well-known western apps have a Chinese equivalent for client base of about 900 million Chinese internet users - as reported by the China Internet Network Information Center earlier this year: the largest internet population in the world, which is for the most part, legally alienated from Western surveillance.

Whether we choose to defend or criticize hyper-surveillance, the first step that should be taken is acceptance. Hyper-surveillance is a fact; we have allowed it to be a fact. Whether it is the US or China, Mark Zuckerberg or Jack Dorsey - the owner of Twitter - the best course of action will be to set boundaries in our complex relationship with the internet. However, if you fear TikTok and/or Huawei because they will gather your data, you have every reason then, to fear every smartphone, every laptop, every tablet, every application, every internet browser and chat-room that you have ever used. You have every reason to fear technology and cameras and fingerprints, but ask yourself: why?

Data held by your government, by an advertisement agency or tech giant, will be used either in your favor or against you. Thus, we must all behave accordingly, and demand more transparency from the data-collectors themselves or we should start being meticulously opaque in the data we wish to share.

Media Corner

Pandemic, or: The Idealization of Disease Control, Prevention, and Eradication

Christopher Wijono

This article is an expansion on the author's writeup on Matt Leacock's interview with CBC.ca, published on the Facebook page of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University's Tabletop Gaming Circle.

For this article discussing a game as its topic (the first of its kind in the ISAD Panopticon!), I will preface it by recommending readers to familiarize themselves with the seminal works of *Homo Ludens* (Latin: "The Playing Man", Johan Huizinga) and *Les jeux et les hommes* (French: "Man, play, and Games", Roger Caillois), and their proposals on how play and games are not only a significant part of human culture, but also an eminent driver of its achievements and progresses. Being an avid gamer myself and having written on its academic and practical virtues in the past, I find that it is both an activity and a passion worth pursuing and studying, and I hope to realize some of that (and be able to convince readers!) in the ISAD Panopticon.

Pandemic is a cooperative board game designed by Matt Leacock, first released in 2008. In it, up to four players work together to combat four diseases that has spread across the world, taking up roles with unique abilities such as the medic, contingency planner, and the contingency specialist. The goal of the game is to discover the cure to all four diseases, while avoiding possible losing conditions; letting the diseases spread beyond control or taking too long to find cures. The

game's ease of accessibility, multiple levels of difficulty, and intuitive "AI" makes *Pandemic* a mainstream success, spawning multiple expansion packs and rethemes based on different settings.

The game saw a sharp increase in interest during the COVID-19 pandemic; the game saw increased sales in different parts of the world, and it has received renewed coverage from multiple news outlets. Most interestingly, Matt Leacock, its designer, has commented on the relevancy of his game during the times of the pandemic. He emphasized the cooperative nature of the game, and the need for authorities and planners to mirror its influence on player interaction-communication and decision-making; just as the players will go nowhere and fail without cooperation, real-life authorities and decision-makers will fail or otherwise be ineffective in combatting the Pandemic and the issues it raises without focused cooperation.

A somewhat idealistic position, but it is not without its merits. First of all, Leacock's focus on cooperation is something important to keep in mind, and not just on the global scale and its relevant agents; for example, state-level decision makers (such as the executive, the legislative, law enforcement, etc.) have to cooperate to contain and mitigate the damage pandemics may cause towards the state and its citizens, or regional/group-level entities (for example, businesses and customers e.g. myself and you readers)



Source: boardgamegeek.com

to cooperate and comply with measures instituted to combat the proliferation of diseases (e.g. following regulations on mandatory masks, social distancing, etc.). Also important in Leacock's point is communication; through it, not only do we achieve consensus and agreement on what's best to do on different levels, but also to communicate its intentions; to justify the pursuit of certain actions and policies.

Second, and something I will discuss more in-depth, is that Leacock's focus on cooperation goes beyond player agency, but also on the meta level; its rules, how it runs, and how it is governed. It is almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy; whether Leacock is aware of this I do not know, but I like to think that the focus on cooperation influenced the way he formulated rules of play, and inadvertently or otherwise becomes an author "tract" of sorts on how to best combat (or otherwise, the ideal scenario/position to combat) a pandemic.

The following are the elements of the game (or lack thereof) that I notice reflect or illustrate this ideal scenario. Global movement of the players are simplified, allowing the players to access different parts of the world in order to address its most affected parts. Second, the severity of the infection is clear and transparent; the severity in each city is represented by the number of different colored cubes on it, with three being the most severe. Adding another cube to a city with three cubes causes an outbreak, which causes the disease to spread to cities adjacent to it on the map. The spread of disease is also transparent and traced/tracked, with disease cubes added onto the map on the start of turns. Compounded with the above, the availability of this information is paramount if the players are to control the spread of the disease and avoid the losing condition. Already

we see the failure to fulfill clear and transparent information affecting disease control in the COVID-19 Pandemic; for example, China's notoriety for its failure to control the initial Wuhan epidemic, or the difficulties of countries such as Indonesia and the USA to track diseases within their respective countries.

Another important aspect is the development and subsequent discovery of cures: alongside the clear information on the diseases is the free flow (or at least, its possibility) of information; players are given the option to trade City cards to either travel to affected cities or to work towards discovering a cure. Scientific research for cures also occurs on the global level instead of the state or enterprise/corporate level; players are given the option to establish research stations around the world for the purpose of discovering cures, without going through the difficulty of acquiring large amounts of resources (only through discarding a matching city card). Most importantly, however, are the idealized situation following the discovery of the cures. Aside from the obvious reinforced capacity to combat diseases, there are other implications: Cures are distributed globally with such efficiency such that this reinforced capacity to combat diseases are game-wide, same with the prevention of the spread and reemergence of the diseases. Possible commercialization and the importance of equitable access for the yet to be discovered vaccine for COVID-19 remains a discussed, if not contested subject.

And finally, the players' unified objectives and avatarization of a team of researchers dedicated to eradicating the disease means that there are a lack of conflicts plaguing real-world affairs; for example, conflicts of interest, pursuit of political power, focus on material gain, etc.

Therefore, unlike games like *Junta* (Goldberg et al) or *Kolejka* (English: Queue; Karol Mada) which mechanics are consciously built upon lampooning, illustrating, or portraying certain real world circumstances (something to cover in future issues), *Pandemic* steers away from too closely representing reality and instead its mechanics serve as idealizations of circumstances in which one can best play or game, in this case that of combatting diseases. At the end of the day, I recommend you try the game out; whether digitally (mobile applications of the game are available), or physically. Just remember, cooperation is key and most importantly: keep each other safe in these times of Pandemic.

Other games based on disease and healthcare:

Plague Inc. (Ndemic Creations, 2012). Unlike *Pandemic* and other medical titles, *Plague Inc.* has the player creating and evolving pathogens (bacteria, viruses, parasitic organisms, etc.) with the goal to eradicate humanity. The game is lauded for its realistic simulation of epidemic models (spread, infection rates, lethality, etc.) and received renewed attention due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Trauma Center: Under the Knife series (Atlus, 2005-2008)

Trauma Center: Under the Knife and its sequel takes a narrative-based approach, revolving around the efforts of surgeon Dr. Derek Stiles and the medical organization Caduceus against man-made pathogens created by bioterrorism group Delphi. While the game's simulation of surgery is highly simplified if not fantastical, the narrative offers some poignant exploration on a variety of themes, such as disease and medicine, life and death, and commentary on the medicine and pharmaceutical industries.

Crossword: Surveillance, Disease, and War.

1. Believed to be responsible for the spread of the Black Death
2. Hazardous Material (abbreviation)
3. Bad air
4. Organisms that can cause disease
5. Closed-Circuit Television (abbreviation)
6. Malicious hacker
7. Secret data harvesting program of the US NSA
8. Finnish communications technology company
9. Bacterial infection; American thrash metal band
10. Discovered the Polio vaccine
11. Multinational Intelligence Alliance
12. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (abbreviation)
13. Authored Leviathan
14. Prion-caused neurodegenerative disease
15. Chemical weapon used in the 1997 Tokyo Subway attack
16. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle; colloquial term
17. Restriction of movement to prevent disease spread
18. Led the infamous Unit 731
19. Substances with adverse effects on bacteria
20. Location of origin of SARS-CoV-2

