



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

15 March 2021 | Draft

Controls and Guinea Pigs in the Pandemic Experiment Honouring the sacrifice of vaccine refuseniks for the wider community

- / -

Introduction

[Learning from policy playbooks of the past](#)

[Eliciting complicity and managing consent](#)

[Appreciating the value of critical thinking in time of crisis](#)

[Case study: Australia's vaccination policy](#)

Introduction

The response by authorities to the pandemic has increasingly been reframed in terms of universal vaccination to achieve [herd immunity](#) -- beyond the initial preoccupation with social distancing and masking. Considerable efforts and funding have been deployed in the fast-track development of [COVID-19 vaccines](#). As of March 2021, as summarized by [Wikipedia](#), 308 vaccine candidates were in various stages of development, with 73 in [clinical research](#), including 24 in [Phase I trials](#), 33 in [Phase I–II trials](#), and 16 in [Phase III development](#). In Phase III trials, several COVID-19 vaccines have demonstrated efficacy as high as 95% in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections. As of March 2021, 12 vaccines were authorized by at least one national [regulatory authority](#) for public use.

Universal vaccination? However, rather than a commitment to enforcing mandatory vaccination for all, various initiatives are being developed or envisaged to ensure that voluntary uptake is ensured by constraints caricatured as "no jab, no travel", "no jab, no job", and the like ([Implications of universal vaccination -- voluntary or otherwise](#), 2021). The possibility of "[immunity passports](#)" of some form is now widely debated, with the probability of implementation of some variants in March 2021 ([IATA Travel Pass for Travelers](#), IATA). Bills for mandatory vaccination have been considered for legislation, including [California Senate Bill 277](#) and Australia's [No Jab No Pay](#), all of which have been strenuously opposed by anti-vaccination activists.

Optimism with regard to universal vaccination has been tempered by the obvious inability to ensure an adequate supply of vaccines. More problematic is the acknowledged degree to which those that are available have tended to be acquired and hoarded by the most developed countries. Many developing countries have little (if any) access to vaccines and it is unclear when adequate supplies will be available for them -- irrespective of the facilities required to administer them in remote and highly populated areas ([Developing countries face long wait for COVID-19 vaccines despite promises](#), *Globe and Mail*, 15 December 2020; [WHO chief warns against 'catastrophic moral failure' in COVID-19 vaccine access](#), *UN News*, 18 January 2021; [UN chief blasts vaccine nationalism, hoarding, side deals](#), *AP*, 12 March 2021). Travellers from those countries consequently risk insurmountable constraints through failure to qualify for an immunity passport.

These difficulties reflect those of the failure of other long-standing ambitions naively framed for universal availability of resources (health facilities, food, education, water, energy, social safety nets, and the like). These all feature in the UN's [Sustainable Development Goals](#) for 2030 whose achievement is now highly questionable ([World stands at critical moment to deliver on 2030 Agenda -- UN deputy chief](#), *UN News*, 10 March 2020).

Vaccine resistance: The pandemic response has evoked a backlash variously framed as "vaccine resistance", or euphemistically as [vaccine hesitancy](#). This was identified by WHO as one of the [top 10 threats to global health](#) -- surprisingly no longer mentioned in similar WHO lists for 2020 and 2021. Those adopting such attitudes, whether passively or actively, are now increasingly caricatured as "anti-vaxxers", as a "selfish danger to the community", or even as "domestic terrorists" (California State Senator Richard Pam, [Anti-vaccine extremism is akin to domestic terrorism](#), *The Washington Post*, 1 March 2021).

Arguments are presented by vaccine resisters with respect to the quality of evidence justifying the use of vaccines ([Doctors and Scientists write to European Medicines Agency warning of COVID-19 Vaccine Dangers: a press release from the Doctors for Covid Ethics campaign](#), *OffGuardian*, 11 March 2021). This follows from earlier articulations such as the [Great Barrington Declaration](#) (4 October 2020) advocating an alternative approach to the pandemic that involves "Focused Protection" of those most at risk and seeks to avoid or minimize the societal harm of the [COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns](#).

Such arguments are systematically dismissed as [COVID-19 misinformation](#), thereby [legitimizing their suppression](#) -- if not ensuring indictment for dissemination of disinformation (*The COVID-19 disinformation divide: understanding vaccine attitudes*, *World Economic Forum*, 4 February 2021). The latter study endeavoured to position those in favour of vaccination as objectively responsive to evidenced-based science in contrast to those opposed to it as being to a large degree driven by emotions and unsubstantiated fears. As such, ironically, the study could itself be understood as an exercise in disinformation -- ignoring the extent to which any recognition of the case for a [Precautionary Principle](#) is necessarily unsubstantiated (Judy Wilyman, *Misapplication of the Precautionary Principle has Misplaced the Burden of Proof of Vaccine Safety Science*, *Public Health Policy, and The Law*, 2, 2020).

Evidence-based science? The "scientific" basis for dismissal of resistor arguments is curiously unaffected by evidence of fatalities and vaccine injuries (Zero Hedge, *7 European Nations Halt AstraZeneca Jabs on Reports of "Serious" Blood Clots*, *Global Research*, 12 March 2021). The question of unreported (or misreported) evidence is set aside. (*AstraZeneca defends COVID vaccine as handful of nations pause use over fear of blood clots*, *CBS News*, 12 March 2021). Little has apparently been learned from the authoritative handling of the [thalidomide scandal](#) (1950s-1960s) and its resulting birth defects, to the extent that these are recalled. What indeed is the quality of evidence-based science that has justified masking and lockdowns (Steve Watson, *Fauci Admits There Is No 'Science' Behind Continued Lockdown*, *Global Research*, 12 March 2021).

Mainstream promotion of **the necessity for universal vaccination has tended to de-emphasize the degree to which the fast-tracked vaccines are necessarily experimental** -- in scientific terms -- irrespective of whether or how their use has apparently been "authorised" and questionably upheld to be "safe" (Rosemary Frei, *No Safety Data? No Problem! US, UK, Canada, Australia, Switzerland and Singapore will let new-variant vaccines onto the market without safety or efficacy testing*, *OffGuardian*, 10 March 2021). Specifically little is said about the normal multi-year requirement for an extensive testing period for new drugs before approval of use is accorded.

Side-effects? Less is said about the possible [side-effects](#) which drug use may engender in some, especially those of a long-term nature -- whether more generally or specifically with regard to COVID-19. Those common side-effects typically dismissed as temporary "indications that the vaccine is working" may include: swelling, fatigue, headache, chills, fever, nausea, swelling (Michelle Crouch and Rachel Nania, *What Are the Side Effects of COVID-19 Vaccines?* *AARP*, 1 March 2021). On the blithe assumption that every body is similarly responsive to such vaccines (even the pregnant and the young), little is volunteered about their impact on those with pre-existing medical conditions or the problematic interference with medications they may already be taking. Those cited by vaccine resisters include: allergic reactions, infertility, cancer, and the like. Such concerns for the future, beyond the scope of current testing periods, are dismissed as myths (*The real facts about common COVID-19 vaccine myths*, *UC Davis Health*, 21 December 2020).

Especially problematic is the dismissal of reported incidents of fatal side effects of vaccines after administration -- whether denied or attributed to other factors (Children's Health Defense Team, *653 Deaths + 12,044 Other Injuries Reported Following COVID Vaccine, Latest CDC Data Show*, *The Defender*, 12 February 2021). This is far from exhibiting an appropriately responsible scientific consideration of experimental results (Jen Christensen, *Past vaccine disasters show why rushing a coronavirus vaccine now would be 'colossally stupid'*, *CNN*, 1 September 2020).

This practice is comparable to the standard commercial response to rushing a product to market in full knowledge that some are below the quality claimed -- a proportion treated as negligible, for which compensatory funding is set aside. In the case of COVID-19 in the USA, for example, a declaration by the US Secretary of Health and Human Services under the [Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act](#) for medical countermeasures against COVID-19, covers "any vaccine, used to treat, diagnose, cure, prevent, or mitigate COVID-19, or the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 or a virus mutating therefrom", and precludes "liability claims alleging negligence by a manufacturer in creating a vaccine, or negligence by a health care provider in prescribing the wrong dose, absent willful misconduct".

Experimental "guinea pigs" versus "controls"? In this context it is appropriate to recognize that those seeking and accepting vaccination are appropriately to be recognized as ["guinea pigs"](#) -- the colloquial term used by health scientists to describe the subjects of drug testing. The question here is the framing by "guinea pigs" of those seeking to avoid vaccination -- given the degree to which refusers are seen to be a selfish threat to the larger community, or held to be "domestic terrorists".

Exploration of any such framing can draw on parallels from the past. Authorities can be recognized as relying on the pattern of ["policy playbooks"](#) variously deployed in relation to: conscientious objectors, heretics, dissidents, outlaws, collaborators, terrorists, indigenous peoples, refuseniks, travellers, and the deplorable "unwashed". However such framings of vaccine refusers call for recognition of how each such category has been subsequently reviewed by history.

Human "guinea pigs" can indeed be considered heroic in voluntarily subjecting themselves to the testing of experimental drugs. However is it not the case that the **refusers can also be considered heroic in consciously failing to take advantage of the protection which the vaccines are held to offer** -- especially when many in the world do not have access to the limited supply? Who indeed merit framing as cowards in the face of global crisis?

As noted in the description of scientific [control of an experiment](#), this should always address **what controls are used to limit the independent variables to the one of concern**. A good control group has subjects that, in every important way, resemble the experimental group, except for the difference in the experimental condition. When the possibility of [experimenter bias](#) or subject bias is an issue, the control group is managed through [double-blind](#) testing. Has this been envisaged with respect to the effects of COVID vaccines in the longer term?

In a situation in which the experimenters are ensuring their own vaccination, in accordance with their principle of universal experimental vaccination, the question arises as **who are then to be recognized as the "controls"?** Arguably it is the much maligned vaccine resisters who are effectively sacrificing themselves in forgoing the safety offered in favour of those most anxious to ensure it.

The resisters can then be understood as acting for the benefit of humanity as a whole -- in contrast to the selfishness so short-sightedly attributed to them by the experimenters and their "guinea pigs". Rather than according immunity passports as envisaged, should the "controls" be accorded suitable insignia to be worn like medals of honour? Given the war narrative, with its [COVID marshals](#) framing the response to the pandemic, such insignia would also recall the armbands by which observers are distinguished in war games.

Having reneged on their objective responsibility for the global experiment, the dilemma with respect to the experimenters so highly implicated in the experiment is usefully recalled by the question of the Latin poet [Juvenal](#): *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* -- perhaps to be translated as *Who will oversee the experimenters?*

Learning from policy playbooks of the past

Authorities throughout history, and especially in recent centuries, have been obliged to find ways of dealing with those who avoid or refuse what is deemed appropriate in the light of a prevailing ideology. As policy patterns, notably reinforced by groupthink, they suggest recognition as [anti-patterns](#), namely **a common response to a recurring strategic problem that is usually ineffective and risks being highly counterproductive**. Authorities typically distort the disruptive implications of dissenting opinion (*Warping the Judgement of Dissenting Opinion: towards a general framework for comparing distortion in rules of evidence*, 2002; *Case studies for historical comparison*, 2002).

There are various accounts, vigorously dismissed as dangerous misinformation, about the distortions cultivated by authorities in relation to the pandemic (Megan Specia, *As Europe's Coronavirus Cases Rise, So Do Voices Crying Hoax*, *The New York Times*, 28 September 2020; Ronald B. Brown, *The Hidden Truth Behind the Too-Good-to-be True COVID-19 Vaccines*, *Global Research*, 15 March 2021; Roland Imhoff, et al, *A Bioweapon or a Hoax? The Link Between Distinct Conspiracy Beliefs About the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak and Pandemic Behavior*, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2020, July).

Of particular interest in that respect is the [typology of cover-up processes](#) elaborated by *Wikipedia*, clustered as follows:

Initial response to allegation (9 ploys)	Publicity management (7 ploys)
Withhold or tamper with evidence (8 ploys)	Damage control (3 ploys)
Delayed response to allegation (5 ploys)	Win court cases (4 ploys)
Intimidate participants, witnesses, etc or whistleblowers (8 ploys)	Reward cover-up participants (5 ploys)

In that light, the following invite comparison with the mainstream framing of the vaccine hesitants:

1. [Conscientious objectors](#): With the challenge of the pandemic variously framed by government leadership as a "war", it is appropriate to ask how those who reacted to this framing were framed and framed themselves during wars of the past. Conscience objectors are individuals who have claimed the right to refuse to perform military service on the grounds of freedom of thought, conscience, or religion. Given the war framing, "military service" could indeed be understood as being willing to risk fatality by accepting vaccination to protect one's country.

In some countries, conscientious objectors are assigned to an alternative [civilian service](#) as a substitute for conscription or military service -- where their actions "under fire" may be recognized as heroic. Some conscientious objectors consider themselves [pacifist](#), [non-interventionist](#), [non-resistant](#), [non-aggressionist](#), [anti-imperialist](#), [antimilitarist](#) or philosophically stateless (not believing in the notion of [state](#)). Many conscientious objectors have been executed, imprisoned, or otherwise penalized when their beliefs led to actions conflicting with their society's legal system or government. The legal definition and status of conscientious objection has varied over the years and from nation to nation.

Despite the fact that international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe (CoE) regard and promote conscientious objection as a human right, as of 2004, it still does not have a legal basis in most countries. Among the roughly one-hundred countries that have conscription, only thirty countries have some legal provisions. In many countries outside Europe, especially in armed conflict areas, conscientious objection is punished severely.

2. [Heretics](#): It is appropriate to recognize that religions have a tendency to frame their spiritual struggle as effectively a "war against evil" ([Church Militant](#), [The Salvation Army](#), [Militia Christi](#)). A heretic is a proponent of a belief or theory that is strongly at variance with established beliefs or customs, in particular the accepted beliefs of a church or religious organization. The term is typically used in reference to violations of important religious teachings, but is also used of views strongly opposed to any generally accepted ideas ([List of people burned as heretics](#)).

So framed, vaccine resisters could readily be recognized as "heretics" worthy of modern variants of the treatment traditionally accorded to them by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam -- for which espousing ideas deemed heretical has been (and in some cases still is) met with censure ranging from excommunication to the death penalty. In the light of that earlier pattern, and the doctrinal pressures which gave rise to the Inquisition (inherited institutionally by the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#)), more curious is whether an analogue in systemic terms is emerging with respect to the requirements for belief in authoritative pronouncements regarding engagement with the pandemic as the evil of the day (Jan Hoffman, *Clergy Preach Faith in the Covid Vaccine to Doubters*, *The New York Times*, 14 March 2020).

Historically, despite such strictures, many originally framed as heretics have been reframed as courageous -- even to the point of being beatified. Others, in their instigation of schism, have been honoured as the founders of new religions -- as with Reformation

and the emergence of Protestantism in reaction to the abuses of the Catholic Church. Given the historical treatment of convicted heretics, it is somewhat ironic to note the extent to which they may now be burned in effigy, or that a form of "burning" is experientially internalized (Cher Chen, et al, *Burnout in Social Justice and Human Rights Activists: symptoms, causes and implications*, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 7, 2015, 3; Ayala M. Pines, *Burnout in Political Activism: an existential perspective*, *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 16, 1994, 4).

3. **Non-participants** (in community assemblies): A primary argument for inoculation is to safeguard the health of the community -- hence the strong tendency to frame those who fail to do so as "selfish" -- even dangerously so, in endangering others. Curiously this argument is common in many communities of faith where failure to attend a regular **prayer meeting** is perceived as identifying oneself as estranged from the community and therefore potentially a threat to the community's integrity and spiritual well-being.

Religions may consider regular attendance to be explicitly associated with saving one's own soul -- an understanding of health in a spiritual sense. Non-participants may then be understood as spreading "evil" ideas. The pattern is also evident in relation to ideological assemblies of a non-religious nature. Historically collective sanctions in both cases have been extremely severe, and may continue to be so in some cases -- in accordance with the principle: **you are either with us or against us**.

Indoctrination -- whether religious or otherwise -- can be compared to inoculation in protecting the community and the health of its belief system. In a world riven by deep moral and ethical crises -- with a dramatic reduction in participation in religious assemblies -- it is appropriate to ask whether the "selfishness" of those who resist inoculation is comparable with the "selfishness" of those who fail to participate in communal assemblies of those who have been indoctrinated into a shared belief.

4. **Terrorists**: There is a marked tendency for authorities to label those actively opposed to their perspective as terrorists. It is however problematic in that many of those labelled so categorically as "terrorists" may later be redefined and welcomed as leaders of their countries or political faction -- with the classic examples of **Jomo Kenyatta, Menachem Begin, Nelson Mandela, Yasser Arafat**, Robert Mugabe, and George Washington. Some may be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, as with Begin, Arafat and Mandela. Others who have been awarded that prize continue to be faced with calls for indictment as terrorists (Christopher Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, Verso, 2001).
5. **Resistance movements**: This an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to withstand the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability. It may seek to achieve its objectives through either the use of **nonviolent resistance** (sometimes called **civil resistance**), or the use of force, whether armed or unarmed. Given the global war framing of the pandemic, occasionally considered comparable to World War II, it is appropriate to recognize the historically significant role of the **Resistance during World War II**, the savagery with which its members were treated by authorities and the recognition accorded to their heroism thereafter (*Heroes of the Resistance*)
6. **Collaborators**: Recognized as those cooperating with the enemy against one's country of citizenship in wartime. Some collaborators in World War II committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, or atrocities such as the Holocaust. More often collaborators simply "went along to get along", attempting to benefit from the situation or simply survive. The definition of a collaborator is imprecise and subject to interpretation, but a distinction can be made between *involuntary* collaboration (reluctant recognition of necessity) and *voluntary* collaboration (an attempt to exploit necessity).

An insightful clarification of the reasons why occupied populations might hold collaborators in contempt has been presented by John Hickman (*The Occupier's Dilemma: problem collaborators*, *Comparative Strategy*, 36, 2017, 3), namely because they were perceived as: scapegoats for defeat; opportunistic; benefiting from their own poor decisions as leaders before the occupation; violating the norms of the traditional political order; having no lasting political loyalties; guilty of more than collaboration; cowardly; deceived by the occupier; self-deceived; cheaply bought; diverting political focus; representing powerlessness; and escaping their own guilt.

The postwar treatment of collaborators, following the victory of enlightened understanding, is well-documented, in the case of World War II (*Pursuit of Nazi collaborators*, *Wikipedia*; *Treatment of collaborators*, *Histoforum*). Whether a category of "collaborators" will become apparent post-COVID, only history will tell. Especially problematic in that respect is whether history will recognize the extent to which the occupying power in the pandemic period has been an unchecked authoritarian mindset.

7. **Dissidents**: Ninely a person who actively challenges an established political or religious system, doctrine, belief, policy, or institution -- potentially understood as a sentiment or philosophy of non-agreement or opposition to a prevailing idea or entity. A **dissenter** is consequently a person who disagrees in matters of opinion and belief, There are historical examples of people who have been considered and have considered themselves dissidents (*List of political dissidents*, *Wikipedia*; Thomas K. Johnson, *The Protester, the Dissident, and the Christian*, *World Reformed Fellowship*, 12 September 2020).

In totalitarian regimes, dissidents are often incarcerated without explicit political accusations, or due to infringements of the very same laws they were disputing, or because they are supporting progressive rights such as the free speech right (**Rod Dreher**, *Live Not by Lies: a manual for Christian dissidents*, 2020; Gene Veith, *Becoming a Christian Dissident against Soft Totalitarianism*, *Patheos*, 23 September 2020) . With respect to the challenge to the "war narrative" associated with pandemic strategies, legislative innovation in this regard is now evident (Makia Freeman, *"COVID Denialism" Now Enshrined in Case Law*, *Global Research*, 12 March 2021; Philip Giraldi, *"Domestic Terrorism" Goes Transnational: the war on dissidents picks up momentum* *Global*

The category might be understood to include:

- **Refusenik**: Applied more generally to those who refuse to cooperate with a system or comply with a law because of a moral conviction, notably including members of [persecuted religious groups](#).
- *"Ideologically suspect"*: Especially as recognized in the light of Communist ideology and typically the focus of extensive [re-education schemes](#). A comparable understanding in the USA has been recognized in the designation of "UnAmerican" by the [House Committee on Un-American Activities](#). This notably established The [Hollywood blacklist](#) put in effect in the mid-20th century in the USA during the early years of the Cold War to deny employment to entertainment industry professionals believed to be or to have been Communists or sympathizers. [French re-education camps](#) for deradicalization have been envisaged in response to preoccupation with ideological [radicalization](#).
- **Outlaws**: In historical legal systems, an outlaw is a person declared to be outside the protection of the law. In pre-modern societies, all legal protection was withdrawn from such people, so that anyone was legally empowered to persecute or kill them. The [Third Reich](#) made extensive use of outlawry in the persecution of Jews or other persons deemed undesirable to the state. There are curious echoes of the practice in the concept of ["fair game"](#) in scientology, with corresponding practices in other secretive societies.

Curiously outlaws and [social bandits](#) of the past are now widely and enthusiastically mythologized in contemporary media. Examples include: Robin Hood, [Butch Cassidy](#) and the Sundance Kid, [Salvatore Giuliano](#) in Sicily, [Ned Kelly](#) in Australia ([Outlaw characters](#), [List of American West Gunfighters](#))

- **Outsiders**; Most notably described as a sense of dislocation, or of being at odds with society, afflicted with a needless pessimistic fallacy ([Colin Wilson](#), [The Outsider](#), 1956).

8. **Nonconformists**: These may be understood as including dissidents (as above). Particular distinctions are made with regard to:

- **Counterculture**, namely a subculture whose values and norms of behavior differ substantially from those of mainstream society, often in direct opposition
- **Civil disobedience**, the active, professed refusal of a citizen to comply with certain laws, demands, or commands of a government
- **Protestant Nonconformism**, understood the state of Protestants in England and Wales who do not adhere to the Church of England
- **Nonconformity to the world**, a Christian principle important especially among Anabaptist groups
- **Gypsies**, through their traditional nomadic lifestyle and culture, merit recognition as nonconformists par excellence -- a pattern now extended to drifters and vagrants as ["travellers"](#)
- **Deportees and exiles**: Deportation is the expulsion of a person or group of people from a place or country. Forced displacement or forced migration of an individual or a group may be caused by deportation, for example ethnic cleansing, and other reasons. In common usage the expulsion of foreign nationals is usually called deportation, whereas the expulsion of nationals is called [extradition](#), banishment, [exile](#), or [penal transportation](#). All countries reserve the right to deport persons without [right of abode](#) even those who are longtime [residents](#) or possess [permanent residency](#).

Deportation of foreigners is recognized as an option in response to the pandemic (Felipe De La Hoz, [Facing Deportation in a Pandemic](#), *New Republic*, 19 March 2020; Katherine Hignett, [Covid-19 Vaccines: Deportation Fears May Be Limiting Uptake Among Undocumented Migrants In The U.K.](#), *Forbes*, 6 March 2021). However it is also recognized that deportations may contribute to the spread of the disease ([U.S. Deportations During Global Pandemic Risk Spreading COVID-19](#), *Washington Office on Latin America*, 9 April 2020).

- **Criminals**: Namely those committing an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority according to legislative measures. Clearly any active opposition to government authority lends itself to recognition as a crime. There are trends towards framing anti-vaccination activism in that manner, especially when this involves dissemination of what is defined as dangerously misleading misinformation. Given an emergency like a pandemic, emergency measures may enable the criminalisation of such activism (Melinda C. Mills, [Should spreading anti-vaccine misinformation be criminalised?](#) *BMJ*, 17 February 2021, 372)

There is a tragic irony to the fact that it is incarcerated criminals who have been the subject of notorious experimentation on humans with their questionable consent. Cases cited include that of [Joseph Mengele](#) at the [Auschwitz concentration camp](#) (where he performed [deadly experiments on prisoners](#)). Curiously comparable are the cases of [unethical human experimentation in the USA](#).

Since the COVID-19 vaccines are necessarily experimental, as has been authoritatively emphasized, the controversial question has been raised as to whether mandatory vaccination constitutes a violation under the rules of the [Nuremberg Code](#) (1947), as widely claimed on social media. The Nuremberg Military Tribunals, prosecuted doctors and administrators

for their roles in conducting medical experiments on concentration camp inmates -- thereby providing a definition of "Permissible Medical Experiments".

- **"Degenerates"** and **"Untouchables"**: Degenerates have been historically recognized as those people who no longer have the same intrinsic value as previously, consequent on continual adulterations having gradually affected the quality of their blood. Notably retained as a concept by Nazi ideology and its succeeding far-right white supremacy emulators concerned with the adulteration of racial identity. Readily conflated with genetic mental and physical disability as justification for discriminatory practices in the treatment of indigenous peoples -- deemed soulless, inhuman or **subhuman** -- to the point of justifying eugenic programs.

By questionable association, related labels are readily applied to those who dissociate themselves in any way from mainstream norms -- perhaps collectively to be recognized in the terms of Hillary Clinton as a **"Basket of Deplorables"** whilst seeking election to the US presidency in 2016.

The related notion of untouchability results from the practice of **ostracising** a group of people regarded as "untouchables", most notably as ascribed in the **Vedic Hindu** literature to persons of "low caste" or to persons excluded from the **caste system** resulting in the segregation and persecutions from the people regarded as "higher" caste.

With respect to COVID-19 vaccination, people who exercise their lawful right at common law to refuse a vaccine become a class of *"untermenschen"* or untouchables, who in the eyes of the state and a largely apathetic public, deserve to have their basic freedoms taken away. Usefully contrasted with such untouchables are those at the other end of the social spectrum, namely the "unpunishables" -- untouchable by law. They include recipients of presidential pardons, deceased criminals, diplomats, fugitives, and those whose crimes occurred long ago. Collectively, unpunishable criminals outnumber the "ordinary" criminals that most scholars study (Mihailis Diamantis, *Unpunishable Criminals*, SSRN, 26 November 2020)

- **Civilian internees**: Namely those forced to reside in **internment** camps by an authority engaged in a war for security reasons (as indicated with respect to the "ideologically suspect" above). Historical examples include **Japanese American internment** and **internment of German Americans** in the USA during World War II; Japan interned Dutch, British, and American civilians in Asia in that period. Given the "war narrative" and the focus on health security, the procedure could well be extended to vaccine refuseniks as posing a health risk. Provisional confinement for quarantine reasons could already be seen as anticipating this -- with the possibility of the further development of the practice.

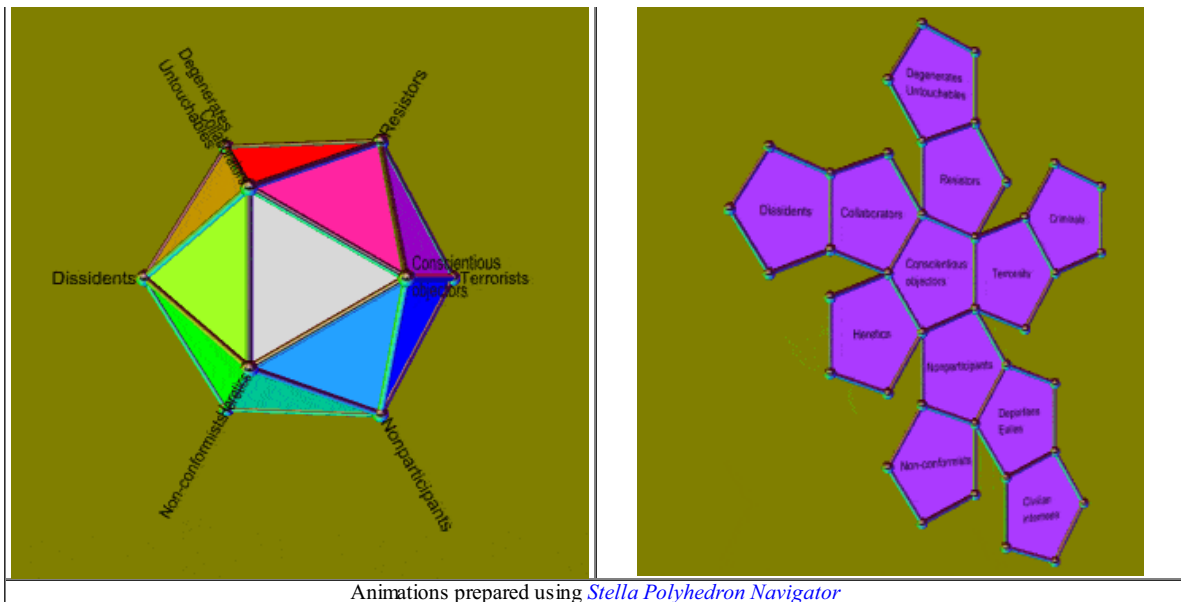
Will the unvaccinated be "rounded up" and interned as a (health) security risk? Perhaps in gated communities and ghettos? In the case of Canada, rumours to that effect have been formally dismissed as misinformation (Mel Woods, *That COVID-19 Internment Camp Conspiracy Is Totally False, Health Canada Says*, HuffPost, 21 October 2020). Use of FEMA camps in the USA for that purpose has been associated with the long-standing **FEMA camps conspiracy theory**.

The pattern could well be recognized in policies with regard to:

- resettlement of **indigenous peoples** and their effective confinement to **reservations**: Reservations for vaccine refuseniks?
- the practice of apartheid, and its **"pass laws"**, more generally explored in relation to the pandemic -- but typically failing to distinguish between the limited access of many to vaccines and the handling of those who refuse them (the "non-whites"):
 - Sarah Wheaton: *Vaccine apartheid or corona-utopia: 6 post-pandemic futures*, Politico, 9 March 2021)
 - Winnie Byanyima: *A global vaccine apartheid is unfolding* (The Guardian, 29 January 2021)
 - Sharon Lerner: *World Faces COVID-19 "vaccine apartheid"* (The Intercept, 1 January 1 2021,
 - Alice Rothchild: *Under Israeli Apartheid, There Are Two Different Pandemics* (Truthout, 28 February 2021)

The subtitle of this document highlights the ambiguity of the refusenik "sacrifice". Are they to be sacrificed as martyrs through any of the playbooks above -- perhaps even to the extent recalling the dubious **Aztec practice** for the good of the collective? Or are they to be honoured for forgoing the guarantee of safety which so many are anxious to ensure for themselves at any cost -- whether or not others might benefit from the limited supply?

Indicative visualization of policy playbooks for social exclusion	
Exclusion policy "mine" (in a social "minefield")?	Entrapment net for social exclusion?



Animations prepared using *Stella Polyhedron Navigator*

Eliciting complicity and managing consent

It is curious to note the contrast between the efforts deployed by authorities in response to the pandemic in contrast to the efforts deployed in response to other global crises faced by humanity and the planet. The contrast with the token response to climate change is striking. Whether or not the pandemic response is elaborating a policy playbook which will be deployed in response to climate change -- post-COVID -- remains to be seen. Of particular interest is the manner in which **universal injection** can be seen as a physical surrogate for the **universal indoctrination** attempted by religions, ideologies and science.

A key to further insight is the manner in which authority is being employed in its struggle with the peoples of the world -- a new variant of the "great game" (*Playing the Great Game with Intelligence: authority versus the people*, 2013). A major weapon for authority has become evident in the **cultivation of fear** -- for which the **Global War on Terrorism** has been a precursor.

It is in this sense that it is appropriate to recognize the extent to which the pandemic is a "memetic disease" evoking **memetic warfare** in response (*COVID-19 as a Memetic Disease -- an epidemic of panic: learning from terrorism, communism, fascism, and evil, as pandemics of the past*, 2020). It falls within a long-established pattern of response to "others" (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others*, 2009). There is little clarity on how to engage with otherness of vaccine resisters (*Elaborating a Declaration on Combating Anti-otherness -- including anti-science, anti-spiritual, anti-women, anti-gay, anti-socialism, anti-animal, and anti-negativity*, 2018).

Whilst the parallels with Nazi propaganda can be easily dismissed, it could be said that the pandemic has offered every opportunity for an "occupation of the world" by forms of **authoritarianism**, namely a mindset through which complicity and conformity are elicited -- a dynamic clearly relished by many at the local level. This trend is recognized in studies of **fascism** in relation to the pandemic:

- Stephen Thomson and Eric C Ip: *COVID-19 emergency measures and the impending authoritarian pandemic* (*Journal of Law and the Biosciences*, 7, January-June 2020, 1)
- Shadi Hamid: *Reopening the World: how the pandemic is reinforcing authoritarianism* (*Brookings*, 16 June 2020)
- Todd K. Hartman, et al: *The Authoritarian Dynamic During the COVID-19 Pandemic: effects on nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment* (*Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11 January 2021)
- Frederico Finchelstein and Jason Stanley: *The Fascist Politics of the Pandemic* (*Project Syndicate*, 4 May 2020)
- Richard Calland: *Fascism is the post-pandemic threat* (*Mail and Guardian*, 4 February 2021)
- Ejeris Dixon, *Fascists Are Using COVID-19 to Advance Their Agenda* (*Truthout*, 11 April 2020).

The use of information during the Nazi regime, as with the many authoritarian practices of the major religions, can be understood as processes through which ideological complicity and conformity are elicited. It is intriguing to note that "**consent management**" is a system, process or set of policies for allowing consumers and patients to determine what health information they are willing to permit their various care providers to access.

Distinct from that focus -- but appropriate to this argument, given the complicity of corporate controlled media -- is the much-cited study by **Noam Chomsky** and **Edward S. Herman** (*Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media*, Pantheon, 1988). Of particular relevance, this could be understood as followed by the study by historians of science **Naomi Oreskes** and **Erik M. Conway** (*Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco Smoke to global warming*, Bloomsbury Press, 2010)

Many aspects of the promotion of vaccine acceptance are now indistinguishable from the "tricks" used in increasingly desperate ploys of problematic consumer marketing campaigns (Kit Knightly, *5 ways they're trying to trick you into taking the Covid "vaccine"*, *OffGuardian*, 4 March 2021).

As with censorship, the manner in which vaccines are being sought, produced, marketed, and framed as highly desirable -- if not mandatory -- merits comparison with the **sale of indulgences** by the Catholic Church in centuries past. As a means of ensuring ideological conformity, these were presented as a means of reducing the amount of punishment for sins that a person had to undergo in the afterlife. Is the safety offered by vaccination comparable with saving one's soul?

The abuse of indulgences, mainly through their commercialization, became a serious problem which the Church was unable to restrain effectively. Is this pattern to be foreseen in relation to vaccination, to immunity passports, and to health certificates? Curiously the cost of a vaccine shot to governments has proven to be less than immediately transparent:

- [Belgian minister tweets EU's Covid vaccine price list to anger of manufacturers](#) (*The Guardian*, 19 December 2020)
- [Europe is paying less than U.S. for many coronavirus vaccines](#) (*The Washington Post*, 19 December 2020)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Prices Revealed From Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca](#) (*Observer*, 23 November 2020)
- [EU Blow: Shambolic vaccine rollout to cost continent billions: new analysis](#) (*Daily Express*, 4 February 2021)
- [What do Covid vaccines cost -- and who is paying over the odds?](#) (*The Week*, 22 January 2021)
- [Poorer countries hit with higher price tag for Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine](#) (*Politico*, 22 February 2021)
- [Hungary pays \\$36 per dose for a Chinese vaccine.](#) (*The New York Times*, 12 March 2021)
- [BioNTech CEO: Initial vaccine cost estimate was more than €50](#) (*Politico*, 20 February 2021)

In a report by *Forbes* on [How Much Will A Covid-19 Vaccine Cost?](#) (17 November 2020), it is noted that:

- Pfizer and BioNTech have set the initial price at \$19.50 a dose, which comes to \$39 per patient (for a two-dose regimen)
- Moderna has a price around \$50 per patient or \$25 a dose.
- the prices are in line with the annual flu vaccine, which is around \$40 for uninsured patients

Appreciating the value of critical thinking in time of crisis

Role of critical thinking: The COVID-19 pandemic naturally evokes the question as to the evidence for the application of [critical thinking](#) and where it is to be found -- in contrast to "criticism of thinking" and the widespread criticism of those asking challenging questions. As usefully argued by Ghassan Hage:

A critical intellectual, someone whose job is to think, reflect and critique can be the last thing one needs in times of practical urgency. If anything such people can be a hindrance to the recovery effort. Padoxically, in such times, critical intellectuals are more necessary than ever. **Pandemics, for instance, invite war metaphors, and unleash reactionary themes of 'cohesion', 'unity' and 'common purpose' that require being challenged.** To be a critical intellectual in such times is to be aware of, and learn how to negotiate, such a contradiction. (*The Haunting Figure of the Useless Academic: critical thinking in coronavirus time*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23, 2020, 4) [emphasis added]

With respect to critical thinking, David Guthrie asks:

Critical thinking is structured thought. It employs reflection, research and synthesis of information. Importantly, it is logical but also considers other perspectives, cultural influences and context.... Your **ability to 'read between the lines' or recognise flawed information or arguments becomes a distinct skill in critical thinking best-practice.** With awareness of the [fifteen commonly recognised logical fallacies](#), examples I see in the current environment are particularly 'appeal to emotion', 'false cause' and 'appeal to authority'. You can employ your critical thinking to consider the validity of information and understand if your thinking is being influenced. (*How Are You Thinking in the COVID-19 World?* *The Cove*, 6 August 2020) [emphasis added]

Sandra Love emphasizes:

Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic require us to lead by example through critical thinking. Critical thinking is a research-validated tool in crisis management because it helps us sort through information, gain an accurate view of the situation, and make decisions.... **Applying critical thinking skills helps us wade through uncertainty and reach sound conclusions.** (*Critical Thinking During COVID* *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, October 2020) [emphasis added]

Colin Seale argues:

Yet, critical thinking is still a luxury good. This crucial set of skills and dispositions, including reasoning, analyzing multiple perspectives, and displaying the healthy sense of skepticism needed to seek evidence to support or refute claims is notoriously hard to teach. Complicating matters further, critical thinking is even harder to teach across different contexts. The critical thinking required to ponder complex questions in medicine, for instance, requires insight into subject-specific expertise and contexts vastly different questions a social media marketer or agricultural expert would explore. **But difficulty alone cannot explain the cognitive dissonance that exists when we claim critical thinking is such a crucial aspect of future-readiness** for all students, but face a reality where only 1 in 10 educators teach critical thinking. The critical thinking gap is one of the most significant, yet overlooked equity challenges in education today. (*The Case For Critical Thinking: the COVID-19 pandemic and an urgent call to close the critical thinking gap in education*, *Forbes*, 10 April 2020) [emphasis added]

For Victoria Tzortziou Brown:

Consensus-seeking tendencies can be so strong they can lead to groupthink among leaders as well as followers and can compel

people to ignore clear warning signs and pursue a disastrous course of action. There are several examples of poor political, policy and business decisions that have been attributed to groupthink, ranging from the Challenger space shuttle disaster to the Watergate scandal. **The risk of leadership groupthink increases at times of crisis**, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, when uncertainty, high pressure and time constraints can create tension and anxiety resulting in decision-makers losing their own critical reasoning skills, conforming to the group's thought process and coming to an uncritical consensus....Critical thinking is not just an important skill for those leaders in positions of power, authority, and influence. It is also one of the most important characteristics of good followers. (*Covid-19: critical thinking in times of crisis*, Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management, 12 June 2020) [emphasis added]

Critical thinking by authorities? The points above give focus to the question as to whether there is clear evidence of critical thinking on the part of authorities -- whether governmental or scientific -- in elaborating strategies in response to the pandemic. Is there a marked tendency to dismiss all criticism as misinformation or disinformation -- rather than being able to distinguish valuable critical thinking? To the extent that the United Nations (for example) promotes and employs critical thinking, this would appear to be unfortunately focused on the mitigation of hate speech rather than on the neglected possibility that groupthink associated with official policies merits appropriate challenge:

Ensuring that education and training, especially at schools, including via online platforms, addresses COVID-19 related hate speech, disinformation and misinformation by encouraging critical thinking, social and emotional skills and responsible engagement, through global citizenship education⁷ and human rights education (*United Nations Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19 related Hate Speech*, 11 May 2020)

The implication that evaluation of the strategies of authorities in now way calls for critical review -- being unquestionably correct -- is again reinforced in the case of the EU, where the focus is on the disinformation to which citizens are held to be primarily vulnerable:

Empowering citizens, raising citizens awareness and increasing societal resilience implies enabling citizens to participate in the democratic debate by preserving access to information and freedom of expression, promoting citizens' media and information literacy, including critical thinking and digital skills. This can be done through media literacy projects and support to civil society organisations. (*Coronavirus: EU strengthens action to tackle disinformation*, European Commission, 10 June 2020)

Analysis of use of scientific data by COVID sceptics: There is an assumption that critical thinking is somehow the monopoly of authorities in their efforts to formulate a coherent response in the face misinformed criticism by sceptics, s could be understood to follow from the study by the World Economic Forum (noted above).

The question can be reframed as to whether there is evidence that sceptics are indeed well-informed by scientific data but choose to interpret that data otherwise (Rebecca Onion, *COVID Sceptics Don't Just Need More Critical Thinking*, *Slate*, 11 March 2021). The latter reports on a massive study by the MIT Visualization Group, supported by the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, MIT Digital Humanities, and the MIT Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing (SERC) Initiative (Crystal Lee, et al, *The Data Visualizations Behind COVID-19 Scepticism Research*, 1 March 2021).

The project explored how COVID-19 sceptics use public health data and social media to advocate for reopening the economy and against mask mandates by studying half a million tweets, over 41,000 visualizations, and spent six months lurking in anti-mask Facebook groups. This resulted in the generation of a remarkable graph of almost 400,000 users and over 583,000 connections between them, with an average of 3 connections per user.

Although the report focuses on anti-masking scepticism, rather than on subsequent vaccination resistance, it notes that:

Despite over [28 million COVID cases and 500,000 deaths in the United States](#) (as of this writing), [a report](#) from Pew Research Center shows that 39% of US adults say that they would not get the coronavirus vaccine and 47% say that they are not concerned about contracting the disease. The contrast between these statistics is troubling: how do people living in the epicenter of the COVID pandemic believe that the pandemic is overblown?...

We discovered that these [anti-mask] groups leverage skills and tropes that are the markers of traditional scientific inquiry. Anti-mask data visualizations directly contradict those made by newspapers and public health organizations, and it can often be difficult to reconcile these discussions around the data... In particular, anti-mask groups are critical about the data sources used to make visualizations in data-driven stories. They often engage in lengthy conversation about the limitations of imperfect data, particularly in a country where testing has been spotty and inefficient....

These anti-mask activists therefore conclude that unreliable statistics cannot be the basis of policies that actively harm people by isolating them and leaving businesses to collapse en masse. For these users, understanding how and why metrics come to be is crucial to understanding whether the pandemic is as bad as the news makes it out to be... Most importantly, many of these anti-mask groups implored their opponents to simply follow the data, as sound data (and their visualizations) are crucial to making informed decisions. In their view, the data simply doesn't support public health measures like closing schools or asking people to wear masks.

The many data visualizations simultaneously challenge scientific consensus and represent an act of resistance against the stifling influence

of central government, big business, and academia. The report addresses the question:

So how do these groups diverge from scientific orthodoxy if they are using the same data? We have identified a few sleights of hand that contribute to the broader epistemological crisis we identify between these groups and the majority of scientific researchers.

For instance, anti-mask users argue that there is an outsized emphasis on deaths versus cases: if the current datasets are fundamentally subjective and prone to manipulation (e.g., increased levels of faulty testing), then deaths are the only reliable markers of the pandemic's severity....

Most fundamentally, anti-mask groups mistrust the scientific establishment because they believe that the institution has been corrupted by profit motives and by progressive politics hellbent on increasing social control.

Another point of contention is that of **lived experience**: in many of these cases, users do not themselves know a person who has experienced COVID, and the statistics they see on the news show the severity of the pandemic in vastly different parts of the country...

Arguing that anti-maskers simply need more scientific literacy is to characterize their approach as inexplicably extreme, and these users [of scientific data] interpret these calls as further evidence of the "Radical Left's" impulse to condescend to citizens who actually espouse common sense....

While academic science is traditionally a system for producing knowledge within a laboratory, validating it through peer review, and sharing results within subsidiary communities, anti-maskers reject this hierarchical social model, as they espouse a vision of science that is radically egalitarian and individualist. Calls for data or scientific literacy therefore risk recapitulating narratives that anti-mask views are the product of individual ignorance rather than coordinated information campaigns that rely heavily on networked participation....

These skeptical narratives are powerful because they resonate with these people's lived experience and -- crucially -- because they are posted by influential accounts across influential platforms.

Case study: Australia's vaccination policy

Especially valuable to reasoned argument is the pre-pandemic context provided with regard to **undone science** in distinguishing a default vaccination policy from the introduction of new vaccines in response to new diseases (*A critical analysis of the Australian government's rationale for its vaccination policy*, University of Wollongong, 2015). The high degree of controversy evoked by that thesis by [Judy Wilyman](#), widely disputed by parties representing those complicit in the system criticized, exemplifies the challenge with respect to balanced discussion of COVID vaccine resistance ([Brian Martin](#), *Judy Wilyman, PhD: how to understand attacks on a research student*, University of Wollongong, 11 January 2016; also *publications on scientific and technological controversies*).

For Wilyman:

A critique of Australia's vaccination policies is necessary because the government has adopted vaccination as the default position for certain groups in Australian society, even whilst claiming vaccination in Australia is not compulsory. Pressure is being placed on individuals to use multiple vaccines by linking financial incentives in the form of welfare benefits, childcare places and employment to the use of an expanding number of vaccines.... (p. 23)

If necessary research to improve knowledge about health outcomes has been discussed but not funded, it is termed 'undone science'... It is important that the funded studies are designed with appropriate parameters to ensure they provide sufficient empirical evidence about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines in the community... (p. 27)

I have used the framework of political economy and undone science to examine the government's claims that vaccines are a safe, effective and necessary preventative strategy for preventing infectious diseases. The investigation examines the political and economic influences on the evidence that is used to make these claims... (p. 29)

... public health policy is being designed on political decisions made without complete scientific knowledge. It provides the political framework for the existence of undone science and explains the consequences of its existence in public policies to population health... (p. 66)

A universal management strategy that carries a risk to sub-groups in the population needs to be openly debated by the community. The dominance of scientific experts in vaccination policy is questionable because of the increasing gaps in scientific knowledge due to undone science. This can synchronise with a lack of transparency in risk assessment to compromise health management strategies... (p. 138)

The existence of undone science illustrates how cultural factors and societal beliefs can mould the science that is produced in scientific institutions. In a capitalist economic model of health the science is shaped by profit and not public interest because this is a fundamental cultural value inherent in this system.... (p. 218)

... structures within the political and academic system can act as a barrier in preventing some important areas of science from being acknowledged and funded. This type of bias is hidden from the public. In the globalisation era it is observed that the peer-review process and production of validated scientific knowledge is being influenced by vested interests that control the financial channels of the peer-review process... In this culture corporate members are acting as reviewers and consultants of scientific

research and they systematically prevent the dissemination of scientific research that may be in conflict with their vested interests... (p. 218). This statement is supported by the previous editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Marcia Angell. She states:

‘It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*’ (Angell, 2009, p2).

Undone science also includes science that is founded on assumptions and extrapolations as opposed to direct empirical observations. An example of this type of undone science is the development of safety standards for the use of chemicals in humans and the environment. The majority of data that is used to establish safety standards for toxic chemicals is collected from observations in animal studies or naturally occurring accidents rather than controlled clinical trials on humans.... Extrapolation produces uncertainty from both ‘known’ and ‘unknown knowledge’... Unknown processes can influence the results in these cases. In some cases this uncertainty arises because the sponsor has chosen to ignore researching this area for political reasons.... (p. 222)

Whilst some scientists have attempted to enforce the precautionary principle in a form that states ‘The absence of certainty is not an excuse to do nothing’ the industry representatives are reversing this principle to state ‘there is no evidence of harm’ therefore no action is required... (p. 225)

Policy-makers, scientists and the public are increasingly acknowledging that harmful consequences of new procedures and technologies cannot be reliably determined through the usual risk assessment framework. This is because the areas of ignorance that result from undone science are increasing (p. 225)

The original thesis has subsequently been published in book form: Judy Wilyman, *Vaccination -- Australia's Loss of Health Freedom: a critical analysis of the Australian Government's rationale for its vaccination policy* (*Vaccination Decisions*, 2020). With respect to COVID-19, the author has articulated a critique of the current application of the Precautionary Principle (*Misapplication of the Precautionary Principle has Misplaced the Burden of Proof of Vaccine Safety Science, Public Health Policy, and The Law*, 2, 2020) and has been interviewed by the Health Australia Party (*COVID-19: Restrictions, Flawed Testing and Conflicts of Interest in Govt*, 17 September 2020).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

For further updates on this site, [subscribe here](#)