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Cock-up or Conspiracy? Understanding COVID-19 as a ‘Structural Deep Event’

(Updated July 2023 based upon an article [originally published by PANDA in March 2022](#))

It’s been three years since COVID-19 emerged as a dominant and, for some time, all-consuming issue. Now there are signs we are witnessing the unravelling of some of the key policy responses – blanket lockdowns and population-wide injections – that have been so aggressively promoted by many, although not all, governments around the world. There is also reluctance by many to concede there have been problems with the COVID-19 responses to date. However, doubts about the efficacy of lockdowns are now [widely aired](#) and [well substantiated](#) and there is increasing [evidence for](#), and [awareness of](#), the dangers surrounding the mRNA genetic vaccine. And it is at least clear that large numbers of people, [including scientists and academics](#), are expressing views at odds with authority or mainstream claims that lockdowns reduce mortality and that mass injections are a rational and efficacious solution.

As debate over ‘The Science’ increases, more and more people now question whether or not there is more to COVID-19 in terms of underlying agendas, in particular with respect to global-level actors such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and so-called ‘Big Pharma’. In the early days of COVID-19 any such talk was immediately dismissed as ‘conspiratorial’ nonsense and, broadly speaking, people raising non-mainstream doubts about any aspect of the COVID-19 issue were subjected to vilification by [‘authoritative’ voices and corporate media](#).

Such dynamics were very much in evidence with respect to debate over the origins of COVID-19. And yet, today, the so-called ‘lab leak theory’, whatever its veracity, has moved from a [‘sphere of deviance’](#) to a [‘sphere of legitimate controversy’](#) with mainstream scientists through to legacy media and [governments](#) discussing it. At the same time, there is increased public awareness of various political agendas, for example the WEF’s ‘great reset’ visions. Indeed, a refrain from some quarters is that yesterday’s conspiracy theory is today’s fact. So, if all this is not about a virus, what might actually be going on?

COVID-19 and the ‘Structural Deep Event’ concept

First and foremost, it is necessary to dispel the idea that any attempt to understand intersections between political-economic agendas and COVID-19 is absurd or crazy. Here, we can learn much from Professor Michael Parenti’s 1993 talk on [conspiracy and class power](#):

No ruling class could survive if it wasn’t attentive to its own interests; consciously trying to anticipate, control or initiate events at home and abroad both overtly and secretly. It is hard to imagine a modern state if there would be no conspiracy, no plans, no machinations, deceptions or secrecy within the circles of power. In the United States there have been conspiracies aplenty ... they are all now a matter of public record. (Parenti, 1993)

It is a fact, then, that powerful political and economic actors do not blindly and irrationally stumble through history but rather strategise, plan and take actions that are expected to achieve results. They may make mistakes and plans are not always successful, but that does

not mean they do not try and sometimes succeed in their aims and objectives. For example the tobacco industry worked long and hard, and with some success, to shape scientific and political discourse regarding [their product](#) and delay public awareness of its dangers.

Second, it is also true that powerful actors can have clear perceptions of their interests and are guided by the desire to realise, protect and further them. Where those interests come from might be reducible to any number of material or ideological influences. But origins do not matter, powerful actors still have conceptions of their interests and what they want to do.

Third, in today's world of weakening democracies, corporate conglomerates and extreme concentration of wealth, it is also true that many political and economic actors are extremely powerful, whether measured in relative or absolute terms. They have resources and skills at their disposal that others do not. One potent tool available is that of propaganda, which grants significant leverage and influence to those with the skills and resources to disseminate it. For those liberals who remain at peace with their world - believing that powerful actors simply relay their political, economic and social goals to knowledgeable publics who then consent, or refuse to consent, to those goals - the fact that [propaganda](#) is [exercised extensively](#) across liberal democratic states comes as a shock. Indeed, many mainstream scholars struggle to recognise the role of propaganda even in well documented examples such as that of the tobacco industry shaping the science on the [harms of smoking](#) or the [bogus claims regarding weapons of mass destruction \(WMD\)](#) used to justify the invasion of Iraq. Recognising that propaganda is a major component of exercising power within so-called liberal democratic states logically removes any justification for the assumptions that a) powerful actors cannot or do not manipulate publics and b) citizenry are sufficiently autonomous and knowledgeable to always be able to grant or withhold consent.

And as Parenti observed, history is replete with examples of powerful actors successfully pursuing goals and manipulating populations in the process. In the days after 9/11, we now know that British and American officials were planning a wide-ranging series of actions – so called ‘regime-change’ wars – that went well outside the scope of the official narrative regarding combating alleged ‘Islamic fundamentalist terrorism’. One British embassy cable stated, four days after 9/11, that ‘[t]he “regime-change hawks” in Washington are arguing that a coalition put together for one purpose [against international terrorism] could be used to clear up other [problems in the region](#)’. Within weeks British Prime Minister Tony Blair communicated with US president George W. Bush saying, amongst many other things, ‘If toppling Saddam is a prime objective, it is far easier to do it with Syria and Iran in favour or acquiescing rather than [hitting all three at once](#)’. As these two western leaders conspired at the geo-strategic level, a low-level ‘spin doctor’, Jo Moore, commented on the utility of 9/11 in terms of day-to-day ‘media management’, noting that it was [‘a good day to bury bad news](#)’. Jo Moore was forced to resign, Bush and Blair laid the tracks for 20-plus years of conflict in the international system, including the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the recently ended 20-year occupation of Afghanistan. And today, there is substantial evidence that the foundational official story regarding the 9/11 crimes is in fact false with [the evidence clearly pointing toward](#) the involvement of a number of state-level actors, including within the US.

Professor [Peter Dale Scott \(University of California, Berkley\)](#) developed the idea of the ‘structural deep event’ and this is useful in capturing the idea that powerful actors frequently work to instigate, exploit or exacerbate events in ways that enable substantive and long-lasting societal transformations. These frequently involve, according to Scott, a combination of legal and illegal activity implicating both legitimate and public-facing

political structures as well as covert or hidden parts of government – the so-called deep state which is understood as the interface ‘between the public, the constitutionally established state, and the deep forces behind it of wealth, power, and violence outside the government’. So, for example, Scott argues that the JFK assassination became an event that enabled the maintenance of the Cold War whilst the 9/11 crimes likewise enabled the global ‘war on terror’, and that both involved a variety of actors not usually recognized in mainstream or official [accounts of these events](#). It is important to note that Scott claims his approach does not necessarily imply a simplistic grand conspiracy, but is rather based on the idea of opaque networks of powerful and influential groups whose interests converge, at points, and who act to either instigate or exploit events in order to pursue their objectives.

Applied to COVID-19, a ‘structural deep event’ reading would point toward a constellation of actors, with overlapping interests, working to advance agendas, and being enabled to do so because of COVID-19. Such a reading does not necessarily include or exclude the possibility of COVID-19 being an instigated event and one that functioned, in the widest sense, as a propaganda event enabling powerful actors to realise their goals. What are the grounds for seriously considering a ‘structural deep event’ reading?

The damaging COVID-19 response

There is now an overwhelmingly strong case to be made that the key responses to COVID-19 – lockdowns, cloth masking and mass injection – were, on their own terms, flawed.

A large swathe of scientists and medical professionals are now clearly and repeatedly warning governments and populations that [lockdowns are harmful](#) and [ineffective](#) whilst mass injection of populations with an experimental genetic vaccine resulted in [substantial harm](#)s. Indeed, it is increasingly clear that the use of the PCR test, which gave a [skewed impression of infection and death rates](#) leading to the locking down of entire(healthy) populations for extended periods of time in response to a respiratory virus, and then attempting to submit people to an experimental injection on a repeated basis, were not [scientifically robust](#) policies. As of mid 2023, although causes are disputed, there continues to be worrying [excess mortality across](#) many countries. It is also now clear to many that the scale and nature of COVID-19 was exaggerated in a way that suggested the existence of an entirely new and unusually deadly pathogen that demanded drastic responses when, in fact, [this was not the case](#).

It is also now apparent that a remarkable and wide-ranging propaganda effort, involving extensive use of behavioral scientists, was used to mobilize support for lockdowns and, later on, injections as well as exaggerate any threat posed. An early [paper published in April 2020](#), authored by over 40 academics, presented a blueprint for how ‘social and behavioural sciences can be used to help align human behaviour with the recommendations of epidemiologists and public health experts’. Furthermore, many Western governments have behavioural psychology units attached to the highest levels of government, designed to shape thoughts and behaviour, and these were engaged early on [during the COVID-19 event](#). According to [Iain Davis](#), in February 2020 the WHO had established the [Technical Advisory Group](#) on Behavioural Insights and Sciences for Health (TAG); ‘The group is chaired by Prof. Cass Sunstein and its members include behavioural change experts from the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Prof. Susan Michie, from the UK, is also a TAG participant’. In the UK, behavioural scientists from SPI-B (Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviour) [reconvened on 13 February 2020](#) and

subsequently advised the UK government on how to secure compliance with non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). Broadly, these propaganda techniques included [maximising perceived threat](#) in order [to scare populations](#) into complying with lockdown and accepting the experimental genetic vaccines as well as utilising non-consensual measures involving incentivization and coercion through, for example, various mandates.

We also now know that propaganda activities included smear campaigns against dissenting scientists and, in at least one major case, were initiated by [high-level officials](#): in Autumn 2020, Anthony Fauci and National Institute of Health director Francis Collins discussed the need to swiftly shut down the [Great Barrington Declaration](#), whose authors were advocating an alternative (and historically [orthodox](#)) COVID-19 response focused on protecting high-risk individuals and thus avoiding destructive lockdown measures. Collins [wrote in an email](#) that this ‘proposal from the three fringe epidemiologists ... seems to be getting a lot of attention ... There needs to be a quick and devastating published takedown of its premises’. Rather than a [civilised and robust scientific debate](#), a smear campaign followed. Furthermore, censorship and suppression appears to have been experienced widely across [swathes of academia](#) whilst the White House is currently [being sued with respect](#) to First Amendment violations against scientists including Professors Kuldorff and Bhattacharya from the Great Barrington Declaration.

The legacy corporate media, social media platforms and large swathes of academia appear to have played an important role in disseminating this propaganda and promoting the official narrative on COVID-19. The proximity of legacy corporate media to political and economic power has been [well understood for many decades](#): concentration of ownership, reliance upon advertising revenue, deference to elite sources, vulnerability to smear campaigns and ideological positioning are all understood to sharply limit the autonomy of legacy media (these factors also arguably [shape academia](#)). With COVID-19 these dynamics are exacerbated by, for example, direct regulatory influence, such as Ofcom [direction to UK broadcasters](#), and censorship by ‘Big Tech’ of views deviating from those of the authorities and the WHO. The Trusted News Initiative (TNI) and Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA) [have coordinated major legacy media](#) in order to counter what they claim to be ‘misinformation’, and this appears to have played a role in suppressing legitimate scientific criticism whilst elevating ‘official’ narratives. At the global ‘governance’ level, both the [United Nations](#) and the [WHO](#) promoted campaigns around combating alleged ‘disinformation’ and the so-called ‘misinfo-demic’. Currently moves are afoot to further strengthen elite control over media discourse [via legislation](#) aimed at preventing so-called ‘misinformation’, ‘disinformation’ and ‘online harms’ and which is being rolled out over [multiple legislatures](#).

Finally, confirmation of direct involvement of US authorities with censorship decisions by the social media company *Twitter* has been presented in the [‘Twitter Files’](#) and, in the UK, further corroboration regarding the role and significance of a [Counter Disinformation Unit](#) within the UK government. Matt Taibbi’s work on the [‘Twitter Files’](#), presents what is described as the Censorship Industrial Complex, or [Counter-Disinformation Industry](#), which links universities, foundations, NGOs and federal agencies and which have actively censored content on twitter [during the COVID-19 event](#). Critically, these censorship regimes dovetail with the aforementioned legislative developments relating to [‘disinformation’ and ‘online harms’](#).

Extreme and flawed policy responses – societal lockdown and mandated mass injection – combined with widespread propaganda activities aimed at securing the compliance of the population might be explicable in a number of ways. For example:

- 1) The cock-up thesis might be invoked to explain all of this as an irrational panic response by well-intentioned or ideologically driven actors who got things badly wrong and imitated each other while doing so.
- 2) It might be that these policy responses are the result of narrow vested interests and corruption.
- 3) Powerful actors might have sought to take advantage of COVID-19, even instigate the event, so as to advance substantial political and economic agendas and, as part of this, helped to promote advantageous narratives during the COVID-19 event.

Following two years of massive societal disruption aimed at containing a seasonal respiratory virus and the persistence of some aspects of the COVID-19 narrative despite substantive scientific challenges, it is clearly necessary to take seriously the very real possibility that vested interests and substantial political agendas underly the COVID-19 event. So, what is the key evidence for explanations two and three?

Manipulation and exploitation of Health Agencies: Regulatory Capture at the NIH and CDC plus the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Pandemic Preparedness Agenda

Evidence for vested interests and corruption has come, in particular, from analyses of US regulatory bodies and the actions of the WHO. In particular, [evidence has emerged](#) showing that key authorities in the US – the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – under the influence of Anthony Fauci, the Chief Medical Officer to the US President, have suffered from conflicts of interest. The term ‘regulatory capture’ is frequently used to describe this situation.^[1]

For example, Robert F. Kennedy Jr’s detailed analysis of the US-led COVID-19 response in [The Real Anthony Fauci](#), documents the corrupt relationship between so-called ‘Big Pharma’ and Anthony Fauci arguing that, to all intents and purposes, there has been regulatory capture whereby pharmaceutical companies and public officials enjoy mutually beneficial arrangements. This mutual infiltration is understood by Kennedy to underpin the COVID-19 response, especially the commitment to a ‘vaccine-only’ solution and suppression of preventative treatments such as Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ). By way of example, Kennedy relays the case of [Dr Tess Lawrie and WHO researcher Andrew Hill](#) in which Hill appeared to confirm there was pressure to delay publication of results supporting the efficacy of Ivermectin. Regarding HCQ, Kennedy writes:

By 2020, we shall see, Bill Gates exercised firm control over WHO and deployed the agency in his effort to discredit HCQ’ ...

On June 17, the WHO - for which Mr. Gates is the largest funder after the US, and over which Mr. Gates and Dr Fauci exercise tight control – called for the halt of HCQ trials in hundreds of hospitals across the world. WHO Chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus ordered nations to stop using HCQ and CQ. Portugal, France, Italy, and Belgium banned HCQ for COVID-19 treatment.

More broadly, the WHO has been important in terms of co-ordinating COVID-19 policy responses. Although notionally independent, the WHO has [increasingly come under corporate influence](#) via both the growth of corporate-influenced organisations such as Gavi (Global Vaccine Alliance), CEPI (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations) and private financing via the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The WHO is also currently [negotiating the treaty](#) on pandemic preparedness with the governments of member states to provide unprecedented powers to this organization to enable rapid responses, transcending national governments, when the [WHO declares pandemics](#) in the future, thus centralizing control and potentially overriding national [sovereignty](#).

This line of analysis might lead to a conclusion that what we have experienced to date – harmful lockdowns and injection strategies underpinned by massive propaganda – is primarily the result of corruption, conflicts of interest and vested interests, rather than what could reasonably be described as good faith errors by politicians and bureaucrats.

The World Economic Forum and the ‘Great Reset’

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has been associated [by some analysts](#) with [the COVID-19 event](#) and in 2020 Klaus Schwab, its founder, published a co-authored book titled [COVID-19: The Great Reset](#). [Schwab declared](#): ‘The Pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world’. One [key component](#) of the political-economic vision promoted by the WEF is ‘stakeholder capitalism’ (Global Public-Private Partnerships, GPPP) involving the integration of government, business and civil society actors with respect to the provision of services. Another key component involves harnessing ‘the innovations of the Fourth Industrial Revolution’, especially the exploitation of developments in artificial intelligence, computing and robotics, in order to radically transform society toward a digitised model. Slogans now frequently associated with these visions include ‘you will own nothing and be happy’, ‘smart cities’ and ‘build back better’.

It is also apparent that the WEF, as an organising force, has considerable reach. It has been involved with training and educating influential individuals - through its Young Global Leaders Programme and its predecessor, Global Leaders for Tomorrow - who have subsequently moved into positions [of considerable power](#). It has [also been noted](#) that many national leaders (e.g. Merkel, Macron, Trudeau, Ardern, Putin, and Kurz) are WEF Forum of Young Global Leaders graduates or [members](#) and have ‘played prominent roles, typically promoting zero-covid strategies, lockdowns, mask mandates, and ‘vaccine passports’. In 2017 [Schwab boasted](#):

When I mention our names like Mrs Merkel, even Vladimir Putin and so on, they all have been Young Global Leaders of the World Economic forum. But what we are very proud of now is the young generation like prime minister Trudeau, president of Argentina and so on. So we penetrate the cabinets. So yesterday I was at a reception for prime minister Trudeau and I will know that half of this cabinet or even more half of this cabinet are actually young

global leaders of the World Economic Forum that's true in Argentina, and it's true in France now with the president a Young Global Leader

Corporate members of the WEF's Forum of Young Global Leaders includes [Mark Zuckerberg](#) whilst 'Global Leaders for Tomorrow' included [Bill Gates](#) and [Jeff Bezos](#).

Financial Crisis, the Central Banks and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)

It is [now established that a major crisis in the repo markets](#) during the Autumn of 2019 was followed by high-level planning aimed at resolving an impending financial crisis of greater proportions than the [2008 banking crisis](#). According to some analysts, one response [appears to have been](#) a strengthened drive to control currencies via the Central Banks: Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The General Manager of the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), [Agustin Carstens](#), [stated in October 2020](#) that:

we intend to establish the equivalence with cash and there is a huge difference there. For example, in cash we don't know who is using a \$100 bill today ... the key difference with the CBDC is that the central bank will have absolute control on the rules and regulations that will determine the use of that expression of central bank liability and also we will have the technology to enforce that.

A programmable CBDC potentially provides complete control over how and when an individual spends money, in addition to allowing authorities to automatically deduct taxes through a person's 'digital wallet'. According to [some analysts](#), this development would also effectively remove any significant control over financial policy at the national level. Although decried as a 'conspiracy theory' in the early days of the COVID-19 event, it has now [become clear](#) that there is a determined drive toward implementing CBDCs and which has the potential to qualitatively change the character of national-level governance.

Technologies associated with programmable CBDCs overlap with those associated with 4IR and concepts regarding digitised society. Specifically, digital identity, a potential component of the intended CBDC, provides a basis for the creation of a digital grid upon which information relating to all aspects of an individual's life will be available to governments, corporations and other powerful entities such as the security services. Also notable is the relationship between digital ID and the drive to create 'vaccine passports' as part of the COVID-19 response: Microsoft and the Rockefeller Foundation are central players in [ID2020](#), alongside Gavi. The overall objective is to create a global-level digital ID framework that integrates with health/vaccination status. As with CBDC, the push to implement these frameworks is ongoing, not dissipating, and include the recent announcement by the WHO and EU of a '[digital health partnership](#)' aimed at facilitating implementation of digital health certificates for health and travel controlled by the WHO.^[2]

All of these political and economic agendas point toward a conclusion more closely aligned with the 'structural deep event' (Scott) thesis, in that they highlight the possibility that COVID-19 has been exploited to advance major political and economic agendas. As such, [COVID-19 is itself primarily a propaganda event](#), instrumentalized in order to pursue political-economic agendas. This hypothesis is, at least in part, distinct from the idea that corruption and narrow vested interests explain most of what we have seen.

Threats to democracy and understanding what this all might mean

The political and economic processes identified regarding the WEF, WHO, digital ID, the central banks and CBDC, the pandemic preparedness agenda and the [Censorship Industrial Complex/Counter-Disinformation Industry](#) are not speculative or theoretical, they are directly observable and ongoing. They are also proceeding in the absence of serious scrutiny by legislatures and wider democratic debate whilst new ‘emergencies’ over war in Ukraine and the climate appear to be being exploited in order to maintain momentum even as COVID-19 recedes from view. Indeed, one [scholar of political communication](#) notes that ‘insidious scare tactics deployed during Covid are still being used in the field of climate communications, where they were first developed.’

It is also worth spelling out the potential interaction between these agendas and threats to democracy. It is now clear that populations have been subjected to highly coercive and aggressive attempts to limit their autonomy, including restrictions on movement, the right to protest, freedom to work and freedom to [participate in society](#). Most notably, significant numbers of people were pushed, sometimes required, to take an injection at regular intervals in order to continue their participation in society whilst PCR test requirements for travelling, for example, have introduced further coercive elements into everyday life. These developments have been accompanied by, at times, aggressive and discriminatory [statements from major political leaders](#) with respect to people resisting injection. The threat to civil liberties and ‘democracy as usual’ is unprecedented. The economic impact has been dire and COVID-19 has seen a dramatic and continued transfer of wealth from the poorest to the very richest (see for example [Oxfam, 2021](#) and [Green and Fazi, 2023](#)). And, today, the drive to create a regulatory framework via the pandemic preparedness agenda, which includes modification of the International Health Regulations, combined with the rolling out of online ‘harm’ legislation and the promotion of moral panic over ‘disinformation’ and ‘online harm’, all create an architecture that enables high levels of control over populations within ostensibly democratic polities.

Furthermore, the combination of a programmable CBDC, a ‘vaccine passport’ that determines access to services and real-world spaces and the availability of all online behaviours to corporations and governments, can enable a system of near total control over an individual’s life, activities and opportunities. This system of control can be seen in China with the social credit system currently being implemented in certain provinces. Integration of personal data and money through a digital ID would also allow individuals to be readily stripped of their assets. These developments reflect the rise of [technocracy](#) whereby government and society become increasingly controlled by experts and technicians and individual autonomy and democracy are curtailed. They can also be related to the transhumanist movement which enthusiastically looks forward to human-machine interfaces and their proclaimed potential to [‘perfect the human condition’](#).

Of course, it is still possible that the sustained adherence to lockdown and mass injection (in spite of growing evidence against their efficacy and safety) are explicable through reference to government blunders, whilst the parallel political and economic projects and rapid reduction in civil liberties are coincidences.

However, it would be remiss to set aside the fact that organisations such as the WHO and the WEF exist within a wider network, or constellation, of extremely powerful, non-elected political and economic entities made up of major multinational corporations, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), large private foundations and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These include, in no particular order, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and other central banks; asset managers Blackrock and Vanguard; global-level entities such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Club of Rome, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, Chatham House, the Trilateral Commission, the Atlantic Council, the Open Society Foundations and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and major corporations including so-called ‘Big Pharma’ and ‘Big Tech’ such as Apple, Google (part of Alphabet Inc), Amazon and Microsoft. And, of course, governments themselves are part of this constellation, with the most powerful – the US, China and India – having considerable influence. In addition, the European Union (EU) supranational body, via its President Ursula von der Leyen, promoted the EU Digital COVID Certificate and also demanded at times that all EU citizens be injected.

As such, it is entirely plausible, if not increasingly likely, that the interests shared between multiple political and economic actors have manifested themselves in the form of concrete political and economic agendas which, in turn, have been advanced via the COVID-19 event. It is also possible that the current war in the Ukraine as well as climate issues are being exploited by many of the same actors and [in a similar fashion](#). Along these lines, Denis Rancourt [recently noted](#):

It is only natural now to ask “what drove this?”, “who benefited?” and “which groups sustained permanent structural disadvantages?” In my view, the COVID assault can only be understood in the symbiotic contexts of geopolitics and large-scale social-class transformations. Dominance and exploitation are the drivers. The failing USA-centered global hegemony and its machinations create dangerous conditions for virtually everyone.

An increasingly large body of work supports the understanding of COVID-19 as a structural deep event. Important and pathfinding analyses were provided in the early months of the COVID-19 event by [Cory Morningstar](#), [Whitney Webb](#) and [Piers Robinson](#), amongst others. James Corbett was one of the first to warn of the [impending dangers of a biosecurity state](#) all the way back in March 2020 whilst [Patrick Wood](#) alerted us to the dangers of technocracy long before the arrival of COVID-19.

In [States of Emergency](#) (2022) Kees van der Pijl argues there has been a ‘biopolitical seizure of power’ in which an intelligence-IT-media complex has crystallized as a new class block seeking to quell growing unrest and the strengthening of progressive social movements throughout the world. Under cover of Covid-19, and via ruthless exploitation of people’s fear of a virus, van der Pijl traces how this new class block is attempting to impose control via high-tech, digitised societies necessitating mandatory injections and digital ID, as well as censorship and manipulation of public spheres. In short, van der Pijl describes a total surveillance society involving massive concentration of power and the end of democracy. Kheriaty’s [The Rise of the Biomedical State](#) (2022) offers a detailed presentation of how COVID-19 provided the impetus for an emerging biosecurity state whilst Iain Davis’ [Pseudopandemic](#) (2022) presents the COVID-19 event as primarily a propagandized phenomenon functioning to enable the continued emergence of a technocratic order built around the Global Public-Private Partnership (GPPP) and ‘stake-holder capitalism’ that has appeared primarily to serve the interests of what he describes as an elite ‘parasite class’.

Simon Elmer's [\(2022\) analysis](#) presents all of these developments in terms of the rise of a new form of fascism whilst [Broecker \(2023\)](#) emphasises the technocratic and anti-democratic underpinnings of the political developments ushered in under the cover of the COVID-19 event.

Robert F. Kennedy's [The Real Anthony Fauci](#), although focused on documenting the corruption with respect to public health institutions and 'Big Pharma', is clear about its consequences for our democracies. Early in the book he notes that Fauci 'has played a central role in undermining public health and subverting democracy and constitutional governance around the globe and in transitioning our civil governance toward medical totalitarianism'. Later in the book, Kennedy discusses the interplay between military, medical and intelligence planners and raises questions about an 'underlying agenda to coordinate dismantlement of democratic governance':

After 9/11, the rising biosecurity cartel adopted simulations as signaling mechanisms for choreographing lockstep responses among corporate, political, and military technocrats charged with managing global exigencies. Scenario planning became an indispensable device for multiple power centers to coordinate complex strategies for simultaneously imposing coercive controls upon democratic societies across the globe.

Broadly in line with this analysis, the work of both [Breggin and Breggin](#) and [Paul Shreyer](#) argue that the political and economic agendas advanced during the COVID-19 event had been long in the pipeline and point toward it being an instigated event as opposed to a spontaneous - naturally occurring - one that groups opportunistically took advantage of.

Along with all this, [transhumanism](#), life extension or 'enhancement' through technology and digitalised society, observable in some of the output from the WEF and public musings of key individuals, appears to reflect a set of beliefs in technology and progress that can be traced back to Enlightenment thinking of the last 300 years. Philosophical debates over technology and what it means to be human have remained at the heart of the Enlightenment 'project', although perhaps deeply buried. Associated with this might be scientism as a religious cult of the West.

Attempts to attach a label to the complex political and economic processes we are witnessing include descriptors such as 'global fascism,' 'global communism,' 'neo-feudalism,' 'neo-serfdom', 'totalitarianism,' 'technocracy,' 'centralization vs. subsidiarity,' 'stakeholder capitalism', 'global public-private partnerships,' 'corporate authoritarianism', 'authoritarianism,' 'tyranny' and 'global capitalism.' Dr Robert Malone, inventor of part of the mRNA technology used in the COVID-19 injections, openly refers to the [threat of global totalitarianism](#) as does US presidential hopeful Robert Kennedy Jnr.

In summation, there are multiple and readily observable signs of political and economic actors working to variously instigate, exaggerate and/or exploit the COVID-19 event. At the same time there are no signs that those promoting the claim that COVID-19 represented an unusually dangerous health crisis are conceding any ground, even as the facts become clear both that it was nothing exceptional and that the responses have been a disaster for public health and well-being. Both ideology and underlying agendas appear to be influencing the dynamics of current events, all of which are occurring in the context of major shifts in the distribution of power globally, witness the BRICS block and various geo-political realignments including the increasingly likely strategic failure for the West in relation to the

Ukraine war. None of this looks like the COVID-19 response was just some innocent and incompetent blunder by our scientific and medical establishments.

The tasks ahead

For those occupying corporate or mainstream positions in politics, media or academia, the fear of being tarred with the ‘conspiracy theorist’ label is usually enough to dampen any enthusiasm for serious evaluation of the ways in which powerful and influential political and economic actors might be shaping responses to COVID-19 to further political and economic agendas. But the stakes are now simply too high for such shyness and, indeed cowardice, to be allowed to persist. There are strong and well-established grounds to take analyses along the lines of the ‘structural deep event’ thesis seriously, as set out in this article, and there are clear and present dangers to our civil liberties, freedom and democracy.

Building on the work already started, researchers must explore more fully the networks and power structures that have shaped the COVID-19 responses and which have sought to move forward various political and economic agendas. Analysing more fully the techniques used, including propaganda and exploitation of COVID-19 as an enabling event, is now an essential task for researchers to undertake. It is also important to consolidate understanding of linkages with ongoing drives related to the UN sustainability agenda - e.g. 15 minute cities - and the climate agenda, all of which potentially involve technocratic and top-down policy approaches at odds with autonomy and democracy. Such work, ultimately, can not only deepen our understanding of what is going on; it can also provide a guide for those who seek to oppose what is being described by some as ‘global totalitarianism’ or ‘fascism’. It is of equal importance for scholars of democracy and ethics to further unpack the implications of these developments with respect to liberty and civil rights as well as, more widely, creative thinking with respect to alternative visions of social, political and economic organisation and including development of parallel societies.

It could of course be the case that such a research agenda ultimately leads to a refutation of the ‘structural deep event’ thesis and confirmation that everything witnessed over the last three years has been simply cock-up or blunder. But it seems increasingly unlikely that this would be the result and evidence in support of the structural deep event reading is stronger now than ever. It is essential that critical research into the consequences of the COVID-19 response does not become bounded by an unwarranted assumption that all can be reduced to well intentioned but erroneous responses. The stakes are high and it has never been more essential to seriously engage with uncomfortable possibilities - even if that means interrogating uncomfortable and alarming explanations.

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^[1] Sheldon Watts offers historic background illustrating how the establishment regularly rewrites the science to serve other purposes. In the case of Cholera, the main editors of The Lancet in the late 19th century actually contradicted their own findings of a previous decade in order to accommodate trade interests concerning the quarantining of British ships from India that would have harmed the British Empire's economic model. From being a human communicable disease, it transformed into a dark-skinned disease of the orient. Watts, Sheldon. "From rapid change to stasis: Official responses to cholera in British-ruled India and Egypt: 1860 to c. 1921." *Journal of World History* (2001): 321-374. Thanks to Isa Blumi for this reference.

^[2] See <https://www.who.int/initiatives/global-digital-health-certification-network> - Global 'public health infrastructure' to 'expand digital solutions' and EU Digital Covid Certificate taken over by the WHO's GDHCN Certificate https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/coronavirus-response/safe-covid-19-vaccines-europeans/eu-digital-covid-certificate_en.