The European Journal

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New Direction

New Direction

Founded by Margaret Thatcher in 2009 as the intellectual hub of European Conservativism, New Direction has established academic networks across Europe and research partnerships throughout the world.

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The European Journal

BUILD BACK BETTER

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THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL
The European Journal is New Direction's opinion journal that gathers the thoughts of world-renowned experts, on the crucial issues facing Europe today.

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Welcome to the second issue of The European Journal - the Foundation's flagship magazine devoted to providing Conservative answers to some of the greatest challenges we face. Policy makers around the world will focus on "Building Back Better" and it is a crucial time to be involved in this debate and to shape the nature of the recovery.

Kickstarting our battered economies and creating jobs after months of rolling lockdowns and social distancing, and with Cop26 taking place later this year, we believe, recovery can be married with the need to invest in clean technologies and natural assets.

Conservatives in particular, with our belief in intergenerational equity and our preference for market-based solutions, will have a critical role to play. That's why, we invited James Cullimore and Lois Toole to write about the history of Conservative environmentalism. The challenge is too important to leave to the Left and is now time for Conservatives to reclaim their heritage as the original conservationists. We owe it to the next next generation to step up.

In this edition, we have invited the most influential conservative experts and reseachers such as Ted-Christie Miller who discusses how to put nature at the heart of the recovery from Covid 19, whilst, Dr Ben Cladecott writes about how private finance can deliver net zero, and Rachel Wolf writes about the pro-market case for carbon pricing.

Royal United Services Institute's Michael Stephen's pens an article about why climate change is the greatest security challenge of our time, and the Managing Director of Iceland about how fragile our agricultural sector is.

Alex Flint writes about why US Republicans are waking up the threat of climate change and Leo Shanahan writes about realising Australia's renewable energy potential.

It's not all about politics in the European Journal. We have an essay on the artistic movements that died with the spanish flu, and a travel guide to Odessa, Cilento and Delft. Professor Pogorel discusses, the new global audio-visual landscape, Dr Jo Twist writes about what video gaming and e-sports, while Lord Ashcroft discusses how we can put a stop to the barbaric lion trade.

We have further exciting coverage of art, music, technology, media, economics, sport, travel and lifestyle.

We hope you enjoy reading The European Journal!

Tomasz Poręba MEP
President

To any conservatives reading this, I hope you join us. This year of environmental action is too important to leave to the left. Now is the time for conservatives to reclaim their heritage as the original conservationists. We owe it to the next generation to step up.

A MAJOR YEAR FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

by SAM HALL

Last year was supposed to be the year of environmental action, but Covid-19 had other plans. Instead of concerted international progress on tackling the twin crises of nature loss and climate change, governments have been overwhelmed responding to a worst-in-a-century global pandemic. But these environmental threats haven't gone away. This year governments need to put the environment centre stage. Conservatives in particular - with their belief in intergenerational equity and their preference for market-based solutions - will have a critical role to play.

During the Covid lockdowns, we've seen temporary falls in greenhouse gas emissions as travel was dramatically curtailed and some industrial activity stopped. We've also seen people reconnecting with nature through more frequent walks in local green spaces, the vibrance of unmown grass verges, and the clarity of birdsong in the absence of traffic.

Yet the pandemic has for the most part made it harder to take action on the environment. Covid has distracted political attention, made international environmental negotiations harder to conduct, depleted the fiscal resources of finance ministries around the world, and through increased uncertainty and cash flow challenges has prevented much of the private sector from investing in green solutions. There is no lasting upside for the environment.

The best hope for environmental progress now lies in the nature of our recovery. The need to kickstart our battered economies and create jobs after months of rolling lockdowns and social distancing can be married with the need to invest in clean technologies and natural assets in order to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

There is clear economic evidence in support of a green recovery. A study by academics from Oxford University found that green stimulus projects offer better economic returns for governments than conventional investments. Another study by LSE economists found that investment in green initiatives in the UK such as energy efficiency improvements would deliver both job creation and progress towards our net zero target.

Unlike environmentalists who believe in the necessity of degrowth in order to preserve natural resources and prevent the breaching of 'planetary boundaries', conservative environmentalists have long argued that economic growth and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand. This argument was accepted by several European countries in the first wave of economic support, with the UK Government committing £3 billion to insulate homes and public buildings and its German counterpart releasing €9 billion to deliver their clean hydrogen strategy.

Now as ministers consider the next round of Covid recovery packages, green projects must once again be prioritised. In particular, governments must focus on unleashing the wall of private capital waiting to invest in clean, green industries. Tax incentives, investible mechanisms like contracts for difference (which the UK uses for offshore wind), and targeted regulation could all help to drive much needed investment into climate solutions and green job creation, without over-burdening the taxpayer.

Against this backdrop we now look ahead to this year as the world's best chance to bend the arc on climate change and biodiversity loss. As conservatives we believe we have a duty to hand on to future generations an environment which is in a better condition than we inherited it. As things stand, there can be little doubt that we are failing in this responsibility.

Biodiversity is declining at alarming rates. Last year's WWF living planet report shows an average 68% decrease in the global populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and fish between 1970 and 2016. Seventy-five percent of the Earth's ice-free land surface has already been significantly altered, most of the oceans are polluted, and more than 85% of the area of wetlands has been lost. The previous year, a UN report discovered that up to one million species are on the verge of extinction. Globally we have failed to fully achieve every biodiversity target that nearly 200 national governments agreed to in 2010.

This is worrying - not only because future generations may not be able to experience the beauty and majesty of some of our iconic, critically endangered megafauna, such as rhinos and elephants, but also because we are destroying the biodiversity and ecosystems upon which our very survival as a species depends. From the provision of food and medicines, to the regulation of our climate and drinking water, we need nature and we have to arrest, and reverse, its precipitous decline.

At the same time, we see the impacts of climate change materialising to an ever greater extent. During the Covid pandemic many of us will have felt as though the world was metaphorically on fire, but in fact many parts of the world from California to Australia were actually on fire. And what's more scientists have found such wildlifes are at least in part made more likely by climate change. The Arctic ice sheet shrunk to its second lowest level in four decades last summer due to record high temperatures observed in the Arctic Circle.

Despite this, we are still set to miss the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Even with China's very welcome 2060 net zero goal, which will reduce the average global temperature rise by around a quarter of a degree by the end of the century compared to the previous baseline, the world is on track for well over two degrees of warming. Unless strengthened, current national pledges would see a hit to global GDP of up to $600 trillion by the end of this century due to rising temperatures, higher sea levels, more flooding, and a range of other damaging climate impacts.

Furthermore, the climate and biodiversity problems are interrelated. One of the biggest drivers of climate change is the destruction of carbon-rich habitats, such as forests and wetlands. Similarly, one of the most important drivers of biodiversity loss is the changing climate, which is rapidly altering ecosystems by increasing the range of pests and diseases. Other environmentally damaging activities, such as unsustainable development and agriculture, also contribute to both problems through the destruction of natural habitats and emissions of greenhouse gases.

2021 has to be the year where we turn this around. There are two big UN conferences coming up. The first summit - the fifthteenth annual meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity being hosted in China - will agree a new framework for protecting and restoring biodiversity, including hopefully ambitious new targets. The second - the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change which the UK is hosting in Glasgow - will take place more than five years after the landmark Paris Agreement and is an opportunity to bring countries' national climate plans in line with the temperature goals.

As conservatives we believe we have a duty to hand on to future generations an environment which is in a better condition than we inherited it. As things stand, there can be little doubt that we are failing in this responsibility.

These summits provide an opportunity for the UK and the EU to work together post-Brexit on a vital shared strategic priority - the environment. Since both have ambitious environmental targets in place covering their own jurisdictions, they can lead 'high-ambition coalitions' to push for greater international action. Successful outcomes will depend on both the UK and EU making climate and biodiversity diplomatic priorities in bilateral meetings with other governments.

Conservatives across Europe have a particularly important role to play this year on the environment. They must be at the forefront of developing and advocating environmental policies that harness the innovative and efficient capacity of the private sector, while generating jobs and economic growth to power our recovery from Covid-19. International targets and frameworks are important for setting the direction and driving collective action. Conservatives should work together in these international fora in support of ambitious outcomes.

But delivery must take place at the national level, where a focus on conservative approaches will be vital. And conservatives have a lot to learn from each other on climate change. Whether it is market-friendly climate policies developed in conservative think tanks, or actual climate programmes being designed and implemented by conservative governments, we need to share these ideas and inspire one another into raising our ambition on climate change.

In this context, one area of mutual interest for conservatives in both the UK and the EU will be carbon border adjustment taxes. This mechanism allows countries to make ambitious domestic climate policies without putting their own industries at a competitive disadvantage. It would mean that domestic carbon taxes are refunded on exports to enable our goods to compete in export markets, and they are levied on imports to ensure that goods produced overseas in countries without adequate climate

policies can't undercut our own more climate-friendly producers.

They provide an incentive for other countries to introduce their own system of carbon pricing, and end the ability of countries to engage in 'regulatory arbitrage' whereby businesses can compete purely on the basis of the strength of the regulations or carbon prices in their jurisdiction, rather than on legitimate comparative advantage. Put simply, carbon border adjustment taxes are a way to stop carbon leakage - i.e. the movement of industrial activities away from Europe towards developing countries with weaker rules on emissions. They will also be a useful revenue stream for finance ministries looking to pay down Covid-related deficits while delivering environmental policy priorities.

Carbon border adjustment taxes are a key priority of the European Commission, while ministers from the UK have indicated their interest too. By working together at the World Trade Organisation and other international fora to demonstrate the feasibility and legality of this mechanism, and by developing our domestic policies in tandem, the UK and EU could create a powerful market-based incentive for global decarbonisation.

Another shared interest is farm subsidy reform. Globally, farm subsidies are worth $600 billion per year - in order to support domestic food production. Yet they have a great number of negative effects: they distort the trade in food products, harming developing countries; they burden taxpayers with poor value-for-money spending; they generally disadvantage smaller farmers; in many cases, they encourage agricultural intensification and land conversion, exacerbating environmental harms; and they can slow agricultural productivity improvements.

Reforming farm subsidies, therefore, is essential for tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, for making markets and international trade freer, and for cutting wasteful public spending. Post-Brexit, the UK is committed to a radical departure from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), ending the system of area-based payments and instead using public money to deliver environmental public goods such as carbon sequestration and habitat creation. Meanwhile, the EU is set to implement only incremental reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy for the next budget period. While some new environmental elements are being added to the scheme, the vast majority of the support will continue to fund area-based payments.

European conservatives should look to the UK in this area, and UK conservatives should have the courage to follow through with their radical reforms. This is a policy with potentially huge global significance, which should be held up at the upcoming UN environment summits. Farm subsidy reform can create vital revenue streams to unlock investment at scale in nature-based solutions to climate change such as forests. Similarly, they can ensure that rural communities in developing countries grow their agricultural sectors in a sustainable way that works in harmony with the environment.

Conservative environmentalists have much more to offer besides - from using auctions to buy new low-carbon power or ecosystem services, to liberalising international trade in environmental goods and services. The environment has often been seen - wrongly - as a left-wing issue. And those on the left like to claim that only a massive expansion in state spending and ownership of the economy can solve climate change.

2021 must be the year when conservative environmentalists prove them wrong. As the Conservative Environment Network, we will be bringing together conservatives from around the world to discuss and champion action on the environment. We've already begun linking up conservatives in the UK with their counterparts in the US and Australia, and building a coalition on the centre-right in favour of ambitious, pro-market environmental policies. We want to reach out to more conservatives in Europe and beyond before the UN climate summit in Glasgow later this year, hopefully culminating in a world-first 'conservative climate action pledge' signed by conservative legislators, local politicians, and thought-leaders.

To any conservatives reading this, I hope you join us. This year of environmental action is too important to leave to the left. Now is the time for conservatives to reclaim their heritage as the original conservationists. We owe it to the next generation to step up.

Sam Hall is the Director of the Conservative Environment Network and a former policy adviser to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP when he was Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

A History of Conservative Environmentalism from Theodore Roosevelt to Theresa May

by JAMES CULLIMORE

For too long, the left has dominated the conversation on environmental issues, and on climate change in particular. But there is nothing inevitable about this - as the suitability of conservative ideas to environmental action demonstrates.

A History of Conservative Environmentalism Timeline

by JAMES CULLIMORE & LOIS TOOLE

1901

Theodore Roosevelt, the 'conservationist president', becomes President of the United States of America. He expanded the United States Forest Service (USFS) and created 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, 4 national game preserves, 5 national parks, and 18 national monuments through the 1906 American Antiquities Act - protecting 230 million acres of public land.

1956

The **Clean Air Act** is passed by British Conservative Prime Minister Sir Antony Eden in response to the 'great smog' of 1952 in London, caused by burning coal and other industrial activities, which claimed 4,075 deaths.

1967

Energy Fund is established under the coalition government in Iceland led by Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson of the Independence Party, to further geothermal energy development and utilization. The fund has been instrumental in creating the Iceland of our times, where 99% of electricity is sourced from renewables (30.3% geothermal, 69.7% hydropower) and 9 out of 10 houses are heated with geothermal energy.

1970

U.S. President Richard Nixon signs the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires environmental impact statements on all policies which may affect the environment, creates the Environmental Protection Agency to tackle all forms of pollution, and signs the Clean Air Act into law to improve air quality, which over the next half-century would help to reduce the total emissions of six major pollutants by nearly 70%.

1975

The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act is passed by the Coalition government in Australia under Liberal Prime Minister Malcom Fraser. Fraser's governments would go on to ban whaling in Australian waters, create the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and add five sites of significant conservation value, including Kakadu National Park, to the World Heritage List.

1988

Canada makes its first commitment to reduce GHG emissions under Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, pledging to cut emissions by 20% by 2005. Mulroney also added eight new national parks and passed the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the nation's first ever comprehensive pollution law.

1989

UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher delivers a speech on the threat from climate change at the UN, becoming the first world leader to warn about the impact of greenhouse gases on our climate and the need for concerted action.

> In a word, we have thoughtlessly, and to a large degree unnecessarily, diminished the resources upon which not only our prosperity but the prosperity of our children and our children's children must always depend.
>
> *President Theodore Roosevelt, 1908*

So said President Theodore Roosevelt more than a century ago. His summary is even more pertinent today than it was back then. Despite his own commendable efforts and those of other environmentally conscious leaders, the deterioration of the natural world which sustains us has only accelerated over the past 100 years.

Yet two of the most significant interventions to try and arrest this precipitous trend have come from centre-right leaders: Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in the U.S. and Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May in the UK. Roosevelt was instrumental in establishing what is now America's National Park System, which has since been replicated by many other countries, protecting some of the remaining fragments of natural habitat across the world. And in 2019, under the leadership of Theresa May, the UK became the first major economy to commit to net zero emissions by 2050, a target which is now being replicated by a growing number of countries across the globe. This short history and accompanying timeline challenges the left's claim to hegemony over environmental concern and action, and sets out the legacy upon which today's generation of centre-right leaders must build if we are to fulfill our obligation to leave the environment in a better state for future generations.

As Margaret Thatcher identified, "the core of Conservative philosophy and of the case for protecting the environment are the same."

Roosevelt's Conference of the Governor's speech, from which the opening quote originates, is a seminal speech in the history of the conservation movement, of which the Roosevelt administration was in the vanguard. The text should be required reading for all conservatives, who will not fail to notice the extent to which his arguments for protecting America's natural resources are rooted in the tenets of traditional conservatism, including Burke's intergenerational social contract, the importance of economic resilience and security, the notion of civic duty, unabashed patriotism, and an inherent faith in the inventiveness and ingenuity of mankind. It is the conservative case for environmental action writ large.

The convergence between conservation and conservatism should come as no surprise - they possess the same etymological roots after all. Yet too often those on the centre-right are cast by those on the left as condoning, or even perpetuating, environmental harm.

This is antithetical to what it means to be a conservative. As Margaret Thatcher identified, "the core of Conservative philosophy and of the case for protecting the environment are the same." The father of modern conservatism Edmund Burke was the first to put the moral case for conserving our natural inheritance, lest we "leave to those who come after ... a ruin instead of a habitation." The impulse which drives even the most feverish environmentalist, to protect the environment and mitigate climate change in the interest of future generations, is a conservative rather than a radical one.

But it is important to note, particularly given the temporal and geographical scope of this timeline, that conservatism possesses no unitary meaning beyond the desire to conserve. It is a political tradition which has evolved and diversified in the centuries since Burke's polemic on the French Revolution.

Today, it provides an umbrella term under which a plethora of different intellectual, cultural and spiritual traditions congregate. There are communitarians and individualists, traditionalists and modernists, Christian democrats and Hayekians, nationalists and internationalists, theists and atheists. After all, one of the distinguishing features of conservatism is that it is non-ideological, pragmatic and pluralist. This heterogeneity is at least partially reflected in the various governments and political leaders included in the accompanying timeline, but all are positioned on the centre-right within their national political landscape.

For too long, the left has dominated the conversation on environmental issues, and on climate change in particular. But there is nothing inevitable about this - as the suitability of conservative ideas to environmental action demonstrates. It is historically contingent, a product of the green movement in the West, which itself was born out of the rapid economic and cultural change of the post-war period, emerging at the same time as the economic ideas of the right triumphed across most of the globe towards the end of the 20th century. The wrath of the green movement was therefore targeted at the prevailing orthodoxy of the time, free-market capitalism, and its intellectual advocates. Yet environmental harm is not unique to any one

1990

A carbon tax is introduced in Finland under the coalition government led by Harri Holkeri of the centre-right National Coalition Party. Finland becomes the first country to use a carbon tax as an instrument for climate change mitigation.

1991

The Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement is signed by Conservative Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney and Republican President George H. W. Bush to address transboundary air pollution leading to acid rain.

1997

The Kyoto Protocol is agreed in Japan. The summit was hosted by the Liberal Democratic Government, Japan's predominant centre-right party, under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Australia's National Heritage Trust is established by the Coalition Government under Prime Minister John Howard to protect and restore Australia's natural capital. This was supported by the passage of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, providing a legal framework to protect Australia's biodiversity and natural heritage.

2001

Australia's Renewable Energy Target (RET) is introduced by the Howard government in Australia, which has been integral to scaling up investment in renewables and bringing down the cost of wind and solar, which are now cheapest new sources of energy.

2006

Former Conservative Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney is honoured as the **greenest PM in Canadian history**.

The Global Warming Solutions Act is introduced by Republican Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, placing a cap on greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean technologies, which boosted the economy and created thousands of jobs.

2012

The General Climate Change Law, based on the UK's Climate Change Act, is introduced in Mexico by centre-right President Felipe Calderón of the National Action Party (PAN). It was one of the world's first climate laws and the first in a developing country, and set the target of reducing emissions by 50% from 2000 levels by 2050.

2015

The UK becomes the first national government to commit to phasing out unabated coal power. Initially announced for 2025, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has recently brought the deadline forward to 2024.

system, as the ecological disasters which took place under Soviet communism demonstrate. Consequently, in recent decades conservatives have too often shirked asserting their support for protecting the environment, deterred by the anti-capitalist rhetoric of those sounding the alarm. The debate around climate change has also become bound up with the broader cultural antagonisms between the left and right, most notably in the U.S.

The aim of this timeline, and the journal more broadly, is to help reclaim the narrative from the left and highlight conservative action on the environment. Indeed, it has often been conservative leaders who have led the way in the past. Canada made its first commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 1988 under Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. This target was revised in Canada's Green Plan in 1990 which aimed to stabilize emissions at 1990 levels by 2000, which Canada then committed to at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Mulroney was honoured as "the greenest prime minister in Canadian history" in 2006, in recognition of his pioneering work in protecting the environment.

In Australia during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser took great strides to protect Australia's wildlife - notably establishing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to protect it from oil drilling. In 1981, the reef was designated a World Heritage Site, along with Kakadu National Park. In his later life, Fraser urged Australia to do more to tackle climate change, supporting the 'Say Yes' campaign which called for a carbon price. At the end of the 20th century, John Howard's government introduced further protections for Australian wildlife and set Australia on the path to a clean energy future.

More recently, President Felipe Calderón took steps to position Mexico as a global leader in tackling climate change during his period in office, overseeing a successful UN climate conference in Cancun in 2010 and implementing a Climate Change Act in 2012.

Getting to net zero can create millions of well-paid green jobs in sectors like renewable energy and in the development of clean technologies such as electric vehicles and carbon capture. Ambitious nature restoration projects can also create jobs and build resilience against future climatic changes, as Prime Minister Imran Khan is demonstrating in Pakistan.

Climate leadership from the right can still be seen today - more than half of the governments which have set coal phase-out dates are on the centre-right. The centre-right Chile Vamos coalition government has pledged to slash the share of coal in Chile's electricity grid from 40% to 20% by 2024, with a view to phasing out the fuel completely by 2040 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Prime Minister Modi in India has set ambitious renewable energy targets for 2022 and 2030, and India has had considerable success in developing renewable energy and bringing down its cost through large-scale clean energy auctions over the past decade.

Successive conservative governments in the UK have led the way since 2010, becoming the first nation to set a coal phase-out date and the first major economy to commit to net zero. Next year, the UK will host the next UN climate conference (COP26) in Glasgow - a unique opportunity to showcase conservative leadership on the environment. Meanwhile, Japan's centre-right government has pledged to host the greenest Olympic Games ever next summer.

But we remain a long way from meeting the scale of the challenges we face from climate change and biodiversity loss. With nearly a quarter of global territorial emissions under the jurisdiction of conservative governments, we urgently need more conservative policymakers to become climate leaders, and to champion this conservative tradition. Modi should halt the expansion of coal and set India on a path to phasing out the fuel altogether. In Germany, Merkel must match her rhetoric on climate change with action - ensuring Germany's climate targets are aligned with net zero and that the policies are in place to meet them, including bringing forward the coal phase-out date to 2030.

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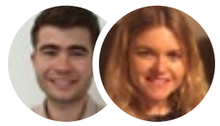
Although not an exhaustive list, the following timeline features some key interventions on the environment from centre-right leaders over the past century. It is now incumbent upon this generation of conservatives to reassert its ideational heritage as stewards of the natural environment, and build on the legacy of previous centre-right leaders by taking ambitious action to mitigate climate change and conserve the natural world for posterity.



James Cullimore is programmes officer and **Lois Toole** is programmes manager at the Conservative Environment Network. Both have previously worked in the European Parliament.

2016

The Blue Belt programme is introduced by the UK's Conservative Government to enhance marine protection in its Overseas Territories. The scheme is now on course to protect 4 million square kilometres of ocean - an area greater than the size of India.

Argentina's Renewable Energy Auction (**RenovAr**) is launched under centre-right President Mauricio Macri, to take advantage of the country's abundant clean energy resources. By the end of 2016, Argentina had successfully conducted two auction rounds which increased the share of renewable energy generation from 2 percent of total capacity to 8 percent by 2018.

2018

The 10 Billion Tree Tsunami is launched by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Centre-right President Sebastian Piñera announces that Chile will become the first Latin American country to enact a **total ban on the commercial use of plastic bags**.

2019

The Conservative Government in the UK under Prime Minister Theresa May passes a legally binding net zero target for 2050, the first major economy to do so.

The centre-right Chile Vamos coalition government led by President Pinera vows to go carbon neutral by 2050 in one of the most ambitious proposals yet for a coal-dependent economy.

India's Prime Minister Nar endra Modi pledges to more than double India's target for renewable energy capacity from 175 GW to 450 GW in his speech at the UN Climate Action Summit, calling on the world to do more to tackle climate change as "what we are doing at the moment is just not enough" and "the time for talks is over. The world needs to act now". The Indian Government aims to meet this target by 2030.

Germany's Climate Action Programme 2030, which includes the introduction of a price on carbon in the transport and heating sectors and the first national climate law which incorporates the 2030 climate target and the commitment to pursue net zero by 2050, is adopted by Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government.

Singapore's Carbon Pricing Act (**CPA**) comes into effect, introducing a carbon tax to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2021

Tokyo Olympics: the Liberal Democratic Government in Japan is promising to deliver the greenest Olympic Games ever.

COP26 to be hosted in the UK under a Conservative Government.

CONSERVATIVE CLIMATE ACTION IN DATA

The governments which we have included are considered to be on the centre-right within their national political landscape and adhere to at least some aspects of conservative philosophy

CONSERVATIVE ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

How private finance can deliver NET ZERO

by DR BEN CALDECOTT

The UK is hosting the next major UN climate change summit (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. This must be a tipping point for greening the global financial system. New commitments at COP26 should amount to the most significant ever from financial institutions on climate and demonstrate the collective intent for massive material change in future financial flows, as well as the widespread adoption of financial practices that actively support the transition to net zero emissions. What should we do to achieve this?

First, we should lock-in and build on critically important work to enhance climate-risk management by financial institutions. This includes the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), that has created a framework to help companies and financial institutions consistently measure, manage, and report their climate-related risk exposures. The TCFD should be made mandatory, but we should also focus on other aspects of climate risk management that are even more important, including: updating risk-based capital adequacy frameworks so they take account of climate-related risks; spurring the next generation of data and analysis capabilities required to properly measure and manage such risks; and changing supervisory expectations globally so all supervised firms, from asset owners to insurers, need to action climate-related risks at the board and senior management levels or suffer censure or worse from their supervisors.

Second and in parallel, we need to urgently open up new frontiers that proactively help align investor portfolios and bank loan books, as well as the provision of financial services, with tackling climate change. Perhaps the single most important thing we can do to spur rapid climate action by financial institutions is to make net zero targets and transition plans mandatory.

COP26 provides a unique opportunity to do this. In 2021, in the same way that governments will have to make new climate targets under the Paris Agreement, financial institutions (as well as companies and other non-state actors) could be asked to do the same. This would be voluntary for all, but there is a strong case for the UK as host to take the lead by making net zero targets and transition plans mandatory for UK financial institutions prior to the summit.

The net zero transition underway is the most capital intensive in human history and the financial services sector has all to gain. Net zero alignment for the financial services sector will create demand for new financial products and services to help companies transition to net zero.

The destination, net zero by 2050, is already law in the UK. The challenge is getting all parts of society to contribute to and think constructively about how we get there. Getting financial institutions to do this systematically will shift capital in the right direction and spur the companies they finance to adopt net zero transition plans. It will also accelerate UK leadership in sustainable finance. The EU - which now also has agreed a net zero target and an active policy agenda on sustainable finance - should be encouraged to follow suit.

The net zero transition underway is the most capital intensive in human history and the financial services sector has all to gain. Net zero alignment for the financial services sector will create demand for new financial products and services to help companies transition to net zero.

Mandatory net zero targets and plans for financial institutions can help the UK lead the way, while also helping us deliver domestic climate targets. The UK is also uniquely placed to help green the global financial system. As the world's largest international financial centre, if the City of London moves, others will follow. Mandatory net zero targets and transition plans would be a sensitive intervention point, where a modest change can create disproportionate benefits for and non-linear growth in climate action. This is exactly the sort of thing the UK should be doing as a world-leader on climate change and the time to consider this is now in the build-up to COP26.

Dr Ben Caldecott is founding Director of the Oxford Sustainable Finance Programme and the Lombard Odier Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow of Sustainable Finance at the University of Oxford. He is also the COP26 Strategy Advisor for Finance in the UK Cabinet Office.

The pro-market case for a CARBON PRICE

by RACHEL WOLF

Countries across Europe are wrestling with three challenges. First, how to drive recovery, including economic recovery, from the pandemic. Second, how to drive down emissions and reach a net zero economy. Third, how to do both in a way that maintains public consent and support.

Our Commission – a group of well known experts in energy and climate change, who have been taking evidence and investigating how to practically deliver carbon pricing over the last six months – has recently published its final report. It argues that clear, transparent carbon pricing is the best way of achieving those goals. A carbon price produces revenue to help fund the recovery – which could in turn be invested into green jobs. It incentivises people to reduce their emissions, and our research found it can gain public support.

I am on the right, and I have always had two great fears about countries' net zero plans.

First, that they might upend too much. Our economy and lives are built off copious amounts of cheap energy. It is the main reason we were able to escape the destitution of the past. A life unimaginable to even the elite in the 18th century is now accessible to nearly all.

Therefore, any successful programme to reduce emissions must understand that people will not go back. That means that our policies must work within the grain of people's lives – not rewire them. We cannot be against trade; or consumption; or travel. We just need ways to achieve all three without catastrophic environmental effects.

Second, that the plans rely on an implausible level of omniscience and competence from governments. We cannot engineer economies. We do not know exactly what innovations to support. We are likely to end up with endless unforeseen consequences and costs.

It is for both of these reasons that I – along with the expert commission – support carbon pricing.

Economists generally agree that putting a price on carbon is the single most effective emissions reduction policy. It uses the forces and ingenuity of the market to change behaviour. Governments don't need to get into the prediction game, and they don't need highly complex regulation. It doesn't dictate what people can or can't do – it just asks them to bear the cost of the damage. In doing so, it encourages innovation from companies, scientists, and investors across the world.

Carbon pricing has been in sporadic use across the world. In the UK, where the carbon price on electricity is substantially higher than other European countries, it has been the single most effective policy – by some margin – in reducing emissions in that sector.

Carbon prices are fair. They ask those who emit the most, to pay the most. Those who reduce their emissions pay less. We found that public support hinged on this fairness. One of the reasons for the Gilets Jaunes protests was the sense that in the balance between business and the 'worker', it was the worker who was paying the most.

One of the great downfalls of the EUs current system is that it is hard for people to understand. Carbon pricing, which many European countries use in sectors not covered by the EU's overarching scheme, is easy to understand and react to.

We also found that public support required three other things. First, sensible redistribution. There are many ways you can spend the revenue from a carbon charge, but one is to send it back to households, and particularly those on lower-incomes.

Second, alternatives. People don't want to be taxed if they can't switch. That's reasonable – and it's the whole purpose of a carbon tax. Good carbon pricing needs to be combined with incentives and investments for credible net-zero alternatives – such as new household heating systems .

Third, transparency. One of the great downfalls of the EUs current system is that it is hard for people to understand. Carbon pricing, which many European countries use in sectors not covered by the EU's overarching scheme, is easy to understand and react to.

Finally, people rightly think global warming is a global challenge, not a national one. Here again carbon pricing has a strength – as one of the best ways of driving global change.

Global action is, of course, where the environmental agenda has stumbled. Emissions are a collective action problem on a grand scale. But carbon pricing provides a potential mechanism for countries to band together through a "border carbon adjustment".

In effect, it acts as a tariff so that our own producers are not unfairly penalised for meeting emissions targets. Its aim, though, is not to increase trade costs, but to incentivise other countries to adopt carbon pricing too. The EU is looking seriously at a border adjustment – our view is that we should use COP26 to create a 'high ambition club' of countries willing to impose border adjustments and drive global change.

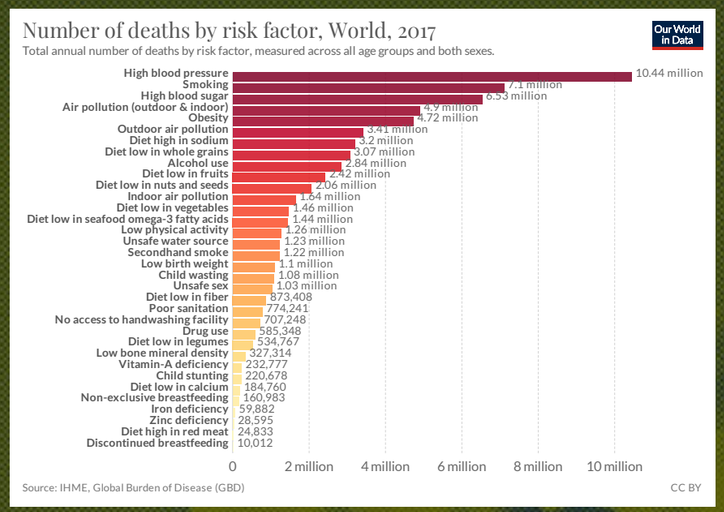
Carbon pricing is not a silver bullet. I have oversimplified the changes necessary to reach net zero, and in our report we outlined a list of complementary policies. They recognise that the cost of reaching net zero is likely to be different for electricity, heating, industry and agriculture, and that the technologies are less mature for some sectors than others. But the basic human principle remains – if there is a price, people will change their behaviour accordingly.

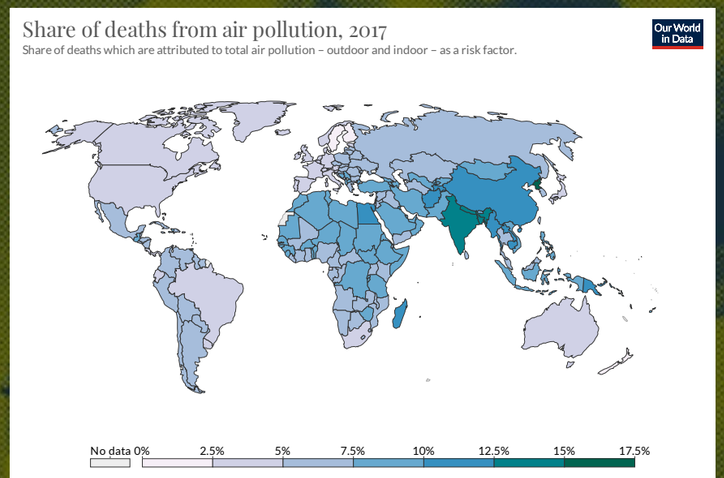
We have been submerged in environmental rhetoric by countries across Europe for years. COP26 is a chance to show how serious they are and how much global leadership they are willing to show. A unified approach to carbon pricing, that encourages the rest of the world to adopt similar policies to drive down emissions, would be a good start.

Rachel Wolf was the secretariat of the Zero Carbon Commission and the co-author of the Conservative Party Election Manifesto in 2019. She is a founding partner at Public First.

WORLD IN NUMBERS
Air Pollution

The world's leading risk factors for death





Air pollution is responsible for 5 million deaths each year

Air pollution – the combination of outdoor and indoor particulate matter, and ozone – is a risk factor for many of the leading causes of death including heart disease, stroke, lower respiratory infections, lung cancer, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in its Global Burden of Disease study provide estimates of the number of deaths attributed to the range of risk factors for disease.In the visualization we see the number of deaths per year attributed to each risk factor. This chart is shown for the global total, but can be explored for any country or region using the "change country" toggle.

Air pollution is one of the leading risk factors for death. In low-income countries it tops the list. In 2017, it was responsible for an estimated 5 million deaths globally. That means it contributed to 9% – nearly 1-in-10 – deaths.

Air pollution contributes to 9% of deaths globally – this varies from 2% to 15% by country

Globally, air pollution contributed to 9% of deaths in 2017.

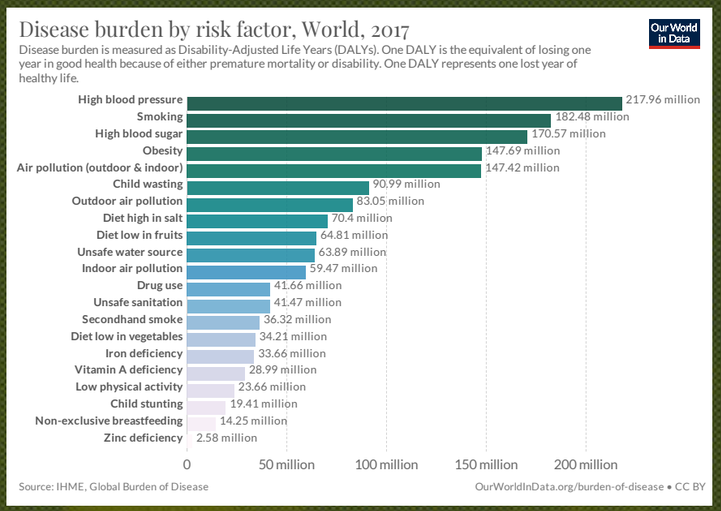
In the map shown here we see the share of deaths attributed to air pollution across the world. In 2017, this ranged from a low of 2% across high-income countries, to close to 15% across many countries in South and East Asia.

One of the leading risk factors for disease burden

Air pollution is one of the leading risk factors for death. But its impacts go even further, also being one of the main contributors to global disease burden. Global disease burden takes into account not only years of life lost to early death, but also the number of years lived in poor health.

In the visualization we see risk factors ranked in order of DALYs – disability-adjusted life years – the metric used to assess disease burden. Again, air pollution is near the top of the list making it one of the leading risk factors for poor health across the world.

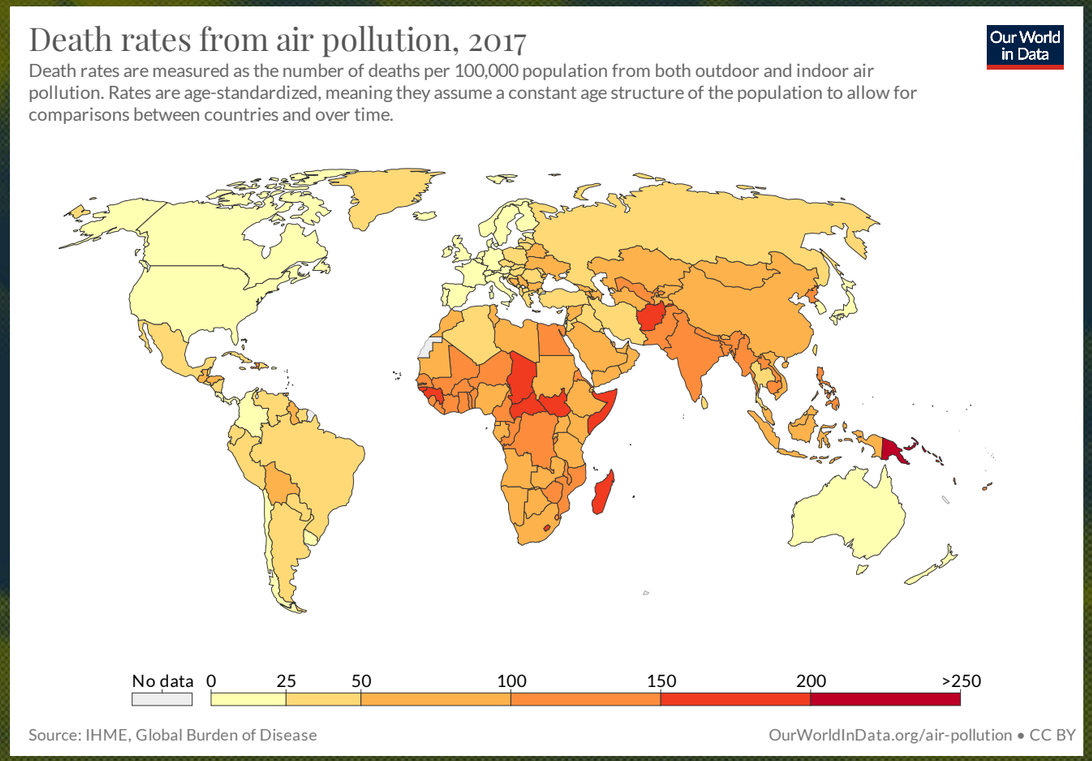
Air pollution not only takes years from peoples' lives, but also had large effect on quality while they're still living.



Death rates from air pollution are highest in low-to-middle income countries

Air pollution is a health and environmental issue across all countries of the world, but with large differences in severity.

In the map we show death rates from air pollution across the world, measured as the number of deaths per 100,000 people of a given country or region. We see that the death rates tend to be highest across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This highlights the large differences globally: death rates in the highest burden countries are more than 100 times greater than across much of Europe and North America. The burden of air pollution tends to be greater across both low and middle income countries for two reasons: indoor pollution rates tend to be high in low-income countries due to a reliance on solid fuels for cooking; and outdoor air pollution tends to increase as countries industrialize and shift from low-to-middle incomes.



Why climate change is THE GREAT SECURITY CHALLENGE of our time

by MICHAEL STEPHENS

Today's world is more insecure than any time since the end of the Cold War. Great power competition is once again increasing, the rules-based order that the UK helped create from the ashes of the Second World War is fraying. All of which has been exacerbated by the spread of Covid-19 which will pressure economies across the world, and push governments to the very limits of their capacity to maintain social order and stability.

Human security issues in the 21st century are increasing in scale and scope, and it is undoubtedly true that the effects of climate change will make these problems worse. It is time for the security community to understand how and why this is so, or else we face a world that we may no longer be able to secure.

So, when thinking about the critical security interests of a nation, concern for the polar bears in the melting ice caps may not be the first thing that springs to mind. But security and climate change are becoming intertwined in more intimate ways, and to consider the full spectrum of security challenges of the future, climate change must be central to how security practitioners conceive of the world around them, and how they mobilise resources to meet emerging threats.

The trade-off can often appear black and white, with security almost always winning out. After all, what government would ever admit that they compromised on national security for the sake of a coral reef, or the wellbeing of a forest? One need only recall the numerous times in which naval sonars have been blamed for the increasing frequency of beached whales to be reminded that when it comes to any trade off between the environment and security, the submarines always take precedence over the whales.

The problem stems from how we conceive security in a world driven by states. All of us (whether we agree or not) tacitly understand that the primary reason we club together into larger groups is for our own safety. We pay taxes to a state so that in return we are protected, and our welfare is maintained. Security above all is the most important task of a state, and the failure to deliver it is usually the first sign that a state is headed toward failure.

Humans tend to think about security in terms of the immediacy of priorities; a sudden spike in crime produces calls for more police on the street, for example, because we need to feel safe. We rarely consider the systemic causes of what caused the spike in the first place, but the moment the problem emerges we demand action. Invariably such calls are too little, too late and at best ameliorate the problem or delay its effects. Security thinkers in the 21st century cannot afford to think like this.

The warnings are all around us. For example, people often miss the fact that the Syrian War (now well into its tenth year) was preceded by years of unusually low rainfall, leading to a severe extended drought. Caused, it is claimed, by long term warming trends in the Eastern Mediterranean. Agrarian areas of the country saw large scale depopulation as farmers moved into the cities to find work, only to find that the cronyism of Assad's government and the general malaise of Europe's economy prevented them from doing so. Syria quite literally and metaphorically became a tinder box, ripe for revolution, which only needed the spark of protests in neighbouring nations to set the country ablaze.

The point here should be obvious: it is easy to focus on the bombs, the bloodshed and the black flags of ISIS. Stories of war make for compelling newsreels and horrify both citizens and governments into taking action. But reading stories about Syrian farmers struggling to tend their crops isn't quite so interesting, and the problems are infinitely harder, and take far longer to solve. After all, you can't solve poor crop management and government corruption with a 1000lb laser guided bomb.

Syria is an extreme example, but much of the security problems in our world today--

The point here should be obvious: it is easy to focus on the bombs, the bloodshed and the black flags of ISIS. Stories of war make for compelling newsreels and horrify both citizens and governments into taking action. But reading stories about Syrian farmers struggling to tend their crops isn't quite so interesting, and the problems are infinitely harder, and take far longer to solve.

ranging from population movements through the Sahara to the Mediterranean affecting the border security of European nations, to piracy off the coast of Somalia, to the (not so simple) maintenance of high end military equipment in ever more extreme weather conditions-- are in some form or another climate related. And these are just the problems that exist now: the challenges of the future are even more complex.

Take for instance research which warns that many cities in the Persian Gulf will regularly experience day time temperatures of about 60 Celsius before the end of this century. Such norms would be punctuated by extreme heat waves leading to parts of the Arabian Peninsula reaching a staggering 75 degrees (or 170 Fahrenheit). This will effectively render such countries unliveable for humans for long stretches of the year, and would severely disrupt industrial activity in the area, not to mention having serious implications for the world's largest annual pilgrimage, the Hajj, which may have to be postponed for years at a time owing to extreme heat.

What has this to do with us in Europe or America? Well the answer is a lot. The UK, the US and France forward deploy large numbers of military personnel, advanced signals intelligence and command and control facilities to the Persian Gulf. The reasons for this extensive deployment are various, including the need to maintain alliances, protect shipping lanes, and perhaps most importantly, being much cheaper to operate troops overseas in the Gulf than it is to station them at home. If Britain seeks to remain a global power, then it must contend with this problem. Moving basing infrastructure is possible, but ultimately Britain's most important defence-industrial partnerships could be jeopardised if this problem is not taken seriously soon, and appropriate mitigation efforts put in place.

This is but one example of why security professionals worrying about tomorrow need to be the climate advocates of today, or else we may face a range of threats that can no longer be solved with the tools available. Human security issues in the 21st century are increasing in scale and scope, and it is undoubtedly true that the effects of climate change will make these problems worse. It is time for the security community to understand how and why this is so, or else we face a world that we may no longer be able to secure.

Michael Stephens is an Associate Fellow at The Royal United Services Institute. His forthcoming book is entitled "What next for Britain in the Middle East? Security, Trade and Foreign Policy after Brexit", co-written with Dr Christopher Phillips.

Clean, FREE TRADE is the muscle that international climate action needs

by JACK RICHARDSON

Europe is where the world looks to for climate leadership: France demonstrated a masterclass in diplomacy through the 2015 Paris Agreement in which countries agreed to pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees; the UK is leading an alliance of countries committed to phasing out coal and presiding over the UN Climate Summit (COP26) in partnership with Italy; and last year, Germany unveiled its $60bn climate package and is now presiding over the EU Council as it begins the entire bloc's journey toward net zero emissions by 2050. Though the UK has left the EU, climate change remains a shared priority. Together, the UK and the EU can use their economic clout to further the climate agenda through trade. By linking market access to climate mitigation and adaptation policies, they can create a powerful economic incentive for other countries to reduce their emissions.

Promoting clean free trade by providing incentives, rather than solely using tax penalties such as carbon border adjustment taxes, offers three big advantages which heavy regulation and reliance on government spending does not provide. First, clean free trade makes clean products cheaper for consumers to buy, in turn accelerating their uptake. Secondly, it creates additional incentives for businesses to develop low-carbon solutions because they can access exports markets more easily as well as import components at a lower cost. Finally, trade offers an additional route to strengthening and institutionalising global climate action, the majority of which is currently done under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Perhaps the greatest challenge governments face in achieving net zero is to do so in a way which maintains public support. The science behind climate change and the need to address it is accepted by the majority of Europeans, and they want governments to act - evidenced by the surge in support for green parties in the most recent elections. But the greens, whatever the country, tend to ally themselves to left-wing economics and so don't have genuinely workable economic policies. Rather than unprecedented and clumsy state intervention, overly burdensome regulation, and a naive faith in the competence of government machines, European nations should utilise smarter, market-based policies .

As other contributors to this journal have argued, a carbon price is an efficient, market-based mechanism for driving climate action. Of course, it does increase the costs of production for businesses, which is why the EU and UK should combine it with a carbon border adjustment tax in return for market access to avoid European firms being undercut by less clean producers overseas. It's already consulting on such a mechanism by 2023, and President-elect Biden has committed to one too. . Making polluters pay their fair share and then either redistributing a carbon dividend to citizens or reinvesting that revenue into the green transition is an effective way to maintain public favourability for net zero - avoiding a repeat of the Gilets Jaunes protests in France.

Reducing European emissions, however, is just one step. European, British, and indeed American emissions are declining and so becoming less significant with each passing year. To promote a global low-carbon economy, the UK and the EU should champion the new Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability for low-carbon goods and services at the World Trade Organisation. Free trade has obvious economic benefits, but it could also be a route to delivering the temperature goals set out in the Paris Agreement.

The UK has already unilaterally cut its most favoured nation tariffs on over 100 low-carbon products in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and the circular economy. Last year, a group of five countries, led by New Zealand, Iceland, and Norway, restarted talks on a free trade deal for environmental goods following an unsuccessful attempt at the WTO in 2016. These talks aim to remove tariffs on green goods, eliminate fossil fuels subsidies to allow renewables to operate on a level playing field, and to develop voluntary guidelines for eco-labelling programmes and mechanisms. The UK and the EU could throw their support behind these talks and move to include environmental services.

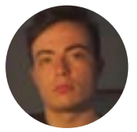
Combined with a green international free trade deal, we could capture the growing ambition of like-minded countries in other continents to rebuild the global economy in a greener, cleaner, and more resilient way, and give developing countries an additional incentive to grow more sustainably.

Europe is home to some of the best in the business when it comes to low-carbon companies and technologies. Germany and Denmark are home to Siemens and Orsted, France is a leading nuclear power, and London is the premier hub for green finance. Meanwhile, more nascent clean technologies such as electric vehicles in Italy, solar power and green hydrogen in Spain, and geothermal energy in Iceland could provide a route for other European countries to become key players in the global green economy. A multilateral deal, which incorporates like-minded countries such as Japan, Canada, South Korea, and New Zealand, would see VAT and tariffs for low-carbon goods slashed - turbocharging the global green economy.

Making these goods and services cheaper will be vital to tackling climate change as we head further into the twenty-first century, when the developing world will make up the majority of emissions - particularly countries such as India and Nigeria. Paris Agreement-aligned free trade could be the muscle that international climate action needs, acting as both a carrot and a stick to encourage countries to decarbonise while also providing cheaper access to clean technologies.

A carbon price paired with a carbon border adjustment tax will help Europe reduce its carbon emissions in the most efficient and just way, and may encourage others to cut their own in return for market access. Combined with a green international free trade deal, we could capture the growing ambition of like-minded countries in other continents to rebuild the global economy in a greener, cleaner, and more resilient way, and give developing countries an additional incentive to grow more sustainably. ⌐

Jack Richardson is the policy coordinator at the Conservative Environment Network. He was previously a researcher in the UK Parliament and at the Henry Jackson Society.



This moment of civic engagement with nature, combined with the looming unemployment crisis, breeds the perfect conditions for an employment program centred around conservation.

Putting NATURE at the heart of the RECOVERY from Covid-19

by TED-CHRISTIE MILLER

Wrenched out of our daily lives and forced indoors, British life came to an abrupt halt in March. Isolated from friends and family, trapped inside, people began to feel the tight embrace of the British state. For many it was work from home, for others it was no work at all, leading to millions of Brits being put on the Treasury's payroll. But the cost of this was not just financial.

With this came unforeseen crises on a number of fronts: calls to domestic abuse helplines rose by 80% in June alone; 64% of one survey's respondents reported signs of depression during lockdown; 38% of children were doing less exercise during lockdown; and over 50% of people with pre-existing mental problems reported exercising less and eating less healthily during lockdown. At the root of these issues was the enforced confinement within the home. With a whole nation trapped indoors, permitted to just an hour of outdoor exercise a day, a grim experiment of intense domestication was unfolding - and people began to crave for the great outdoors.

But rather than unpick those problems, I want to unveil some of the positives to come out of the recent lockdown, such as: the resurrection of community spirit, and how this was used to turbocharge conservation efforts up and down the country; the newfound appreciation people have had of the outdoors, green space and the environment; and what this all means for the future of work and recreation. We need bold ideas to sustain the community spirit after lockdown, particularly with regards to conservation, and inventive ways to give people a stake in climate action at home and abroad. I will set out below how I think we can achieve both these aims in the context of the UK.

Community strength was in long term decline at the end of last year. Onward found that 71% of people felt that community had declined in their lifetime. People were less likely to be a member of a local group or volunteer or to attend church or community activities than they were even ten years ago.

2019 now feels like a long time ago. There has been a clear and considerable shift in these attitudes, with some community groups "overwhelmed" with the number of volunteers during lockdown. So, whilst the pandemic in many ways forced people apart, it also served as a catalyst for community togetherness and neighbourly support. As Onward polling in March unveiled, community spirit and care for one's neighbours soared during the pandemic. People were more worried about the impact of Covid-19 on the health of their wider community (88%) than they were about their own physical (77%) or mental (56%) health. Just 9% were not worried about their community's health. Despite the horrors of the pandemic, the bounce back of community spirit was certainly a shining light.

As people began to reconnect with their local communities, or in some cases connected for the very first time, they also began to reunite with the outdoors. People yearned to be outside of their four walls, be it in the green space near their flats or in the national parks outside of the city. Lockdown saw thousands of people flood to national parks - much to the dismay of authorities. Pictures of Snowdonia, for example, showed mass overcrowding with no chance of social distancing. In cities, local parks were inundated with people trying to make the most of the uncharacteristically hot spring: Hackney Downs saw the police called several times due to overcrowding concerns. For the first time in a generation, the positives of city life disappeared overnight and people turned instead to fresh air, sunlight, nature and greenery.

Evidence suggests people are now desperate to leave the city for good. A recent poll by the London Assembly finds that one in seven Londoners want to relocate outside of the city. The same poll finds that almost a fifth (19%) now want a garden and 17% want easy access to parks. These are stark figures for the London housing market, but more importantly exhibit a renewed appreciation for outdoor space that lockdown has brought about.

A demonstration of this shift is seen by the "staycation" summer and the booming of the camping industry. Since lockdown was lifted in early July, sales of tent pegs are up by 45%, airbeds by 130%, gas stoves by 300%, cool boxes by 180% and camping chairs by 120%. British camping is back on the agenda. People are trading in their Spanish villas for tents in the Brecon Beacons. Only time will tell whether this is a short-term situation or a long-term shift.

With a boost in community action happening alongside a rise in nature-based experiences, it is perhaps no surprise that the little platoons came out in force to assist in environmental action. The UK has a long tradition of conservation, with nearly one in ten people a member of a green NGO. Between 22nd April to 22nd May, despite people not being able to leave their homes, thousands joined the #ReturnToOffender campaign from their homes. The aim of the campaign was to challenge big brands on the volume of plastic and packaging pollution found on beaches and other wild spaces. There was also the "The Time is Now" campaign which saw over 14,000 people sign up to ask MPs to put people, climate and nature at the heart of our nation's recovery. Matt Browne for the Wildlife and Countryside Link put it perfectly saying:

"even though continuing restrictions make a lot of traditional nature volunteering difficult, people have found innovative ways to help, from sharing what nature means to them, to taking part in online campaigns calling for a green recovery".

There is a real danger that without support, many smaller wildlife, conservation and environmental groups will disappear, creating a huge loss to our social fabric and our environmental outcomes.

This new-found connection with the environment and nature would have been no surprise to Sir Roger Scruton if he were alive today. He saw environmentalism as the pinnacle of conservatism, touching on the three pillars of conservative thinking: trans-generational loyalty, the priority of the local and the search for home. This Burkean view of the world put innate faith in the individual and their community to achieve social good, rather than the state. Scruton would perhaps have hated the big brother state of pandemic Britain, but he would also have been heartened by such a solidifying of communities strength across the country not least in the case of environmental action.

There is now the urgent question of what the Government does to capitalise on this moment of community strength and environmental awareness. Debt and unemployment are due to hit historic highs in the months ahead. At the same time, people are more engaged with place, home and the environment than ever. It is time now to enable a truly green recovery that simultaneously deals with unemployment, environmental issues and mental and physical health. A National Nature Service, an English Right to Roam and a support package for conservation groups would be a bold and impactful trio to kick-start that green recovery.

As people began to reconnect with their local communities, or in some cases connected for the very first time, they also began to reunite with the outdoors. People yearned to be outside of their four walls, be it in the green space near their flats or in the national parks outside of the city. Lockdown saw thousands of people flood to national parks - much to the dismay of authorities.

This moment of civic engagement with nature, combined with the looming unemployment crisis, breeds the perfect conditions for an employment program centred around conservation. One such idea is to create a National Nature Service in the mould of the Citizens Conservation Corps, which was launched as a part of Roosevelt's New Deal. In the 1930s, it was a state-led conservation-focused employment programme which employed 3 million young men during the Great Depression, helping to build the foundations of the US National Parks which their descendents enjoy today. In the UK, 60 organisations, including NGOs, banks, councils and trusts, have written a letter to the Chancellor calling for a 21st Century version of the scheme to deal with the recovery from COVID-19, and more than 8 in 10 UK adults want the Government to help those left unemployed by the pandemic into nature-related roles. The UK Government's Kickstart Scheme provides an opportunity to achieve this. With 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week being covered by the Government, employers in the conservation and wildlife sectors have a huge opportunity to engage a new generation in conservation. The demand is certainly there, as seen by the Government's Pick for Britain campaign filling vacancies at a rapid rate. All that is needed is for the opportunities to be created.

To further seize the moment of civic engagement with nature the Government should be bold and open up access to the countryside in the UK. As the pandemic has shown, people more than ever want to camp, walk, cycle and ride on this great isle. While the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act was a big step in the right direction, 90% of land and 97% of rivers are still inaccessible for English and Welsh citizens. As billions of taxpayers money is set to be invested in restoring biodiversity on farmland through the Environment Land Management Scheme, it is only right that the public should be able to appreciate more of the habitats and wildlife they are paying for.

In Scotland, there is a 'right to roam', meaning any member of the public has the right to walk, cycle, swim and ride on private land as long as it is not within the confines of a garden. After the Scottish Outdoor Access Code act was passed, recreational walking levels rose by 14% between 2007 and 2017. Walking now contributes an estimated £1.26 billion a year to the Scottish economy, according to VisitScotland.

England and Wales should create their own version of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, specifically for Green Belt land, albeit with a few exceptions: the access rights should be stricter with regards to proximity to stand-alone private homes, and a strict and punitive clause enforcing a "leave no trace" rule for walkers and ramblers should also be included. The country is at a unique juncture in its history and reform of our land access could trigger large changes in the British way of life. It is about time that urban dwellers in England were allowed to ramble, swim and ride across the Great British countryside. The evidence tells us that such engagement with nature will trigger eco-actions, encouraging people to live more sustainably, having a positive impact on people's mental health.

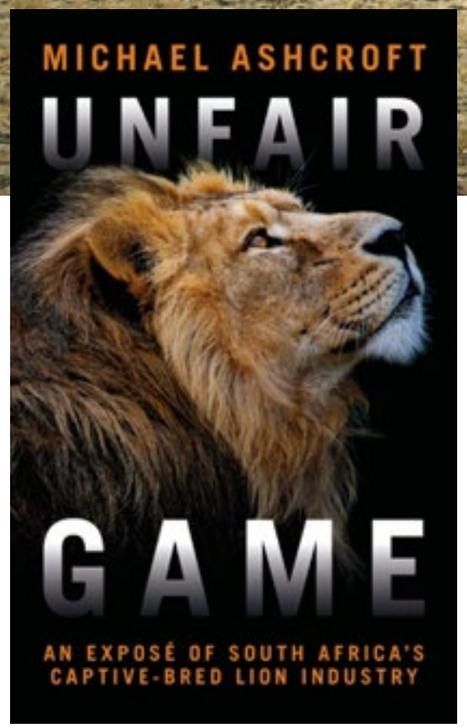
Finally, a series of measures should be taken to support conservation charities in the medium and long term. These should include: charitable loan support from the UK Treasury; reform of tax reliefs to incentivise donations and social investment; and the removal of VAT on online advertising for civic groups. These changes, from an Onward report earlier this year, would provide meaningful and impactful support to the charities sector, including conservation NGOs, at a time when donation levels are falling and many are just on the brink of survival. This support package would be superior to straight funding, which would just further increase their dependency on the state.

While we begin the year under the cloud of COVID-19, we will hopefully be on the ascent of a green economic recovery by the time of the COP26 summit in Glasgow in the Autumn. It is vital that the Government puts nature restoration and conservation at the heart of its net-zero strategy, embracing market forces and empowering local communities. The three recommendations set out here are by no means a complete manifesto for a green recovery, but if implemented they would lay the foundations for a people-first and community-led net-zero transition with nature at the forefront.

Ted-Christie Miller is a researcher specialising in energy and environment policy at Onward, a centre-right think tank in the UK.

Unfair Game

HOW WE CAN PUT A STOP TO THE BARBARIC LION TRADE



Given the abuse and cruelty which is so prevalent in the lion trade as well, it is high time the captive lion business was brought to an end. European governments must play their part in ensuring this happens.

Unfair Game, which exposes the scandal of lion farming in South Africa, was a grim and distressing project to work on. The importance of the issues it covers, however, cannot be overstated. At a general level, the book shines a powerful light on the appalling cruelty inflicted on one of the most majestic species in the world. In a global context, it also details the activities of international crime networks, the billion dollar black market trade in wildlife parts, and the spread of potentially fatal zoonotic diseases. There is plenty that British and European lawmakers could do to help tackle this barbaric business, from which so much evil emanates.

The book describes the typical lifecycle of the captive-born lion. It is a four-stage process. First, cubs are torn from their mothers when just days old and used as magnets to lure tourists into paying money to cuddle and pet them. (Incidentally, young animals that do not "behave" are often drugged or beaten). Next, when they are a few months older, they continue to be exploited for tourists' amusement via "lion walking" excursions, in which one can spend an hour or more in the company of a lion while walking on a private nature reserve or at a safari park or farm. Then, when they are considered too dangerous to be in such close proximity to humans, they are either killed in a "canned hunt" - in which people pay many thousands of dollars to shoot an animal in an enclosed space from which it cannot escape - or simply slaughtered and then stripped for their bones and body parts. The bone trade represents the fourth spoke of this hopeless wheel. Lion bones are often passed off as rarer tiger bones and command high prices in Asian wildlife markets. In China, for example, they are used in so-called "traditional" medicine. Ludicrously, its practitioners claim that consuming food and drink products containing big cat bones is advantageous to one's health and sex life.

My undercover investigations into this murky world, carried out with the help of ex-British Army and security services personnel, generated crucial new evidence. I believe there are now at least 333 farms in South Africa breeding lions and probably 12,000 captive lions in the country, against a wild population of only 3,000. These horrifying statistics are made worse by the fact that some experts believe there may be no wild lions left in South Africa by the middle of the century.

Having recruited a lion dealer as a 'double agent' and planted tracking devices in lion skulls destined to be sold to the Far East, we also established how a Russian tourist used a pack of dogs to illegally hunt and kill a captive-bred lion in a fenced enclosure; how wild lion cubs are being caught in Botswana and smuggled into South Africa to widen the gene pool of lions raised in captivity; how poachers kill wild lions in Botswana by poisoning or shooting them in the stomach to ensure their bones are not damaged; and how some lions are 'deboned' while still alive because this produces a distinctive pink colour - caused by blood left in the bone - that is highly valued by buyers. This and other information was presented in a dossier to a South African police chief but he rejected it and then threatened to have a member of my team put in jail. It seems the South African authorities are in no hurry to address this problem.

Yet several things can be done by European governments to help, and Britain can exert particular influence as a member of the Commonwealth. First, I believe the issue of captive-bred lion farming must be raised with the South African government as soon as possible. It has no conservation value at all and should be outlawed. Second, international airlines, shipping firms and freight companies must be lobbied to stop them transporting the trophies or bones of captive-bred lions. Third, the European tourist industry must be instructed by ministers to inform and educate everybody who visits South Africa that any interaction with lion cubs and lions simply perpetuates their abuse. Finally, just as has happened in Australia, the EU and the UK must introduce new import laws banning the practice of importing captive-bred trophies. I am certain this would send a strong message throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

As the world reels from the Covid-19 pandemic, Unfair Game also highlights the fact that lions carry various diseases which also threaten humans. These animals have weak immune systems to begin with, made worse by their limited diet of abattoir offcuts and animal carcasses that are not fit for human consumption. Their risk of carrying a bacterial infection is high. Furthermore, China's appetite for lion bones may well trigger another major public health incident in Asia. One well-regarded veterinary surgeon in South Africa, Dr Peter Caldwell, is quoted in the book with a warning about the infectious disease brucellosis, which can easily be transferred from animals to human beings. He says botulism is also common in captive lions because of poor hygiene. It produces spores and toxin which can grow in dead flesh and bone. Once consumed by lions, they get the toxin. When an afflicted lion enters the bone trade, the toxin remains in its bone, so the people who utilise or exploit that lion can die a miserable, painful death. Animal TB poses another significant risk. And who knows whether a new disease, like Covid-19, might come from a South African captive lion?

South Africa's reputation will sink lower the longer this situation goes on. Any country that allows lions to be bred intensively for cash and for their bones to be sent abroad for consumption has questions to answer. Given the abuse and cruelty which is so prevalent in the lion trade as well, it is high time the captive lion business was brought to an end. European governments must play their part in ensuring this happens.

Lord Ashcroft is the author of 'Unfair Game: An exposé of South Africa's captive-bred lion industry', and an international businessman, philanthropist and pollster.

Feeding the World while Saving the Planet

by RICHARD WALKER

Our food system is in desperate need of a whole systems change to reduce carbon, enhance biodiversity and rehabilitate soils. This is our best defence against climate change and the next global crisis that threatens our food system. Changing this system from root to branch will be hard work on the part of policymakers and industry, who will need to collaborate to make change happen faster.

As we begin January 2021, our food economy has undergone a marked shock due to the challenges of Covid-19. In the past year, we've seen supply chains rattled by panic buying, and an oversupply of some produce that either lacked the hands to pick it, or no longer had a captive market in newly shuttered restaurants and cafes.

The pandemic has proven how fragile our food systems really are, and unless we foster a systemic change within our global agricultural sector, we leave ourselves exposed to the impact of the next inevitable crisis. Equally, the pandemic has made us all patently aware of the fragility of our planet.

As a member of the Council for Sustainable Business, I work with the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how businesses and policymakers can cooperate. The coronavirus pandemic might be the inflection point for both to realise they need to work in a more joined up way to ensure our food system is sustainable.

This may have to start with a difficult home truth: for too long we have prioritised price at the expense of all else. According to the UK's Office for National Statistics, for the year ending March 2019 the average household spent £56.60 a week on food - the second lowest out of the OECD countries and less than 10% of total household expenditure. In 2006, the average household spent 15% of their income on food, half of the 33% spent fifty years before in 1957.

While greater affordability is a positive trend, too often the costs saved by individual consumers have been externalised, with the burden shifting to society as a whole in the form of climate change and ecological degradation. Supermarket margins have declined, it's true. But at the same time, agricultural industrialisation has enhanced productivity by piling pressure onto our environment. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, soil disturbance from monoculture practices such as tilling and intensive fertiliser use has degraded around 25% of the earth's surface, to the extent that there could only be about 60 harvests left. What's more, producing fertiliser uses a huge amount of energy, and when coupled with the mass methane emissions from ruminant livestock, as well as the food miles clocked up by the products that end up on the shelf, food has become a massive contributor to climate change - with agriculture accounting for around 10% of both UK and EU emissions

The UK currently uses an area almost the size of our own land mass to satisfy our annual demand for commodities such as palm oil, timber and soy, and that number is increasing.

We know consumers want us to do more. ING's 2019 International Survey on sustainability found that two thirds of Europeans (64%) felt that companies who don't adapt business models to limit environmental impact will experience consumer backlash. However, value was also a top priority for 82% of shoppers. The challenge for industry and policymakers is how to reconcile consumers' concern for the planet with their understandable desire to save money on their weekly shop.

This starts at the very first link in the chain; agricultural production. We must invest in technological innovations to provide future resilience. Vertical farming, for example, massively decreases water and land usage compared to traditional agricultural practices. Given they can be set up in cities, we can also reduce travel costs and improve food security.

We could also commit to regenerative agriculture practices to lock up more carbon in soil and trees, and make room for wildlife. Indeed, many low-carbon and nature-friendly farming practices, like agroforestry or precision fertiliser application, can also boost agricultural productivity to help feed a growing population. Policymakers should look to reward farmers for storing carbon and protecting biodiversity on their land, as the UK is doing through the 'public money for public goods' principle in the Agriculture Bill. At an EU level, the CAP could be reformed along the lines of the UK's Environmental Land Management scheme being introduced under the Agriculture Bill to achieve widespread European change. This is one way to ensure that farmers feel supported to tackle the environmental challenges we face and balance this with profit.

At the point where produce reaches the store, we know that businesses are making strides in voluntarily moving to tackle the issues we face, but where possible, we must encourage further action. That's why Iceland, as part of the Plastic Coalition with Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, A Plastic Planet and Surfers Against Sewage, has recently called for the UK Government to mandate businesses to fully disclose their plastic footprints, and set legally binding reduction targets. We've even developed a draft Plastic Pollution Bill to speed up this process.

It might seem strange for a supermarket with 1,000 stores across the UK and a European footprint to be calling for greater regulation, but we believe that policymakers have a role to play in ensuring businesses like ours deliver on our plastic pollution and waste targets.

Without measurement, it's impossible to quantify progress. So, in September Iceland published its first annual plastic consumption footprint report, including data for the brands we stock. We reported 32,000 tonnes of plastic across our UK operations in 2019, including over 1.8 billion items of packaging and almost 93 million plastic bottles.

Importantly, two thirds of the plastic packaging we sell comes from brands. Since Iceland made its commitment in 2018 to eliminate all plastic packaging from our own label products by the end of 2023, we have reduced our own label plastic usage by 29% (to the end of 2019). We hope that our latest action will nudge other retailers to do the same and, by way of trickle-down, the brands that we stock too.

Consumers also have a role, and we know they want us to help them make the right choices. In 2019 a YouGov poll for Friends of the Earth showed that 86% of people think retailers should be doing more to cut down on plastic. So, if voluntary action doesn't happen, policymakers must use their mettle to intervene.

The UK and EU should also leverage their trade policies to promote sustainability on a broader scale. In the UK, we're currently undergoing a period of negotiation with other nations to establish trade deals following our exit from the EU. Climate considerations have to be a key part of this, whether we're discussing food standards with the US or ensuring proper due diligence on supply chains in South America that might impact deforestation.

The UK currently uses an area almost the size of our own land mass to satisfy our annual demand for commodities such as palm oil, timber and soy, and that number is increasing. The government has recognised the need to reduce our global footprint, and is now consulting on a new world-leading law requiring large businesses to end illegal deforestation in their supply chains. The EU should consider implementing its own due diligence obligation to replace its piecemeal approach to tackling deforestation to date.

Our food system is in desperate need of a whole systems change to reduce carbon, enhance biodiversity and rehabilitate soils. This is our best defence against climate change and the next global crisis that threatens our food system. Changing this system from root to branch will be hard work on the part of policymakers and industry, who will need to collaborate to make change happen faster. This doesn't just go for the food sector, but for all sectors that we know are having an adverse impact on the environment, which are ten a penny. Where companies aren't moving fast enough, policymakers will need to take a more interventionist approach to nudge the market in the right direction. Our challenge is an existential one, and it can only be solved by businesses and policymakers working together and in partnership with informed, engaged consumers.

Richard Walker is the Managing Director of Iceland Foods and a member of the UK's Council for Sustainable Business

Ocean Rescue

by RUTH EDWARDS MP

Did you know that, on average, a great whale sequesters 33 tonnes of carbon dioxide in its lifetime? Whales also increase the production of phytoplankton which in turn increases the amount of carbon captured by these microscopic organisms. They currently capture 37 billion metric tons of CO2, an estimated 40 percent of all CO2 produced. Remarkable, beautiful, miraculous and mysterious, oceans cover more than 70% of our planet and sustain all life on it. They produce most of our oxygen, provide sustenance and livelihoods, regulate our climate and are the source of many medicinal products. They are also in terrible danger.

The international community must come together to take urgent action to help protect and restore marine environments.

Protecting marine environments: a priority for us all

Marine habitats play a major role in the regulation of the climate. The sea grass meadows, mangroves and salt marshes along our coastal systems are known to store more carbon per unit area than terrestrial forests, with the potential to lock high concentrations of CO_2 below ground for many thousands of years. They also promote resilience against the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, for coastal communities.

Beyond the benefits to our climate and the protection of our coastal cities, many people rely heavily on the oceans for sustenance and their livelihoods. Approximately 3 billion people in the world rely on wild-caught and farmed seafood as a primary source of protein. The fisheries and aquaculture sector is a major source of employment: in 2018, an estimated 59.5 million people were engaged in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture.

Oceans also provide many medicinal products that help fight cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis and heart disease. For example, a group of researchers have spent the last few years investigating molecules extracted from Lamprey fish and have found that their variable lymphocyte receptors (VLRs) may be able to help transport chemicals through the normally impenetrable blood-brain barrier and help treat cancer and strokes.

We have endangered our oceans

But despite the possible wealth of discovery and scientific advancement, we aren't treating our oceans with the respect they deserve. Overfishing, exploitation of the seabed and the spilling of harmful chemicals into the marine environment have deeply damaged vital ecosystems. We are all too often confronted with heart-breaking pictures of melting sea ice, bleached coral reefs and plastic-choked sea life.

A third of global fish stocks are overfished; the percentage of fish stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels have decreased from 90 percent in 1974 to 65.8 percent in 2017. Over a third of marine mammals and a third of the world's shark species are under threat of extinction. Pollution and plastic waste also continue to be major causes for concern. The United Nations estimates that 80% of the world's wastewater enters the oceans untreated, polluting the water immediately around our most sensitive coastal marine systems.

Millions of tonnes of plastic - 80% of which originates on land - enters the ocean every year, with high concentrations of unseen microplastics harming all aquatic life. Plastic has even been found in some of the deepest marine trenches. It is projected that, if the current rate of plastic consumption continues, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea by 2050.

And, in the deepest parts of the ocean, trawling and mining rip up the seafloor, scarring the seabed and serrating topographical features responsible for directing currents, circulating nutrients, and hosting rich and diverse habitats. Often this activity launches plumes of once-settled material up and into the currents, disturbing the feeding paths of larger marine animals and smothering aquatic plants as it resettles.

As a global community, we need to act now to protect our oceans; and the UK, with its long maritime history, is leading the way.

What is the UK doing to protect our oceans?

Last year, the UK created the Global Ocean Alliance. This coming together of nations is working to pass international legislation to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030 through the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Domestically, the UK has already created over 350 of its own MPAs, covering over 25% of our waters, and with the addition of a new Marine Protection Zone around the remote island of Tristan da Cunha in November last year, the government's Blue Belt programme has exceeded its target of protecting 4 million sq km of ocean in the Overseas Territories - over 1% of the Earth's entire ocean.

The aim is to protect a huge number of the most

beautiful and important biodiversity-rich sites on Earth.

Just as importantly, the UK has shown its commitment to stopping domestic waste entering the marine environment and has introduced some of the most stringent bans on single use plastics anywhere in the world. For example, the charge on single use plastic bags has led to a 95% cut in plastic bag sales in major supermarkets, cutting the number that end up in the marine environment. Similarly, bans on microbeads, plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds are also having an impact.

In the deepest parts of the ocean, trawling and mining rip up the seafloor, scarring the seabed and serrating topographical features responsible for directing currents, circulating nutrients, and hosting rich and diverse habitats.

Industrial fishing vessels operating inside protected areas are a threat to fragile ecosystems and hinder the recovery of fish populations. With limited fish stocks, these huge vessels also put at risk the livelihoods of local fishing communities.

As a member of the European Union, the UK was banned under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) from imposing restrictions on fishing activity within offshore MPAs without agreement from other member states. When the UK leaves the CFP at the end of the year, the UK Government will have new powers to regulate fishing activity in offshore waters up to 200 nautical miles from the UK's coast, including inside MPAs.

Compelling recommendations from the landmark Benyon Review go further, calling for the designation of 'Highly Protected Marine Areas' in which invasive and exploitative human activity would be strictly prohibited and ocean recovery promoted.

A global ambition

But thinking and acting domestically will never solve the problems our oceans face. We need to work globally to build on our national actions; and our presidency of COP26 gives us the ideal vehicle to do this and lead the way in calling for an ambitious Global Ocean Treaty.

Complicated international frameworks govern some activity in the high seas, which are beyond the jurisdiction of any single nation, yet only 1% of this space is currently effectively protected.

Next year, there is an opportunity to secure global agreement to protect at least 30% of the world's oceans by 2030.

The UN biodiversity conference in May 2021 seems like an ideal opportunity for the nations of the world to make this commitment and signal that we will throw our full weight behind the future of our oceans. To make this happen, countries must agree beforehand a new Global Ocean Treaty at the UN, to establish an international framework for protecting marine biodiversity in international waters.

If history has taught us anything, it's that the planet's ecosystems are remarkably resilient. Given the opportunity to recover and protection from further exploitation, our ocean habitats will bounce back. But even the most robust environment has a limit.

If we take immediate global action, we can still undo much of the damage we have done to our oceans. If we wait much longer, that damage may be permanent.

As we enter the United Nations 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development', the message is clear; the international community must come together to take urgent action to help protect and restore marine environments.

Ruth Edwards is the Conservative MP for Rushcliffe and sits on the Home Affairs Committee. She is also a member of the Conservative Environment Network Parliamentary Caucus.

BEYOND GRETA

Young conservatives want to protect the environment too

by DANIELLE BUTCHER

Conservatism is often chastised for being the ideology of elitism, when in fact it is conservatism that recognizes the unique role each individual plays in society. Through this ideology, we can champion solutions that give power back to the people. While bureaucrats spend their time regulating how to care for land, hunters, fishers, and farmers spend their time living on it, working with it, and connecting to it.

Today, the term "environmentalism" often conjures up powerful images of youth protesters and progressive politicians. Progressives have staked their claim on the environmental movement, yet, over the last few decades, we have seen little progress. There are many reasons for this, one of the most important being that it is a steadier, more understated approach that will carry the impact we are looking for -- conservatism.

It is a common misconception that an ideology grounded in economic growth, individualism, and limited government cannot properly care for our natural world. And yet, conservatism is also grounded in tradition, love of country, intergenerational loyalty, and personal responsibility. With these values, conservatism is not only up to the task of environmental conservation, but better equipped than progressivism.

Let's begin with tradition, which extends beyond the confines of religion, family, and ritual, applying also to our natural heritage. A commitment to conserving the wonders of the natural world for posterity provides a roadmap with which to guide environmental decisions. This natural heritage passed down generation after generation is perfectly linked to our identity as a nation, and so love of country, too, compels us to care for and steward that which we call home.

As we face enormous challenges such as climate change and ocean pollution, it is naive to believe this stewardship can be left to the government, which more often than not results in the expansion of the state and little else. This government-led approach has failed our environment time and time again, yet we continue to rely on it, despite two often-overlooked, fundamental flaws.

The first is that while well-intentioned, governments are ill-equipped to handle challenges such as these, as they approach the issue from the top-down. Instead, our approach must be localized and based in the community. It is up to each individual to take responsibility, play their part, and contribute to a society which chooses to prioritize conservation efforts. While some may argue that this model lends itself to collectivism, the key difference is that the conservative approach begins with the individual and results in a community, while the progressive approach begins and ends with government alone. For lasting results, a culture of sustainability must be nurtured in the community rather than forced by the hand of government.

The second reason for the state's ineffectiveness is that where conservatism participates in active conservation, progressivism leans on preservation. However, in many cases preservation is not enough. While some environmentalists would prefer we fence off our natural places to protect them, a conservative approach to conservation instead says that we should enjoy and interact with our environment, so long as we leave it as beautiful as we found it. Active conservation understands that we not only need to take care of natural ecosystems, but we ourselves are an integral part of natural ecosystems, and this interaction allows an affinity for our wild places to develop, therefore increasing the incentive to steward resources.

Conservatism is often chastised for being the ideology of elitism, when in fact it is conservatism that recognizes the unique role each individual plays in society. Through this ideology, we can champion solutions that give power back to the people. While bureaucrats spend their time regulating how to care for land, hunters, fishers, and farmers spend their time living on it, working with it, and connecting to it. From the passionate hunter to the dedicated farmer, conservatives all over the United States care deeply about responsibly managing our natural resources and making sure that our natural places stay healthy and beautiful -- their livelihood and quality of life depends on it.

Even values that may at first seem in opposition to environmentalism, such as economic growth, can be used as an asset. It is Sir Roger Scruton who makes the case that "while markets cannot solve all our environmental problems, and are indeed the cause of some of them, the alternatives are almost always worse." This is not to pretend that markets are the only institution we must utilize, but to acknowledge that they ought to be the first. Scruton's observation articulates that while there is not a perfect solution or approach, some are certainly better than others. Markets, in contrast to government, are self-correcting, and thus able to more quickly adapt, change course, and meet the challenges of today. They are our best tool for the distribution of resources, development of technology, and creation of incentives necessary for a sustainable future. A market-led approach, when applied correctly, can effectively tackle many of the challenges we face.

The truth is that conservatives are natural conservationists: through tradition, love of country, individualism, and yes, even markets, we can promote actionable solutions to the environmental challenges we face, and leave our environment in a better state for future generations.

Historically speaking, some of the very best conservationist presidents in the United States were also conservatives. From the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency by Richard Nixon, to George H.W. Bush, who signed key amendments to the Clean Air Act in 1990, the American conservative movement has a strong record on the environment. Teddy Roosevelt, the namesake for the bicameral Roosevelt Conservation Caucus in both the House and Senate, has become an icon across party lines for his work on national parks. This history is too often forgotten when it should instead be embraced as a part of our legacy.

While the figureheads of today's Republican party may not spend time making the case for environmentalism, rather than lamenting this it is now my generation of conservatives' duty to stake our flag and demonstrate that conservatism and conservation are intrinsic to one another, ensuring we return to our shared heritage and tradition. Fortunately, we have guidance from intellectual giants of conservatism such as Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk, and Roger Scruton.

The false narrative that conservatives do not care for the environment because they do not favor increased government intervention must end. Environmental success is not an inevitable consequence of larger government and more spending, and the effectiveness of environmental action should not be measured by the costs and investments associated with a policy. The truth is that conservatives are natural conservationists: through tradition, love of country, individualism, and yes, even markets, we can promote actionable solutions to the environmental challenges we face, and leave our environment in a better state for future generations.

Danielle Butcher is the executive vice president at the American Conservation Coalition (ACC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing young people around environmental action through common-sense, market-based, and limited-government ideals.

WORLD IN NUMBERS

Electricity

What share of people have access to electricity?

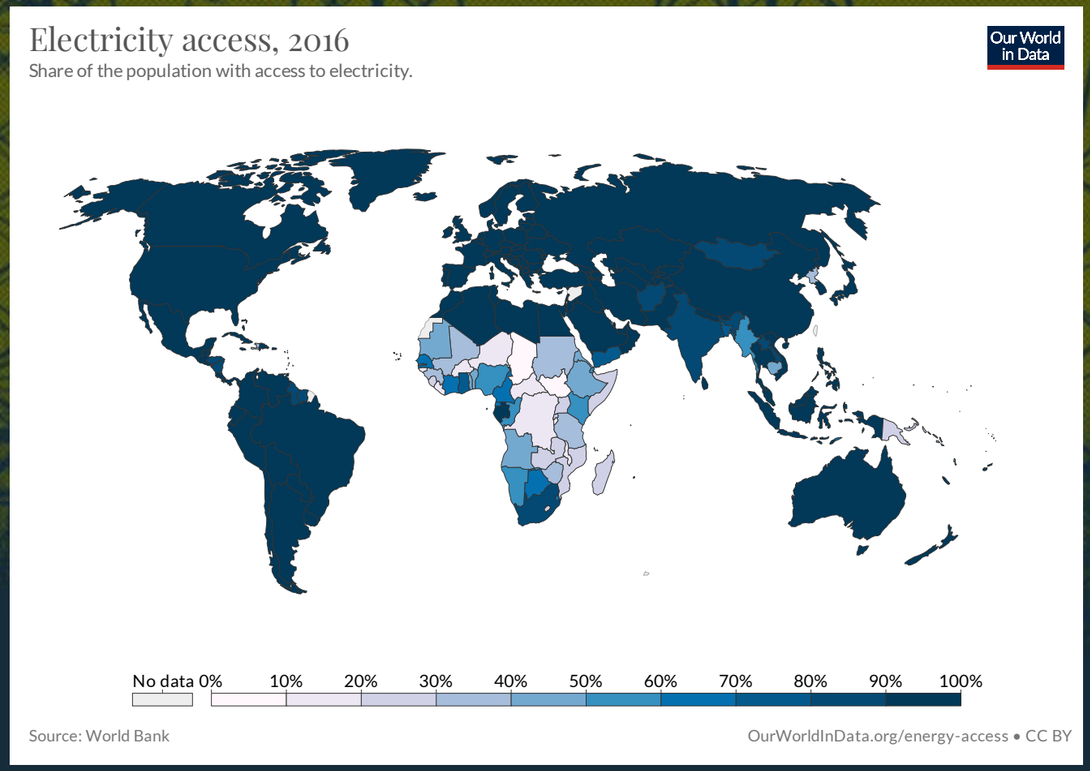
13% of the world do not have access to electricity

Electricity is a crucial for poverty alleviation, economic growth and improved living standards.

Measuring the share of people with electricity access is therefore an important social and economic indicator. There is no universally-adopted definition of what 'access to electricity' means. However, most definitions are aligned to the delivery of electricity, safe cooking facilities and a required minimum level of consumption. The International Energy Agency (IEA) definition entails more than just the delivery to the household. It also requires households to meet a specified minimum level of electricity, which is set based on whether the household is rural or urban, and which increases with time. For rural households, this minimum threshold is 250 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year and for an urban household it is 500 kWh per year.

At a global level, the percentage of people with access to electricity has been steadily increasing over the last few decades. In 1990, around 71% of the world's population had access; this has increased to 87% in 2016. This means 13% of the world did not have access to electricity in 2016. High-income countries – or countries defined by the UN to be 'developed' are assumed to have an electrification rate of 100% from the first year the country entered that category. Therefore, the increasing global share has primarily been driven by increased access in low and middle-income economies. In many countries, this trend has been striking: access in India, for example, increased from 43% to almost 85%. Indonesia is close to total electrification (sitting at almost 98%) – up from 62% in 1990. For countries with strong population growth, such improvements in the share of the population with access is even more impressive.

Whilst the trend is upward for most countries, a number are still severely lagging. At the lowest end of the spectrum, only 8.8% of Chad's population has electricity access. For some countries, significant improvements in access will remain a pressing challenge over the next few decades.



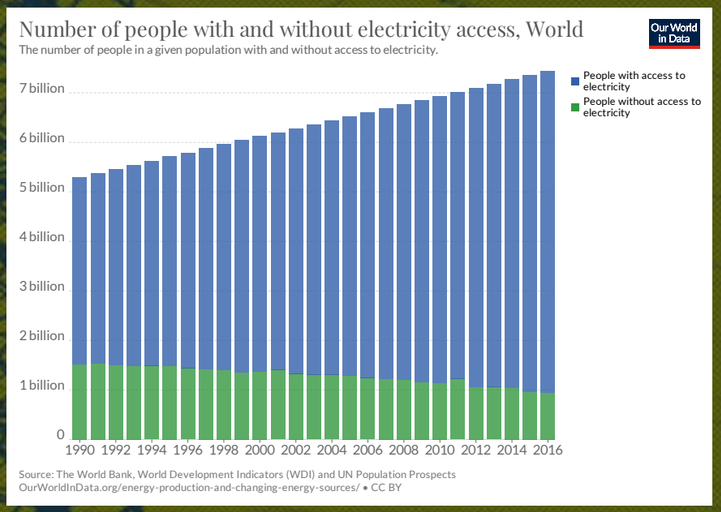
How many people don't have access to electricity?

940 million people do not have access to electricity globally

Global access to electricity has been steadily rising in recent decades. In 1990 just over 71% of the world population had access; by 2016 this had risen to over 87%.

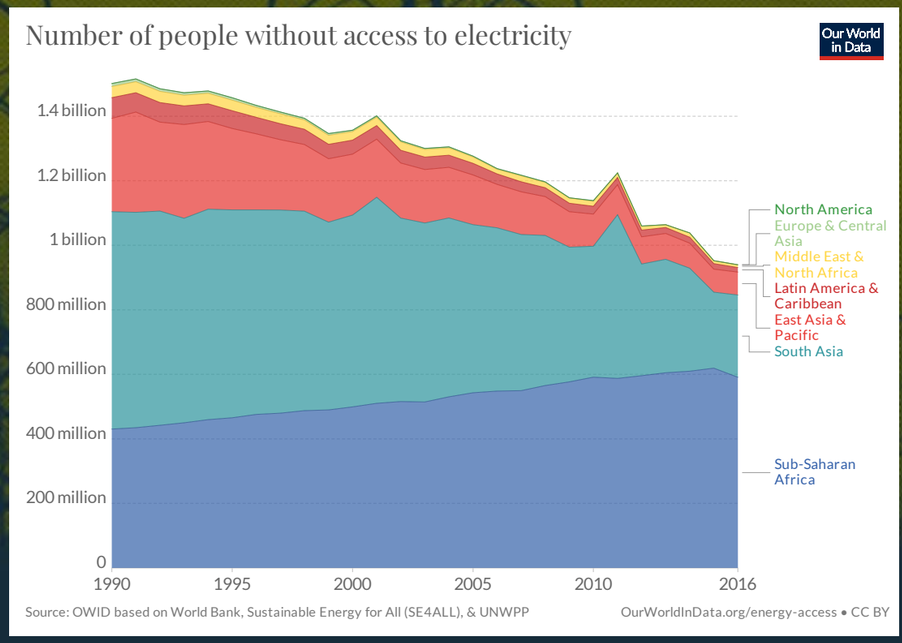
This progress also holds true when we look at the total number of people without electricity access. In 2015, the total number without electricity **fell below one billion** for the first time in decades; very likely the first time in our history of electricity production. This is shown in the chart: in 1990 more than 1.5 billion didn't have electricity; by 2015 this had fallen to 952 million. By 2016 it had fallen again to 940 million.

Progress has been fast. 1.26 billion got access to electricity for the first time in their lives between 2005 to 2016. Broken down to average daily change this means that on any average day in the last 11 years there were 314,770 people who got access to electricity for the first time in their lives.



This figure is still unacceptably high — and gains in access are moving much too slow to reach our goal of universal access by 2030. This is particularly true for Sub-Saharan Africa — despite the share of the population with electricity rising steadily, population growth meant that the total number of people without access was on the rise until 2016. Accelerated progress will be needed to ensure this number now continues to fall.

The number of people without access to electricity by region and country



In the chart we see the total number of people without access to electricity, grouped by world region.

Here we see a regional shift in electricity access over the past few decades: in 1990, nearly half (45 percent) of people in the world without access lived in South Asia. By 2016 this had shifted significantly: the largest share now lives in Sub-Saharan Africa (which is now home to nearly two-thirds of the world population without electricity access).

ENVIRONMENTAL LOCALISM

by SAQIB BHATTI MP

Given the last twelve months, you would be forgiven for thinking that the Covid-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge of our time. In fact, it has only served to signify the peril that our planet faces with the destruction of our natural world.

In the wake of Covid-19, we all have read the stories of 'nature hitting the reset button', as flora and fauna gradually creep back into habitats from which they had vanished. For the most part, this did not come as a surprise to us.

The before and after maps of air polluted with CO_2 in China should have brought to us all the stark reality of humanity's devastation to our climate. In response, we have witnessed a multitude of countries set new targets to be net-zero, under the advice of the United Nations.

Of course, this is a much-needed step in the right direction and its value must not be understated. We must now look to enhance our approach to preserving and improving the natural environment.

Saqib Bhatti MP
Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom
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The conservation of our natural world is an inherently conservative principle. It is the Conservative Party which is leading the way and a Conservative government which is leading the world in environmental standards and ambitious targets. The Conservative party has often been branded as the 'natural party of government' and being good in government is about creating opportunities for future generations and prioritising the quality of life for the people who are here now – and protecting the environment aligns wholly with these ambitions. The father of modern-day Conservatism, Edmund Burke, said that "Society is indeed a contract. It is a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born." As conservatives, and as lawmakers, it is incumbent upon us to always consider the real impact of every decision we make to the prosperity, security and wellbeing of our electorate and this responsibility is never more obvious than when considering the health of our planet.

In the United Kingdom, the Government has put forward its 10 Point Plan, which is integral to its Green Industrial Revolution that will create roughly 250,000 new green jobs.

When in government, we take fiscal responsibility seriously because we do not wish to burden future generations with debt, and similarly with the environment, we cannot afford to make decisions that put our planet in peril and lessen the quality of life for its future inhabitants. As conservatives, we must do as Burke, and many since advised, we must remember our traditions and ask ourselves what state we are leaving our world in as the "temporary possessors and life-renters", we must never allow ourselves to be those who "leave to those who come after... a ruin instead of a habitation"

While national frameworks and strategies are important in mitigating our impact on the environment, we must not fail to recognise the importance of local structures and organisations and the decisive role they will play in the implementation of sustainable environmental policies.

In order to understand the benefits of localism, we do not need to conduct vast amounts of research. As an example of this, we see much of road and pathway maintenance devolved to local councils in the United Kingdom. Tindihis has proven to be beneficial to both local and national government in a variety of ways. Of course, there is the element that local governments understand which roads and pathways are used more often and for what reason, and so they are able to target funding for repairs or illuminating the route at night. Ultimately, it is the local government that listens to its electorate and acts upon their demands; albeit for increasing safety and brightness of roads and pathways or any general repair. Another benefit of localism in this example is resource efficiency. As local governments understand a particular area, they are more capable of attributing the correct solution to the problem first time. This saves in financial resources and mismanaging people. Even with something that is so politically sensitive, such as the National Health Service (NHS), localism is finding its purpose. The NHS' *Integrated Health Plan* sets out how health and care services in the United Kingdom will be localised to a level never experienced before. This Plan is explicit in its view that localism will drive down the levels of bureaucracy and mismanagement within the health and care systems. The conservation of our environment should not be treated differently; if we allow services that are vital for our communities' survival to be devolved, we should surely also pursue devolution in environmental policy.

In ensuring the success of localism, national governments must also play their part to the fullest. By setting ambitious targets, we can encourage local governments to pursue the approach that best suits their

The father of modern-day Conservatism, Edmund Burke, said that "Society is indeed a contract. It is a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

area. In the United Kingdom, the Government has put forward its 10 Point Plan, which is integral to its Green Industrial Revolution that will create roughly 250,000 new green jobs; the Clean Air Strategy, which the World Health Organisation described as "an example for the rest of the world to follow"; and, of particular focus is the government's Environment Bill, which is an innovative piece of legislation that will create a governance framework for the environment, a new course for resource and waste management, improving air quality, enhancing our water efficiency, improving our green spaces and updating our laws on chemicals.

When I delivered my maiden speech to the House of Commons during the second reading of the Environment Bill, I did so with great pride, knowing that I was speaking in favour of a landmark piece of legislation which sends the crucial message that Conservatives care about our natural world. The Bill has a realistic potential to deliver a cleaner, greener and a more resilient country for future generations. It will redefine our political and social culture surrounding the environment. In order to capitalise on this potential, we must vociferously promote the localism agenda; ensuring that we can further adapt and progress our social, political and economic cultures towards a healthier environment.

In moving towards a political system in which local councils have a greater level of responsibility over the protection of the natural environment in their area, more must be done than simply legislating in Parliament. We must go further to harbour a culture of local responsibility towards our climate. More encouragement is needed to promote co-operation and collaboration between local and national governments, that also puts at the heart of policy local needs and concerns. Local bodies and national government working together must be understood as a necessary component of localism; it is not a policy that can be pursued in order to alleviate national government of any responsibility. On the contrary, the role of national government in providing for local governments adequate support and the correct set of standards is vital.

When reaching towards the goal of further localism, we must be clear that this is not a lofty and untenable idea. In fact, localism can be found across the United Kingdom to be in perfect working order. In my constituency of Meriden, the local authority Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has been putting into practice a local environmental agenda, through the Greener Solihull for Success programme. Solihull Council is approaching environmental issues through a number of initiatives, ranging from a greener local economy to a greener housebuilding programme. As a result of the local initiative, Solihull Council has pledged that the borough will be net-zero by 2030, a target that supersedes the national ambition by two decades. This is not an over-ambitious target with little chance of reality, it is a plan backed by local politicians and people of all political stripes and ages. The success of this pledge hinges upon three critical factors: I) that the national government has given adequate provisions for the local government to pursue this policy; II) that individuals feel a sense of responsibility for their environment, through the genuine acquisition of localism in their area; and, III) that Solihull Council's ambitions brings together all aspects of the community, including individuals, local bodies and local businesses.

It is important to emphasise the necessity of all three tenets of localism, people, local bodies and businesses, working together to achieve our environmental ambitions. We cannot be complacent in suggesting that we need only aim for a single tenet of localism to function properly.

It is important to emphasise the necessity of all three tenets of localism, people, local bodies and businesses, working together to achieve our environmental ambitions. We cannot be complacent in suggesting that we need only aim for a single tenet of localism to function properly. There should be the understanding that all tenets must shoulder their share of the responsibility to the natural environment, in order to ensure success.

ARNOLD DOESN'T CARE

if you Believe in Climate Change

by CONYERS DAVIS

Climate change is real, and so is global warming. You don't need to convince me, Arnold, or millions of other environmentalists of that. But if we want the public -- and the policymakers they elect – to give a damn what should our focus be on? The answer is easy, the thing that makes everyone's eyes burn, throats hurt, and noses run: Air pollution.

Photo: Frederic Legrand - COMEO / Shutterstock.com

Arnold was right in 2015, and he's right now: It's time to move beyond a discussion of whether people believe, or don't, in the specifics of science -- and instead focus on the impact of pollution on their daily lives. Let's fight climate change using a framework that's right in front of the public's nose.

In the middle of the 2015 Paris Climate negotiations, Arnold Schwarzenegger issued this statement: "I don't give a damn if you believe in climate change. I couldn't care less if you're concerned about temperatures rising or melting glaciers. It doesn't matter to me which of us is right about the science."

Arnold hadn't sold out to the oil companies or joined the flat earth society. No, he was making this point: It's time for pro-environmental policymakers to overhaul their communications.

Communications focused on "climate change" and "global warming" language too often comes off as academic, rooted in the specifics of science that are outside most people's frame of reference. As a result, rhetoric about "climate change" and "global warming" often fail to convince average people that dramatic action is necessary (which it is). If you want to watch people's eyes glaze over, start talking about PM 2.5, melting ice caps, or 1.5 degree temperature rise. That just doesn't resonate with most people, who are interested in how the here and now impacts them personally.

Furthermore, talk of "global warming" gives climate deniers a rhetorical leg to stand on. Just check out twitter every time there's a winter snow storm or the temperature dips; the deniers love asking the rhetorical question, "is this what global warming looks like?"

Climate change is real, and so is global warming. You don't need to convince me, Arnold, or millions of other environmentalists of that. But if we want the public -- and the policymakers they elect – to give a damn what should our focus be on? The answer is easy, the thing that makes everyone's eyes burn, throats hurt, and noses run: Air pollution.

Climate change is caused by air pollution, whether it's the pollution from factories, powerplants, freeways, campfires or any other carbon-emitting source. If you solve one, you will solve the other. But unlike climate change, air pollution is something that people can see and smell in their daily lives. It's not an abstraction and, as such, it becomes a powerful rhetorical tool. Environmentalists would be smart to acknowledge this, and shift communications to a framework that emphasizes this universally disliked (and recognized) menace.

Once you make that switch, the OpEds, speeches and policies write themselves. The reasons to fight air pollution are clear, compelling, and well documented:

In America, pollution kills an estimated 100,000 a year. Globally the number is exponentially larger. According to the World Health Organization over 7 million die annually from pollution. That is more than triple the numbers who die from AIDS, malaria and tuberculous combined.

Air pollution victims have faces, families and very compelling stories -- and environmentalists would be wise to highlight them. In a recent landmark ruling, British authorities concluded that pollution contributed to the death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah in 2013. This made global news because it was an easy-to-understand story about a family hurt by pollution. Recognizing these victims is a meaningful way to make the impact of climate change real.

Pollution also has an outsized economic cost. In 2017 the Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health estimated that the financial cost of pollution totals nearly $4.6 trillion per year. According to journalist John Vidal "pollution already costs some countries as much as 4 per cent of their GDP – a figure likely to increase because children are the worst affected and deaths across much of the world are set to double within thirty years." Again, these numbers are compelling and speak to a major motivator: money.

Finally, addressing air pollution is good for business. Since 1970 when the Clean Air Act came into effect the United States have invested approximately $65 billon in air pollution controls. Instead of destroying business and American competitiveness – as many critics argued it would – the U.S. has received roughly $1.5 trillion in benefits.

Over the past 40 years the modern environmental movement could have made much greater progress if it had changed its strategies to frame these problems in ways that the public finds meaningful. Arnold was right in 2015, and he's right now: It's time to move beyond a discussion of whether people believe, or don't, in the specifics of science -- and instead focus on the impact of pollution on their daily lives. Let's fight climate change using a framework that's right in front of the public's nose. ¬

Conyers Davis is the Global Director of the Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy at the University of Southern California and former Head of Operations for the Conservative Party.

CHINA
CLIMATE FRIEND OR FOE?

by ALICIA KEARNS MP

In order for any negotiation and agreement on climate change to be meaningful, and in order for our cooperation and collaboration to not undermine our other pressing concerns with the Chinese state, it would be wise to adopt and adapt a well known turn of phrase from the then US President: mostly "trust, but verify".

Talking about global challenges inevitably means talking about China. In no area is this more true than in climate change policy. Without China working with us, there is almost no chance that we can hit the global 1.5 degree global warming target in the Paris Agreement.

China-UK co-operation on climate change raises two conundrums. The first is that, while Chinese development itself has generated huge investment in green energy, this development is itself also predicated on significant increases in emissions, and reliance on carbon-intensive power.

Secondly, the UK will always run the risk of co-operating with a power with often adversarial geo-political aims, and a human rights record that is, if I am to be courteous, nothing short of unacceptable. The UK must then adopt a stance that seeks to extend a hand to China to combat climate change but remains cautious of its ends and its means.

There is no doubt that China's rise has fuelled huge investments in green technology. Since 2012, China has by far been the largest investor in renewable energy (excluding large hydro), and its investments in 2017 more than doubled those of the United States. However, the figure in 2018 was 38 percent down on its record in 2017 and the lowest in four years, driven in part by the falling cost of solar power, but also by a shift in policy from the Chinese government to restrict access to the feed-in tariff, in response to alarm at the level of public expenditure committed to renewable energy projects. Consequently, solar energy investment actually fell by 56 percent according to the figures available, with the amount of new solar capacity added also falling, but less steeply. In the same year, the China Electricity Council called for the development of between 300 and 500 new coal power plants by 2030, although overcapacity in the sector means that typical plants already run at less than 50% of their capacity.

This contradiction has continued through the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Chinese Government has indicated that it wants to reboot its economy in part by focusing on green infrastructure, and has committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2060, it has also begun approving carbon-intensive infrastructure projects to alleviate "significant pressure" on the grid. While final decisions are still to be made, China will continue to be heavily reliant on coal well into the 2030s under Bloomberg NEF projections.

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the United Kingdom. We have been climate leaders for the last two decades. We were the first major economy to legislate for net zero by 2050, and emissions were 44 percent below 1990 levels in 2018. Indeed, between 1990 and 2017, the UK had the highest per-capita growth rate in the G7 whilst delivering the fastest decarbonisation rate. If approached in the right way, we've shown that decarbonisation goes hand in hand with economic growth.


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We can leverage this leadership with our excellent diplomatic service, and in the coming year as we hold the Presidency of COP26 and Chair of the G7, we can push for meaningful progress worldwide. We hold the pen. Leading environmental think tank E3G has called for the creation of coalitions, like the High Ambition Coalition, to get countries like China signed up to more ambitious targets.

There is also a real ambition, shared by our Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Xi, to use the UK's Presidency of COP26 and China's hosting of the Biodiversity COP to put public health and the environment, alongside nature-based solutions to climate change, centre stage - this I believe has been made all the more acute by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is in addition to the deep financial cooperation that has become a hallmark of UK-China engagement on green issues. The UK-China Green Finance Centre has helped leverage London's role as a global financial centre to invest in green technology and secure clean growth. These are precisely the sort of initiatives that will allow the UK to both push China to adopt more ambitious targets and cement our role as a financial and environmental leader.

Thus, on one level there are opportunities for partnership, and for the United Kingdom to take the lead on climate issues. If we can get China on side, we will have been instrumental at encouraging China's integration into the international community and its rules-based order in at least a limited manner. This will hopefully commit China to further constructive engagement, rather than unproductive enmity.

However, if the UK is to increase its geopolitical profile and global influence through environmental diplomacy, there must also be significant attention paid to the implications of co-operation and engagement with the People's Republic. This is a dynamic that has for a long time been under-appreciated in the West.

China has already demonstrated an unfortunate willingness to flout international law and to disregard human rights. China's treatment of Hong Kong and its shredding of the Sino-British Treaty is a clear demonstration that the United Kingdom must always be weary of international engagement with the Chinese state. They have shown that international agreements can be discarded when politically necessary. Similarly, the Communist Party has committed appalling atrocities against the Uyghur people in Xinjiang province, and continues to deny its gross human rights violations there. They have also demonstrated a willingness to mislead other countries in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and its public health impact, until it was too late.

China has already demonstrated an unfortunate willingness to flout international law and to disregard human rights. China's treatment of Hong Kong and its shredding of the Sino-British Treaty is a clear demonstration that the United Kingdom must always be weary of international engagement with the Chinese state.

The United Kingdom is therefore faced with a dilemma: to co-operate on issues where we might achieve important gains, but to do so in ways that keeps watch on the actions of the Chinese state at every turn, and does not see us remain silent on pressing human rights and geopolitical concerns. Climate change is an existential question, but it cannot be used to allow an authoritarian state, which is also the world's largest emitter, to bend multilateral rules and institutions, aided by our willingness to compromise. We must shift from a diplomatic posture of hopeful and aspirational engagement with China, to one of clear-eyed and pragmatic diplomacy with a much firmer declaration of our own intent: to defend and secure our interests, protect human rights and bolster the international rules-based order.

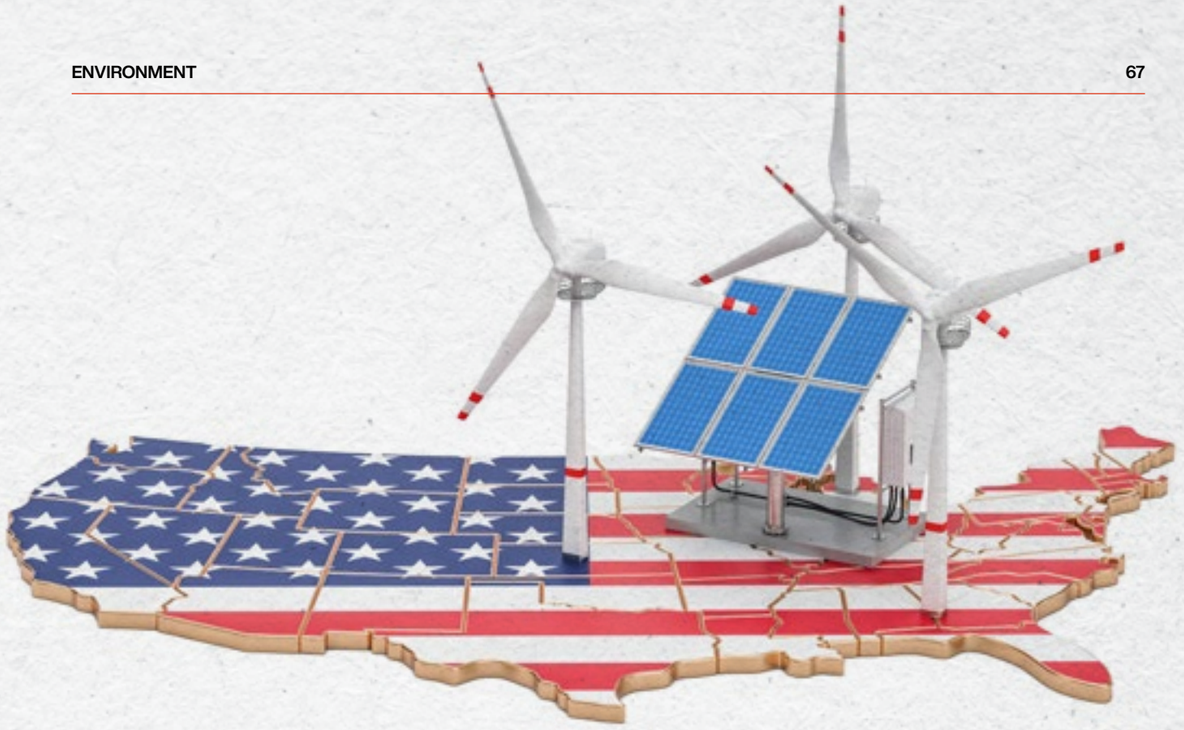
Perhaps the best analogy is one that was used when the existential threat was not the climate, but nuclear weapons. In the midst of those intense cold war negotiations, there was a real willingness to reduce the threat of nuclear war. In order for any negotiation and agreement on climate change to be meaningful, and in order for our cooperation and collaboration to not undermine our other pressing concerns with the Chinese state, it would be wise to adopt and adapt a well known turn of phrase from the then US President: mostly "trust, but verify".

Alicia Kearns is the Conservative MP for Rutland and Melton and sits on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee and the National Security Strategy Joint Committee. She is also a member of the Conservative Environment Network Parliamentary Caucus.

TOWARDS A MARKET-BASED ALTERNATIVE TO THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Why US Republicans are waking up to the threat of climate change

by ALEX FLINT



U.S. conservatives now agree that the U.S. needs a climate policy. An effective policy should embody conservative principles, which, unlike liberal proposals, including the Green New Deal which exploits climate change to transform society, hold the promise of effectively reducing the risk of climate change at the lowest cost. This is why Republican policymakers are reengaged. Our country's future and the prosperity of generations to come, depends on it.

In the United States, conservative leaders are credited with some of our Nation's greatest environmental achievements. Teddy Roosevelt founded our national parks system, and Richard Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency and enacted the Clean Air Act — which was significantly strengthened by George H. Bush in 1990. Environmental stewardship has been one of our party's core values.

And then we lost our way, and, for about two decades, the Republican party tolerated and supported climate change deniers.

Those decades were not our best, and our return to full standing among those committed to addressing climate change is not yet complete.

In my party's lost decades, Democrats led the U.S. climate conversation. They devised our climate goals and selected our policy approaches, largely a set of regulations and subsidies implemented without the benefit of climate legislation because our Congress has been mostly deadlocked on climate change since the Senate rejected the Kyoto Protocol 95-0 in 1997. Because Democrats were the only party at the table, conservative values were simply absent from the U.S.'s effort to address climate change.

For a number of reasons—overwhelming evidence of climate change, growing economic consequences, and increasing desire by corporate America to be socially responsible—Republican policymakers are re-entering the U.S. climate conversation, some striving to reclaim our reputation as environmental stewards. And they are regaining the trust of their constituents concerned about climate change, which has elevated more conservative voices on the issue.

But Democrats are still the noisiest in the U.S. calling for climate policies, and many of them think their best strategy is to steer even further left and to go it alone, or without Republicans. Democrats' latest effort is the "Green New Deal," a climate proposal with the goal of a zero-carbon electricity grid in 10 years as well as a myriad of provisions that are tangential, at best, to climate goals. It touts guaranteed wage rates, family and medical leave, paid vacations, and universal healthcare, just to name a few, at an estimated cost of $51 to 93 trillion over ten years—an exorbitant expense for a government with a current debt of $27 trillion.

In fairness, the cost estimate is dubious because Green New Deal policies have never been sufficiently defined to be seriously considered by U.S. policymakers. But, more importantly, the proposal represents an effort to leverage conservatives' poor positioning (or lack thereof) on climate change to advance a broader, liberal agenda and to continue to politicize the issue.

For some Republican policymakers, the alternative to liberal policies has been to embrace fewer regulations and fewer subsidies than their Democrat colleagues. But that is most likely a transitory phase that is the result of two decades of liberals setting the terms of the U.S. climate discussion.

Among many conservatives, myself included, the truly conservative response to the threat of climate change is to price the negative externality of energy production by imposing a carbon tax. Rather than a myriad of easily manipulated regulations and/or unaffordable subsidies, assigning a cost to carbon pollution would bring the power of the world's largest market to bear on one of the world's largest problems. The result would be both environmentally and economically beneficial.

A carbon tax is not yet a popular approach in the U.S., at least not among policymakers and constituents of either party. The U.S. traces its origins to a tax revolt in the Boston harbor in 1773, so politicians, especially Republicans, are reluctant to call for more taxes. But economists generally agree that taxes are more efficient than regulations in reducing carbon pollution, and we will eventually face a choice: Should we drive needed change through an efficient tax or inefficient regulations?

The determining factor may be the growing need to address the U.S.'s fiscal condition. Mounting U.S. federal deficits, especially due to pandemic-related stimulus spending, is forcing a quiet but thoughtful discussion about tax policy. Based on current forecasts of climate change and fiscal issues, pressure to address both are on course to converge in the coming years and, if not addressed, could be catastrophic.

As those two pressures converge, another is emerging and may be the spark that ignites carbon pricing in the U.S.: the European Union's commitment to a carbon border adjustment by 2023. Trade is an issue of particular importance to U.S. policymakers and one area in which the U.S. president has unusual authority. The EU's action has the potential to trigger pressure from U.S. industry for a reciprocal U.S. carbon border adjustment and a broader carbon emissions policy.

Most importantly, because of science, economics, and politics, U.S. conservatives now agree that the U.S. needs a climate policy. An effective policy should embody conservative principles, which, unlike liberal proposals, including the Green New Deal which exploits climate change to transform society, hold the promise of effectively reducing the risk of climate change at the lowest cost. This is why Republican policymakers are reengaged. Our country's future and the prosperity of generations to come, depends on it.

Conservatives in the U.S. are back at the table. That noise you hear is our chairs scooting forward.

Alex Flint is the Executive Director of the Alliance for Market Solutions. He previously served as staff director of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, senior vice president of governmental affairs at the Nuclear Energy Institute, and as a member of President Trump's transition team.

Realising AUSTRALIA'S renewable energy POTENTIAL

by LEO SHANAHAN

For decades there has been overwhelming intransigence on climate and emissions policy in Australia. This lack of progress has not only resulted in inertia, but at times a self-destructiveness that has meant climate and environmental policy has become a graveyard for consecutive governments and oppositions.

Recently, however, there are signs that things are changing. Last summer's devastating Australian bushfires put climate in the front of mind for many normal people who had not previously considered it a priority. The fires made `+many Australians realise the destructive impacts of climate change which are occuring in their generation – not some intangible concept that takes place generations from now.

As a result, the Liberal and National conservative coalition government led by Prime Minister Scott Morrison has sought, subtly, to change the discussion on climate change and clean energy. While the pace and policy approach are never enough for some, the government is favouring a technology centred approach over long-term targets.

Australian states, including New South Wales and Victoria, have already committed to a net zero by 2050 target. While maintaining targets for 2030 the Morrison government has repeatedly said it won't commit to net zero by 2050 without a plan to get there.

However, this is not to say significant progress is not being made in terms of renewables and decreasing reliance on coal. The backbone of the Coalition's policy on renewables is the Technology Investment Roadmap, which aims to drive investment in renewables while boosting the economy and jobs. While some have criticised the roadmap's aims for eschewing hard targets and timelines, it does at least demonstrate commitment to renewables as part of a strong policy platform.

In fact, in September 2020, for the first time in Australia's history, solar and wind generated more power than coal. Overall electricity prices continue to fall from their highs in Australia, with historically high prices in recent times feeding discontent with renewables.

Along with ongoing aims to decarbonise the grid through renewables like solar, wind and pumped hydro, there is genuine excitement within government ranks about the prospect of hydrogen. The government has short listed seven potential hydrogen electrolysis plant projects, with two to be given the green light in the new year. Energy and Emissions Minister Angus Taylor regularly talks about the possibility of Australia turning into a hydrogen exporting superpower and has spoken at Coalition for Conservation events about its incredible potential.

There is also a great deal of potential for "blue" and "green" steel projects in Australia.

British billionaire and Whyalla steel works owner Sanjeev Gupta recently announced a plan to develop up to 3000 megawatts of renewables in addition to the planned 280MW Cultana solar farm in South Australia, all with an aim to power his new green hydrogen steel plant at Whyalla produced with clean energy.

Australia's clean energy funding agency ARENA has largely laid the groundwork for the nation's solar and wind industries. Its success in helping fund solar projects has meant that the solar industry is so far advanced that it is basically at capacity under our current energy grid conditions. The next step is to build transmission to allow greater access to the system.

In fact, in September 2020, for the first time in Australia's history, solar and wind generated more power than coal. Overall electricity prices continue to fall from their highs in Australia, with historically high prices in recent times feeding discontent with renewables.

Wholesale energy prices across eastern states fell for 12 straight months between 2019 and 2020, with reductions of up to 46 per cent. In fact the challenge for solar in Australia in the coming years will be to make money given how cheap solar is becoming.

Photo: SAKARET / Shutterstock.com

While major coal fired plants, such as Liddell in NSW, are due to go offline in 2023 this could precipitate another "cliff event" that causes steep price rises. To mitigate this loss of dispatchable power the Morrison government has embarked upon what it has labelled a "gas-led recovery" to replace the lost energy and stimulate the economy post-COVID19. The government has gone so far as to promise to build a new gas plant to fill the shortfall unless the private sector commits to an alternative by April 2021 to replace the lost 1000 megawatts. It's an extraordinary intervention in the market, especially by a conservative government, but goes to show the urgency with which energy security and keeping costs low is being treated by the government.

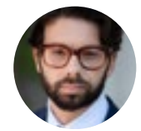
There are signs that things are changing. Last summer's devastating Australian bushfires put climate in the front of mind for many normal people who had not previously considered it a priority.

The problem Australia has is since state-wide blackouts in South Australia in 2016, the government doesn't trust or believe renewables are capable of filling the gap left by coal. While many climate change activists and renewables purists will criticise the government for incorporating gas into its plan, the truth of the matter is gas was always going to play a role when coal plants came offline.

Attacks on an interim gas policy also ignore the fact there's a broader strategic decision to move away from the use of coal. It wasn't that long ago that there was serious discussion among some in the Coalition about government funded coal-fired plants. Those types of discussions have ceased. There is also the fundamental point that gas, although being a fossil fuel, has a quarter of the emissions of coal when used in conjunction with renewables.

Coal-fired plants cannot be removed from the power grid without causing severe price spikes for consumers.There are at least two promising projects that could go some way to filling the gap left in dispatchable power. The new Snowy Hydro 2.0 pumped hydro goes online by the end of 2024 and could provide up to 10 percent of dispatchable power in Australia and the world's biggest pumped storage plant. It also does not require new dams to be built as it relies on the existing Snowy Hydro electric scheme. Another large-scale project is the Marinus Link between Victoria and the island state of Tasmania, which offers a 1500 megawatt underground electricity connection.

Private investment in Australian renewables would be a lot easier if the government could present industry with a long-term plan underpinned by a net zero 2050 carbon target. Putting a stake in the ground and setting up a net zero 2050 target would create certainty for business and likely get the very investment the government is demanding.



Leo Shanahan is Executive Director of the Coalition for Conservation (C4C), which debates, devises and advocates ideas on environment and energy policy for the centre-right and conservatives.

Pakistan's SUPER YEAR for Nature

by MALIK AMIN ASLAM KHAN

The year 2020 was expected to be the "super year for nature" designed to propel the climate and biodiversity agendas on the global stage. This planned outcome was, instead, substituted by a sudden and strong wake up call by nature. The two striking lessons emerging out of the ensuing COVID19 crisis are, firstly, that nature has an inherent capacity to quickly self heal - if allowed the time and space to do so - and, secondly, that a renewed and sustainable relationship with nature is possible and within reach but must be backed by political commitment and collective action. As the situation continues to unfold, with ongoing uncertainty, it is painfully reinforcing the fact that we no longer have a choice but to respect the natural limits and boundaries of our coexistence with other species. Nature, while reclaiming lost space, seems to be forcing a rebalancing of our relationship with it.

Over the past few months while most countries grappled to come to terms with this new normal, Pakistan was willing to think ahead and act out of the box - sensing a silver lining within the black cloud of confusion and uncertainty. The Government had already announced a 5-point green agenda built upon the premise of trusting and investing in nature – with the 10 Billion Trees Tsunami, Clean Green Pakistan, Protected Areas Initiative, Electric Vehicles shift and the Recharge Pakistan Program – and this had effectively created the launch pad for a directional shift of the economy towards sustainable growth.

Pakistan's first institutional "National Parks Service" is now underway, which will protect and conserve the protected areas as biodiversity reserves and wildlife habitats. In the initial phase, almost 5,000 direct nature jobs will be generated for the youth to become trained guardians and custodians of these parks.

The successful implementation of the Billion Tree Tsunami in the KP province, generating half a million green jobs between 2014-18, had already proven that the revival of nature and economy could go hand in hand. The Government had been convinced that nature based solutions not only protect and preserve nature but also have the potential to spur an alternate green economy.

Imran Khan
Prime Minister of Pakistan

Photo: SkycopterFilms Archives / Shutterstock.com

Against this backdrop, the COVID19 crisis provided not only an ideal opportunity but a trigger for a renewed revival, and we seized it with both hands.

The successful implementation of the Billion Tree Tsunami in the KP province, generating half a million green jobs between 2014-18, had already proven that the revival of nature and economy could go hand in hand. The Government had been convinced that nature based solutions not only protect and preserve nature but also have the potential to spur an alternate green economy.

This created the foundation and internal momentum to break out from the COVID19 depression and reboot the ailing economy with a "Green Stimulus" focused on two objectives: protecting nature and creating green jobs. The focal areas for intervention included planting more trees, expanding and reviving our protected areas and improving sanitation - with the targeted beneficiaries being the unemployed youth and women, along with the daily wagers suddenly out of jobs and migrating to rural areas. The three chosen intervention areas had approved work plans with joint federal/provincial ownership, could be easily made COVID19 safe, and all delivered climate compatible development. The green stimulus was designed to boost and upscale these ongoing activities across Pakistan.

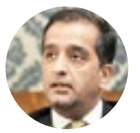
In terms of implementation, we envisioned three financing phases all of which are now in place. The first ongoing phase is fully funded through budgetary provisions and got recalibrated and prioritized towards green job creation. As a result, it has already delivered 85,000 daily wage jobs across the country in nursery raising, plant care, protection of natural forests and fire fighting activities. Through the provinces, we have further planned to raise this to 200,000 daily wage jobs within the next few months.

Over the past few months while most countries grappled to come to terms with this new normal, Pakistan was willing to think ahead and act out of the box - sensing a silver lining within the black cloud of confusion and uncertainty.

The second phase is the post-COVID19 recovery, for which substantial funds (U$180 Million) have been secured through multilateral donors, proving that if the right plan is in place the funds can always be generated. These funds will support the ecological preservation of the recently announced 15 national parks, covering a land area of over 7,300 square kilometers, spanning the mountains in the north to the scrub forests and the plains in the center and the virgin coastline in the south. Also, as a part of this initiative, Pakistan's first institutional "National Parks Service" is now underway, which will protect and conserve the protected areas as biodiversity reserves and wildlife habitats. In the initial phase, almost 5,000 direct nature jobs will be generated for the youth to become trained guardians and custodians of these parks. Furthermore, this funding will also support sanitation activities in at least 20 main cities of the country, including storm water management and solid/liquid waste management, and generate employment in the hundreds of thousands. All this activity is designed to address the spike in Covid-linked unemployment across the country and, at the same time, link economic activity with the preservation of nature.

In addition, an ingeniously designed "Debt for Nature" swap scheme has recently been put in the pipeline. This is premised on a renegotiation of Pakistan's burgeoning debt with countries seeking a green revival of the global economy. There are strong indications of a growing global appetite for supporting this directional shift and Pakistan has been recently chosen to pilot an impact-based nature bond.

This nature-positive pathway to rebuild the economy and stimulate sustainable growth, while employing the youth, is the need of the day and will allow the country to not only emerge from the economic recession but also build back better and greener. With guarded optimism, the world's super year of nature has only been pushed forwards to this year. Pakistan, meanwhile, carved out an opportunity amidst the crisis to live out its own super year of nature in 2020 – by rebooting the economy with a green stimulus and putting its faith in a nature based recovery.



Malik Amin Aslam Khan is the advisor on climate change to Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and is Global Vice President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)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For Small Island States, THE WAY FORWARD IS TOGETHER

by JEFFREY SALIM WAHEED

The time has come to resolidify the global consensus needed on climate change. The time has come for us to once again recommit to this global agenda and take ambitious, urgent action towards addressing climate change to ensure prosperity for all.

In defiance of cynicism, scepticism, and environmental radicalism, the world came together – unified to adopt the Paris Agreement in 2015. Every nation on the planet heeded the call to action, agreeing to a goal of 2˚C for the heating of the planet above pre-industrial standards, and aspiring to a goal of 1.5˚C. We acknowledged that even a 1.5˚C world, will see dramatic global changes, including to coastal protection, biodiversity, water supply, human security, food security, and livelihoods. We also acknowledged that we must take steps to address the changes we will see in the world around us that result from climate change.

However, since 2015, we have seen the world splintered and our unity shattered. In acquiescence to fear, we have allowed ourselves to look inwards, and to retreat from our unified mandate to reinforce global solutions to this global problem. The climate summit at COP26 in Glasgow, UK, provides an opportunity to turn the tide; reunify once more around the common good in favour of a more prosperous future.

At Paris, we accepted one fundamental truth: that we are in this together. In the lead up to and through this agreement, it was one of the greatest honours of my life to have helped Chair the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) – the political extension of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) around the world. AOSIS is a coalition of 44 small island and low-lying coastal developing states that negotiate as a bloc at the United Nations on climate change, sustainable development and oceans issues. Founded in 1990, it was the first group of nation states dedicated to the environment, even holding an 'Earth Summit' the year following its founding. Three decades of advocacy on behalf of the world's most vulnerable, has given a voice to the voiceless on a global stage, and have revolutionized the way in which we approach conservation and climate change.

Through this negotiating block, my colleagues from across the broad spectrum of island states and our allies elaborated a vision for an interconnected world, where we all move as one. Where we recognized the challenges we faced, the failings in the existing systems, and the danger faced - not only by islands and low-lying states, but by every nation and peoples across the planet. We helped the world to understand that the danger that could result from inaction was one that was shared. Over the course of three decades, we galvanized the people of the world to chart a path, united in strength for a brighter tomorrow. We took the two-decade old mantra of sustainable development, that we "leave no one behind," recognizing the inextricable links between climate change and sustainable development and turned it into the rallying cry for climate action. And we created a near universal regime in the Paris Agreement.

We helped the world to understand that the danger that could result from inaction was one that was shared. Over the course of three decades, we galvanized the people of the world to chart a path, united in strength for a brighter tomorrow.

Under the leadership of the conservative UK Government's Presidency at COP26, and in union with allies from around the world, the time has come to resolidify the global consensus needed on climate change. The time has come for us to once again recommit to this global agenda and take ambitious, urgent action towards addressing climate change to ensure prosperity for all.

Jeffrey Salim Waheed

Maldivian key former diplomat responsible for realizing current global environmental and sustainable development frameworks. President of the SEAS Institute. @JSWaheed

A Strong First Step

The UK, President of COP26, recently announced their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) or target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the lead up to the climate conference. With a target of having net-zero emissions by 2050, the UK also aims to reduce emissions by 68% from 1990 levels by 2030. This is an increase of 15% from its initial pledge of 53% made in 2016. The UK was among the first developed nations to set a target that is consistent with the ambitions agreed to in the Paris Agreement.

Following the UK's retreat from the European Union, COP26 provides an opportunity to reaffirm a measure of global leadership. As host, the UK needed to send a strong signal to the world that the Paris Agreement was on firm footing, and they rose to the occasion in the announcement of their revised, significantly more ambitious NDC pledge.

Around the world, developing nations are rising to the occasion as well. The world's biggest emitter, China, has made an ambitious pledge to attain net-zero emissions by 2060, while committing

Ambitiously revised pledges to reduce emissions are a big part of the equation for COP26. However, much needs to be done to create a conducive environment for all nations of the world to effectively address climate change.

When we work together for our planet, the potential for success is exponentially increased. It is essential however, that stakeholders beyond nation states are integrated into the process.

to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030. With developing countries and emerging economies taking big steps towards the reduction of emissions, the world is looking towards developed nations for greater leadership at COP26.

The EU has come a long way towards being recognized as a global leader for climate action and looks to be taking measures to implement an ambitious NDC. However, much of the world also now looks once more to the United States, and towards the Biden administration for their NDC pledge.

Though the United States formally withdrew from the Paris Agreement on 4 November 2020, the Biden administration has committed to acceding to it once again. The acceptance of the United States once more will elevate the agreement into one that is universally accepted by the global community, and together with an ambitious NDC pledge, will revitalize the process once more.

Ambitiously revised pledges to reduce emissions are a big part of the equation for COP26. However, much needs to be done to create a conducive environment for all nations of the world to effectively address climate change. Ensuring that adequate financial flows are available, and that the world's international financial institutions are ready and able to direct these flows effectively to developing nations, will play a large role in their ability to build resilience and curb emissions in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

For the first time since the Paris Agreement was adopted, there is potential for the world to come together again and cement a regime that has a holistic approach towards achieving the vision proposed at Paris. Once again, the world has the opportunity to take advantage of a universal regime that can galvanize greater collective action by nations and stakeholders, confident in the knowledge that they are not making these commitments alone. When we work together for our planet, the potential for success is exponentially increased. It is essential however, that stakeholders beyond nation states are integrated into the process.

Sustainable Climate Action

Coming from the Maldives, the lowest lying country on earth with 80% of its land only 1 meter above sea level, it is particularly evident that efforts towards achieving climate action at COP26 need to be sustainable, working hand in hand with both public and private sector stakeholders alike to revolutionize environmental climate action and ensure a higher level of coordination among relevant stakeholders in moving forward.

The time has come to recognize that climate change goes hand in hand with development, and the linkages between the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both negotiated by my AOSIS teams and adopted in 2015, provide a pathway for all the nations and peoples of our planet. Having personally written compromise language in 12 of the 17 SDGs, it is hard to separate the holistic nature of that framework from the urgent needs presented by the efforts on climate action. Though SDG13 specifically calls for climate action, nations like the Maldives have long known that every aspect of our national development including housing, health, tourism, energy, and livelihoods are fundamentally connected to the issue of climate change. The linkages between climate change, oceans, and sustainable development are more evident today than ever before and can no longer be regarded in silos. Climate action therefore, cannot be approached in isolation from development, but is rather inherently complementary to existing developmental efforts, and we in turn must take tangible steps to better integrate our climate action into our development and economic growth models.

Leveraging resilience building measures, to work in tandem with private sector stakeholders must be a priority at COP26.

In the case of the Maldives, like in many other island nations across the globe, the biggest single industrial sector is tourism. For us, both directly and indirectly, it accounts for more than 70% of our gross national income. And the Maldives, like many other countries, is an import heavy nation with over 90% of our consumables coming from abroad. The only way to sustain this spending is to generate foreign currency reserves through the tourism industry. But such high reliance on a single sector presents a vulnerability in itself. However, the only way to move beyond this limitation, is to leverage that industry to grow others over the course of the next few decades and build resilience to external shocks. If the year 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we are inherently reliant on the global economy and that our resilience is fundamentally tied to our neighbour nations.

Beyond our primary avenue for economic diversification, Tourism represents the very lifeblood of our economy, and is inherently tied to the environment. Every one of our private sector stakeholders have strong incentives towards conservation; given their industry's reliance on the biodiversity and marine life of tourist islands, as well as the stability of the islands themselves due to increased climate-induced coastal erosion. Tourism islands are the same as the 187 other islands in the Maldives inhabited by Maldivians. We are a people dedicated to developing our islands, growing our economy, and increasing opportunities for all; but that dedication can only be fructified on the tree of a climate conscious development policy. We can only improve the standard of living for all Maldivians, while meeting our development targets, through protecting the environment and meeting our objectives on climate action. Regardless of the locality, it is increasingly clear that meeting environmental targets must support development objectives.

By working together for our planet, we can ensure that nations, especially those that are most vulnerable, are able to build resilience and are supported by multiple sectors both within their domestic economies and the global marketplace. For nations like the Maldives, it is clear that we cannot do everything at once. Market forces need to be taken into account, and our prospects must be adjusted to what can be absorbed by the global economy. A particularly difficult factor to reconcile with our climate objectives are the emissions associated with air travel. Despite COVID-19 and a horrible year for travel, the World Travel Awards recognized Maldives as the world's leading travel destination. Being the most exclusive tourist destination in the world, the Maldives enjoys more than a million tourists annually, and must therefore also be conscious and consider the emissions associated with these visitors and ensure that this travel is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner that protects our islands for future generations while materially improving the lives of our citizens today.

Though the Maldives contributes a negligible amount of carbon emissions when compared to the global scale, we remain committed to addressing emissions on the whole. We remain committed to moving in the same direction, as per available support, and in favour of ensuring the highest collective aspirations of the global community.

In the most vulnerable nations, like the Maldives, resilience building is a key component to addressing climate challenges, and is a key indicator for the private sector regarding safe investment climates. Given that there is already a 1.1˚C rise in global temperatures since 1880, there is a need to act swiftly and decisively, to provide holistic solutions that mobilize private sector investments. In the case of the Maldives, the private sector is already mobilizing to fortify infrastructure, adhering to stringent development standards, and leveraging private capital to protect natural resources and adapt to the changing climate. Leveraging the same for large public investments, necessitates a more conducive financial environment in the public sphere as well. Even in order to fortify infrastructure works like sea walls, ports, airports, bridges, and roads, public funds need to be mobilized.

This is exactly why the global community of nations must begin to meet their commitments under existing climate agreements, especially in generating the finances necessary to fund the Green Climate Fund. The world agreed that from this year onward, it would raise $100 billion USD annually, dedicated to mitigation and adaptation across the globe. Without public sector contributions to adaptation measures along the lines of resilience building, raising private sector support will remain challenging. Given the reality that in a best case scenario, we aim to live in a world that is 1.5˚C hotter, there is a requirement for crucial support to adaptation projects, especially those that inspire private sector support. Our only way forward, is to build today, for the rising tides and extreme weather events of tomorrow.

Though the Maldives contributes a negligible amount of carbon emissions when compared to the global scale, we remain committed to addressing emissions on the whole. We remain committed to moving in the same direction, as per available support, and in favour of ensuring the highest collective aspirations of the global community.

Ambition at COP26

Our global prosperity is reliant on ambitious targets being set in countries' NDCs. Among them, net-zero emissions goals for the year 2050 must be prominent. Creating the necessary frameworks and ensuring support is in place to achieve these ambitious goals must be a priority. Therefore, this must necessarily translate to tangible efforts to include the private sector and mobilize international efforts. Galvanizing the support from a universally accepted regime on climate change, we must ensure the world undertakes new investments in lower carbon production, ensuring that supply chains become more efficient and less wasteful. The global economy, whether its stakeholders believe it or not, is already dependent on a sustainable climate change regime.

At the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, our responsibility to highlight a way forward, with all nations working in tandem towards building resilience, is of paramount importance. There needs to be high level political commitment to the Paris Agreement, not only from political leaders, but from multilateral agencies of the UN, from International Financial Institutions, and from non-governmental and private sector stakeholders. We need a political commitment and a plan on how to effectively support the implementation of NDCs, and a clear strategy towards mobilizing resources for the Green Climate Fund with predictable support for adaptation financing and resilience building.

By COP26, every nation on the planet will have committed to this undertaking. By November 2021, we will be committed to creating a prosperous future for all mankind. But the work will just be beginning.

Indonesia and Europe

AN EQUITABLE PATH FORWARD

by IBU MUSDHALIFAH

Indonesia is at the center of many of the major global debates on environment and sustainability currently taking place. It is one of the world's most-forested countries, with ancient tropical rainforest stretching over thousands of islands; it has endemic and iconic species of flora and fauna that are the focus of major conservation efforts; and it sits at the intersection of a fundamental question: how to ensure economic and social development *alongside* environmental protection? Indonesia is also the world's largest producer of sustainable palm oil, which is the world's most-certified and most-efficient oilseed, raising millions out of poverty.

Each of these issues – forest protection, biodiversity, trade and economic development – are key to the global debate and will be a focus of COP26 later this year. The European Union has also recognised the importance of these questions and is deepening relations with Indonesia and the wider region – not only on environmental cooperation but on much broader issues as well. On December 1st 2020, ASEAN and the European Union formally elevated their relationship from a Dialogue Partnership to a Strategic Partnership.

This is a significant event for two of the world's largest trading blocs, and it is particularly significant for Indonesia.

There were two key elements to the event. The first was the upgrading of the second relationship itself, and the second was that ASEAN and the European Union forged a new path on palm oil.

At the 2019 meeting, ASEAN and EU ministers had reached an impasse on the issue of palm oil and deforestation. At this year's meeting, a new path was forged.

First, the ministers agreed that any discussion should not just include palm oil, but all vegetable oils. Second, the ministers broadened to scope of the discussion to include sustainability within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and a 'holistic' approach to the environment. This means that any discussion around the sustainability of palm oil will incorporate economic and social concerns and the broader relative environmental footprint of all vegetable oils – not just a narrow frame of palm oil and deforestation.

Any discussion around the sustainability of palm oil will incorporate economic and social concerns and the broader relative environmental footprint of all vegetable oils – not just a narrow frame of palm oil and deforestation.

Any discussion can and should include, inter alia, the importance of trade and sustainable development, poverty, hunger, health, renewable energy and economic development. Importantly, in line with the SDGs, the discussion must be oriented towards national sustainable development strategies.

This is particularly important for Indonesia and its relationship with the European Union. Economic relations between Indonesia and the EU have and continue to be strong, and they are moving further away from a development assistance approach to a trade and economic cooperation approach.

Indonesia and the European Union are well advanced in negotiating the Indonesia-European Union Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IE-CEPA).

A completed agreement will follow signing of the Indonesia-EFTA Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and Indonesia's key leadership role in the negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

These developments underline the significance of Indonesia as ASEAN's largest economy, and why it has become a focus for Western economies for trade relations in Southeast Asian region.

In simpler terms: It has a population larger than Germany, France and Italy combined, and a larger GDP than Turkey or the Netherlands. Its young population will near 300 million by the end of the decade and will continue to grow.

The importance of Indonesia-EU trade

The EU, as a bloc, is Indonesia's third-largest trading partner. This trade is largely distributed between Germany, Netherlands, Spain, France and Italy; Indonesia's exports to the EU represent around EUR14 billion – just under 10 per cent of its total exports, which is similar to the value of exports to Japan and the US. This is around half of the value of Indonesia's intra-ASEAN export trade.

Why is this significant? Because trade between Indonesia and the European Union remains underdone. Indonesia's exports to the EU are largely raw materials; the EU's exports to Indonesia are dominated by manufactured goods.

What we are yet to see between the two countries is greater levels of investment and the development of value chains, so that investors are better able to access the dynamism of one of the world's fastest-growing countries.

The mutual benefits are simple: Indonesia is seeking inward investment; the EU is seeking better access to the largest market in ASEAN.

How can this relationship be made better?

From an Indonesian perspective, there appears to be a great deal of antagonism from European stakeholders over Indonesia's forests and its palm oil exports. In our view, this is misguided.

Indonesia Environmental Policies to Protect its Forests

Indonesia is currently going through what is known as a 'forest transition'. As countries become wealthier, they manage their forests better for conservation and increase their forest areas. Forest transition has taken place in wealthy Western countries and is now happening in emerging economies – such as Indonesia.

Indonesia has now put in place measures to protect the environment, biodiversity and sustainability. Deforestation for oil palm in Indonesia peaked more than 10 years ago.

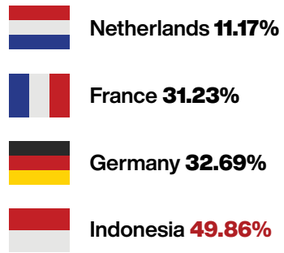
In 2018, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, renewed the moratorium on new licenses for oil palm expansion for another three years, a major environmental commitment. In September 2019, this moratorium was made permanent. Oil palm plantation expansion in Indonesia has stopped.

Major plantation companies have also made zero-deforestation commitments.

Let it be known that Indonesia has the largest forest area in Southeast Asia; the total forest area is almost twice the size of Spain.

Indonesia's total protection and conservation forest area is 51.8 million ha, covering 27 per cent of the country's land area.

Indonesia's land reserved as forest area is, compared to other countries, according to the official World Bank statistics:



Much of the criticism levelled at Indonesia has been because of the rate of deforestation that has taken place in Indonesia, particularly over the past two decades.

These levels of deforestation should be understood – as with all sustainability considerations – in a broader economic context.

All Western and wealthy nations have undergone 'forest transition'. As countries develop and undergo agricultural development, followed by urbanisation and industrialisation, levels of deforestation will increase and then decline accordingly.

For example, between 1700 and 1920 approximately 82 million ha of forest was lost across North America. Cropland area grew significantly, from 3 million ha to 179 million ha in the same period.

European industrialisation took place much earlier. Approximately 25 million ha of forest was lost between 1700 and 1850, while cropland doubled from 67 million ha to 132 million ha.

These cases are significant: the deforestation rate was higher than current FAO estimates of deforestation in Indonesia.

There is, therefore, a question of equitable outcomes in development.

In the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for example, 'technological transfer' – where low-carbon technologies are given a mechanism to transfer to less developed economies – is embedded within the convention.

Why? Because it is understood that some countries simply do not have the means to access or produce low-carbon technologies.

Similarly, having better outcomes for forests and land-use change requires an understanding of the development context.

Indonesia, for example, has worked closely with global donor agencies to reduce deforestation levels and improve forest governance. It has successfully received payments from the Government of Norway for its deforestation efforts and meeting targets and landmarks for better forest protection.

In both cases this has been the result of the implementation of stronger forest laws, and better enforcement. The clearest example is the case of the introduction and implementation of the forest moratorium by successive Indonesian presidents. Both have gone a significant way to protecting Indonesia's primary forests.

Protecting Biodiversity – a key pillar to Indonesia's sustainable future

Indonesia is committed to the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife. Indonesia has set aside 21 million ha of forest for biodiversity conservation and protection. These are distributed across more than 500 conservation areas.

The Indonesian palm oil community supports a number of conservation programmes that have been developed to with major NGOs and research institutions.

Indonesia has more orang-utans than any country on Earth, and is committed to protecting this iconic species. Indonesia has strong laws against the trafficking and illegal capture of wildlife such as the orang-utan. Penalties for trafficking are as high as ten years in prison and fines of up to USD790,000. The Indonesian palm oil community, working in collaboration with the government and national / international NGOs, has made the protection of the orangutan a key pillar in its commitment to a sustainable future.

Orangutans are protected under Indonesian law, and conservation programs mean that population numbers are stable. Over 100,000 orangutans live in Indonesia's Kalimantan state alone.

Indonesian Palm Oil and the European Union

Palm oil and its derivatives are Indonesia's largest agricultural export and often its largest export overall. It is also ASEAN's largest agricultural export.

Estimates of its contribution to GDP are around 6 per cent. The Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture estimates that the palm oil sub-sector's contribution to GDP in terms of gross value added is approximately 17 per cent.

Literally millions of people -- around 8 million according to one estimate – are directly dependent on palm oil for employment, with another 16 million jobs indirectly supported.

Its production has brought millions of people out of poverty and produced positive health and social outcomes for a country seeking to achieve sustainable development.

European oilseed farmers produce oilseed, but this is processed into two products: meals and oils. Meals are used for animal feed. Oils are used in food, industrial applications and biodiesel. The price that is paid to farmers – and therefore planting decisions – is dependent upon global prices for vegetable oils and feed.

When palm oil enters the EU at a lower price – because it is a cheaper and more efficient oil – it pushes down the price of European oils, primarily rapeseed. This can depress the price paid to farmers, which can change planting decisions, and potentially push up the price of European animal feed. If European feed prices go up, it can encourage greater animal feed imports from countries such as Brazil or the US.

Palm oil, deforestation and EU policy

Is palm oil responsible for deforestation in Indonesia?

The most recent figures indicate that oil palm plantations only contribute around 15 per cent of Indonesia's deforestation. This is significantly below other drivers such as small-scale agriculture, other tree plantations, conversion to grassland and even logging roads and other uses.

The contribution of palm oil to deforestation in Indonesia has been steadily declining since 2008-2009, when it was arguably at its highest.

The concerns around deforestation have generated a different, but nonetheless related, set of policy responses in Europe.

The most recent of these is proposed due diligence requirements from firms in the EU and UK. Under these requirements, firms that import certain commodities – including palm oil, soybean, beef and cocoa – would have to take due diligence to determine that the goods were produced in a particular way.

The UK at this stage is opting for an approach that is oriented towards legal standards. Some EU policymakers are pushing for an approach that is oriented towards either deforestation free or sustainable.

This EU approach has its own risks. As mentioned earlier, the development of agriculture – and therefore agricultural exports – necessitates deforestation in many countries. Requiring that no deforestation takes place – or providing evidence of no deforestation -- for imports could mean that African cocoa farmers or Papua New Guinean coffee growers are simply blocked from the European market.

Similarly, reaching consensus on sustainability is potentially difficult. The global consensus on sustainability is the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. This may not be enough for some EU policymakers when determining sustainability criteria. Similarly, there is at times a conflict between goals towards reducing deforestation and producing more food.

Legality, ISPO and Due Diligence

Palm oil producers, for their part, have been attempting to provide solutions for both deforestation and sustainability for more than 15 years. Indonesia's largest plantation companies were the first movers on introducing zero deforestation commitments. Indonesia's largest companies have also committed to voluntary sustainability certification systems that are considered an acceptable

verification of sustainability under the 'Amsterdam Declaration', a declaration by a number of EU Member States to commit to sustainable palm oil imports.

The Indonesian government and palm oil community are committed to producing 100% sustainable palm oil under the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) initiative, which will be the world's largest-ever sustainability scheme. ISPO includes requirements on social responsibility, health, safety and employment conditions, as well as protections in place for the environment, natural resources, biodiversity and protected species.

The Indonesian government has also developed and implemented a comprehensive policy response. ISPO is a certification system that was first launched by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2011. ISPO was introduced to provide verification of adherence to all relevant Indonesian laws – and therefore improve the sustainability of the Indonesian industry. In its first iteration, the certification scheme covered more than 200 Indonesian laws and regulations. This included the first moratorium on plantation development introduced by President Yudhoyono. It was compulsory for plantation companies, but voluntary for smallholders.

In 2016, a revision of ISPO commenced. This revision process was referred to as 'Strengthening ISPO'.

The key objective was to improve the system overall and to underline the system's overall credibility, particularly for international markets.

This involved a revision of the principles and criteria, and particularly criteria in relation to plantation development. But it also involved improving the procedures for firms undertaking certification, particularly around land disputes and community consultations. But there were also institutional reforms. These included the establishment of an accreditation body for the accreditation of certifiers, giving greater independence and arms' length separation between the standard-setting body and the accreditation body – in line with international standard-setting practices. Further, there was an upgrade of the regulation underpinning ISPO from the Ministerial level to the Presidential level.

Finally, the mandatory nature of the scheme was expanded to all operators, with no exception. And alongside this, new sanctions were introduced for non-compliance.

The process undertaken for these revisions was broad, with a large number of stakeholder consultations that took place across Indonesia. It was led by the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs. This process was considerably different from the process that instigated the first ISPO. ISPO incorporates all aspects of legality and therefore serves as a legality standard. However, the consultation process, which has resulted in the incorporation of additional criteria unrelated to existing regulation means that it serves both as a technical and sustainability standard for palm oil production. Moreover, the sustainable criteria are in line with the expectations of Indonesian stakeholders and in line with Indonesia's broader sustainable development goals.

Why is this important for forthcoming regulation in the United Kingdom and the European Union? As stated above, both are seeking to introduce due diligence requirements for palm oil.

ISPO's Mutual Benefit

The Government of Indonesia firmly believes that ISPO can and should be a key pathway for legality verification and sustainability verification for either or both due diligence requirements.

Indonesian stakeholders have worked closely with the UK government to underline the importance of ISPO to Indonesia. Recognition of ISPO by the UK in its due diligence requirements would serve a number of purposes.

First, ISPO could work as a 'first mover' for the UK's Due Diligence system, bolstering the UK's credentials in international environmental cooperation. This will be of particular significance when the UK is host to the United Nations Framework

Conference on Climate Change in 2021. This first mover aspect should prompt other nations to cooperate with the UK on certification recognition.

Second, recognition by the UK can operate as a pathway for the EU Forest Regulation. The EU is seeking to introduce due diligence, but its pathway is not yet clear. A number of EU stakeholders – particularly environmental NGOs funded by the European Commission – are pushing for its due diligence to incorporate criteria unilaterally developed in the European Union. The risks of such an approach are clear; the most obvious is a challenge under the World Trade Organization.

More importantly, such an approach would ignore the lessons of the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU-FLEGT) Programme.

This programme had two components. The EU first introduced a due diligence regulation that required importers to seek assurance on the legal production of timber and timber products. Acceptable forms of assurance included national certification schemes (the timber equivalent of ISPO) and voluntary certification schemes. Then the EU and major timber trade partners signed bilateral agreements – voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) – to develop legality standards for forest products. The first of these – and arguably the most successful to date – was the VPA with Indonesia.

These components relied on existing certification schemes and bilateral cooperation respectively in order to engender cooperation and make the program successful.

The UK appears to have learnt its lessons from the EU-FLEGT programme and will likely apply it to its Due Diligence regulation. The EU should do the same.

The certification of commodities such as vegetable oils is arguably much more complicated than the certification of forest products. Their role in the global food supply and international trade makes their economic significance and contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals that much more significant.

An Equitable Path Forward

It is therefore why Indonesia is seeking meaningful cooperation with the United Kingdom and the European Union on due diligence going forward.

To do so, the UK and the EU should abide to Indonesia's principles in regards to environment and sustainability by supporting its existing standard (ISPO), and to follow a legality-based measure. A legality-based approach in Brussels and London would provide a firm foundation for joint Indonesia-EU cooperation on future sustainability issues.

This will ensure that Indonesia's sovereign right to regulate its domestic palm oil industry, including the future development and evolution of ISPO, is not curtailed.

Indonesia's palm oil community is acutely aware of the results of uncontrolled and illegal deforestation. But it is also aware of the gross differences in social and economic development between the poorest regions of rural Southeast Asia and the wealthiest areas of the European Union. We believe that Indonesia, the UK and the EU can work together to solve both these problems.

2021 will be a crucial year for conservation, environmental protection and international cooperation. As the world emerges from the COVID pandemic, we policymakers in Indonesia and around the world – including in Brussels – will be able to re-focus on the major global challenges that existed pre-COVID, and still exist today.

Preventing illegal deforestation, protecting biodiversity, and supporting efforts to reduce emissions, are some of those challenges. Indonesia's government, working with our major agricultural producers such as palm oil exporters, are committed to meeting these challenges. The work is underway, and the success of the Presidential moratorium and other policies is a strong platform on which to build. The COP26 in Glasgow this year will no doubt include discussions on these very points and Indonesia is committed to playing our part.

Ibu Musdhalifah
Indonesian Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs

Indonesia's palm oil community is acutely aware of the results of uncontrolled and illegal deforestation. But it is also aware of the gross differences in social and economic development between the poorest regions of rural Southeast Asia and the wealthiest areas of the European Union.

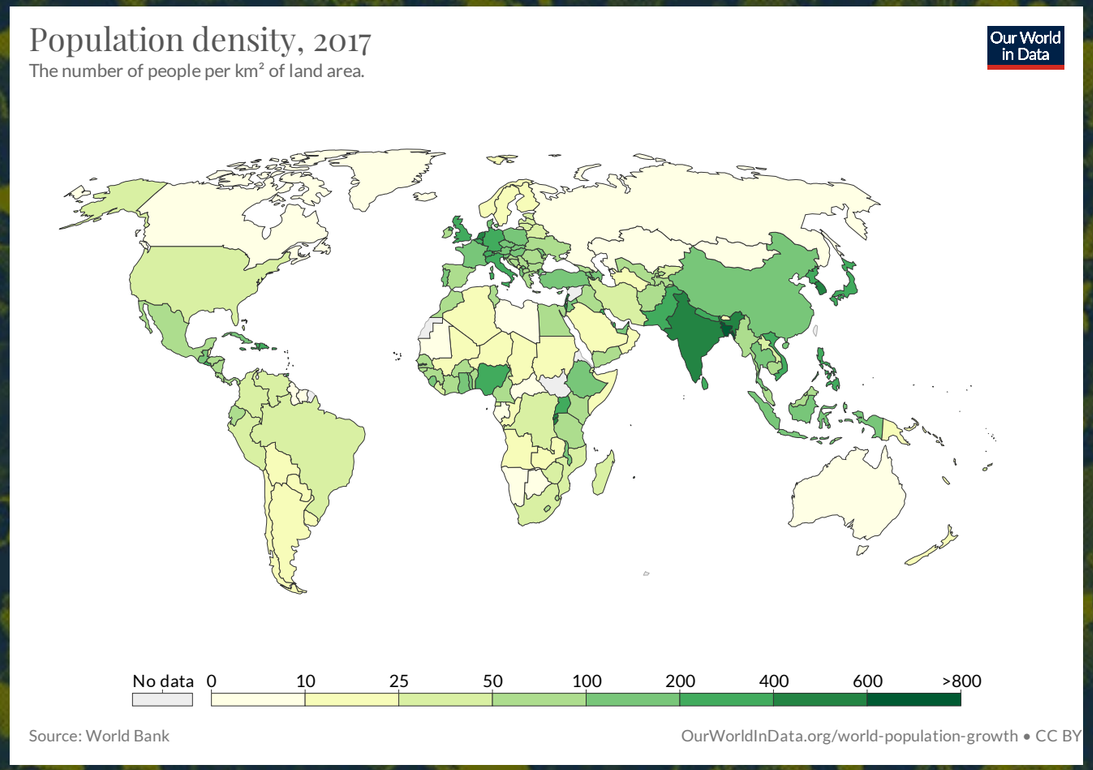
WORLD IN NUMBERS

Population

Which countries are most densely populated?

Our understanding of the world is often shaped by geographical maps. But this tells us nothing about where in the world people live. To understand this, we need to look at population density. In the map we see the number of people per square kilometer (km2) across the world.

Globally the average population density is 25 people per KM, but there are very large differences across countries. Many of the world's small island or isolated states have large populations for their size. Macao, Monaco, Singapore, Hong Kong and Gibraltar are the five most densely populated. Singapore has nearly 8,000 people per km2 – more than 200 times as dense as the US, and 2000 times that of Australia. Of the larger countries1, Bangladesh is the most densely-populated with 1,252 people per square KM this is almost three times as dense as its neighbour, India. It's followed by Lebanon (595), South Korea (528), the Netherlands (508) and Rwanda (495 per km2) completing the top five.

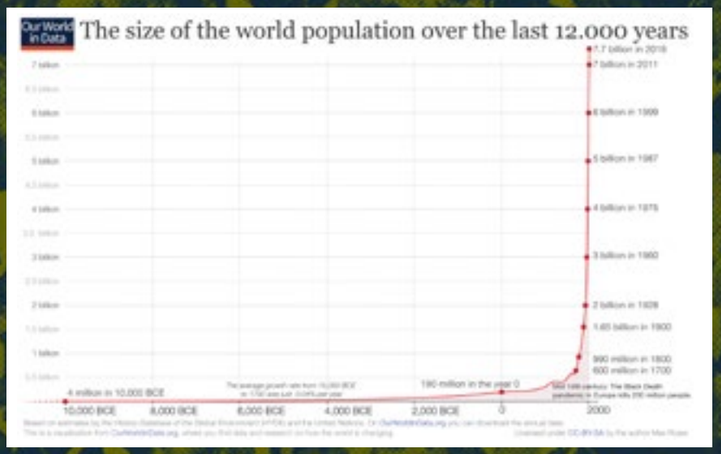


World population from 10,000 BC to today

The chart shows the increasing number of people living on our planet over the last 12,000 years. A mind-boggling change: The world population today that is 1,860-times the size of what it was 12 millennia ago when the world population was around 4 million – half of the current population of London.

What is striking about this chart is of course that almost all of this growth happened just very recently. Historical demographers estimate that around the year 1800 the world population was only around 1 billion people. This implies that on average the population grew very slowly over this long time from 10,000 BCE to 1700 (by 0.04% annually). After 1800 this changed fundamentally: The world population was around 1 billion in the year 1800 and increased 7-fold since then.

Around 108 billion people have ever lived on our planet. This means that today's population size makes up 6.5% of the total number of people ever born.



For the long period from the appearance of modern Homo sapiens up to the starting point of this chart in 10,000 BCE it is estimated that the total world population was often well under one million.

In this period our species was often seriously threatened by extinction.

How has the world population growth rate changed?

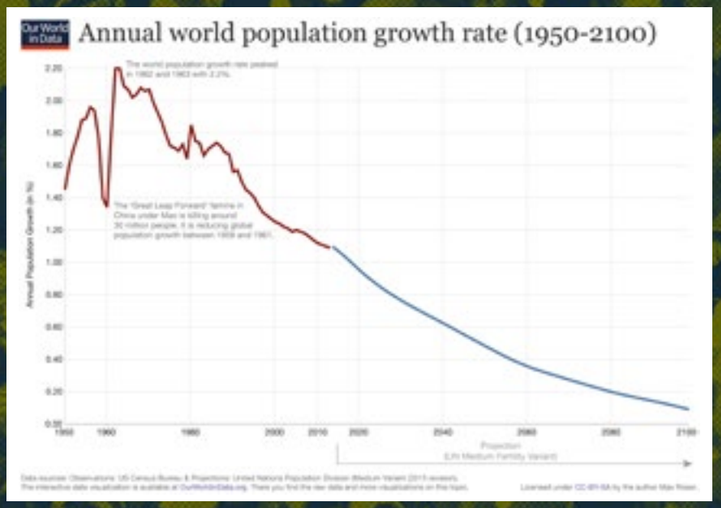
In terms of recent developments, the data from the UN Population Division provides consistent and comparable estimates (and projections) within and across countries and time, over the last century. This data starts from estimates for 1950, and is updated periodically to reflect changes in fertility, mortality and international migration.

In the section above we looked at the absolute change in the global population over time. But what about the rate of population growth?

The global population growth rate peaked long ago. The chart shows that global population growth reached a peak in 1962 and 1963 with an annual growth rate of 2.2%; but since then, world population growth has halved.

For the last half-century we have lived in a world in which the population growth rate has been declining. The UN projects that this decline will continue in the coming decades.

A common question we're asked is: **is the global population growing exponentially**? The answer is no. For population growth to be exponential, the growth rate would have be the same over time (e.g. 2% growth every year). In absolute terms, this would result in an exponential increase in the number of people. That's because we'd be multiplying an ever-larger number of people by the same 2%. 2% of the population this year would be larger than 2% last year, and so on; this means the population would grow exponentially.



But, as we see in this chart, since the 1960s the growth rate has been falling. This means the world population is not growing exponentially – for decades now, growth has been more similar to a linear trend.

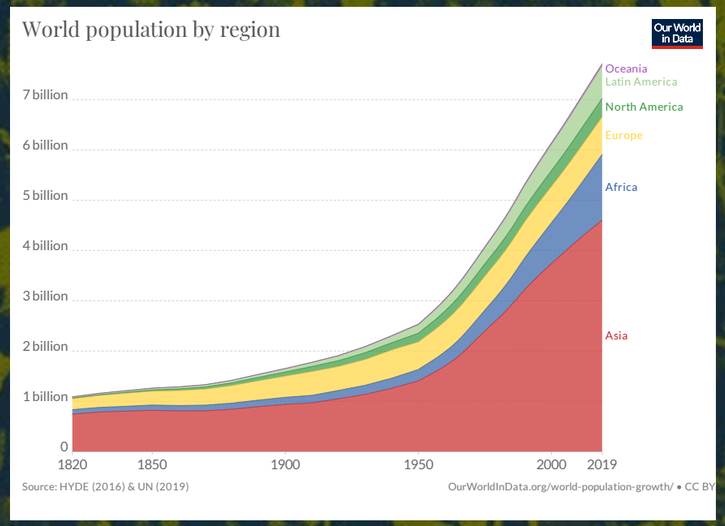
Population growth by world region

Two hundred years ago the world population was just over one billion. Since then the number of people on the planet grew more than 7-fold to 7.7 billion in 2019. How is the world population distributed across regions and how did it change over this period of rapid global growth?

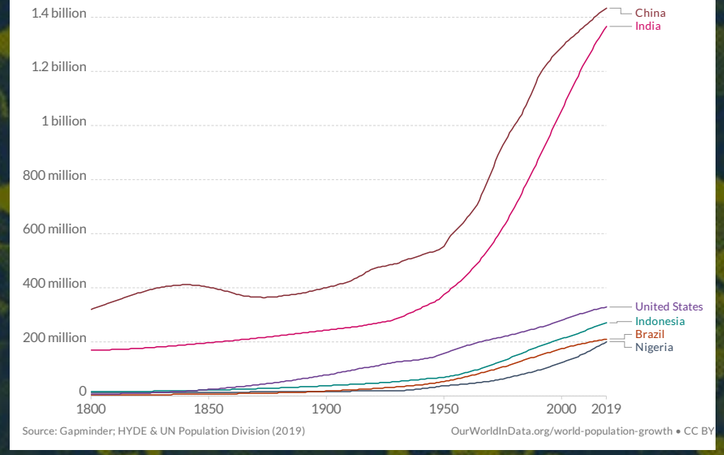
In this visualization we see historical population estimates by region from 1820 through to today. These estimates are published by the History Database of the Global Environment (HYDE) and the United Nations Population Division from 1950 onwards.

Most people always lived in Asia: Today it is 60% two hundred years ago it was 68%.

The world region that saw the fastest population growth over last two centuries was North America. The population grew 31-fold. Latin America saw the second largest increase (28-fold). Over the same period the population Europe of increased 3-fold, in Africa 14-fold, and in Asia 6-fold.



Population growth by country



Over the last century, the world has seen rapid population growth. But how are populations distributed across the world? Which countries have the most people?

In the map we see the estimated population of each country in 2019.

The top five most populous countries are:

(1) China (1.43 billion)
(2) India (1.37 billion)
(3) United States (329 million)
(4) Indonesia (270 million)
(5) Brazil (211 million)

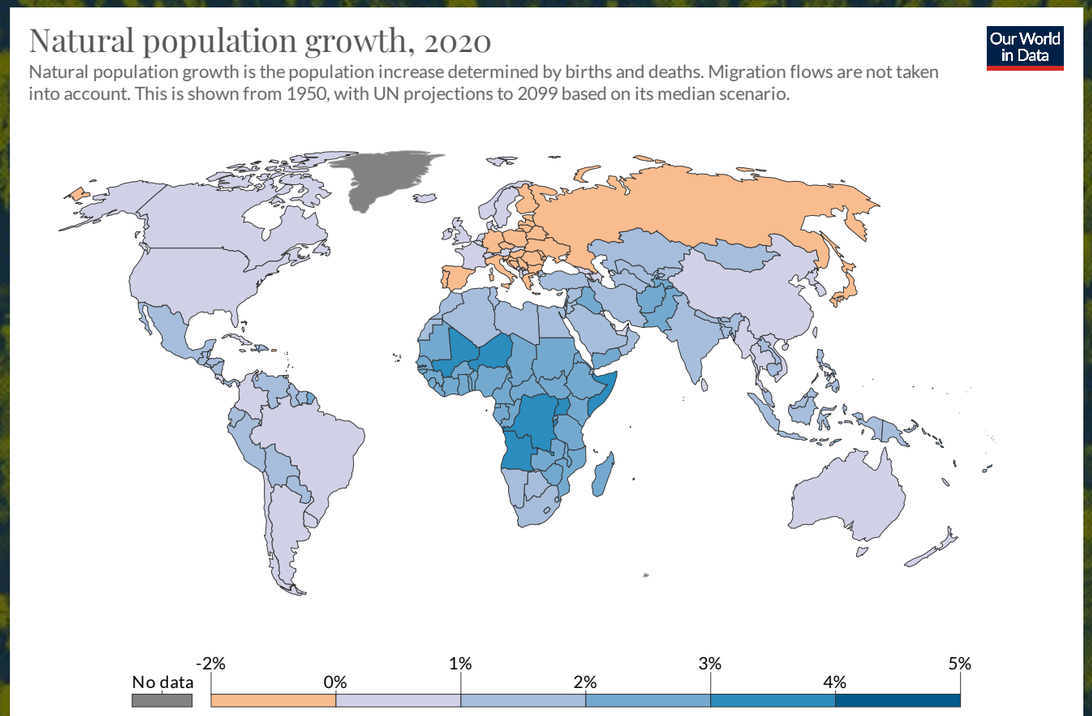
For several centuries, China has been the world's most populous country. But not for long: it's expected that India will overtake China within the next decade.

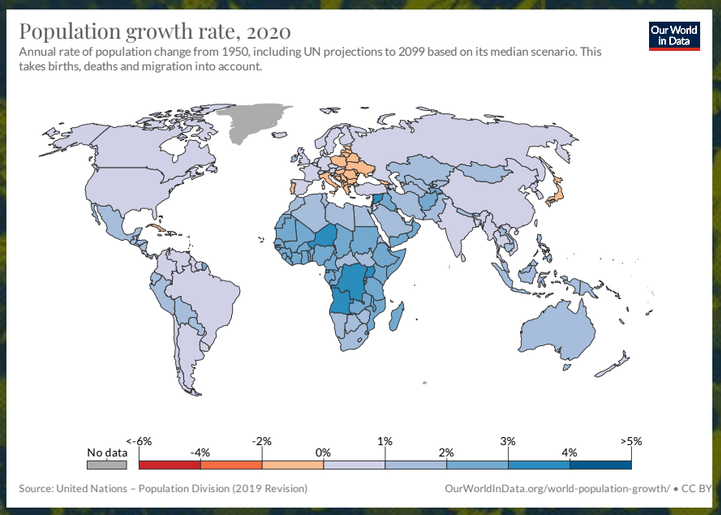
Population growth rate by country and region

Global population growth peaked in the early 1960s. But how has population growth varied across the world? There are two metrics we can use to look at population growth rates:

Natural population growth: this is the change in population as determined by births and deaths only. Migration flows are not counted. **Population growth rate**: this is the change in population as determined by births, deaths plus migration flows.

Both of these measures of population growth across the world are shown in the two charts. We see that there are some countries today where the natural population growth (not including migration) is slightly negative: the number of deaths exceed the number of births. Up until the 1970s, there were no countries with a negative natural population growth. Worldwide, population growth is slowing. Overall, growth rates in most countries have been going down since the 1960s. Yet substantial differences exist across countries and regions. Whilst Western Europe's growth rates are currently close to zero, sub-Saharan Africa's rates remain higher than 3% — that is, still higher than the peak growth rates recorded for the world at the beginning of the 1960s. Moreover, in many cases there has been divergence in growth rates. For instance, while India and Nigeria had similar growth rates in 1960 (around 2%), they took very different paths in the following years and thus currently have populations that grow at very different rates (about 0.98% for India compared to 2.53% for Nigeria).





GEORGIA and the EU

by KAKHA KUCHAVA

Together Towards Environmental and Climate Resilience

Georgia is a proud European nation, with 3,000 years of history. Over the past years, country has undertaken a range of profound reforms to modernise and revitalize successfully its democratic and sustainable development. These included, investing in infrastructure, restructuring of the public sector, deregulation for businesses, a fight against corruption, and trade-related rules and procedures, which on its turn has an influence on environmental stability. Environmental policies, climate change and sustainability are very high on the agenda of the ruling party Georgian Dream and the Georgian Government.

Back in 2015, during the COP21 Conference in Paris, the Georgian Government strongly committed to sustainable environmental policies, and confirmed its role as a regional leader in the export of clean energy. Georgia has set climate targets through its nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the period 2021-2030 and adhered to the OECD Declaration on Green Growth. It has also completed the development of Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) and National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP). As a Party to the UNFCCC, Georgia is fully committed to the objectives of the Convention and UNFCCC negotiation process.

Georgia launched in 2013 the elaboration of the Low Emission Development Strategy (LEOS) with support of the EU and US government. Based on the results achieved, Georgia prepared and submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the UNFCCC, which outlined post-2020 climate change mitigation actions intended to be taken under the new 2015 Agreement. The sustainable development goals and national circumstances have been taken into account during the preparation of Georgia's INDC.

Furthermore, Georgia is committed to develop and adopt the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) and Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDO). Georgia supports green economic development by promoting modern environmental technologies, developing clean transport services and ensuring the transfer to Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

In regards to sustainability, Georgia is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fulfilling the core pledge – "to leave no one behind" – that underpins the Agenda. The Government's policies and priorities are well-aligned to the SDGs – making them a very solid basis of the country's reform agenda. The level of integration of nationalized SDGs into Georgia's development planning, in line with its EU integration aspirations, is very high - 36 sector strategies and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement jointly incorporate 96% of the country's nationalized SDGs targets. Together with that, Open Governance Permanent Parliamentary Council monitors implementation of the SDGs Action Plan of the Parliament of Georgia while the Committees link their activities to SGSs in their early action plan.

From a climatic viewpoint, Georgia is characterized by great diversity. Almost all types of climate areas are represented here, with the exception of desert, savanna and tropical forests. The main natural resources of the country are water and forests. Currently about 40% of the territory of Georgia is covered by forests. It is worth noting, that Georgian lawmakers passed the new Forest Code, which displays environmental, social and economic functions of forest and provides sustainable forest management principles aiming to conserve the biodiversity of the forest of Georgia.

Over the past years, country has undertaken a range of profound reforms to modernise and revitalize successfully its democratic and sustainable development. These included, investing in infrastructure, restructuring of the public sector, deregulation for businesses, a fight against corruption, and trade-related rules and procedures, which on its turn has an influence on environmental stability.

Georgia plans to unconditionally reduce its GHG emissions by 15% below the Business As Usual scenario (BAU) for the year 2030. Georgia already uses renewable energy to provide more than 80% of its electricity and has one of the world's greatest hydropower capacities and one of the largest fresh water reserves.

Another relevant factor here is Georgia's agricultural sector, which plays a key role in the country's economy. Georgian farmers are going to fulfill a principal role in providing one of the fundamental needs of society: a safe, secure, and affordable food supply. This underlines the importance of the relationship between climate change impacts on agriculture and food security. During last decades, negative consequences of climate change have drastically reduced agricultural productivity. For the adaptation of agricultural sector to the expected climate change, wide range of measures are in place. Those include the following:

- Research and development of emergency response plans for agriculture dealing with droughts, floods, etc;
- Introduction of innovative irrigation management and water application techniques;
- Implementation of various site specific anti-erosion measures;

Establishment of information centers for farmers that provides guidance on adaptive management of agriculture; etc.

Further to national initiatives, the Georgian Government has put in place actions on environmental policy and conservation, together with the help of the EU. In February 2019, the Georgian government announced the launch of the Climate Change Adaptation Programme with a budget worth USD 70 million. The program aims to protect the country from natural disasters and decrease damage caused by disasters to a minimum. Georgia works together with the European Union (EU) via three projects for environmental protection and climate change in Georgia. The projects are focused on the renovation of water supply and sanitation systems, the construction of modern landfills, fight

against industrial pollution, protection of forests as well as other important issues.

The Georgian's Government commitment to a pro-Western path for Georgia is unwavering and can be seen by the multitude of joint EU-Georgia projects. Georgia cherishes the shared values embodied in Europe, whether it is the strategic, economic and particularly the climate change goals. With this, the EU-Georgia Eastern Partnership policy Beyond 2020 further emphasizes the deep links between Georgia and the EU, notably in regards to the environment. It supports the delivery of many global policy objectives, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and the European Green Deal.

Georgian farmers are going to fulfill a principal role in providing one of the fundamental needs of society: a safe, secure, and affordable food supply. This underlines the importance of the relationship between climate change impacts on agriculture and food security.

In the move towards climate neutrality, the EU and Georgia have the joint responsibility to fulfil their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and modernise their economies, reducing their carbon footprint.

The European Green Deal makes it clear that environmental and climate challenges require urgent action by the EU and the partner countries, such as Georgia. In the move towards climate neutrality, the EU and Georgia have the joint responsibility to fulfil their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and modernise their economies, reducing their carbon footprint. The EU and Georgia are working together towards a resilient and sustainable future:

- Transforming the region into fair and prosperous societies, with modern, resource-efficient, clean, circular and competitive economies, while increasing their environmental and climate action, including through more sustainable use of natural resources
- Developing new green jobs and economic opportunities linked to the green transition
- Developing local and renewable energy sources, thus halting the loss of biodiversity
- Continuing investment in environmental governance and in raising awareness, including by teaming up with civil society
- Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility
- Scaling up action in areas that are critical for people's health and well-being.

The EU and Georgia have started sharing best practices and coordinated efforts on environmentally sustainable investment such as green taxonomies, environmental and climate disclosures, and standards and labels for green financial products. Notably, the country closely cooperates with agencies and embassies of European countries to ensure the environmental and climate resilience project are delivered firsthand.

In May 2020, the Georgian parliament has adopted legislation on energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings, bringing the country closer to EU standards, in a move which was applauded by the EU Ambassador to Georgia, Mr. Carl Hartzell.

The legislation aims to reduce emissions and pollution, improve the energy efficiency of buildings, as well as decrease energy imports and bolster the country's energy security.

EU, Energy Community and UNDP help Georgia refine its climate and energy legislation as Georgia is making progress in adopting laws and policies to monitor and reduce GreenHouse Gas Emissions.

Georgia's carbon dioxide equivalent emissions amount to around 17.6 million tonnes per year (2.37 tonnes per capita), which is significantly lower than emissions in the world's largest economies, but still slightly higher than in some of the Eastern Partnership countries.

The EU-funded "EU4Environment" Action, launched in 2019, helps Georgia, as well as five other partner countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine - preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts

In October 2020, the EU underlined achievements under the above18-month project "Support to implementation of the Environmental Provisions of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement", supporting Georgia's environmental protection system. It concluded achievements in the field of:

- Proposals for four by-laws on environmental liability;
- A draft National Marine Environment Strategy and Action Programme;
- Management Plans for three Emerald Sites: Samegrelo 2, Racha-Lechkhumi, and Svaneti-Racha;
- Reports on air quality aspects (emissions from petrol distribution and from paints production and distribution; air quality policy outlook);
- Reports on protected areas monitoring and management.

All these achievements will permit Georgia to accelerate the implementation of the environmental provisions included within the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and to improve its environmental protection system to the ultimate benefit of Georgian nature and the health of Georgian citizens.

The effective implementation of the law is a complex process which requires a number of components, including effective oversight. Often, the focus shifts on getting legislation adopted, rather than on practical implementation and its impact. To fill in this gap, oversight over the practices and regulations is the key to environmental and climate resilience future of the country. Interestingly, under the chairmanship of Deputy Speaker Kakha Kuchava (previously Chair of Environment Committee) the Environment Protection and Natural Resources

Committee successfully introduced Committee Inquiry practice (Ambient Air Quality in Tbilisi and Municipal Waste Management) and Post-Legislative Scrutiny, later also reflected in Rules of Procedure of Parliament and widely used by other committees and permanent parliamentary councils. The feature worth pointing out is that these mechanisms are mainly enjoyed by civil society, which makes the oversight of the parliament even more crucial. All the processes are transparent and fully correspond to European values and the democratic processes. Within the Committee inquiry, the recommendations are provided together with the relevant timeline to follow the recommendations where the executive reports back to the parliament regarding the status of recommendation.

Georgia is committed to a European future, and meets the standards, that is a fact. However, it cannot always be the State making demands and regulations, working with private sector is key. To do so, one needs also to think outside the box. It takes the innovative thinking of everyone to solve the climate crisis. Working with the private sector is key.

The founder and Chairman of Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili, is a noted philanthropist and generous contributor to charitable causes, including conservation work. Private philanthropy has a vital role to play in a small country such as Georgia, and it dramatically complements government funding. Bidzina Ivanishvili has been doing conservation work via the International Charity Foundation Cartu (Cartu Foundation) established in 1995 by the family Ivanishvili with the aim of supporting Georgia's development through philanthropic and charity projects. The projects worth of over 3.2 billion US dollars were financed and implemented by the Cartu Foundation since its establishment to date, in the fields of Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage Preservation, as well as protection of the environment.

Protection of environment is an important priority of the Foundation with the following projects funded and implemented since 1995:

- Vashlovani Protected Areas;
- Lagodekhi Protected Areas;
- Tusheti Protected Areas;
- Batumi Botanical Garden;
- Tbilisi Botanical Garden.

Two prominent examples are Bidzina Ivanishvili's arboretum and the renovation of Tskaltubo. The arboretum is a project that started in 2015 in Ureki. Georgia is set to have a unique dendrological park. This is one of the most prestigious new botanical garden in the world. It encompasses some of the most impressive collection of trees, flowers and animals of Georgia. This botanical garden is quite a success amongst Georgian tourists and it will be on every traveler's must see attractions when travelling will resume normally in 2021.

This arboretum can be compared to other prestigious gardens such as the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the Adelaide Botanic Garden and the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens.

In Tbilisi, earlier this year, it was announced that about 700 hectares of forest landscape on the slope of Mount Mtatsminda in the heart of the Georgian capital will be restored over the next four years. The project by the Cartu Foundation aims to restore the degraded forest and develop recreational infrastructure.

In regards to Tskaltubo, this project is much more recent. In the first years of gaining independence, the medical and tourist infrastructure of Tskaltubo practically fell into decay. The resort, which featured 22 sanatoriums and 9 balneological baths, successfully competed not only with regional resorts but with similar resorts in Eastern Europe as well. Since, at the moment, the country does not have the resources to invest several hundred million Euros in the rehabilitation of Tskaltubo (the Government priority is to revitalize the economy of the country in light of the COVID-19 crisis), the Cartu Foundation is leading the Tskaltubo revival project. This will be a full-scale rehabilitation of the existing, completely run-down tourist and medical infrastructure but also to ensure its development according to modern, international standards.

EU officials have praised the Government's work and many joint EU-Georgia projects have led to successful results in the past 18 months. This is paving the way for Georgia's future in Europe, making it a leading candidate for enhanced collaboration, cooperation and further integration.

The Georgian Dream ruling Government has built a modern and Sustainable state in Georgia, aligned with the EU's innovative and committed approach to environmental action. All actions undertaken by the Government since 2012 show that Georgia is well ahead of the curve. Its commitment to sustainable environmental policies during the COP21 Conference in Paris, setting climate targets through its nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and adhering to the OECD Declaration on Green Growth, further to national and private initiatives, are the proof of Georgia's willingness to contribute to environmental protection. In addition, businesses are an important part of it. Corporate and individual responsibility in environmental issues is as important as the State.

It is regrettable that the Ministry of Environment has been merged with the Ministry of Agriculture several years ago. However, the strong political will, actions undertaken and the ambitious plans and deliverables the ruling party has been projecting since 2012 confirms that environment and climate resilience are priority matters and the room for improvement should be used wisely.

EU officials have praised the Government's work and many joint EU-Georgia projects have led to successful results in the past 18 months. This is paving the way for Georgia's future in Europe, making it a leading candidate for enhanced collaboration, cooperation and further integration.

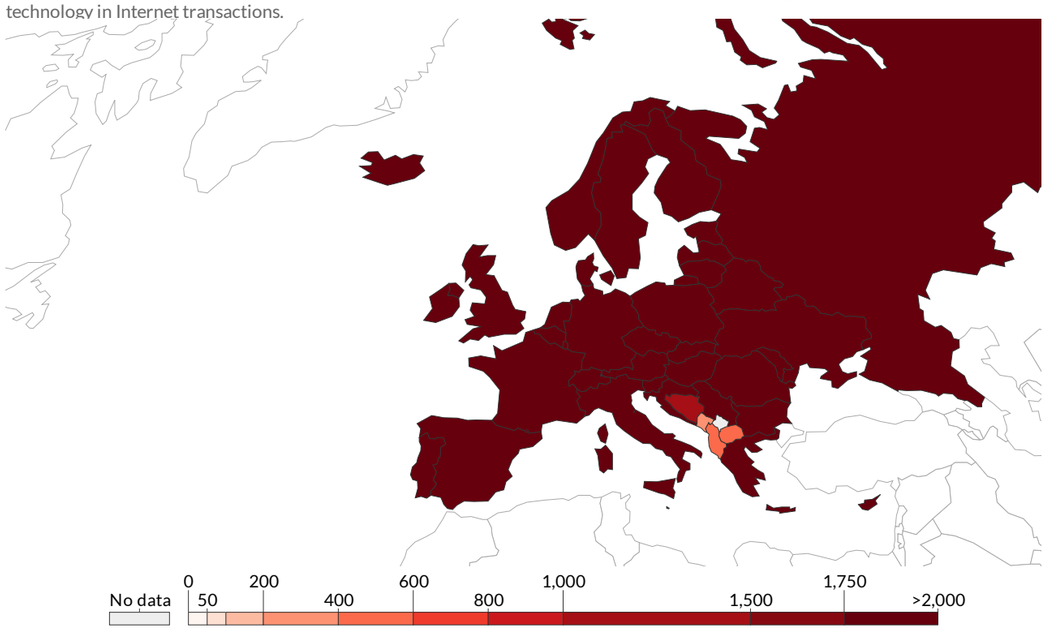
Kakha Kuchava is Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia (Foreign Affairs)

WORLD IN NUMBERS

Technology Adoption

Secure Internet servers, 2017

Number of secure internet servers, measured per one million people. Secure servers are servers using encryption technology in Internet transactions.

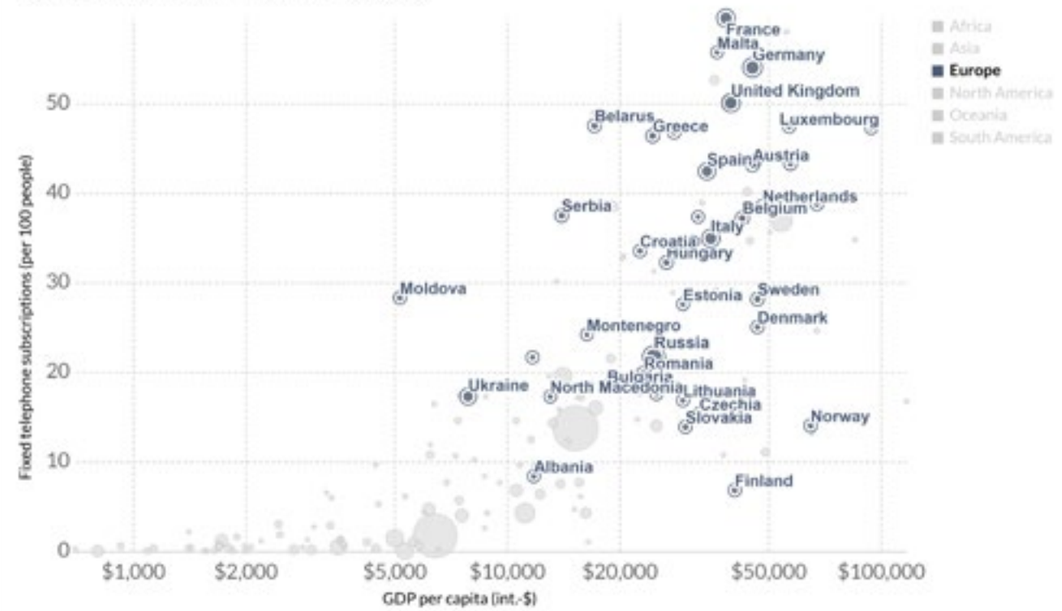


Source: World Bank

OurWorldInData.org/technology-adoption/ • CC BY

Fixed (landline) telephone subscriptions vs. GDP per capita, 2017

The number of fixed (landline) telephone subscriptions, measured per 100 people versus gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, measured in 2011 international-$.

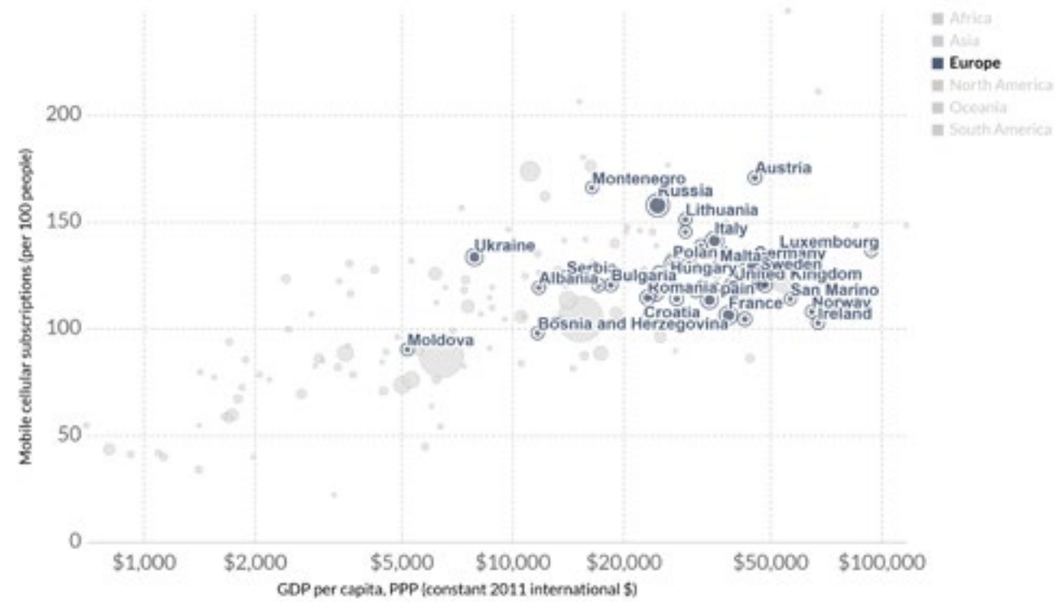


Source: World Bank, Population (Gapminder, HYDE(2016) & UN (2019)), Our World In Data

OurWorldInData.org/technology-adoption/ • CC BY

Mobile phone subscriptions vs. GDP per capita, 2017

Number of mobile phone subscriptions, measured per 100 people versus gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, measured in 2011 international-$.



Source: World Bank, Our World In Data

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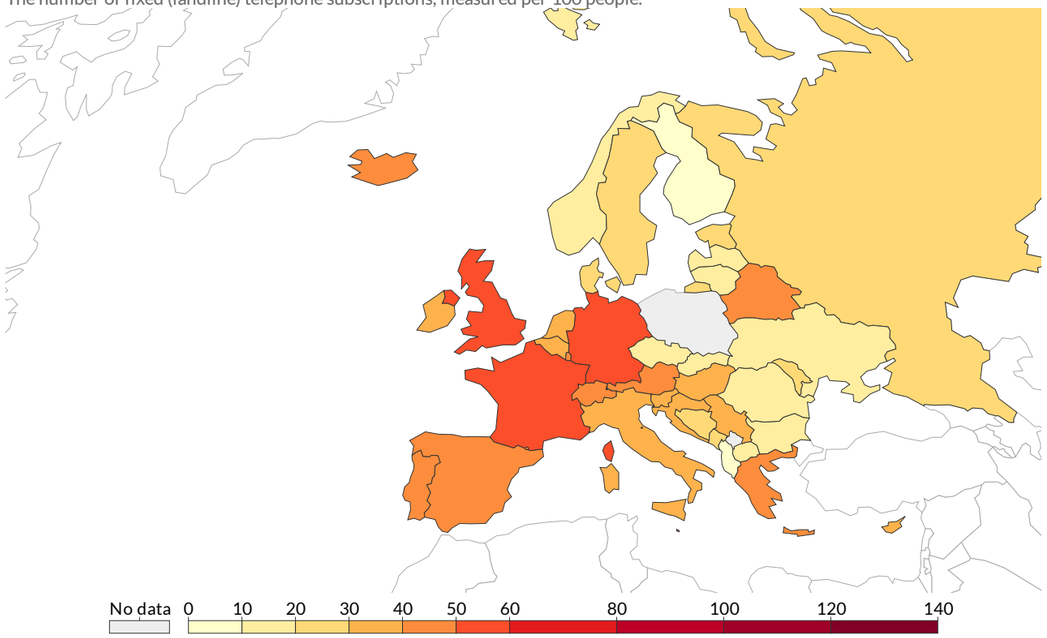
Fixed telephone subscriptions, 2017

The number of fixed (landline) telephone subscriptions, measured per 100 people.



Source: International Telecommunication Union

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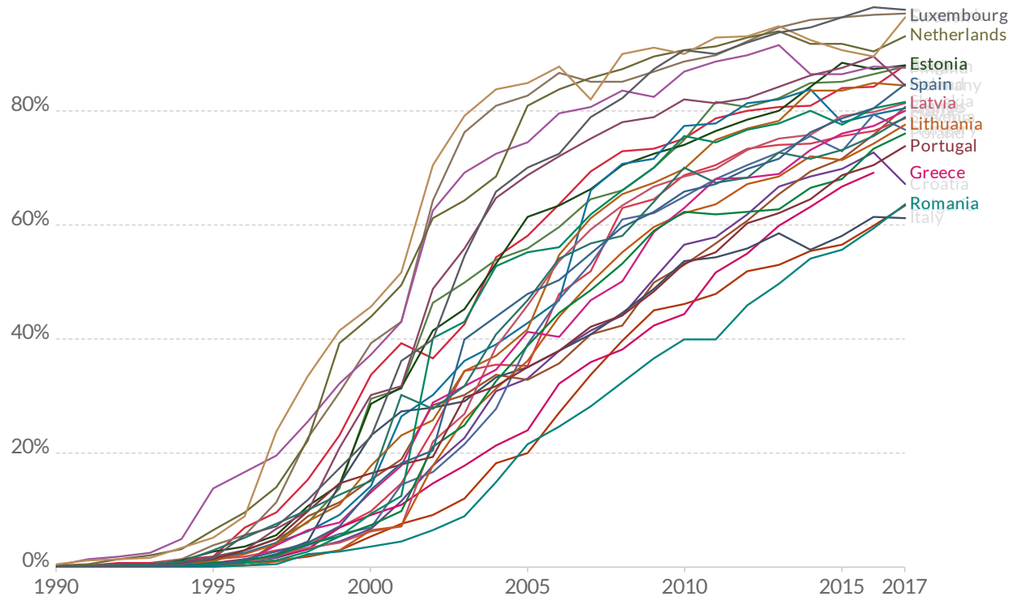
Share of the population using the Internet, 1990 to 2017

All individuals who have used the Internet in the last 3 months are counted as Internet users. The Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.



Source: World Bank

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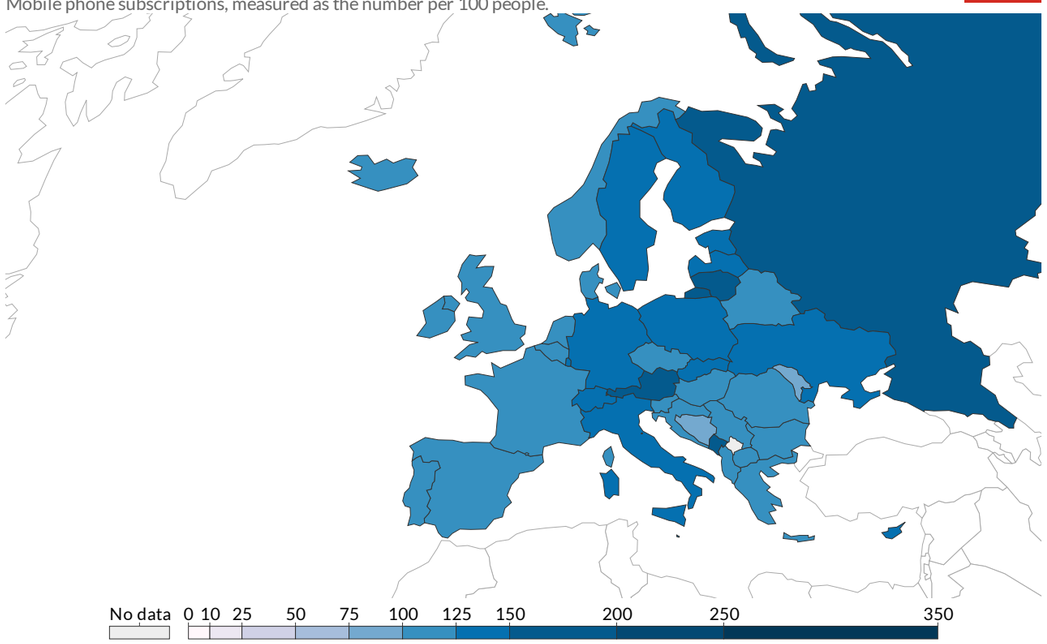
Mobile cellular subscriptions, 2017

Mobile phone subscriptions, measured as the number per 100 people.



Source: International Telecommunication Union

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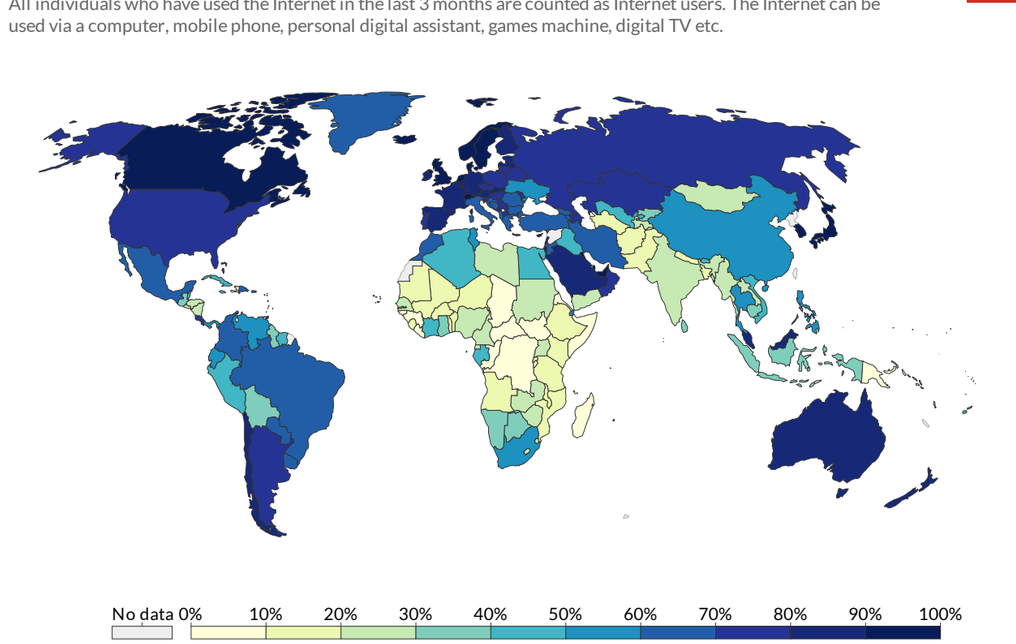

Source: World Bank

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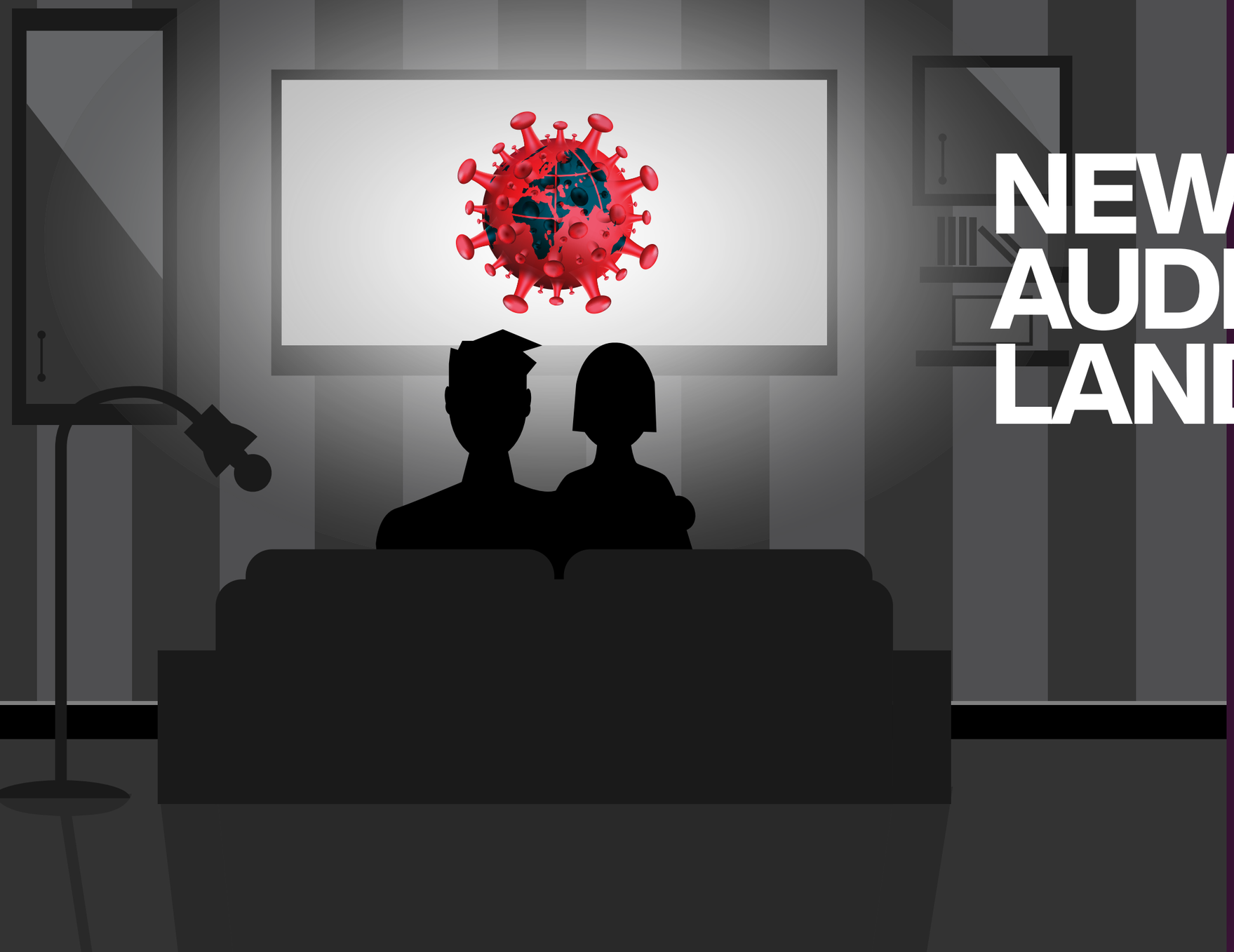


Europe facing the challenges of the NEW GLOBAL AUDIO-VISUAL LANDSCAPE

by GERARD POGOREL

The year 2020, tragically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, sees a transformation of the global audiovisual landscape. Classic free or pay television channels, mostly specific to each country, are complemented and substituted by an increasingly number of services allowing access to audiovisual shows, on demand or by subscription, independent or associated with national television and film industries. New broadcast and streaming services have very significant financial resources.

Abundant financial means allow an international footprint from the outset, both for the shows offered in the catalog and for the technical and marketing channels of distribution. How do streaming services originating from America (Netflix, Amazon, Apple, WarnerMedia, Disney) position themselves with regard to countries with a strong domestic creative focus, often advocating the need for cultural “diversity”. Symmetrically, many countries create great television and cinema in Europe, France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Poland, in Asia, China, South Korea or Taiwan, or in Latin America Brazil or Mexico. They already enjoy international recognition. How can they take advantage of the international extension of communication networks supporting globalized Internet platforms? The scene will now be increasingly global, as powerful actors with global ambitions emerge on all continents.

"Diversity" countries produce works that already have an audience outside their borders. Demand is so strong, in Denmark for example, that the demand for qualified professionals exceeds supply, at a moment when demand is multiplied by digital platforms. The challenge for creators is the channeling of works of diversity to broader audiences. The extent of the catalog of national film and television productions and the marketing resources limit the possibilities of a direct relationship between national operators and international audiences. This raises the crucial question of the relationship of works of cultural diversity with international networks and platforms, most often of American origin.

We meet, in countries of "diversity", a tangle of devices created over time in a defensive spirit for local productions: quotas, financial aid, various obligations concerning exclusive content or events said to be of "major importance. », as well as mergers and acquisitions restrictions. These measures, whose raison d'être should not be lost, must however be carefully re-examined in the light of the new realities of the digital world. The recent controversy over the definition of "cinema", initiated by Martin Scorsese, following the debate concerning Rosa at the Oscars, illustrates the potential contribution of platforms to creation. We can already see how the platforms, anxious to attract a local clientele for their international extension, provide welcome financial means for original cultural productions. The international openness and the range of possible agreements between network operators and creative producers, managed with farsightedness, present a historic opportunity for the development of cultural diversity at the international level, for increased opening of markets to different productions.

Alongside the cavalry of blockbusters and their sequels and prequels, diversity today is driven by a plurality of vectors. National streaming services exist or are being created. They play an important national role but enjoy limited access beyond their borders. The integrated quadruple-play offers of telecom operators, with their large markets and significant financial resources, are a powerful support tool for penetration. Even more, the platforms are a privileged vehicle for financing and international expansion. Regulatory distrust of horizontal or vertical integration, such as exclusivity, which could be justified when the range of works and events offered to the audio-visual was limited, is much less so today, as the offer as well as the expectations of the public have widened and diversified. The fulfillment of the digital promises for the countries of diversity, in Europe, in Asia (South Korea, Taiwan), in Latin America (Brazil, Mexico), to name but a few, supposes to carefully re-examine the constraints weighing on the digital economy, in particular those affecting cross-border flows of data, capital and

Telecommunications and broadcasting industries in Europe have long been segregated in silos, with companies reluctant to integrate across different skill sets and assets. Network operators now offer converged services comprising voice, data and content, the latter being the major growth factor.

works, and to achieve the synergy of the creations of cultural diversity and large international networks.

The big question for audio-visual actors in Europe will be how to confront and make the most of the worldwide developments to come. Telecommunications and broadcasting industries in Europe have long been segregated in silos, with companies reluctant to integrate across different skill sets and assets. Network operators now offer converged services comprising voice, data and content, the latter being the major growth factor.

In Germany, Deutsche Telekom chose a conservative strategy as a content aggregator rather than an exclusive media rights-holder. It signed deals with other companies, including Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. German broadcasters have made significant investments in high quality content, DT is possibly wary of gaps in management cultures.

Conversely in the UK, BT has pursued a content acquisition strategy. It grabbed the Champions League from Sky, spending £4.8 billion (US$ 6.1 billion) for the rights of the English Premier League, the Champions League and Europa League. It currently spends more than £700 million per year on top-tier international and domestic football. Competition has increased, with e-commerce giant Amazon winning a three-year broadcast package for the Premier League, while Sky would like to use the Champions League to boost its NOW TV streaming service. British broadcasters joint venture BritBox has been pitched as a cheaper additional streaming service for consumers who already subscribe to Netflix, with a focus on providing thousands of hours of archive material and classic box-sets by the two broadcasters. What was launched in 2017 as a platform showcasing the best of British content in the US and Canada, is now Britain's new weapon in the streaming wars.

A few European-wide initiatives are under way. In 2017, Mediaset agreed to set up a joint trading platform for digital video advertising with European commercial broadcasters TF1 (France) and ProSiebenSat.1 (Germany), establishing in equal shares the European Broadcaster Exchange (EBX). The purpose was to address at scale the demand for pan-European by media agencies planning continent-wide video campaigns. It was the start of a strategic collaboration to drive forward the technological development of online advertising. The joint venture should allow reaching over 250 million people, a critical mass able to face the giants of the global web. With a higher ambition, in September 2019, Mediaset announced the establishment of a European wide media Group, MFE, based in Netherlands, including the Italian and Spain wholly owned TV companies and its stake in Germany based ProsiebenSat1.

After the 2017 Vivendi/Telecom Italia/Mediaset project of a "Netflix of Southern Europe" was put on the back burner, the Vodafone/Liberty deal in May 2018 was a significant catalyst for the sector in Europe, potentially paving the way a consolidation across Europe along this business model. Similar deals involve all European operators, BT, DT, Orange, Altice, Free, Telefonica, etc.

Meanwhile, the European Public Service Broadcasters have also been active, joining forces at national and also European levels. RAI for example teamed up with France Télévisions and German ZDF in an alliance for the co-production of content for the three public television services of Italy, France, and Germany. Franco-German ARTE is asserting its European ambition by offering programs in 6 languages, without copyright limitations in Europe, unlike most other offers.

In France the three largest French broadcasters France TV, M6 and TF1 will operate the joint online-video platform Salto, planned to be launched in 2020. Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions would stop selling shows to Netflix so it can keep exclusivity for its own home-grown equivalent, to keep strong French and also European fiction. France has been a strong proponent of cultural diversity policies, with tax breaks and quotas to incentivize local players, contributing at the beginning to Netflix being a slower burn than in the UK or the Nordics. In theory, not working with Netflix might allow French broadcasters, which back around 75% of audio-visual creation in France, to maintain a strong foothold by having more market leverage. But in the French TV industry, where budgets and revenues have fallen flat, Netflix has been welcomed by producers, and broadcasters for bringing more money to the sector.

The challenge for "diversity" creations is to reach wider audiences. The breadth of the catalogue of national film and television productions and the marketing means limiting the possibilities of a direct relationship between national operators and international audiences.

The economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is dramatic and is affecting industries heavily. Streaming is among the (few) winning businesses in the global lockdown. Since 2010, the Pay-TV ecosystem has seen nearly a 30% reduction in overall viewing hours and as much as a 60% decline among 12-35-years-old. Pay-TV is the largest recurring discretionary entertainment expense for the average household. This makes it one of the first places families will look when struggling with bills, unemployment, or other financial pressures, especially when they already have Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and significant free streaming offerings from national broadcasters.

Consumers are examining their personal finances as never before to determine what they can afford to buy and weigh what products and services provide the most value to their household. Household prioritization of paid entertainment services against other household services and product needs will determine if a free trial, promotional offer, or an exclusive piece of content converts to a paid subscription.

The cultural dimension will become increasingly important for Europe in the future: the European creative industries already produce shows that is very popular in each country of origin, with an audience significantly higher than the American ones. Thanks to the Internet and to the new streaming services, potential demand is growing at world level. The new digital world platforms present a unique opportunity for Europe to expand outside their borders.

Consumers are examining their personal finances as never before to determine what they can afford to buy and weigh what products and services provide the most value to their household.

Gerard Pogorel, Emeritus Professor of Economics, Télécom Paris-Institut Polytechnique de Paris, CNRS Interdisciplinary Institute for Innovation I3

Not every cluster will be as large or as successful as the UK games sector is. But if countries across Europe back games makers, they are all potentially able to benefit by generating growing highly skilled, highly valued creative jobs across their countries.

FROM HOME BREW HEROES TO GLOBAL SUCCESS

What policy makers can learn from the rise of the UK games industry

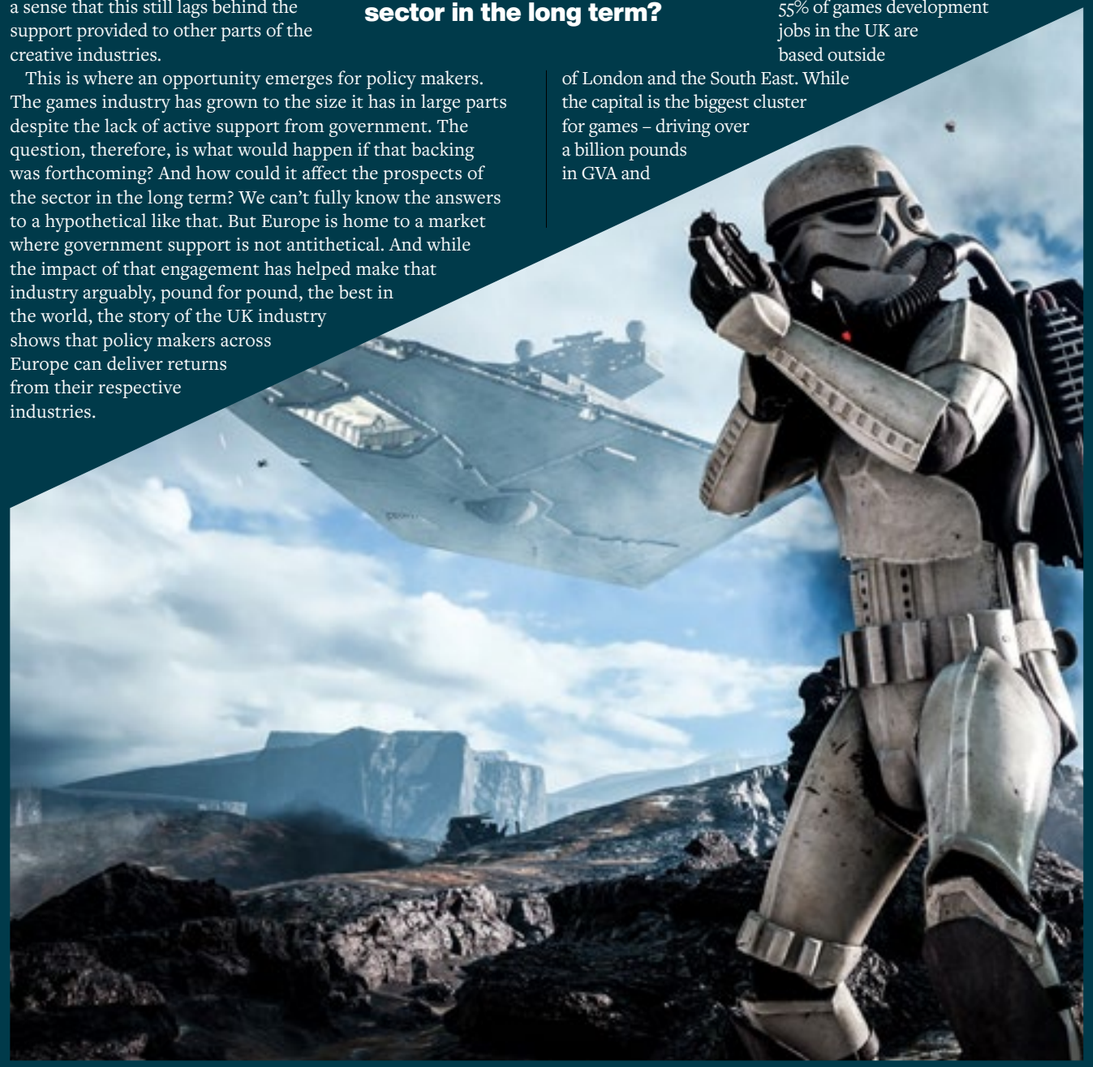
by DR JO TWIST OBE

In the past year, games have reached heights that scarcely seemed possible even five years ago. The global market is worth $186bn according to Newzoo, over four times larger than global box office takings were in 2019. Games are played by well over half Europe's population, despite the fact that the industry has only four decades under its belt. They're even popular enough to sell out stadiums and draw crowds of millions online when played competitively by professional players.

But despite the size, prominence and outright importance of the games industry worldwide, there is still an overriding sense that the political class haven't fully plugged into it yet. The industry has received, in many places, comparatively strong support for its activities in the past five years from policy makers. However, there is a sense that this still lags behind the support provided to other parts of the creative industries.

This is where an opportunity emerges for policy makers. The games industry has grown to the size it has in large parts despite the lack of active support from government. The question, therefore, is what would happen if that backing was forthcoming? And how could it affect the prospects of the sector in the long term?

This is where an opportunity emerges for policy makers. The games industry has grown to the size it has in large parts despite the lack of active support from government. The question, therefore, is what would happen if that backing was forthcoming? And how could it affect the prospects of the sector in the long term? We can't fully know the answers to a hypothetical like that. But Europe is home to a market where government support is not antithetical. And while the impact of that engagement has helped make that industry arguably, pound for pound, the best in the world, the story of the UK industry shows that policy makers across Europe can deliver returns from their respective industries.

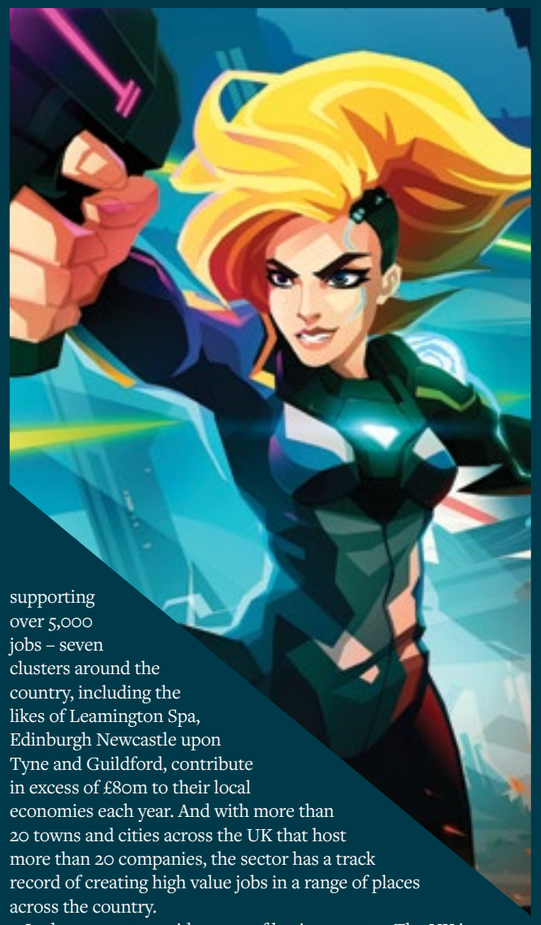


Understanding the UK games sector

The UK games market is a big one. With a consumer market valued at £5.35bn per year, and with nearly 37 million players across the country, it is considered to be the fifth biggest market for video games (and associated cultural content) in the world.

On top of that, the UK is also considered to be one of the most developed games industries globally. The country plays host to 2,200 businesses that support the employment of nearly 50,000 full time equivalents across the country. It also contributes £2.87bn in gross value add to the UK economy at large, with the average GVA per employee sitting at £83,300, making it twice the size of the country's oft talked about fishing industry.

Importantly, the games industry in the UK is spread across the country. 55% of games development jobs in the UK are based outside of London and the South East. While the capital is the biggest cluster for games – driving over a billion pounds in GVA and supporting over 5,000 jobs – seven clusters around the country, including the likes of Leamington Spa, Edinburgh Newcastle upon Tyne and Guildford, contribute in excess of £80m to their local economies each year. And with more than 20 towns and cities across the UK that host more than 20 companies, the sector has a track record of creating high value jobs in a range of places across the country.



It also supports a wide range of businesses too. The UK is home to a wide cross section of companies. Global platforms and publishers have bases in the UK to cater for the domestic market, but also to act as a bridge between Europe and the US. Home grown development heroes like Jagex, Codemasters and The Tonic Group have built successful standalone businesses, employing hundreds of people to create games. Then there are external development businesses such as Sumo Digital and Splash Damage, who have built substantial work forces to bring the expertise of the sector to bear on leading international IPs. And what can't be forgotten are the hundreds of micro businesses, producing thoroughly creative standalone games and selling them to international markets through digital store fronts.

The games industry in the UK is supported by some of the brightest minds in the world. 88% of workers in the UK games industry hold at least an undergraduate degree, making it one of the best qualified professions in the country.

Alongside the wide variety of games businesses sits a plethora of service companies too. Many provide tangible direct support to the sector. The UK is home to businesses offering the development engines used to make games, outsourced services to produce creative elements of a game (e.g. motion capture or voice acting) and wider tools. But the sector is also supported by a wide range of dedicated business support companies offering industry specific advice on finance, PR & marketing and legal matters to support its growth.

Finally, the games industry in the UK is supported by some of the brightest minds in the world. 88% of workers in the UK games industry hold at least an undergraduate degree, making it one of the best qualified professions in the country. And while homegrown talent, developed in the many universities offering great quality computing and game design courses, has helped the sector flourish, nearly a third of the UK industry workforce is from the rest of the world. This international talent doesn't just drive the creation of great games either; it also plays a significant role in diversifying the make up of industry's workforce – increasing the number of women and BAME representatives working within the sector.

The UK games industry has remarkably deep foundations for a comparatively young industry. And it becomes easier to understand why this is the case when we take a look at the environment in which the industry evolved and how policy has supported it.

Building for the long term

From an industry perspective, there are a number of key reasons why the UK games sector has developed into such a national success story so quickly into its existence. The first reason is the legacy of the bedroom coders of the 1980s. Historically, the individuals who made classic games like Dizzy, Manic Miner and Hovver Bovver have tended to be celebrated for their ability to code from home on rudimentary computing devices.

But their importance wasn't just found in who they were; it was found in where they were. As explained in the Game Maker's Toolkit documentary series The Rise and Fall of the Bedroom Coders, the shining lights of the UK video games industry blazed brightly in places such as Sheffield, Leamington Spa and Liverpool as much as they did in London. While the home brew computing revolution promised that programmers could take on the world, they were able to do so from within their communities – implanting the sector across the country from its earliest days.

As the industry grew, the early industry success stories – benefitting from the rapid growth of the sector – were able to begin to turn inadvertent regional distribution into coherent clusters.

In Scotland, Dundee's Institute of Computing (now the University of Abertay) and DMA Design – the creators of Lemmings and Grand Theft Auto – added 'joysticks' to the city's reputation as a home for 'jute' and 'jam'. Team 17, founded in Wakefield in 1990, helped establish a base for the industry in Yorkshire. The Guildford cluster grew successfully alongside Bullfrog and Lionhead, with the eventual closures of both leading to more studios founding in the area. And the success of the PlayStation in the mid 1990s helped the creators of WipeOut – based in Liverpool – and DRIVER – based in Newcastle – to survive in the area.

However, these points don't adequately explain the UK's success as a national cluster. While it is undoubtedly the case that the relative ease of setting up games businesses across the UK, and the access to a deep talent pool, helped companies to succeed, the sector also benefitted from a wider range of national support that ensured its growth was sustainable.

One of the earliest pillars of this was the early emergence of a trade organisation for the sector in comparison to the rest of the world. The European Leisure Software Publishers Association

(ELSPA), the forerunner to the UK industry trade body Ukie, was first formed in September 1989 – making it the first such organisation to form for any national games industry in the world.

This was important for the development of the sector for a couple. First, it helped the industry to organise more effectively internally. It helped to bring together companies engaged in ongoing discussions on topics such as the reporting of sales data, the protection of intellectual property and the development of business in the sector to help the nascent industry develop further.

Second, it also provided the industry with a voice in early policy debates that gave it an opportunity to build relationships with government – even on challenging topics. In the early to mid 1990s, the iconic debate focused on the establishment and maintenance of an age rating system in response to moral panics around video game violence.

At the time, it led to the appointment of the Video Standards Council (VSC) to oversee the industry's content through the lens of the British Board for Film Classification (BBFC) age rating standards. But nearly 15 years later, towards the end of the New Labour government, the debate culminated in the introduction of the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) age rating framework – something established and pushed forward in 2001 within the European political framework - in law following a review into the system by Dr Tanya Byron in 2008.

And while of itself this was an important development in the regulatory framework around games, the emergence of an age rating system is indicative of something much more important to the long term health of the industry: a relatively strong relationship with Government that has been established over many years.

Government has, for example, supported trade missions to international conferences for nearly two decades. The UK Games Fund, a dedicated funding pot designed to support prototyped games funded by Government to the tune of a million pounds a year, has been active since 2016 but was preceded by the Abertay fund that ran between 2010 to 2014. And Video Game Tax Relief (VGTR), the games industry's dedicated tax relief scheme supporting the creation of culturally British games, has been running successfully for over half a decade – delivering £4 back to the taxpayer for every pound invested into it, according to the BFI's Screen Business report.

The industry in the UK has also benefitted from a number of invaluable global developments too. Digital distribution through storefronts like the App Store and Steam turned every business into exporters, allowing them to reach markets around the world with a press of a button. The emergence of game engines such as Unity, Unreal and Game Maker democratised development, making it affordable and accessible to even the smallest businesses. And the emergence of social media provided a platform for games to build and reach enormous communities, giving them a practical way to manage the one to many approach of selling games online.

However, the combination of a deep pool of talent, a wide spread of business types across the country, the existence of a national framework for internal industry development and a conducive policy environment has played a major role in placing the UK in the position we find it today.

And, importantly, the industry looks relatively well set to continue this growth too. The impact of COVID-19 on most industries has been significantly negative, but the games sector in the UK has mostly ridden it out.

While companies did report a small reduction in productivity to 80% and concern about longer term access to finance, 49% of UK businesses surveyed in Ukie's Playing On Report reported a rise in profits during lockdown and only 17% reported using the government's furlough scheme to support their business. 24% even reported that they continued to hire through the process.

In short, the UK sector has been able to grow so effectively because the people talented enough to make games have ample support from Government, from within the sector and from the natural resilience of the sector in a digital age to build a business that can thrive anywhere in the country.

The combination of a deep pool of talent, a wide spread of business types across the country, the existence of a national framework for internal industry development and a conducive policy environment has played a major role in placing the UK in the position we find it today.

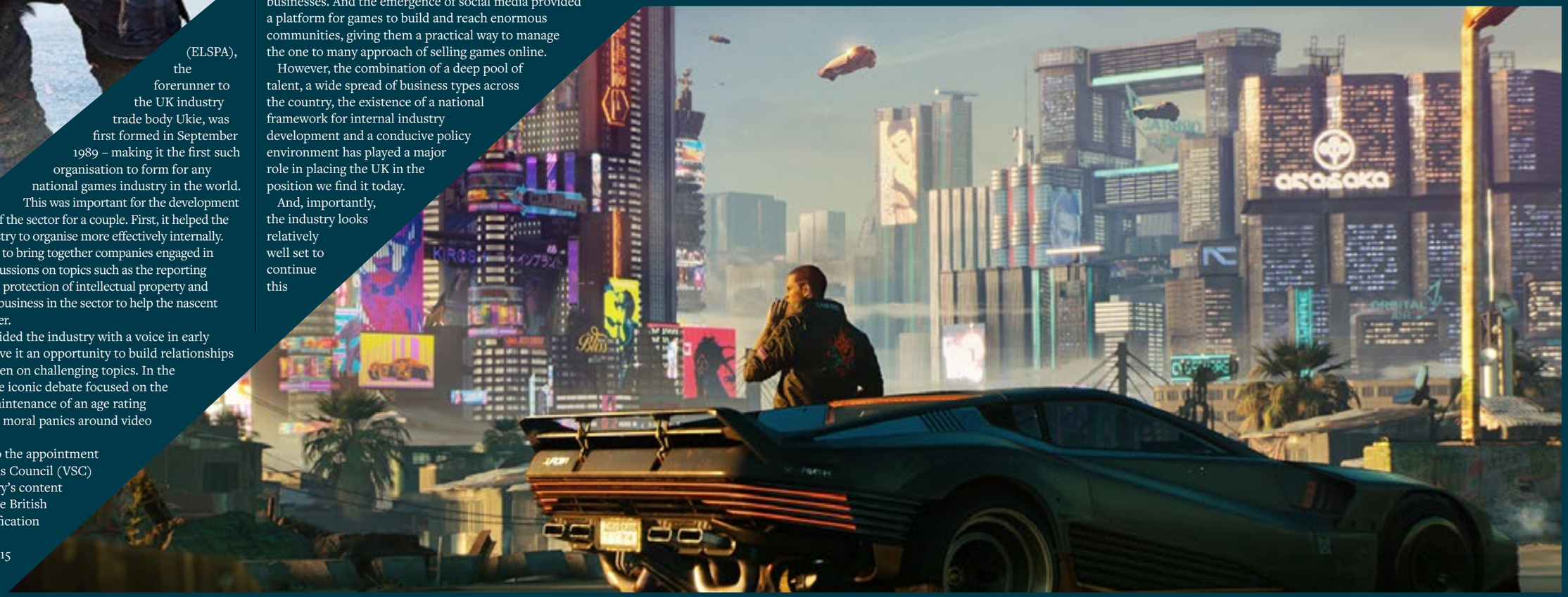
Moving to the next level

So what does the future hold for the UK sector? The immediate positive for the UK industry is that the profile of the sector is closely aligned with the Government's ambition to 'level up' the UK at large.

The Social Market Foundation highlighted this point extensively in a recent paper. The location of high value games industry jobs across the UK, and particularly in areas close to 'red wall' constituencies that fell out of Labour's grasp, make it a natural sector to back – especially given its potential to create hundreds of jobs off the back of hit games such as the UK's 2020 breakout video game hit Fall Guys.

The industry has also seen its importance rise during the COVID-19 crisis. Alongside its aforementioned economic resilience, the sector has been able to point to the numerous ways it supported people across the UK during lockdown. This included giving away tens of thousands of free games to NHS workers through its Games for Carers initiative, its support for the Government's #LetsTalkLoneliness campaign and its broader benefits on player mental health which included reducing feelings of anxiousness and isolation during lockdown.

However, the sector also has to negotiate its way through unprecedented regulatory scrutiny. The monetisation of a small number of video games through loot boxes, a paid random item that gives players content, led to Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee calling in September 2019 for it to be regulated as gambling The emergence of 'gaming disorder' in the World Health Organisation's International Classification of



Diseases has forced the industry to consider further its impact on players.

The sector also faces some long term issues that could affect its fortunes. The implications of Brexit remain unclear, but it is likely that access to talent will be disrupted and there is a risk that data flows will be undermined. The industry is also facing challenges in broadening the domestic talent pipeline, both to ensure the sector has enough talent across all disciplines to fill job roles and to make sure it diversifies entry to the sector for more women and BAME people.

Fortunately, the relatively long established framework of internal industry co-operation and an understanding policy environment has ensured that the sector is already well placed to tackle problems - and potentially seize the opportunities - presented to it.

The industry looks relatively well set to continue this growth too. The impact of COVID-19 on most industries has been significantly negative, but the games sector in the UK has mostly ridden it out.

On the thorny issue of loot boxes, the sector has moved quickly to assuage concerns on in game spend. It has strengthened its age rating system to ensure that any game containing them is labelled as such and that it displays the probabilities of getting items within each major platform. The sector has also run a major consumer awareness campaign called Get Smart About P.L.A.Y., which has sought to equip parents and players with the confidence to use settings on their devices to stop concerns about overspend or excessive screen time at source. This approach is consistent with the industry's self regulatory approach during the early days of age ratings and is why it argues that any issues with loot boxes should be dealt with it – or through appropriate consumer regulation – rather than inappropriate gambling law. In regards to the talent pipeline and diversifying the sector, the games industry has also put in place a number of schemes and initiatives to develop the next generation of talent.

In education, the UK industry's flagship Digital Schoolhouse scheme has brought computing to life through play based learning to over 80,000 students through a network of schoolhouses across the country. BAFTA's games team has run the inspirational Young Game Designer competition, giving students across the UK the chance to win awards for creating either the best game or the best game concept. Schemes such as Into Games have helped to collate a range of initiatives designed to help students into the industry, while also producing resources to explain the range of jobs. And companies themselves have developed the pipeline further, with the likes of The Sumo Group and Creative Assembly running entry level schemes to bring through the next generation.

The sector has also led the way on diversity. Following the UK Games Industry Census, the largest and most comprehensive survey of industry diversity done in any games cluster worldwide, the industry collectively launched the #RaiseTheGame pledge to commit companies to hire widely, foster inclusive workplaces and reflect diversity in game content. With nearly a hundred companies signing up in under a year, and schemes emerging from both companies and industry advocacy groups in response to it, it shows that the industry does understand and appreciate the need for diversity across it.

But what the industry also needs is additional support from Government to achieve what it can. While the UK industry does have a comparatively strong relationship with Westminster and elsewhere, the level of support for games lags well below the rest of the creative industries. And while they require support following the COVID-19 crisis, the games sector argues that ambitious support for games could lead to both widespread economic good for the UK and present a genuine opportunity to cultivate a home grown 'unicorn' business.

For the most part, the industry is looking for existing support to be boosted to continue to grow the industry further. In the Ukie Manifesto ahead of the 2019 General Election, the industry asked for an extension of the UK Games Fund from £1m a year to £25m a year to support games prototyping, to boost VGTR further in recognition of its great return for the taxpayer of £4 for every £1 put into it and to support regional organisations such as Creative England, Gameopolis for the North West and Scottish Games to ensure that growth is targeted at the grassroots. It also is seeking a beneficial Brexit outcome. While the industry has secured a number of roles on the government's shortage occupation list to keep talent coming through, an agreement that maintains access to talent and keeps data flowing would be welcomed by the sector.

However, the sector also believes that rigorous support for games industry priorities could have benefits elsewhere. A significant investment into computing in schools could, for example, create a

talent pipeline that benefits the industry as well as myriad sectors. Investing strongly into esports, a growth industry that's already contributing £111m to the UK economy despite no backing, by developing a hub around an existing event space such as Birmingham's NEC could deliver long term jobs in both the sector itself and wider tourism. And having the ambition to back games businesses by launching a UK wide accelerator, backed by significant funding, would give creators the chance to build big while also ploughing money back into communities based across the country in the process.

Conclusion: levelling up across Europe?

Though these issues may seem specific to the UK games industry alone, the truth is that the success of the sector is something that can be – and already is – replicated elsewhere. Already France and Germany are, in of themselves, European games market powerhouses. Poland is home to a thriving PC games cluster driven in no small part by the presence of CD Projekt Red; one of the biggest game developers in the world. The Balkans are waking up to games, with Serbia recently founding its first trade body and forging links with the UK through the British Council to share expertise. Greece has even set up its own version of video game tax relief, offering even more relief than the 20% provided to developers in the UK.

By backing growing games companies with effective policy measures, educating the work force to tackle creative digital challenges and sharing knowledge – either from internal clusters or from successful games industries abroad – policy makers can, in the spirit of those UK game developers in the 1980s, build their own remarkably resilient home brew success stories.

Not every cluster will be as large or as successful as the UK games sector is. But if countries across Europe back games makers, they are all potentially able to benefit by generating growing highly skilled, highly valued creative jobs across their countries.

Dr Jo Twist OBE, CEO of Ukie, The Association for UK Interactive Entertainment is a non-profit trade association for the video game industry in the United Kingdom.

European Conservatives at a

CROSSROADS

by JORGE GONZÁLEZ-GALLARZA

Upon a storied career at the intellectual apex of the conservative movement, *Washington Post* columnist George Will parted ways with Donald Trump's Republican Party in what will likely be the last of a long and illustrious bibliography. *The Conservative Sensibility*, hailed as Will's *magnum opus* when published in June of 2019, urged the American right to re-commit to the classical liberal principles of the country's Founding. To Will, this meant steering clear not just of the national-populism that has dominated the party since the electoral upset of 2016, but of the movement's older failures to meaningfully trim down the state, promote enough originalist jurists to the federal benches and protect the Republic's constitutional design, with its system of so-called *checks-and-balances*.

In the run-up to last year's presidential race, Will joined a slate of former Republican stalwarts turned *#NeverTrumpers* in pledging to vote for Joe Biden, but the deep divide within the right that his book portrayed was telling for another reason. In one of his chapters, Will points not just to Trumpism as the dark path to avoid but to European conservatism as well, which he describes as anathema to the American variety with a most telling epithet—"throne-and-altar conservatism". By pointing to state-sponsored religion (*altar*) and the divine right of absolute monarchy (*throne*) as looming influences in the development of nation-states, Will alludes to a European conservatism that is millenary, traditionalist and hierarchical, anchored in the profound inheritance from the past that over centuries shaped what we call the West.

Not that Will views America as separate and apart from the West, nor that he ascribes to the Founding Fathers the will to break away from it, for that would make them—and Will too—quite the contrary of "conservative". What Will calls to mind is the particular worldview of the pre-1776 society that birthed the Founding generation, with its belief in natural rights under limited government enshrined in Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*. Unlike the Burkean tradition of English—and to a lesser extent European—conservatism, America's pre-Revolutionary society was more likely to view in the hierarchies of old not a conduit for transmitting the wisdom of the past but an unjust corset on individual liberty, and thus to better accommodate the accelerated pace of social and economic change sparked by the Industrial Age. It is in that classically liberal, adaptive worldview inspired by the Founding that Will called American conservatism to re-anchor itself.

Unlike the Burkean tradition of English—and to a lesser extent European—conservatism, America's pre-Revolutionary society was more likely to view in the hierarchies of old not a conduit for transmitting the wisdom of the past but an unjust corset on individual liberty, and thus to better accommodate the accelerated pace of social and economic change sparked by the Industrial Age.

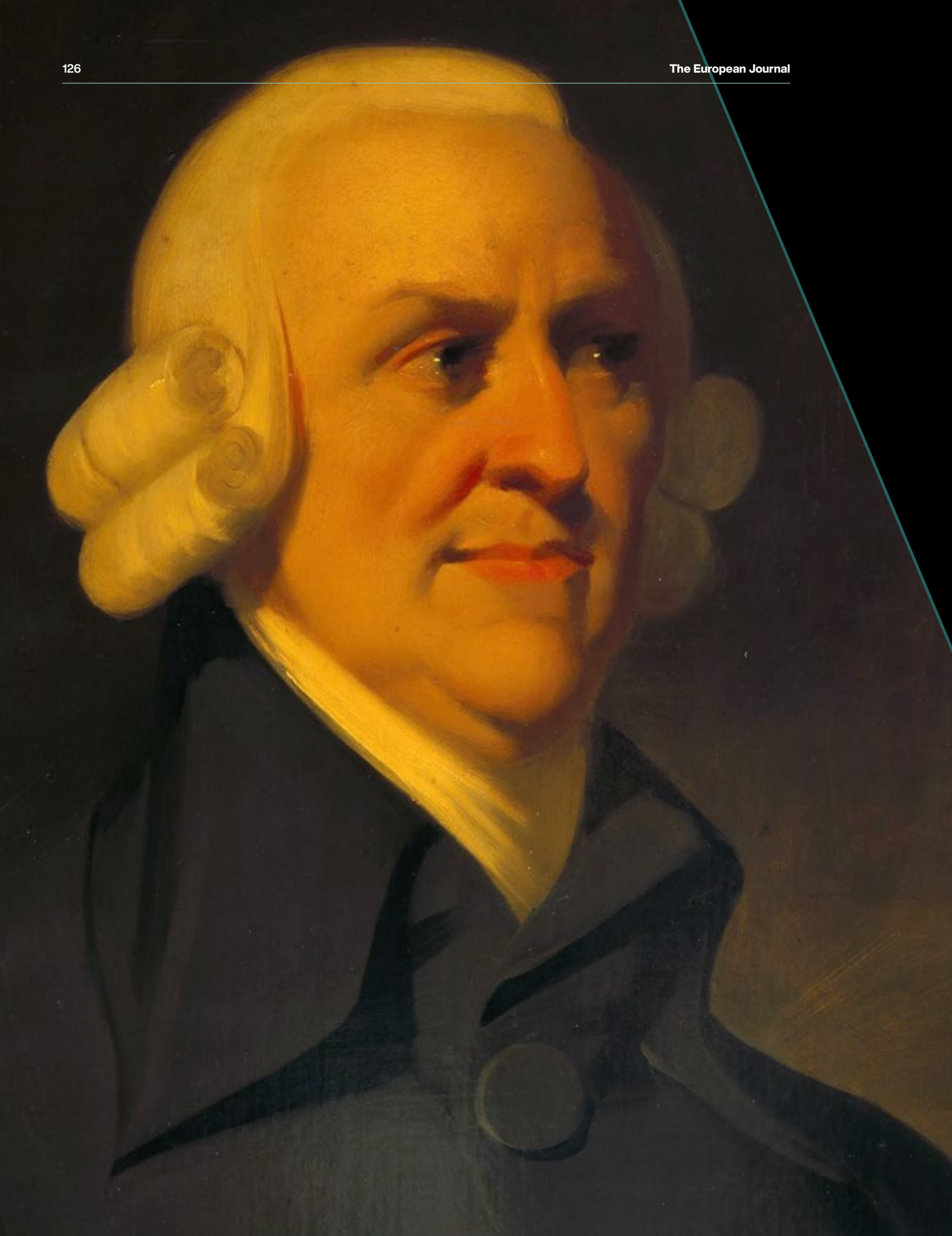
The contrast Will draws is largely valid, for those claiming the "conservative" mantle on each side of the Atlantic do indeed attach different objects to the verb "conserve". The label's elasticity is nothing new, and even within the American conservative movement, variances of even greater import can be identified across its component parts. The late Roger Scruton, to whom the last issue of this magazine was dedicated, used to bring this point home by differentiating conservatism from the *ideologies* it competes with, which tend to prescribe holistic, one-size-fits-all agendas easily transferable across national boundaries. Scruton—and Will himself, through the same word choice—have defined conservatism rather as a diffuse *sensibility* that prizes the established institutions of family, community, tradition and organized religion as indispensable wellsprings of social stability and human flourishing.

And yet even as conservatives, on account of their differing national and historical conditioning, may apply in varied ways their common appreciation of institutional legacies, the overarching trend of late facing them all is for these differences to gradually fade away. Owing to two distinct factors herein discussed—the proliferation of transnational phenomena, on one hand, and the sheer pace of social and economic change, on the other—conservatives in all places find themselves fighting largely similar battles. This may ring counterintuitive to the intrinsically indefinite nature of conservatism that Scruton described, but the trend towards homogenization has become manifest. Let's unpack it.

Conservatism, homogenized

Start with transnational forces. Beginning with the first globe-spanning explorations of the 16th century and reaching its apex sometime in the 1990s or early 2000s, the deepening links of economic and cultural interdependence across nations have been repeatedly invoked—largely by the ideology that Claremont Institute Senior Fellow Michael Anton has termed *transnational progressivism*—to build supranational institutions and endow them with ever more power plucked out from sovereign nation-states. This supranationalism tends to be inimical to conservatism, for it goes against the core principle of subsidiarity, one that our movement shares with Christianity. Said principle instructs that problems should be dealt with the closest possible to where they occur. Supranational institutions, on the contrary, operate distant from the local scale, which makes them more unaccountable and less accommodative of the varied cultural conditions under their jurisdiction.

But so-called *globalism* is at odds with conservatism for a second reason, separate from the supranational bureaucracies that have tended to follow in its wake. The globalizing trends in our economies, cultures and societies are in fact less novel than commonly thought and not limited to the present-day challenges of so-called *global governance*—climate change, digital taxation, judicial action against



borderless kleptocracies and so on. Many earlier modernizing trends were global in scope too, and as such also tended to homogenize conservative agendas premised on moderating them. Think of secularism and the decay of organized religion, the spread of universalist ideologies such as 1790s French Jacobinism or 1920s Soviet communism, or the trend towards meritocracy, a system that prizes academic and professional credentialism at the expense of virtue and excellence in serving one's local community—these trends all challenge the national traditions that conservatives hold dear. Being equally felt across the West, they've tended to add uniformity to conservative agendas that would otherwise be shaped primarily by national challenges.

The more recent global trends of the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s are sparking even greater homogenization, making conservatives across the West relate to one another in a way that lacks historical precedent. It is this deeper coalescence that has seen the American right cheer on Brexit, social conservatives applaud Poland's campaign against LGTB ideology in primary schools, and opponents to open borders praise the Visegrad Four for throwing down the gauntlet on Angela Merkel's quota system for welcoming a mass inflow of migrants in 2015. A number of other milestones in countries from Israel to Brazil and from Colombia to Australia have been similarly popularized and hailed as examples for other conservatives the world across.

Mutations within our economies and societies form the second reason why conservatives are seeing eye to eye on common challenges. The American conservatism that Will describes as his own may be in nature more accommodative of so-called creative destruction and *laissez-faire* economics than its more traditionalist European cousin. Yet the bulldozing force of today's economic, societal and cultural change is such and so widely accepted by our elites that even those not sharing a conservative's instinct for prudence may be put off by it. Inversely, these forces are introducing a more traditionalist sensibility within classically liberal elements of the conservative movement that were erstwhile hostile to them. In other words, the scale and pace of change has grown the coalition inside which people of varying inspirations can self-identity as conservatives. Whether or not parties claiming that label will seize this as a political opportunity is a different matter.

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Populism, economics and the fate of the middle class

The economy is arguably where change of the sort described has run deeper. Mutations in labor markets, trade, consumption practices and the sectoral make-up of the economy have long been a potential menace to the traditional, character-forming and society-shaping institutions that conservatives hold dear.

The celebrated conservative intellectual Russell Kirk began one of his famous essays by describing an "octagonal home, its roof crowned with a glass dome" that he spent entire afternoons as a child observing from a hillside across a river-valley near his hometown of Mecosta, Michigan. Kirk soon turns the essay into a profound argument about *The Question of Tradition*. He recounts returning a few years later to see the home entirely knocked down by a local man "with more money than he knew how to spend", who builds a more profitable ranch-type dwelling in its stead. Kirk had themed his essay around conservatives' duty to uphold tradition—the repository of wisdom that past generations endow us with, and that we are tasked with gracing future ones in what Edmund Burke described as "a partnership between the dead, the living and the unborn". The anecdote of the octagonal home was for Kirk a clear example of how modern economic incentives—the quest of lucre, the lure of profits—hang as a perennial threat over the duty to preserve. Already in the 1950s, Kirk was urging alertness and suspicion *vis-à-vis* unbridled economic change. Yet a somewhat blind commitment to the system of free enterprise that is almost designed to deliver such constant change became, for reasons discussed below, a building block developing the conservative movement at around the time that Kirk wrote.

The coalescence between the right and the free market was best accomplished in the US. Conservatism, as it happens, was a philosophy without a movement until the early 1950s, when one William F. Buckley Jr., who'd made a name for himself as a young writer castigating the progressive conclave at his *alma mater* with *God and Man at Yale* (1951), emerged on the national scene with a highly pragmatic vision for retaking power after two decades of full progressive control of Congress, the White House and the Courts. Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt's start-of-century progressive agenda, solidified under Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and threatening just around that time to spill into the Republican Party under the liberal influences of NY State Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, liberalism was, at the time Buckley wrote, an almost uncontested force in American politics.

Buckley, who founded *National Review* (NR) as a monthly venue for the movement he hoped to build, had a concrete recipe in mind for wrestling power away from that ascendant progressive coalition, best articulated by *NR*'s Frank Meyer. *Fusionism*, as Meyer called it, was about bringing together under the big tent of "conservatism" three disparate groups that hadn't shared a home until then, but all of which stood to lose from progressive omnipotence. The so-called "three-legged stool" of Cold War hawks (1), social conservatives (2), and economic libertarians (3) remains a popular template for analyzing the American right. With the fall of the USSR, the hawkish leg of the stool would largely transmogrify into the liberal internationalism of the 1990s and later the neo-conservatism of the Bush administration, a swing that is now undergoing reversal with a new pro-restraint, anti-war sensibility gaining ground. Beginning in the 2010s, a second leg came under strain—libertarianism. This wing was perhaps

never as internally cohesive as we've retrospectively come to see it, for it encompasses business-friendly Republicans wedded to tax cuts and deregulation and a more intellectually grounded sensibility, variously expressed in the writings of Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and other academic economists. Be that as it may, libertarianism and conservatism were, as a result of this fusion, married at the base.

This coalescence made practical sense. The economic contest against the impoverished USSR had produced a bipartisan consensus around free markets as the most surefire conduit to prosperity, assuming that somewhere along the path to central planning—a point not always clearly defined— lied stagnation and sclerosis. This allegiance to free markets also made sense theoretically, to some extent. An overweening, highly centralized and meddlesome government is necessarily anathema to the conservative institutions of family, organized religion and civil society, and to the principle of subsidiarity binding them together. But again, only to some extent. The seemingly unbreakable causality between untrammeled free-markets and human prosperity was and remains the product of historical circumstances of the 50s and 60s and is being tested today by far different ones. While it lasted, this causal bond muted the conservative distrust of economic forces that Kirk wrote about in his essay, and now conservatives are having to rediscover Kirk's skepticism as the bond seems to break. Just like central planning can bulldoze over institutions, so can the untrammeled free market, when left to its own devices. Kirk was onto something—let's reckon with it.

To achieve that reckoning is to prompt the question: does the free market remain a dependable conduit for the kind of economic, societal and human flourishing that conservatives should aspire to? If not, how large is the disconnect? How—what policies, what theoretical constructs—should it be addressed with? On this score, a variety of viewpoints exist within present-day conservatism, which places a cloud of uncertainty over just what kind of economic agenda it will espouse in the coming decades. Loath to any kind of rethink is the more classical liberal or libertarian element—so long as they accept the "conservative" label, which may be gradually less the case. For this side, to the extent free markets now fail to deliver the kind of prosperity that made their appeal in the past, this is due not to an excess of economic freedom but a shortage of it. This strikes pro-rethink conservatives as blind, facts-proof dogmatism. If free markets are held as an infallible vehicle to prosperity, and insufficient prosperity is only explained by insufficiently free markets, then free markets become the be-all, end-all—yet conservatism was premised on different ends.

Note how, as the high rates of economic growth that marked the 3-4 decades of the post-war era recede into memory, this libertarian belief in the infallibility of ever freer markets is becoming global in scope, for it is losing its appeal domestically. As stagflation, oil shocks and deindustrialization dampened the West's growth in the 1970s, the libertarian contention turned towards the developing world. Free markets, these libertarian optimists contend, keep propelling millions out of poverty in places like Africa and South America, an argument that has gained salience with the disastrous economic effects of lockdowns in these poor regions. This focus on far-off corners of the world only goes to prove that the prosperity-producing potential of free markets has been far less at work back home since the 1970s—particularly for the middle classes. Branko Milanović, an economist formerly at the World Bank and recently the author of *Capitalism, Alone* (2019), has sketched out this phenomenon in what he calls the "elephant curve". The graph shows just how unevenly prosperity gains have accrued worldwide from the 1970s to the present. The developing world as a whole and the elites of developed countries, on one hand, keep enjoying uninterrupted gains in earnings and wealth. On the other, the middle and lower classes in advanced economies have suffered losses in both. The U-shape of the earnings curve along the distribution of global income, with a slight skew towards the top 1% percentile, gives it its name.

Just what menu of causes explains the economic disenfranchisement of the first world's middle class is less settled. The economic left—who has found a guru standard-bearer in Thomas Piketty—points to the role of property taxes and intergenerational wealth accumulation, a contention that remains in wide dispute in academia. What is indisputable, however, is the role of the offshoring of manufacturing jobs to China—and more recently to its even lower-wage neighbors—since the country joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. This strikes right at the heart of the libertarian optimism described earlier, for the culprit here is at least indirectly the very economic freedom it extolls—in this case, the freedom of Western firms to relocate to where cheaper labor allows them to more efficiently meet the market's needs. There is, however, one popular retort, inspired by a linchpin of modern economics—David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage. The impoverishment of those erstwhile employed in industrial manufacturing, the retort goes, stems not from free trade with China itself but from the failure of Western policymakers to accompany that opening with public policies to redistribute its net benefits. In Ricardo's stylized model of international trade, even when country A loses

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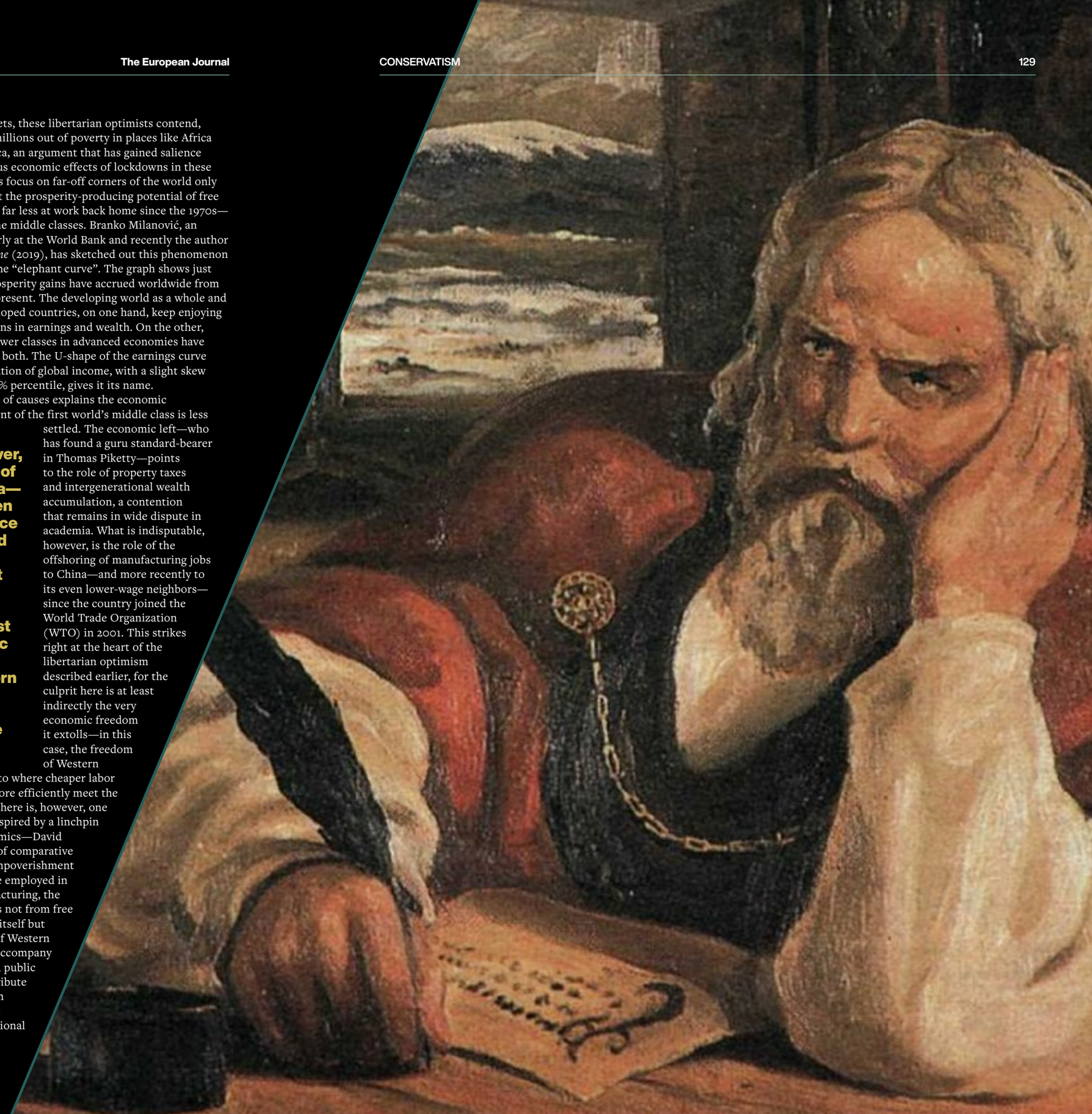

an industry to its trading partner country B with a so-called comparative advantage in producing the good in question, specializing in another industry where country A holds a comparative advantage of its own yields benefits more than offsetting the initial loss. Free trade is always a net benefit for society as a whole, Ricardo argued, so by merely redistributing the gains from winners to losers, policymakers could make free trade a win for all. The challenge of trade policy, in Ricardo's view, lied not in whether or not to open up—failing to do so was a self-inflicted loss—but in whether the gains from trade were distributed.

Be that as it may, the sorry fate of the Western middle class is a hard truth that conservatives can't afford to look away from. The crux of the matter is that the damage has been done—whether from open trade itself or from the incompetence of our governing class to manage it—, and one cannot simply turn back the clock on decades of deindustrialization and middle-class impoverishment. Even if one were to embrace the *potential* of redistributive policies to even out the balance between trade's winners and losers, a practical agenda for making that happen may not always align with conservative principles. Affording jobless miners from Ohio or Pennsylvania—or from the *Pas-de-Calais* or Northern England—the latest virtual courses in computer programming may not, after all, result in a higher net level of prosperity. At least not of the kind that conservatives should want to maximize, if this means the miner has to uproot himself and his family from his home in search of programming jobs in, of all places, hipster Berlin or yuppie California. This is all in the abstract, but it tugs at the complex realities of managing a fully internationalized, open economy—a task much harder than initially advertised during the neoliberal hubris of the 1990s.

This reckoning with the limits of a fully liberalized global economy isn't just compelling in the abstract. It is already happening in the down-to-earth realm of politics, whether we like it or not.

This reckoning with the limits of a fully liberalized global economy isn't just compelling in the abstract. It is already happening in the down-to-earth realm of politics, whether we like it or not. In 2016, Donald J. Trump shocked America's media and political establishments by eking out a narrow win in the Electoral College that relied on swinging Midwestern states that President Obama had won twice—Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. His majorities in these states hinged on voters with jobs in industries put at risk by trade with China or left jobless by competition from it. Since winning, Trump has accelerated a realignment, long brewing on the right but hardly visible outside the narrow realm of think-tanks and magazines, away from the GOP's dogmatic embrace of free trade and towards a concern—sometimes principled, sometimes politically expedient—for the livelihoods of economically insecure middle-class workers. This realignment may or may not stick—it isn't sure that it will endure if Trump loses in November and the momentum for it fades, even as a class of Senators, notably Josh Hawley [R-MO], Marco Rubio [R-FL] and Tom Cotton [R-AK], vies to cement it. But here's the questioning that conservatives can't avoid, whomever happens to become their standard-bearer post-2016:

Are free-markets an end unto themselves? Does our trust in their ability to unleash broadly-based prosperity survive the national-populist electoral upsets of Trump and Brexit? Writers on both sides of the Atlantic—Oren Cass in the US and Nick Timothy in the UK, famously—argue that free markets should instead be seen as a means. Even then, what is the ultimate end they should serve, and what specific public policies—other than an intuitive preference for low taxation and light regulation—should be leveraged in service of said goals? Are the concrete living standards and life prospects of the lower and middle-classes, as Cass and Timothy argue, the better variable to maximize, rather than computational abstractions such as GDP?

Rediscovering the nation-state—and nationalism

And thusly politics in the West undergoes a profound realignment, with economics perhaps the more important, but not the only track. Another area where conservatives are called to balance the dogmatic idealism of progressive elites with our own belief in prudence and tradition concerns the question of national sovereignty. To address the cross-border challenges mentioned at the start, transnational progressives have sought to remake the ages-old natural order of world politics, profoundly shaped by the primacy of the nation-state, through practically unlimited transfers of power to unaccountable supranational institutions. They have done this in the name of "global governance", even though the case for why these issues are better dealt with by unelected, supranational bodies rather than through the cooperation of sovereign nation-states accountable to their respective polities is never persuasively made.

Recent fever pitches reached between conservative governments and the supranationalism of the EU have helped sort out the intellectual case for each of these approaches. Think of the way the Visegrad Four (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and Matteo Salvini's Italy threw down the gauntlet against Chancellor Merkel's handling of the 2015 migrant crisis, or the way Poland and Hungary have recently withstood the EU's open season against their policies to ameliorate judicial accountability and to monitor the transparency of foreign-funded NGOs, respectively. But the conservative case for the primacy of the nation-state and for intergovernmentalism—the cooperation between accountable national governments unencumbered by unelected supranational bodies—ought to be steeped in sound political theory. On this score, *the nation-state is the most successful political innovation in mankind's history*—there lies the old wisdom that conservatives ought to rediscover.

In Europe, that innovation is commonly associated with the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which put an end not only to the Thirty Years' War but to millennia of non-stop military

strife between European powers vying for domination of the Eurasian landmass and its rich resources. At that fateful date when the Habsburg Dynasty and a coalition of Protestant states, along with France, agreed to cease attempting to annihilate each other, a historical turning point was reached, the profound significance of which is truly hard to overstate. The wisest way to balance rival powers in the interest of peace and stability, the Treaty's letter argued, was to confine each to the nation from which their sovereignty stemmed, delineating a set of fixed, inviolable and historically defined borders, having each pledge not to interfere in each other's affairs. The ideal of Westphalian sovereignty—and the attendant principle of non-interference that has tended to go hand-in-hand with it—have truly changed History. Some historians, however, have traced it much further back. For Israeli philosopher Yoram Hazony, national self-determination is a markedly pre-modern notion, anchored not in 17th century European geopolitics but in Jewish theology. In *The Virtue of Nationalism* (2019), Hazony describes the modern nation-state ideal as a distant sequel to the Biblical theme of an exclusive covenant between God and the nation of Israel who, as a matter of religious belief and geopolitical statecraft, should be afforded a neatly delineated piece of land where others ought not to trespass—and vice-versa. Be that as it may, the nation-state has been an immense force for good for two main reasons. Linking the ability to self-determine to culturally unified publics bound together by language, history, religion and other national commonalities, as it happens, ensures peace (1) and enables democracy (2). The nation-state has thus become a durable construct, encapsulating centuries' worth of wisdom—one that conservatives ought to defend against the latest fantasies of supranationalism.

Start with peace. Whenever leaders with continental ambitions or universalist agendas have sought to impose them on foreign peoples by transcending the corset of the nation-state, political strife or armed conflict has tended to follow—think of every empire from the Ancient World all the way to Napoleon and Hitler. This shouldn't come at a surprise, for imperialism is almost by definition experienced as an unjust yoke wherever it extends and can hardly be carried out peacefully. As for democracy, the argument is slightly harder to make in theory, but the historical record is no less clear. Entrusting the power to self-determine away from the nation vastly complicates the democratic experiment, a hard truth made abundantly clear by the EU's travails in this area. This doesn't mean nation-states are all democratic, granted. But inversely, all successful democracies tend to operate on a national scale. The word borrows from the Greek *demos,* which implies a body politic sharing a sense of common destiny and thus agreeable to power-sharing across its differing factions. An empire, by definition, lacks a *demos.* If electoral contests between the provinces of the Roman, Persian or Napoleonic empires seem an unlikely abstraction, it is because assembling culturally disparate people into a common political experiment can hardly be done democratically, for each will lack the sense of national kinship required to share power with the others. If it had been tried, then decisions on a number of issues would have likely ran along national lines, with each voting bloc less willing than the next to peacefully transfer power when a majority emerges in a neighboring nation. The successful exercise of pan-European democracy is similarly tricky when decisions break along national lines, for the losing side rarely accepts the outcome as legitimate in the same way than if their fellow compatriots had won the day. This hasn't erupted in broader daylight in the EU largely because member states fear losing access to funds—but even this isn't a solid enough basis to build a democracy.

Is it any coincidence, in light of this, that conservatives distrust the EU's ambition to form an "ever-closer union"? That the sole political grouping that owns that label—the ECR Party—stands at sharp odds with supranationalism and the delegation of ever more power to the European Commission and the Parliament? That the Euro-realism we embrace instead places the nation-state at the heart of the European project? These are all politically intuitive realities, but as conservatives we ought to add sound political theory and historical understanding to mere intuition.

With its ambition to override nation-states, the EU is running into both of the aforementioned qualms. This is so clear in the case of democracy that even the EU itself has imported from the academic jargon into official documents the notion of an "EU democratic deficit". But the way it has sought to remedy it is likely to make the problem worse. Granted, the EU's supranational direction of travel since the Treaty of Lisbon has benefited the Parliament at the expense of the Commission—an institution by all measures less accountable and democratic. But expecting enhanced democracy and accountability from delegating greater legislative functions to Strasbourg is, at the very least, misguided. Sure, MEPs are directly elected, serve limited terms and their work is more transparent. But entrusting them with greater powers doesn't amount to creating a *demos,* which remains the fundamental defect of the European project as currently conceived. A more powerful Parliament has if anything *exacerbated* the EU's democratic deficit, for European elections are still largely fought along national lines. Upping the stakes of European elections only heightens the disconnect between what the peoples of Europe wish for when they vote for their MEP—concerns largely national in scope—and what the EU is designed to deliver—a supranational agenda. Even as MEPs build their voting record on EU-wide initiatives, at the time of their (re)election they still run on national platforms. Polls have consistently showed that a majority of voters have their national news cycle in mind when they vote in European elections.

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Meanwhile, pan-European issues are top-of-mind for a few pockets of Euro-federalists only. For all their naïve fantasies, the 500 million citizens living under the EU's jurisdiction remain—and this, conservatives should celebrate—an assemblage of culturally disparate, distinct nations, loath to sharing their entire political destiny with the nation next door. Hungarians didn't acquiesce to having their immigration policy dictated by Angela Merkel, not any more than the German pensioners the Chancellor represents can accept to have the euro weakened through devaluations to boost the Southern eurozone's economies. Neither efforts towards building a European press nor making European elections more direct and consequential will serve to overpower the underlying reality of distinct European nations, for the weight of History is far greater than that of the bureaucrat's pen. In the words of American conservative scholar James Piereson, "nations can only be built as a result of time", so even if one agrees that a European nation is a desirable outcome—and conservatives should argue in the negative—building an agenda of power-delegation on the mistaken assumption that it already is will yield major dysfunction. Which is the EU's current predicament. As hinted at earlier, none of this is to obviate the need for inter-state cooperation—but the EU's conceit lies precisely in conflating cooperation with supranationalism. Conservatives should wholeheartedly embrace cooperation, of a different sort than currently practiced by today's supranational EU. Foreign policy is but one example where the voluntary cooperation of sovereign member states can yield better results than supranational policies insulated from public sentiment and the different national diplomatic corps. On this score precisely, conservative Euro-realism doesn't impel de-arming the EU of its foreign policy instruments, but rather directing them towards better aims. A tougher policy on China, stronger support for the transatlantic alliance and a beefed-up posture against human rights abuses worldwide are but a few examples of how EU foreign policy could be better leveraged.

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The argument is perhaps harder to make on the issue of peace, but no less important. Granted, stoking armed conflict isn't among the many vices that can be chalked up to the EU. But not all conflict is armed, and not all of it is even explicit—it can simmer below the surface without making headlines. The EU was in large measure built on the historically dubious premise that the *maelstrom* of genocide, destruction and war that marked the first half of the twentieth century was attributable to the noxious forces of nationalism. Conservatives, instead, are instinctively inclined to see nationalism as benign, for it cements noble loyalties and anchors nations in a shared culture and sense of belonging. There may be something to be said about the potential for nationalism to transform from a benign love of country into a zeal for conflict, but World War II is no good example of that potential, for Nazism does not fit into the conceptual mold of nationalism. To label Hitler as a nationalist, as mainstream European historiography has tended to do, misses his larger ambitions, which weren't to elevate the German nation to European domination but rather to eliminate it altogether and replace it with a racialized version of its former self. In light of this nuanced reading of History, conservatives should feel emboldened to embrace nationalism, which in its purest form is a benign, pacifying force, for it goes hand-in-hand with sovereignty as a universal principle and respecting the right of other nations to self-determine. In deriving its driving impetus from the horrors of World War II, the EU has chalked up to nationalism what was instead the work of imperialism, thus blinding itself to an otherwise noble ideal.

Identity politics—the unforeseen foe

There's something in common between the challenges of rekindling a conservative economic agenda concerned with the welfare of the middle classes and upholding the nation as the ultimate locus of democracy and peaceful world politics. The uptick of European federalization brought on by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the worldwide spread of neoliberal economic policies in the 80s and 90s have together thrust these challenges front and center in conservative politics, but the two had been in many ways lurking in the background, waiting to be revisited. But as this rethinking takes place on both sides of the Atlantic, another challenge has sped past them, in a largely unforeseen way, snatching first place ahead of quandaries far more familiar—"identity politics". Put bluntly, this third, novel challenge requires simply that conservatives reconnect to the old truths of the human species.

The left, as it happens, is no longer—even by its own admission—defined around the interests and worldview of the working class, not even the economically vulnerable, as used to be the case with Marxism and some elements of social-democracy. Progressives across the West have come to define themselves instead around a worldview oftentimes termed as "intersectionality", a convoluted attempt to synthesize every claim of systemic inequity between social groups into a theoretically cohesive whole. This holistic worldview demotes class and nationality as henceforth irrelevant criteria for apprehending social groups, replacing them with race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and a potentially endless etcetera of ever more anecdotal identifiers. The groups thus defined are given the labels of "victim" or "oppressor", which turbocharges the case for compensating the former at the expense of the latter past the

liberal requirements of free speech, due process and general democratic discourse. To be sure, "identity politics" hasn't followed a single pattern of intrusion into European public discourse, and some countries—for reasons primarily to do with History and migration—are far more advanced in its importation than others. And yet under the ascendance lately of radical feminism, the LGTB movement and the souring of race relations exacerbated by the death in Minneapolis of George Floyd, all European countries have, to one extent or another, experienced the widespread onset of *wokeness*, as this overweening public sentiment has come to be called in America, where it originates.

The profound changes in public mores sparked by identity politics is everywhere to see, particularly during the woke fever pitch reached after the Floyd case. Statues of historical figures are desecrated and knocked down, not for their partaking in slavery—a fair enough reason for depriving them of recognition, you may argue—but for being insufficiently woke. Winston Churchill, though an indispensable Allied factor in the defeat of Nazism, deserves scorn according to the radical woke left, for he was also a "toxic" defender of Western civilization. Or think of how, for all the welcome shame heaped upon sexual abusers, the so-called #MeToo movement has stealthily weakened the procedural safeguards of due process. It has oftentimes thrown into the vortex of extra-judicial shaming individuals who were later exonerated for lack of evidence or whose innocence was later proven beyond doubt, but who were never fully restored to their erstwhile respectability, their standing irreparably sullied by unsubstantiated allegations. This was notably the case of US Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh throughout his Senate confirmation hearings.

Identity politics was also, in some ways, behind the EU's open season of attacks recently on the socially conservative Law and Justice government of Poland—among the few in Europe to oppose sexually explicit education in primary schools. This policy reflects the broadly shared preferences of a majority of Polish parents, yet LGTB advocacies and a good number of EU officials have taken to labeling Poland's government as "homophobic". Sensitizing primary school children around the important issues of consent and reproductive health, on one hand, and the rights of the LGTB community, on the other, are entirely separate issues, you may object. They are indeed, but Poland's government has become the latest victim of the conflation of the two by woke LGTB interest groups who seek to co-opt the realm of sexual education with an agenda that is about much more than that. Think of such radical propositions as "deconstructing gender roles", a dangerous notion that is gradually infiltrating schools on the misguided premise of protecting "trans" rights at the expense of a decent learning environment for children. The naming and shaming of Poland as a country in thrall to homophobia for simply reflecting the wishes of Polish parents wishing to preserve the innocence of their children is a sobering example of the extremes where hyper-radicalized woke politics threatens to take us—in Europe as a whole too. On this score, conservatives are prompted not so much to concoct a whole new paradigm to confront the illiberalism of the left, but simply to rediscover the old truths that lay at the base of the conservative worldview. The inquisitorial spirit of woke radicalism would label these views as retrograde—truth is another social construct, in their view—but conservatives should boldly embrace them, for they have proved their validity throughout centuries of human development. These are, to cite just a few:

Someone's race doesn't define them entirely, and the attempt by the left to shoehorn entire ethnic groups into political categories is, by definition, prejudiced—not progressive. Gender is anchored in biology—not a social construct. Granting everyone their due right to live out their sexuality as they see fit can't become an excuse to shove through a radical agenda of indoctrination into the classroom. The moral failings of leading figures of the past can't be used to deface their standing in the present, for their epoch and ours operate, by definition, according to entirely different moral frameworks. Applying to the past the moral standards of the present would inevitably deprive us of any historical reference points—a gloomy scenario for any civilization that wishes to preserve itself. The history of slavery and colonization, however shameful by today's standards, doesn't turn all whites of the present into oppressors, not any more than it turns all people of color into victims of oppression.

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A European conservatism for the future

The challenges herein spelled out are neither simple nor solvable from a single angle. Policymakers, scholars and the peoples of Europe will all play a part in redefining a conservatism that is willing and able to confront the challenges of economic displacement, supranationalism and identity politics, with a balanced blend of statesmanship, informed debate and common sense. What these challenges are instead is unavoidable—there's no way around them if conservatives wish to remain a relevant force across Europe's highly fractious, diverse political landscape. Only by confronting the potential failures of untrammeled economic neoliberalism, the EU's over-confident Euro-federalism and the left's embrace of noxious intersectionality will conservatives avoid becoming a fossilized version of their former selves. Will they be up to the task? ¬

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The Art of the Viennese Ball

Inside the Royal Traditions of a Monarchy without an Monarch

by ROBERT TYLER

Vienna is a city that is very much shaped by its history – in particular its former imperial majesty. Every building, in every street, in every district is built with beauty in mind. For a city of just over a million people, Vienna continues to look like the capital of an Empire, and this has a profound impact on the citizens who dwell there.

Although Austria shed any pretence of being a monarchy in the aftermath of the First World War, the way of life is still very much shaped by the heritage of the Habsburg's. Shops continue to boast their Royal Appointments – as though the Emperor himself still shops there – and the Royal palaces are still crawling with busy people – although today with civil servants working away in the OSCE and the Bundesregierung.

Austria has the constant feel of a monarchy but without a Monarch. Amongst society figures the Republic doesn't seem to be taken altogether too seriously. Ancient traditions carry on as though nothing has changed. Even the respect given to those with titles is from another era – despite the fact that titles are technically illegal under the post war settlement.

Austria has the constant feel of a monarchy but without a Monarch. Amongst society figures the Republic doesn't seem to be taken altogether too seriously. Ancient traditions carry on as though nothing has changed.

The proudest of the Austrian traditions that continue to this day are the famous Viennese balls. The balls themselves offer a glimpse into a bygone age of Austrian history. From the grand formal ceremonies at the beginning – to the way that Austrians universally embrace the Waltz.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend two balls in the Imperial Hofburg Palace last February. Both reflected two different corners of society with their own traditions and subcultures. The first I attended was the so called 'Juristinball' organised by the Austrian law society. The second was the much older and more conservative Rudolfina Redoubt – organised by the historic fraternities of Vienna's universities. Attending these two different prestigious events has given me a chance to explore what it is that makes these Balls so popular and iconic.

Perhaps the best place to start is with the basic formula for a successful ball. Doors open at around seven in the evening with guests arriving around eight o'clock. In some cases it's possible for attendees to book a table for food – either in the coveted main ball room or in one of the other former state rooms that makes up the Imperial palace. Those privileged enough to have a seat at a table – often sponsored by companies or other organisations – enjoy a meal of schnitzel, wurst and potatoes (a hearty Austrian meal).

Those who choose to skip dinner – the majority of guests – are able to walk around the hallways of the Hofburg following in the footsteps of the great Habsburg emperors. Each room naturally adorned with giant chandeliers, gilded ceilings and wall sized mirrors. It may be cliché to describe it as a fairy tale palace - but then it's obvious where the inspiration for those folk stories came from.

Of course, the dress code helps maintain this imperial façade. Before attending a ball strictly enforced rules are sent out. For men – full morning dress, military uniform or black-tie tuxedo are accepted. For women it's full ball gowns only. Naturally no lederhosen or dirndl – we'll leave those for the mountain folk.

At around nine the main ceremony commences – people flock to try and find a space in the main ballroom with its painted ceilings and ducal coats of arms to try and watch the preceding unfold. What happens next is a procession of the great and the good of Viennese society. A trumpet blast follows the announcement of each group of guests by the master of ceremonies – in both balls I went to this role was taken by a bubbly TV show host who from what I can tell is the Austrian version of Graham Norton in so far as she also hosts Eurovision.

A fanfare is played by a full orchestra as the dignitaries enter – the guest list becoming more prestigious as the introductions go on. In the case of the Jusristinball the academics of Vienna's law schools came last – marching out to 'Ode to Joy'. At the Rudolfina the guest of honour was none other than Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz himself – flanked by the bishop of Vienna and the dean of the university. At the Operenball – held funnily enough in the Opera House – the President of Austria is still heralded with trumpets and takes his seat in the imperial box before the ball may begin.

It's also at this point that the evenings debutantes are presented. Marching out in perfect unison in their finest white dresses, opera gloved fingers interlocked with their dancing partners in full white tie. Balls originally became a part of Viennese society for the purpose of presenting debutantes to eligible bachelors under the watchful eyes of the Imperial family.

After a rendition of the Austrian national anthem – sung with full patriotic gusto – and a round of the EU's Ode to Joy – the ball begins. Traditionally it begins with a classical waltz, usually something by one of the Strauss's. However, tastes have somewhat changed – at the Juristinball this year they opted for 1920's swing jazz as the second waltz. And at the Rudolfina – the theme being a 'United Europe' – the first waltz was followed by a choreographed dance that included traditional classical music from across the continent, culminating in the Offenbach's Can Can and fanciful display in which the flags of all European countries were pulled out and paraded (rest assured that the UK was still there along with Switzerland and Norway).

Photo: Pavel L Photo and Video / Shutterstock.com

After the opening ceremony is concluded ball goers rush in one of two directions – to the dance floor to join the waltz – or to the bar to build up the courage to do so later in the evening. The onus is usually on the gentleman to ask for the pleasure of joining in the festivities – however the Rudolfina has a long standing tradition that as a masked ball it is for the lady to invite the man to dance until midnight – at which point masks come off. To avoid awkwardness a service is provided on the edge of the ballroom in which Vienna's dance schools provided suitable young men to stand ready to be invited to dance – the so-called taxi dancers (or eintansen in German).

Aside from the main ballroom, the Hofburg is set up to allow patrons to move from room to room, with different music playing in each. Every musical taste is catered for – from jazz to swing to tango to a full-on modern disco with local DJ on the ground floor (out of the way so as not to break the illusion of Imperial grandeur in the state rooms).

The fact that balls continue to play such an important part in upper middle-class society in Austria says a lot about the character of the country. Austrians recognise that they once had a proud history – but a complicated one at that.

At midnight – after everyone is suitably liquored up and feeling merry – the aristocracy let their hair down and indulge in perhaps one of the strangest traditions I have ever seen. Several lines of people facing each other form – two pairs facing each other. As the room fills the orchestra strikes up with a medley of Strauss music to rile up participants and then – silence as the Master of Ceremonies takes the stage once again and announces to much excitement the commencement of the Quadrille.

The Quadrille is a folk dance that spread across the ballrooms of Europe sometime around the end of the 1700's and seems to have found a permanent home in Austrian galas. I describe as one of the strangest spectacles I have ever seen because despite how inebriated everyone may be and how complicated the instructions are (more on that later) everyone seems to know what they're doing and make it work.

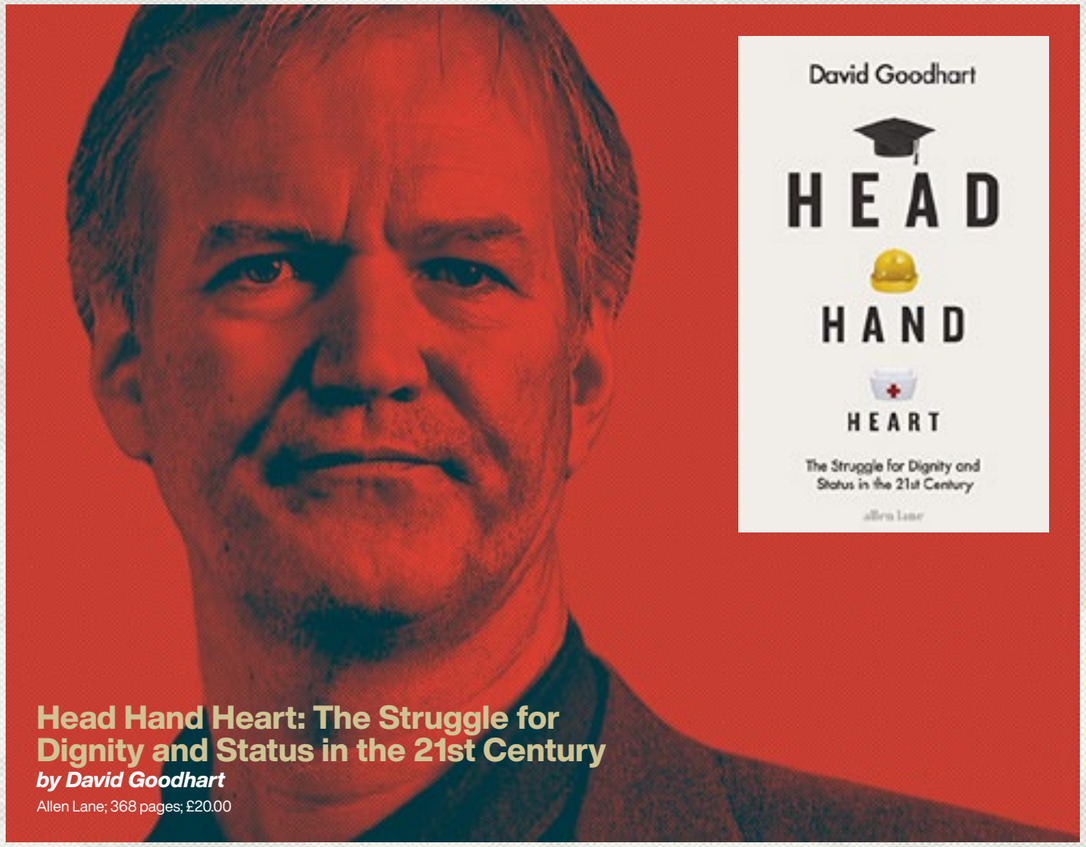
The instructions for dancing the Quadrille are easy – step forward and bow and step back, step right and bow and step back, present your dance partner and bow and step back, swap sides with the other couple, swap partners with the other couple, swap sides again, spin each other around, and then stamp. Thus, concludes part one of five with the music - 'The Quadrille' from Fledermaus - becoming faster and faster each round.

Part two is simple – start by stamping your feet and then step forward and bow and step back, step right and bow and step back, present your dance partner and bow and step back, swap sides with the other couple, swap partners with the other couple, pass between each other shouting something incomprehensible in German and swap sides again, spin each other around, and then stamp. Bolder members of the congregation might grab their partner and gallop up the middle of the two rows howling out like a Hussar.

This is repeated several more times until no one really knows what's going on and the whole mass breaks down into a 'Galop' – in which partners charge around the ball room as though they're riding a horse until the musical key changes and they have to go round the other way. This bizarre dance is repeated at least three more times throughout the night – at 2AM, 4AM and 6AM. And yes, these balls do often end the following morning – although most sensible folk tend to leave after the first Quadrille.

The fact that balls continue to play such an important part in upper middle-class society in Austria says a lot about the character of the country. Austrians recognise that they once had a proud history – but a complicated one at that. Although there is no wide support for a restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy outside of fringe groups, it is clear that Austrians are keen to hold on to their traditions and are willing to identify with a romanticised past. Certainly were the Monarchy still in place – most of those who attended these balls would never have a chance of attending – and so in a way the revival of the Republic at the end of the war did a lot to democratise what has become a key part of Viennese identity.

Robert Tyler is the Political strategist based in Brussels supporting the conservative movement. He holds a Master's Degree in Security and Intelligence Studies from the University of Buckingham, and Bachelor's Degree in Modern History and Politics. He writes often on politics and culture.



Head Hand Heart: The Struggle for Dignity and Status in the 21st Century

by David Goodhart

Allen Lane; 368 pages; £20.00

Meritocracy is no longer all the rage. Basing our notions of "status" on the fuzzy concept of "merit" began merely as a method to staff government bureaucracies challenged by the complexity of the industrial era in the 19th century, but it has since metastasized into a holistic regime, if tacit, for apportioning social esteem across the board, in a way that has vindicated Karl Popper's (apocryphal) dictum that "History is the process of solving old problems by unwittingly producing new ones". And just as this strategy's collateral damage started seeing the day in the aftermath of World War II, Western societies doubled down on its deficiencies by narrowing even further the notion of "merit" to cognitive ability and academic attainment—the latest stage of meritocracy, one that David Goodhart, sincerely hoping it will be the last, labels "cognitive meritocracy".

Goodhart, one of the UK's doyens of contemporary populism and famously the author of *The Road to Somewhere* (2017), blends again sharp social science with a forceful moral argument in this latest book. At the heart of it lies the claim that cognitive ability is destined to remain a narrow segment of the spectrum of human ability, and that seeking to suck up ever larger swathes of the population into acquiring it can only end up cheapening the unique excellence that superior cognitive skills are supposed to reflect. Notably, this has been done by shoving into a university education scores of youths who would be better suited by other lifepaths, and more generally revering the jobs of the knowledge economy at the expense of the occupations in what Goodhart calls the "hand" and the "heart" of the economy. The public hospital nurses and truck drivers keeping our patients ventilated and our shelves food-stocked throughout Covid-19 are a salient example, but our indebtedness to them will mean nothing if it isn't translated in long-term change in policies and social mores beyond the pandemic, Goodhart advocates.

To be sure, part of the shift towards cognitive meritocracy needs a contextual explanation, and not all of it has been the result of deliberate government policy, at least not directly, for deindustrialization and automation have proved to be both major players, too, in this game of unintended consequences. As a result of outsourcing the West's base of manufacturing jobs first, and later automatizing clerical and administrative occupations, the only remaining segments of the occupational ladder able to provide for a middle-class life for a one-income family began to entail high academic qualifications, a requirement which then spilled over down the ladder by mere dint of the increased competition for jobs. But there are other areas where policy has made matters far worse. Goodhart writes specifically of the university system, where the chronic mismatch between the increasing intakes of school leavers and the narrowing opportunities where they can make their investments pay through high-earning jobs has generated incalculable social dysfunction. The recent trend away from mass university enrollment in countries like the UK may be a hopeful sign, but without a radical change in the underlying repository of values fueling the system, Goodhart frets further problems beckon. Those resistant to any kind of rethink towards the hand and the heart should read his book.

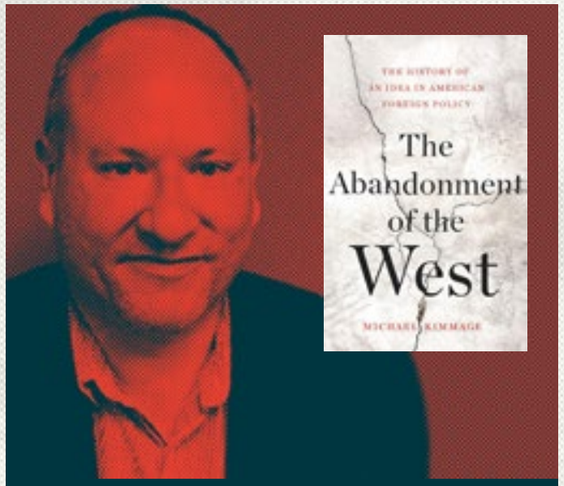
The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols

by Prof. Ryszard Legutko MEP

Encounter Books; 194 pages; £19.95

Prof. Legutko taught philosophy at Jagellonian University in Krakow, Poland for many years before becoming the head of the Law and Justice party's (*PiS*) delegation in the European Parliament, but he hasn't stopped engaging in the wider intellectual disputations within which his political work now occurs. His 2016 bestseller *The Demon in Democracy* was highly impactful for readers on both sides of the Atlantic, many of whom were left quite befuddled by his case that far from being polar opposites, the Soviet-style totalitarianism of 1980s Poland and the liberal democratic regime that has replaced it aren't all that different. Perhaps one of the ways in which he meant this strange parallel relates to the enforcement of different versions of political correctness with similar zeal, albeit no longer with the use of force. One such facet of today's overweening PC culture is a hyper-liberal notion of freedom, to which Prof. Legutko turns his attention in this latest book.

In it, he draws on his long experience thinking and researching about the thought of Plato, Socrates, Isaiah Berlin and a range of modern and contemporary thinkers who have grappled with freedom and its boundaries. The synthesis Legutko draws from this most wide-ranging symposium of views is disconcerting, as any honest examination of the concept of freedom should be. The notion itself doesn't only mean the absence of external coercion—when tyranny crumbled across the former Soviet bloc in 1989, it didn't necessarily mean that civil and political liberties instantly brought forth the kind of individual self-determination that lies at the core of freedom. On the contrary, Legutko revisits here the argument that *The Demon in Democracy* lies in opening up for new ways to coerce our inner freedoms. As the EU deepens its involvement in the culture wars—Legutko has been particularly critical of the bloc's contestation of a recent ruling by Poland's High Court restricting abortion—this book will be one to watch out for.



The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy

by Michael Kimmage

Basic Books; 384 pages; £23.99

There's technically little difference between referring to Europe and America as "the West" or as "the transatlantic relationship", and yet the former term is increasingly relegated to quaint conservative jargon. Michael Kimmage, a distinguished historian and expert on Russia, traces *The Abandonment of the West* (2020) to a specific turning point in American culture when progressive elites and the academic intelligentsia turned on what had theretofore been a universally revered notion. Namely, beginning in the 1920s as the country stepped into World War I to salvage Europe from itself, a *zeitgeist* began to take hold amongst the Ivy League-educated *beau monde* that prized the civilizational heritage of the West, in no small part to infuse in young servicemen the zeal to defend it in the battlefield. As Kimmage himself reckons, what the West means has never been widely agreed upon, although the definition he gives of "a shared commitment to liberty and self-government" anchored in the specific cultural inheritance of Greece, Rome and Judeo-Christian civilization is a rather capacious one.

Another key insight from his book is the crucial difference between the cultural West and the geopolitical West, which seem to have balanced each other out since the fall of the Berlin Wall. While the Soviet Union's collapse seemed to presage the triumph of liberal democracy, this ascendancy was largely fueled by a philistine technocracy, untethered from the cultural repository that had given the West meaning in previous decades. Whether the future will see a re-anchoring of the Euro-American alliance in that timeless locus of Western values, Michael Kimmage doesn't venture to predict. But he does diagnose a veneer of ethno-nationalism that History has appended to the West and submits that dismantling this unsavory legacy could be a good start. Only by re-anchoring itself in the self-evident truths of natural equality and the sanctity of human life can the West recover its luster, he argues.

Small Men on the Wrong Side of History: The Decline, Fall and Unlikely Return of Conservatism

by Ed West

Constable; 250 pages; £24.95

Winning on bread-and-butter issues but losing in the culture has become such a routine depiction of the conservative predicament that it's almost become a trope. The first assertion is so uncontested that barely anyone bothers to relitigate the divisive economic arguments that defined the post-World War II era—our conversation on economic issues happens largely within the bounds of the free enterprise system, as opposed to between it and socialism, which is a known loser. It is in the cultural arena that conservatives are having to forcefully make their case to a wider audience. Ed West is a cultural warrior, one that William F. Buckley—who understood that his laying out the groundwork for the Reagan revolution in the 80s wouldn't be complete until both the economy and the culture were won over—could be proud of. Yet his latest book—to appear soon in the US under the only slightly edited title *Tory Boy*—isn't so much a bellicose pamphlet as a cool-headed attempt to understand the societal and demographic undercurrents that have led to conservative disenfranchisement in the culture.

At the heart of his book lies something we can all increasingly relate to—the social penalty for being a conservative—although one that Covid-19 is making more bearable by not having to endure your liberal friends' opprobrium at dinner parties and cocktail gatherings. More largely, West dissects the most worrying demographic trend for conservatives in a generation—the much-touted social mechanism, famously described by Winston Churchill and Michael Oakeshott, whereby progressive youths turn into conservative adults by mere dint of progressing through life's stages. It would appear as though that mechanism has broken down, which portends gloomy scenarios for the right, but West's description of them all, even nourished by personal experience, lacks not the wit and entertainment that he's widely known for.

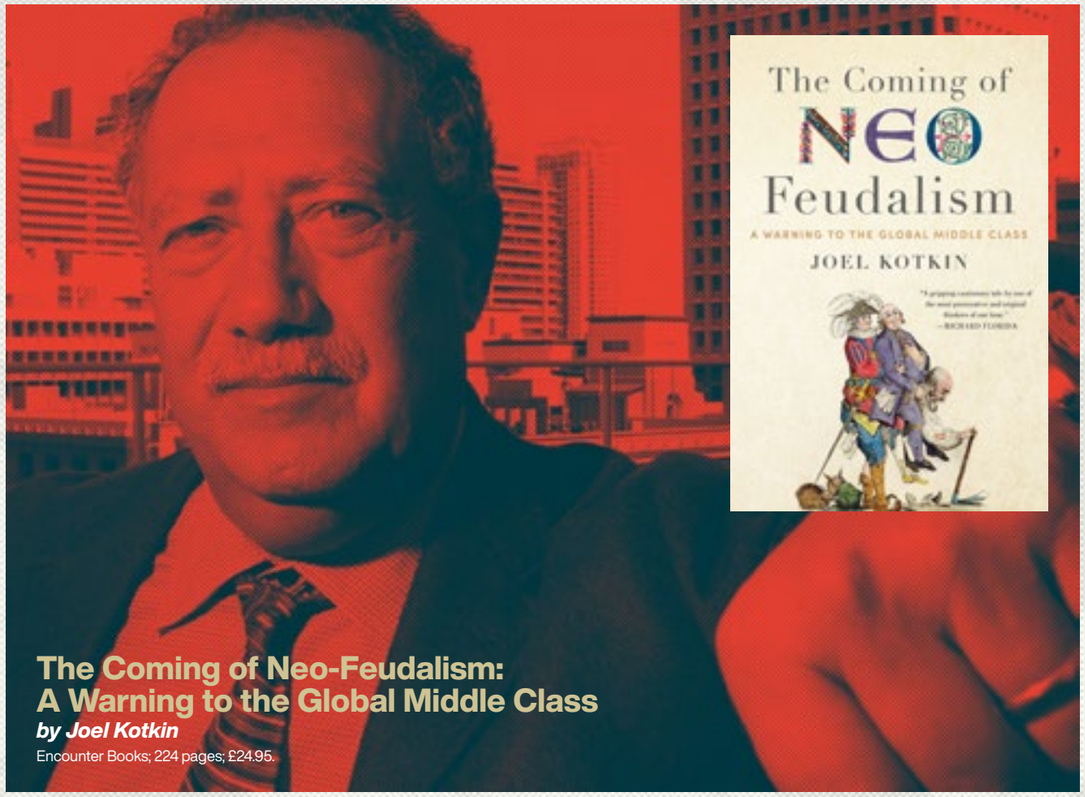
The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World

by Anu Bradford

Oxford University Press; 424 pages; £24.95

Europeans—particularly of the Euro-realist sort who will skim through these pages—can associate any number of "effects" to Brussels, not least the sapping of national sovereignty by unelected bureaucrats and rule-makers. There is, however, a flip side to that coin, one that becomes easier to grasp the more one steps outside the realm of EU jurisdiction. The *Brussels Effect* is Anu Bradford's term-of-art for the immense power the EU wields to shape regulations beyond its borders, by leveraging the sheer scope of the internal market and its more than 500 million consumers. The Finnish-American legal scholar and professor at Columbia Law School explains how companies, even the large multinational ones who can better afford it, find it more expensive to cater to a global consumer base when regulations vary across markets, so they will oftentimes choose to comply with the most stringent variety across all their product base. This would endow regulatory power to any internal market of the EU's size, but the bloc has been particularly keen to leverage it in pursuit of higher global standards across a number of areas: the environment, digital privacy and even human rights.

One can only hope that in the latter category, the EU will prove just as zealous to rid supply chains channeling products into the European market from child and forced labor, particularly in light of China's exploitation of its Uyghur minority. In April this year, EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynolds announced that legislation along these lines will be introduced in 2021, but if the EU's appeasement of China is anything to go by, the bloc is unlikely to stretch the Brussels Effect beyond what the US Department of Labor has already put in place for its own market. The notion of a Brussels effect can be connoted in different ways whether you ask the large US tech firms caught in Margrethe Vestager's crosshairs or the Commission bureaucrats who draft her directives. But there's a blind spot in Bradford's analysis that those removed from both of these groups can better grasp. The ability to project regulatory clout abroad tends to go hand in hand with over-regulation at home, as has become increasingly the case in the field of environmental policy. For Europeans—and Euro-realists particularly—the *Brussels effect* is mixed news at best.



The Coming of Neo-Feudalism: A Warning to the Global Middle Class

by Joel Kotkin

Encounter Books; 224 pages; £24.95.

One is oftentimes taken aback by a title that may seem too ambitious at first sight, only to be persuaded of its relevance upon reading the thing. This was the case with *The Coming of Neo-Feudalism*, where progressive urbanist Joel Kotkin calls out the liberal intelligentsia in places like his home state of California for concocting a mix of policies and social mores that are inching our society ever closer to a new form of feudalism. The parallel may seem far-fetched, but that's only because our connotations of that f-word harken all the way back to pre-1789 France, where a small elite of aristocrats kept an entire country subdued while the clerisy kept this unequal compact together by extending the promise of salvation in the next life to all. In a similar way, Kotkin argues, our society is increasingly defined by raw power relations and economic dependence, but the overall compact is being held together by the growing numbness of those living under the system whom are made to tolerate its excesses for the sake of today's woke pieties.

The economic transformation that Kotkin describes is felt by all. Whereas older forms of capitalism were sustained by a relatively wide ownership of capital across different income groups, today owning a home or saving enough for a comfortable retirement is increasingly the privilege of a select few who are lucky to work in the narrowing fields of productive activity. In the past, the wide base of industrial, administrative and clerical jobs across the West ensured that a large middle class was able to climb the ladder of homeownership, comfortable retirement and college education for one's progeny. With those jobs mostly evanesced as a result of deindustrialization and automation, life for many on those same income brackets has become a succession of frustrations as college fails to convert into high-paying jobs and the constantly evolving demands of the labor market require ongoing retraining and moving across locations. This all makes settling down, marriage and childrearing—and thus the possibility of a better future for one's children—all the harder. And yet the unleashing of unheard-of technologies has ensured that productivity remains on the rise, so the liberal logic applied to growing labor disparities is one of dependence, as manifest in the logic of Universal Basic Income (UBI).

You would think this sort of shift is contrary to human nature's innate preference for self-sufficiency, stability and the dignity of work over uncertainty and dependence—and you'd be right. This is precisely where the other side of the neo-feudal coin comes in, one that proves a lot harder to unpack than the objective economic facts of neo-feudalism. Kotkin's basic argument is that the woke narratives of progress towards racial equality and social justice are masking the basic inequities of the system between those privileged to work in the productive sectors of the economy and those working gig jobs in what some have deridingly called the "share-the-scraps" economy. As opposed to a rethink of the foundations of our system that would allow us to better apportion economic opportunity across life paths and vocations, today's progressivism demands satisfaction with our economic predicament as long as its woke demands are met, such as higher shares of women and ethnic minorities being shoveled into the top ranks. Which may work, for a while—one of the takeaways from Trump's success in 2020 among ethnic minorities is that the productive populism that Joel Kotkin advocates appeals beyond the narrow white working-class electorate that propelled him to victory in 2016. Which will likely make Joe Biden's administration even more neo-feudal.

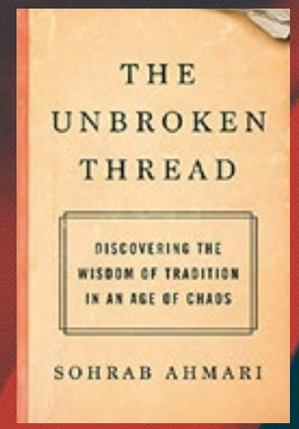
The Unbroken Thread: Discovering the Wisdom of Tradition in an Age of Chaos

by Sohrab Ahmari

Convergent Books; 270 pages; £27.00

The ongoing realignment of the American right of late has brought with it a reshuffling of its cast of characters. Among its rising stars stands out Sohrab Ahmari, who first made a name for himself sharing his first-hand account of growing up in a Mid-Eastern country when the Arab Spring of the early 2010s aroused the hopes of seeing the region embrace liberal democracy. Ahmari's previous book, *From Fire by Water: My Journey to the Catholic Faith* (2010) was a most successful memoir for our hyper-secularized age—particularly coming from a naturalized Iranian immigrant whom, having long struggled with a vacuum of meaning upon replacing the Shiite Islam of his formative years with unquestioning atheism, turned to the Catholic faith while working as an opinion writer and editor for the *Wall Street Journal* in London. A most unique life path, you could say. It is precisely through its interactions with religion that Ahmari seeks to shape the future of conservatism, and Catholic integralism, though he seldom claims it, isn't too far-fetched a label for the kind of views that permeate his writings.

He's also a frequent contributor to Rusty Reno's famous *First Things* magazine on religious issues, where he wrote last year a damning critique of the kind of morally neutral libertarianism epitomized by David French, another conservative writer formerly at *National Review* and now at *The Dispatch*. His takedown was triggered by French's stance on the infamous issue of so-called Drag Queen Story Hours (DQSHs). Should conservatives eschew their non-interventionist pieties when the right to free association is used to rob underage children of their innocence? DQSHs involve the renting of private spaces by parents to "entertain" their children with performances by paid transgenders. The self-proclaimed libertarian-constitutionalist David French believes no grounds exist for the state to interference with parents' rights to raise their children as they wish, but Ahmari begs to differ. Following the *First Things* spat, the two Christian writers faced off at a public event at Catholic University in Washington D.C., which went down as a watermark of the right's growing internecine tensions between Ahmari's post-liberal brand of conservatism and French's libertarianism. In this latest book, Ahmari—also a connoisseur of Catholic theology and ancient thought—picks up 12 timeless questions to challenge our secular, hyper-liberal modern certainties. Among them, is God reasonable? What is freedom for? What do we owe our parents, our bodies and one another? You won't want to miss this book, nor Ahmari's larger role in challenging the right's temptation to abandon the notions of virtue, prudence and morality under the influence of his libertarian arch-nemeses.



Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism

by Anne Applebaum

Doubleday; 224 pages; £25.00

Every once in a long while comes out a special kind of polemic—a book that, by taking the most partisan stance on an issue, drives its contradictors mad whilst managing to make both sides agree that the book itself accurately portrays the divisions between them. This was the case with *Twilight of Democracy*, the latest book by world-renowned columnist and popular historian Anne Applebaum. Drawing on her several decades of experience as a sought-after commentator on Euro-American politics and her marriage with Radek Sikorski, formerly Poland's foreign minister under the early 2000s Civic Platform government of Donald Tusk, Applebaum sounds the alarm about what she fears is a growing trend towards authoritarian thinking among conservatives across the West. Amongst her wider American readership, the book snugly fits into the editorial-industrial complex of anti-Trump polemics and has drawn Applebaum even closer to her liberal colleagues at *The Atlantic* and *The Washington Post*. Among those acquainted with European politics, however, the book's success has been more nuanced, and one finds a slate of damning reviews across conservative publications.

A common line of argument among the book's critics is Applebaum's facile way of packing her intense dislike of conservative populists into a ready-made, one-size-fits-all theory of political psychology, one that she fails to fully credit its original creator for. Theodoro Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) was the first major work to articulate the case that conservatism correlates with an innate tendency to reject complexity and seek appeasement in figures of authority. Applebaum does credit, however, another author whom she emulates even more closely by pointing fingers specifically at the intellectual class with whom she has shared magazine mastheads and end-of-year parties in Polish countryside estates. For her, the ongoing trend towards nationalist populism in countries like Poland and Hungary wouldn't be taking place if a select minority of the educated class driven by the lust for power and resentment towards their more successful liberal peers hadn't machinated to subdue the conscience of the masses through facile arguments, a thesis that follows in the footsteps of Julien Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927).

Regardless, whether one comes out loving or loathing Applebaum's book seems to correlate heavily with one's priors, which is a bad look for a journalist with a reputation for tracing the complex historical undercurrents of our politics in impartial ways. In fact, Applebaum's intention in *Twilight of Democracy* doesn't seem to be so much warning conservatives about the kind of leaders they follow but to beat them with a cudgel for the sake of pleasing her liberal readership. And yet again, her book has the merit of succinctly capturing, if not for today's readers then for tomorrow's, the growingly sour tensions between the diverging factions of what remains of 1980s conservatism. That fractious coalition was united by a common dislike of Soviet-style regimes and a shared embrace of free-market economics but each of its component parts have taken different tacks since, between those who embrace liberal globalism and social progressivism and those who keep claiming the label "conservative". No wonder which side Applebaum falls on.

The Other Lost MASTERPIECES

The Artistic Movements that Died with the Spanish Flu

The Spanish Flu that spread across the world from 1918 until early 1920 claimed the lives of over 50 million people. It took more lives than the First World War which had directly preceded it – and spread amongst soldiers at a more devastating rate than any weapon could have. No one was untouched by the by the pandemic; teachers, doctors, nurses, labourers, writers and even a First Lady of the United States lost their lives. Rich and poor alike suffered at the hands of the influenza virus. Amongst those who succumbed to the virus were the great artists of the day.

by ROBERT TYLER

Many of these artists, who were at the peak of their careers, left behind unfinished works and unrealised pieces. Artistic movements across the western world lost their leadership – including the burgeoning new form of 'Expressionism'. The death of one of the leading figures of the 'Vienna Secessionist Movement' including Gustav Klimt all but sealed the fate of the movement. The death of his protégé Egon Schiele only sped up the demise of the 'avante guarde' movement.

Event he cadet branches of the 'Expressionist Movement' such as the early modernist and cubist movements were touched by the loss of figures such as Bohumid Kubista, Amadeo de Souza-Cadosa and Morton Schanberg. All of whom died before reaching the age of 40 – and many without seeing mainstream success in their lifetimes.

The Spanish Flu had a profound impact on the artistic world – both in the movements that it cut short and in the ones that emerged as a result.

Gustav Klimt

One of the biggest names to go as a part of the Spanish Flu pandemic was that of Gustav Klimt. Born in 1862 in Vienna's 14th District – he was recognised early on for his artistic talents. His father was a gold engraver from Bohemia and so he grew up around the arts – but also in poverty. From an early age Klimt studied at a specialised school of applied arts.

Much of his early work was done according to convention – it was mostly allegorical in its nature and followed the popular 'historicist' movement. The fashion at the time was for paintings that depicted romanticised scenes from history and mythology. Some of his earliest work was in collaboration with his brother Ernst, their friend Franz Matschm and their teacher Hans Makart. Together they painted the murals above the grand staircase in Vienna's new *Kunsthistoriches Museum*.

This early success led Klimt to take up further professional work as a mural designer – painting the interiors of many of the illustrious buildings on Vienna's Ringstraße – including a few facades. For this work Klimt was awarded the 'Golden Order of Merit' by Emperor Franz Josef I of Austria in 1888. It was in 1892 with the death of his father and brother that Klimt's style would begin to evolve. Whilst his work continued to follow the historicist trend – he began to deviate by introducing more erotic motives.

In 1894 Klimt pushed the bounds of his art to the limits. Having been commissioned to create three paintings for the ceiling of the 'Great Hall' in the University of Vienna he chose to stick to allegoric theme but put greater emphasis on the female form. On revealing his paintings, he was accused of painting 'pornography' with 'perverted excess'.

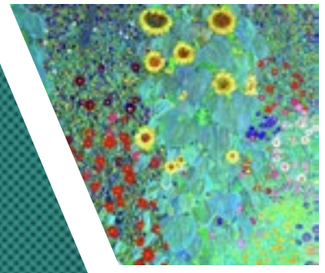
The gamble however ultimately paid off as in 1897 Klimt became one of the founders of the 'Vienna Secessionist Movement' and editor of the group's magazine 'Ver Scarum' (Sacred Spring). The group found quick success – as they had chosen not to take on a political message but rather challenge the artistic orthodoxy and push the limits of what was considered acceptable in public art. The Austrian government was supportive of them and offered them public land to build an exhibition space.

Klimts paintings moved further and further away from any other recognisable form and from the late 1890's he entered his 'Golden Phase' in which many of his paintings included the use of gold leaf and bright colours. Moving away from murals – Klimt was now being commissioned to produce portraits. He also began to draw inspiration from new sources – in particular Byzantine mosaic work with its more stylised depictions of individuals.

It was around this time at the turn of the century that Klimt discovered Egon Schiele and agreed to take him under his wing. He had bought many of Schiele's early drawings and offered to introduce him to various patrons – as well as presenting him with models for his new work.

Klimt spent much time travelling with his work – and being too old to enter the War he spent much of his time in the Austrian countryside. Despite the conflict many of his exhibitions still went ahead in Vienna.

In January 1918 Klimt suffered a sudden stroke – he was taken to one of Austria's largest hospitals and it seems as though he might make a recovery – until in early February he began to exhibit signs of the Spanish Flu. By the 6th of February he had succumbed to the influenza virus. His loyal friend and disciple Schiele visited him several times in this period and drew a haunting sketch of Klimt on his death bed. Schiele was expected to now takeover from Klimt as the leading artist in Austria and take the 'Secessionist' movement forwards.



Egon Schiele

The passing of Gustav Klimt was supposed to have been Schiele's great opportunity. Many in Vienna society had expected the young artist to go on to greatness and take over from this former teacher.

Afterall Egon Schiele had had the same humble beginnings as Klimt. Born in Lower Austria in 1890 – to a station master working for the '*Kaiserlich-königliche österreichische Staatsbahnen*' (Austrian State Railway). Schiele had an unusual upbringing – he was a timid and shy child who didn't excel academically and was more interested in drawing. When he was 15 his father died of syphilis and young Egon was sent to live with his maternal uncle.

His uncle, recognising Egon's talent, sent him to the same school of Applied Arts that Klimt had gone to before. Whilst studying there his tutors urged him to apply to join the prestigious '*Akademie der Bildenden Künste*' where he was trained in a more traditional style. Frustrated by the conservative style in which he was being tutored he dropped out and sought out help from the artist he admired most – Gustav Klimt.

Klimt gladly supported him – buying work from him and introducing him to potential patrons and clients. The two worked together for a while and as Schiele's artistic style developed so too did Klimt's. Both men were drawn more and more towards eroticism – with numerous sketches of people in intimate positions. Many found this work to be disturbing.

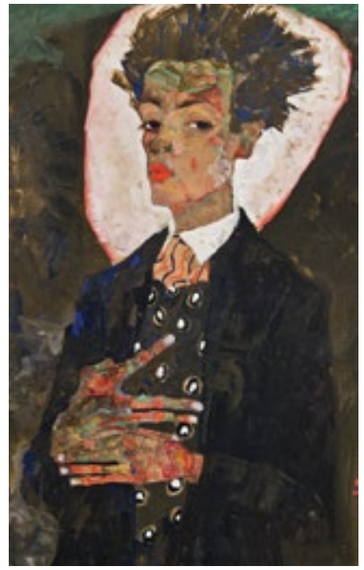
Klimt invited Schiele to exhibit alongside him in the Veinna *Kunstschau* with artists such as Edvard Munch and Vincent van Gogh. This became a platform that allowed Schiele to exhibit across Europe, from Budapest to Prague to Munich. However his sexual themes got him in trouble – in 1912 he was arrested and much of his art confiscated for its compromising and pornographic nature.

It was after his time in jail that Schiele decided to marry. He chose to marry his neighbour Edith Harms. Three days after the wedding he was ordered to report for active service in the infantry – originally stationed in Prague. He continued to paint throughout the war – with his pieces becoming larger and more elaborate.

By 1917 he was allowed to return to work in Vienna and was invited to take part in the 'Secessionists 49th Exhibition'. Schiele was able to display an astonishing fifty works at the exhibition. The success of the show saw demand for his work increase. However, tragedy struck when his friend and teacher Gustav Klimt succumbed to the Spanish Flu in February 1918. Schiele was on hand to produce his last portrait of Klimt in his death bed.

Schiele affected by the experience began to shift his focus towards the theme of family. In mid-1918 he painted a self-portrait, with his wife and unborn child. Edith was pregnant at the time and he wanted to capture his future. What he could never know was that this future would never be realised.

On the 28th of October 1918 – whilst six months pregnant – Edith died as a result of the same influenza that had claimed his friend Klimt. Three days later Egon Schiele – the rising star of the Vienna art scene – contracted Spanish flu and died at the age of 28. He spent those final three days drawing sketches of his lost wife Edith.



Bohumil Kubišta

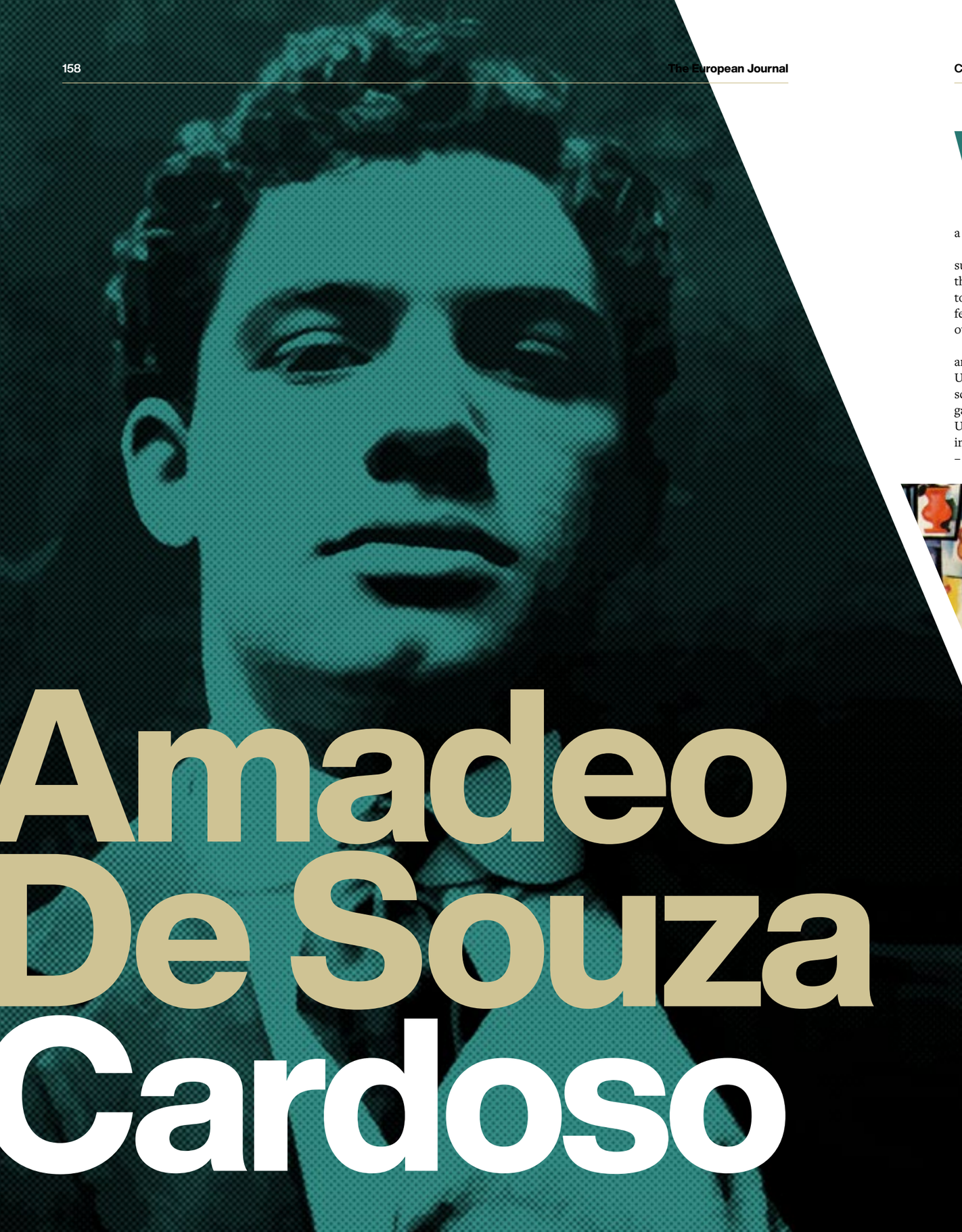
The deaths of both Klimt and Schiele brought about the end of what could have been one of arts greatest movements. The Spanish Flu also prematurely took the lives of those who could very well have broken new ground on the new expressionist movement.

Across the border from Austria, in the Czech Republic, a young up and coming artist by the name of Bohumil Kubišta was making waves with his new expressionist paintings. A self-taught painter – he had also studied optics in order to better understand light and colour. He had as a child been captivated by the works of impressionists such as Van Gough and Cezanne – however his greatest inspiration was Edvard Munch, who had exhibited his paintings in Prague in 1905.

Much of his earlier work was characterised by dramatic use of shadow and light – capturing the details through use of sharp contrasting colour. However, as he experimented more and more with the use of angles and light – he moved further and further away from reality and more into the world of fantasy.

By the 1910's much of Kubišta's work had taken on a distinctively cubist and futurist style. Clear details had been replaced by jagged lines and contrasting colours. Kubišta, in many ways, was ahead of his contemporaries in his exploration of cubism. It was around this time that the figures most related to Cubism – such as Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso – also began to embrace cubism. But it was in Central and Eastern Europe that it found the most mainstream success – in part because of artists such as Kubišta.

However it was not meant to last – in November 1918 Kubišta contracted the Spanish Flu. He died at the age of 36 before achieving mainstream success outside of Czechoslovakia.



Amadeo De Souza Cardoso

Whilst futurism in the style of Kubišta was more popular in the Eastern half of Europe, cubism found its mainstream success in Iberia – with artists such as Picasso and Dali. Another of those early cubists was Amadeo de Souza Cardosa – a painter from Portugal.

Amadeo – much like Schiele – enjoyed a great deal of early support and had a fast rise. At the age of 18 he was admitted to the Superior School of Fine Arts of Lisbon and a year later moved to Paris to continue his training. By 1910 his work was being featured in the Société des Artistes Indépendants alongside many other prominent artists of the time.

He used his new fame to foster close relationships with artists and writers such as the American author Gertrude Stein, Ukrainian cubist painter Alexander Archipenko and Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși. These connections helped him to gain notoriety around the world, and in 1913 he was invited to the United States to display his works at the illustrious Armory Show in New York alongside Picasso, Edvard Munch and August Rodin – with work by deceased artists such as Goya and van Gogh. The shows purpose was to display the best of modern art to a public that was yet to grow accustomed to it.

This show gave him the chance to explore the United States and he spent time in New York, Boston and Chicago. He returned to Portugal the following year as his profile continued to grow – many of his works having been picked up by museums and private collections in the United States. He continued to communicate and meet with artists across the Iberian peninsular – in both Portugal and Spain.

In 1917 he, alongside several other prominent artists launched the magazine *Portugal Futurista* – however it only ever published one edition. He used the publication to try to bring cubism to a popular audience in Europe, despite it being in its infancy and a much more developed market already existing across the Atlantic.

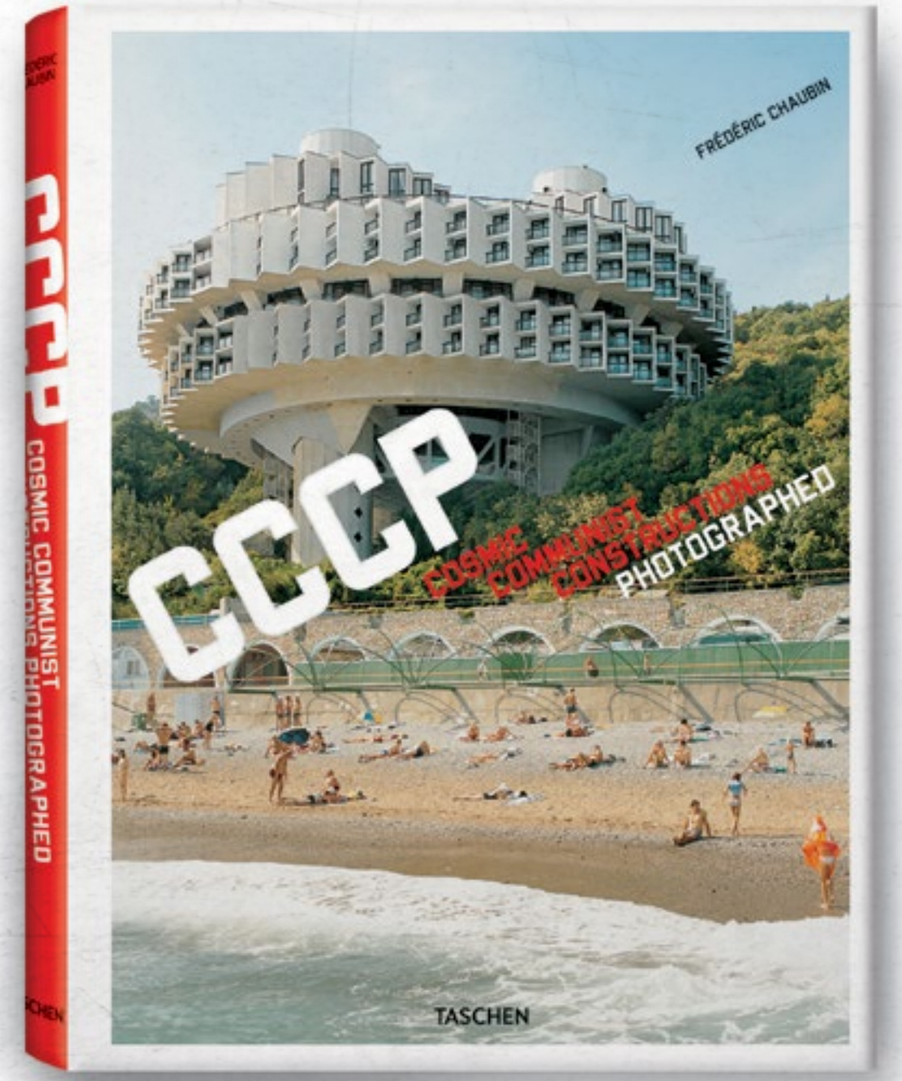
Although Cubism would eventually take off in Europe throughout the 1920s – Amadeo would never see it. In October 1918 he contracted the Spanish Flu – and died at the age of 30. His legacy would be honoured some years later when in 1925 the Portuguese government introduced the Souza-Cardoso prize for modern art.

The Spanish Flu – in taking the lives of so many up and coming artists – altered the lifeline of several movements. For Cubism and Futurism it offered a false start – as those who could have brought the movement to the forefront sooner passed too early. Whilst expressionist movement met a premature end – with the passing of its greatest known pioneer and his disciple in Vienna.

But perhaps more interestingly was the way that tastes were beginning to change in art to begin with. As the gloom of the Great War and the Spanish Flu lifted from the Western World – Europe and North America entered the 'Roaring Twenties'. A period of liberation and excess. The golden nude paintings of Klimt, and erotic poses of Schiele, with the cubist brutality of Kubišta – that had all for so long been seen as outsider art – found a home in the mainstream. What had once been taboo – was now welcomed with enthusiasm.

A CRUMBLING LEGACY

A Journey Through Soviet Architecture

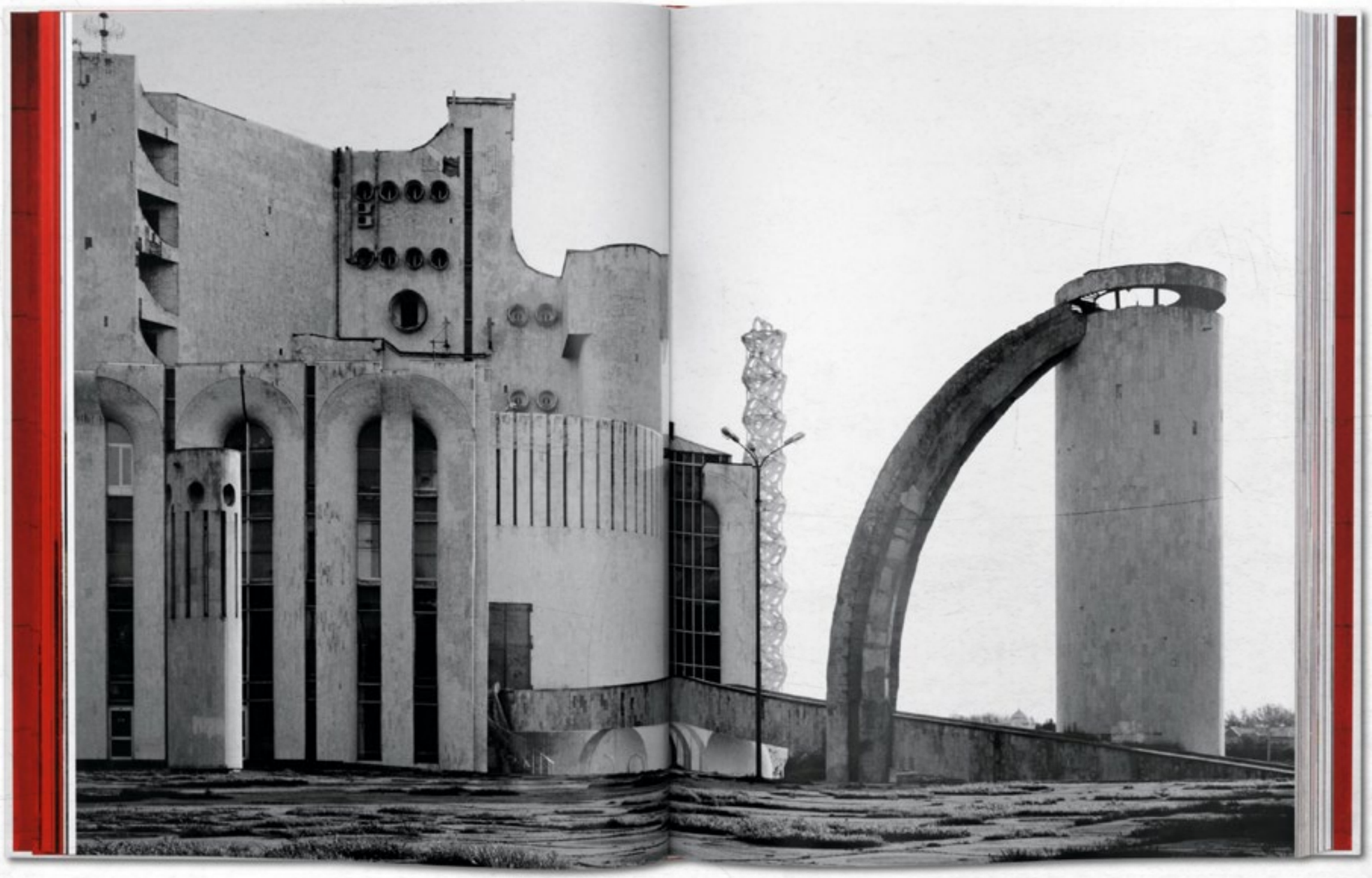


Frédéric Chaubin | Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed | TASCHEN | € 40

December 2021 will mark the 30th Anniversary of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The final collapse of the Communist Empire in Eastern Europe led to the creation of dozens of news states – with countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea reclaiming their independence.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was met with jubilation across many countries, as for the first time in decades countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus became independent states. However, what remained was a legacy of terror.

The people of these countries had for over half a century lived under the boot of one of the most totalitarian governments in the history of the world – a regime of repression that encroached on every aspect of their lives. From controlled education, to propaganda in the media, to constant surveillance from secret police, every aspect of life in the Eastern Bloc was designed to remind people that they were subjects of a greater Empire.



The same was true of the architecture in the Soviet Union – buildings were designed to be imposing and dominate the people who lived and worked amongst them. From the Stalinist Seven Sisters in Moscow, with their socialist take on classical architecture, to the obtuse grey tower blocks that have come to be an icon of communist brutalism – Soviet architecture was made to make people feel small.

Today, many of these buildings stand in now free countries as reminders of darker times. French photographer Frédéric Chaubin has spent the last two decades travelling across the former Soviet Union capturing some of the more unique buildings that today stand as monuments to an oppressive regime.

Chaubins journey has taken him from Moldova, to Kazakhstan, Riga to Kyiv, and to every place in between. His book 'Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed' details his search for the strangest of these Soviet structures – from every day buildings such as schools and train stations, to purpose built Party Congress buildings and monuments to the forgotten achievements of the Soviet Empire.

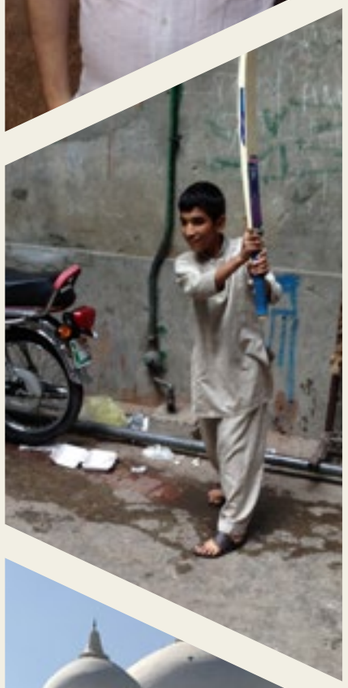
His photographs capture a melancholic image of an architectural style that was born out of the space race as a means of projecting an image of the future but now, like the Soviet Empire itself, sit as hollow shells of failed ideology.

Pakistan is unique. Its heritage is rich and its people so friendly. It has earnt my love and fascination. It is a country which possesses everything. Cricket without Pakistan is nothing.

Pakistan

MAJESTIC, MYTHICAL AND MYSTERIOUS LAND

by JONATHAN COLLETT



I have had a love affair with it for six years now and yet my experiences have barely scratched the surface. Each visit has brought new experiences, wonderment and intrigue. Pakistan offers amazing hospitality, stunning scenery and proudly does things in its own way and on its own terms.

My experiences have been interwoven in cricket which is fitting given it is the very lifeblood of Pakistan.

On 3rd March 2009 twelve gunmen attacked the Sri Lanka national cricket team as they travelled to the Gadaffi Stadium in Lahore. Six members of the Sri Lanka team were wounded; and six Pakistani policemen and two civilians were killed.

Then began a period of isolation as no international cricket was played in Pakistan because of security fears. The very future of cricket in Pakistan was at risk and international exile cost Pakistan hundreds of millions in lost revenue from tv rights and ticket sales as it was forced to play in exile in empty stadiums in the UAE.

I felt so very sorry for Pakistan a country which has produced the most exhilarating and unpredictable cricketers. World cricket without Pakistan was missing one of its key participants.

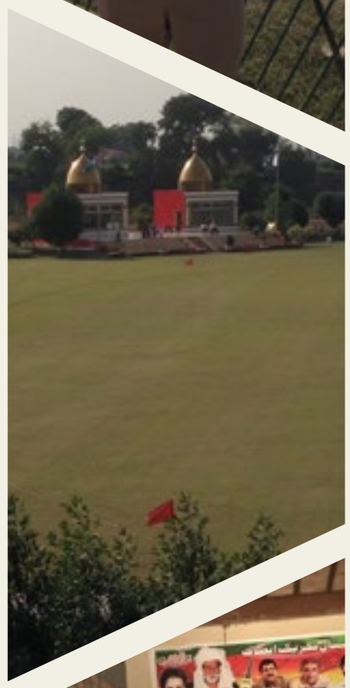
In this context my first cricket tour of Pakistan in November 2014 was of immense significance and symbolism. We were the first international team to tour Pakistan since the Al-Qaeda attack and our visit was accorded security and a welcome in ways far surpassing our abilities as cricketers.

Peter Oborne who had written an acclaimed history of Pakistan cricket entitled *Wounded Tiger* organised the tour and he was given enormous support by the Pakistan High Commission in London and the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Our team contained editors, journalists, academics, and political advisers. We were flying into the unknown.

We should not have worried. As soon as we arrived an armed escort took us to Felletis hotel, the hotel used by early England touring teams in Pakistan, where we accorded heroes' welcomes with garlands of flowers and photographers.

This set the tone for the week. Our player coach was the legendary leg spinner Abdul Qadir. We played in wonderful surroundings at the Lahore Gymkhana - Pakistan's first test ground and its oldest ground - home to many famous cricketers including Imran Khan and Majid Khan. The Gymkana contains



one of the best Museums in world cricket curated by Najum Latif where once British imperial forces had their bar.

We visited the beautiful Mitchell's fruit farm, one of the major food producing companies in 720 acres of oasis in the Okara District, where we played in majestic surroundings.

A match against the Australian High Commission was unfortunately rained off but we dined together at the Cous Cous Restaurant in Old City. This is a unique high dining venue with breathtaking views of the Fort and Mosque in the old city.

Off we flew to Karachi.

Next came the most surreal moment of this tour as we travelled to the Arabian Sea Country Club, where we will played a floodlit fixture on live national television. We were told by Arif Ali Khan Abbasi, its Chairman and the former CEO of the Pakistan Cricket Board, that our match this had been sold as the most significant fixture since the MCC's first visit to Pakistan.

The Pavilion was enormous. A replica of the Parks at Oxford and containing huge cavernous changing rooms. Playing in coloured clothing under lights whilst commentators described the action to a national audience meant we could all dream we had played international cricket.

After playing the Sind Club in Karachi we flew home amidst great security. By now we had all fallen in love with Pakistan.

By now I was plugged into the Pakistan Cricket Board and my next involvement with Pakistan cricket came in England.

In 2012 during Pakistan's tur of England three Pakistan players including their captain Salman Butt were captured in a News of the World sting operation concerning match fixing at Lord's in a test match. All three players were subsequently convicted of conspiracy to cheat at gambling and conspiracy to accept corrupt payments. They all received jail terms and received bans from cricket.

By the time of Pakistan's tour of England in 2016 the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) were understandably concerned about their reputation and their treatment by the UK media. They hoped for a happy tour and to pave the way to international tours returning to Pakistan. In particular they were concerned at the return of Mohammed Amir who had been the youngest player convicted of match fixing episode in 2012. He was a skillful and wonderful bowler but many resented his return and

the PCB feared what his treatment would be at the hands of the English press.

So, they recruited me as their media consultant for the duration of the tour. I would live and travel with the players and spend my time handling the media in the press box and offering strategic advice to the Pakistan management and coaching staff.

It was a dream to work with such wonderful and highly skilled players. They bought in to the need to represent their country in the most professional and accommodating way. They all played their part in boosting the reputation of Pakistan cricket.

The tour was a huge success. There were a series of successful interviews including by the Chairman of the PCB and Pakistan's former Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan and Malala Yousafzai the Pakistan human rights advocate who has survived assassination by the Taliban.

Coach Mickey Arthur was a wonderful ambassador and communicator for his team.

Famously at Lord's victory was marked by the Misbah-ul-Haq and the Pakistan team expressing their joy in front of the Pavillion by performing press ups – a sort of Pakistani version of the Haka. It was a scene of joy and friendliness conveyed to the cricketing world.

The tour was declared a success from all perspectives and engendered enormous goodwill towards Pakistan cricket. Since then English media coverage of Pakistan cricket has been marked by positivity and respect. The reputation of Pakistan cricket has not looked back. This year's tour has been marked by sympathetic coverage especially from Sky tv.

February 2019 saw my return to Pakistan.

The Wounded Tiger XI had been reconvened by Peter Oborne and this time we set off along the path of the Indus Valley from Karachi to Multan.

This is currently an area where visitors seldom travel but they should because it is an area of historic significance and beauty. It bears favourable comparison with the great tourist destinations of the world.

The Indus river runs the entire length of the country and gave its name to the sub-continent and India. It was the home to ancient civilizations and contains an astonishing variety of scenery, climate, people, culture, animals and plants.

Our short trip gave us a flavour and of course some wonderful memories. This time the gender balance of our party was healthier and an ever wider

range of professions travelled – heads of charities, commissions, GPs, academics, estate agents and even a current Varsity cricketer.

I joined the group at Moenjo Daro, the great city of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Here the group had ridden in bullock carts to see the wonderfully preserved archaeological site. A world heritage site.

Next we moved on to Jacobabad. A vibrant city with colour and character. Our welcome was so friendly and out of proportion. A huge crowd watched our match with local news channels capturing the wonderful atmosphere and reception.

Colourful sights greeted us everywhere whether elaborately painted vans, huge hay wagons carried by donkeys or camels, or happy locals waving from motorcycles.

We journeyed up the Indus on ancient boats and saw historic ancient sites including Buddhist temples, colonial outposts and movingly the shrine of the Bhutto family (including Benazir).

We travelled through the Balochistan Desert and made our way up steep sandhills in jeeps.

At dusk we were guided around the Derawar Fort. A breath-taking sight dating to the 9th century with forty bastions. The walls have a perimeter of 1500 metres and stand up to thirty metres high.

We camped nearby at the site of the Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally and were given terrifying desert rides in the jeeps. We awakened to a stunning sunset in the desert.

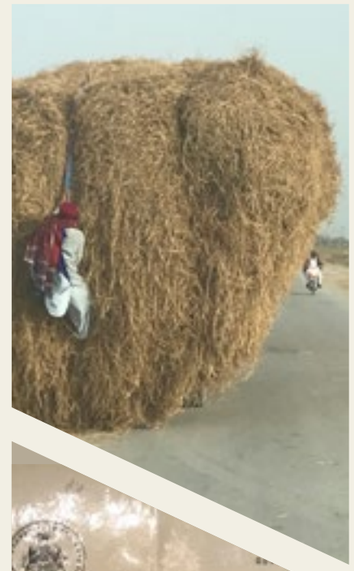
Finally, we moved on to the Test Match stadium in Bahawalpur where we played a local representative side and were greeted by the mayor and other dignitaries.

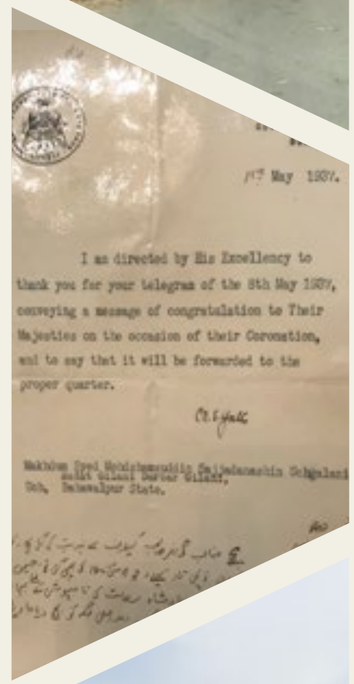
My journey was almost complete. I was concerned as my taxi to Multan was held at a petrol station in Bahawalpur but I need not have worried as the hold-up was to arrange for guards to escort me to the airport. Hospitality in Pakistan knows no bounds.

I look forward to a forthcoming film made by Ahmed Peerbux being released of this tour. The locations and warmth of the locals will ensure its success.

It is so heartening to see the return of international cricket to Pakistan. A tour from England must be on the horizon. I hope we have played our part in ensuring its return.

Pakistan is unique. Its heritage is rich and its people so friendly. It has earnt my love and fascination. It is a country which possesses everything. Cricket without Pakistan is nothing.





Odessa

UKRAINE


Photo: Travel Faery / Shutterstock.com

Few cities are as varied in what they have to offer travellers than Odessa on the Black Sea coast in Ukraine. From warm beaches to rolling hills, from lively night clubs to refined opera, ancient history to an up and coming art scene – Ukraine's third largest city has it all.

Odessa as a city has two histories – the mythical and the real. The romanticised history of the city is that it was once an affluent Ancient Greek colony on the way to Crimea – that fell to nomadic tribes around the same time as the collapse of the Roman Empire. In reality – the ancient city of Odessa was likely further up the coast.

The modern history of the city however starts in the late 1700s under the reign of Empress Catherine the Great. The land that became Odessa was under the control of the Ottoman Empire – and in his bid to win the love of the Russian Empress, General Grigory Potemkin stormed the fortress and founded the new city.

Under Catherine the city grew – centred around a strategically useful warm water port that is still used by the Ukrainian navy today. Much of this growth was owed to Duc de Richelieu – a French noble who had fled the revolution and become governor to the city, in later life he would become Prime Minister of France. A statue of Richelieu overlooks the harbour and is a popular hangout point for the cities inhabitants in the summer.

During the Russian revolution – Odessa was the site of a brutal massacre between Revolutionary strikers and the Imperial military. This massacre was later immortalised in the film 'The Battleship Potemkin' by Sergei Eisenstein – which is widely seen as one of the greatest early movies ever made. To this day the 'Potemkin Steps' where the film was made are a popular tourist attraction.

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Only the statues of Russian and Ukrainian heroes remind you that you are not in Western Europe. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Statue of Catherine the Great – unique for the fact that it also depicts her many lovers around the base.

Photo: Kyrylo Valyeyev / Shutterstock.com

Since it's founding – the city has long been a popular tourist destination; first for Russian Aristocrats, then Soviet Citizens and now drawing people from across Europe as an affordable and luxurious beach destination. In recent years a great deal of money has been poured into building more accommodation and improving attractions.

Depending on any given persons taste the highlights of a trip to Odessa could include a night at the famous Opera House – once the jewel in the crown of the city. The current building was designed and built in the 1880s and boasts a beautiful gold gilded ceiling. Performances are run year round – with other concerts and ballets held as well.

For those after something more lively and modern the Arcadia clubbing district runs along the coastline – with DJs playing every night of the week during the summer until the early hours of the morning. The 'Ibiza Beach Club' is the largest – however for those looking for something more relaxed there is the 'Mantra Beach Club' further down the coast.

Away from the nightlife, Odessa is well known for its baroque and neo-classical architecture. The historic city centre resembles something more of Vienna or Milan than it does of Eastern Europe. Luxury hotels such as the Londonskya and Bristol Hotels follow tree lined avenues – with upmarket restaurants, bars and art galleries all around. Only the statues of Russian and Ukrainian heroes remind you that you are not in Western Europe. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Statue of Catherine the Great – unique for the fact that it also depicts her many lovers around the base.

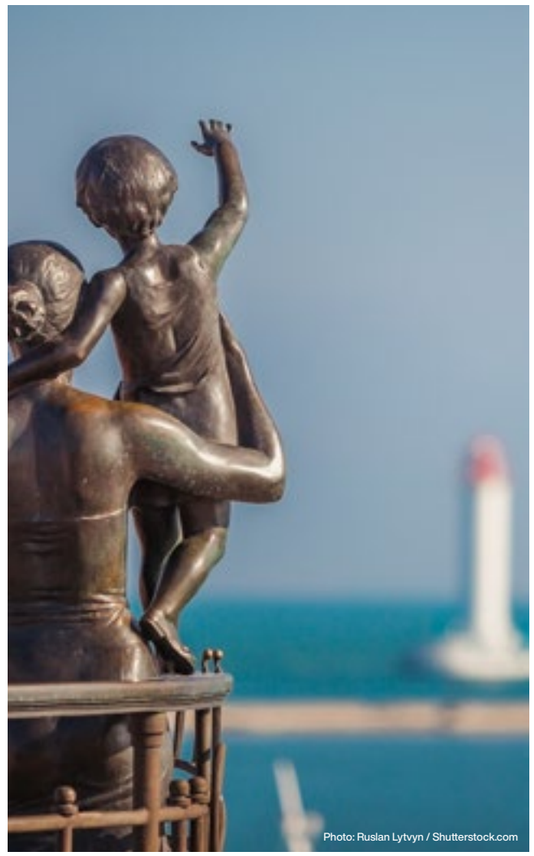


Photo: Ruslan Lytvyn / Shutterstock.com

Cilento

ITALY

When it comes to ancient ruins – most people think of Pompeii – however as a result it is often spoiled by the throngs of tourists that crowd its ancient streets. For those after a quieter taste of the ancient world the Cilento National Park is home to Paestum – an ancient Greek settlement with some of the best preserved temples in the world.

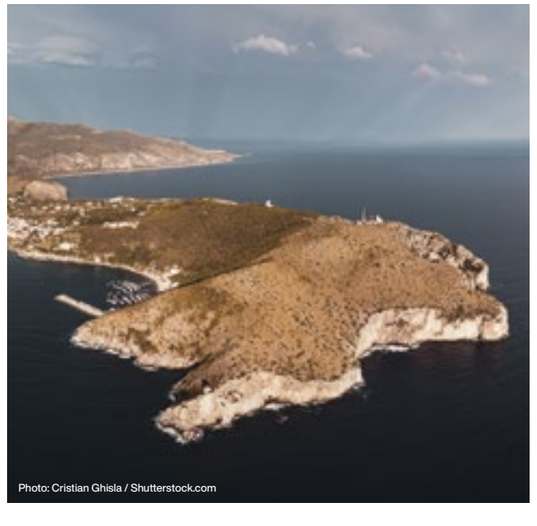


Photo: Cristian Ghisla / Shutterstock.com

When it comes to Southern Italy – most tourists imagine the cliffs around Amalfi, or the ancient history of Naples. It's not often that people venture much further down the coast, or even consider heading in land. However, those who do are greeted by the unique and rustic charms of the Cilento National Park.

The Cilento is the second largest of the twenty-five national parks in Italy. It is also perhaps one of the most diverse, encompassing long stretches of sandy beaches, dramatic coastal cliffs, dense forests, deep gorges, and towering mountains. And all of this is now being set up to encourage tourism – with new cycling routes, hiking trails and agricultural tourism along the way.

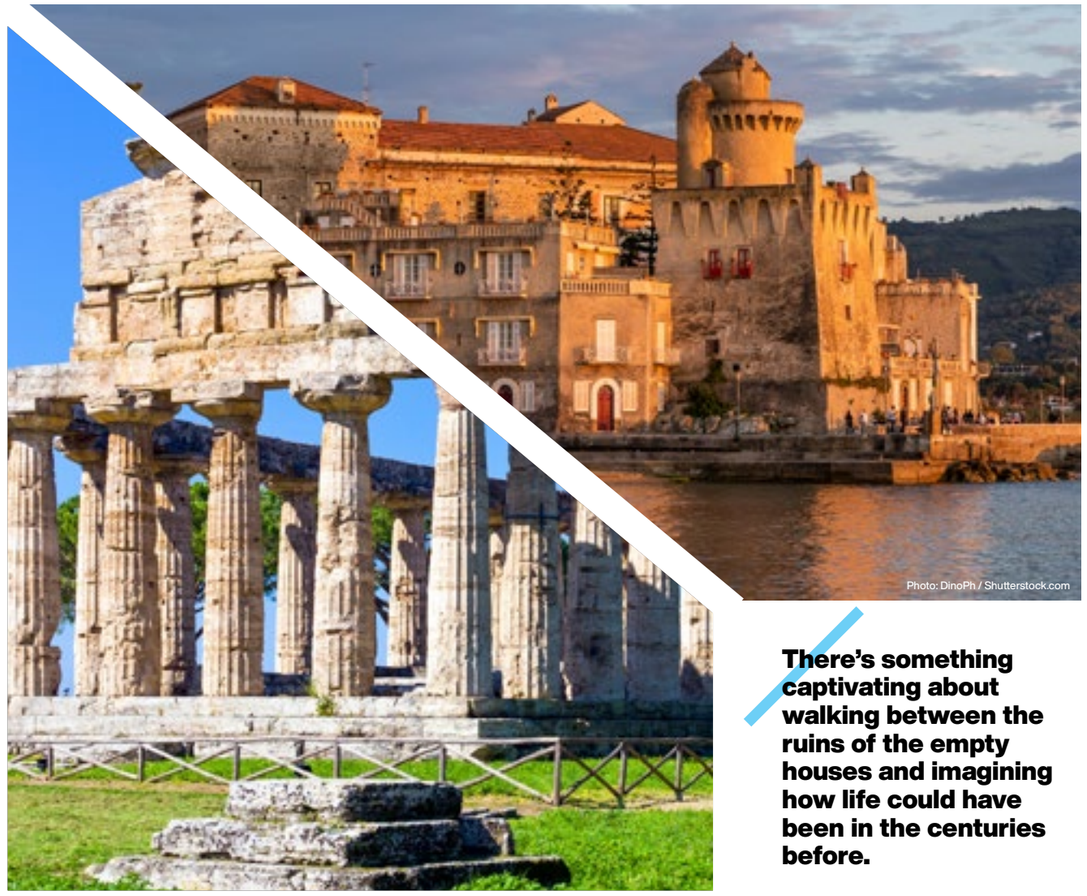
Of course such a diverse region also offers a varied culinary experience. Along the coast one can naturally expect to find a wide range of sea food dishes – from fresh fish, to calamari to oysters – all plucked fresh from the Mediterranean. Whilst in land one can be treated to fresh buffalo mozzarella, chingale sausages (wild boar), freshly made fusilli pasta, all washed down with wild strawberry fragola liqueur. There are no shortage of restaurants tucked away along the winding roads – with many of them feeling more like having a meal at a family home than dining out at all.

When it comes to ancient ruins – most people think of Pompeii – however as a result it is often spoiled by the throngs of tourists that crowd its ancient streets. For those after a quieter taste of the ancient world the Cilento National Park is home to Paestum – an ancient Greek settlement with some of the best preserved temples in the world. Many of the original streets, walls and houses are still intact. Paestum has long been an understated, yet popular tourist attraction, with the ruins having been subject to numerous paintings by wealthy Europeans who travelled across Europe during the 'Grand Tours' of the 17th and 18th Century. Today it attracts visitors from around the world – and there is a very good museum of statues, mosaics and weapons found on the site.

Attached on to Paestum is the *Ristorante Nettuno* which first opened its doors in 1929 and offers a wide range of seasonal local dishes. The highlight however is the wide selection of traditional desserts on offer – all made by their professional pastry chef.

Further down the coast is Palinuro – unique on the Cilento coast for its azure coloured waters that almost glow in the sunlight. It's a popular site for swimming, diving and boating. The area also has a cinematic past – with the *Arco Naturale* beach having been used as the backdrop for such films as Wonder Woman (2017), Clash of the Titans (1981) and Jason and the Argonauts (1963). For those more interested in urban exploration – the abandoned town of San Severino sits nestled in the mountains above. There's something captivating about walking between the ruins of the empty houses and imagining how life could have been in the centuries before.

Away from the coast and up in the mountains, is the town of Padula. It's believed that people have lived in Padula since the ninth century – however the towns real growth took place with the construction of a Carthusian monastery in 1306. The *Certosa di Padula* is known for having the largest cloister in the world, covering an incredible 12,000 m². The monastery has, amongst other things, also been used a military headquarters during the Napoleonic War, and as a base of operations for Garibaldi during the unification of Italy. Since 1998 it has been a UNESCO world heritage site.



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Delft

THE NETHERLANDS

When people think of cities to visit in the Netherlands they often conjure up images of a boat tour around the Canals of Amsterdam, or a Summer concert in the main square in Maastricht, or perhaps a trip to one of the famous International Institutions in The Hague. Very few however would consider a trip to the town of Delft.

However the former Royal Capital of the Netherlands is a hidden gem of the low countries. Steeped in history, this city – which sits halfway between Rotterdam and The Hague – is the perfect stopping off point on any tour of the Netherlands. It has been the home of artists, monarchs, philosophers and boasts itself as the home of blue pottery.

Delft started off a small and insignificant hamlet – before growing to become the de facto capital of the Netherlands. The town first rose to prominence during the 'Dutch Revolt' in the Eighty Years War when William of Orange took up residence in the town. From that point on it became the centre Dutch politics and art – with Amsterdam the centre of trade. To this day the city is connected with the 'House of Orange' that still sits on the Dutch throne.

The city became better known for its distinctive blue pottery – known as 'Delft Blue china' – and as the home of many famous 'Dutch Realist' artists such as Rembrandt and Johannes Vermeer.

Thanks to this rich history, there are plenty of things to see in Delft. For those interested in the royal history of the Netherlands there are two highlights; the first is the museum at the Prinsenhof, which once served as the seat of William 'the Silent' Prince of Orange. It's a stunning former abbey that became the headquarters for his revolt against the Spanish – but most notably is the scene of his assassination. To this day the bullet holes in the wall behind where he was shot are preserved and open for the public to see.

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Delft is well worth simply walking around and getting lost in. The typical Dutch Golden Age architecture makes every street picture perfect.

The second site of royal interest in Delft is the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) which sits in the city centre. It was originally built in 1496, and has been the burial place of every member of the Dutch Royal Family since William of Orange. As well as being an active church and open to the public, it also hosts small concerts and organ recitals. It's also possible to climb the tower – which has stunning views over the city and the province beyond.

For those interested in the cities more artistic history – there is the Vermeer Centre in the old town. Vermeer is one of the Netherlands best known painters and lived in Delft his entire life. He is perhaps best known for his portraits, including 'The Girl with the Pearl Earring', which is on display at the Mauritshuis Museum a short 12 minute train ride away.

Of course no visit to Delft is complete without a visit to 'Royal Delft' – the last remaining pottery manufacturer in Delft who have been producing handmade earthenware for over 350 years. Well known the world over for its distinctive blue designs – it has long been the prized by collectors.

Aside from the museums and churches – Delft is well worth simply walking around and getting lost in. The typical Dutch Golden Age architecture makes every street picture perfect. Fitting for the former Royal Capital.

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