

Responses to Covid-19: A Ragged Global *Patch-Work* **So what for Canada?**

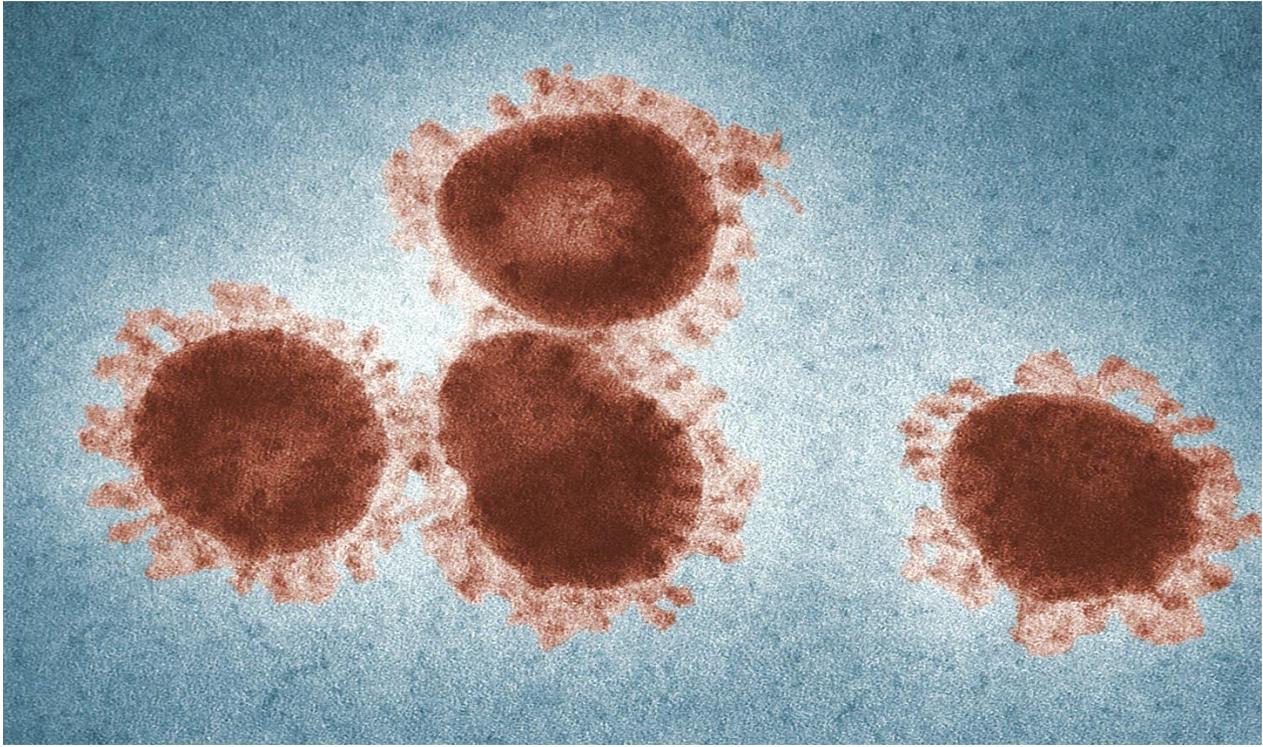


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Over four weeks from May 12 to June 2, 2020, the Idea Connector Network and the Proteus Canada Institute produced four online discussions on the patchwork of responses by Canada and the world to the Covid-19 pandemic. To do so, we invited eminent global thinkers, leaders of organizations and businesses, accomplished academics, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals from Canada, Germany and the USA. They were invited to share their thoughts on policies Canada should consider going forward.

After each online discussion, a “Listener’s Reflection” summary was produced by David Harries, Ph.D., P.Eng. Foresight Director, Idea Connector Network. This article is, in effect, a reflection on the contents of those four summaries. We continue to welcome, at any time, comments and questions the observations may provoke, address them to Info@IdeaConnector.net

Preface

The panel discussions were loosely governed by the narrative in the package sent to panelists beforehand. It is summarized as follows:

- ✓ The overarching theme was Canadian and global *Patch-Works* of preparations for and progress in dealing with the global COVID-19 pandemic and its unfolding consequences.

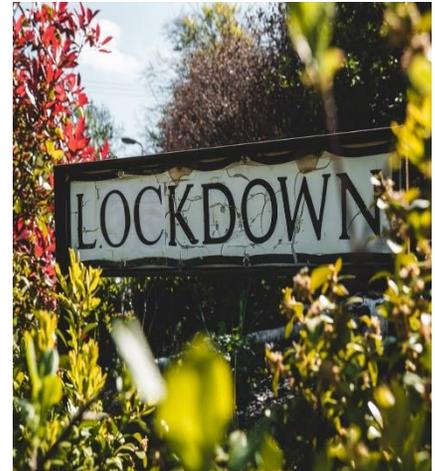
- ✓ Generic themes suggested for the dialogue were: *Well-being, Equality, Employment and Leisure.*
- ✓ Looking ahead to the 'next normal', the following context uncertainties, in no particular order, were offered to provoke discussion:

Government (Peace Order and Good Government, or Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness) -- with or without buy-in of significant elements of civil society.

Lateralism (Whither Unilateralism, Bilateralism, Multilateralism) –as the Bretton Woods regime atrophies.

Change Acceleration (2021 Chaos? -- as most 2020 events have been moved to 2021)

Education (Teaching or Learning; academic, vocational, experiential, or cultural? Whither accreditation?)



Climate change (Consequences and reactions to Covid-19's interruption and disruption of effort all the while reinforcing its negative impact?)

Consumerism (*whose* wants and *whose* needs?)

Capitalism (two? three? or four? bottom lines?)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (What does the 2030 deadline now mean?)

Public Health (who manages the differences between *health care* and *health security*, and how?)

Infrastructure (do almost daily reports of sometimes tragic failings/failures of major infrastructure in *developed* countries signal a decline to the status of a re-developing country? So what?)

Resilience (Whose and how much Resolve, Resources, Redundancy, Responsibility, Accountability, and....?)

Self-sufficiency (Should it, like charity, 'begin at home'?)

To initially focus discussion, the following What If, post-pandemic? questions were offered.

- I. What if 20 or 25% of small businesses closed their doors for good?

- II. What if Government was unable to return to pre-pandemic priorities for improving Indigenous well-being?
- III. What if Civil Society decided to disregard government's instructions aimed at Peace, Order and Good Government?
- IV. What if, after months of quarantine, Canadians had changed many of their habits and much of their behaviour?
- V. What if consumerism has changed?
- VI. What if digital transformation amplified concentration of wealth so much that many more Canadians are challenged to be economically self-sustaining?
- VII. What if the Government was more commanding and controlling?
- VIII. What if Canada adopted a Canada-First policy?



Photo by Jason Jarrach on Unsplash

Panelists were offered the choice of dealing with these questions as written or adjusted, and choosing their own. No new questions were suggested during the meetings, a reason, in part, why this document concludes with a set of What If? questions.

Proceedings

The first session, on May 12, highlighted the '*unprecedentedness*' of the times: of all the COVID-19 threats to humanity, the unpreparedness of most public and private individuals, organizations and governments to both face up to and then deal with the risks, the exposure of so many false assumptions on long-ignored social and technological conditions, and of the still-exploding (July 16) list of needs for change, without which almost all of the planet and its life will face a future that is, at best only uncertain, and at worst physically and politically dystopian.

Keywords and terms, as copied from Reflections about May 12: Pandemic, food security, needs vs wants, leader-ship, educations, adaptation, 'we' are 'who'? Community, disruptions, normal (s), polarization, esthetics, entrepreneurship, conversion, values, opportunity, young people, older people, indigenous peoples, intersectionality, legacy, ancestry, one planet, political will, climate change, boomer remover.

On May 20, the second session looked at two fields of concern; Changes needed and Canadian policy directions. On Changes, it was widely agreed that some changes were

mandatory, such as ending the thoughtless, resourceless 'warehousing' of the old and the infirm. However, *how much* change that WFH (Work from Home) and SFH (Studying from Home) will drive that emerging technology will enable, and that people will 'trust' are all open questions. Human nature is to stick with the familiar, and some fields – i.e., the economics of supply and demand, has an inherent and massive momentum that resists (major) adjustment. On Canadian policy directions, it was no less widely agreed that Canada needs to put itself 'first' in terms of self-sufficiency in the processes and resources that COVID-19 so forcefully showed the country lacked. But 'Canada' is not a united or harmonious single entity in any way. The combination of its geography, population, economy, climate and diversity, all ever-changing, demand that it remains externally engaged and connected. Canada-First is not a viable policy.

Keywords and terms, as copied from Reflections about May 20: Point (s) of failure, momentum (s), nudging, fear, acceleration, 'known(s) work, the usual suspect(s), economic *and* social *and* environment, trust, communications, circular economy, societal division(s), Canada' first', WFH, SFH, technology (s)

The third session, on May 26, was an opportunity to vent frustrations. Participants described events and situations in which counter-productive ways and means were employed – or omitted - by public and private sectors that need not and should not have been. Also, there was frustration that there are, and in some cases have long been, changes that a rich, educated, developed, G7 country such as Canada had no excuse for not making long ago. In not making them, it left the country weaker within and, in the eyes of other countries, less reputable and accomplished. Germany was offered as a model whose well-being, on all fronts, is firmly in place because of the good Government of its citizens, all of whom are provided free education and free health care. That all Canada's citizens cannot connect with each other because the internet – let alone *high-speed* internet - is not nationally accessible, is unnecessary and unfair, if not ridiculous. The inability to communicate nationally amplifies gaps in understanding, opportunities, competitiveness and health security. There was much support for a universal basic income, and not only because of the federal CERB (Canada Emergency Response Benefit) response to the pandemic's destruction of Canadian employment figures.

Keywords and terms, as copied from Reflections about May 26: Productivity, labour, leisure, well-being, universal basic income, opportunity(s), competitiveness, well-being, listening *ab initio*, water, digitization, inclusivity, government(s), connectivity, communication(s), 'between' nation, technology(s), W/SFH,

On June 2, the fourth session focused on infrastructure in its broad sense and thereby, its essential influence on Canadian well-being overall. Infrastructure is much more than built structures. It is the enabler of all aspects of life and living in Canada; the

social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, ethical, and security. The learning, knowing, and understanding needed to underpin harmony throughout Canada are both cause and effect of infrastructure. There are no better reasons Canada must increase its (too slow) investment in infrastructure, wisely, and for the times.

Keywords and terms, as copied from Reflections about June 2: Media(s), 'UBI', government(s), digitization, un-equality, assumption(s) infrastructure, systems, respectfulness, the commons, good-ness, society, bigness, incentivization, education, compartmentalization, growth, expectation (s), Transparency-Truth-Trust.

To Note Each 'Reflections' included a section listing themes that were not considered but seemed eligible and relevant to have been so. (Page 6, below)

Final Comments

Much has happened since June 2. Most, unfortunately, cannot be considered good news. Some of the themes in the What If? list below would probably be addressed if the four discussions were to start today: 16 July.

What if there are not 10 million but 100 million COVID-18 cases? Or 200 million?
<https://globalnews.ca/news/7115244/coronavirus-10-million-cases-world/>

What if Canada adopts a Canada First Policy?

What if the country does not significantly reduce differences/reduce gaps/remove barriers between provinces and territories?

What if the two Michael's are convicted? And are sentenced to death?

What if the flu arrives in time in 2020 to reinforce COVID-19?

What if Canadian governments continue to 'pretend' emergencies only happen one at a time, with lots of time between to rest and recover?

What if Trump loses on November 3?

What if the young hate SFH?

What if Canada fails to install Hi-speed internet nation-wide by 2025 or 2030?

What if Canada continues without tangible LT objectives for the whole nation?

What if Canada ended its uniqueness of being the only OECD country w/o a national Minister of Education?

What if science continues to be a poor communicator?

More Food for Thought.

Note that the footnotes were current on the day of their writing

Not heard lists, which may be of interest: YOUR decision on whether or not to include.

May 12: Not heard were: a definition of 'youth'/the young, any reference all-domain security (other than food security), acknowledgement of newly 'essential' workers, China's impact on the global context, religion in the COVID-19 era, any comment on the future of democracy, a requirement for vocational training, interoperability – in recognition of the fact that *integrated, collective* effort – on any crisis – by the governments of the world is between highly unlikely and impossible.

20 May Not heard Responses to Exercise questions 2 and 7. Q2 *What if Government was unable to return to pre-pandemic priorities for improving Indigenous well-being?* Q7 *What if the Government was more commanding and controlling?* Nothing on crisis convergence and or concurrence[1]. Nothing on the need for a reassessment of the criteria for the designation of 'essential worker' [2]. Nothing on the type and scope of potential civil unrest that begins with disagreements on science and myths that then provoke feelings of 'we' are disadvantaged relative to others and or that the 'good old days' are not coming back.

May 26 Not or little heard Comment[3] on the failure in Canada and, perhaps not surprisingly, other members of the G7, to be prepared to care humanely for the aged and chronically ill, a failure perversely reflected in the 2019 and first ever Global Health Security Index that rated the US, the UK and Canada first, second and fifth of 195 countries. Again, nothing on crises convergence and or concurrence[4], on the criteria for the designation of 'essential worker' [5], or on types and scope of potential civil unrest[6]. Lastly, the existence, role and performance of the Canadian *Federal* Minister of Digital Government[7].

June 2 Not or little heard Surprisingly, again, no mention of the existence, role and performance of the Canadian *Federal* Minister of Digital Government[8]. Nothing on the 'aged' as both 'cost' and benefit, or on globalization of civil unrest, or, again, on crises convergence and or concurrence[9].

[1] e.g., Fort McMurray. Major flooding, Oil price wipeout, Covid-19

[2] Staff at COVID-19 hot-spots are clearly the *most* essential. When the US-Canada border was closed, the *next* most essential because the drivers of transport trucks.

[3] In Canada, the failure has been transformed from a governmentally deliberately ignored failure, to an internationally visible Canadian disgrace, thanks to two reports by CF members.

[4] In North America, storm and fire seasons are imminent

[5] More than 1500 civilian-soldiers of the CF are in Quebec elder and chronic care homes, while the PM and Quebec Premier engaged in polite disagreement over the validity and length of their deployment. Perhaps, even before re-opening was contemplated and begins, the most valuable, essential workers were those repeatedly sanitizing carts and service surfaces so food and medicines remained available.

[6] In only the six(6) days between Session 2 and this one, and after the May 25 murder of George Floyd, violent deadly protests erupted in several major US cities.. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/us/george-floyd-protest-minneapolis.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage> and (June 1) continue, with the White House turning off its lights and the President being moved to the bunker.

[7] <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2019/12/13/minister-digital-government-mandate-letter>

[8] <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2019/12/13/minister-digital-government-mandate-letter>

[9] In North America, storm, fire and flood seasons are underway. The presence of the continuing global pandemic guarantees that responses to, mitigation of and recovery from any of them will be at least much more complicated and sometimes impossible. Leaders and responders will face extremely tough choices.

Eminent global thinkers convened as participants to the discussions

See Appendix "A" attached

For more information,

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Eminent global thinkers convened as participants to the discussions

Dr. Adele Buckley, Canadian Pugwash M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc.(hon); physicist, engineer(aerospace) and environmental scientist; Past Chair of Canadian Pugwash (CPG); member of international Pugwash Council. Steering Committee member, (1) Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (2) CNANW. Leads CPG campaign for a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic; presentations in 8 countries.

Bradley Greyeyes Brant, President & CEO, Kiyam Nutrients Inc. M.A. (International Affairs; conflict management and conflict resolution, Awarded William Barton Travel Bursary for research in International Security, Arms Control and Disarmament, Reconciliation Coordinator, Aboriginal Student Services, National Association of Friendship Centres.

Robin Collins, World Federalist Movement - Canada Collins has been active in civil society organizations focused on peace, disarmament and global governance for about 25/30 years. He has been actively involved in the antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions ban campaigns as well as in support of nuclear weapons abolition. He is national secretary of the World Federalist Movement -- Canada, secretary of Canadian Pugwash Group, and Chair of The Group of 78's peace and security working group.

Michael J. Cooper (born 1984) is a Canadian politician who was elected as a member of the Conservative party to represent the riding of St. Albert—Edmonton in the House of Commons of Canada in the 2015 federal election.

Samantha Matters, Director of Ancestral Services, Future Ancestors Services Inc. Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation, her thesis title “Strategic Foresight in Metis Communities: Lessons from Indigenous Futurism.” Samantha’s training in both science and design brings a transdisciplinary lens to her work as a foresight strategist in which she helps clients understand their most significant challenges and possible futures through the lens of Indigenous futurism, ancestry and equity.

Peter Meincke, President Emeritus, University of Prince Edward Island. Graduated from the Royal Military College, B.Eng.Phys., masters and Ph.D. in low temperature physics. After teaching and doing research at RMC, Bell Labs and U of T, he served as Vice Provost of U of T. Concerned about the negative impacts of technology on the environment and humanity, he became president of UPEI and became involved with the exciting work in PEI on appropriate intermediate technologies. He developed courses on “Energy Environment and the Economy” and “Technologies for Sustainable Development”. In addition to serving on many boards and councils. He belongs to many NGOs including Canadian Pugwash, Group of 78 and Canadian Association for the Club of Rome.

Prof. Dr. Thomas Reuter, University of Melbourne, Australia (participating from Germany)

Prof Reuter is an anthropologist at the University of Melbourne with a research focus on Indonesia. He is on the board of the World Academy (WAAS) and Future Earth (Asia), a past chair of the World Council of Anthropological Associations and advisor to various international organizations and governments.

Michael Sales, Principal, The Security & Sustainability Guide (participating from USA) Michael joined the Security & Sustainability Guide research team in 2015. He provided strategic leadership

development consulting to a wide variety of organizations for 40 years. He and Anika Savage co-authored *Life Sustaining Organizations — A Design Guide*. He was a member of the World Future Society from 1998-2015. He holds a doctorate in Organizational Behavior from Harvard's Graduate School of Education and a Bachelors in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

Sandra Schillo, Associate Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa Sandra is the Inclusive Innovation Cluster Co-Lead at the Institute for Science, Society and Policy (ISSP) and an Associate Professor at the Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa. Sandra's research explores aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship that have policy and societal relevance. In addition to her academic work, engages regularly in policy conversations, and has published for policy audiences, e.g. outlining the concept of "Inclusive Innovation in Developed Countries" in the TIM Review. She holds a Phd in innovation and entrepreneurship and has experience working in technology transfer and innovation and entrepreneurship policy consulting.

Michael Turner, V.P. System Strategies, Wesley Clover International

Michael provides the company with strategic analysis, government relations management and support of the Alacrity business incubators program. Previously, Michael was a senior executive with the Canadian Government, leading the IT and telecommunications operations within the common services agency. During this period, he was a member of the executive team responsible for implementing over 100 Internet based eGovernment services for Canadian citizens and businesses. Prior to this, Michael served for more than 25 years in various operational and executive positions within the Canadian Coast Guard, culminating in several years as Deputy Commissioner.

Moderator

Robert Falcon Ouellete, Pearson Centre for Progressive Policy

Ouellette is from Red Peasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. He is a dedicated activists educator. A veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces for 23 years where he served as a company commander in the 5th Field Ambulance. He was a university professor at the University of Manitoba. He has a PhD and two Master degrees from Laval University in Quebec City. He is a former Member of Parliament where he obtained unanimous consent to change the Standing Orders of the House of Commons to allow interpretation of Indigenous languages. He was the Chair of the Indigenous caucus where he helped lead change in CFS & languages legislation as well as advising the government on changing the large institution of government for advance reconciliation.

David Harries, PhD., P.Eng. Executive Director Foresight Canada

David is a Canadian now living in Kingston. He who has worked in the public and private sectors as a senior military officer, as a consultant in personal and corporate security, and as a senior advisor and professor in heavy engineering, humanitarian aid, post conflict/post disaster response and recovery, civil-military relations, executive development and university education. He has lived in 20 countries and paid one or more working visits to another 93, Currently, he is a past-Chair, Canadian Pugwash Group, Associate Executive Director, Foresight Canada, a Principal of the Security and Sustainability Guide, President of the Proteus Canada Institute and a Fellow of the World Academy of Art & Science.