



May 2020

Managing a Post- Covid19 Era

ESCP Impact Papers

Edited by

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ESCP eBOOK

Cite as

Author(s), (Year), Paper title. In Bunkanwanicha, P., Coeurderoy, R., and Ben Slimane, S. Editor (Ed.), Managing a Post-Covid-19 Era, ESCP Impact Papers. Retrieved from http://url_of_ebook_database.

ESCP Impact Papers are in draft form.

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ABOUT **ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL**

ESCP Business School was founded in 1819. The school has chosen to teach responsible leadership, open to the world and based on European multiculturalism. Our campuses in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Turin and Warsaw are the stepping stones that allow students to experience this European approach to management. Several generations of entrepreneurs and managers were thus trained in the firm belief that the business world may feed society in a positive way. This conviction and our values: excellence, singularity, creativity, and plurality, daily guide our mission and build up our pedagogical vision. Every year, ESCP welcomes 6,500 students and 5,000 managers from 120 different nationalities. Its strength lies in its many business training programmes, both general and specialized: Bachelor, Master, MBA, Executive MBA, PhD and executive education, all of which include a multi-campus experience.

It all starts here.



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FOREWORDS



Philippe Houzé

Chairman of ESCP Business School

Chairman of the Executive Board, Galeries Lafayette Group

All my life I have encouraged that great leaders embrace two essential and complementary qualities: long-term vision, and agility in decision-making and implementation. Only the wise combination of these two gives companies the ability to adapt their pace and direction while keeping their goal in sight.

Whenever I meet ESCP students, I cannot tell them strongly enough how important "lifelong learning" is. The humility of those who never stop learning prepares them not only to avoid mistakes, but also to seize the magnificent opportunities that our uncertain world has in store for us.

I pay tribute to the ESCP Faculty for having found, in these turbulent times, the resources to transition to distance learning, and to share their knowledge with society. We are truly in a Business school where training and education guides our future leaders and entrepreneurs to define the purpose of the companies they will manage, in order to create prosperity for all their stakeholders.



Professor Frank Bournois
Dean and Executive President, ESCP

New Leadership Skills for Managers in a Post 2020 Economy

The current Covid-19 crisis has triggered unprecedented upheaval on a global scale, although from a strictly public health point of view, humanity has proven itself capable of joining forces and transcending political boundaries.

The crisis is transforming management

Coming hot on the heels of our bicentenary year, the pandemic has severely impacted the work of ESCP across all of our European campuses, affecting all of our faculty members and international students. This crisis has confounded forecasters completely, and now raises serious questions about the responsibilities of managers and the meaning attached to their work.

*“Life ... is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing”
(Macbeth).*

These famous lines from Shakespeare seem particularly apt now, as we reflect upon the teleological import of the actions taken by those in authority.

As the head of a higher education institution, this reflection takes on a dual significance. First and foremost, it concerns the meaning, the usefulness, the value and the purpose of the knowledge which we produce, for society in general. And of course, it also concerns the dissemination of actionable knowledge for the benefit of our stakeholders: students, alumni, businesses, organizations and public administrations.

As Dean of a business school, our responsibility goes above and beyond the production and dissemination of knowledge, methods and managerial practices. It is also a matter of guiding and responding to events, overseeing the constant adaptation of individuals within structured social systems.

Finally, as an academic specialising in leadership, I find myself wondering how best to prepare future business leaders for the challenges they will face.

In a recently published work, Rebecca Anderson (2020)¹ of Harvard Business School explains that managers now have no choice but to totally reinvent capitalism. In *La Prouesse Française* (French Prowess), published in 2017, I insisted on the characteristics, which define the French style of management, highlighting its strengths as well as the weaknesses in need of a rethink (Suleiman, Bournois and Jaïdi, 2017²).

¹ Henderson, R. (2020) Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire. New York: Public Affairs.

² Suleiman, E., Bournois, F., & Jaïdi, Y. (2017). La prouesse française: le management du CAC 40 vu d'ailleurs. Odile Jacob.

The Covid-19 crisis has thrust this debate front and centre. Attentiveness to well-being at work, respect for individuality within groups and a commitment to the greater good are all key pillars of European humanist culture. These values have rapidly come to the fore in the form of the decisive measures taken to protect citizens, respect individual liberties and prepare for the economic recovery of the European Union.

Leaders in both the public and private sectors are acutely aware of the impact of this enforced pause, this moment of reflection on a global scale, and must learn the lessons of the current crisis. Going forward, the six major dimensions identified in the table below will be of primary importance by 2030:

Table 1: Qualities and aptitudes required of future leaders

A) Intellectual	B) Adaptive
Decision-making / ethics Analysis and synthesis / "Helicopter view" Forward-planning/ Strategic vision	Resilience / Resistance to stress Political sense / Governance Agility in different cultures
C) Interpersonal	D) Executive
Human relations / Teams / Networks Leadership / Delegation Written and oral communication	Energy/ Focus on results Evaluation / Feedback Ambition / Modesty
E) Digital	F) Environmental
Digital transformation Interdisciplinarity/ Artificial intelligence Disruption	Construction of ecosystems Integrating the interests of all stakeholders Focus on sustainable development

Source : Adapted from Bournois et Roussillon (1998)³, Bournois et al. (2010)⁴ et Bournois et Allary (2019)⁵

The ESCP community rises to the occasion once again

I could not be more impressed by, or proud of, the monumental work done by the ESCP Faculty, and all in record time! Students, alumni and decision-makers will find herein a rich profusion of ideas, debates and pragmatic proposals for the future of the post-2020 economy.

What variety and depth of talent we have in the academic community of our Business School! All of our European campuses, all of the disciplines of management studies and all of the principal dimensions of decision-making are represented here. Six overarching themes emerge, corresponding to the major challenges awaiting managers: the digital transformation (particularly at work), the limits of individualism and the rise of new forms of collective action, inclusive management/leadership, the resilience of businesses in times of crisis, uncertainty and the need for change (or stability) in the financial markets and the markets for goods and services, and finally the challenges this crisis raises for higher education.

³ Bournois, F. & Roussillon, S. (1998). Préparer les dirigeants de demain : une approche internationale de la gestion des cadres à haut potentiel. Les éditions d'Organisation.

⁴ Bournois, F., Duval-Hamel, J., Roussillon, S., & Scaringella, J. (Eds.). (2010). Handbook of Top Management Teams. Palgrave MacMillan.

⁵ Bournois F., & Allary C. (2019) La coopération entre dirigeants : un ingrédient essentiel du leadership, Harvard Business Review France.

Our community is particularly proud of the mission statement we set ourselves a few years ago: “Inspire and educate business leaders who will impact the world.” In that collective spirit, it falls to me to salute the initiative of three colleagues who have launched and steered this project with incredible energy and commitment. On behalf of our President Philippe Houzé and everybody here at ESCP, I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Pramuan Bunkanwanicha, Régis Coeurderoy, and Sonia Ben Slimane, without whom the project would never have risen to such heights. The call for contributions has inspired a flood of original scientific work, despite the fact that faculty members were already overburdened by the sudden need to create teaching materials for remote learning, as well as preparing for an unprecedented level of digital engagement in 2020/2021. Once again, I want to express my admiration and extend my sincere thanks to all of the colleagues who have contributed to this wonderful outpouring of intellectual solidarity and stimulation. Thank you for sharing so generously the fruits of this prolific period of reflection, inspired by these uncertain times.

ESCP is a prestigious institution with a profound connection to the European humanist tradition. As we traverse this time of global crisis, I am reminded of a passage from the memoirs of Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, published in 1976⁶. His words ring as true now as ever and offer a point of reference as we navigate these turbulent times: “When people find themselves in a new situation, they adapt and change. But as long as they are still hoping that things will stay as there were, or that some compromise might be found, they are not keen to hear new ideas.”

⁶ Monnet, J. (1976). *Mémoires*, Paris. Edition Fayard.



Professor Valérie Moatti
Dean of Faculty

As the Dean of Faculty, I am very proud to introduce this excellent initiative of a series of Impact Papers.

It is a concrete demonstration of the excellence and the engagement of our Faculty, including our permanent professors, emeritus professors, affiliate professors and PhD students. Indeed, 72 faculty members and 12 PhD students pulled on their specific area of expertise to reflect on the Covid-19 crisis, contributing innovative papers.

Despite the heavy workload related to the switch to on-line teaching as well as many other projects, about half of the ESCP faculty from all our campuses contributed positively to this impactful collective initiative. Such involvement reflects not only the talent of our faculty but also its ability and willingness to influence our society and to dialogue widely with our stakeholders.



Dimitri Champollion
Director of Brand & Communications

The prudence - and nobleness - of Professors and researchers, whose activity requires long-term observation, hypothesis formulation, and quantitative studies, often contrast with the agitation of media experts chasing the limelight. How can serious conclusions be drawn so quickly about a crisis that will have changed the world within a few weeks? Yet crises don't wait! The teachings of the next academic year cannot and should not remain unchanged.

The crisis has created many opportunities, much faster than we could imagine. New kinds of remote working, depolluted cities... It has also raised challenges that we considered distant: geopolitical tensions affecting the business world, the place of Europe in a world that is now multipolar, and where the notion of industrial sovereignty will be key... A world that needs to be rebuilt avoiding, if possible, the false patterns that were still in place just a few weeks ago.

In this book collection, you will read more than analysis, you will find convictions, forged over a long period of time. Professors are citizens. Their daily observation of the business world, but also of society, has conferred them more than a distant scientific view. It contributes to the school's bicentenary vision, forged in European humanism and combining academic excellence, creativity, and optimism. Values that characterise those who have a real impact on the world.

PREFACE



Professor Pramuan Bunkanwanicha
*Associate Dean for Research and Chairs
& Professor of Finance*

Research at ESCP Business School envisions a unique and dynamic environment. We are very proud of launching our research initiative on “**ESCP Impact Papers**” aimed at providing insights into management knowledge that is applicable to not only practicing managers, but also other stakeholders, namely the European community, students and society.

The ESCP research impact is developed within the four pillars of the **B.E.S.T.** framework (Business impact, European impact, Society impact, and Teaching impact) as a research-for-action framework.



This first edition of ESCP Impact Papers on “Managing of Post-Covid19 Era” demonstrates how our incisive researchers could react to addressing several insightful, on-time challenges that help further reflections, to better prepare for the possible changes on the future of business and society following this unprecedented disruptive pandemic.

EDITO



Professor Pramuan Bunkanwanicha
Editor-in-Chief



Professor Régis Coeurderoy
Academic Coordinator



Dr. Sonia Ben Slimane
Editorial Coordinator

Not more than a month ago, and with the active support of the ESCP Business School Executive Committee, we launched a call for impact papers "MANAGING A POST-COVID-19 ERA" to the ESCP Business School academic staff. The aim was to provide interpretations of the corona virus crisis and its impact on European business and society, based on the expertise and experience of the ESCP faculty, thus stimulating creative ideas and innovative perspectives that could inspire our many stakeholders.

The underlying idea is expressed through a simple question: Is there a before- and an after-coronavirus crisis? With such a question we wonder whether we can anticipate the consequences of this exceptional situation and whether we can identify transformative factors, or continuities, particularly regarding the potential changes in consumer behaviour, the organizational challenges for management and leadership, or the strategic and financial issues in the markets that this crisis may generate. From a broader perspective, we can also ask what the implications of this crisis are for public policy, innovation; national, regional and global economic development but also for many societal issues.

As a higher education institution, it is important to explore the implications of the crisis on the transformation of higher education, particularly in terms of studying and teaching management.

The subject areas for contributions were very open and reflect the diversity of expertise within the faculty. We were pleasantly surprised to receive in just a few days, proposals from almost 50% of the faculty. We were even more pleased with the transformation of these proposals into full contributions – our first impact papers.

One month further on, we are able to offer you unique analyses and proposals from the ESCP faculty. As you will see, there is a great wealth of contributions, both in content and angles of approach. This diversity reflects as much the diversity of the expertise and knowledge of the faculty as the diversity of their concerns in the face of this unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

As part of this collective mobilization, we have grouped the contributions under thematic headings that fall within the framework of our BEST strategy:

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Total		80

Each of these contributions is first and foremost that of its author(s), who had complete freedom in choosing the subject and the manner in which it was dealt with. ESCP Business School is fundamentally respectful of the academic freedom of its faculty.

With a mobilization that has extended to the School's doctoral students, as well as to external collaborators, we are delighted to see this academic and human challenge succeed so quickly, an exceptional mark of solidarity from all those involved in the realization of this project.

We wish you a good reading.

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What behavioural science can tell us about human behaviour in the wake of pandemic?

Benjamin Voyer
ESCP Business School

Abstract

In the last few weeks, the world has witnessed irrational and extreme behaviours - from stockpiling toilet paper to failing to abide by life-saving lockdown measures. Those behaviours can appear puzzling but are rooted in deeper inner psychological mechanisms. From a psychological point of view, those behaviours can be explained by three main dimensions. Social first, as the current context shows how much of an individual's behaviour is dependent on its social environment, cultural norms, or group behaviours. This is made apparent in the way different countries have tried to address the pandemic. Cognitive, second, as irrational behaviours often have roots in cognitive biases, for instance a short-term bias, which makes use less likely to behave in a way that is supportive of long-term societal interests. Evolutionary, third, as some of the behaviours and information processing strategies we have inherited from our hunter-gatherer ancestors make use more susceptible to spread unhelpful rumours and other potentially unreliable information. This paper offers theory-driven explanations to some of the commonly observed behaviours of the last 2 months.

Keywords: Behavioural science, Consumer psychology, Decision making.

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What behavioural science can tell us about human behaviour in the wake of pandemic?

Panic behaviour: how did we end up we toilet-paper shortage?

Many of us have seen images or even experienced first-hand empty shelves in supermarket. Several reasons can explain why individuals would flock supermarkets and overstock. In previous research conducted with colleague Alain Samson, we showed that most buying behaviour models rely on the assumption that people buy in a standard context, and that consumers have planned their purchases (Samson & Voyer, 2014). But in many contexts, including the current pandemic context, we are facing what we called an emergency purchasing situation, which has several consequences in terms of buying behaviour. First, stressful situations like a world pandemic can trigger a shift in individual regulatory focus, making individuals switch from a promotion focus to a prevention focus. In other words, in a pandemic, we focus primarily on what could go wrong and try to prevent this from happening. This forms part of a series of fight or flight reactions, which we inherited from our hunter-gatherer ancestors. Our behaviours are also guided by perceived social norms around us. As we see images of others stockpiling in supermarkets, we can become convinced that this is the norm, and start mimicking stockpiling behaviours. This eventually leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those events end up triggering social avoidance behaviours, but also, in terms of consumption stockpiling, change of product categories bought (typically, comfort food would be on the rise, as would health and safety product categories). In addition to this, one could add that a rise in anxiety levels and stress is also likely to affect buying behaviours. However, the effect of stress and anxiety varies from one individual to another, with some individuals ending up buying more / comforting themselves with consumption, while others buy less or stock. Whereas normally only a small proportion of the population over-stocks, the pandemic has caused a larger proportion to stockpile and, as stocks are based on past shopping behaviours, supermarkets found themselves overwhelmed.

What can be done to address the issue? The best thing is to give people feedback for them to incorporate in their decision making (Samson & Voyer, 2012). Ocado – an online supermarket in the UK - has used online banners in order to give feedback that it had enough stock if people kept on shopping normally. Anytime panic shopping happens, stockpiling happens at the beginning, and quickly stops as people see shelves being replenished. As we see food and items available, we stop stockpiling because we see no more need to do so and we go back to what we bought and start 'emptying' our own stock. In some cases, governments or store can impose restrictions, which can be useful in the short run to lessen the panic buy. But what eventually stops panic buying is simply people realising that there is no shortage, thus incorporating this feedback into their behaviour.

How will we buy when things go back to 'normal'?

The first thing to say is that one should avoid jumping to hasty conclusions. In theory, one could argue that individuals will have discovered the wonders of ordering things from the comfort of their living rooms and will not ever want to go back to the before. But the reality is likely to be far more complicated than that. First, consumers may be put off by negative experiences: items missing, products arriving late if at all... We know that first experiences matter – start-ups often rush to refund or offer discounts to their new customers in the fear that one bad experience could lead to non-recurrent business and negative word of mouth. So not every new online customer will be a happy one, let alone a returning and regular one.

Then, the 'going back to normal' stage will also play a role and affect behaviours. For some, perhaps following government encouragements, it will be about 'saving small and independent shops. This means that we may see a temporary rush towards in-store buying behaviours. But of course, it depends on how the safety and health guidelines play off. The result is that there could be no real winners. Last but not least, some behaviours could become associated with a 'lockdown phobia'. If you have only been a customer of a certain product or service since the start of the pandemic, you are likely to associate that precise behaviour with the pandemic – something that will probably elicit negative memories. In addition, this behaviour may have come with stress, uncertainty, and other things you may want to avoid in the future.

Towards a cashless society?

One could also wonder whether the covid19 crisis could lead to a cashless society, as some have pointed towards a potential role of cash in spreading the disease. The divide in consumers' use of cash is already generational – with older people relying more on cash than younger people. The fact that vulnerable people are asked to keep sheltering while younger ones join back the working force could mean that shops accelerate the transition as they find consumers readily accepting this and being able to use dematerialised payment. In addition, vulnerable people may find it is perhaps better for them to adopt a different form of payment to be and feel safer. Whether the pandemic affects the use of cash in the long run largely relies on the perceived cost vs benefits of using cash vs dematerialised forms of payment. It will also depend on whether there is confirmed scientific evidence of the role of cash payment in the pandemic spread. If bank notes and coins are found to play a minor or no role, once more research becomes available, this could mean people revert back to older habits. Observing what happens in Western countries where cash is still heavily use (e.g. Austria, Germany, Switzerland) will be interesting. It does not necessarily mean the end of cash though. Even in countries like Sweden, which have had ambitious plans to go cashless, those plans have been scaled back as these were found to exclude part of the population, which relies on cash for various reasons from not having a bank account to strong personal preferences and opposition to lack of anonymity provided by contactless payments and cards.

Witnessing changing habits – for good?

People's habits have changed during the lockdown. And to a certain point, one could wonder if these newly formed habits will carry on once lockdowns are lifted and life comes back to a 'new normal'. For a habit to be carried on, it needs to 'pass' 2 tests. First, it needs to bring some benefits. Second, the constraints of keeping up with the habit need to be low. What we have seen with Covid-19 is that people have been forced to adopt new habits. Many people never get into forming new habits in the first place because the incentives are never strong enough to do so – see how poorly new year's resolutions usually fare. So what is likely to stay is anything that has been seen as valuable and does not require much to maintain. Some may have discovered working from home and may want to stick to it after lockdown. For others, it's about establishing a routine of video calls with friends. Else, getting everything delivered. Changes are likely to be much more individual than society-wide – we will all have discovered things we like and dislike. What goes against our social nature, should, however, slowly vanish in the long run. So as much as social distancing behaviours will be observed until necessary to do so, we should not expect 2-feet-spaced queues to be the norm for longer than mandated. The same goes for virtual everything. Unless those proved beneficial in some ways and some contexts in the future, they are unlikely to stay around. At the same time,

governments may be using 'nudges' to try to foster longer-term changes that they deem desirable (Voyer, 2015, 2018).

The lockdown has had a disproportionate impact on different groups in society, for example the elderly and will have weighted more on people that self-categorise as vulnerable. These may feel higher levels of stress and anxiety and shift even further into prevention focus. The main unknown at the moment is how likely and how quickly behaviours will go back to normal. It will largely depend on the length of social distancing and 'new normal' measures. We do know that adherence to constraints wear off over time, so the coming months will be interesting to watch, to see if masks on the tube really becomes a thing or a month-long fad.

Altogether, behavioural science can provide valuable insights into the behaviours we have witnessed during the lockdown and may witness in the future. But predicting what exactly will happen in the coming months is not easy, as the models and theories we work with are often based on laboratory studies rather than real-life ones. The first thing that was expected was for people to try and recreate something that looks like 'normal' life. And we have seen virtual 'everything' emerging, from dinners, dates, clubbing, or else. But a next step is to rethink how we do things in the first place, facing those constraints. If you take the example of teaching – children or adults – this means going from doing the same activities in an online version, to rethinking how to interact with the audience in different ways. The main difficulty for most is forming routines that can help going through the days. Having a routine makes us go into a sort of 'auto-pilot' mode that means everything goes by quickly (we say that time flies because we go from one thing to another all the time, and often at set times in our days). And last thing, adherence to behaviours and habits decrease over time. New and creative ways to remind people of important measures such as social distancing will be important as measures in place are observed.

The social costs and opportunities of social distancing

The lack of social interactions also comes at a cost. For children, playing with others is an important part of developing and growing up. But a few months of lesser social interactions are unlikely to affect the psychological development of social skills in the long run. Humans are very social by nature. The ways we find to replace these do have merits, but people are discovering how tiring virtual communication can be. With face to face communication, we can sense and communicate in a much more subtle way. With online interaction, we need to compensate for the lack of cues that we usually use to signal we are engaged, happy, etc. This makes it more tiring.

There could be some positive too. If anything, it will make people realise how valuable social interactions are. Cultural changes may also be witnessed in the Western world, where people may realise the value of a collectivist mindset, as opposed to a purely individualist mindset. That is, in collectivist cultures, the default is to take care of others because you expect others to take care of you. In individualistic cultures, everyone is expected to take care of themselves, which can lead to difficulties in times like a pandemic where we, as a society, are relying on everyone changing their behaviours in order for things to get better. Contexts such as a lockdown can probably lead to temporary shifts in interdependent self-construal, that is the extent to which people see their self as connected to others. People are likely to develop these as they are forced to take the perspective of others and understand their difficulties - see parents realising that teaching children is much more challenging than it may look like. Eventually though, things will probably revert back to close to what they were. We would need profound structural changes in how society operates to see shift in values of individualism in the West.

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Neuro-behavioral economics *GET*: Understanding and eliciting choice and behavior... from employees to buyers and users

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Abstract

Have you ever heard about or read about things like “biases”, “nudges”, “thinking fast thinking slow” or “neuroleadership” in the popular press? Neuro-Behavioral Economics combines insights coming from both the behavioral sciences and the cognitive neurosciences. It’s important for leaders to understand how it provides new and useful insights into how people think, make choices and behave... from employees to customers.

Keywords: Cognitive neuroscience, Behavioral economics

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Neuro-behavioral economics *GET*: Understanding and eliciting choice and behavior... from employees to buyers and users

“Anyone inventing products should be able to articulate a robust theory of human nature.”
(Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn)

Of course, COVID-19 has created a shock to the global financial systems and real economies! But even before the pandemic hit, these were exhibiting behaviors that were puzzling for economists, only exacerbated by the epidemic lockups and shutdowns. Why can unemployment be so low while yet inflation stays so low as well (i.e. what happened to the Phillip's Curve...)? Increasing industry concentration yet the same low inflation? Massive global debt at near-zero rates with Inverted Yield Curves? Seemingly unending “economic growth”? The “real economy” slowing while financial markets daily reaching new record heights? Public policy being influenced by classic economic paradigms and imagining that a government can and should be run like a business (e.g. if a State fails, can you simply declare bankruptcy, selloff all of the remaining assets, layoff all of the citizens... and replace it with another)? Why are some nations – and their peoples - responding efficiently to the health situation and others not? And so on and so forth. Somehow many of the classic economic parameters and models that have informed and governed our economies and policies for so many decades already seemed to be out of joint.

In fact, this COVID-19 pandemic may simply be accelerating a process (or providing the tipping point?) towards a new way of building our economies and societies. One seems to hear that call from many corners. Just looking at our economic systems, indeed we have been seeing a growing trend of concern for the way it works, from the issues of inequalities to what people are willing to give – or give up – for “the sake of sustainability”. Not to mention what private information so many are giving up every day as we move from a Surveillance Economy (Zuboff, 2019) towards a Surveillance Society. And who are these entities now automatically scooping up and taking for their own what others are giving or unknowingly abandoning to them? How much are individuals willing to give-up for what other benefit they can choose from? Current standard economic paradigms are not capable of addressing issues such as these in a coherent and systematic manner. At best they deal with these things as anomalies and outliers, things which they no longer are: they have become central to our societies.

So, as we come to the end of the 2nd Industrial Revolution Era and enter what some call the 4th Industrial Revolution, many of the basic paradigms that were developed over the last two centuries - and have structured many of our ways of thinking and doing - need to be rethought, starting with basic classic economic paradigms. Central to which is the reliance on the old idea that everyone is only a purely self-interested Rational Utility Maximizer. RUM as a cognitive concept was perhaps useful in its time (when we didn't know any better, couldn't measure and analyze granular data at low cost, needed to build deterministic mathematical models that became increasingly complex and obtuse...) but is now vastly out-of-date.

And by the way, just as much so as the vaunted “Invisible Hand of the Market”. That so-called Invisible Hand of the Market is no longer very “invisible” anymore. Nowadays, thanks to suchlike social media and an ubiquitous 5G internet, we can now measure and analyze in

granular detail and real-time both individual and aggregate behavior (increasingly based on sophisticated AI algorithms, like we already see with financial markets).

So, is society best served by going back to the pre-COVID-19 economic model? If not, so what is to be done? Maybe one needs to start over and go back to basics. Just like it was done over a century ago.

Economics is, in its most fundamental sense, all about how people make choices about things, and relate and exchange with each other. And for the last century or so it has been dominated by what can loosely be called “equilibrium thinking”: tit-for-tat matched and balanced relation and exchange *if* each party provides as promised. It therefore assumes a large degree of certainty (e.g. remember the “perfect information” clause, which by the way implies an infinite cognitive capacity for knowledge...). “Buyer Beware” is essentially treated as something of an afterthought. But that being said, is equilibrated transacting the only way humans - and even corporations and other organizational entities - do these things in their daily lives? Of course not! It’s a fiction. But it’s easy to forget that all of neoclassical economic thinking, models and methods today are built upon this presumption¹.

And what are “the basics”? It all comes down to: *what is your theory of human nature? What is your model of human cognition and behavior?*

So, if economics is fundamentally the science behind choosing, maybe it’s about time to rethink how real people make choices. Based not on age-old philosophies and doctrines, but on what modern science says.

- On the one hand, leaders need to understand the subtle forces why people will – or won’t – follow them. Neuro-Behavioral economics brings to bear psychology, economics, and organizational behavior to understand how to manage organizational decision-making and change. Nitin Nohria (former Dean of HBS) quipped: “I think the social-science lemon has been squeezed dry. There may be some drops of juice left, but the fruit of the neurosciences has barely begun to be touched. Businesspeople are turning to them now because we see a much richer opportunity for ourselves in the future.” (Lawrence and Noria, 2002)
- On the other hand, marketing spends billions to understand and influence consumers—with mixed results. Neuro-Behavioral economics brings to bear psychology, economics, and marketing to better understand the oft-hidden factors that really influence consumer choice-behavior, and how context affects the decision-making process. Philip Kotler (2016) (of 5P fame) recently complained that: “Behavioral Economics Is Really Marketing”. And in that, Kotler is both right and wrong. Their purposes are not the same. He’s right in that Marketing looks at actual human behavior... though focused on how to entice and persuade them to buy *your* product or service. Wrong in that Behavioral Economics looks far beyond simply this domain of “Marketing”. Behavioral Economics looks at *all* of external human *behavior*, and then Neuro-Economics look at all internal human *cognition* that is relevant of economics. They are in fact two sides of the same coin, each feeding on - while also informing the other.

So, what’s the alternative? And why should we be surprised at what it says? Even Adam Smith was, in effect, a behavioral economist before its time (Ashraf, Camerer and Loewenstein, 2005). But after a long hiatus, now new ways of “thinking economics” is being revived with a vengeance and rapidly going mainstream. Some of these ways, such as Behavioral

¹It’s noteworthy that Alfred Marshall, the purported father of neoclassical economics, intended his theoretical developments to be descriptive and not normative. The latter came later.

economics, focus on the deviations from the neoclassical models, such as Herbert Simon's "Bounded Rationality" and Richard Thaler's "Nudge: ideas. However, new approaches throw out the old model altogether. That's where *Neuro-Behavioral* economic thinking makes the difference.

So why do you need neuro-behavioral economics? Indeed, thanks to the underlying *science* behind *Neuro-Behavioral* economics, year by year we now know much more about how to improve an organization's success and growth by learning how to elicit the desired employee and customer behavior.

So, what are these recent disruptive scientific discoveries underlying *Neuro-Behavioral* Economics? There are many. And the list grows every day. However, just to give a flavor, in a nutshell science says such things as:

- Reasoning and affects are *not* "separable" with respect to choice-making (aware of it or not, what we commonly call "emotions" are the biological mechanisms by which we qualify and rank options to predispose a choice),
- The mind is a *limited resource* that can only focus on one thing at a time and is hardwired to "economize" (such as systematically "categorizing", relying primarily on "softwired" heuristical versus "spot" deliberate choice-making...),
- "Change is pain" and we have many innate primitive intuitions (such as innately intuiting "more" versus "less", repetition versus non-repetition...) and systematic unidirectionally asymmetrical biases,
- We "look forward" relentlessly but are often surprisingly poor natural observers, "rememberers", "calculators" and predictors... with respect to ourselves and to others,
- Some things we just don't know: too diffuse, distant, complex, can't even conceptualize... or hidden,
- We also simply and completely "forget" (sorry Sigmund...),
- ...

As you can easily imagine, this is a far cry from Homo Economicus 1.0 RUM characteristics. So how can we think of these characteristics in a structured way? People do have some common characteristics, after all when they make choices. Things we all choose to do in some way, shape or form. So for example, ask yourself the question(s). Why and when do they proactively give philanthropically or *de facto* abandon when with some effort they might get more (G). Classic economics can't explain that. *Neuro-Behavioral* Economics can. Same with why and when do people take from each other (T)? As for why and when do they perform balance, match and equilibrate (E) their transactions (E)? *Neuro-Behavioral* Economics includes that too.

Giving. Equilibrating. Taking. What can determine what these GET choice-modes we choose between? It all depends of course on what we know... and don't know (Also understanding, of course, that if there's a choice, it means that there's a cost. That's what – in cognitive terms - economists mean when they talk about "choice under constraint"). But the crucial difference is: now we know how and why this is, thanks to the new discoveries coming from the cognitive neurosciences (Piret, 2019a).

G, E and T: For corporations, what are we learning?

What does this mean for corporations and its leaders? These new economic ways of thinking and models, based on the latest science, will help leaders to deal more effectively with crucial business issues. For example, how to:

- Understand the forces that drive choices.
- Examine the cognitive biases and motivation problems that get in the way of making wise decisions.
- Leverage Neuro-Behavioral science for the organization.
- Discover how to more effectively, efficiently, and ethically influence people's behavior to meet your business objectives and learn how to scale those behavioral and neuro-science capabilities across your organization.
- Design products and services that create and capture more value to both the customer and you.
- Learn how environments influence behavior, and how you can combine Neuro-Behavioral insights and data science to identify opportunities.
- Lead user and outcome-oriented choice-making, and enhance motivation and performance across your organization.

And ultimately?

- Engineer your organization's growth.

The next step: get growth again?

So, if the world is going to reemerge from the COVID-19 economic shutdown, where is growth going to come from? What is going to drive it? If the driver will be corporations, what is it going to look like?

There's a broad assertion going around town that can be summed up as: "you can't engineer² growth". That's what classic economics-based "strategy and finance thinking" has been loudly claiming for a few decades now³. And that's because the only answer that classic "rational utility maximizing (RUM) equilibrium economic thinking" has provided for growing your business is some variation on: "sell more and better". Produce a product or service. Then push it out the door to the maximum number of potential customers. Each will either choose or not choose to buy and consume it as a function of other competing close and likely alternatives. *A price will be set.* Any competitor has something of a monopoly on the alternate "solution" they provide. In effect, for the last few centuries the mantra has been that all you can do if you want to grow is to wait for "the market" to do its "invisible" deed. And that made a lot of sense when all that you were talking about was increasingly mass producing things

² From Piret (2019b), what is meant here by "engineer" is not about designing and building an airplane or an oil refinery, but what is best captured by the wider definition given by Webster's: "a person who carries through an enterprise through skillful or artful contrivance".

³ The usual sweeping argument is that 60 to 70% of M&A cases do not "provide shareholder value". But what about the remaining 30 to 40% of cases? Perhaps that just means that M&A is hard to do well? For a recent example in the strategy literature, see Good Strategy Bad Strategy. Richard Rumelt. Crown Business, Jul 19, 2011. [Disclosure: Richard Rumelt was the author's PhD Thesis Chair at UCLA]

that consumers couldn't change once they had bought it and then literally *consume* it, and you couldn't easily track what everyone was doing and choices they were making.

And as a result, on the one hand classic "strategy thinking" implicitly assumes that growth will follow implementing a good strategy. If there's any problem, tactics take over. Take it up with marketing and sales. It's their job to "talk at" the targeted customer segment and convince individuals within it to make a purchase. On the other hand, classic "finance thinking" assumes a known growth rate in their models. So both end up staring each other in the face. But neither explicitly deals with *growing as a phenomenon per se*. It too is invisible.

In a sense - as Mark Twain quipped about the weather - everybody talks about growth... but nobody does anything about it. And yet growth remains a powerful and central human concern, from the individual through corporations to national economies. For if you, your company or your nation are not flourishing and growing, they are stagnating, vulnerable and on the slippery slope towards dying. "Growing" in some way, shape or form has become a macroeconomic, business - and human - essential⁴.

The problem is that if you rely on classic economic thinking, you can't make much new headway on the question of growing and growth in general. That's fundamentally because of the way, as mentioned above, it conceptualizes and models the nature of human nature: the classic *Homo Economicus* (1.0) mind that has the same unlimited resources, only makes deliberate choices, and does that in one fundamentally same way.

So is that all that can be said about growing? Is there anything else that we actually do to make growth "visible"? Can one think through and act in a coherent, comprehensive and structured way towards *growing and growth in itself*? And finally, how will this be useful to strategy and finance as well as general business and economic thinking and activities? Why is Neuro-Behavioral Economics and this GET "theory of human nature" useful? Indeed, it allows one to take a fresh approach on whether or not "growth can be engineered" above and beyond simply "selling more and better".

Why is this picture of "*Homo Economicus*" different?

Don't shoot the messenger: this is what science is telling us. But this also overturns centuries of economic and business thinking that managers have been formatted to believe and use for decades. Though it's not like classic economists-business thinkers got it totally wrong, after all. "Equilibrating" has a strong force of attraction in human relations and exchanges. We do it all the time when we go to the bakery to buy our usual loaf of bread. The problem is that it assumes that people *only* make choices when they know everything they need to know. But that's very often not the case. And all buyers and users are not the same and now we can take into account the differences in the way individuals make their choices. This alternative GET model directly, coherently, parsimoniously and measurably addresses the entire range of these common circumstances, from monopoly to philanthropy, based on what science tells us about how real humans make choices.

Why does this matter? Unshackled from the tyranny of RUM-thinking, the doors are open to now better understand, measure, analyze and - crucially - mathematically model in a new way a broad range of business and economic issues, such as how and why:

⁴ For an interesting overview of economic growth and its human cognitive impact, see Friedman (2006).

- Maximizing buyer-user satisfaction and minimizing buyer-user *dissatisfaction* is *not* the same thing. This has an impact on how we should be thinking about basic concepts like “utility” and “value”. All of which is to say that benefit and cost structures can - and should - be dealt with separately, each with its own attributes and profiles,
- People's choice-making mindsets tend to *shift-to-the-middle* (E), since this can lead to cognitive comforts like greater *simplicity, predictability and stability* for themselves with respect to others,
- Equilibrating is constrained by what each party can provide in exchange to the other. This can lead to phenomena such as *inertia*. And since “change is pain”, in order to effect *deep contextual change*, leaders need to delicately combine T (e.g. for *direction* and *speed*) and G (e.g. to *empower* and build *trust*),
- Due to the uncertainties inherent to asymmetric information, how people can and will *game* between GET characteristics, and think through and build in a structured way *new business models*,
- And much more...

Though last but not least, on a broader scale: the economic historian Fernand Braudel (1992), talking about the Gutenberg invention, explained how you need to satisfy three criteria for a new technology to create a change of civilization:

- A change in human communication (today that means email, IM, VOIP, search engines, apps, bots... to sensor technologies and IoT),
- A change in knowledge sharing (today that means social media, forums, blogs... to Big Data in the Cloud, algorithm mosaics, AI and Persuasive Tech),
- A change in making and exchange of goods and services (today that means Amazon, Robotics, Ubiquitous Computing, Mass Customization... to 3D/4D printing, CRISPR, Precision Medicine, Crypto Currencies and Blockchains).

So why be surprised at all the excitement around all of these innovations? We shouldn't. Just like the Technological Revolution of two centuries ago, these recent leaps in technologies are “revolutionizing” once again. Not least of which, we're *finally* getting access to masses of granular data on convergent buyer-user benefits structures, but *especially on divergent uniquely individual buyer-user cost structures*. Which allow for the development of new ways to capture and analyze this granular information, in order to build growth by using these - along with new relational, production and “currency” technologies - in new ways. Thereby – for better and for worse - providing more choice opportunities. And indeed, over the last decades we've seen new business models that weren't previously possible emerge, be imitated and improved to great effect. And we shall see many more. Though while they may provide great benefits, they will also necessarily be accompanied by costs. But at least now we'll have a way to deal with *both of these*.

Conclusion

It's clear that people are going to have to give-up many things post-COVID-19. It's not clear that “business as usual” will naturally reappear. But whatever the case may be, what is clear is that there will be a “before COVID” and an “after COVID”, and that in the long term the traditional neoclassical economic way of thinking, built for an Industrial Revolution that peaked in the 1960s, is not here to stay.

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Mobile phone data as an opportunity to fight the pandemic

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Abstract

This impact paper shows the anonymous mobile phone user location data, when aggregated and properly analysed, can be of great help to the pandemic combat. It then discusses potential data privacy issues and argues that a 100% confidentiality does not exist. It is important to manage and control the data carefully, and make it an opportunity for us in the digital era.

Keywords: Mobile phone data, Pandemic, Privacy, COVID-19, Digitalization

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Mobile phone data as an opportunity to fight the pandemic

Since winter 2019, an outbreak from the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has raised intense attention from all over the world. The World Health Organization (2020) recognized the outbreak as a pandemic. As of 9 May 2020, more than 3.93 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in 187 countries, resulting in over 274,000 deaths (Johns Hopkins University, 2020). The increasing number of cases and widening geographical spread raise grave concerns about its socioeconomic impact. The outbreak is regarded as "the greatest test that we have faced together since the formation of the United Nations" (United Nations, 2020).

The challenge of COVID-19 requires efforts from various fields. Whereas pharmaceutical approaches are critical in the combat, information and operations management methodologies can also play an important role. Specifically, in the era of digitalization, mobile phone data offer a novel opportunity to fight the pandemic. This paper shows that some of the plain mobile phone data, when aggregated and analysed properly, can be of great help to combat the pandemic. It also discusses data privacy concerns and calls for stakeholders to take this opportunity proactively.

Which data is needed?

A mobile (smart) phone stores various types of data, such as call details, text messages, media files, social media posts, online transaction records, etc., and many of them are indeed private and confidential. These data are critical to the individual phone users but are not of many effects to combat the pandemic. Instead, some of the unremarkable and unimportant data, when aggregated, could play an important role.

Highly accurate location data are recorded by many apps with positioning/navigation functions. With aggregated location data, the positions of phones and the proximity between phones can be tracked. Another useful stream of data is the activation history of apps. Note, this metadata only records, e.g., when a user opens Whatsapp but does not have access to the text sent via Whatsapp. With this history, the so-called user profile can be estimated. For example, a phone that never runs Instagram or TikTok and only occasionally activates news apps might belong to an older person, who is likely to require more medical care during a pandemic.

How can the data support pandemic combat?

Among all opportunities, I find the following four cases especially interesting.

Governments have implemented policies to enforce social distances, mobility restrictions, quarantine controls, etc. In general, they have been proved successful in combating the pandemic. However, improvements are always possible. Are some policies too strict? How can the violations be controlled? Should the policies be tailored for different areas? Aggregated location data can be used to empirically evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of such policies, which can further guide the policy modifications.

A fundamental parameter in almost all infectious disease progress models is the so-called "basic productive ratio" (Larson, 2007). It is often denoted as R_0 in literature, and is defined as the average number of new infections generated by an infected person. For example, $R_0 = 3$ means an infected patient transmits the disease to three others on average. This ratio

represents the essential characteristics of the disease and changes during the pandemic. If $R_0 < 1$, the virus will soon subside, and everyday life will gradually move back to normal. Obviously, this parameter is dependent on the proximity between people. The location data can be used to improve the calculation accuracy of this ratio in real-time, and predict the date it falls below one.

The locations of a specific individual can also be helpful. It is known that a patient has a so-called "incubation period" after infection, in which he/she is asymptomatic but infectious. When the patient is diagnosed after showing relevant symptoms, he/she could have already unintentionally spread the virus to many others. Using the location data, the people who have had close contact with the patient during the incubation period can be found and proactively tested.

The so-called "patient zeros" mean the first patients infected and are of great importance to investigate the origin of the virus for its cure. Because the virus spreads very quickly with possible mutation, time-consuming laboratory tests are difficult to keep track of the route of transmissions. If the location data from all populations can be well maintained, it is possible to efficiently trace back to "patient zeros" digitally.

Data privacy concerns

Unavoidably, the use of mobile phone data raises legitimate concerns about privacy data protection issues that nobody should ignore.

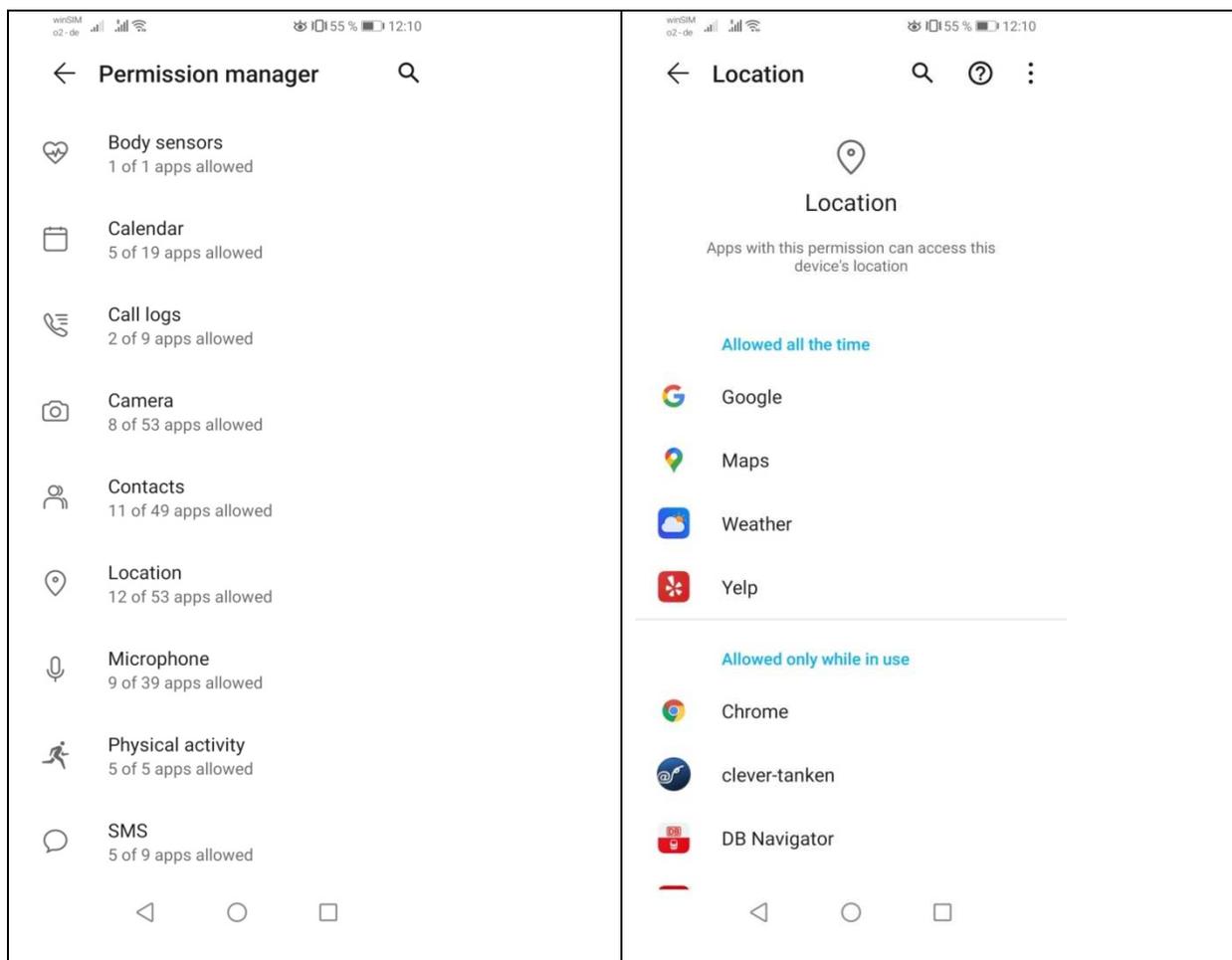
May I invite you to open your smartphone settings and check your Permission Manager? The left-hand side of Figure 1 shows the different types of privacy permitted to the apps installed on my Android phone. For example, 53 apps have requested to access the location data of my phone, and 12 of them have been granted. Some of the apps even have access to my contacts and SMS, which I believe are even more confidential than location. The right-hand side of Figure 1 lists part of the apps that know my location. Every day, many apps are intentionally collecting all types of private data from users. If you (have to) allow commercial firms to access your location, calendar, camera, etc., why don't you voluntarily have your location retrieved to support the pandemic combat, which is arguably the biggest challenge of our human beings now? In addition, the location data are anonymous, whereas the commercial firms know (too much of) your privacy in terms of calendar, contacts, call logs, etc.

It is fair to argue that perfect anonymity does not exist. Rocher et al. (2019), for example, find it possible to re-identify the phone users to 97% accuracy by only analysing the location data. I would argue that a 100% confidentiality does not exist, and it is more important to proactively control and manage the data. A knife can be a weapon to hurt people, or, a tool to serve people. The difference does not depend on the knife itself, but the person in the use of it. Data is a much more useful tool compared to a knife, and it deserves much careful management and control.

In Asia, ambitious smartphone apps with governmental support are already working effectively, such as the Corona 100m app in South Korea, the TraceTogether app in Singapore, and government apps in China. In the US, Apple and Google have teamed up to create technology to trace COVID-19 infections across IOS and Android phones (Apple, 2020). In Europe, several research universities, research centers, and companies have established the Pan-European Privacy-Preserving Proximity Tracing (<https://www.pepp-pt.org/>) to develop GDPR-compliant tracing. The EU Commission on 23 March 2020 called upon European

mobile network operators to hand over anonymized and aggregated data to the Commission to track virus spread and determine priority areas for medical supplies (Financial Times, 2020). Recently, a group of world researchers has launched a called in *Science* (Oliver et al., 2020) to encourage governments, mobile network operators, technology companies, and researchers to collaborate and make good use of the mobile phone data to combat the pandemic. These are optimistic initiatives.

Figure 1: Screenshots of the author's Android phone, listing how the private data are accessible by the apps installed.



Conclusion

In this short paper, I present how the plain mobile phone data can be used to combat the pandemic, and discuss the relevant privacy concerns.

Many argue that COVID-19 is the main driving force in an organization to digitalization (McKinsey, 2020). This also applies to the use of mobile phone data. Data can be even more valuable than oil, as long as they are properly managed, controlled, and analysed. They give us a new opportunity to fight the pandemic, which has never happened before the digital era. We should proactively take this opportunity era to protect ourselves. COVID-19 may subside soon, but other pandemic or new challenges will always come again.

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The regulatory functions of experiences of consumption in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

This impact paper reviews the current knowledge in consumer psychology to better understand how and which experiences of consumption can regulate consumers' negative emotions and, in turn, foster consumer well-being. Based on the publications and research projects led by the members of the ESCP research center in "Happiness & Well-Being in Management", this impact paper informs managers and consumers about routes to happiness through consumption in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Consumer well-being, Experiences of consumption, Positive emotions

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The regulatory functions of experiences of consumption in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Surrounded by the individual and collective threat created by the COVID-19, people may experience a myriad of emotions, with the preponderance of them being negative by nature. Individuals come to discover their utter lack of control and emotions related to anxiousness (i.e., feeling worried, scared, afraid), sadness (i.e., feeling empty, gloomy, depressed) or even anger (i.e., feeling frustrated, upset, irritated) may be felt. Research in psychology has shown that such catastrophic events can create substantial emotional distress and negative long-term effects on an individual subjective well-being. But it is clear that not everybody is affected in the same way. It obviously depends on one's personality and life experience but it also depends on how people regulate their negative feelings and emotions.

To improve their emotional state, individuals naturally tend to engage in coping strategies and mitigating such negative feelings and emotions through consumption is one of them. This is the reason why the pandemic has induced new and sometimes irrational consumption patterns. Among them, for instance, panels from McKinsey, BCG, IRI or Nielsen report that consumers tend to spend less money but shop more frequently online and that they tend to buy exclusively primary commodities except for hedonic product categories such as alcohol, skin care, makeup or entertainment. Those reports also evidence that even if the COVID-19 pandemic affects differently consumers, a majority of them believe the way they shop will fundamentally change after the pandemic.

To shed light on those unusual but probably long lasting shopping behaviours induced by the pandemic, this impact paper reviews the current theoretical and empirical knowledge in consumer psychology to better understand how and which experiences of consumption can regulate consumers' negative emotions and, in turn, foster consumer well-being. In particular, this impact paper relies on the psychological stream of research about regulatory focus and the findings from the studies related to consumer well-being run by the members of the ESCP Research Center in "Happiness, Well-Being & Management" (<http://happymgmt.eu/about-research-center/>). This impact paper has practical implications. It can inform consumers who often fail to choose situations that maximize their happiness about routes to well-being. It also helps managers to identify a typology of experiences of consumption strengthening affective and meaningful relationships with their customers.

Self-regulatory orientations: Avoiding pain or approaching pleasure?

Example in the context of the pandemic

Imagine that Maya and Emile are two students in their last year of studies at an international business school. Although they do not feel at high risk of contracting the Coronavirus, they may experience episodes of anxiety, sadness or frustration because they are worried for their loved ones, they are confined alone at home, they socialize only online and are highly uncertain about their future in the workplace.

They will both try to cope with those negative feelings and emotions but they may have radically different goals in doing so. Maya may be motivated by experiences allowing her to escape from reality and she might, for example, immerse herself into alternative realities through videos-games, series or shows. By contrast, Emile may be motivated by experiences

allowing him to self-actualize and he might, for example, express his creativity through digital paintings or develop his physical skills following sports' tutorials.

Maya and Emile show two different ways in regulating the negative feelings and emotions induced by a stressful life event as the COVID-19 pandemic. The underlying psychological mechanism and its consequences in the consumer behavior are discussed below.

Psychological mechanism

In this example, Maya is orientated towards a prevention goal (i.e., to feel better, she will avoid negative feelings) whereas Emile is seeking a promotion goal (i.e., to feel better, he will search for positive feelings). The theory of self-regulatory orientations (Higgins, 1998), fundamental to explain human motivations, suggests that even if most people try to approach pleasant states, they can do so in different ways.

When prevention focused, as Maya in the previous example, people are responsive to security needs and try to avoid mismatches with a desired state (e.g., avoid negative feelings to enhance well-being). When promotion focused, as Emile in the previous example, people are motivated by growth and development needs and are concerned with approaching matches with a desired state (approach positive feelings to enhance their well-being). If the desired state is, for instance, to remain healthy, prevention focused individuals would be likely to avoid eating fat foods (avoiding a mismatch) whereas promotion focused individuals would be likely to exercise (approach a match).

Overall, comfort or ensuring non-losses predominate for prevention-focused persons whereas eagerness or ensuring gains predominate for promotion-focused persons.

Consequences on consumption

This distinction between prevention focus and promotion focus people offers an interesting conceptual dichotomy in the consumption realm. The research projects and publications from the ESCP research center on "Happiness, Well-being and Management" evidence that prevention focused consumers are more likely to use experiences of consumption as a mean to escape from worries (Cova, Carù, Cayla, 2018) whereas promotion focused consumers are more likely to use experiences of consumption as a mean to express one's potential (Belk, 1988).

To regulate their negative emotions, most of the positive episodes of consumption reported by prevention-focused consumers are related to sensorial experiences (i.e., the temperature of a drink, the taste of a food, etc.) and to technology-based entertainment (i.e., playing video games, watching shows, etc.). Those experiences allow people, like Maya, to escape self-awareness because they focus on on-going physical sensations or because they turn to imaginative escapes. Notably, those episodes of escape in consumption are mostly ordinary, frequent and within the realm of everyday life.

As for promotion-focused consumers, like Emile, most of the positive episodes of consumption are related to health (e.g., following a diet, doing gym) and creativity (e.g., drawing paintings, playing guitar). Many consumers, indeed, relate health to the construction of their ideal selves and creativity to the expression of their actual selves. Compared to episodes of escape in consumption, those experiences of self-actualization through consumption are related, in a higher extent, to extraordinary, infrequent and beyond of the realm of everyday life episodes.

Self-regulatory outputs: seeking calm or excitement, looking for pleasure or meaning?

Example in the context of the pandemic

Let's move back to Maya and Emile example. Even if Maya will look for experiences of consumption providing escapes whereas Emile will look for experiences of consumption providing self-actualization, they both are willing to experience positive emotions and enhance their general well-being. They, however, may differ in terms of the nature, the intensity and the consequences of the emotions felt.

Will Maya derive more happiness from high emotional experiences providing excitement, elation or enthusiasm rather than low emotional experiences providing calm, relaxation or serenity? Will Emile be more likely to look for pleasure-based forms of episodes of consumption or meaning-based forms of episodes of consumption? Those questions are theoretically and empirically discussed below.

Characteristics of positive experiences of consumption

A recent and growing stream of research investigates the impact of experiences of consumption on happiness and generally shows that the nature of the experience (either with material or immaterial goods) has an impact on consumer well-being.

In particular, Mogilner et al. (2012) distinguish between positive experiences of consumption providing emotions low in arousal (calm, relaxation, serenity) and high in arousal (excitement, elation, enthusiasm) and find that the latter is more important to young people's well-being while the former plays a larger role in the well-being of older people.

The age, or more precisely the way people are thinking about time (as expansive for younger people or limited for older people) also influences the search for ordinary or extraordinary episodes of consumption. Maya and Emile are both young students and should, in turn, derive more happiness from exciting and extraordinary episodes of consumption whereas their grandparents should derive more happiness from calming and ordinary episodes of consumption. Maya, however, will find more happiness through calming experiences of consumption that allow her to relieve immediately her stress compared to Emile who is eager to experience invigoration through his episodes of consumption.

Whatever their age, research on consumer happiness also demonstrates that consumers derive more happiness when activities are focused on others (shared with others, experienced to connect with others) instead of being focused on oneself (solitary, experienced to re-connect with oneself). Both Maya and Emile should be encouraged to turn to their digital devices in order to experience those social benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. This should be especially true for Emile because he is eager to develop his ideal and social self compared to Maya.

Distinction between pleasure-based and meaning-based forms of consumption

Marketing scholars who investigate consumer happiness generally take a unilateral approach focusing on the hedonic path, where people experience happiness as pleasure. Positive experiences of consumption are commonly viewed as ways to provide immediate pleasure (i.e., eating a tasty ice cream), enjoyment (i.e., playing video-games) or contentment (i.e., listening to music). This unitary view is however increasingly criticized because it is now

widely acknowledged that a eudaimonic path, where happiness arises from the fulfilment of meaningful goals is a distinct and important dimension of consumer well-being (Schmitt, Brakus and Zarantonello, 2015).

Consumers, for instance, may approach positive experiences of consumption with the intention of seeking long lasting meaning (i.e., making homemade organic ice cream), excellence (i.e., becoming the best video-game player) or growth (i.e., learning to play guitar). Well-being through consumption need, therefore, to be approached through its pleasurable and meaningful dimensions. Consumers can turn to the same brand (e.g., Google) for the same product or service (e.g., Youtube) with the same device (e.g., mobile phone) but can seek either pleasure (i.e., watch a funny video) or meaning (i.e., learn a new skill with a tutorial). Finally, as for Maya and Emile, our prevention-focused Maya is more likely to increase her immediate, hedonic, pleasure-based forms of happiness through consumption whereas Emile is more likely to increase his long lasting, eudaimonic, meaning-based forms of happiness through consumption.

Conclusion

If everyday consumer experiences can regulate negative feelings and emotions induced by the COVID-19 pandemic and consequently have an impact on consumer happiness, how can managers provide these positive experiences of consumption? This question should be addressed when developing a brand's content strategy. Traditionally, marketing managers distinguish content to educate (e.g., articles, guides, infographics), to persuade (e.g., checklists, ratings, financial calculations), to entertain (e.g., games, competition, mobile apps) or to inspire (e.g., endorsements, testimonials, forum comments) so as to attract prospects, convert them into clients and retain them as loyal customers. Why not adding a category we refer to as "content to enhance consumer well-being" and activate accordingly marketing campaigns that could either focus on "avoiding negative feelings and emotions" or "approaching positive feelings and emotions". With regard to prevention-focused content, brands can propose experiences of consumption to escape from the anxiety, sadness or anger felt and underline the calming benefits provided as well as the contribution to short term and pleasure-based forms of happiness. By contrast, brands can decide to apply a promotion-focused content strategy and enhance the invigoration benefits provided by the experience of consumption as well as the contribution to long lasting and meaning-based forms of happiness.

Importantly for consumers, this impact paper is not an invitation to engage in simple materialism or mindless overspending which is neither a useful nor ethical path to well-being. Consumers, alternatively, need to be aware of their usage of consumption in regulating their negative feelings and emotions especially in the context of this stressful pandemic. Experiences of consumption can offer the opportunity to relieve stress but may be driven by the need to escape from reality and self-awareness. Consumption of immersive sensorial experiences like eating food, drinking beverages, watching TV or listening to music may provide calming experiences but will lead more probably to short-term pleasure but not long lasting benefits. Still, some episodes of consumption more related to physical or creative activities can also provide invigoration for individuals with a promotion-focus. Those are also more likely to experience long lasting well-being seeking meaningful rather than pleasurable goals.

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Influencer marketing post Covid-19: Notes on being a personal brand

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Abstract

Influencer marketing, where brands collaborate with opinion leaders to engage with users, has been prominent in the marketplace. Such collaboration is under threat during this unprecedented crisis. This impact paper discusses the role and the content strategy of social media influencers during the pandemic and beyond. With a particular focus on the two critical success factors in the field, authenticity and relevance, we examine how influencers could evolve and remain consistent in building their personal brands. Based on the scope and the types of personal brands, whether with the emphasis on professional or personal-self, we make recommendations on the future communications strategy.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Personal brands, Crisis communication, Authenticity, Commercial relevance

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The rise (and fall?) of influencer marketing

Brand communication through opinion leaders and influencers has become paramount in marketing strategy in recent years. A market report in 2019 showed that 86% of the surveyed marketers had dedicated a portion of their budget for influencer marketing. Based on the prediction pre-Covid19, the overall industry is set to grow to approximately \$7.9 billion in 2020⁵. These influencers are often deployed due to the belief that their "ordinary customers" status make them perceived as more authentic and their brand-content more persuasive. As the influencer marketing practices are maturing over the years, there has been a shift from seeing them as influential individual consumers to personal brands. This transition highlights the need to consider commercial relevance in their roles in engaging with consumers. This places influencers in a unique position in the marketplace, the crossroad between being a (content) consumer and a (content) producer.

The main task of influencers in the commercial market is to provide content, whether branded or non-branded. However, during the pandemic, we can observe influencers struggling to keep communicating and engaging their audiences in the context of the crisis. Several factors may have contributed to their struggles. First, user behaviours have changed during the crisis. While more time is spent on social media, the usage of social media has pivoted mainly to look for information or connect with relatives and friends in platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, or Messenger. As a result, the share of eyeballs may have been reduced.

Also, most influencers are not considered to be reliable sources of information, especially during the ongoing pandemic. According to the Edelman group Brand Trust Report (2020), consumers' trust in influencers has decreased to 32% for a small influencer, 28% for a well-known influencer, and even less, 26% for celebrities, compared to 45% for a Brand's CEO. Understandably, the level of trust can fluctuate within the same influencer categories depending on the content types and the influencers' careers outside of the social media space. It is perhaps not surprising to see that many practicing doctors and fitness gurus have witnessed a significant increase in their following in the past two months. On the other hand, those who create aspirational, travel, and lifestyle content may find it challenging to make their content relevant to their audiences. There is no denying, however, consumers seem to look at brands to address the crisis mostly, instead of the influencers who may or may not be working with brands at the time.

The distinctive consumer responses and expectations toward brands and influencers emphasise the ambiguous status of influencers between being a famous internet user and a personal brand. The blurred boundaries have been heightened by the increasing participation of celebrities also in the social media space. Many have opened new accounts in the past two months, documenting their life during lockdowns. While for some of their intent to connect and be relevant is backfiring for the noticeable difference in their confinement conditions⁶, the competition of providing entertainment has uncourtly become increasingly fierce—all of which further pressures, especially macro-influencers to maintain their market space.

Lastly, brands in these times of crisis are constraining their marketing budgets, especially in those industries where the pandemic has impacted more severely. One of the most affected

⁵ <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report-2020/>

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/arts/virus-celebrities.html>

marketing activities has been influencer marketing. Based on a recent survey, the two main challenges that influencers are facing in the late weeks are related to the decrease of collaborations with brands (27.3%) and the risk to look insensitive to their audiences (26.5%)⁷. The fundamental challenges seem to lie in their (in)capabilities of reiterating and expressing their relevance and authenticity during this unprecedented time. We examine the understanding of these two factors to date to provide a framework on how influencers and brands who wish to work with one can communicate more effectively in this kind of crisis context, what type of content or content strategy may resonate better and how to keep it relevant and authentic for audiences.

Staying Authentic and Relevant

Authenticity can be defined as something real, original, sincere and not fake (Gilmore & Pine, 2007), which seem to be qualities any individual could easily present in real life – in the sense that people just need to be themselves without any other considerations. To understand why it is challenging in the context of influencer marketing, we need first to recognise how influencers emerge and evolve. Influencers are usually consumers who go through a transformation process from being a person to a personal brand (Erz and Christensen, 2018). This process often coincides with and constitutes of the accumulation of their following. As they shift their personal identity to a brand persona, they evolve from being nano-influencers with 0 to 10k followers to celebrity influencers with more than 1 million followers (Campbell and Farrell, 2020). As they accumulate cultural capital and establish the power of influence, they often risk losing their authenticity. While a celebrity can still be authentic, those who are "true to oneself in their behaviours and interactions with consumers" (Ilicic et al., 2016, p.410), it is becoming harder to maintain and communicate as the fame increases.

This is because the construct of authenticity is not a fixed term. What is authentic now, for this community, may not be so tomorrow, or for a different group of audiences. Authenticity in social media has a few implicit values that need to be fulfilled. The "being true to oneself" implies that one's content strategy is consistent; any form of sudden change would not be welcomed. Much like one's identity has to be negotiated through their journey to become a personal brand (Erz and Christensen, 2018), their authenticity has to go through the same process. This may explain why some influencers' content during the pandemic has backfired. People are looking for a particular type of content or form of expression, and a sudden pivot may make them seem commercially strategic in their move, rather than being genuine.

The flip side of being consistent is to be unique, which is also a critical quality to be authentic online. Consistency has to be evaluated in relation to the community and other creators in similar domains. For example, based on the level of transparency and passion, prior research suggests there are four paths of authenticity used by social media influencers in the past to proactively manage their self-presentation (Audrezet et al., 2018). With our research, however, we affirm that being transparent with one's commercial intents is less critical than expressing passion for the subjects in establishing authenticity. By law and by public demand, influencers are regularly revealing their collaborations with brands. Internet users are acquainted with such marketing practices. This results in the lack of added value in being transparent while building one's authenticity. When everyone is posting in a similar style, it would naturally become less original or unique.

On top of this, generally speaking, there can be two types of personal brands. One is where the brand originated or built upon one's work, such as influencers who are known for their

⁷ <https://www.emarketer.com/content/covid-19-hinders-influencer-marketing-collaborations-causes-some-creators-to-shift-focus>

content creation, and themselves eventually became a brand. We can consider this as a *professional-self brand*. The other is where the entirety of a brand is built upon the person. Their life and themselves are the content and the brand. We can consider this as a *personal-self brand*. In terms of building authenticity, it will always be easier for the former than for the later. The professional-self brands have, in fact, separated themselves from the personal brands. Once they add "personal" flair to their content, show a bit of vulnerability, and be themselves, they would be perceived as authentic. On the other hand, for a personal-self brand whose entire contents are already rather personal, there would be little room to be more authentic in a sense. Viewers tend to be building a stronger bond with the personal-self brands, but they are also likely to be more sensitive to the changes in the content strategy.

Collaborating with Brands

This belief in having a say in the content strategy of the influencers is a by-product of the transformation process of the influencers' emergence. Fans and followers of the emerged influencers are likely to have a sense of collective ownership in whom they contributed to making as a personal brand. This entitled attitude is distinct from the context of celebrities-turned-influencers whose creations can be separated and respected as their own and true expression. These celebrities use social media to add personal elements to the relationships with their followers (Johns and English, 2016) not to be dictated of what they should create. Moving forward, social media influencers, especially the ones relying on their personal-self brands, may find it harder to ignore the followers' opinions to fight against shrinking attention.

It is also going to be challenging to grow the follower base without occupying a particular subject-domain. In building its credibility and expertise, influencers depend on how well the content they create can resonate with their audiences. To stay relevant, one needs to provide value, be it hedonic or utilitarian. Influencers should not just consider the topic-relevance to the target audience, but also the context they are in. Consequently, content shareability is a critical factor for brands to consider using them as brand ambassadors, endorsers, or just to communicate the brand values.

Regarding content and shareability in social media, many have looked at the different components of content to drive sharing behaviour and virality. Most evidence indicates that emotional content is more frequently shared and impacts purchase and brand evaluation (as long as it is contextual to the brand) as compared to informational content (Akpinar and Berger, 2017). Distinct from the traditional belief that digital messages should include action words, Villaroel et al. (2019) found that generally, directive (action) messages induce less sharing than the assertive (informational) or the expressive (emotional) ones. While this can be served as general guidance, being emotional and expressive may not be authentic for everyone, in every genre, and all communities. It has to be evaluated on a relative scale to the influencers' own past content and benchmarked with others in a similar topic field. This is not to suggest that one should proactively imitate what is popular and in demand, but to find the baseline of communication and create unique content with such a reference.

More importantly, we content that, in the context of personal branding as the case of influencers, another category of messages needs to be included, which we called "inspirational." Inspirational content aims to reflect self-image based on the influencer self-representation in social media. This is especially important for personal-self brands, aiming at creating value through the "personal" elements. The individual characteristics of influencers are, after all, essential to determine their potential as opinion leaders. In this

regard, their personal qualities and their likeability would eventually drive their followers' behaviours. The personal narratives, their arch of becoming who they are (as a personal brand), can turn into inspirational content without deviating from their personal-self in the brands.

A Guide for Personal Brand Communication

Sustaining personal brands overtime requires a strategic vision and careful planning. Notably, one needs to adjust to context while keeping the authenticity and being relevant to the audience and context. Here is what influencers can do in managing their personal brand communication in impactful ways in the days to come.

Carefully assess the current state in becoming a personal brand. As influencer marketing becoming a mature industry, it seems inevitable for influencers to eventually become a personal brand. While nano-influencers can enjoy the newcomers' authenticity, they need to strategically think of what they eventually wish to become, whether a professional-self brand or a personal-self brand. Authenticity would have different meanings, and it will not be a static aspect in conveying the personal brand to the (growing) audiences as it gets more established.

Benchmark the content strategy against the community without compromising uniqueness. During the process of emerging as a personal brand, influencers would have to negotiate their identities not only with their followers but also with others in the same subject-domain space. Since the perception of authenticity and relevance is always on a relative scale, continuous monitoring would help them adjust the content creation accordingly. The objective of the benchmarking is not to create the same content, but to produce unique value on the reference of what is the norm.

Adjust the content per personal brand types: being a professional-self brand or a personal-self brand. The two approaches call for a distinct communication strategy. Prior study on branding communication professes that the narratives should work with the brand image (Chang et al., 2019). Personal brands would benefit from the same approach. While personal-self brands would enjoy more first-person narratives, professional-self brands could benefit from limiting their personal stories and emphasise their competence through their professional content. It is paramount to note, however, the extent of emotional, informational, and inspirational components should be communicated proportionally relevant to the community norm.

Keep the relevance of the context in mind. It would seem that professional-self brands would be less prone to the fluctuation of the context. Someone who provides value with what they do would be expected to keep providing the same thing to a certain extent despite the changing environment. They are thus advised to only use personal elements as an occasional strategic move to enhance the relationships with their followers. Conversely, personal-self brands are more likely to be expected to reflect on the changing of the living environment, as they are regularly communicating about their lives with the audience. The lives we live now has been drastically changed, to which the relevance of their content would require a constant adjustment.

To be an authentic and relevant personal brand—be you, but not the absolute you nor the whole you, only the relative you to the community you are in.

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Marketing in post COVID-19 era: A guide for marketing managers

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Abstract

The economic recession caused by the recent pandemic has significantly affected consumer shopping and media habits and altered firms' marketing activities and performance. Marketing research over the last decades has provided insight into how economic recessions affect consumer behavior and how firms should adjust their marketing mix activities in response to these macro-economic contractions. In this paper, I review the related marketing literature and demonstrate that recessionary periods may provide opportunities for marketers to grow their brand's market share with the right marketing-mix spending management.

Keywords: Marketing research, Empirical generalization, Economic recession, COVID-19

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Marketing in post COVID-19 era: A guide for marketing managers

The recent coronavirus (COVID-19) has forced immediate, far-reaching lifestyle shifts for consumers around the world, and these changes are likely to stay beyond the period of pandemic itself. The global retail industry is experiencing an unprecedented crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown and its economic recession (ER). France's economy, together with several other countries, is expected to experience an ER as it may shrink by 8 percent in 2020 due to COVID-19 (Statistica 2020). U.S. retail sales also dropped by a historic 8.7% in March, and are expected to drop by (at least) 20% moving forward, according to the National Retail Federation.

Faced with uncertainty about the future, many firms are responding to recession by adapting their marketing strategy to changing consumer behavior (The Nielsen 2020). Google, among many other firms, has recently announced a cut in marketing budgets by as much as half, while before the pandemic, they expected to increase marketing spending from the previous year (CNBC 2020), as they did after the ER of 2008.

Marketing researchers over the last few years have studied the impact of ERs on consumer behavior and firms' responses to ERs. Drawing on the existing empirical knowledge, the current review intends to offer a guide to marketing managers on how to respond to the predicted ER in the post-COVID-19 period. This paper addresses the issues regarding the management of marketing-mix spending during an ER in particular. It is worth mentioning that the main focus of this paper is on the consumer (offline) retailing sector, although some of these insights can also be generalized to other sectors.

COVID-19 and the shift in consumer behavior

Although we still have to wait to discover the actual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy in the long-term, most predictions indicate that there will certainly be a recession in the post-COVID19 period (HBR 2020). Marketing literature shows that consumers become more price-sensitive and more risk-averse during an ER and economize on their expenditure, especially on durable goods (Deleersnyder et al. 2009)

On the other hand, the impact of ER on non-durable industries, such as consumer packaged goods (CPG), could even be positive, given that it is more difficult to cut back on non-durable consumer goods (Van Heerde et al. 2013; Lamey et al. 2007). Therefore, in the CPG sector, consumers are likely to switch to cheaper alternatives (Lamey et al. 2007), to cheaper stores like discounters, or to look for special-deal products (Lamey et al. 2012).

Marketing spending during an economic recession

In the next sections, I discuss the implications of the shifts in consumer behavior during an ER on each of the marketing mix elements.

General marketing spending

During an ER, one of the most common reactions of marketing managers is to cut marketing costs to the minimum, mainly to protect short-term profits (Deleersnyder et al. 2009). However, there is a body of evidence indicating that cutting on marketing is not necessarily the best decision, especially if the focus is on the long-term.

One of the first studies in this area was done by Srinivasan et al. (2005), who empirically demonstrated that pro-active marketing strategies in a recession result in superior business performance during the recession. More recent academic studies have also supported a proactive marketing approach, by maintaining or even increasing marketing spending during an ER (Dekimpe and Deleersnyder 2018; Deleersnyder et al. 2009; Lamey et al. 2012; Steenkamp and Fang 2011). The main reason favoring a proactive marketing strategy during a recession is that as other firms in the industry reduce their marketing activities during a recession, a proactive firm could achieve a superior competitive edge and market share by keeping its marketing budget at the same level as before the ER.

Advertising

The majority of studies have repeatedly shown that maintaining, or even increasing advertising spending during ERs often results in better market share and overall performance (Dekimpe and Deleersnyder 2018; Lamey et al. 2012; Steenkamp and Fang 2011), despite the dominant practice of firms cutting back on advertising during the ER. During an ER, fewer competitors engage in advertising, resulting in reduced clutter. Consequently, a firm that increases its level of advertising activity relative to competitors (i.e., increases its share of voice) in tough times can expect a larger effect on firm performance.

In particular, advertising elasticity will be larger in strongly cyclical industries (e.g., durable goods). In strongly cyclical industries, sales fall sharply in an ER, meaning that many customers will be lost. If better economic times arrive again, these lost customers will return to the market. Advertising helps these new entrants update their product knowledge (Steenkamp and Fang 2011).

On the other hand, long-term advertising elasticities are lower in a recession for the CPG category, suggesting that advertising should be reduced during ER for CPG firms. This is because less cyclical industries, such as CPG, exhibit a greater amount of temporal inertia and their sales are less affected during ER, which offers less change for strong advertising effects (Van Heerde et al. 2013).

Price

Several studies have shown that price sensitivity is predominantly counter-cyclical; it rises when the economy weakens, especially for necessary goods (e.g., CPG) (Dekimpe and Deleersnyder 2018). During an ER, consumers reduce their spending by switching to less expensive brands within the category, such as private labels (Lamey et al. 2012). This gradual switch to private labels contributes to the erosion of the market share of national brands. Therefore, it is recommended that national brands consider increasing temporary price reductions (TPR) during an ER, as this helps to attenuate the popularity of private labels induced by the downturn.

Van Heerde et al. (2013) also found that consumers react more strongly to price reductions during an ER and they suggest that brand managers should reallocate marketing budgets from advertising to price discounts during ER, especially for the CPG sector.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that only relative prices matter. This means that brands should maintain an appropriate differential level between their price and that of the competitors. Therefore, in a bad economic situation, if competitors raise their prices, marketing managers could also do likewise (Deleersnyder et al. 2009).

Research and development (R&D)

The research finding on the impact of R&D investments during ER is consistent with the finding on advertising spending, as it is shown that R&D investment has a counter-cyclical pattern. This means that increasing R&D spending during an ER has a significant positive impact on a firm's performance, again due to reduced competitive clutter (Steenkamp and Fang 2011).

Van Heerde et al. (2013) also found that R&D investments during ERs lead to higher long-term gains in market share and profit and that R&D investment is even more effective than advertising during ER. The differential effectiveness of both instruments is especially pronounced in highly cyclical industries such as durable goods. Therefore, if the firm faces tight budget constraints and has to choose between either maintaining R&D or advertising during an ER, results show that maintaining R&D is associated with better company performance.

New product launch

Talay, Pauwels, and Seggie (2012) studied the launch of new products over 60 years in the automobile industry and they found that the new products launched in a moderate recession had higher long-term survival chances. In particular, they found that new products launched immediately after a recession fared better than those launched later.

Lamey et al. (2012) also found that innovative new product launches are critical to fighting against the growth of cheap private labels during an ER, as they are more difficult to imitate. That being said, the severity of the recession presents a boundary condition to the benefits of a new product launch, as the product survival chances are lower when it is launched in a severe recession (Talay, Pauwels, and Seggie 2012).

Summary

Marketing managers should be aware that consumers are acting and changing their behavior in real-time in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Therefore, there is a genuine danger of adopting a "no-action" attitude and waiting until things return to normal to act. Years of (empirical) research in marketing have shown that recessionary periods provide an opportunity for marketers to grow their brand's market share, especially if they are prepared to think long term. Relying on the marketing literature, here, I summarize several actionable insights for marketing managers to effectively re-organize their marketing activities during an ER:

- **General marketing spending:** A proactive marketing approach is a powerful strategy to mitigate the negative effect of an ER on the position of brands in the market and in particular, to prevent consumers from (permanently) switching to cheaper options available in the market (such as private labels).
- **Advertising:** There is an opportunity in maintaining advertising spending during an ER in order to keep or increase the brand's share of voice. It is even cheaper to access higher quality marketing communication during an ER.
- **Price:** Temporary price reductions (TPR) are a very effective tool to retain market share during the ER, especially if there is strong competition in a specific category/brand with many private labels.

- **New product launch:** Firms should continue with their new product launch projects during an ER, in particular in the window immediately after the recession, when advantages of the launch can be more significant.

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Self-care during the pandemic and beyond: Implications for consumption and well-being

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Abstract

This impact paper aims to discuss today's fast-paced society, in which people tend to lose touch with their bodies, and how the coronavirus lockdown has boosted a phenomenon of people reconnecting with themselves through the practices of yoga, meditation, or cooking. It intends also to demonstrate how the pandemic is impacting positively and negatively on consumption and on well-being in general. Beyond that, this paper stimulates a counterpoint reflection on the reality in poorer economies, in which people are excluded from consumption even from the basic resources needed to fight the pandemic.

Keywords: Self-care, Consumption, Well-being, Pandemic.

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Self-care during the pandemic and beyond: Implications for consumption and well-being

In today's fast-paced society, people tend to lose touch with their bodies, and cases of mental and physically-related disorders arise (Brown, 2014). Yet the coronavirus lockdown is boosting the appearance of these mental illnesses at a global level, with people exhibiting varying degrees of grief, panic, hopelessness, paralyzing fear, or difficulties in sleeping. Excessive anxiety, mainly caused by over-indulging in tuning or reading bad news about Covid-19 which tends to affect people's emotional or physical well-being, with symptoms varying from hearts beating faster, blood pressure rising and breathing rate increases, to gaining weight and the nagging worry about the future (Brody, 2020). While social change caused by the crisis is impacting mental on health and well-being, people are developing home-based coping strategies to better deal with these times.

The phenomenon, already underway, in self-care and in people reconnecting with themselves through the practices of yoga (Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012), or other related spiritual practices (Hemetsberger, Kreuzer, and Klien, 2019), seems to gain force as people want to fight anxiety and other mental disorders coming from the confinement and social change. To better deal with these issues, people are taking up yoga (Ford, 2020), dancing to music (Connolly, Quin, and Redding, 2011), walking up and down the stairs, doing exercises and carrying out breathing techniques or even taking a 20-minute walk outside. Moreover, depending on home circumstances and the number of people living together, they will have to cope with constraints and variabilities. For instance, parents may face extra challenges once they need to work from home and incentivise their children to continue being physically active as well as continuing other activities.

Consumer research around well-being has shown that people tend to escape from the struggles of their everyday life by engaging in extraordinary experiences such as 'consuming' adventurous experiences (Belk and Costa, 1998), spiritual and religious movements (Husemann and Eckhardt 2019), music (Ulusoy 2016), or nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013). Some marketed escapes can offer healing and therapeutic services for those people in need (Higgins and Hamilton 2019). However, it seems that when it comes to confinement, there is no escaping from it. In such stressful circumstances, your body goes into fight-or-flight mode, spurring you on to do something. For those who were able to escape to the countryside, in which they can benefit from their families' house in nature, they may well have faced less stress and worrisome routines. But those that are living in big cities, which is 55% of the entire world's population (Ritchie and Roser, 2018), in small apartments/houses, they will have to find ways of fighting or at least escaping to imaginary places through the on-line practices of yoga, home exercising, music and so on.

Contradictorily, our desire for well-being (Sirgy and Lee, 2006) associated with fear (Beitelspacher et al., 2012) and anxiety can lead us to adopt unhealthy behaviours and poor decision-making too (Chater, 2020). Home confinement may tempt people to just curl up on the couch and binge-watch Netflix. The consumption of alcohol and nicotine, for instance, are very linked to anxiety (Stewart, Peterson, and Pihl, 1995), consequently drawing our attention to look at ourselves during the pandemic. Likewise, anxiety has been considered as an emotion that can increase caffeine and food consumption (Lee, Cameron, and Greden, 1985). Therefore, the longer we remain in confinement, the higher the chances of having other health-related diseases associated with the consumption of food and drugs.

Coronavirus impact on consumer behaviour and culture in the marketplace

Since lockdown forced the shutting down of nonessential businesses, a movement was born to incentivise purchasing from small local businesses instead of large multinational companies. Although people are trying to engage in this movement, it has been difficult to adapt to the changes of the crisis while still supporting all neighbourhood businesses at the governmental and consumer levels (Watson, 2020). Consequently, within this crisis, e-commerce is a sector that has been facing relevant changes throughout the weeks of confinement.

E-commerce facilitated the growth of sales of within unusual product categories. Across Walmart and Amazon, weights such as dumbbells and kettlebells are out of stock, while backorder dates have been postponed far into the future (Wolff-Mann, 2020). In the U.S. there has been a growth in purchasing items based on three needs: to protect, to entertain and to connect. Sales of yoga mats and board games like Sorry, Connect 4 and Clue have increased drastically in the last weeks, as well as the consumption of preventive supplies (e.g. personal care and health products), food and beverages (Whitten, 2020). Bicycles and exercise gear, home and garden items, reading matter, electrical goods and coffee are also on the list of products in high demand during confinement (Gompertz and Plummer, 2020). In parallel, there has been growth in the consumption of smartphone apps, such as social networks and food delivery, and an explosion of apps of video chat, media and entertainment, online shopping, and health care (Jones, 2020).

As the coronavirus pandemic rages on, many retailers are being overwhelmed by demand, but others are seeing trade collapse (Gompertz and Plummer, 2020). The searches for luggage, briefcases, cameras, bridal wear and party events, among others, have been facing a drastic decrease since the beginning of the pandemic (Jones, 2020), as a result of the huge number of events and flights being cancelled throughout the year of 2020. Smartphone apps in the travel/hospitality and mobility industries have experienced a slowdown in consumption (Jones, 2020).

Going beyond: what is going on outside Europe?

Fragile economies can experience harder realities during the crisis when compared specifically to European countries. In Brazil, for instance, 35 million citizens - almost 15% of the whole country's population - have no access to basic sanitation (Brasil, 2019). The situation gets worse in the favelas, where the lack of constant availability of clean water, making it harder to follow the simplest World Health Organization's suggestion - to wash hands with soap and water regularly - while hand sanitizers are an unattainable luxury (Gortázar, 2020). In the favelas, large families need to share small and poorly ventilated houses, and parents do not have the chance of working from home since their jobs normally involve selling products or services in downtown, or serving richer families in privileged areas (Gortázar, 2020). This exemplifies the abysmal differences between social classes and access to the consumption of basic needs (products and services) and explains why the application of social isolation and distance practices in some regions in the world is almost impossible.

According to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, about 4.5 billion people - more than half the world's population - either practise open defecation or use unsafe sanitation facilities and services, which places sanitation as a contemporary issue to tackle, especially in Sub-Saharan

Africa and South Asia (Water, n.d.). The risks gets higher for nearly half of the global workforce that may lose their jobs and who are already facing a drop in their incomes due to the coronavirus (Chaves, 2020). The situation has drawn attention from governments and companies, which are addressing resources to directly help communities impacted by the coronavirus, or supporting third-sector initiatives. Overall, a global chain of a solidarity economy seems to be happening and shared responsibility and action are needed for the world to recover (Guterres, 2020).

The discussion about self-care and well-being practices introduced at the beginning of this impact paper, gains a supporting role when we observe the reality of a considerable percentage of the global population whose basic needs are not being met. For those people, consumption and access is clearly out of reach, making trying to survive the coronavirus pandemic harder and unfair.

Conclusion

So, what will change after the coronavirus? We stressed how this crisis has alerted many consumers to use their newfound time to focus on their body-mind health. From practices such as taking up some kind of exercise while in social isolation (Jones, 2020) to cooking at home for the first time, people are arguing among themselves whether the crisis will leave a heritage of these good practices after everything is back to normal.

As predictions point to a slow return to normal life, it is expected that people will have learnt through the crisis how to behave in a new world reality. Other pandemics refined the way we take care with hygiene and shaped the way we structure and furnish medical facilities, and even within our homes and cities. Likewise, the coronavirus pandemic will have provided lessons to health care systems, economies, and lifestyles. Governments, companies and third-sector forces should get together to provide appropriate information and resources, from food to digital content, for people to better deal with emotions and 'consumption' within their new reality at home (and for those without a home). Otherwise, staying at home and facing a new reality of living may have negative influences on food nutrition, anxiety, and other health issues.

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Transitioning to a post-COVID19 world: Lessons for leaders from crises and discontinuous change

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Abstract

This impact paper summarizes the results from three recent studies on crisis management and discontinuous change. It highlights lessons that are applicable to the current COVID19 situation. Specifically, it proposes that leaders (1) should resist the temptation to simply return to the pre-crisis status quo, (2) must be mindful of the perceptions they instill in their organizations to enable a powerful yet flexible adaptation to the situation, and (3) avoid feelings of unfairness that might hamper an appropriate response.

Keywords: Crisis management, Discontinuous change, Leadership

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Transitioning to a post-COVID19 world: Lessons for leaders from crises and discontinuous change

The global COVID19 pandemic is currently changing life as we know it. It is a change that—outside the circles of epidemiologists—few people anticipated and even fewer prepared for. Consequently, organizational leaders of all kinds are scrambling to adapt their organizations to the crisis—and the “new normal” we must expect once the worst is over.

Given how unprecedented the current situation is in recent history, we have limited insight into how businesses should best respond to a pandemic that is truly global and that disrupts business as usual at the present scale. But we certainly know a lot about how to respond to organizational crises and discontinuous change in general.

And COVID19 clearly represents both. It is undoubtedly a crisis not only on a human level, but it also challenges organizations to their core, be it by disrupting operational processes or by causing sudden cash-flow problems. At the same time, it is obviously a discontinuous change. It is not only “one step further” in an established direction, but it (at least for now) stops and even reverses most patterns of economic and social development, including megatrends like urbanization and globalization.

In this essay, I detail insights from three recent research projects related to firms’ crisis management and their adaptation to discontinuous change. All three projects yielded crucial lessons for leaders seeking to prepare their organizations for a “new normal” after COVID19.

Let go of the status quo to avoid returning to a lost world

It is a cliché that change is a constant and that organizational leaders should always be ready to push for a departure from the status quo. But this is not obviously true in all cases of crises. In a recent study, several colleagues and I analyzed how pharmaceutical firms respond to organizational crises in the form of product-safety problems and associated product recalls and threats of substantial interventions by regulatory agencies (Struck, Milinski, Schaedler, Graf-Vlachy and König, 2019). Such crises are caused by problems within a firm’s operations and are high-profile events with potentially severe consequences for the firm: Not only is resolving them often very costly, but such crises might even endanger patients’ lives and the firm’s overall viability.

In our study, we specifically analyzed top executives’ commitment to the status quo and how it related to their handling of such crises. What we found was astounding: Managers who were particularly committed to the pre-crisis status quo were much faster in resolving the organizational crisis. Apparently, they had a stronger commitment to return to what they perceived as a desirable “normal” state, and they were therefore more effective in mobilizing organizational resources to resolve the crisis.

However, we also found something disconcerting. The firms of managers who had a greater commitment to the status quo were more likely to experience a similar crisis again at a later time. This suggests that while managers’ desire to return to the status quo expedited crisis relief efforts, it also made these efforts very rigid, superficial, and not very systemic. Managers were in fact quick to return to the status quo—unfortunately, they were not innovative in the process and did not make lasting changes to the parts of their organizations that caused the crises in the first place. They went back to a status quo that was not a good state of affairs.

Today, it is important for leaders to recognize that a strong affection for the pre-COVID19 status quo may help them and their organizations recover quickly from the crisis and return to a prior status quo. But such a recovery will only be a success if this prior status quo is still viable, i.e., if the post-COVID19 world is like the world we knew before. And there are many indications that this will not be the case. This includes seemingly mundane examples like Berlin's Kreuzberg district broadening bike lanes to allow cyclists to keep their distance—and already announcing that this change will be permanent. But it also includes potentially more seismic shifts like an increase of online teaching in schools and universities, an increased acceptance of remote work, reduced long-distance travel, or changes in people's savings habits. While it is not clear yet in all cases, it seems likely that at least some of these changes will be long-lasting.

Thus, if you find yourself with a certain affection for the status quo before the virus hit, your role as an organizational leader requires you to check if this status quo will still be there once the crisis is over. Because if it is not, you may end up moving swiftly after the crisis—but to the wrong place.

Create perceptions of gain and control to find a good place in the new world

It has long been known that how organizations adapt to discontinuous change depends at least partially on how their members perceive this change. For instance, it has been frequently argued that unless a situation is viewed as a potential threat or loss, managers and others throughout an organization are very unlikely to allocate substantial resources (both financial and attentional) to a discontinuous change. A seminal study of how newspaper publishers responded to online news demonstrated almost fifteen years ago how organizational resource allocation remained rigid in the face of discontinuous change unless this change was seen as a threat (Gilbert, 2005). For better or worse, in times of COVID19, you probably do not have to worry about instilling a threat perception in your organization.

Making things more complicated, however, is the fact that even when threat perception makes investments in adaptations to discontinuous change possible, it tends to make organizations rigid in another way. Specifically, when organizational members perceive a change as a threat or a potential loss, they tend to invest freed-up resources in activities that address the change in traditional ways. Newspapers, for example, perceived online news as an existential threat early on, but made investments that attempted to simply replicate their analog product on the internet. They did not experiment and were thus unable to take advantage of all the additional opportunities the online world had to offer. Ultimately, many of them failed in creating a truly viable online product. Consequently, leaders in times of discontinuous change must create a sense of opportunity or gain to afford their organizations' members the mental freedom to experiment to find ways to thrive in a "new normal" instead of simply trying harder what they have always been doing. This may be particularly critical in a crisis like COVID19, when many dearly held beliefs are shattered, but it is not yet completely clear how to operate from now on.

Prior research would thus suggest that you, as a leader, have the daunting task of instilling both loss and gain perceptions in your organization. In the prototypical case of traditional firms' responses to online competitors, this could often be achieved through the creation of a separate organizational unit that served as a kind of corporate "start-up," which could

engage in experimentation due to a prevailing gain perception, and which was funded by the legacy organization that dominantly held loss perceptions.

But in times of COVID19, this may not be a viable solution due to the breadth of changes needed. Alternatives thus include either the explicit communication of the paradoxical nature of the change, trying to instill perceptions of loss and gain at the same time, or the creation of different perceptions in sequence. In particular, after initial loss perceptions made resources available for investment in the adaptation to the change, you might try to switch to a gain-focused communication, outlining the opportunities the crisis brings to get ahead of the competition. Clearly, both approaches are difficult to implement.

However, in a recent study on the adaptation of bookstores and book retail chains to online book retailing, my co-authors and I were able to add nuance to these challenging recommendations (König, Graf-Vlachy and Schöberl, 2020). On the one hand, we replicated most of the prior findings. We found the old patterns of loss perception that makes resources available and gain perception that allows making good use of them. But we discovered more. Investments were indeed often made under the perception of loss—but *only* if organizational members simultaneously perceived some control over the situation. If members perceived almost no control or a lot of control over the discontinuous change, they did not see a point in investing in any adaptation to the change—either because they saw no chance of the investments ever paying off, or because they felt that since the change was under control, there was no investment necessary in the first place. And of course, even when control perception was just right and investments were made, this did not solve the problem of non-experimentation.

On the other hand, we also found that loss perceptions were not always necessary for resource allocation. Even under gain perceptions, organizations were able to make investments in a discontinuous change—if the organizational members believed they had control over the change. When organizational members believed that adapting the change might be beneficial for their firm, and when they felt that they had sufficient control over the situation so that they could make a difference, they were willing to invest. At the same time, gain perceptions allowed for experimentation, leading to novel ways of adapting to the discontinuous change.

In sum, our research shows that you can either play the complex game of creating loss perceptions to enable investments and gain perceptions paired with just the right degree of control perceptions to allow experimentation; or you can instill gain perceptions paired with control perceptions to achieve both at the same time. Of course, neither is simple, but the latter allows you to keep your communication consistent throughout the process.

Don't be a sore loser on the way

Over the last weeks, we saw that governments across the world are willing to support businesses who are threatened by the pandemic. However, such help is necessarily always distributed in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. The same is true for how governments impose and ease restrictions on economic activities. After the initial lockdown in Germany, for example, which had seen all non-essential retail outlets closed, the government allowed stores up to 800 square meters to reopen in April 2020. Why not stores with up to 600 square meters? Why not stores with up to 1000 square meters? The government made its decision based on a 2005 decision of Germany's highest administrative court, which had ruled—in a

completely different context—that stores over 800 square meters were to be classified as “large-area retail.”

If your business is on the losing end of such a decision, it is easy to get angry and call for changes to regulation and to lobby officials. And while this is both understandable and may even make sense if you have a real chance of changing them, it is important not to let a feeling of being treated unfairly take the upper hand. Instead, treat it as a motivation for change.

In a third recent research project, my co-authors and I investigated the early reaction of hotels to sharing-economy platforms like Airbnb (Weber, Lehmann, Graf-Vlachy and König, 2020). Aside from a variety of other responses, such as general confusion and the belief that Airbnb would necessarily always remain a niche business, it stood out to us that proprietors of small hotels and managers of large hotel chains felt treated utterly unfairly by the government. They thought that companies like Airbnb were getting away with skirting or downright ignoring regulations that hotels had to adhere to. They saw Airbnb as a company that enabled hosts to avoid taxes, ignore fire codes, and violate a multitude of other regulations. Because hotel managers felt that this was such an obvious injustice, they were confident in waiting for the regulator to step in and regulate or even outlaw Airbnb's business. As we now know, of course, this largely did not happen.

Arguably, hotel chains would have been much better off questioning their own practices and business models to adapt to the change. But only a small minority of them did this. For instance, some hotels decided to change their customer segmentation to better compete with Airbnb. Others began to change their product offering, e.g., by relying more on self-service or by adding lounge areas for people to socialize in, to face the competitive threat head-on.

In times of COVID19, the lesson is thus to not be angry and wait for the regulator to step in. Government intervention may or may not come in time, and it may or may not come in the way that suits your particular needs. Instead, be proactive and use this situation in which things are not as we knew them before as an opportunity to reconsider key assumptions about your business. Think about what it is that your customers really value about your product or service. Consider what you actually need to do to keep your business running. And, most importantly, assess how you might need to change.

Conclusion

Much like pharmaceutical firms face product-harm crises, book retailers face online retailing, and hotels face the discontinuous change of the sharing-economy, *all* businesses today face a COVID19 reality they cannot just wish away. Change is needed, and not only temporarily. Once the immediate need of business continuity is met, it is time to think about what true continuity can and must look like in the “new normal.”

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The Resilient Leader: A resource of optimism in the post-Covid era

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Abstract

At the end of an organizational crisis such as the one triggered by Covid-19 and several weeks of global lockdown, the role of managers and leaders with their teams will be even more crucial than in ordinary times. In the post-Covid era, employees will demand both proof of meaning, reassurance and a proactive clear-sighted attitude from their managers. This will require them to adopt a series of concrete attitudes on a daily basis that will truly produce collective resilience.

Keywords: Post-crisis management, Optimism, Resilience, Positive leadership

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The Resilient Leader: A resource of optimism in the post-Covid era

At a time of major organizational upheavals triggered on a global scale by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is incumbent on those who are steering to keep the ship and the players on course in the hope of a better tomorrow. Whether one is a political player, a sports coach or a business leader, the ability to generate responsible optimism remains at the heart of any process of collective resilience in any post-disaster era.

In the organizational recovery phase, the leader's optimism represents an unparalleled asset for any human organization, whether in terms of enthusiasm, motivation or energy; an asset to be protected, of course, but also to be nurtured. What we are looking for, in a post-crisis period, are not only people who are optimistic by temperament; but above all professionals capable of establishing with others (colleagues, collaborators, clients, subcontractors, suppliers, etc.) a mode of relationship oriented towards a dynamic of resilience and reconstruction. Here, interpersonal skills are combined with know-how, through the application of behavioral principles that generate inspiration, energy and enthusiasm.

The current political, economic and social situation - after several weeks of a lockdown unprecedented in recent history - generates a lot of anxiety for a large number of actors. Slowdown at all levels, loss of old points of reference and short-term visibility of the future, fear of the obsolescence of "old" skills and professional disqualification, fear of the unpredictable in all its forms, these are the ingredients of doubt and loss of confidence in oneself and in society, the breeding ground for post-Covid collective pessimism.

Faced with this, inserted in a world that demands ever greater performance from them, what do we expect from those who lead us? Let's propose three expectations that are quite simple in fact, but which will always be common to nourish the dynamics of organizational resilience, whether of individuals or teams.

1) In a period of post-crisis uncertainty, the first expectation of social actors probably concerns the regular provision by their leaders of *proof of meaning*, i.e. a subtle emulsion combining a reminder of the direction of the change (objective, goal, line of sight), the usefulness of what is expected from them (contribution) and the place occupied by them, as individuals, in this process (recognition).

2) The second expectation is also that of *signs of reassurance*, whether this relates to the competence of the leader or to the confidence placed in his own action and that of his/her troops, and in their ability to face the breaks and challenges of the moment in a determined and creative way.

3) The third expectation, finally, is that of a climate that is truly adapted to periods of change and reform, a climate that could be described as *positive and proactive lucidity*. Faced with the tensions arising from the challenges of confinement and a situation now marked by the scarcity of means and resources (financial, material, human, etc.), the atmosphere maintained by the leader must indeed allow his team to face difficulties without risking doubt or a feeling of powerlessness, or even despair.

What does one recognize in a resilient leader? First of all, the fact that he is... a leader like any other, that is to say, a leader who tries against all odds to achieve objectives - political, economic, sporting, entrepreneurial - through the mobilization of others. The resilient leader, like any leader, must therefore ensure the success of a human community that has been shaken by the crisis, i.e. help its members to achieve the objectives set (even if adapted),

make them more autonomous in the face of the consequences of the ordeal and, in the long run, enable them to evolve in a world with new rules of the game.

It is therefore not on the finality of his action that the resilient leader will make the difference, but on his principles and methods of action. Generally speaking, such a leader can be recognized through four fundamental attitudes:

1) The resilient leader concentrates the essence of his action on strengths, i.e. on the qualities of structures and people, as well as their potential for evolution and change.

For a resilient leader, the people around have two types of resources for action in the face of change: strengths to be cultivated and strengthened, and possibly points of effort on which there is room for improvement and progress. Concerning the weak points (major defects, structural deficiencies, etc.), they are an objective reality but cannot be used sustainably to produce performance, whether industrial, sporting, societal or other. We can therefore only ignore them, "deal with" or even neutralize them by compensating for them, for example through an extreme development of certain other strong points.

2) The resilient leader knows how to favor effective solutions, even partial and temporary ones.

Some, especially at the top, like to feed off meticulous analysis of the causes of failure and the reasons for defeat. In doing so, they almost always produce resentment and regret around them in the long run, inevitably leading to justification and the search for culprits. Pessimistic leaders, under the guise of realism, also like to test the perfectionism in them by searching - often in vain - for ideal solutions that are perfect in every respect and that would solve all the problems at once. They even end up admitting, more or less openly, the impossibility of any change or reform.

The resilient leader, on the other hand, sees things differently. Knowing "why" it has come to this point, especially in the case of major difficulties, is certainly interesting; but the search for causes - especially in complex situations - is often a waste of time. Faced with the "why" of the analysts, the resilient manager will always initially focus on the "how to", on the immediate search for alternative paths or new opportunities arising from the difficulty encountered. Great leaders don't need to know the origin or who is responsible for the obstacle in front of them and their troops in order to start exploring ways around it.

3) The resilient leader tracks down "small victories" and capitalizes on them.

Everyone likes to be congratulated after winning. But because every day is a new day, just because you are congratulated today does not mean that you will be more motivated tomorrow, or that you will win for sure. On the contrary, it is the fact of being encouraged while you are making an effort, of making your contribution to the collective challenge, that helps to maintain our self-confidence, our desire to continue the effort and our optimism about future success.

The resilient leader certainly keeps his eye on the line of sight of the reconstruction to be completed. But he never loses an opportunity to celebrate with his troops a milestone victory, a game won, an obstacle brilliantly overcome, an effort that has paid off, a technical breakthrough or a new contract. In short, the resilient leader likes to catch those he leads in "flagrante delicto" of success, however modest this success may be. It is on these occasions that the leader can train people in the practice of the "optimistic style", by analyzing with them how this success is due to their own action, how it illustrates lasting skills possessed by the community and how it is destined to be reproduced as soon as possible...

4) The resilient leader encourages perseverance and risk-taking.

"Success," said Winston Churchill, "is to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm". While pessimistic leaders systematically anticipate and fear failure, whether for themselves or their teams, optimists - and therefore the most resilient - know that failure - no matter how unpleasant - is part of life and - as such - is only one ingredient of success like any other. Perhaps a little more bitter, and still... Being prepared for setbacks and failure, for a resilient leader is both knowing what you will do - and what the team will do - if things go wrong; and it is giving yourself the right to try again, to try your luck again.

And what better fuel for a leader's resilience than optimism? What better than this extraordinary ability to put reality under positive tension? For if optimism is such a powerful factor of success, especially in post-crisis periods, it is essentially because it creates the individual and collective conditions for rebound and perseverance in the face of the hazards inherent in every "day after". An optimistic leader is therefore, in all cases, a leader who grants (and grants himself) the right to make mistakes, as long as these mistakes can be analyzed and represent a source of collective learning. An optimistic leader, at the time of reconstruction, is also one who gives those around the permission to innovate, to move the lines.

An optimistic leader is finally the one who can be said: "In the face of the turbulence born of trials and difficulties, he/she made us want to try, allowed us not to succeed right away, and pushed us to start again until we finally win the part of the transformation! ».

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Covid19 organizational leadership vaccine at Aegon

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Abstract

This impact paper aims to prove that Total Leadership (TL) training has been an excellent just-in-time Organizational Leadership vaccine against Covid19 at Aegon. In 2019 and 2020, we had the opportunity to train all Aegon employees in Spain – around 450 people – in TL methodology. TL is a systematic, flexible approach for creating sustainable change to improve performance in all areas of life, both professional and personal. Initial results, pre-Covid19, show an impressive increase of 50% in Employee Engagement Measurements. Management perceptions and employees reactions and experiments observed at Aegon post-Covid19 show why TL has been very helpful to overcome the challenges resulting from lockdown and pressures due to working from home,. The program has been shared with Aegon at group level.

Keywords: Leadership, Covid19, Insurance.

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Covid19 Organizational Leadership Vaccine at Aegon

In November 2018, Tomás Alfaro called his old colleague from the Santander/Aegon joint venture, Carlos Casanueva, to have breakfast together in his office at Aegon. He had just been promoted to the position of CEO at Aegon - a financial services company - a few months earlier, in September. In 2015, Carlos had translated into Spanish the book Total Leadership, authored by Professor Stewart D. Friedman from The Wharton School with whom he had been collaborating since 2008. Tomás probably remembered his participation with the quotes he kindly contributed to the Spanish edition's back cover. After twenty minutes talking about their lives, they walked through the building to the office of the Human Resources Director, Smara Conde. Tomás introduced both of them and left. The result is that, after several meetings and conversations in which Professor Friedman was involved, on April 1st 2019, Carlos was signing a contract to "Boost Cultural Transformation at Aegon through TL" and on April 25th Carlos and his colleague Gonzalo Landaluce held the kick-off training session.

The key for success has been the ability of Tomás and the Human Resources team, led by Smara, to take intelligent, brave and fast executive decisions. From the onset, they saw the transformational opportunity of training everybody in the company, to be better leaders and have richer lives. The training was conducted in medium-size groups which merged everyone without hierarchical or functional discrimination. To ensure an appropriate implementation three phases were defined:

- Start up: two pilot groups (90 employees) to be trained in 5 sessions and finishing before the summer of 2019.
- Main Training: eight groups (almost 400 employees) to be trained from September 2019 to April 2020.
- Follow-up: implementation of ideas to ensure continuity.

Pre-Covid19 impact

At the beginning of March 2020, just before the Covid19 crisis, the project was performing in an excellent manner. Almost 400 employees had already been trained with very enthusiastic and active participation. Management at Aegon was very satisfied with the result. Employees shared continually and in an informal manner their positive experience and anecdotes. All this positive and natural feedback from participants was tremendously valuable.

At that time, the most objective valuation about the project came from the Aegon Global Employee Survey (GES) that it executed at Group level. Aegon Spain had been asked from Headquarters in The Hague to increase the Employee Engagement Measurement during 2019 from the 40% figure of 2018 (a low figure!) to 50% (a figure everybody thought was impossible to achieve!). The result in the November 2019 survey was 59%, overcoming all expectations, and with more than 95% employee participation. Apparently, the TL training had been one of the key activities in achieving this result and strongly correlated with the cultural transformation strategic initiative.

These improvements in results were obtained not only in the work environment but also in other personal domains, as the following data shows, proving the sustainable change properties of TL. Analysis of data gathered for the two pilot groups of the Start up phase from

April 2019 until July 2019, shows that perceived performance grew in all domains: 7% in Work; 12% in Home; 17% in Community; and 19% in Yourself. These results are very much aligned with previous studies conducted by Professor Friedman.

Post-Covid19 impact

On Saturday March 14th, the Spanish government declared a state of emergency. Most business activities were limited all over Spain and of course this project was stopped at Aegon. Fortunately, it was almost completed and the damage was very limited.

The interesting idea is the following: it seems that what employees learned during the program was especially appropriate for the Covid19 lockdown period. Let's see why. TL is a systematic, flexible approach for creating sustainable change to improve performance in all areas of life – at work, at home, in the community and for yourself. Participants are trained to face change in a sustainable manner, even if it is tough and difficult. They are trained to embrace change courageously, to see new ways of doing things, to play an active role and take control of new situations, instead of suffering from them with a passive and pessimistic attitude. Also, they are taught to try to harmonize these four domains, learning to draw boundaries between them and to create value in a non-zero sum game through experiments, which are called Four-Way Wins (4WW). They are encouraged to build supportive networks, so important in this lockdown period, and to find a way to talk with their more important stakeholders and to have conversations to clarify mutual expectations, focusing on what really matters and building trust.

Let's hear Aegon's management team's opinions to confirm these ideas. Vicente Gonzalez, Human Resources Manager and TL Program Leader:

- *“We believe that the TL training has helped to start new experiments during the lockdown period: exercise; family lunches; quality time; management of the work/home space..., although we don't have concrete data about this yet... Intranet messages invited employees to share experiments, practice new ones and download experiments from other colleagues that could be done during lockdown.”*
- *“I completely agree that TL has helped our employees to have a framework (the 4WW) to increase daily harmony during lockdown, managing kids' homework/enjoyment, work and home duties, everything in the same space. Sharing experiments among colleagues has been very useful.”*
- *“Finally, I want to mention that TL has facilitated the contact and the conversations among people at Aegon, asking for feedback, sharing experiments or daily problems during lockdown such as work/home pressure. Due to TL and Covid19, we have broken an existing barrier and now we are closer, more empathetic and in a certain way more human.”*

Smara Conde, Human Resources Head at Aegon Spain:

- In her periodic “Aegon takes care of you” communication to employees, she has reminded everybody of the power of experiments during these days of lockdown, *“Do you remember TL experiments? This could be a good moment to put in practice some of them, because we can use digital media to have conversations with our most important stakeholders in all domains. Now more than ever it is necessary to find harmony at Work, at Home, in the Community and for Yourself.”*

- *“The way of working from now on is going to be completely different. Conversations and their preparation are key for being effective. Through conversations we will learn to use them in a digital manner. When you are face to face, in person, non-verbal language gives you a lot of information and with digital tools this information must be verbalized, and you can only say it with conversations.”*
- *“Learning how to harmonize appropriately (with the TL methodology) has been critical in these moments in which you have so many roles at the same time, and you need to keep boundaries between each of them for recharging the energy that a critical situation likes this requires.”*

Tomás Alfaro, CEO at Aegon Spain believes that: *“Whoever has not experimented with his personal leadership during this crisis, he is sinking... We are facing a change in paradigm that has opened our capacity for experimenting, and this is what we are sharing throughout our organization. For example, I make phone calls while walking on the terrace and thanks to this I am walking more than ever; or perhaps while cooking... Now, we have the possibility to organize our work and our life in a different manner”.*

Professor Friedman, in his April 2020 mail *“Parents Who Lead in Pandemic Times”* confirms these conclusions: *“We are deeply gratified to see how this book has been of use to so many working families at a time when they urgently need the help it offers. We never imagined the book would arrive at a moment when the physical boundaries that used to separate work and family life have been obliterated, when working parents are struggling to guide their children’s schooling at home, and when everyone is anxious about the profound uncertainties of our new world order. Parents Who Lead has relevance these days in ways we could not foresee. Our evidence-based guidance – for how to take practical steps to focus on what matters most, on who matters most, and on experimenting with new ways to live and work that are sustainable because they serve both personal and collective interests – is resonating with working parents and their employers in this strange episode of our history”*

Conclusion

Before the Covid19 crisis, TL training had a strong impact at Aegon Spain with 50% increase in Employee Engagement Measurement and perceived performance increase in all domains - Home, Work, Community and Yourself - of 7%, 12%, 17% and 19% respectively. After the Covid19 state of emergency declaration in March 2020, it is clear that what employees learned during the TL course has been especially appropriate for this lockdown period. Aegon's management team's perceptions and actions have confirmed this view. In summary, mainly by chance, it seems TL has been the perfect just-in-time Organizational Leadership vaccine against Covid19. The next possible interesting question to answer is if TL will also be a good vaccine to face other disruptions and challenges that await us in the future.

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Building uncertainty competence: Applying the entrepreneurial method

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Abstract

This impact paper looks upon the global Covid19 crisis as an event that created massive worldwide uncertainty at an unprecedented speed. A world that was preoccupied with different versions of uncertainty, some of which related to globalization and digitization, is now unified in tackling pandemic uncertainty. The question is: what to do about it? While the field of entrepreneurship has a traditional focus on creating start-ups, the past 20 years have expanded our understanding of entrepreneurship to what we here offer to call uncertainty competence. Entrepreneurship as uncertainty competence describes the process of creating new value in the face of uncertainty. And we believe that this uncertainty competence should become a fundamental element of today's management education.

Keywords: Uncertainty, Entrepreneurship, Effectuation, Decision-making

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Building uncertainty competence: Applying the entrepreneurial method

The Covid-19 crisis is characterized by a high level of uncertainty. At the beginning of the crisis uncertainty mainly stemmed from questions like “Will the virus spread from animals to humans?”, “How easily can it spread between humans?”, “What are the best ways to impede the spread?”. Then uncertainty was around “Who is affected the most?”, “What kind of medical equipment do we need (how fast and when)?”. And now we are grappling with questions like “How can we end the confinement?”, “What parts of our economy needs the most help and what form should that help take?” to name but a few. On a company level, questions might be around “What should we be worrying about the most?”, “Will our business model still work?”, “What can we do; now that our business model does not work?”, “What new opportunities emerge from such a crisis?”. All of these questions are characterized by a high level of uncertainty about what to do next. Not only are we unsure of which scenario will come to pass, we do not even know if we have considered all the options and potential outcomes.

The current Corona pandemic has brought a concept which is central to the entrepreneurship field to the fore: Dealing with and making decisions in the presence of uncertainty. A cornerstone of this theory is the work by economist Frank Knight from 1921, in which he made uncertainty the basis of his theory of entrepreneurial profits. Knight portrays entrepreneurship as a discovery process. Many new ventures will be launched, but only some will survive and prosper (Knight 1921).

Ever since then, entrepreneurship is viewed as a process that typically involves a high degree of uncertainty. The ability of entrepreneurs to interpret and respond to that uncertainty is what determines the degree of success or failure achieved by the venture. In fact, the notion that entrepreneurs take decisions and subsequently act in the face of inherently uncertain, even unknowable, futures is one of the most closely held assumptions in entrepreneurship (e.g., Knight, 1921; Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Sarasvathy 2008).

In this paper we want to briefly discuss some of the key findings of entrepreneurial research and how they might help managers in developing uncertainty competence in their companies as they adapt to a world in the grips of Covid-19. We suggest that for uncertainty competence, managers need to first understand and assess uncertainty as opposed to risk. Second, they need to know how to approach different levels of uncertainty, and, third, we will discuss how executives can prepare their companies for uncertainty competence. With a lot of uncertainty around us, and potentially more to come, this seems a worthwhile investment.

Understanding and assessing uncertainty

Uncertainty implies the absence of certainty of the potential outcome of a specific decision or action in a particular situation. The Covid-19 crisis came out of the blue and took us by surprise – it is described by Nassim Taleb as a black swan. Uncertainty at an unprecedented scale ensued. Politicians, epidemiologists, managers or others cannot agree upon the potential outcomes of their decisions. Therefore, it seems valuable to look into complementary processes beyond standard risk management in order to develop uncertainty competence.

Our starting point is discussing and coming to understand the true nature of uncertainty before we can think about ways of dealing with it. Almost 100 years ago, Frank Knight detailed in his book, “Risk, uncertainty and profit”, his conception that fundamentally only uncertainty can explain profits (and losses) and therefore entrepreneurial endeavours. He

defined uncertainty as a situation in which there is no basis for classifying potential outcomes. To Knight, true uncertainty is substantially different from risks, as it is impossible to neither assign probabilities to future outcomes nor even know all possible future outcomes based on today's possible actions. While this may sound like an objective classification, organizational researchers later argued that uncertainty is perceptual and thus has to be assessed individually (e.g. Downey and Slocum 1975).

For Covid-19, there is no solid prior experience, and hence many decision-makers in these times experience what Frances Milliken (1987) describes as state, effect and response uncertainty. State uncertainty captures the perceived uncertainty about how components of the environment like suppliers or competitors might be changing or reacting in the Covid-19 situation. Effect uncertainty captures a perceived inability to predict the impact of these changes and repercussions for the organization. Finally, response uncertainty is about the lack of knowledge of response options and the inability to predict the consequences of those response options.

Ultimately, the judgement of the degree of uncertainty of any given situation is subjective. Individual decision makers will have different experiences and potentially even different access to information and might therefore experience a given situation differently. Or as William Gibson put it: "The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed". In today's connected and digitized world all necessary information for any given situation will most likely exist, but this information might nevertheless not be available for the individual decision maker. She might just not know where to find the information and on top of this, might experience uncertainty about whether to trust this information. In our Covid-19 situation, a lot of information is most likely available. But some of it is hard to find (scientific publications), and studies contradict each other, so it is hard to know what to trust.

We will argue below that the degree of uncertainty should influence the approach taken. This choice requires an assessment of the uncertainty involved in a decision. Therefore, it becomes important to not only consciously include such an assessment, but also create transparency about the perceived uncertainty within a team, business or even company by asking and discussing a number of questions. Questions for an uncertainty assessment can include:

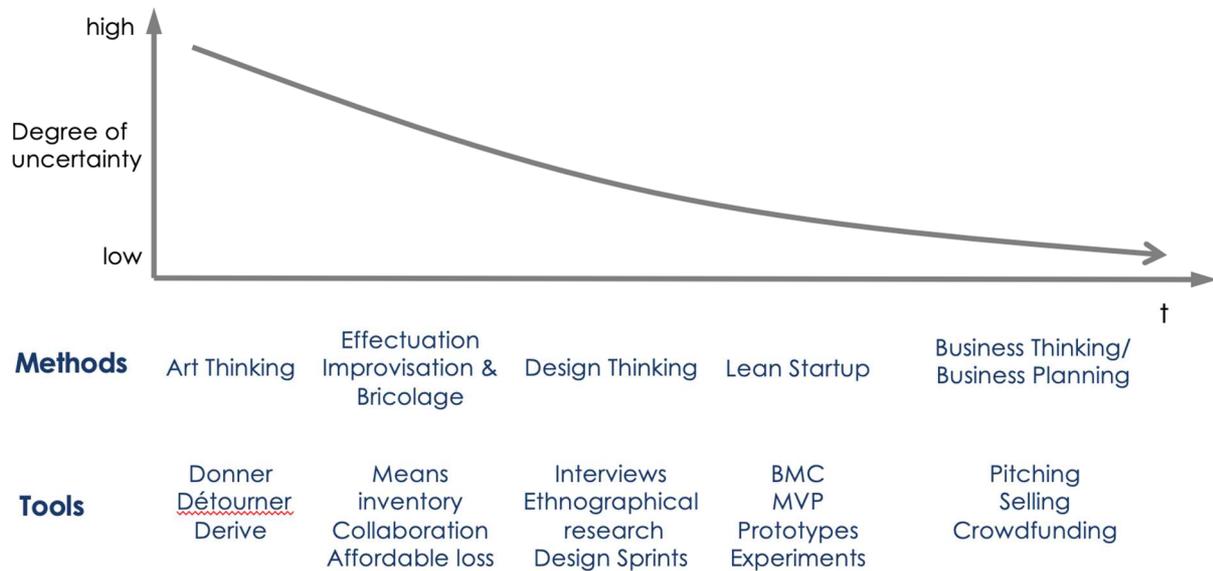
- Are the goals well-defined and specified?
- Is the information provided unambiguous?
- Can the future consequences of decisions taken now be estimated?
- Is the environment constant or are changes-frequent?
- Is the decision-making situation straight-forward?

Dealing with uncertainty

As described, certainty, risk, and (true) uncertainty are not distinct and separated conditions but rather points on a continuum. So a situation is not *per se* uncertain or certain, but it can move from being highly (true) uncertain to lower levels of uncertainty to risk and potentially to certainty, depending on our actions (and here the importance is on the word action in contrast to analysis). In the start-up world we often hear the term "de-risking", but what it often actually means is "de-uncertaining". And as entrepreneurship research has focused so much on uncertainty as the fundamental driver of entrepreneurial action, it has also started to research what entrepreneurs actually do and how they take decisions to reduce uncertainty. Figure 1 shows an entrepreneurial venture over time as it moves from high levels of uncertainty to lower levels of uncertainty and eventually to certainty (for sure after the

fact). During this process, entrepreneurs might use a number of methods or tools which are appropriate to the different degrees of uncertainty.

Figure 1: Entrepreneurship as uncertainty reduction



Source: own visualization based on Grichnik et al. 2017

The right-hand side of the figure (methods like the business plan or tools like pitching, crowdfunding and the like) is closest to standard management practice. It has dominated practice in entrepreneurship for decades. This is quite natural as the knowledge was taken from the field of business administration and management. It had simply been adapted to the realities of newly established and small companies. The knowledge helped start-ups to be more professional. However, it did not fully serve what is potentially the most distinctive characteristic of ventures: uncertainty. A business plan, for example, helps to define how different pieces of a business idea need to come together; what it does not do is help with more fundamental uncertainties which start-ups face in the early stages, and with which companies around the world, irrespective of their age and development stage, are now grappling.

Progressing leftwards in the figure moves us through many of the approaches that have been developed, adopted, or integrated by the discipline of entrepreneurship over the past 20 years. They take on higher levels of uncertainty and allow entrepreneurs to explore and cocreate possible futures. These methods include more widely spread approaches such as Design Thinking or Lean Start-up, but also approaches like effectuation, bricolage, improvisation, or art thinking – the further development of which is a key focus of ESCP's 'Jean-Baptiste Say Institute for Entrepreneurship'.

It is only over the last 10 years that we have seen a strong tendency of established companies to develop an interest in these methods and tools, not least because uncertainty has come to their attention more radically.

What do these methods and tools have in common:

- Bias towards action (if you are unable to predict the future, only action will help you)

- Bias towards collaboration (as you do not control all means, only collaboration will help you)
- Bias towards today (as uncertainty is high, the speed to move forward matters)
- Bias towards small iterations (testing and experimenting are key)
- Bias towards keeping investments/losses low (starting with small bets and consequently increasing them over time as uncertainty decreases)
- Bias towards agility (radical readiness to react even to weak signals)
- Bias towards early customer interaction (ultimately, only the customers know)

The current curricula at business schools around the world are typically skewed towards teaching the methods and tools on the right side of the figure (how to write a business plan, entrepreneurial finance, strategy, market analysis, etc.). Entrepreneurs are seen as experts in dealing with uncertainty. They tend to use methods and tools that are further to the left side of the figure. Therefore, we believe that these methods and tools should be much more prevalent in business school curricula and in companies. In order for this to happen, it is not enough to merely know these methods and tools. Companies faced with high uncertainty have to enable their employees to better understand their individual decision-making process and to adapt it to the environment. Employees ought to be trained in the application of these different approaches and provided with the working environment and leadership skills required not only to act, but also to convince others to act with them. This is what we call building uncertainty competence.

Building uncertainty competence

Supporting multiple decision rationalities

A first step in developing uncertainty competence means that leaders, managers and employees need to have the knowledge (understanding of uncertainty) to assess the specific decision-making situation that they are in, determining its position on the uncertainty spectrum, and then deciding for the appropriate approach (dealing with uncertainty). While this sounds intuitive, in reality it can be complicated as it very often breaks with the traditional rationality approach. Here, it is generally assumed that more information and, potentially, computation (analysis of variance, regressions, Bayes's rule, etc.) always result in better decisions. But in the face of high uncertainty this might not be true and can actually be very costly and time-consuming (Gigerenzer 2008). To give an example: Writing a detailed business plan including modelling the diffusion of a new product with a newly developed technology for a new and never-before served customer segment can be as context-irrational as applying effectuation for introducing an incrementally new feature for a well-established product targeting a well-known target group.

What we propose is that companies develop and allow a wide range of decision logics with matching methods and tools (as outlined in Figure 1) and actively encourage employees to choose the appropriate one. This of course makes the life of everyone a little bit more complicated than having one defined and accepted decision logic for every situation, as for example in the case of one single stage gate process for innovation through which all innovations (incremental and radical) have to go through.

Developing method and mindset expertise

The second step of building uncertainty competence brings a choice of methods to a company. Those methods then have to be applied. And here the focus is on application, on action. It is one thing to analyse and learn about a new method, it is a very different thing to

actually apply it. Methods and tools which are more suited for highly uncertain situations have a bias towards action, collaboration, iteration and customer centricity. These methods therefore require a shift in mindset. This shift means that in order to successfully apply these methods and tools people have to shift from an optimization mindset to an exploration mindset. And this might prove difficult as through our education most of us are trained in the mindset of optimization, finding the best solution to a problem. On the left hand side of the spectrum, we need to become a lot more like artists, with a mindset that allows for the emergence of (not necessarily optimal) solutions. Training in design thinking or effectuation highly depends on a mindset that allows acting without knowing what the right direction is. Failing becomes part of the process. And failing your way to success is not a standard operating procedure in companies today. It needs training, in terms of both method and mindset.

Making “room” for creation: developing leadership and the work environment

Finally, uncertainty competence requires making room in companies that are designed for optimization. Leadership must come into play at this point. There certainly have always been people acting as entrepreneurs in established firms – we call them intrapreneurs. However, their task is not starting up a venture on a green field. They are acting in an institution with rules that are not necessarily conducive to creation and emergence. Leadership in an uncertainty competent company needs to be aware of that and to make room for it. This room comes through developing leadership skills in people who are supposed to do projects on the left side of the spectrum presented in Figure 1. They need to feel safe in following their procedures and take other people with them on their journey of exploration. At the same time, top management needs to be trained in delegating those projects, which requires rethinking of KPIs and reporting procedures, but also designing the communication between the established management practices and the exploratory projects. With uncertainty competence, leadership is installing a new operating system as opposed to replacing the existing one. Instead, both are supposed to run in parallel and create fruitful connections. Innovation management literature has been talking about developing ‘ambidexterity’ (two-handedness) of firms. Developing uncertainty competence is an important step in that direction.

Conclusion

Our research on decision making under uncertainty can help managers to not only rethink their approach to decision making but to actually build a much-needed uncertainty competence. We have outlined three critical steps in building this uncertainty competence: Supporting multiple decision logics, developing method and mindset expertise, and building organisational spaces to give this new approach a safe environment to apply the new competence.

The process of building uncertainty competence is in itself highly uncertain as it depends on previous knowledge, routines, structures and processes. It is therefore important to treat the project of building uncertainty competence as a decision under high uncertainty. This would mean that it is important to prioritize action over analysis, collaboration over competition, today over tomorrow, experimenting over executing, agility over efficiency and last but not least working early and closely with your customers, employees, leaders, and managers.

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Crisis, inertia, uncertainty and management

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Abstract

This article explores the relationships between the concepts of crisis, inertia, uncertainty and management, and specifically discusses the apparent paradox between inertia, which is an essential attribute of organizations, and the uncertainty provoked by the Covid-19 crisis. The central idea is that designing an organization or strategy capable of anticipating this type of crisis is an absurd project.

Keywords: Crisis, Inertia, Uncertainty, Management, Strategy

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Crisis, inertia, uncertainty and management

Many in Europe and elsewhere argue that the Covid-19 pandemic – and even more so the shutdown of the economy resulting from it – is a unique opportunity to drastically reform business practices, management, strategic thinking, and therefore both the economy and society. Based on the “one should never waste a crisis” mantra (and the inevitable Chinese ideogram designating both “danger” and “opportunity”), they postulate that we have turned a major corner and that the “new normal” will differ profoundly from the old one.

However, we can reasonably assume that organizations will not change radically. As a matter of fact, among the ideas that run through management literature, organizational inertia is perhaps one of the most essential. From Cyert and March's (1963) behavioral theory of the firm to Kim and Mauborgne's (2005) Blue Ocean strategy, from March's (1991) exploration/exploitation dilemma to Johnson's incrementalism (Whittington et al., 2020), and from DiMaggio and Powell's (1985) institutional theory to Christensen's (1997) notion of disruption, we find the same observation: one of the main attributes of organizations is their inertia.

Inertia and organization

Many works in organizational theory, business strategy and management of innovation rest on the idea that organizations are systems that are always seeking to apply the same routines, replicate recipes and perfect procedures, at the risk of locking themselves into strategic drifts. Above all, what an organization wants is to do its job; above all, what each of its functions wants is to function. Because of this conservatism, one frequently recommended strategy consists in challenging the status quo and moving away from the crowd in order to shift the competitive field. However, this ends up creating a new inertia, which in turn locks the innovator into its own path (Christensen, 1997).

How can we maintain this inertia when, by nature, the competitive, regulatory, technological and environmental context is changing? Cyert and March (1963) have shown that a healthy organization needs some “slack”, that is to say unallocated resources that make it possible to react to unforeseen events and muddle through inevitably imperfect processes. If collective action relies on optimized systems, the slightest grain of sand can block the machine. This is the reason why it is wise to always ensure a surplus of ordinary skills, multiple procedures, a budgetary mattress, a redundant workforce, and even to make sure that all of this slack, in turn, is embedded in the routines. However, the sound management taught in schools of course consists precisely in eliminating slack, optimizing systems, choosing the most efficient approaches and getting rid of everything that is not absolutely necessary. The hunt for waste, the best use of resources and the clarity of management lines require the primacy of efficiency over effectiveness. Between two investment projects, the more profitable one will be preferred, and between two managers, the more frugal will be promoted. As a consequence, the overarching responsibility of a strategic leader consists in arbitrating between sound management and adaptability, in maintaining ambiguity in the most optimized processes, and in avoiding day-to-day business imperatives prevailing over the possibility of the unexpected.

More detailed analyses (Saussois and Laroche, 1991) have highlighted the detrimental role of faulty learning, a classic in organization theory: a system which has been functioning for a long period of time demonstrates strength in appearance, when in fact it is approaching

collapse. Even if the repetition of the daily successes of an organization gives the impression of confirming its merits, it is precisely its optimization – sometimes through the normalization of deviance – that pushes it to its limit.

However, we should not forget that without inertia, an organization simply cannot function (Laroche, 1996). If you always had to reinvent everything, if everyone was in constant improvisation and innovation, interaction would be strictly impossible. If we can live and work together, it is precisely because our actions are predictable. The confidence we inspire depends on the inertia of our behavior. Our consistency defines our reliability. It is the very nature of collective action to build routines and habits, procedures and rules, repetitions and learning. According to the transaction cost approach (Coase, 1937), firms handle transactions in a more efficient way than markets: whereas market relations would imply a constant reconstruction of relations, firms, thanks to their stability and to their inertia, have enabled mass production and collective prosperity.

Inertia and strategy

Likewise, continuity is the basic assumption behind all business strategy classic tools. The experience curve, PESTEL framework, BCG matrix, SWOT model or 5(+1) competitive forces (Whittington et al., 2020) rely on the hypothesis that the present – and sometimes even the past – is a good predictor of the future. If uncertainty is total, if the nature, extent and consequences of change are unknown, the concepts and models of business strategy, as taught in schools and universities, are simply useless.

In a totally unpredictable environment, the very notion of strategy makes no sense. By definition, strategy consists in allocating resources that commit the firm over the long term, in order to gain superior performance. If anticipation is impossible, engaging in an allocation of resources (whether human, financial, physical or technological) is just gambling, but certainly not strategy.

In fact, when uncertainty is ubiquitous, strategy must give way to survival techniques, such as anchoring, agility and imitation (Fréry, 2014):

1. Anchoring, like an offshore oil rig, consists in waiting until the storm calms down. While waiting for better days, one must set up a resilient organization that is capable of resuming its initial state once the pressure has dropped.
2. Agility is the exact opposite: like a cork floating on the surface, you let yourself be tossed around until stability returns, which notably involves the transformation of fixed costs into variable costs (thanks to outsourcing), in order to lower the break-even point.
3. Imitation starts from a simple observation: for a decision maker, the worst case is to be the only one to make a bad decision. Conversely, if everyone makes the same bad decision at the same time, accountability will be collective, and therefore much more acceptable. As a consequence, when placed in a context of high uncertainty, leaders tend to adopt some form of herding.

However, all this has nothing to do with strategy: anchoring opposes any evolution, agility consists in disallocating resources, and imitation is the negation of competitive advantage. These techniques can at best allow endurance, but they cannot lead to success. When uncertainty reigns, when only survival counts, strategy is useless and success can only be fortuitous.

Trying to overcome uncertainty is an absurd project

All in all, can we say that the Covid-19 pandemic could have been much better anticipated, better prepared and better managed if our decision-makers had worked well, if the right strategies had been deployed and if our organizations had been well designed? Can we say that our managers have betrayed their role as strategists, have forgotten the imperative of slack and have favored immediate savings?

Nothing is less certain, because trying to build organizations capable of overcoming uncertainty is an absurd project.

Nassim Taleb, the father of the Black Swan concept (2007) – a Black Swan is an event that suddenly makes all historical observations obsolete – stresses that Covid-19 is not a Black Swan, since comparable pandemics have already occurred (notably in 1918, 1958 and 1968), and that several experts, until recently, had identified the threat. If public and private organizations have been caught off guard, it is therefore not by surprise, but because of blindness or amnesia.

Now, what could a strategy designed to take an event of this nature into account have looked like? How should it have been taken into account in calculations of net present value, in extrapolations of the experience curve or in the measurement of competitive rivalry? The sheer enormity of this scenario would have dwarfed any other consideration, until monopolizing all the resources: only the survival plan would have been imposed. In short, it would have been a perfect example of anti-strategy.

What should have been done to ensure the slack capable of withstanding an event of this magnitude? What resources should we have safeguarded to resist a hypothetical epidemic, of which it was impossible to foresee the gravity, date or nature? Besides, why should we limit ourselves to a pandemic? Many other hazards threaten us: natural disasters (linked to global warming or not), nuclear conflicts, cyber-attacks, chemical or biological warfare, and so on (and the “and so on” is the most important entry in this list). All of these perils require different preventive measures and involve fencing specific resources. All our efforts would therefore be dedicated to anticipating future crises, and eventually this principle of prevention would make our present unliveable and the pursuit of happiness suspect. As Aldous Huxley said, “Medical science is making such remarkable progress that soon there will be hardly a healthy human left.”

Conclusion

Under these conditions, what can we recommend for a post Covid-19 era? The principle of slack is relevant for organizations facing strategic uncertainties that could be described as “normal”: a new competitor, customer default, technological innovation, regulatory changes or corporate restructuring. In all these situations, managers must preserve slack, possibly against their managers and especially their shareholders. On the other hand, this principle is irrelevant when uncertainty reaches the magnitude we are currently experiencing. It is not the responsibility of business managers to anticipate uncertainties of this nature. What should the CEOs of Air France, Club Med or Accor have done to protect their companies from the risk of a total loss of their revenues for several months? They would have caused an equally damaging paralysis. We must remain modest about the scope and ambitions of our management tools: they are designed to improve everyday life – which is already a lot – but not to cope with monstrous events.

Covid-19 is a tragedy for each of its victims, even if other pandemics have historically been much more deadly. What constitutes a completely unprecedented historic event is not this disease by itself, but the global shutdown of the economy that an escalation of decisions – and a lack of decisions – has triggered. Never in history have more than 2.5 billion people been placed on lockdown, and no one can anticipate what the consequences will be. In fact, what we are most likely to suffer from is not illness, but our attempts to escape it.

However, humanity has experienced far more devastating crises, including two world wars twenty years apart, not counting the black plague, smallpox and the Spanish flu. However, each time, the economy ended up regaining its place. Everyday life gradually won out over the exceptional. Homeostasis imposed itself.

Management is the conduct of collective action, and the ultimate goal of business strategy is progress. Since crises are inevitable, we must remain humble but determined. Protecting ourselves from everything “whatever it takes” leads to hygienist absolutism, the consequences of which are worse than the causes. Facing the next shock, let us prefer action to precaution and the search for prosperity to the tyranny of abstinence.

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Freedom & vulnerability: How people develop new skills in an unexpected work environment

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Abstract

This impact paper aims to reflect on the flexibility and temporary character of the work environment brought on by the Covid-19 health emergency. In particular, the focus is on the set of soft skills developed by people to face the many challenges on a personal, social and methodological level. Finally, conditions to sustain and perpetuate these efforts are described, such as work flexibility, agile teams and a learning culture.

Keywords: soft skills, people development, flexible working, covid19

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Freedom & vulnerability: How people develop new skills in an unexpected work environment

During the health emergency brought on by Covid-19, we can observe unexpected practices and behaviours within organizations. The multiple obstacles people are facing to get their job done from home (e.g. physical distance, technological equipment, attention span, support to the community and family members, etc.) are forcing them to reinvent work activities significantly. In-depth reflection is needed to outline the managerial implications and key drivers of this phenomenon.

Management will not be the same because people have discovered freedom and autonomy. Before the pandemic, scholars would complain about the obsolete management models of our organizations, unable to adopt innovative approaches such as agile or lean management, holacracy, polycratic or exponential organization, to name but a few. It seemed that managers felt threatened by autonomous, self-managed teams that could undermine their status, power and control (Denning, 2015). They were being asked to stop thinking of themselves as “*master designers of hardwired organizational structures, processes, rules, and procedures*” and to become “*the everyday orchestrators of a flexible and dynamic behavioural system, to unleash employees’ autonomy and initiative*” (Morieux, 2018, p.1). The disruptive advent of Coronavirus forced teams to get re-organized very quickly and managers empowered workforces to take decisions, with courage and responsibility. In most cases, a situation of confinement and isolation, which might have led to demotivation, dispersion of energy and disorganization of work, has developed a higher level of self-efficacy among employees and cooperation to achieve organizational goals. Multinational companies, for example, have delegated to local management to take decisions for their countries in complete autonomy. Responses in most of the cases have exceeded expectations in terms of speed in taking action and the constructive attitude in proposing solutions.

The vulnerability, fragility and precarity being felt by human beings emphasize the importance of the present moment. People are concerned about their health and feel exposed, as they have probably never felt before in modern society. Complete uncertainty about future scenarios places new emphasis on living the present situation and making sense of it (Rahola, 2020). Every crisis forces us to come back to the basic questions and need of a meaning. The sense of urgency driven by the economic crisis and financial pressure of companies are pushing people to react pragmatically and exploit concrete opportunities. Basic assumptions are being challenged and managers are motivated to try new approaches and find new solutions to problems. Particularly, small start-ups and young companies have been impacted by the suspension of business activities, showing their intrinsic weaknesses. The difficult financial situation has obliged young entrepreneurs, where possible, to change direction immediately and think of new businesses to meet the needs of the contingent situation (e.g. production of medical devices, supply of personal protective equipment, online delivery services, etc.).

Challenging context and acceleration of skills development

Van Elser and McCauley (2004) indicate that a challenge is the most effective development tool. Managers must be put in circumstances where their existing skills and perspectives are inadequate. If managers are never forced out of their comfort zone, they will continue to

employ strategies that have served them well in the past. Only by placing individuals in situations where past behaviour may lead to failure are they likely to try new approaches.

Despite huge human and financial losses, this crisis represents an opportunity to observe how people react to disruptive events and which capabilities are put in place. In fact, many skills have been developed by employees and managers in just a few weeks, while companies have been struggling to develop them in formal settings for years.

In particular, we would like to focus here on the set of soft skills which are being stimulated to act in this flexible and vulnerable work environment.

In 2019, a study was conducted to identify the most important soft skills required by the job market (Succi & Canovi, 2019) and how employers were measuring and developing them (Succi & Wieandt, 2019). A taxonomy and working definition of soft skills can be taken from Haselberger (2012, p.67): “*Soft skills represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills. Soft skills help people to adapt and behave positively so that they can deal effectively with the challenges of their professional and everyday life*”.

a) Personal Skills

Every individual is observing him/herself in a totally different environment and we are recording new behaviours and practices to deal with the complexity of the situation. **Self-awareness** and **self-management** skills (such as emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook; Goleman, 2006) are crucial to re-organize activities and manage the pressure coming from personal and professional needs.

Apart from personality traits, **resilience** or **stress management** are necessary to react to unexpected events, like the sudden stopping of usual activities and the obligation to switch ways of working. People are showing a **commitment to work** to strive toward organizational goals, despite the uncertainty of the situation and the pessimistic outlook of the business framework. Two protagonists in this emergency are **creativity** - the process leading to the generation of products that are new, original, useful, and effective - and **divergent thinking** - a mind process that leads to an increased number of ideas instead of searching for “the right one” (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). They are stimulated impressively by the need to bring innovative ideas and develop alternative solutions. Moreover, an unusual setting helps to see things from an outside perspective, which allows us to handle uncertainty well and excel at reconciling conflicting information (Khazan, 2020).

Obviously, everybody has developed **learning skills** to acquire and implement new knowledge to respond to the emerging demands concerning remote working, scientific reports, medical devices, online grocery shopping, home schooling and possible unusual domestic activities. Finally, a reflection on **life-work balance skills** is required, considering the overlapping of personal and professional spheres that is occurring these days. It is common to see people attending a videoconference while cooking or playing with the kids. Careful **time management** can solve the frequent conflicts between the new life and job in lockdown (even if the objective is sometimes not feasible).

b) Social Skills

Communication and **teamwork** are two essential sets of skills for managers and this situation has clarified important aspects of this. For example, **empathy**, the ability to sense others' feelings and take an active interest in their concerns (Goleman, 2006), which is one of

the most difficult soft skills to develop, has become of crucial importance. Common feelings and emotions shared by people located in different places have actually created strong bonds, erasing physical distance. It is frequent, at the moment, to start a conversation with authentic questions regarding health conditions and personal situations, before moving to a business conversation. This is also reflected in the type of communication channels utilized by users. For example, an increase has been recorded in use of instant messaging and a reduction in formal messages exchanged by email.

Cultural Intelligence is also stimulated in a context in which travels are suspended and sensitive issues can be addressed only in a mediated environment. **Contact network skills** are becoming the essential trait of a leader, who should be able to connect different professionals around the globe and motivate them to contribute effectively.

c) Methodological skills

Conditions are moving very fast and **adaptability to change**, defined as the ability to redirect the course of action to meet goals in a new situation, is a requisite. **Analysis skills**, considering the amount of data available, and **decision making skills** are also triggered by the volatility and complexity of the business environment.

Finally, **customer orientation, striving for excellence** and **results orientation** are the skills which will distinguish the managers who will evolve, from those, who will simply count their losses. There are examples of companies which have moved employees from operations to customer service to strengthen the relationships with their clients; companies which are contacting customers to listen to their needs and developing solutions almost for free, to keep the position in the market.

Conditions to sustain development

These exceptional individual efforts cannot last for a long time. After an initial positive and constructive reaction, anxiety and fatigue might overwhelm people's ability to achieve objectives. Stress tends to impair the ability to learn new skills (Zajonc, 1965).

Organizations need to build on the accomplishments of their managers and need to create the right environment to support their performance. In particular, three conditions seem essential to perpetuate this positive trend.

- **Work flexibility.** *Remote working, smart working or teleworking*, to mention only some definitions of flexible working, have finally become a reality in our society. Legal constraints and technological tools have been managed successfully to accelerate the possibility of working from different locations. It is important now to strengthen the process and secure the progress that has been made. The future employee experience should include the appropriate mix of presence at the office and smart working.
- **Agile teams.** Self-organized virtual teams are now the main unit of organizations. Leaders should support their momentum and find ways to connect and engage people as much as possible. Empowerment and reduced constraints will be essential, even afterward, to maintain efficiency and ensure performance of teams working at distance.

- **Learning Culture.** Providing continuity to the organizational culture is probably the main challenge of organizations. Sharing values and decision-making processes are essential to be aligned toward organizational goals and are the priority of senior management during the crisis. The learning culture, where people can propose ideas, experiment alternative solutions and make mistakes, as experienced during the pandemic, should be kept and enhanced to build sustainable businesses for the future.

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[COVID-19: How some companies leapt, while others stalled

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Abstract

This impact paper is based on the follow-up study of how altruistic corporations responded to COVID-19 crisis. Altruistic corporations are companies that serve unconditionally their customers, suppliers and local communities through their core business processes. Our previous study (Getz & Marbacher, 2019) found that these companies outperform their competition in normal times. The follow-up study reveals that during the COVID-19 crisis, these companies have also shown antifragility (Taleb, 2012).

Keywords: COVID-19, Leadership, Transformation, Organization, Altruism

* A revised version of this article appears in *Strategy+ Business* review.

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COVID-19: How some companies leapt, while others stalled

In mid-March, COVID-19 locked down most of Europe and Asia. For Sterimed, a 900-strong world leader of high-end sterile medical packaging, this was mixed news. A sudden 40% increase in demand for its pouches was welcome but ramping up production at its French plants was challenging. One aspect was particularly thorny: procuring protective masks for workers was impossible in France and even in China, where the export of such masks was banned at the time. But Sterimed refused to endanger its employees and found a solution.

Sterimed had been exporting its products to China for several decades. Quickly, the company realized that one Chinese client was also producing protective masks. Sterimed got in touch and the client agreed to send several free sample boxes. As a result, not only could Sterimed protect its employees, but its CEO Thibaut Hyvernats could also help others. "I am a very sociable person, so I started calling my friends who run businesses and began sharing some of the spare masks." Then, a thought struck him: "Instead of helping several dozen friends, I could help 20 million friends!" Hyvernats immediately called the head of Asian operations who quickly came back with two important facts: (1) more than one of Sterimed's Chinese clients were manufacturing protective masks and (2) China was lifting its export ban.

The next day, working from his suburban Parisian home, Hyvernats called an executive meeting. "The conversation lasted 10 minutes. Or rather, there was no conversation. We all said: 'Let's do it,'" he recalled. Put differently, in these 10 minutes Sterimed decided to launch an activity which was totally new to them: importing medical supplies. The company leveraged its core technical, regulatory, and supply chain competencies, but they still needed to: (1) obtain authorization to run this new activity and approval for the import of masks; (2) book the production capacity for up to 20 million masks with its Chinese suppliers throughout April and pay for it in advance (Sterimed declined the government's emergency credit and paid with its own funds); (3) arrange a huge hub with the capacity to receive large cargo plane loads arriving from China and dispatch them with trucks to European clients. Two weeks later the first million masks arrived, followed by four million the week after, and 25 million by mid-April.

Last but not least, although mask prices soared, Sterimed sold them at cost price—of buying and of estimated transportation. "If air transportation costs exceed our estimations, we may well lose money by the end of April. But that is not the point," remarked Hyvernats.

During COVID-19, many companies tried to figure out a new way to run their business, while also aiming to create traditional economic value. Sterimed achieved it, but with a different and unique purpose in mind—creation of social value. We call such companies altruistic and found that their economic success comes only as a result, indirectly. Our five-year study showed that they were continuously successful using their very specific, socially-focused mode of business. This is proof that there is a new way to run companies. And it isn't just a B-Corp way of working. Rather, it offers a solid and credible alternative to the "Chicago school" approach for running the capitalistic firm (Friedman, 1970). COVID-19 reinforced this. We took a fresh look to see how and what the altruistic corporations were doing.

Not wasting a crisis

Altruistic corporations are companies that serve unconditionally their customers, suppliers and local communities through their core business processes (Getz & Marbacher, 2019). Hence, they measure their success by, for example, how loyal their customers are, how

supportive their suppliers are or how admired they are in their communities. Paradoxically—but in fact, naturally—these altruistic corporations' successes with the members of their ecosystem translate indirectly into economic success. We observed this phenomenon in several dozen companies across three continents, both public and private, in industries ranging from banking and manufacturing to retail, pharmaceutical, and healthcare. Many of these companies have been practicing corporate altruism for decades. Though altruistic corporations differ from their competition both by their unique focus on their ecosystem members' good and—as a consequence—by higher economic performance, they remain capitalistic firms. That said, they often allocate their after-tax profits more to further service of the ecosystem members—and employee—needs than to shareholder needs, including in the public companies and with the stockholders' agreement.

That is the situation in normal times. Since crises are often said to be the true tests of the way businesses are run, we followed up with several altruistic corporations we had studied and added some new ones across many industries. Here is how and what they did during the COVID-19 crisis.

In banking, advisors of the 200-branch strong UK division of the Swedish bank Handelsbanken did not hesitate when one of its clients—a medical ventilator manufacturer—asked for something which had never been done before. Faced with a surge in demand, the manufacturer needed to place a massive purchase order for ventilator parts, a transaction that would usually take 2-3 weeks to process. Handelsbanken's advisors managed to process it in 7 days, by working into the evenings and even on weekends, thereby accelerating the delivery of these ventilators to UK hospitals at the height of the pandemic. Remarkably, this wasn't the first, but the third crisis, in which Handelsbanken distinguished itself. In the early 1990s real-estate and the 2009 crises, Handelsbanken was the only Swedish bank that did not turn to taxpayers' money for a bail-out. On the contrary, Handelsbanken extended its credit to individuals and businesses that were under strain, thus benefiting society as a whole, instead of being a burden for it.

In the textile industry, LTC, a high-end French textile producer, also decided to help with the demand for masks. On Friday, March 13, 2020, just at the start of the pandemic in France, they developed a professional reusable mask made from washable fabric within 24 hours and set the offer live on their website. On the following Monday, after receiving close to one million visits and thousands of calls begging to sell the masks, LTC went into action. In the next 48 hours, they transformed all their manufacturing and supply chain to launch the non-stop 24/7 production of 150,000 masks produced and delivered to hospitals and other clients, every day. Similar to Sterimed, LTC charged a price that just covered production and shipping. What's more, they shared the design and specifications of the mask publicly thus allowing other manufacturers to produce it too.

In food production, on March 24, 2020, Laurent Cavard, the CEO of Altho, a major potato chip producer announced a 9% pay increase to all its delivery suppliers. What's more, Altho backdated the increase a week and also pledged to pay any invoices immediately upon their receipt.

In utilities, on the same day of March 24, 2020, EnergyVision, a Belgian provider of energy transition solutions wrote to all its clients announcing a freeze in bills, stating that customers wouldn't be charged for energy consumption for the following two months. The company was already not charging clients for the initial studies of their energy infrastructure, or for the costs of transitioning towards more efficient and greener solutions. EnergyVision were just charging clients for energy consumption using transitioned infrastructures and at a price much lower than what they had paid before. Now, this price has been brought down to zero.

In insurance, on April 2, 2020, just after April fool's day, MAIF, an 8,000-strong French mutual insurer announced that they were refunding €100 million back to its 2.8 million car insurance customers. MAIF's experts observed a 75% drop in car accidents during the lockdown and decided to refund this unpaid damage fund back to its customers whom they viewed as no fools at all.

You may think that all of these companies could afford being altruistic during the crisis because they were already doing well. Yes and no. Yes, thanks to their way of running their business they were already outperforming their competition continuously. For instance, in 2020, MAIF was ranked as N°1 for customer relations in France in insurance for the 16th year in a row, and Handelsbanken in Sweden outperformed its competition on profitability for 48 years in a row, while in the UK—its growing market—it was voted the best *private* bank four years in a row, although its 200 branches are in retail banking. But it would be a mistake to think that it's because of their financial strength that they had the chance to act unconditionally for the good of their ecosystem members. In France, none of the larger competitors of MAIF returned any funds to its car-insurance customers—they all pocketed the money.

There is something in the very way the altruistic corporations are run which makes them pursue the good of their ecosystem members unconditionally. Something which explains why these companies refuse to make profits in the inflated market, why they increase what they pay suppliers, why they return their rightfully earned profits to customers, and why they work extra hours during their time off without charge.

The altruistic corporations explained

Corporate altruism isn't business philanthropy—donating part of corporate profits. Neither is it B-Corp or Benefit Corporations way of running business, where you try to balance the simultaneous pursuits of social and economic value. Instead, altruistic companies focus unconditionally on the creation of social value, wagering that the economic value will follow. That means that if a specific business activity does not generate—or even loses—money, it's fine for an altruistic company as long as it provides benefits to a part of the corporation's ecosystem. Amazingly though, we have found that this wagering is not simply a nice thing to do, but that it leads to corporate success. More, we have also found that these crises reveal how antifragile these companies are, a quality, which According to Nassim Taleb (2012), denotes a system's capacity—from weightlifters to entrepreneurs—not just to show resilience or robustness but to become stronger while facing adversity.

Below are four organizational components explaining how corporate altruism leads to success and antifragility.

- *Socially-oriented and inspiring corporate vision.* This depicts a company unconditionally serving their ecosystem members—customers, suppliers, and local communities—as well as employees, and viewing financial performance as a result of these actions and not as their purpose. The vision must be larger than the boundaries of the company and also be aspirational, thus allowing employees to own it emotionally.
- *CEO as a guardian for the vision.* These CEOs view their first responsibility as ensuring that everyone has ownership of the company's vision and that it serves as the criterion for their decision-making. The CEOs don't tell employees what to do but ask: "Does what you are trying to do constitute the best way to serve our ecosystem members as persons first and not as means to our business?"
- *Autonomous action.* Since all company employees know what vision they're pursuing, decision-making and the power to implement ideas belong to them.

Knowing the decision criterion, they have no need to ask managers which options are best for each and every ecosystem member they deal with.

- *Managers acting as servant leaders.* Managers are not occupied with instructing and controlling teams, but with asking them “what do you need in order to do your best for the company’s vision” or “what is preventing you from doing your best.” Managers can then remove the obstacles to employee action and provide them with the necessary resources (material, financial, time...) they need to act.

The FruitGuys, a Californian company delivering fresh fruit to offices, provides a great illustration of how these four organizational components allowed them to thrive, as well as to weather several crises, COVID-19 included.

Corporate altruism thriving in practice

Firstly, The FruitGuys’ vision of doing all they can for customers was the very reason Chris Mittelstaedt founded the company. In 1998, he was looking for a start-up that made sense, when his friend mentioned to him that office employees really lacked healthy food. “If you could do something to make them healthier, that would be great,” he said. Shortly after, Chris started his business, not in a proverbial garage, but in his San Francisco apartment kitchen. There, together with his wife, they prepared healthy fresh fruit baskets, which Chris would then deliver to businesses who signed up to the idea.

The company took off. Doing all they could for customers soon extended to doing all they could for the fruit growers too. Ed McGee was one of these, growing peaches that The FruitGuys buyer Rebecca North described as so juicy that “when you’ve eaten one, you need to take a shower!” One day though, Ed encountered a huge problem. Small rodents, gophers, invaded his orchard digging tunnels and eating the roots of his peach trees.

Rebecca knew little about gophers, but she wanted to do all she could for Ed and so asked him: “What can we do for you? What do you need?” Ed half-jokingly replied: “I need barn owls.” She didn’t know much about owls either, yet she continued to think about it and shared the issue with Chris. A few months and calls later, the FruitGuys surprised Ed by coming to his farm and installing four owl nesting boxes. Not long after this, owls came to nest in them. To Ed’s delight, since a barn owl can eat up to six rodents in a single night.

Rebecca, who is in charge of teaching other The FruitGuys employees how to interact with farmers, sums up the company’s approach: “Real face-to-face interactions with farmers are critical to the relationship. We want long-term relationships, not just one or two dates. We’re looking for a long-lasting marriage!”

Chris defines his life goal as “crafting business models that allow for people and organizations to have a positive and healthy impact on the world”. This, in turn, drives “what FruitGuys is and what it provides to clients, employees, community partners, farmers and the world at large.”

Secondly, for this corporate vision of unconditionally serving the ecosystem members to be owned by everyone, the role of CEO as corporate vision guardian was critical. It wasn’t simple, though.

From the very beginning, Chris did everything to explain to his employees how best to serve customers, and he thought this was sufficient. However, one day a customer complained about a particularly rude gesture one of The FruitGuys delivery drivers had used with a client. This led Chris to a one-year introspection and to the elaboration of a more explicit philosophy

of customer service that he called the 5Rs: be Respectful / Responsive / Realistic / Responsible / Remembered positively. In this way, Chris said, “I was able to teach the behavior that I wanted, to make it part of the daily routine [instead of] explaining it every day.” This philosophy was then extended to suppliers. From then on, Chris would say to his employees: “Do whatever you think is necessary [to implement this philosophy], no matter what the cost. You have *carte blanche*”.

Thirdly, enabling employees to internalize the company’s vision and philosophy allowed them to act on their own when facing customer or supplier problems.

One day, while dealing with account receivables, Nicole Wagner called a major client about the late payment of eight bills. “You tell me that you sent me these invoices electronically, but I never received them,” Nicole heard how upset the customer was on the phone. She apologized, admitting that she must have forgotten to check the box indicating that the client prefers to receive invoices automatically via the data-transfer system. But the customer was still upset because she now had to process the bills manually.

So, Nicole decided to act, “Ma’am, I am aware of how much trouble our mistake has caused you: it’s unacceptable,” she said. “Would you like us to just cancel these bills for you?” she then offered. Totally taken aback, the client changed her tone and refused Nicole’s kind gesture, instead promising to pay the owed \$320. Interestingly, Nicole used *carte blanche*, but the client rejected the gesture.

Finally, as servant leaders, The FruitGuys managers are key, not only for giving employees the responsibility and power to do all they can for customers and suppliers, but also in providing them with resources they need to do so.

This all started with the CEO Chris telling everybody: “I’m not smart enough to come up with the right answer, but let’s ask really good questions to try to find out what the right answer would potentially be.”

In the meantime, Nicole moved from account receivables into customer relations and then became the manager here. One day, Mary – a member of Nicole’s team – received a call from a client in Fresno, in north-eastern California: “You just delivered my box of fruit... The bananas are all brown. I don’t understand how you can deliver fruit in such terrible condition!” said the client on the phone.

“We’re very sorry. It must be because of the heat, nearly 40°. We should have sent you greener bananas,” apologized Mary. “Is it alright if we send you another delivery tomorrow?” she proposed. “No, it’s not alright. I need this fruit today,” the client replied.

Though this was a very minor client for The FruitGuys, ordering just one medium-sized box every week, Mary decided to act. Together with her manager Nicole, they called Meesy, another manager in charge of the Silicon Valley warehouse. Together, they decided that Meesy would get a company van and drive for three hours to deliver new bananas to this client. Put differently, two managers helped Mary to do “all she could” for the client—who could not believe it when the new fruit box was delivered to her on the same day.

The FruitGuys have relied on the four organizational components to provide unconditional service to their customers and suppliers for the past 22 years, during normal times. However, these same components have helped the company to weather multiple crises as well, reaching 170 employees and over \$35 million in revenue.

Antifragile altruism in times of crisis

In 2000, two years after its foundation, The FruitGuys were struck by the dotcom crisis because of their struggling Silicon Valley clients. The first thing many of them did was to cut their “corporate benefits” budgets, including their provision of free fruits for employees. In a short time, the company’s \$1-million turnover was halved. To save his start-up, Mittelstaedt had to lay off some of his employees and drive the delivery truck himself again.

Yet, Mittelstaedt called this crisis a “blessing in disguise.” Most of Silicon Valley’s high-tech firms took years to recover from the dotcom crisis, laying off many of their staff. This was not the case for the low-tech The FruitGuys. In the meantime, many of the laid-off Silicon Valley executives left to find work elsewhere, in Chicago or Dallas, in a trend described in the humor of the time as “B-to-B and B-to-C: back to banking, back to consulting”. But they missed their peaches and pears. So, having become used to their healthy daily fruit basket, some called The FruitGuys to find out whether they offered the same delivery service in their new city.

This is the blessing Chris was referring to. Soon, The FruitGuys started opening branches around the US and today, they serve 15 hubs delivering in 48 states.

COVID-19 has hit The FruitGuys even harder than the dotcom crash did. In a matter of weeks, its revenue dropped by 90%. Chris recalls someone telling him to “moth ball” his business and lay off everyone to stem the losses. He admits that financial logic did dictate this solution, but it didn’t sit well with the company’s vision and philosophy. Moreover, providing fresh fruit became even more important during COVID-19 because of the health benefits of their vitamins.

So, during the first week of the crisis The FruitGuys leadership team started to look for solutions in line with its vision and “even at triple the losses incurred,” as Chris put it. Quickly, they invented a home delivery business for private customers. In addition, they launched a program to deliver fruit to people fighting COVID-19, adding the local community to the ecosystem they served. The team has also decided against layoffs, preferring instead a partial furloughing of the workforce, all the while paying them 100% of healthcare. They also decided to find work with other businesses for its delivery and packaging employees to avoid furloughing.

At the time of writing, 93 out of 170 employees are furloughed, including some of the leadership team who suggested the plan. Of the 77 remaining, The FruitGuys found 13 of them temporary work in other businesses. Moreover, in one month the company has pivoted dramatically from office to home delivery. They now have orders worth \$90,000 per week, reaching a rough breakeven point. The Paycheck Protection Program from the US government will allow them to bring back employees to the reinvented company. They are anticipating that only 60-70% of their corporate customers will come back and are looking at growing their home delivery business to propel them forward so they can not only achieve full employment again but actually exceed their previous annual trajectory.

A solid alternative to the “Chicago school” way to run companies

The FruitGuys and all the other companies we have mentioned found how to leverage their business competencies and processes to act—also in times of crisis—for the good of their customers, suppliers and local communities. But they did not achieve this through smart financial analysis, focusing on profit or shareholder value maximization. Amazingly, they did it by rejecting the unique financial orientation and instead, focusing single-mindedly on the good of their ecosystem members. This allowed them to devise and implement—often

pivot—massive solutions on a dime. Sterimed, for example, is considering—at the time of writing—to turn their new import activities into a major business pole after the crisis. They managed to do so because they weren't asking many questions, just one: "How can we transform our processes to keep on serving unconditionally the members of our ecosystem, as well as our employees?"

All crises end – that is what crises do. However, for many companies that won't be good news. They may be unable to meet demand when it picks up—or exceeds normal levels— because suppliers will have disappeared, clients will have fled and employees will have been laid off. Like in Aesop's fable, they will resemble the oak which breaks during the storm. And like in this tale, altruistic corporations will resemble the reed which bent but did not break. They didn't break because, after the crisis, just like the former clients who called The FruitGuys to deliver them fruits in other regions, these companies are surrounded by members of their ecosystem who haven't forgotten. The crises prove the superiority of the altruistic way of running companies, but there is more.

There has been lots of talk about not wasting a crisis like this. Altruistic corporations show that there is a credible alternative to the "Chicago school" way to run companies. This alternative does not consist in balancing the creation of social and economic values, like B-Corps or the 181 US top CEOs of Business Roundtable (Winston, 2019) offer. Instead of pursuing financial performance which eludes you, you can use the crisis to refocus your company single-mindedly on the common good, and—as a result and not as a purpose—to thrive. It may not be possible for every company, but it's not too late to try.

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Accounting implications of the COVID-19 outbreak

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Abstract

This impact paper provides an overview of the major challenges CFOs face in the light of the current COVID-19 crisis when preparing their financial statements. In particular, CFOs need to consider the magnitude of disruption caused by the outbreak to their business operations and adequately disclose the information about those assets and liabilities that are subject to significant estimation uncertainty. Furthermore, the question arises whether the outbreak represents an event before or after the end of the recent reporting period (FY 2019) which needs to be discussed in the (current) financial statements of 2019. Also, CFOs need to revisit the accounting for fair value estimates, expected credit losses (ECLs), impairments, and other assets. Finally, CFOs should carefully assess whether these events or conditions may compromise the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Keywords: COVID-19 disclosures, Estimation uncertainty, CFO reporting

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Accounting Implications of the COVID-19 Outbreak

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the consequent measures taken by many governments all over the world happened exactly during the period of the year when many companies are preparing their annual financial reports. Moreover, the uncertainty about the future evolution of the situation raises a lot of questions and challenges with respect to accounting measurement and valuation. What is the impact of the outbreak on different accounting periods? How is it going to affect the company's going concern? Is it possible for CFOs in the current situation to provide in their financial statements a "true and fair" representation regarding estimations, judgments, and assumptions? This study examines and discusses some of the most significant financial statements' implications due to the COVID-19 outbreak and provides actionable items on how to deal with the evolving situation.

The current coronavirus crisis has led many countries to disrupt firms' business activities. Disruptions are more immediate and pronounced in certain industries such as tourism, hospitality, transportation, retail, and entertainment, while there are also anticipated knock-on effects on other sectors such as manufacturing and the financial sector. As the outbreak continues to progress and evolve, it is challenging at this juncture, to predict the full extent and duration of its business and economic impact. In the current situation, considering the publication of the first studies and forecasts (see OECD, IMF, EU), probably no economic activity in the world could have avoided considering itself affected by this situation. Consequently, these circumstances may present a great challenge also for CFOs of companies in their pursuit to address the financial effects of the novel coronavirus outbreak when communicating with their stakeholders. These challenges are already present when preparing financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 (the reporting date), but even more as the approval of the interim 2020 approaches. Local regulators in almost all the countries overwhelmingly affected by the COVID-19 have already adopted (or are on the way to adopting) specific rules to face this exceptional situation, affecting, among many other things, also the financial reporting and disclosures practices of companies (for example in terms of deadlines for publication and approval of the annual reports). Also, international standard setters (i.e. IASB, FASB) have reacted to this situation by amending the effective dates of certain accounting principles (e.g. amendment of IFRS 16 *Leases*).

One of the biggest concerns comes from the fact that the financial and economic impact of this pandemic disease is strongly dependent on facts, elements, and variables, that are largely still extremely difficult to predict, even in general terms. For example, it is unquestionable that the future evolution of this situation largely relies on two fundamental elements: the results coming from scientific/medical research (i.e. vaccine and new effective medical treatments) and the reaction of the population (in terms of compliance) to the norms that regulate both the lockdown and the slow reopening ("back to normality") that will follow in many countries.

Consequently, from an accounting, reporting, and audit perspective, the challenge becomes how each entity can "translate" the effect of those macro conditions into reliable estimates of its own accounting metrics. Additionally, from a slightly different perspective, how can we ensure that the decisions and estimations of different companies about this uncertain and unprecedented situation would be compliant to the accounting principle and, moreover, will be comparable, in order to protect the interest of investors, stakeholders, and markets?

Analysis

The analysis that follows will examine the major accounting challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak is raising for both current and future accounting period(s), with the impact on companies' financial statements. CFOs, accountants, and auditors need to "do their best" to provide "fair" and reasonable estimations, judgments, and assumptions in order to come up with reliable results, reports, and disclosure, accompanied by clear supportive documentation that provides evidence to their assumptions and estimates. Table 1 below summarizes the key issues together with possible actions that a CFO can undertake to cope with each issue. A detailed analysis follows, which is developed with IFRS financial statements in mind. The main conclusions, however, are consistent with other accounting regulations, such as U.S. GAAP.

MAJOR ACCOUNTING ISSUES TRIGGERED BY COVID-19 CRISIS	CFO ACTION ITEMS
<p><i>Does the COVID-19 outbreak represent an event before or after the end of the recent reporting period (FY 2019) which needs to be discussed in the financial statements of 2019?</i></p>	<p>The COVID-19 outbreak can be generally considered a non-adjusting event. However, due to materiality, the nature and the implications of the outbreak, the implications should be discussed in the management report.</p>
<p><i>Does the COVID-19 outbreak have implications for the going-concern assumption of the company?</i></p>	<p>CFOs need to revise their budgets, plans, forecasts, and sensitivities, evaluating carefully the implications of the outbreak in terms of liquidity, solvency, and profitability of the company. In case of uncertainties, it has to be reported that the going-concern assumption might be subject to material uncertainties.</p>
<p><i>Does the COVID-19 outbreak affect the fair value measurements of assets and liabilities?</i></p>	<p>Being a market-based measurement, fair values will be affected. CFOs may be challenged in evaluating carefully the conditions for "active markets". Assumptions and judgements applied during the valuation process should be documented. Moreover, potential breach of loan covenants should be monitored carefully, in order to prevent potential problems in the company solvency.</p>
<p><i>Does the COVID-19 outbreak impact the expected credit loss (ECL) assessment under IFRS9?</i></p>	<p>CFOs have to re-estimate the probability of default of many borrowers, in order to evaluate properly all their receivables, accounting for adequate provisions for bad debts. While the 2019 ECL will not incorporate the effect of all subsequent measures, the forward-looking approach of IFRS 9 requires CFOs to anticipate the future expected loss to the current period, with the risk of amplifying the losses.</p>

<p>Does the COVID-19 outbreak represent a triggering event for non-financial assets impairment testing?</p>	<p>The consequences of the outbreak of COVID-19 are clearly external indicators or events that might require CFOs to perform impairment tests for their non-financial assets. Moreover, the outbreak of COVID-19 will impact all the elements involved in the procedure of the impairment test: the recoverable amount, the estimated future cash flows, the discount rate and even the book value of the non-current non-financial assets.</p>
<p>Does the COVID-19 outbreak require other financial statement disclosure?</p>	<p>CFOs have to report in the financial statements all the information that enables users of the reports to understand the impact of the outbreak on their financial position and performance, such as additional information about risk exposures, provisions for onerous contracts, plans to restructure, changes in the company's objectives, policies and risk management processes or methods, even if this occurred after the reporting date.</p>
<p>Does the COVID-19 outbreak specifically affect other sectors or industries with particular regulation?</p>	<p>Specific industries, such as insurance companies, are directly affected by the COVID outbreak, especially in a moment of transition through a new complex accounting standard (IFRS 17, further deferral of effective date to 1 January, 2023).</p>
<p>Does the COVID-19 outbreak affect Lease Contracts Accounting under IFRS 16?</p>	<p>In this time of uncertainty, companies may need to change their lease payment schedules, resulting in lease modification accounting or variable lease payments accounting. However, the International Accounting Standards Board plans to issue amendments by the end of May 2020 regarding a proposal on accounting for lease modifications.</p>

Table 1: Major accounting issues due to COVID-19 and actionable items

- Events before and after the end of the reporting period: *determining whether an event is an adjusting or a non-adjusting event is crucial and, in some situations, might not even be so obvious or simple.*

Although the outbreak of the COVID-19 started originally at the end of 2019 (China made it "official" on exactly December 31, most of the effects that have to be reported on annual financial statements seem to be more a consequence of events that occurred later during the first months of 2020. Nevertheless, a decision on whether an event is an adjusting or a non-adjusting event becomes crucial and, in some situations, might not even be so obvious or simple, and not only depending on a company's reporting date.

As adjusting events, according to IAS 10 “Events After the Reporting Period”, are those that provide evidence of the conditions that existed at the reporting date (i.e. December 31st), the crucial question that accountants and auditors have to ask themselves in making their reporting evaluations is which event is relevant and at which date? (For example, in evaluating a certain item, is it just the outbreak of the virus that has to be considered or the restrictions and the measures adopted by Governments as a reaction?). In order to answer this question, all the information available about the timeline, the nature and the cause-effect of both the outbreak of the virus and the consequent measures adopted should be carefully evaluated.

Reasonably, for reporting periods ending at 31 December 2019, the financial reporting effects of the COVID-19 outbreak can be generally considered as non-adjusting events (with the exception of going concern) as the outbreak itself did not directly have a significant impact on markets, prices, and business until after the end of January 2020, when the World Health Organization announced a global health emergency (even if the Wuhan Municipal Health Committee issued its first urgent notice about the virus on 30 December 2019). If non-adjusting events are material (as the COVID-19 reasonably is), companies have to disclose in the notes to the financial statements, the nature and the implications of the Coronavirus and of the other related events (i.e. Government restrictions and other reactions) and, possibly, estimate their financial effects. As such, the nature and the implications of the outbreak should be discussed in the management report.

For reporting dates after 31 December 2019, the outbreak and the consequent measures could be both an adjusting or a non-adjusting event. Accountants and auditors will then consider all the additional available information available for their assumptions, evaluations, and assessments. Accordingly, an adjusting event for subsequent reporting dates should be expected. For future accounting periods (and, obviously, for interim reports), COVID-19 will become a current-period event that will require ongoing evaluations.

• Going concern: *the entity prepares the financial statements under going concern assumption and BEFORE the issuance of financial statements.*

The distinction between adjusting and non-adjusting events previously examined does NOT apply to the going concern assumption. All companies (not only the ones directly affected by this situation) have to assess whether these events or conditions may compromise the company's ability to continue as a going concern or, in the worst-case scenario, whether the assumption of the going concern could still be considered valid for the preparation of the financial statements. Going concern is considered to be one of the basic accounting principles for general purpose financial statements.

Considering all the potential impacts (both direct and indirect) of the outbreak as well as the measures taken by governments and other institutions, the management has to revise their budgets, plans, forecasts, and sensitivities carefully evaluating the implications in terms of liquidity, solvency, and profitability for their companies. Given the high level of uncertainties about the future evolution of the situation and the consequent impacts, probably reviewing the plans through a multiple (different) scenario approach would be the best option. Additionally, significant attention should be devoted to the managerial decisions, the actions and the plans that the company intends to realize in order to face the evolution of the situation and to mitigate the effects that potentially raise doubts on the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

• Fair value measurement: *Assets and liabilities measured at fair value are affected, which may lead to violating debt covenants.*

Fair value is one of the key relevant measurement criteria for many items in IFRS financial statements. Fair value is a market-based measurement (and not an entity-specific measurement) that reflects the market conditions as of the measurement date. IFRS 13 defines fair value as the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The current situation may create some difficulties in relation to the concept of “active market”, especially when significant decreases in volume or activity (frequency) of transactions affect the ability of the market price to match the definition of fair value, although this situation does not automatically imply that the market is not active anymore.

Considering that the “fair value hierarchy” requires a preference for the use of “observable inputs” (Level 1 and 2) rather than “unobservable” ones (Level 3), significant judgment from accountants and auditors may be needed for assessing the relevance of observable market data and whether they reflect orderly transactions in active markets.

When observable inputs and market data are not available, fair value measurement would be based on “unobservable inputs” (Level 3) and become particularly challenging, given the high level of uncertainty about the evolution of the situation and considering that the circumstances may change rapidly and quite unexpectedly. Besides, it certainly requires additional disclosures.

Developing assumptions (inputs) that market participants would use when pricing an asset or a liability under current market conditions, including assumptions about risk, using the best information available may not be easy.

In this contest, managers should seriously consider resorting to external valuation specialists and push even further the level of transparency about the techniques, key assumptions, sensitivities, and sources of the estimations.

Besides all the problems related to the fair value measurements, a significant change in the value of assets and/or liabilities, market downturns and contraction due to the lockdown and other restrictive regulation (i.e. social distancing, quota, etc...), instability in trading conditions and shortages of cash flows may lead companies to violate debt covenants, incurring penalty payments or increases in interest rates. This breach in the debt covenant may affect the timing of repayment of loans and/or other liabilities and, consequently, the classification in the financial statements of the related liabilities at the reporting date (i.e. current vs. non-current). The key elements here would be the date of the breach of loan covenants (before or after the reporting date), whether it is material or not, and the impact on the company solvency (and, consequently, on the going concern assumption, as previously examined).

• Expected credit loss assessment: *Accounts receivables, loans, leases etc. may have decreased in value. In addition, IFRS 9 has a “procyclical effect” which makes banks particularly susceptible to the highs and lows (saw-tooth) of economic cycles.*

One highly probable (and quite obvious) consequence of this crisis will be a significant increase in the probability of default (PD) of many borrowers. For example, many companies should quite reasonably expect a deterioration in the credit quality (i.e. an increase in the PD) for one or more entities, along their supply chain. The switch from an “occurred approach”

(IAS 39) to a “forward-looking approach” (IFRS 9) has an implication for all companies to anticipate and account for what they expect the loss to be, evaluating and estimating how the current and the future economic conditions are supposed to impact on the expected credit loss (ECL).

This approach has significant consequences on companies in almost all sectors and industries. First of all, it will clearly have a huge impact on banks, lending businesses and financial institutions, as they probably expect a deterioration in the quality of their credits (loan portfolios). Secondly, these effects will probably also affect all other investments (made from any type of company) in any interest-bearing financial assets (e.g. bonds, lease, debentures). Finally, it will probably have quite a huge impact on the trade receivables. In this context, companies with a shorter cash cycle, low amounts of trade receivables, will be less impacted.

The disclosure of the estimated financial effect should be quantitative information about how the outbreak is expected to affect the ECL allowance based on the information available after the reporting date but before the financial statements are authorized for issue. From a practical perspective, this would often mean running the ECL exercise again with, or adjusting it for, the latest available information on a date close to when the financial statements are authorized for issue.

· Non-current assets impairment: *Future cash flows are much harder to predict when conducting impairment tests.*

According to IAS 36 non-current non-financial assets with indefinite life (such as goodwill) have to be tested for impairment annually. Additionally, other non-financial assets have to be tested whenever there is an indicator that those assets might be impaired. The consequences of the outbreak of COVID-19 are clearly events that might indicate impairment. Consequently, many businesses may have to consider additional testing for impairment of their non-financial assets.

Besides, the outbreak of COVID-19 will impact almost all the elements involved in the procedure of the impairment test: the recoverable amount, the future cash flows, the discount rate and even the book value of the non-current non-financial assets.

First of all, in the impairment test, the recoverable amount (as the higher of the value-in-use and the fair value net of the costs of disposal) has to be determined and compared with the book value of the asset. As the value-in-use is mostly determined from the net present value of the expected future cash flows from the asset or cash generating unit (CGU), it is reasonable to assume that both the forecasted future cash flows and the discount rate will be deeply affected by this situation.

As for the future cash flow estimations, changes in economic, market and specific sector conditions must be considered and, given the high level of uncertainty, a multiple scenario and probability-weighted approach, combined with data and simulations from official external sources (such as central banks and reliable international studies from respected organizations) may be suggested.

Additionally, both the two basic components of the discount rate (the risk-free rate and the entity-specific risk premiums) will be affected. Even if the risk-free rate for some countries (measured as the yield on long-term government bonds) has decreased in the last months (due to the increase in prices in some government bonds), this decrease is fully offset by the

increase in risk premiums related to the uncertainties and the rise of risks for the specific company. In order to not overestimate the phenomenon by double-counting some elements, it should be checked that the discount rate does not include the impact of any factor that has already been considered in estimating the future cash flows.

Last but not least, due to some changes in market conditions, in the company strategy or in operational activities, the useful life and the residual value of some non-current assets might be changed and, consequently, its depreciation schedule (or even its depreciation method), affecting the book value of the asset.

· Other financial statement disclosure requirements: *Entities should disclose information that enables users of the financial statements to understand the impact of the outbreak on their financial position and performance up to when the statements are authorized for issue.*

IFRS 7 requires an entity to disclose information about the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments to which it is exposed at the reporting date ('risk disclosures'). Entities should review whether their risk disclosures provide sufficient information that enables users of financial statements to evaluate the risks to which the entity was exposed as of 31 December 2019. In light of the developments of the novel coronavirus outbreak, additional information about risk exposures may have to be given, or in a different form than before. For example, concentrations of risk could be extremely relevant as those developments affect different geographical areas, economic sectors or customer segments differently. Also, in light of those developments, the exposure to liquidity risk and how it is managed might be more important and relevant to users of the financial statements now than it was for past reporting periods.

In addition, if the entities have changed their objectives, policies and processes for managing risk, or the methods to measure it, that should be disclosed. Even if this occurred after the reporting date, that information might be relevant to users of the financial statements for the same reasons that underpin the disclosure regarding non-adjusting events in IAS 10.

· Other accounting estimates: *A specific focus could be on the impact on the insurance sector, which is undergoing a "transition phase" through the adoption of the new IFRS 17 (combined with IFRS 9).*

Insurance companies will be deeply affected by the COVID-19 both on their operating activities and on investing activities, which are rigorously combined. Moreover, around 80% of the liabilities of an insurance company are represented by technical provisions and reserves, which come from complex future actuarial estimates that will be deeply impacted by this situation. For these reasons, huge pressure for further postponement or even changes to the new accounting regulation specific for this sector is being raised. Most insurance companies had already adopted (long before the COVID-19 outbreak) the "deferral approach", that allowed them to postpone the adoption of IFRS9 (especially for the evaluation of their assets) up to the adoption of the "new" IFRS17 (especially for the evaluation of the insurer liabilities, technical provisions and reserves). Now, the COVID-19 outbreak is going to put more pressure on deferring the "combined" adoption of IFRS9 and IFRS17 for those companies.

Conclusion

CFOs need to consider the magnitude of the disruptions caused by the outbreak to their businesses and adequately disclose the information on those assets and liabilities that are subject to significant estimation uncertainty, in order to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of the financial implications. The financial implications of the outbreak will put more pressure on CFOs, asking them for evaluations, estimations, and decisions that cannot be “delegated” as well as applying rules to what is called a “VUCA” situation. They will get out of it not simply by mechanically “applying” accounting principles and rules, but by courageously using the most out of their expertise, knowledge and professionalism.

Also, regulators will need to take into account the disruptive effects of the current situation and try to carefully balance their role of “protection” of the stakeholders’ interests (in terms of access to transparent, reliable and adequate information) with the uncertainties, concerns, and issues for the companies in providing the requested information to the market.

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global employees

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Abstract

This impact paper examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global employees. Based on survey data collected before and in the first intense phase of the pandemic, we find a decline and change in global work roles, interestingly a largely positive effect on job and career satisfaction, however, varying by gender and family situation. Thereby, we identify factors that are important for organisations to consider when managing this crucial group of employees, especially for human resource management and leaders. We also discuss to what extent the crisis can serve as a starting point for future-oriented developments and thus, as a learning opportunity.

Keywords: Global employees, International assignments, Careers, Work role, Gender, COVID-19

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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global employees

The rapidly increasing global interdependence of the world economy has led organisations to strategically use international assignments to manage the demands that come with it (Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2017). With globalization on the advance, and barriers to travel and remote communication having almost vanished, global careers are no longer limited to traditional expatriates (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). On the contrary, global work has become very diverse (McNulty & Brewster, 2019). The large pool of global employees today not only includes different forms of expatriate assignments (for example, long-term, short-term, self-initiated). Other work forms where permanent relocation to another country is not the norm (for example, international commuting, virtual teamwork, global domestic work) are also gaining popularity (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). This development has gone hand in hand with the rising number of global careers (Brookfield, 2015) and is in line with findings - also from alumni of ESCP Business School - showing that international business education and international work experience are important drivers for career success in a global environment (Schworm et al., 2017; Suutari, Brewster, Mäkelä, Dickmann, & Tornikoski, 2018).

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly interrupted this continuous development. All over the world, economies are facing tremendous challenges as global trade has declined, travel is restricted, businesses are struggling to survive and consequently, employees are being furloughed or even dismissed in large numbers, to name just a few of COVID-19's detrimental effects on the world economy. As global employees are a crucial group within internationally operating organisations and are directly affected by the decline in cross-border business activities, especially where global physical mobility and work routines are concerned, it is important to understand their situation, respective changes and challenges when preparing for after the crisis. This makes this target group an interesting subject for our research. Based on a survey conducted among global employees before the start and during the first intense phase of the pandemic, we aim to find out how the COVID-19 crisis has affected global employees and discuss potential implications for leaders and human resource management (HRM) in practice. We would like to acknowledge that this study has been conducted with the support of the Renault Chair of Intercultural Management. It is part of a larger research project on global careers conducted together with Margaret Shaffer and Benjamin Blake (University of Oklahoma/USA).

Methodology

Sample

Based on data we collected from a sample of different types of global employees in January 2020 (n = 524), we surveyed the same sample again in April 2020 (n = 344). According to the data provided by Johns Hopkins University (2020), this is both prior to and after the official outbreak of COVID-19. Both surveys were conducted using a panel provider; respondents were asked to report their current global work role. To account for the variety of global careers, we included corporate and self-initiated expatriates, short-term assignees, international business travellers, international commuters, global virtual team members, and global domestics. Our final sample consists of 126 women and 218 men, 121 respondents reported not having any children. The average age is 47, the average organizational tenure amounts to 10 years. Work experience shows a mean value of 25.5 years. Most respondents indicated their first nationality to be British (n = 287).

Survey

We used established measures and scales to capture the various forms of global work, job satisfaction and subjective career satisfaction in both studies. In the second study, to consider potential effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we additionally included measures on perceived job stress and perceived job insecurity, as well as on the extent to which respondents experience their role requirements to be different (role novelty) in April compared to January. Besides, an open question invited respondents to state how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their work role.

Findings, Discussions, and Implications

In the following sections we highlight a few of the very recent results of our study including changes in the role of the global employee, the role of gender and parental status as well as job and career satisfaction in the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Decline and changes in global work roles

Overall, we find tremendous changes in the global work settings of the investigated global employees. More than two thirds of our respondents (236) stated that they perceive their work role differently than prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. Among these, there are 70 respondents who do not even see their role as being global anymore and three respondents who report being unemployed. In terms of the quality of change they experienced, four aspects seem to be prevalent: working from home (33%), facing uncertainties (financially, and/or regarding the future in general; 25%), changes in interactions (25%), and travel restrictions (20%).

The impact of changes in global work roles

In order to gain a more detailed understanding of global employees' experiences, we focused on the extent to which the perceived changes in work roles are also reflected in changes in work routines and what impact they have on respondents' feelings of job insecurity.

To learn how exactly their work routines have changed (role novelty) in the context of the crisis, we asked respondents to think about different aspects of their work. While for the overall measure of role novelty, results indicated moderate differences, it was reported that interactions changed the most, followed by both tasks and methods and lastly the skills required to do the job. It is plausible that those respondents who perceive having changed their work role reported higher extents of role novelty regarding tasks, skills, and methods than those who do not. Only interactions are reported to have changed equally for all global employees. This can be explained by the huge impact of the social distancing and increased virtual work measures on interactions in general. Thus, changes in work roles are accompanied by changes in work routines. These findings could stipulate actions from leaders and HRM supporting employees in adapting to the new situation (e.g., working from home) and leading and motivating teams with digital means.

The results regarding role novelty also give reason to assume differences in respondents' feelings of job insecurity since it is well known that changes at work can cause uncertainties on the side of the employees (Cullen, Edwards, Casper, & Gue, 2014). Indeed, while, overall, we find a medium level of job insecurity, the perceptions are significantly higher for those respondents who assess their global work role as different from prior to the pandemic. Although these findings are only an indicator of the impact that changes induced by COVID-

19 may have and do not allow for causal interpretation, they may again have implications for leaders and HRM. Both could make an effort to buffer COVID-19's crisis effects through intense communication. Being aware of and addressing potential uncertainties of global employees in these times may help them to better concentrate on their actual work and to stay motivated. This is in line with findings from the literature on international assignments which point to the need for support for assignees, especially in transition states before the assignment, at the beginning of a stay abroad, and upon repatriation to the home country (for a summary see Dowling et al., 2017).

The impact of gender and parental status on the perceptions of global employees.

Another interesting aspect in times of COVID-19 is global employees' perceptions of job stress. While the stress level across all investigated global employees reaches a medium level, those with children report higher levels of job stress than those without children. It also seems that they cannot benefit from positive developments in the same way as persons without children can, e.g., in terms of increases in job and career satisfaction.

When looking at the overall results we found a significant interaction between gender and parental status. Men without children reported a lower level of overall role novelty than both men and women with children. With schools and childcare facilities being closed in most countries, these findings indicating that having children makes a difference do not come as a surprise. In fact, this is probably not even specific for the group of global employees. However, these results can lead to the suggestion that leaders and HRM are well advised to pay attention to the struggles of working parents. Supporting them to manage these challenges can not only increase commitment and identification with organisations. It can also help to retain job performance under these difficult circumstances (Lam, Liu, & Loi, 2016).

Job and career satisfaction of global employees

For job and career satisfaction we compared results from prior to and after the outbreak of the pandemic. Interestingly, for the overall sample, both job satisfaction and career satisfaction increased after the outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore it seems that despite the important implications of the crisis, most of the investigated global employees still see positive effects on a personal level. However, the analysis of the interaction between gender and parental status shows that job satisfaction only increased for women without children but not for women with children. Interestingly, this is not the case for the male respondents, possibly indicating that females, even as global employees, might still take on a larger share of the burden of childcare. Another somewhat surprising effect is that career satisfaction only increases for men without children but not for men with children.

We can further note that role novelty is significantly associated with job satisfaction. This is a sign that the role change – despite being most probably caused by the crisis and for some being a source of uncertainty – has been positively interpreted by the respondents. However, job insecurity is negatively related to both job and career satisfaction. As mentioned above, this requires listening, a reassuring communication and support from the employing organisation in order to avoid negative performance effects (Cullen et al., 2014).

Conclusion and Outlook

The COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly hit our globally interconnected and interdependent (business) world. While we cannot reverse time, we can focus our attention on how to constructively manage the associated challenges and what we can learn from it.

Global employees in times of COVID-19

While the results of our study leave no doubt that the pandemic poses challenges to individuals and organisations in the global context, the situation for global employees could be worse. Only three of them indicated being now unemployed and 83 respondents even indicated that COVID-19 did not affect them at all. Uncertainties were mentioned only by 67 of the 344 global employees in our sample. Without neglecting that for some individuals the situation surely is extremely challenging, or even threatening their existence, most global employees seem to be rather privileged in that their jobs are relatively safe. Similarly, even before COVID-19 they were confronted with requirements that may have prepared them well for the crisis, e.g., in terms of digital maturity or the ability to react flexibly to new situations maybe making them more resilient than other types of employees. In this sense, being a global employee, maybe even having gone through international education as offered by ESCP Business School (for an analysis, see Schworm et al., 2017), may pay off, not only financially.

The impact of COVID-19 on organisations, leaders and HRM

For organisations and leaders or HRM in particular, the pandemic can be used as a starting point for positive and future-oriented developments. The somewhat surprising fact that, at least for global employees without children, job and career satisfaction were significantly higher after the start of the crisis suggests that organisations can learn from this situation. For example, the higher job satisfaction could in part be due to the implications for employees of using digital means instead of traveling and working from the office. It creates more flexibility to combine work and private life and opens the opportunity to stay longer in one place. Using the digital infrastructure and new work routines that are currently being built to meet the challenges of COVID-19 could enable companies to create more flexible workplaces, in line with the trend towards New Work. In this context, asking their global employees about the positive lessons learned from the crisis could represent a fruitful starting point for organisations and their (global) employees to find some benefits in the COVID-19 pandemic.

With our findings, we hope to contribute to the discussion on a constructive and future-oriented approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, both for practices around the management of global employees as well as for future research.

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Life is not a quantity: philosophical fragments concerning governance by number

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Abstract

Management has historically been associated with a fascination for numbers, considered to be the basis of enlightened decision-making, scientific analysis and self-proclaimed objective evidence. The fruit of this belief is the phenomenon of “governance by numbers” (Supiot), characteristic of modern societies and economies. But the illusory nature of faith in figures has been extensively examined in the field of philosophy: numbers are a source of power, but this power operates by simplifying reality (Nietzsche), reducing life in all its complexity to a series of quantifiable values and totally failing to comprehend what constitutes “dignity” (Kant). Taking as our starting point these philosophical perspectives, some contemporary and some more long-established, we seek to illustrate some of the illusions which stem from decision-making founded (exclusively) on numbers, while also examining the managerial consequences of moving beyond this blinkered approach in the context of a public health crisis. In order to do so, we prioritise the sound judgement of individuals, as well as their capacity to unlearn old certainties.

Keywords: Dignity, Governance by numbers, Life, Nietzsche, Kant

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Life is not a quantity: philosophical fragments concerning governance by numbers

In recent months our societies have chosen, for the first time in their history, to prioritise the preservation of human life over the health of the economy. This choice has revealed two things: humanity's progress in the field of humanity, and the limitations of the cult of numbers which is a common feature of contemporary organisations. For researchers in management sciences, the urgent question raised by this choice is as follows: are we right or wrong to pilot our organisations using statistical dashboards, thus allowing the figures to take charge? Our aim in this paper is to offer a historical and philosophical analysis of the rise to power of numbers in our societies, the process by which "calculocracy" conquered our organisations. We shall then attempt to define the contemporary expression of this phenomenon, namely "governance by numbers," (Supiot, 2015) before proposing a few potential avenues for further research as management seeks to reinvent itself in response to the sheer incalculability of the current catastrophe.

The apotheosis of numbers, a historical approach

Numbers have historically occupied a central role in Western modernity, with mathematics considered to be both a field for philosophical and scientific reflection, and also one of the keys to understanding the world (Everett, 2019). Tradition holds that Plato's Academy had the following warning engraved above the door: "Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here" ("*mèdeis ageômetrêtos eisitô mou tèn stegèn,*" Plato, 1966: 445). In the Republic, Plato also asserts that calculus and arithmetic, the science of numbers, "lead the mind on towards truth," (Plato, 1966, VII-526a: 284) because they deal with the very essence of things. Later in Book VII he asserts the superiority of arithmetic over geometry. The theories and philosophies of numbers which have emerged since antiquity are syntheses of many influences, regarding numbers both as a tool and as a key to understanding the world. Numerical studies already occupied a central position in education. The late classical and medieval tradition which originated with Boethius identified four numerical disciplines: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music (also considered to be a numerical discipline in the Pythagorean tradition (Mattéi, 2001)). Together they made up the *quadrivium*, the numerical counterpart to the *trivium*, the trilogy of disciplines founded on logos: dialectics, rhetoric and grammar (Rouche, 2003, TI: 169).

The Western fascination with numbers became ever more manifest during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, culminating in an apotheosis of science whose purest incarnation was held to be physics: the mathematical expression of reality in the form of rigid laws. Since its earliest beginnings, management has been closely aligned with this cult of numericity: Luca Pacioli, the man who popularised dual-entry accounting from 1494 onwards (Pacioli, 1494, P. 1, L. 9), was first and foremost a mathematician steeped in the ancient tradition, fascinated by the "golden ratio" or "divine proportion" (Pacioli, 1509) as both a tool for architecture and the arts as well as a symbol inherited from ancient hermeticism (Neveux & Huntley, 1995). The sea change initiated by F. W. Taylor and F. Gilbreth in the late 19th century, with their search for the "one best way" (Taylor, 1902) and the "scientific" approach to the division of tasks and labour (giving us *scientific management*) firmly entrenched the importance of figures and numerical evaluations in all areas of management (Power, 1999).

The transition we now associate with the Enlightenment, from so-called "traditional" societies to societies founded on Reason, chimes with the desire for emancipation evoked by Kant in *What is Enlightenment?* (Kant, [1784], 1985: 209-217). The ascendancy of Reason and

the supremacy of science brought with them a promise of justice and freedom which resonated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Bouilloud, 2012): it is worth recalling that Lenin was an avid reader of Taylor, publishing articles on his work in Pravda as early as 1913 (Lenin, 1913, 1975: 594-595; Scoville, 2001). In more recent times this phenomenon has given rise to a “passion for evaluation” (Amado & Enriquez, 2009) which is no longer limited to the financial or technical aspects of management, having also invaded the fields of individual management and HR, domains which for many years seemed to be protected from this creeping numericization. Economic actors have played a prominent role in this process: Vidaillet (2012) has amply documented the fear but also the desire for evaluation, preferably a “positive” evaluation, and the ambivalence displayed by workers in relation to these numericized assessments. Evaluation is always a form of control, a symbol of the “social extension of the normative,” (Foucault, 2001, T. II: 74) an additional constraint upon our freedom. But, at the same time, evaluation is also perceived to be a source of justice, an instrument for obtaining recognition, praise where praise is due. It can also be seen as a force for emancipation since it removes the suspicion that we are being hoodwinked, lifting the lid on a reality which was heretofore hidden from view. Which is why our telephones and computers are now loaded with applications designed to evaluate and compare, helping us to find the lowest prices for flights, hotels and other services, giving us the impression that we are better informed, and thus better equipped to choose.

In fact, as Weber observed, power is regularly obliged to find new ways to express its rational and legal legitimacy. It is interesting to note the major role which measurement and quantitative objectification have long played, and still play, in this process of challenging traditional authority. This mode of legitimation is constructed around a “result” to be achieved, dictating the way in which the organisation will be “governed” since the objective, enshrined in numerical assessment criteria, serves as a tool for directing the activities of managers and their teams. Measurement thus replaces judgement since measuring is, ultimately, a form of judgement. (Dujarier, 2015). To put it another way, governance by numbers tends to impose a normative, unequivocal style of management which leaves little room for interpretation or conflicting opinions.

The numerical illusion, a philosophical approach

Nietzsche’s critique of modernity’s excessive reliance on numbers is part of a broader attack on the emphasis placed on work, the drive to consume and the avidity for material gain which are the defining features of consumerist modernity. In Nietzsche’s view, numbers are always associated with power and strength. “In matters of strength numbers always prevail, because they have the greatest strength.” (Nietzsche, 1972: 263). Numbers impose their strength upon us, dragging us out of the hazy realms of the undefined and unquantified. Numbers put an end to all debate by enforcing a sense of finite space: counting and quantifying is a first step towards controlling – as any company auditor will tell you. But this overlooks the fact that numbers are a somewhat futile human construction, resting on the assumption that things have a strictly-defined identity, a hypothesis which Nietzsche contests. In order to count we must downplay differences, lumping together entities which are singular and thus different, schematising and simplifying:

“In all scientific demonstrations we always unavoidably base our calculations upon some false standards [of duration or measurement]; but since these standards are at least constant, as, for example, our notions of time and space, the results arrived at by science possess absolute accuracy and certainty in their relationship to one another. One can thus keep on building upon them — until reaching that final limit at which the erroneous fundamental conceptions, the

constant underlying faults, come into conflict with the results established.”
(Nietzsche, [1878], 1993, TI: 453).

Numbers lead us to misrepresent reality, and for Nietzsche this problem was inherent to all of the models and representations we rely upon to understand the world in which we live. “To a world which is not the fruit of our own representation, the laws of number are wholly inapplicable: such laws are valid only in the world of mankind.” (Id.: 454)

Nietzsche’s critique of numericized modernity also embraces the importance afforded to science, our obsession with work and the subjugation of time to modern imperatives. In his view our time is increasingly counted and filled on our behalf, a situation which Morin recently described as the “confinement of immediacy.” For Nietzsche, in the modern world, “One thinks with a watch in one’s hand even as one eats one’s lunch, whilst reading the latest news of the stock market – we live as if we were always at risk of ‘missing out on something!’” (Nietzsche, [1882], 1982: 219) In another philosophical tradition, this world in prey to rampant quantification, or even quantophobia, would be described as “alienating.” In short it represents an affront to the irreducible individual on an intimate level, the level of his or her dignity.

What is “governance by numbers”?

In Alain Supiot’s view (2015), the increasingly widespread use of the term “governance” can be directly linked to the growing power of figures in contemporary society, a pre-eminence achieved at the expense of the law. Supiot is a legal scholar specialising in the labour market, and he considers governance to be a socio-economic system based on calculation. In this system, the law itself is superseded by calculations of utility. But this “dream of harmony” through calculations has since become the preserve of liberal democracies, which have also adopted economic calculations as the primary regulating force of their political systems.

In his analysis, however, the problem with current modes of governance – in the international political, public and private spheres – is that they are founded exclusively on a quantitative approach to problems, even with regard to cultural and civilizational values which are, by definition, unquantifiable. He cites as an example the way that economic thinking has invaded contemporary attitudes to the practice of law, while also soaking up influences from certain theories of management such as game theory, and which by definition “would leave no room for somebody like Jean Moulin, nor anybody else who, for better or for worse, holds certain values to be more important than their own life.” (Supiot, 2015: 192). But, as he is at pains to point out, “it is not mathematics which governs the alliances formed by humans, it is the need to strike a balance between the differences in our labours and the similarity of their needs.” (ibid.: 116).

We might also turn to Immanuel Kant to lend some theoretical weight to Nietzsche’s critique. His *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals* contains a very neatly-phrased explanation of the difference between that which has a price and that which has no “equivalent,” namely that which has its own dignity:

“In the realm of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price is such that something else can also be put in its place as its equivalent; by contrast, that which is elevated above all price, and admits of no equivalent, has a dignity.” (Kant, [1785], 1985: 301).

But governance by numbers subjugates everything to the logic of prices, including those things endowed with “dignity.” (Bouilloud, 2012) Governance thus becomes an end in and of

itself, asserting the supremacy of prices and basking in the illusion of justice created by the systematic use of numbers and evaluations.

To put it another way, governance by numbers tends to impose a normative, unequivocal style of management which leaves little room for interpretation or conflicting opinions. This in turn gives rise to a misinterpretation of the term “measurement” when used in a management context, as Supiot himself points out, since it often “neglects the importance of the rules of quantification.” (2015, p. 120). In other words, the processes of compilation, comparison and interpretation which are inherent to “measurement” are generally absent from the processes of governance as they ultimately apply to employees. As Desrosières has shown (2000), the ultimate political purpose of quantification is often indiscernible, despite the fact that it remains the ultimate justification of the whole process. Quantitative practices in organisations, presented as accounting obligations, are thus revealed to be a form of *ex post* justification which is actually driven by its own intrinsic considerations.

Conclusion: from the “good enough manager” to the virtues of unlearning

Ultimately, while science is comfortable enough with uncertainty, politics is not.⁸ Science is willing to accept indecision over long periods of time: certain famous hypotheses have remained unproven for centuries, such as Fermat’s last theorem. But politics is a very different world, one where decisions need to be taken and indecision is unacceptable in the long term.

Management exists somewhere between the two. On the one hand, it is a field of study which considers itself to be scientific, while on the other hand it must satisfy the demand for decision-making, required for the day-to-day running of the organisational polis. In this respect, the concept of *bounded rationality* as developed by March and Simon represents a realistic model of the way in which decisions are taken within organisations, something akin to an ersatz version of a rational ideal – a choice which is merely satisfactory rather than optimal – which exists in a specific temporal context, determined by the information available at that time. The current crisis is a perfect illustration of this phenomenon in action: our elected leaders and the leaders of our international institutions, in the midst of a public health catastrophe, are called upon to make decisions every day. They make decisions which they feel to be satisfactory at the time, but they can never be absolutely certain that they have made the right choice. But it is nevertheless worth reiterating that, in times of uncertainty, only dignity can provide a moral compass. Numbers alone are no longer sufficient: they are shown to be fundamentally incapable of governing, because they too readily conflate cost with value. The value of a colleague (e.g. a nurse or doctor) within the chain of care is not directly correlated to their salary. And protective masks and gowns may not cost much, but their value is immense because of the lives they save.

As it turns out, the “good enough manager” (Deslandes, 2020) and his/her human understanding of control seems infinitely preferable to a situation in which our critical capacities have been entirely sacrificed to the power of algorithms and numerical norms. In short, refusing to lose faith in our judgement appears to be an essential pre-requisite when it comes to resisting the temptation to surrender control to the dashboards of governance by numbers and the infinite calculations of algorithmic governmentality, instead keeping the

⁸ Science has long embraced uncertainty: from Francis Bacon’s *experimentum crucis*, the crucial experiment which decisively determines whether or not a hypothesis is valid, to Popper’s theory that it is all a matter of *conjecture and refutation*, uncertainty is a driving force behind scientific exploration. Popper also argued that the only certainties were negative ones: theories exist in a state of perpetual probation, always at risk of being superseded by a new theory which would render them insufficient, invalid or unnecessary.

power to act in human hands. This view is founded not solely on the fact that organisations are shaped by a whole host of factors which are not immediately quantifiable (the satisfaction of achieving an objective, solidarity between individuals, the desire for recognition etc.), but also on a more fundamental consideration, namely that statistics and computer programmes are worthless unless accompanied by an “enlightened use of figures.” (Charolles, 2016, p. 100). In short, when we describe figures as a means of “getting at the truth” about an organisation, what we are really describing is the possibility, which transcends the numbers themselves, of comprehending the way these figures were designed and constructed. Without this critical reading, this sense of perspective, we run the risk of mistaking numbers for essential ontological realities, when in fact they are simply symbols of abstract equivalence. Only a critical approach to managing organisations, which leaves sufficient room for managers to exercise their faculties of judgement, can imbue numbers with meaning.

What are the implications of this upheaval for the way in which management is taught? Perhaps if we want the “general” managers turned out by our business schools to go on to become specialists, like interns in medical schools, developing their cross-disciplinary, systemic and over-arching knowledge, then we need to seriously reconsider the role of culture and the humanities in management training. In this respect the signatories of the *critical engineering manifesto* (<https://criticalengineering.org>), primarily engineers concerned about the risks of “algorithmic bio-hygiene,” represent a source of inspiration for a new vision of managerial education.

A potential source of de-automation can also be found in the recommendations put forward by Ordine (2017), an Italian literary critic and acknowledged expert on Giordano Bruno and the Renaissance, who argues for a new philosophy of education, indirectly rejecting the polite utilitarianism and cult of numbers which currently dominate most management studies. Ordine argues that the useless is as much a part of humanity as the useful: the sciences, the arts and all other forms of intellectual and spiritual curiosity are not necessarily dependent on ideas of usefulness, and it is precisely this which makes them important; indeed, this capacity to transcend utilitarian considerations is an essential prerogative and privilege of humanity. Hence the importance, in Ordine’s view, of ensuring that our educational system does not “gradually kill off the memory of the past, the humanities, classical languages, teaching, free research, creativity, art and critical thinking.”

Ordine’s book contains a useful lesson for our purposes (as management scholars and educators): before considering their usefulness to the system, it is important for managers to remember that there will always be a certain portion of their working experience which is resistant to quantification. For instance, the satisfaction of completing a project, mutual assistance between the members of a team, the frustration we sometimes feel at work: none of these things is immediately quantifiable, calculable or profitable. There are some things, like respect and dignity which our “calculocratic” systems and their obsession with usefulness will never be able to apprehend.

In some respects, the role assigned to numbers in management is the humble task of reducing uncertainty, maintaining the illusion of hermeneutic evidence: while words can have multiple meanings, numbers appear to represent undeniable proof, a manifest univocity akin to objectivity. In the context of the current Covid crisis, an immense challenge for scientists as well as those in government, political debate has by and large deferred to “the science.” Should testing be exhaustive or targeted? Lockdown or no lockdown? Is chloroquine effective? Politicians have fallen for the supposed certitude of science, transforming political debate as we know it. Nonetheless, this crisis represents an

opportunity for organisations to develop by adopting an approach to management which is more aware of its own weaknesses (Deslandes 2020), finding in this acceptance a source of strength, and transforming organisations into forums of collective dialogue which acknowledge the importance of the incalculable. Because life is not a quantity.

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The key role of shared identity, trust and overarching goals in the Post-COVID-19 era

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Abstract

The scope of this impact paper is social psychological, it aims to demonstrate how much in their endeavour to be resilient in the Post-COVID-19 era, companies need to create conditions that allow to foster shared identity and trust amongst their inner stakeholders. By doing that, former discrepancies in the way each member of the organization represented the mission of the company will be replaced by overarching strategic goals relying on a clear and shared definition of the context. This shared perception of what is at stake in the crisis and of what needs to be done by everyone will lead companies to decrease their inner competition, to increase their inner agility and to be ready to give adaptive answers to the requirements of the complex and challenging Post-COVID-19 era.

Keywords: Human factor, Inner competition, Social identity, Trust, Super-ordinate goals

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The key role of shared identity, trust and overarching goals in the Post-COVID-19 era

More than ever, the Covid-19 crisis is leading companies to realise how fragile they are in the face of unexpected fluctuations in their ecosystem. The Covid-19 crisis and the fluctuations that it generates is a prime example of what is expressed in the military term VUCA which stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity.

After the initial shock, the use of *ad hoc* solutions allowed companies to continue to function. However, it's widely acknowledged that in the near future they will be called to find sustainable solutions to continue to operate and perform in the post-COVID-19 era. Yet, what can we say about these solutions? Will it be a redefinition of the organization's mission? of new strategic choices? of new working methods? the invention of new processes? of new modes of leadership? the integration of new skills ? and/or the overhaul of the company's corporate culture?

In a recent publication, Jared Diamond (2019) describes seven case-studies in which individuals and nations cope with crisis and change. In all these cases, twelve conditions allow to overcome the crisis and display resilience through selective change. What about companies?

Companies are living organisms that operate in complex ecosystems. These ecosystems bring together various actors linked by interdependent relationships. In the current crisis, which we liken to a *Tipping Point*⁹ (Gladwell, M. 2000), it is difficult to predict what the future fluctuations will be as well as the strategic choices of the actors that make up the ecosystem. Moreover, this complexity is compounded by companies' internal complexity induced by the diversity of their social bodies.

Among the necessary conditions evoked by Diamond (2019) for the successful management of the crisis, flexibility, i.e. agility as a response to external fluctuations, is key. Since they have no possibility of control and influence over the fluctuations generated by COVID-19 and its consequences, in order to create the necessary conditions for agility, companies will have to reduce their inner complexity. This means that they will have to make their organizations solid and capable of adapting quickly to the requirements imposed by their external environment. To achieve this objective, the understanding and acceptance by the company's social body of the current stakes and of the need for such strategic decisions and organization is very important.

Inspired by social-psychological studies which analyse individuals' functioning in societies we will focus in the following sections on three elements which allow companies to decrease their internal complexity and therefore to reach the required agility: shared identity, trust and overarching goals.

⁹ « *The time at which a change or an effect cannot be stopped* », Cambridge Dictionary

Shared identity

Organizations are complex arenas of interaction between the actors that make them up. Their objective is to create value for their internal and external stakeholders. Their structure is the scene of complex interactions between their agents who, despite their cooperative interdependence¹⁰ (Deutsch, 2011a) maintain relations of a mixed nature, sometimes cooperative and sometimes competitive. Among the elements that foster competition between agents of the same organization we quote the mind-set and the specific behaviors associated with each function, the limitation of resources, the information uncertainty or the different ways of representing their own positions and roles. A major part of these elements is closely related to each agent's professional identity and contributes to create a particularly complex internal environment defined as a *cooperative conflictuality*. This latter must be sought at the individual level and more specifically within the professional identity dynamics hosted and nurtured by the organization. In order to decrease internal complexity and allow an organization to be agile in the face of external shocks, what leverage can be offered by the creation in its social body of an overarching and solid professional identity?

Before answering this question we need to gain a better understanding of the process of identity construction. One of the most popular social-psychological theories of personal identity, the *Social Identity Theory* developed by Tajfel and Turner in the mid-1980s, states that individuals consciously consider themselves as a part of a larger social group. This belonging leads them to experience emotional, cognitive and behavioural consequences. In other words, any individual feeling part of a group (in-group) will have specific perceptions of reality, will experience specific emotions and behave in specific ways which will be common to the majority if not to all the members of the group. Members of the same group will also share the same definition of their own place in society and consciously or unconsciously, will compare themselves to the others. This process of *Self-Categorisation* that results in the establishment of distinctive categories (in-group /out-group) is completed by another, unconscious process, that is activated in case of social comparison, the process of *Self-Enhancement*. This latter consists in systematically favouring the group to which one belongs, and this operation allows the individual to maintain a positive social identity. Finally, a strong identification with one's own group (in-group) will result in behaviours which allow one to maintain the positive identity of the group, putting one's personal goals on hold and focusing all efforts on achieving the group's collective goals.

Within organizations, it is no longer a question of social categories but of professional categories, the members of which share the same perception, the same emotions, the same behavioural patterns and the same idea or representation of their role. Before the crisis generated by COVID-19, three major evolutions (globalization, digitalization and individualization) impacted the strategy and the working methods of organizations and by that favoured the emergence of new more individualistic professional identities. They also led top executives to set new individual and collective goals more oriented towards the short term. As H. Mintzberg wrote in 2009, in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008, "*decades of short-term management had inflated the importance of CEOs and*

¹⁰ M. Deutsch defined two situations of social interdependence: i/ competition or negative interdependence, whenever the goals of one party cannot be reached if those of the other party are, and ii/ cooperation or positive interdependence, whenever the fulfillment of one party's goals relies on the fulfillment of those of the other party

reduced the others in the corporation to fungible commodities" which contributed to increasing organizations' *cooperative conflictuality*, thereby fostering individual concern and leading to the disengagement of employees from the company's project.

In the light of the theory of social identity and all the teachings it gives us about the consequences of a strong identification of the individuals with the group in which they believe and feel they belong to, companies should now create all necessary conditions to foster a shared corporate identity, to build a solid community. This means instilling in their social body a "*caring about our work, our colleagues, and our place in the world*". In other words, it is more essential than ever to build or recall the common identity built on similarities and on the need to be together in the endeavour to stand stronger after the crisis.

Finally the effect of this reactivated shared identity on the emergence of agile, yet coordinate behaviours, of all members of the organization is reinforced by two additional elements: trust and the existence of overarching goals.

Trust

Trust is not tangible; it is a cognitive and emotional state that involves an intention to behave. It is made up of the body of knowledge we have about the "target" person of our trust or defiance, by the emotions that the evocation of this "target" person generates in us and by the intention or not to take the risk of making us vulnerable to this person.

The research literature on trust covers many fields, economic, sociological, psycho-sociological, and gives us hundreds of definitions of this key concept in the understanding of the decision process and of human behavior.

A concise and broad definition of trust is the one given by Gambetta (1988). According to this author "*Trust embeds one's acceptance of vulnerability, uncertainty and risk taking to another's possible but not expected ill behavior toward one*". In other words, trust is not built during situations of a *quiet professional routine* but involves three elements that potentially generate anxiety and frustration: vulnerability, uncertainty and risk. Lewicki and Brinsfield (2015) provide important methodological elements for measuring the components of trust beliefs and trust behaviors. These elements include personal predispositions, context parameters as well as the history of the relationship between the parties involved.

In the current highly constrained context, organizations need more than ever to rely on a confident, solid and united social body. Therefore, why is it important to focus on intra-organizational trust in the post-COVID-19 era? Many answers can be given to this question, all of which corroborate the fact that human behaviour is determined by the degree of trust that individuals attribute to their environment and to others. This degree of trust is the determining factor in the achievement of the desired goals. In other words, the more the social body of the company will have confidence in its leaders regarding the management of the post-COVID-19, the more it will accept its vulnerability and will direct its behaviour towards the achievement of the common objectives, even if these objectives imply uncertainty and risk.

How can trust be built or regained? To answer this question it is necessary to specify that trust is complex and multiple. It is built up over time and is based on tangible evidence, which should not be underestimated by managers who invite their employees to trust

them. Lewicki and Bunker (1996) distinguish between three types of trust: calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust and identification-based trust.

The first type (calculus-based) results from the power to reward or sanction the other in the event of non-compliance with commitments. It is a question of saying "I trust you because if you do not provide proof of your commitment I can punish you" or "I trust you because I promised you that if you keep your commitments I will reward you". This mode of trust, which can produce the expected behaviour, has a limited life span and is based on a very instrumental perception of the other. However, in organizations where the potential for trust is very low, it can be a turning point, a first step in the ascent towards lasting trust, provided only if given promises are followed by proofs.

The second type of trust (knowledge-based) is based on knowledge of the other through previous interactions in situations involving a certain degree of risk. "*I know you so I know if I can trust you*". Although this type relies on a more elaborate cognitive process than the simple mechanical response of the calculus-based trust, its lifespan is limited to the medium term and its presence is not totally guaranteed during operations of deep and/or brutal change in an uncertain context, which requires determination and psychological endurance on the part of the individual.

Finally, the third type of trust (identification-based) is based on identification with the other. It results from a shared identity, which we developed in the previous section. This type of trust is solid, is not instrumental and is at the origin of behaviours oriented more towards the interest of the group than towards one's own interest. The fundamental elements of this type of trust are the group's values and the meaning of its own actions. In the presence of an identification trust, these actions will take place regardless of the sacrifices or risks involved, provided they serve the common good.

Hence, reactivating a shared identity will allow the whole social body to unite around its leaders and to ensure consistency in short-term and in long-term action even if it involves a high degree of risk, thanks to an unshakeable trust based on identification with the group.

Overarching Goals

The existence of clear overarching goals is the third condition that must be taken into consideration by leaders who wish to reduce the internal complexity of their organization in order to make it more agile in the face of external fluctuations. This condition, strongly related to the two previous, deserves a particular focus inasmuch as, although more tangible than identity or trust, it can generate important dysfunctions due to poor communication between actors.

The term "super-ordinate goal" was first presented by M. Sheriff (1953) who ran a series of experiments devoted to intergroup cooperation and competition. In these experiments he created spectacular conditions of negative interdependence between two groups with a common cooperative past. He then curbed this competition through the appearance of super-ordinate goals, i.e. goals whose realization requires the cooperation of all the actors. These experiments have shown that a turnaround from competition to cooperation is possible if the groups hitherto hostile to each other make repeated efforts in situations where their mutual cooperation is necessary for the resolution of urgent crises of a vital nature.

As in Sheriff's experience, in their race for performance, today's organizations have more often divided rather than united the professional groups that make them up by setting more individual and less collective performance objectives. They have indeed encouraged their agents to pay countless attention to *the bottom line* and to hold themselves accountable only for their own field of delegation, all this in a time-frame that keeps getting shorter and shorter, in a context of scarce resources and of lack of communication on global strategy. This managerial approach has hence encouraged the emergence of internal competition and has reinforced organizations' inner complexity.

In the current context, how companies will respond to the external fluctuations of the post-COVID-19 era will depend on their ability to create inner cooperation, i.e. to engage their stakeholders in the repeated pursuit of super-ordinate goals. Although the quote of A.M. de la Haye may sound extreme: "*It's terribly easier to make people who didn't know each other hate each other than it is to reconcile people who hate each other*", it allows us to understand that in order to weaken internal competition, leaders will have to communicate repeatedly and clearly their organizations' overarching goals and to clearly operationalize these goals so that everyone can act individually and collectively in the global interest.

Conclusion

In response to the objective of supporting organizations in the post-COVID-19 era, we have presented what the impact of three social-psychological factors on corporate performance would be in a context of vital and particularly demanding stakes. Although these three factors - shared identity, trust and overarching goals - do not encompass all the complexity of current organizations, they highlight the importance and determinant role of the human factor, particularly in the context of the current crisis. We hope that these few pages will help the leaders who read them to ask themselves the right questions, to feel concerned by the diagnosis and by our recommendations and to act in the right direction.

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Virtual teamwork and employee well-being: The Covid-19 effects

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Abstract

This impact paper brings together concepts from the organizational psychology and information systems literatures to explore employee well-being in the context of virtual teams (VTs). The recent Covid-19 outbreak has led to a sudden transition into VTs for numerous workers around the world. Drawing on the job demands-resources (JDR) model, we argue that in the current context, newly formed VTs due to the lockdown face increased job demands and diminished job resources, potentially impacting their well-being. The paper presents a theoretical synthesis in this area and provides managerial and organizational implications.

Keywords: Virtual teamwork, Remote working, Employee well-being, Job demands, Job resources

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Virtual teamwork and employee well-being: The Covid-19 effects

Teamwork is a key organizing principle in modern organizations. Most workers, particularly in industries characterized by knowledge intensive and complex tasks, belong to teams whose performance is dependent on effective communication and collaboration. Over the last two decades, teamwork has become increasingly virtual (e.g., Bell and Kozlowski, 2002). Virtual teams (VTs), contrary to traditional ones, need to work at a distance, often in different time zones, and across organizational boundaries by means of a range of digital technologies (Breuer et al., 2020).

Research into VTs shows that their unique characteristics (e.g., their different types of dispersion) often lead to discontinuities (Watson-Manheim et al., 2012) affecting team performance. Though not all of these issues have been explicitly investigated in the extant VT literature, it is likely that these discontinuities lead to feelings of isolation, misinterpretation, and ultimately, reduced employee well-being (e.g., Gilson et al., 2015). In fact, Gilson et al. (2015) argue that despite well-being having been seen as theoretically linked to team performance, and although VTs are ideal environments for creativity and innovation (Chamakiotis et al., 2020), we lack an understanding as to how VTs influence well-being, and then, how that may affect team performance within this context.

Following from the above, the key question we want to explore in this paper is: *How does virtual teamworking influence worker well-being?* The current context of confinement makes this question particularly relevant, given that nearly all knowledge work has become suddenly virtual due to the Covid-19 crisis. The immediacy of the pandemic has forced the rapid transformation of traditional teams into virtual ones. This expeditious change may pose additional, still under-explored, challenges to employee well-being.

This paper provides a theoretical analysis of employee well-being in Covid-19 emerging VTs building on the job demands-resources (JDR) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). In what follows, first we present the key elements of the theory. Second, we apply such elements to analyse the demands and resources experienced by teams transformed into VTs as a result of the Covid-19 emergency. Finally, we offer preliminary practical managerial and organizational insights.

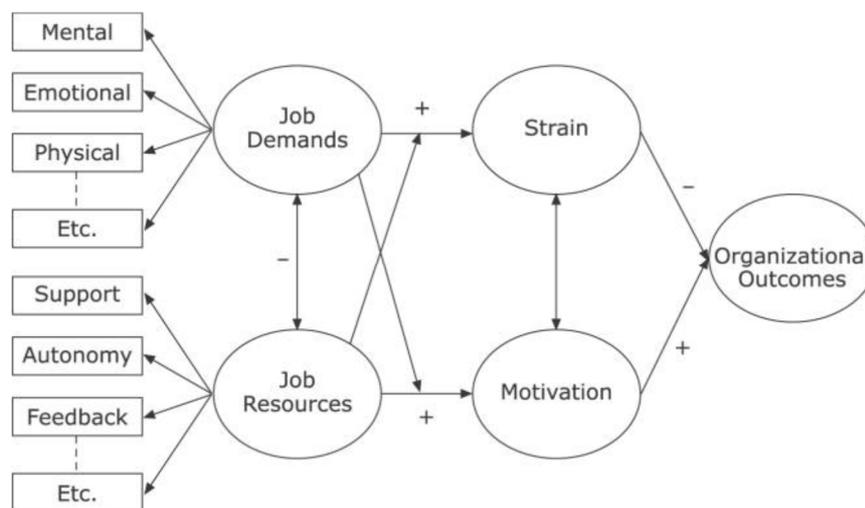
Job demands-resources model (JDR)

The JDR model was originally developed to explain how job characteristics are connected to employee burnout. This connection relies on two fundamental propositions (Figure 1). First, the JDR model claims that all types of job aspects (physical, psychological, social or organizational) can be categorized in one of two groups: *job demands* and *job resources*. Job demands refer to elements of the job that require continued effort, let it be cognitive, emotional or physical. Role overload, role conflict, urgency or uncertainty, exemplify job demands. Job resources refer to aspects of the job that are useful in terms of (a) meeting work objectives, (b) diminishing job demands and their associated cost or (c) encouraging employee learning and growth (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Job security, role clarity, autonomy or performance feedback are commonly cited job resources.

Second, the JDR model proposes that these job characteristics are connected to employee well-being through two differential psychological mechanisms (Bakker and Demerouti,

2007). On the one hand, the health-impairment process posits that excessive sustained job demands (for example ongoing uncertainty) deplete employees of energy, leading to exhaustion and strain. On the other hand, the motivation process assumes that job resources contribute to employees fulfilling needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). For instance, receiving constructive feedback can help individuals see the purpose of their effort, motivating them to engage further. In addition, the model postulates two interactive mechanisms: (a) job resources may mitigate the positive relationship between job demands and job strain (for example, having a supportive boss may reduce the negative influence of uncertainty); and (b) job resources have a stronger influence on motivation when job demands are high (receiving constructive feedback is more beneficial for those who deal with ongoing tight deadlines) (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

Figure 1: The JDR model



(Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; p. 313)

Virtual Teams (VTs) and well-being

Demands and resources may change significantly as a result of alterations in work design and organization. The Covid-19 crisis has abruptly pushed organizations around the globe to embrace new ways of working which entail changes in the when, where and how work is conducted (Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). Millions of workers are now working remotely, obliged to transform their homes into productive work environments, engaging with their teams at a distance, while facing potential illness. Some are surrounded by their families, facing interruptions, noise and increased housekeeping work. Others are confronted with enduring solitude. For most, boundaries between work, family and personal time have virtually disappeared. Although there are important lessons to be learned from the extant VT literature which offers useful accounts as to how working remotely may influence traditional management, the current lockdown has introduced additional challenges, yet to be explored. In this unprecedented context, demands and resources may have drastically shifted. In the following subsections, we analyse how this shift has occurred and its consequences.

Job demands in Covid-19 VTs and the health-impairment process

First of all, Covid-19 has generated role conflict, which occurs when individuals experience incompatible demands (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991). This is often the result of simultaneous demands emerging from two or more role senders with incongruent requirements. Work-family or family-work interference are examples of role conflict. During the lockdown situation, this type of demand has rocketed. Individuals have been obliged to attend to different roles simultaneously (e.g., worker, caregiver, housekeeper). Whereas before, these could be separated into different physical spaces and times of the day, at the moment they co-exist with diffused boundaries. These roles can pose conflicting demands, which undermine the individuals' capacity to perform any of them satisfactorily. For instance, it is very likely that trying to teach an online higher education class while caring for a toddler results in unsatisfactory performance at both tasks, engendering feelings of frustrations and anxiety. If in normal situations telework can increase role conflict when all life is mandatorily confined at home, such conflict is likely to be exacerbated.

Second, there has been an increase of role overload. Role overload happens when a person feels incapable of properly fulfilling the requirements of their various roles (e.g., employee, parent, etc.) because of the collective demands such roles impose on them. In other words, individuals can be saturated from having too much to do in too little time (Duxbury and Halinski, 2014). During the crisis, many people have had to assume new roles (such as teacher for home-schooled children or shopper for elderly parents) that they may not be trained for and require significant effort. Moreover, in the work sphere new tasks resulting from the use of distance communication technologies (e.g., learning how to use digital tools) create additional demands. It is plausible that the assumption of new roles and tasks makes individuals feel they have insufficient time and energy to fulfil them all, resulting in work overload. Moreover, being unable to leave work at work, having severely diminished boundaries may pose problems in terms of detachment, rendering psychological recovery more difficult.

Third, employees may be facing increased role ambiguity. Role ambiguity exists when the expectations and steps that need to be fulfilled in order to perform a role are unclear or dubious (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991). The sanitary crisis has demanded companies to adapt drastically to attend to their clients' needs (e.g., increased online services, new interaction methods, etc.), potentially modifying the roles of many employees. At the same time, opportunities for role clarification have decreased. For instance, context and the informal conversations that take place at work can help people clarify their roles. Observation of colleagues and work dynamics may shed light on expectations and requirements that may otherwise be missed or misinterpreted. In combination, new or evolved roles and decreased opportunities to learn from contextual interactions increase the likelihood of role ambiguity.

Role conflict, role overload and role ambiguity increase the degree to which employees experience their jobs as burdensome. They can drain a person's mental and physical energy and may spark a negative self-image with employees doubting their ability to perform sufficiently. As a result, they have been connected to poorer health and well-being (Duxbury and Halinski, 2014).

The fourth growing form of demand is job insecurity, which involves uncertainty regarding potential involuntary job loss. For many workers, the current situation has brought about

doubts regarding their organization's capacity of surviving the crisis and preserving their jobs. Others may expect decreased opportunities to advance their careers. There is substantial evidence to argue these forms of uncertainty can induce serious strain, particularly for young workers with strong career orientations (Cartwright and Cooper, 2009).

Having explored the changing nature of job demands in the current context, we now turn to discuss how job resources may have changed due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

Job resources in Covid-19 VTs and the motivation process

Job resources can be offered to employees at three different levels: organizational, interpersonal and individual (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). At the organizational level, crises have the potential to undermine participatory decision-making processes. For example, Spain has declared a state of emergency, restricting the autonomy of its regional, autonomous communities and centralizing administrative power and decision-making for the duration of the lockdown. Organizations may well be tempted to follow suit, first, in order to make quick, efficient choices and second, because they do not have the channels to engage in distant participatory processes. However, participation in decision-making has been argued to be a relevant job resource because it enables employees to raise their voice and craft organizational roles and routines.

The emergence of Covid-19 has the potential to particularly affect interpersonal resources such as support from colleagues. Although digital technologies are keeping VTs connected, as noted earlier, informal interactions that happen at the interstices of work can easily decline both in quality and quantity due to physical separation. The exchange of supportive tacit or sensitive information may particularly suffer if all communications are mediated by technology. In addition, the increase of job and non-job-related demands may hinder overloaded colleagues from helping out.

Similarly, performance feedback may be reduced at the individual level. It is possible the lack of face-to-face interactions between employees and their direct supervisors might decrease opportunities to ask for and to give informal feedback. As far as discretion and control are concerned, both an increase and a decrease are plausible. On the one hand, teleworkers have reported increased autonomy in deciding when they work. Employees now working from home may be better able to decide when to start and finish work than they were previously when working from the office. On the other hand, employees working remotely in these unusual circumstances may feel more controlled by technology. For instance, because of decreased on/off work boundaries, some may feel pressured to answer e-mails in the late evening or during weekends.

A reduction in job resources is likely to affect employees' ability to fulfil their basic psychological needs (Ryan and Deci, 2000). For example, reduced social support will probably affect the realization of relatedness. Similarly, lower levels of performance feedback may influence feelings of competence. In addition, following job-demands-resources theory, it is probable that the impact of demands on well-being worsens. Indeed, if employees have fewer resources available to them, they cannot mitigate the negative effect of demands. This is particularly problematic in a context where demands seem to be on the rise.

Practical managerial and organizational insights

The analysis provided in this impact paper highlights the changing nature of both job demands and job resources in the context of formed newly VTs due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Drawing on relevant literature, we suggest that employee well-being in this context may be menaced by increased job demands and diminished job resources. Organizations can work at three different levels to palliate the situation.

- **Reinforcing job resources:** Given that there are less resources in the current context, organizations can allow more flexibility so that employees can create their own temporal boundaries and work at their own pace. Maintaining a close connection between VT leaders and members can help mitigate feelings of isolation and reinforce their sense of belonging. Similarly, it is equally important that the right systems be put in place to enable and protect employee voice.
- **Developing VT specific job resources:** Transitioning into virtual working suddenly means that most workers converted without the relevant technical (e.g., infrastructure) and social (e.g., training) preparations. Organizations should invest in their information systems by, first, providing the relevant technology to support adequate operations. They should also invest in people's training to ensure that workers develop familiarity with, and ultimately expertise in, the required digital technologies. Further to formal communications, it is important that a social context be maintained to allow for informal conversations to take place among co-workers. For instance, workers can be encouraged to allocate time for social interactions before or after scheduled meetings. Organizations should also be explicit about respecting their employees' privacy when interacting through the company's systems. Finally, organizations should explicitly advise their employees on issues relative to work-life balance within this new context.
- **Prioritizing job demands:** To avoid the risk of being overwhelmed, employees who have gone virtual should be given strategic direction as to which objectives are essential and which ones peripheral, so that they can prioritize accordingly. Issues of role clarity and how roles may have been modified to accommodate the lockdown situation are particularly important. Lastly, organizations should revisit which projects should continue, which ones should be modified and how, and which ones may be non-essential and thus postponed, in order to ensure that job demands remain manageable.

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Best practices for effective and sustainable virtual working*

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Abstract

This impact paper discusses four practices that can help practitioners transition from traditional (physically collocated) to virtual (computer-mediated) working environments: (a) maintaining a virtual social context; (b) selecting technologies according to the task at hand; (c) adopting leadership styles tailored to the virtual environment; and (d) establishing (new) work-life boundaries. The four practices are important not only in terms of transitioning, but more importantly in terms of creating and maintaining a sustainable working environment that can promote productivity and enhance workers' sense of work-life balance over time.

Keywords: Virtual working, Remote working, Digital leadership, Work-life boundaries

* This impact paper builds on ideas originally published in the *LSE Business Review* on April 16th, 2020 on the following link: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2020/04/16/how-to-go-virtual-as-efficiently-and-painlessly-as-possible/>

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Best practices for effective and sustainable virtual working

There exists a wealth of academic literature on virtual teams (VTs) and virtual working which is generally presented as a geographically dispersed and computer-mediated environment that challenges traditional management theories based on the physically collocated working environment. This literature, developed within the last two decades, takes a focus on temporary VTs that may be formed on the spot for a specific project and are then disassembled upon completion of the project at hand (e.g. Chamakiotis et al., 2020).

Currently, we are witnessing a steep rise in virtual or remote working due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to a complete lockdown and a need to work from home for large part of the working population worldwide; a number of organizations across industries had to transition from traditional, physically collocated working into virtual working from home from one day to another and without the necessary preparations in terms of equipment and training. This has led to a widespread challenge, generating uncertainty as to how to create an appropriate working environment at home.

In what follows, I draw on the extant VT literature and my own experience of research and teaching in this area for over a decade, and discuss four practices which can help practitioners to not only transition into virtual working, but more importantly to create a sustainable virtual working environment. Though the VT literature is largely based on temporary VTs whose members do not know one another prior to the VT launch, there are important lessons to be learned, as discussed below.

First practice: maintain a virtual social context!

Not being able to see your colleagues face-to-face does not mean that you should not socialize. Transitioning into virtual working with colleagues with whom you have been working face-to-face means that there exists an established social context already. Given the importance of the social context for the development of trust, the existing social context must be maintained in the virtual environment. VT members have been found to focus too much on work tasks, underplaying the importance of social interactions. In order to maintain a pleasant and constructive culture, the new virtual environment should be designed in a way that promotes informal socialization. A good idea for a team that has 'gone virtual' is to start their meeting with a coffee and have a chat about topics outside work before starting to speak about work.

Second practice: select the 'right' technologies!

Despite the availability of numerous different types of information and communication technologies (ICTs), it is important to understand that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to selecting the right ICTs. Naturally, some of us may tend to select synchronous ICTs, allowing for real-life communication. However, relevant theory suggests that different types of ICTs might be better for different types of tasks (Dennis et al., 2008). Therefore, before establishing the ICTs that could support a specific project, we should recognize which ICTs are likely to serve better the tasks at hand; while synchronous ICTs might work better for a joint brainstorming session online, for example, an asynchronous ICT might be preferable for storing or sharing.

Third practice: adopt suitable (e-)leadership styles!

Though some of us may be experienced leaders in the face-to-face environment, switching into virtual working may require alternative (e-)leadership styles. The following four styles have been presented in the VT literature as pertinent e-leadership styles and they can work either on their own or in combination with one another (Chamakiotis and Panteli, 2017).

- **Centred leadership:** This leadership style is commonly found in traditional (physically collocated) working environments, whereby one person has the overall responsibility for a project from start to end. In digital environments, a centred leader often coexists with another type of leadership, such as the ones presented below.
- **Emergent leadership:** Although an appointed leader may already be in place, in a digital environment we see people emerge as leaders during the lifecycle of a project, either to step in and help with an unexpected task, or because they have expertise in a specific aspect of the project. It is important to allow and encourage colleagues to emerge as leaders, although they may not have been formally appointed as leaders upfront.
- **Shared leadership:** Due to the geographical dispersion characterising digital work, we often see that different individuals lead different stages or different aspects of the project. This is often due to their specific area of expertise and it is usually *successive* in nature, with one leader handing over the baton to another person once they have completed their task.
- **Co-leadership:** While shared leadership is successive in character, co-leadership is a leadership style whereby two or more teammates assume the responsibility for two different tasks (or components of the project) at the same time. Therefore, co-leadership is *simultaneous*, rather than successive.

Fourth practice: revisit work-life boundaries!

Although ICTs are the primary enabler of VTs, offering us unparalleled flexibility and the ability to work from home, they also create problems for us, often referred to as paradoxes: as Mazmanian et al. (2013) have argued, although ICTs give us the opportunity to work anywhere, anytime, we often end up working everywhere, all the time. To protect, therefore, our work-life balance in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown, it is worth considering the following four strategies:

- **Deciding where to work:** Designating a specific space in our homes, within which we can conduct our work, and establishing rules preventing us from working outside that space, can help us create a spatial boundary separating work from non-work activities.
- **Deciding when to work:** Capitalizing on the temporal flexibility offered by ICTs, and in order for us to be able to fulfil both our work and non-work commitments, it may be a good idea to create a working day that is tailored to our personal (and family) circumstances and that might differ significantly from the traditional 9-5 working day.
- **Deactivation or silencing of notifications:** The proliferation of smartphones and mobile technologies has led researchers to conceptualize notifications as 'interruptions' that may disrupt our work activities or create work-life imbalance (Chen and Karahanna, 2014). To minimize the negative effects of such interruptions, one can deactivate or silence all work-related notifications on their personal devices.
- **Different devices for different purposes:** Segmenting work from non-work activities (Sayah, 2013) can be achieved by using separate devices for different

purposes, which may help us to 'switch off' and to maintain a sense of work-life balance while in lockdown.

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When teleworking questions the meaning of work: Managerial lessons from the Covid-19 crisis

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Abstract

As lockdown exit begins cautiously, as companies reopen their doors and as employees prepare mentally to return physically to their workspaces, it is time to draw the first lessons of this unprecedented crisis from a managerial point of view. In this article, I propose to consider the crisis as an accelerator of managerial transformations¹¹, and as an opportunity to reinvent management in the post-industrial era.

Keywords: Telework, Remote management, Work transformation

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¹¹ Dejoux C., Léon E. (2018). *Métamorphose des managers à l'ère du numérique et de l'intelligence artificielle*, Pearson

When teleworking questions the meaning of work: Managerial lessons from the Covid-19 crisis

We have learned through this crisis to work and manage differently. So be it. But this involuntary learning has been done in a hurry, under stress and sometimes even painfully. Such a drastic change in our work habits could only be made under duress. This is a far cry from the progressive teleworking projects, with pilots, feedback, etc., which have been implemented in the past. Besides, can we really talk about teleworking? In a matter of days, employees who were able to do so, found themselves pursuing their professional activity at a distance, confined to their homes, installed as best they could in unsuitable workspaces (dining room table, sofa, kitchen counter), equipped or not with tools enabling them to work at a distance, and surrounded by their families living in the same situation. Overnight, a new segmentation between professional and private life had to be invented. In less than 24 hours, we all became experts in remote work and management...

The primacy of managerial maturity

The crisis has highlighted a key element in the digital transformation of organizations: it is less a question of tools, however sophisticated they may be, than a state of mind. Of course, a minimum level of equipment and connection is required to function properly at a distance! However, a company's digital maturity is measured first and foremost by its ability and willingness to experiment with new, more open, more horizontal ways of working. The last few weeks have made it possible to clearly distinguish between digital maturity (at company level) and managerial maturity. Faced with a sudden, brutal and full-time shift to remote work, it is first and foremost managerial intelligence and maturity that we need.

I propose to distinguish here three postures adopted by remote managers: the first concerns those managers who have tried, against all odds, to do "the same at a distance", the second refers to those who have not been able to cope with the distance component in managing their collaborators, and the third relates to those who have been able to successfully adapt to the situation.

Managing with blinkers

Our first manager is the one who has tried, whatever the cost, to continue practicing his or her activity in the same way as in a face-to-face environment. One concern: to conceal geographic distance. Let's take the example of managers who are used to spending their lives in meetings, and have continued to do so, at a distance. It didn't take them long to realize that face-to-face and distance meetings are significantly different. Remote meetings require more concentration¹², as it is much more difficult (and sometimes impossible) to decode the non-verbal communication of the participants. It is also more tiring because you are online all the time, without any breaks. It provokes anxiety because everyone is constantly confronted with his or her own image as it is displayed on the screens of their managers, colleagues or co-workers. And this anxiety is accentuated by the fact that, in these difficult times, family interruptions are frequent and difficult to control, especially for people with young children at home. Nevertheless, the manager

¹² <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200421-why-zoom-video-chats-are-so-exhausting>

who does not want to change will continue to maintain the same rhythm of meetings, will generously allow 45 minutes for the lunch break, and will only see distance as a constraint, without ever seizing the opportunities that it may bring. Finally, in this case, proximity appears to be a lost paradise.

Managing in anguish

The second case is that of the anxious manager, because even though teams can exist without a manager, can a manager exist without his or her teams? From this point of view, remote management creates anxiety, and this is one of the reasons why it has been so hard to implement teleworking in France. In order to manage distance as well as possible, and to maintain his/her legitimacy as a leader, this manager will amplify "micro-management" behaviors, wanting to know about everything that's going on, as well as trying to control all the interactions. The explosion of remote surveillance software in the United States is a perfect illustration of this. Some software can take a photo of the employee and his or her computer screen at regular intervals to check that he or she is "working"¹³.

For some managers, distance generates an almost pathological need for reporting. And if remote employees understand that, they will try to quell this anxiety by informing their managers of everything that is going on, by copying them in on all their emails, by calling them all the time... If the managers feel burned out, they will only have themselves to blame! This category includes managers who have not understood that attendance time is only an indicator of... presence, and not of the work actually done. These are the same managers who will insist that the team meeting should take place every morning between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m., and will also expect a review every evening. This, of course, at the precise time at which the employment contract gives the employee the right to log off. Have they understood and heard the needs and expectations of their employees during this complicated period? This is certainly a legitimate question.

Managing in a different way

The third case is that of the progressive manager, who quickly understood that lockdown required new working methods and who decided to take advantage of this unusual period to progress and develop his or her teams. This manager has abandoned all forms of supervision of the team's working hours. When working from a distance, management by objectives must take precedence. However, this means being able to clearly define these objectives and monitor them over time. You also have to learn to trust. This is the key word in a long-distance relationship, whether professional or personal. Unfortunately, it is often an empty word, sometimes used to make managers feel guilty for not delegating enough. But trust does not exclude control! It seems useful at this stage to distinguish two types of trust: trust in skills, and interpersonal trust. You can trust an employee's skills, which means that you have confidence in his/her ability to keep his/her professional commitments... while knowing that he/she will be the first to divulge information that you consider confidential. You can also have complete trust in a person's discretion... and judge them to be totally incompetent for the tasks at hand. The semantic confusion that reigns around the theme of trust is not conducive to effective distance management.

¹³ <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/2/21195584/coronavirus-remote-work-from-home-employee-monitoring>

In a typical teleworking situation, confidence in professional skills is the most valued, as it will be the key to achieving results. In fact, classic leadership grids have long since taught us that delegation works if - and only if - the employee demonstrates real professional autonomy. But, once again, we are not living in a classic teleworking situation! In the case of the lockdown, it is first and foremost the manager's ability to maintain or create a relationship of interpersonal trust that will have made the difference. Caring managers, who listen to the needs of their teams and the individuals within them, and who are able to organize work not only according to their own constraints but also those of their employees, are the ones who will have been the most appreciated during this difficult period. In a way, the crisis will have highlighted the interest of "servant leadership"¹⁴, a leadership at the service of one's community and one's team.

Management in the post-industrial era

What if Covid-19 could be construed as a rapidly-induced learning opportunity, to adopt a management style in line with the changes that are happening in the world?

The end of the industrial era?

For a long time, work has been assimilated to time spent in a place. This logic, inherited from the industrial era, was imposed when presence was synonymous with production, as in the case of assembly line work. *Call centers* are typical modern illustrations of this type of logic since all activity is both measurable and measured. But the world has changed. We live in a time when working no longer means being in a dedicated space-time all the time, especially for those *knowledge workers* who manipulate above all symbols, to use Robert Reich's expression¹⁵, and not objects.

That being said, this industrial logic still carries a lot of weight in the current representations of work¹⁶. The reluctance to allow employees to work remotely is evidence of this. While a study by the Concorde foundation considered that 26% of French employees were eligible for part-time teleworking¹⁷, according to INSEE (France's national statistics institute), only 3% of them were regularly teleworking in 2017¹⁸. Research conducted in the United States by Elsbach, Cable and Sherman sheds¹⁹ new light on this issue. In this study, the authors show that physical presence in the workplace is perceived as a sign of reliability and being present beyond working hours as a sign of commitment. It is therefore not a uniquely French prism, contrary to what we often hear!

An opportunity to reexamine our certainties

Over the past few weeks, we have come to understand that working remotely is not the same as working face-to-face. Distance is an indicator of managerial shortcomings. It does not tolerate improvisation. As far as managers are concerned, it is no longer their charisma that is at work, but the availability and responsiveness they show towards the demands of their employees. An organized, reactive manager, attentive to others, listening to the

¹⁴ Van Dierendonck D. (2010), *Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis*, *Journal of Management*

¹⁵ Reich R. (1997), *L'économie mondialisée*, Dunod

¹⁶ Galambaud (2014), *Réinventer le management des ressources humaines*, Editions Liaisons

¹⁷ <https://www.fondationconcorde.com/etudes/accompagner-la-mise-en-place-du-teletravail/>

¹⁸ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4238573?sommaire=4238635>

¹⁹ Elsbach K.D., Cable D.M., Sherman J.W. (2010). How passive "face time" affects perceptions of employees: Evidence of spontaneous trait inference, *Human Relations*, 63(6), 735-760

needs of his /her teams will be more valuable from a distance than a charismatic leader. Remote meetings are proof of this. In a face-to-face environment, the late arrival of some people attending a meeting allows those present to have informal exchanges. In a virtual meeting, waiting several minutes for the remote connection of those who are late irritates those who are "on time". While many meetings in person are held with an agenda that is approximate to say the least, a remote meeting requires a precise schedule, dedicated speaking time, and advance preparation of those who are going to speak (and therefore need to know that they are going to do so). While many people, when in face-to-face environments, wonder why they are in the meeting and who subsequently spend part of their time managing their emails, the remote meeting - in video format - deprives them of any freedom to do anything else. Therefore, managers need to make sure that everyone who is there... really needs to be there.

Are we now going to see a new business model emerge where teleworking is the norm and office presence the exception? PSA's latest announcements²⁰ are pointing in this direction. However, we will have to be all the more attentive to what happens when we are close to each other. Coming to the office today is like taking a risk. If we have to take that risk, what happens in the office has to be worth it. So, we're going to have to be particularly vigilant about all the things that a context of proximity takes for granted: non-verbal communication, socialization, informal exchanges, sharing of tacit knowledge, to name a few. It is now time to reflect in depth on the working methods implemented at a distance, on the modes of communication used, on the standards of behavior to be adopted both face-to-face and at a distance. We have learned to work, and to be effective through teleworking. But we are only at the beginning of the learning process...

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²⁰ <https://www.lesechos.fr/industrie-services/automobile/psa-fait-du-teletravail-la-regle-pas-l'exception-1201054>

Mitigating risk of negative productivity shock in the post-Covid-19 normalisation phase

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Abstract

The advantages and disadvantages of Remote Work and Flexible Working have been broadly researched and discussed by academics and business leaders²¹. However, probably never before, those interested in Remote Work and Flexible Working have experienced better conditions for exploring remote work than under the current Covid-19 crisis, given its global impact. The widespread transition to remote work in many professions in consequence of the pandemic has led to important learnings, which are likely to influence the new employer-employee relationship in the Post-Covid19 Era.

The key finding of the analysis of the responses to the Survey: "Covid-19– Impact on Work Arrangements and Employee Efficiency", is that it is possible to work effectively from home, even under strict confinement requirements. However, the effect of work/productivity hinges on the capability to maintain effective communication with key stakeholders in the organisation. Furthermore, based on these results I argue that the Covid-19 confinement generated a new productivity enhancing working pattern. I also note, that relatively long period of the confinement has enabled employees to establish a daily routine of working from home which can now be difficult to be swiftly reversed. In this article, I highlight the risk of a negative productivity shock, in a scenario where planning for the return to pre-Covid19 work arrangements does not incorporate a sufficient transition period allowing for a gradual adjustment of employees' working patterns developed during the confinement. A framework for an effective transition period to Post-Covid19 era is recommended to employers and policymakers at the end in this article.

Keywords: Remote work, Flexible working, Productivity

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²¹A very useful research synthesis is presented in: Kelliher C., de Menezes L. (2019). Flexible Working in Organizations: A Research Overview, Routledge.

Mitigating risk of negative productivity shock in the post-Covid-19 normalisation phase

Remote Work as a Viable Option for the Post-Crisis Era

Survey Focused on the Impact of Covid-19 Confinement on Work Results/Efficiency

During the Covid-19 confinement period individuals employed in professions allowing to execute work from home have turned their homes into workplaces. Some tangible and intangible investments were made to facilitate remote work during Covid-19 confinement. The employers and employees also adapted their way of communicating with teams and management, remotely.

The impact of coronavirus confinement on results of work delivered from home was the key point of interest in my recent Survey: "*Covid-19 - Implications for Work Arrangements and Employee Efficiency*"²², conducted for the purposes of this article. The survey was focused on employees working in professions allowing to execute work from home. The responses were received from 140 professionals with diverse professional backgrounds and based in different countries who could work from home during the Covid-19 social isolation.

The responses demonstrate that for the majority of surveyed professionals, work results/output were either as good as before Covid-19 (40% of all the respondents) or better (32%). Despite an expectation of some form of adverse impact on the quality of work executed from home as a result of negative impact of the confinement on different aspects of daily life, only 28% of the respondents indicated that their work results/output were negatively affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Only few respondents indicated that they were unable to work at all.

The individuals who, compared to the pre-Covid19 level, maintained or increased their output in a condition of a global sanitary crisis, were able to achieve it through two channels. For some, the same (29% of all the respondents) or longer (34%) working hours during the work day were possible/necessary, for some an improvement in productivity was achieved (29% of all the respondents). There is also a group of 9% of all the respondents who have spent less time working during the Covid-19 confinement than before but who compensated it with an increase in productivity, what allowed them to maintain the same work results.

It is worth noting that some of the respondents who worked longer hours compared to the period Pre-Covid19 indicated that they had to spend additional hours working in order to address some corporate challenges, driven by the Covid-19 crisis.

²²The respondents were asked to share their experience of working fully remotely during Covid-19 confinement, and for their preferences for the work arrangements for the period of Covid-19 deconfinement and when back to normal. The claims presented in this article are based on the results of a preliminary analysis of the 140 collected responses from the employees with diverse professions (which can be executed from home) and country profile. The survey was conducted with a start date in May 2020, the data collection has still been ongoing at the moment of the submission of this article. Great thanks are directed to all the respondents of this Survey and to Leslie Martin for her valuable assistance with setting up this Survey.

Table 1: Change in the Work Results / Output, Daily Time Spent on Working, and Productivity compared to the Pre-Covid19 condition.

WORSE WORK RESULTS – LOWER OUTPUT		THE SAME WORK RESULTS – THE SAME OUTPUT		BETTER WORK RESULTS – HIGHER OUTPUT	
Daily Time Spent on Working	Productivity	Daily Time Spent on Working	Productivity	Daily Time Spent on Working	Productivity
14% (of all the respondents)		9%		Answer 11%	
Less time	Lower	Less time	Higher	More time	Higher
4%		20%		Answer 9%	
The same	Lower	The same	The same	The same	Higher
10%		11%		Answer 12%	
Less time	The same	More time	Lower	More time	The same
TOTAL with Worse Work Results/Output - 28%		TOTAL with the Same Work Results/Output - 40%		TOTAL with Better Work Results/Output - 32%	

Source: The results of the Survey: “Covid-19 - Implication for Work Arrangements and Employee Efficiency”, the data is based on the respondents declarations of their time spent working and the productivity of work²³.

Remote work related communication during the Covid-19 confinement period was considered by the respondents as enhancing work efficiency the most and this took a form of the below elements, ranked from the most to least frequently chosen (the respondents were invited to choose as many as applicable and to complete the list with the other factors considered as important):

1. Regular catch-up video calls with colleagues/team members (61% of all the respondents have indicated this factor as productivity enhancing)
2. Clearly set tasks and deadlines (52%)
3. Regular catch up video-calls with Line Manager (28%)
4. Work results assessments discussed with Line Manager (13%)
5. Regular support / “Social” / “Q&A” team meetings (8%)
6. Use of instant messaging platforms (1%).

Other factors, which potentially had a positive impact on the productivity of work executed from home included the ones, which the respondents of the Survey indicated as the advantages of home work altogether, and combine a lower stress level (30% of respondents indicated this factor as advantage of work from home, multiple were possible to be indicated), lower tiredness (27%), less distractive environment (25%). Others pointed out to presence at home as stimulating creativity (19%) and providing higher comfort when compared to work in the office (1%).

The results of the analysis based on this Survey suggest that an average employee in professions allowing for executing work from home, has gone through an effective

²³ It would be interesting to compare the assessment of work results by the employees (which has the elements of subjectivity) with the assessment of the same by employers (with use of certain quantitative metrics). Such a study is planned by the author of this article.

transition towards working fully from home. Understandably, there is also a group of respondents who, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, were unable to work efficiently or to work at all.

Too Short Post-Covid19 Transition Period Could Lead to a Fall in Productivity

Based on the initial indications from governments in different countries, it is reasonable to assume that during the Covid-19 deconfinement period some social distancing restrictions will remain in place. It is likely that the remote work will continue to be required or recommended for selected professions as long as the Covid-19 pandemic remains a health threat, i.e. at least for several months. The Covid-19 confinement period alone has been long enough, for the employees to develop new routine of working from home, involving no daily commuting, less time-consuming morning preparations, and fully based on remote communications with professional colleagues and management in the organisation. It is also possible that continuation of work from home during the Covid-19 deconfinement period will additionally reinforce these work habits in some professions.

As a result, once the pandemic is over, it may prove difficult to return to the usual Pre-Covid19 work arrangements, involving working exclusively or mostly from employer premises, without compromising the results of work/output (through a combination of time spent on work and productivity). There is a risk that the immediate return to pre-Covid19 work arrangements would increase pressure on employees. On the one hand, the return to regular commuting could adversely affect the physical or mental condition of some employees (increased morning tiredness, negatively affected wellbeing) on top of time engaged, which in turn could compromise their productivity and/or lead to higher work absenteeism. As mentioned earlier, 34% of the surveyed employees have increased their daily time allocated to work during the Covid-19 confinement. The same would not be possible without employees working from home and saving time spent on daily commute. It is also fair to assume that during the deconfinement period and in the initial phase of normalisation once the pandemic is over, increased workload will still be needed in certain professions, in order to allow organisations to fully overcome the effects of the recent crisis and adjust to the new environment. This in turn could lead to elevated stress levels among employees, especially if, at the same time, they have to adjust their work patterns, including transitioning to work from employer premises. In the absence of gradual adjustment during the transition period, I see the risk of a negative productivity shock during the period of normalisation, once the Covid-19 pandemic is over. It is therefore of utmost importance that the decisions about the return to “normal” working arrangements are taken very carefully both by policy makers and by employers. In my opinion, a sufficiently long period of transition, granting employees significant flexibility in adjusting their work routines would mitigate the risk of such a negative productivity shock.

Return to Pre-Covid19 Work Arrangements - Recommendations

To preserve the gains resulting from employees’ effective transition towards working fully from home, I recommend a flexible and gradual return to Pre-Covid19 work arrangements.

During the deconfinement period, I recommend to limit employee time required in the office to a minimum necessary for critical tasks, which cannot be executed remotely. This is in line with the preferences of the biggest proportion of the respondents in the Survey

(44%) , who expressed willingness to return to employer premises only for a limited time, to execute critical tasks²⁴. For work, which can be delivered remotely in an effective way, work from home should remain an option offered by employers to employees. This recommendation seems in line with the plans laid out by governments in several countries, based on the guidance they provided.

I believe it is important that during the deconfinement period employees remain supported by employers in ways indicated by the Survey respondents as supporting the efficiency of their work. Clearly defined tasks, precise deadlines and expectations, regular team catch-up video-calls with colleagues and managers, as well as regular feedbacks from line managers are recommended, given their motivating and productivity enhancing impact²⁵.

In the normalisation phase, once the Covid-19 pandemic is over and no health and safety related risks are present anymore, employers should consider the below proposed framework for an effective return to work from employer premises. As a starting point, a detailed analysis of all job posts, detailing tasks that can be carried out exclusively from employer premises and those that can be carried out remotely, should take place. This combined with other considerations should define the extent to which employees' physical presence is required in employer premises. If it is possible to carry out some work related tasks from home, it is recommended to employers to analyse employees' preferred home/office work balance and to agree an effective work plan on an individual basis.

In the initial phase of the normalisation, it is recommended that employers temporarily offer increased flexibility to employees in deciding about home/office balance, followed by a gradual increase of the office work time (over a number of weeks) until it reaches the number of days/office work time a week that the employer considers as effective for the organisation.

In addition, given increased reliance on working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, which, in my opinion, is likely to continue once the pandemic is over, managing performance will remain of crucial importance. I recommend that employers maintain regular performance appraisals. In some instances, increasing the frequency of appraisals may be required. The performance results should be the basis on which employers could consider to adjust work arrangements on case-by-case basis in the long run. If performance is considered by employers as satisfactory, there is a clear indication that current work arrangements are work-effective and could be extended in the long run. If the employee performance is found out as unsatisfactory, the employer could revise the work arrangements towards increasing the number of weekly office work days or request this employee to fully return to work from the employer premises²⁶.

While throughout this paper I list numerous advantages of working from home, in my opinion, home should not be the only workplace though, as there are important advantages of working at least partly from office/employer premises. The most important are (as indicated by the respondents of the Survey): face-to-face (real) interactions as a

²⁴ Preferences of the remaining respondents in regards to the return to pre-Covid19 working arrangements: *Return to pre-Covid19 pattern of work is allowed by the public health body and their employer* (29%), *To continue working from home every day until Covid-19 crisis is fully resolved* (25%).

²⁵ Read more: Nawrot, W. (2020). The Relationship Employer-Employee in Remote Work. The Impact of Covid-19 on the Employers Needs and Employees Work Preferences, forthcoming

²⁶ Read more : Nawrot, W. (2020). Remote Work – From a Necessity in Covid-19 Emergency to a Post-Crisis Opportunity. A Formula for Productivity Gains, Cost Optimisation and Enhanced Work Satisfaction, forthcoming.

form of social stimulation, deeper sense of community with colleagues and management, better work equipment than at home (IT hardware and software, etc.), enhanced mood and wellbeing coming from socially valuable interactions, peer and organisational face-to-face support, deeper sense of identity with the organisation, and better work motivation thanks to the traditional forms of supervision and control²⁷. In the Survey, “Covid-19 - Implications for Work Arrangements and Employee Efficiency”, 31% of the respondents indicated that their “ideal” balance involved working 20% of the time from home and 80% from employee premises.

I expect that when following the proposed process, in the long run an optimal office/home work balance will naturally emerge across different industries or functions, representing the most effective approach to work delivery, taking into account business requirements and employees’ preferences with regards to home/office balance.

Conclusion

The most important finding of the survey of work patterns during the Covid-19 confinement is that in many professions it has been possible to work effectively from home, even despite extreme conditions of the confinement. Another conclusion is that work productivity depends on the quality of communication with other colleagues and line managers in the organisation. Remote work has been a necessity during Covid-19 confinement and it is a viable option for the post-Covid19 world. I believe that this form of work could gain on importance in the post-Covid19 reality. In my opinion, employers should not view this form of work as a threat but build on advantages of remote work, as proved during the Covid-19 crisis.

I recommend adoption of a *flexible approach* to working arrangements in the initial phase of the post-Covid-19 era and a *gradual adjustment* reaching an optimal work formula. This is to minimise the risk of a *negative productivity shock*, that could occur in case of insufficient transition to the post-Covid-19 reality.

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Rethinking businesses: Collaboration, digitalization and sustainability as core pillars for future innovative and resilient

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Abstract

Every crisis or change in world history created new opportunities as society was driven to develop new ideas. Managing uncertainty and being able to adapt to an unprecedented situation is demanding. In the post Covid-19 era, developing resilient companies will be the key factor for success. This impact paper looks at a way to prepare organizations for future disruptions, to make companies innovative and resilient, by considering the combination of i) collaboration, ii) digitalization and iii) sustainability as core pillars to ensure corporate longevity, increase efficiency and foster better responsiveness.

Keywords: Resilient companies, Collaboration, Sustainability, Digitalization.

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Rethinking businesses: collaboration, digitalization and sustainability as core pillars for future innovative and resilient companies

Global crises, both sanitary and economic, have changed society in many ways. Managing uncertainty and being able to adapt to an unprecedented situation is demanding. While the Covid-19 spreads globally, all countries are taking steps to overcome the problems affecting their citizens and economies.

Disruptions throughout history have had many negative impacts, yet these disruptions have also created new opportunities. They have driven our society to develop innovative solutions to tackle unprecedented problems. The real impact of this crisis is unknown, yet companies do have a main goal: adapt to survive. In a time of change, we need to prepare our companies for the cultural and behavioural shifts this crisis has caused. Businesses should focus on their core strategy to create more value, counter Covid-19 side effects and fulfil needs that will appear in the near future. As we are facing new challenges, developing resilient companies will be the key factor for success.

Globalization and technological advances: uncertainties and possibilities.

Currently, thanks to globalization and technological advances we are able to travel and access goods and services from all over the world. Conversely, these advances are now part of the problem, and making it a challenge to control the spread of the virus. In terms of socio-economic impact, governments and companies are taking measures to mitigate the effects of the sharp reduction of economic activity. Consequently, the possible effects on financial markets, mobility and trade will be key for the future of the global economy (World Economic Forum, 2020). To tackle these problems, new policies and stimulus packages are being developed to support the most affected industries.

The pandemic affects every industry to a greater or lesser extent, especially those hit by the border restrictions and the lockdowns in certain countries. In addition, company leaders have to ensure employees' safety, well-being and financial stability while adapting their way of working and yet remain competitive. It has become clear that accelerating digital migration is necessary for remote working and commuting.

Companies, from big corporations to start-ups, are facing periods with lower-to-zero revenue. This has created difficulties to manage their cash flow. Moreover, companies now face the additional strain of restarting their operations whilst following the newly required social distancing rules. It is difficult to know how the world will be. Thus, focusing on the aspects that can be controlled is vital. This means separating trivial aspects from crucial ones. But not all news is negative. Technology has emerged as a solution for traditional companies and people have changed their way of consuming with online shopping (Longfield and Collett, 2020). Gig economy shopping models have seen their demand increase, allowing small businesses to reach more customers.

Technological experts state that some aspects of our pre Covid-19 life, such as working from home, and digital migration or transportation, will change forever (Sullivan, 2020). Furthermore, they explain that facing problems and uncertainty stimulates innovation and being resilient is the most critical skill to master.

Now that the rules of the game have changed, different questions need to be addressed. How should companies remodel their value chain? Which aspects are crucial to navigate uncertainty? Can we create value for society and still successfully face any change in the environment?

Collaboration, digitalization and sustainability are key to navigate uncertainty.

To face the current situation and recent challenges, companies need to develop a long-term vision while solving short-term problems. The reason is that it is important to identify and focus on the elements that affect most our businesses, analyse present and future variations and decide on a new strategy to follow. As a part of corporate strategy, a solution to consider might be the combination of collaboration, digitalization and sustainability to ensure corporate longevity, increase efficiency and be more responsive.

Collaboration: engaging different stakeholders.

Since the start of the pandemic, initiatives aiming to solve different problems caused by Covid-19 have emerged. These initiatives have shown the strength of collaboration between individuals, public institutions and companies.

After the financial crisis of 2008, new business models based on the collaborative economy flourished. For example, Airbnb, Uber and Slack were founded after that financial crisis, at a time when ensuring financial stability was difficult. Since then, our way of consuming, living, travelling or working has largely shifted to practices based on the peer-to-peer system.

The sharing economy enabled the use of underutilized resources, which increased efficiency. Botsman (2015), who defined the collaborative economy as “an economic system of decentralized networks and marketplaces of connected individuals creating value in ways that bypass traditional institutions”, studied the different approaches of this model. Botsman pointed out how systems with poor waste management, limited access or unnecessary intermediaries suffered disruption.

Nowadays, these applications are no longer for early adopters. Consumers move about using ride-sharing applications, shop on online marketplaces or use pay-to-access platforms.

Performance through community, access and collaboration are three methods needed for the success of the sharing economy (Richardson, 2015). By creating a community with shared values and objectives, individuals are able to contribute to something larger. In this aspect, companies from the same sector or with shared values should cooperate to thrive during the actual crisis and achieve better solutions while addressing critical challenges. In addition, allocating under-utilized resources or sharing services will solve problems such as space limitation or lack of required skills.

For the collaboration between governments and private institutions, the current situation should prioritize the co-design and co-creation of the future between them (Mazucatto, 2020), to develop a robust and inclusive economy ensuring that partnerships are driven by public interests.

Another aspect to consider is the impact of closed borders on the supply and distribution of goods. Creating local ecosystems could help manage these problems by increasing accessibility. Meanwhile, corporations should encourage inter-departmental collaboration by improving communication to enhance rapid response and ensure monitoring of incidents.

It is clear that collaboration is a key pillar needed to remodel companies' value chains.

Digitalization: tools for present and future companies.

Digital transformation is already part of society yet companies are resistant to change. Nowadays, we consume differently: we stream videos, order food, trade online and send money within seconds. People use streaming applications to listen to music, professors give webinars to their students and you can have hundreds of books in your e-book reader. However, traditional companies' late arrival to digitalization means that this crisis has caught them off guard in terms of remote working and value chain diversification.

The pandemic has caused a pivot from analogue workplaces to their complete digital transformation due to social distancing measures. Based on necessity, consumer and business behaviour has changed, with an increasing demand for software-as-a-service and cloud capacity (Longfield and Collett, 2020) to continue with their remote work and commuting. It is no longer part of a plan. They have developed a digital workplace within weeks, implementing collaboration tools to participate in meetings and work effectively. These applications are no longer exclusively for corporations (Sullivan, 2020) and the majority of people are using them to communicate with their families and friends during the lockdown.

Why did most of the Covid-19 initiatives start by developing an application or a website? Mainly, because it increases accessibility and helps companies to reach a wider population. One of the aspects that made the collaborative economy so trendy and easy to use is the combination with technology, whereby traditional businesses like restaurants and retail brands can use online marketplaces and platforms to sell their products.

Since the digital transformation started, there is a major concern about the controversial aspect of using technology in our jobs. However, we should look at digitalization as a way of empowering people, not substituting them for machines. Digital solutions will help people in their daily tasks, data processing and changing the mind-set to focus on decision-making, monitoring and supervision. Every department from human resources to finance could benefit from it. In addition, new jobs and skills related to data protection, policy guidance and trust networks are required.

The world as we knew it has changed and every company should embrace digital transformation to combine digital and face-to-face interactions as a way of better positioning their products and services and empowering their workers, creating more value for society while facing possible disruptions.

Sustainability: the final transversal purpose.

For the past few decades, sustainability has been an increasing concern. Specifically, climate change and social inequalities are some of the most critical challenges that need to be addressed. Since the foundation of the United Nations, the main objective is the search for more sustainable development. From the Millennium Development Goals, to

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN aims to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace around the world by 2030.

Non-profit organizations are the main way we have to solve social problems, and progress on these matters is incremental. The problem is that they have difficulties to scale because of the scarcity of resources they suffer due to a model based on private donations (Porter, 2013). We need to let businesses create solutions with a profit-based approach in order to become self-sustaining.

Companies are trying to target the SDGs and developing their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) departments to address problems related to social, environmental and governance aspects (ESGs). There is also a remarkable shift in demand from consumers who want more sustainable products and are more concerned about social causes.

The actual CSR model works at times when economic growth is positive, but is not durable in the long term as it is the first program to be cut when financial problems arise. To change this configuration, the concept of Total Societal Impact (BCG, 2017) addresses the disconnection between sustainability and corporate strategy. It consists in including societal and environmental impact as part of the corporate value chain. For example, when reviewing their product design, distribution or the core business, companies should consider ESG topics in their decision-making process.

There is a belief that making profit is inconsistent with solving social or environmental problems. We need to have a long-term vision, understanding that business benefits (obtained from solving these problems, increasing efficiency, developing better workplaces and reducing pollution) will affect positive market valuation, contributing to shareholder value (Porter, 2013). Companies should focus on the concept of creating shared value by solving problems through their business models. In this context, products solve societal needs and the social and environmental benefits meet economic profits.

From an environmental point of view, the circular economy is one of the solutions. With changes in the way of consuming, we are able to reduce waste, keep products and materials in use without deteriorating them and regenerating natural systems (Ellen McArthur Foundation, 2020). It is important to think about a competitive and innovative way to change processes to improve efficiency and reduce economic costs to make the model attractive for industries.

Sustainability is key to create value for society and to successfully face any future change in the environment.

Conclusion

Collaboration and digitalization are crucial to achieve sustainability. Forging partnerships between enterprises and stakeholders will amplify the positive impact for society. The use of digital solutions will help to monitor and measure impact, developing clear ESG reports, based on transparency and attracting more investors. The sharing economy appears as a complement to the circular economy, extending the material life of underutilized products.

It is not our mission to predict what will happen. Instead, this impact paper looks at a way to react to forthcoming changes. We have the possibility to amend errors from the past,

look to the future with positive perspectives and search for new opportunities. Responsibility for the future lies in our hands, and we have to determine the type of company we want to develop, invest in or work for.

Innovative and resilient companies will be capable of managing future disruptions and handling the most important challenges we need to solve like climate change, inequalities or financial crises. If we focus on the synergies between collaboration, digitalization and sustainability, the solution is closer.

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Unlocking sustainable business model innovation for a post-crisis economy

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Abstract

In this impact paper we argue that sustainability paradigms such as degrowth offer an inspiration for a post-crisis economy. There is increasing demand from politicians, civil society and industry for programmes that do not just protect and revive business as usual, 'whatever it takes,' but provide new ideas to motivate more ecological, social, and resilient businesses. Business model innovation, combined with sustainability paradigms such as degrowth, is introduced as a promising contribution to an innovation and management toolbox for a post-crisis economy.

Keywords: business model innovation, business model patterns, sustainability, degrowth

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Unlocking sustainable business model innovation for a post-crisis world

Surviving the crisis (and the future)

The world faces an unprecedented crisis due to the global spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While governments are being challenged to save human lives and keep the spread of the virus under control, companies from all industries are facing unseen supply risks, market risks, and, as a consequence, the risk of insolvency. Some respond to this crisis with new and sometimes very innovative solutions: farmers, restaurants, and retailers of all sorts are experimenting with delivery services and are switching from business-to-customer to business-to-business models; book stores and artists are using digital media to reach out to their customers and audiences; and entrepreneurs are forming local alliances to support each other or coordinate their new online retail channels jointly.

The Corona crisis does put companies' resilience to the test. Many are forced to innovate or even transform themselves to survive, which opens the door to new ways of doing business. *Could this also open the door to a better, more sustainable post-crisis economy?* We argue that a post-crisis economy that is more ecologically sustainable and socially just must build on business models for sustainability, i.e. organisations and networks that create value for their stakeholders by following sustainability principles such as circularity, inclusiveness, local and green supply chains, or sufficiency (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2018, 2019b). Following such principles to stabilise and revive companies could make industries and whole national economies more diverse and inclusive and provide a foundation for more economic resilience in the face of future crises.

More recent debates have introduced the notion of degrowth as a normative framing for such a sustainability-oriented transformation of companies, industries, and national economies (Kallis et al., 2018). The current situation, in which companies around the world are forced to rethink their ways of doing business, together with the notion of degrowth, can inspire thinking about post-crisis business models for sustainability. If the billions of Euros from economic recovery programmes were used to support such business models *now*, as change, disruptions, and transformations occur due the Corona crisis, the economic development of Europe and the world could be put on a trajectory that brings us closer to the normative ideal of sustainable development and contributes to reaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Learning from the past and moving towards sustainable business

Learning from the past

Saving the lives of those who are most vulnerable (e.g., elderly people, people with medical conditions, people in need) and developing vaccines and therapies are without doubt the most important tasks during this crisis. In parallel, the political debates about how to stabilise the economy now and how to revive it after the lockdown are intensifying on a daily basis. Millions of jobs and hundreds of thousands of companies are at risk of losing their basis of existence. In Germany, for example, key industries such as automobile manufacturing slowed down to the point where all operations were stopped for weeks.

Traditional companies like Lufthansa, Germany's largest airline group, face bankruptcy and need state support, countless small and medium-sized businesses, micro firms, and self-employed people are lacking up to 100% of their income (e.g., hotels, restaurants, theatres, event organizers). The list goes on, and with each new entry we must ask ourselves: what can we learn from other crises and disruptive shocks to handle the current situation?

To begin with, after the corona crisis we will still be in the middle of an ecological and social crisis – climate change. Many programmes to deal with the financial crisis of 2008 were set up to secure the survival of banks (which were causing the crisis) and revive consumption. This was paid for with increasing levels of resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, economic inequality is rising worldwide (if to different degrees) – a trend that was neither significantly altered nor sufficiently addressed after 2008. Such tendencies must be avoided this time. Many politicians, industry experts, and researchers have already made the point that fiscal policies, for example, should be bound to criteria such as greenhouse gas emissions or social responsibility in supply chains.

Societal shocks can create windows of opportunity – yet only if they fall on fertile ground. The Chernobyl disaster in 1986 was a profound shock that gripped our global society. Yet, while it triggered a worldwide debate, it did not directly change the energy landscape. By contrast, in 2011 the Fukushima disaster took place at a time when the preconditions for change were more advanced and established. This time, public discourse, new societal narratives, and the availability of innovative solutions gave shape to what we nowadays call the 'energy transition' ('Energiewende'). At least for a certain period of time, the Fukushima shock accelerated a profound change in Germany's energy industry – a flourishing of both technological and social innovations, for example, in the form of more decentralized community renewable energy projects.

Moving towards sustainable business

Referring to degrowth against this backdrop stands to reason inasmuch as it is a discourse that emerged in view of crises. Sustainable degrowth is a transformative quest towards a more equitable socio-economic setting, as well as a reasonable level of economic throughput that, taken together, improve the quality of life while respecting planetary boundaries (Kallis et al., 2018). Hence, degrowth is explicitly not what we are experiencing due to the Corona crisis, namely a disastrous economic recession or depression deteriorating social conditions (e.g., destroying jobs or limiting access to healthcare). Still, degrowth questions economic growth and profit generation as indicators of social wellbeing and companies' contribution to society (ibid.).

Comprehending economic activities' potential and actual diversity beyond merely monetary and reciprocal transactions and relationships is essential in order to imagine, creatively experiment with, and implement new solutions to pressing sustainability challenges. Research into degrowth highlights what we otherwise often turn a blind eye to: our economy already includes local sharing, repairing and self-provision, unpaid family care, and many other potentially non-commodified activities. Likewise, the book "Degrowth: A vocabulary for a new era" (D'Alisa et al., 2015) presents and discusses a diverse collection of approaches that can potentially contribute to the objectives of degrowth. These are, amongst others, simplicity, bio-economics, commoning, and co-operatives.

In light of a degrowth vision, governments and businesses can use the Corona crisis to profoundly rethink their approaches to supporting and doing business and use sustainability paradigms such as circularity, inclusiveness, local and green supply chains, or sufficiency as an inspiration for reviving and redesigning business activity during and after the crisis. In addition, as consumers are forced to focus on what is really important to them, their routines and habits are possibly more accessible for sustainable change.

Resilience and sustainability transformations for a post-crisis economy

Companies are being challenged to develop new modes of creating value for and with stakeholders, as well as new ways of relating to their technical and socio-ecological environments. We are seeing a window of opportunity here to offer ideas for more sustainable business models that do not repeat past mistakes.

It is our conviction that a sustainable transformation of companies, industries, and national economies is urgently needed. But instead of pushing single entrepreneurs, managers, or customers to make the transformation happen, we are calling for simultaneous and joint changes in various domains: tax laws and labour regulations, cultural institutions, higher education and vocational training, industry associations and business consulting – just to name a few. These institutions are massively shaping our understanding of a ‘good life,’ ‘good business’, and a ‘well-working economy.’ Thus, they have a great influence on what is being done on a daily basis – and whether we contribute to sustainable development, or not.

Because of all of the fates, the following argument must be made with greatest care and empathy: *The Corona crisis opens a door to a sustainable transformation of companies, industries, whole national economies, and global economic culture. And to be clear: It is not the crisis itself that is a good opportunity; it is the way out of it that is the opportunity.* While crises and societal shocks hold potential for sustainability transitions, it is our current and past unsustainability which put us into a risk society in the first place – a society in which we move from one crisis into the next. This is why our economy must become a post-crisis economy that is ecologically sustainable and socially just.

Crises and aspired transitions bring the perspectives of transition management and resilience to the fore. Resilience refers to a system’s ability to handle disturbances and shocks in robust, creative and adaptable ways, allowing it to maintain its functionality (Palzkill and Augenstein, 2017). In addition, we can understand companies’ ability to contribute to a sustainability transition as their capacity to find new and viable ways of utilising resources, competences, and processes contributing to a more sustainable development. An ability that becomes all the more urgent when existing ecological and social conditions become untenable.

Reflecting on the lessons learned from crises and shocks, as they have been discussed above, and in line with insights from transition as well as resilience research (cf. *ibid.*), we propose four essential lessons for navigating a sustainability transition:

- As the financial crisis shows, we need to learn our lessons from the past. Recipes used in past crises are not necessarily useful in current or future crises. Selling more cars may help for a moment, but it burdens future generations.

- As the shocks of Chernobyl and Fukushima show, we need shared and actionable narratives and knowledge to make effective use of windows of opportunity to motivate real change, such as with Germany's 'Energiewende.'
- As the environmental and social crises in light of degrowth show, we need diversity of available ideas, institutional logics, and practices for both resilient responses to environmental shocks and to facilitate alternative, more sustainable transition pathways.
- As the Corona crisis shows, we need inclusive approaches. Only a handful of (often digital) companies will survive the crisis without problems or even be stronger than before. A great many people are ordering at Amazon, but doing little to support local grocery stores, restaurants, or cinemas.

While companies like Amazon may be very resilient, are they sustainable? We argue that diversity is needed instead of industrial monocultures to contribute to a future-fit and resilient post-crisis economy. Here, the notions of sustainable business model innovation and business model patterns come into play.

Sustainable business model innovation and business model patterns:

Tools for the post-crisis economy

Like any type of innovation, business model innovation is a means to alter and extend the ability of firms to act effectively and efficiently. With its focus on proposing and creating value, business model innovation has become a major technique to develop new, and change existing forms of, organizational value creation. The emerging field of research and practice on sustainable business models has taken up this approach in order to understand and develop new forms of value creation that offer sustainable value propositions to customers and all other stakeholders, and that allow firms to capture economic value while they maintain or even regenerate natural, social, and economic capital (e.g., Dentchev et al., 2018; Schaltegger et al., 2016). Sustainable business model innovation can be understood as a way of translating sustainability strategies into actionable 'blueprints' of value-creating activities of companies. Based on a decade of research on this topic, we define this approach as follows (cf. Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2019b): sustainable business model innovation improves a company's ability to create, maintain, or regenerate natural, social, and economic capital beyond its organisational boundaries by changing the value proposition for its customers and all other stakeholders and/or the way how value is created, delivered, and captured.

A broad knowledge base about the diverse forms sustainable business model innovation can take has been developed in several research projects and publications, partly conducted at ESCP (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2018, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). This knowledge base, presented as various classifications of business model patterns, can serve as a source of inspiration and a tool to help companies develop better post-crisis business models. These classifications often follow Alexander's understanding of what a pattern is: "Each pattern describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the solution to that problem, in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice." (Alexander et al., 1977, p. x)

We see at least three features that are useful for business design in general and business model innovation in particular: first, a pattern describes a problem-solution combination and thus contains a statement about a problem that is perceived as important and a

statement about a potential solution to that problem; second, it is about a recurring problem; and third, there is a generic and adaptable solution to that problem. As such, patterns are also discussed and used by business model scholars and for business model innovation in practice. Transferring the concept of patterns to business models, we see that it is about problem-solution combinations that are proposed to support business model developers and innovators in accomplishing their design tasks. For the case of sustainable business model innovation, we found 45 patterns with the potential to create ecological, social, and economic value. These were arranged in eleven pattern groups (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2018):

- “Pricing & revenue”
- “Financing”
- “Eco-design”
- “Closing-the-loop”
- “Supply chain”
- “Giving”
- “Access provision”
- “Social mission”
- “Service & performance”
- “Cooperative”
- “Community platform”

Using and developing patterns for a post-crisis paradigm: Degrowth

In line with the need to learn our lessons from the past and make knowledge actionable, the concept of Alexandrian patterns offers a heuristic device to systematically capture knowledge of experience-based best practice solutions for sustainability: “A sustainable business model pattern describes an ecological, social, and/or economic problem that arises when an organisation aims to create value, and it describes the core of a solution to this problem that can be repeatedly applied in a multitude of ways, situations, contexts, and domains. A sustainable business model pattern also describes the design principles, value creating activities, and their arrangements that are required to provide a useful problem–solution combination” (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2018, p. 148).

Moreover, business model patterns can function as empowering communicative devices. If done well, patterns make expert knowledge understandable and useful for laymen. This can essentially contribute to making business model design processes more democratic and inclusive, resulting in shared narratives and activities for a sustainability transition.

Last but not least, collecting, discussing, and sharing patterns can greatly contribute to the perceived and actual diversity of our economy. The theoretical conception is that patterns relate to, embellish, and support each other (Alexander et al., 1977). Pattern collections for a certain domain, such as business models for sustainability, turn into pattern languages once their number and the knowledge about how they relate reaches a level of maturity and saturation. Still, pattern languages are living languages reflecting diversity, growing organically, and allowing ever-new answers to complex problems to take shape (Alexander et al., 1977; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2019a).

To give an illustration, a concrete and new pattern we propose is ‘community prosumption’. In research on degrowth, Bloemmen et al. (2015), for instance, present a corresponding case of community-supported agriculture. The pattern takes place in a

socio-economic *context* in which citizens are considered as mere consumers of what companies produce, while intermediaries, such as supermarket chains, are positioned in between these two parties. The *problem* is that this form of economic relation and practice does not convey non-material and non-monetary forms of value creation. It disconnects consumers from the conditions of production. Furthermore, it puts producers in fierce competition with each other and, hence, makes the individual vulnerable to poor local conditions (e.g., a dry season). A *solution* then is to share the risk with local citizens who pay a fixed yearly amount, regardless of how successful the production is. Moreover, local citizens engage in local manufacturing or harvesting, build social connections, experience mutual learning processes, and spend leisure time, for instance, in a green environment. Hence, economic relationships are diversified, monetary exchanges are, to a certain degree, deprioritized, and consumers eventually turn into ‘community prosumers.’ This reduces producers’ workload and frees up time to invest in the quality of organisational processes.

Outlook

The Corona crisis once again raises critical questions about how we collectively want to overcome crises and where we want to go. Governments, educational institutions, consultants, local businesses, and all the other actors who shape our society should rethink what post-crisis economies and businesses should look like and whether business as usual is a reasonable way to move on, or whether lessons can be learnt from those who are already experimenting with alternative business paradigms. The necessary actionable knowledge is available in various repositories of sustainable business model patterns. It just has to be used. The example of degrowth, given here as an illustration, points to the rich avenues and inspiration this sustainability paradigm can offer in the search for sustainable business models for a post-crisis economy.

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Strategic agility in a time of crisis

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Abstract

This impact paper focusses on *Strategic Agility* in a fast-changing world, turning crisis into opportunity. We are currently seeing many companies focussing on surviving the impact of Covid-19 in the short-term. But a few organisations have already shifted their focus to the post-Covid world, thinking flexibly and preparing for very different, disruptive ways of doing business. These few are likely to be the success stories of the post-Covid era, thanks to their agility in the way they think and act strategically.

Keywords: Strategic agility, Disruption, Disciplined experimentation, Affordance

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Strategic agility in a time of crisis

In the past 10 years, the issue of strategic agility has been climbing to the top of the CEO's agenda. This is not only because of an acceleration in the process of globalisation, but also in anticipation of future black swan events. Covid-19 has sharply underlined the importance of this topic. Many executives are stressing the importance of being strategically agile in a context of disrupted markets which will undoubtedly produce a great many losers and a few big winners, with the latter being the companies who have anticipated the challenges and opportunities more effectively. In "normal" times, it tends to be hard to change positions and market share is conquered gradually in reward for consistent effort. Times of crisis are different, offering real opportunities for those organisations that are prepared to adapt their strategy swiftly, disrupt their own business model, and execute with speed.

The Covid-19 context and its strategic opportunities

For some time, the media have been fixated on trying to figure out exactly when the crisis will be over, lockdown relaxed and normality resumed. But we are coming to realise that there will be no "back to normal". Experts from the economic, business, medical and political arenas are touting a variety of scenarios, all of which highlight the fact that a "New Normal" will emerge with no return to the pre-Covid era. Not surprisingly, long-term predictions differ widely, as they depend on assumptions about factors that are currently unknown, such as the way the virus may mutate and spread, and the nature and effectiveness of interventions by health systems and governments. We are moving into uncharted territory, as policy makers respond to the threat of imminent recession. Since the impact of Covid-19 is likely to be with us for a long time, it is wise to accept that the new normal, or at least its first stage, starts now. This new normal is predicted to be different from our recent past. This means that opportunities will arise for those who can anticipate this new future. We are facing what American philosopher Thomas S. Kuhn called a "change of paradigm" (or for Gaston Bachelard a "*rupture épistémologique*"), when the past and its underpinning assumptions must be abandoned, in order to embrace a future of opportunities and discoveries. But these new opportunities will be unevenly distributed as consumer behaviour shifts as a result of the crisis, and only those who can figure out today what disruptive moves their organisation must take will have a chance to lead their industry into a post-Covid tomorrow. This is where thinking strategically with an agile mindset becomes imperative.

What it takes to be strategic agile

A review of the literature shows that strategic agility for organisations refers to the continuous adjustment and readjustment of strategic direction, with a view to developing innovative ways to create value (Weber & Tarba, 2014). This is achieved by bringing together dynamic capabilities, such as strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity and collective commitment (Doz & Kosonen, 2010), in a way that retains flexibility without losing efficiency (Junín, Sarala, Tarba, & Weber, 2015).

Becoming strategically agile through being "both stable (resilient, reliable, and efficient) and dynamic (fast, nimble, and adaptive)" (Aghina, De Smet, & Weerda, 2015) is essential for multinational enterprises with global value chain exposure to not only survive the

unprecedented market changes induced by Covid-19, but to identify and create new value. Leading scholars such as Nassim Nicholas Taleb see the current crisis, which is often referred to as a Black Swan event due to its unpredictability and wide-reaching repercussions, as an unparalleled opportunity for companies to become resilient. The disorder, volatility, and uncertainty they are confronted with on a daily basis can act as a catalyst for change and create what has been called an antifragile mindset. Taleb suggests that antifragility goes beyond robustness and is a mindset that thrives on randomness and uncertainty and is not afraid to make mistakes. To turn adversity into advantage, companies must be ready to embrace the turmoil and instil a love of experimentation and problem solving into their DNA. No company can control Covid-19, but strategically agile ones will find novel but fruitful avenues for their business in the midst of the crisis.

Agility in strategic thinking can only start when we are ready to give up some of our preconceived ideas, and even some of the commonly accepted benchmarks or best practices in the industry. It means understanding what the core challenges are, what new opportunities are emerging and what is possible in this new environment. It is about making new assumptions about what customers want, about their future behaviours, and about your new business model. Those assumptions cannot be tested through classical market research. Asking the market what it may want in a world that does not yet exist is largely futile. The only useful test is courageous trial and error. This demands disciplined experimentation, a readiness to make mistakes, learning lessons quickly, and pivoting or changing your assumptions repeatedly until successful. All of this has to be done with almost scientific rigour in order to test out the new assumptions that will lead to a paradigm shift. Doing so gets companies to understand what they can “afford”, that is where the strategic affordances are located in a new world of many possibilities. As psychologist James Gibson who coined the concept of Affordance puts it, “perceiving, acting and knowing” are key activities to better seize the unfolding new world.

Strategic Agility in Action

History teaches us that every major global shock creates winners as well as losers. The rapidly-altered business landscape and the changed terms of competition benefit those who adapt swiftly and risk bold moves. For example, the SARS outbreak of 2003 and its repercussions cleared the board and opened the way for the rise of e-commerce giants such as Alibaba and JD.com. Apple, whose CEO Tim Cook famously said “we believe in investing during downturns” represents another example of a company which adapted drastically and built resilience during Black Swan events such as the dot-com crash and 9/11.

Covid-19 is likely to follow the pattern of past crisis in that it will produce some winners; those companies who are able to be strategically agile. Recently, we have observed three types of strategically agile moves:

1. Identifying opportunities leading to new blue ocean markets.
2. Scaling existing products or services to the new normal.
3. Accelerating digital transformation, upgrading it from a change management challenge to a vital necessity.

Let's illustrate with some examples:

1) Identifying opportunities leading to new blue ocean markets:

There are a number of companies finding opportunities in adversity. A frontrunner in adopting blue ocean strategy during Covid-19 is **UVD Robots**, a Danish robotics manufacturer. In 2018, UVD Robots launched a self-driving disinfection robot for hospitals. But they did not stop there. Spotting the emerging need for disinfection in supermarkets and malls, UVD Robots has recently entered this new, uncontested market space. They are currently manufacturing and selling disinfection robots to sterilize stores in Thailand and planning to expand internationally.

Another potential blue ocean is the one identified by **Astound Group**, a global design & fabrication company that specializes in the delivery of state-of-the-art events, retail environments and exhibits, which found its business highly disrupted by Covid-19. They had to pivot their strategy to focus more on the opportunities that emerged during this crisis. These included the urgent need for temporary hospitals using tents or existing structures, as well as supplying containment kiosks and assessment centres. In addition, they are also providing government agencies and other organisations with containment solutions and safety barriers – an unoccupied market that only recently came into existence but which is likely to expand rapidly.

Finally, the fact that people were not able to visit friends and family in person due to lockdown restrictions resulted in skyrocketing demand for video chat apps. One of these apps is **Houseparty**, which has seen 50 million sign-ups just in the month of March (2020). The company was recently acquired by Fortnite maker Epic Games and has managed to combine video chat with their gaming expertise to offer multiplayer games during video calls. Houseparty is focussing on a freemium strategy as the app and most games are free to play, but are charging for add-on features and for some of the premium games.

2) Scaling existing products or services to the new normal:

Several companies have emerged to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the new normal, such as the need for body temperature scanning and social distancing.

Vodafone, the telecommunications giant, is focussing on leveraging and adapting existing technologies to develop solutions (in collaboration with its partners) to support its corporate clients in dealing with the pandemic in Italy. In particular, Vodafone Business has been successful in launching thermo-scanners (devices to be placed at the entrance of offices and shops capable of quickly detecting the body temperature of employees or visitors) and social-distancing bracelets (devices capable of interacting with one another to warn when the distance between two employees or visitors goes below two meters), which are now becoming standard across the country.

Lavender Hill Clothing, a British sustainable fashion brand, realised before most others that there would be a demand for face masks that not only would protect the wearer from viruses but would also be of high quality and a fashion statement – a market segment that did not exist before. Their founder redirected their manufacturers to produce the fashionable, triple-layered cotton face masks that are now available online from their website.

Another example is **Dyson**, the British technology company that has pioneered vacuum cleaners and fans, which exploited existing expertise to manufacture ventilators that are portable, efficient and do not require a fixed air supply.

3) Accelerating digital transformation, upgrading it from a change management challenge to a vital necessity.

Covid-19 was the reason for accelerating the digital transformation in numerous companies.

The Italian company Treccani, a leader in sales of encyclopaedias and precious books with annual turnover of €80 million, entered the school and education industry in 2017, setting up a subscription-based online platform (Treccani Scuola) aimed at middle and high schools. The emerging Covid-19 crisis forced it to accelerate its digital transformation process. Leveraging its digital assets, it moved its school online platform to a freemium-based model, resulting in impressive growth in active users within a few weeks, from 20,000 in 2019 to more than 200,000 currently, operating with a totally renewed business model.

MSD, a leading global animal health business, has partnered with LinkyVet in France, a high-tech company in telemedicine, to offer remote consultation options to veterinary practices across France. In a lockdown situation where pet owners cannot visit their vets, LinkyVet's platform allows a consultation with a certified veterinarian via video call. This has been a catalyst for the digital transformation of numerous veterinary practices in France, allowing them to maintain relations and create connections while social distancing. It also provided MSD with a strategic opportunity to serve their vet clients better, while accelerating the transformation of their digital services.

Conclusion

These turbulent times, possibly the most disruptive since WW2, will inevitably lead to a polarisation in the fortunes of many industries, with the majority coming out seriously weakened, if not bankrupt, but a few emerging much stronger. These will be the ones who have adapted the fastest though being agile in their strategic thinking, based on a culture of disciplined experimentation, readiness to make mistakes (but learning from them fast!), thinking big, starting small and acting swiftly.

We do not have a monopoly on prediction. We offer these insights whilst acknowledging the risks of drawing lessons from a crisis still in progress. Nevertheless, it is a safe bet that those companies that are able to think strategically and employ an agile mindset are better placed than others to survive and even do well in turbulent times.

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Force for good: Social media's bright side restored

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Abstract

This impact paper analyses and confirms the crucial role of social media as a tool to respond to crises, including the unprecedented public health and social crisis caused by Covid-19. People are forced to adapt to a new way of living, turning to social media as a place in which to seek refuge, find a sense of community, and socialize while coping with physical and social distancing. Companies are rethinking the way they make use of social media to respond to the crisis adequately, reassure consumers, and gain traction for the post-pandemic era. By observing brands' reactions to Covid-19, a new social and societal role of social media is detected. Companies seem to be adopting a new stance with regards to social media, which the authors refer to as a "commitment to the common good". Due to the crisis, companies are not only forced to accelerate their digital transformation, but must also redefine themselves as purpose-driven brands which apply social media as a space in which to serve the community and the common good.

Keywords: Crisis communication, Crisis management, Covid-19, Social media, Social networks

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Force for good: Social media's bright side restored

The world is a different place to what it was just a couple of weeks ago. The Covid-19 outbreak has had a profound impact on societies and economies, individuals and organizations across the globe (Kotler, 2020). Country lockdowns have confined people to their homes and shifted consumers' purchasing behavior and daily habits. They have forced many organizations to work remotely, lay off staff, or even close for good. The pandemic is also accelerating existing trends, such as the digital disruption or the quest for a more sustainable and ethical approach to business.

Leaders, scientists, institutional decision-makers, executives, scholars, as well as each of us, are vividly debating what the post-Covid-19 new normal might look like. What new behavior is here to stay once the curve flattens and how should we adapt to it? What is already sure is that some businesses will benefit from it, while others will vanish.

The internet will be stronger than ever, becoming even more central and pervasive in consumers' lives with all its various forms, ranging from the social media which have become the public place for comfort and distraction in an age of social distancing (i.e. think about all the live streaming of concerts, museum virtual tours or even virtual wine-tasting sessions on Instagram and other leading social networks in these days), mobile and app usage, and several old (e.g., gaming, home delivery, messaging, remote health) and new tasks (e.g., business video conferencing for homeschooling children, aperitifs with friends and yoga classes; as well as mass people movement tracking), to e-commerce, in which big players, such as Amazon, are strengthening their competitive position and ubiquity while smaller players may disappear.

From a corporate perspective, surviving Covid-19 or even benefitting from it depends on several factors. First, it depends on the industry. The travel and transportation industry is inevitably in decline due to travel restrictions and mass isolation. Other product categories are seeing an all-time high, however, such as disposable gloves, bread machines, or even toilet paper. Second, it depends on a company's degree of resilience, defined as the capability of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or a significant source of stress (American Psychological Association). Resilience influences the ability to re-configure business models into hybrid ones where the digital sphere becomes a real alternative, rather than second best after the offline model. Third, brands' promptness and response to this unprecedented crisis will make a difference in consumer trust and brand familiarity, and eventually in post-pandemic sales and market share recovery.

This paper focuses on the role of social media during and after Covid-19. Companies are reconsidering how they use social media to reach their communities with the right message at the right time, in an attempt to reassure and gain traction for the post-pandemic era. This paper contributes to this debate. The extensive literature on social media use and potential for crisis management helps to substantiate our arguments, while several examples show how brands are using social networks to respond to the current global pandemic. The authors conclude by stressing the restored social function of social media, strengthening their increased use by companies as a force for good.

Role of social media in crisis management

Organizations are vulnerable entities, as demonstrated by the array of adverse events that can cause a crisis. Reasons range from internal causes (think of brands intentionally

deviating from socially acceptable practices) to external ones (hostile takeovers, brand boycotts, or even natural disasters).

When a crisis impacts brand reputation negatively, the corporate response plays a role in restoring brand equity, customer trust and therefore financial stability (Hegner, Beldad and Heghuis, 2014). It is widely recognized that the type of response should depend on the nature of the crisis (Dutta and Pullig, 2011; Combs, 2014). Also, a prompt, transparent, and genuine response may lead to a far faster and more holistic recovery.

Social media use during crises has increased over the years, among both corporations and individuals. Social media thus represent an essential additional tool at a brand's disposal for crisis communication (Roshan, Warren, and Carr, 2016). Social media enable companies to contact consumers directly in a timely and effective manner (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). It thus appears evident that social media have become the new norm in crisis management. The actual and potential use of social media in crisis management has generated intense interest in academia. Scholars have investigated both the advantages and potential drawbacks of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter in crisis, but many aspects are still not adequately understood (Alexander, 2014; Kaufhold et al., 2019).

Being active on social media during a crisis comes with several benefits for firms. Companies connect with their consumers, support them emotionally, and create social cohesion and stronger relationships (Jin, Liu, and Austin, 2014). They make use of social media for crowdsourcing, co-creating, and crowdfunding (Alexander, 2014). Social media serve as a preferred information source with a higher level of credibility than traditional mass media (Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007). Companies can listen to the consumers' concerns, which helps them to understand consumers better and enables a more emphatic and human response by the firm. Finally, social media can themselves be a place in which a crisis can be detected in time and possibly prevented (Alexander, 2014).

Social media platforms themselves are also adding features to support local communities in a time of crisis and potentially get even more data in return. Think, for example, of the Facebook Safety Check feature which was introduced back in 2014 as a simple and easy way to say you are safe and check on others during times of emergency. Its first massive deployment was on Saturday, April 25, 2015, in the wake of the Nepal earthquake. Immediately, it became a hub of vital real-time information on who was safe, where exactly the person was, and even what they were doing there. This knowledge helped to check on individuals' safety virtually, but also to set up emergency services in the physical world (Kaufhold et al., 2019).

The success of this feature, as well as its frequent use afterward, raises questions about privacy, data use, misinformation, fake news, and the like. It reopens the debate on the dark side of social media as amplifiers of news, regardless of their accuracy or veracity. Researchers warn of social media abuse or misuse during crises (Alexander, 2014; Kaufhold et al., 2019). They furthermore point out the need for evidence-based guidelines when integrating social media into crisis management practices (Jin, Liu, and Austin, 2014).

Social media amidst Covid-19

While the streets are empty, the web is overpopulated. Social media are experiencing a new wave of increased usage, accompanied by a return to their original social scope. Social media have become the place in which to seek refuge, find a sense of community, socialize in the age of physical, social distancing, and urge our families and friends to choose

healthy food and more sensible clothing (Kotler, 2020). A recent survey involving 25,000 people across 30 countries revealed that consumers expect brands to use social media to communicate regularly. Points of interest are the company's general situation, as well as potential activities in the area of corporate social responsibility during the crisis (Kantar, 2020).

Usually, in times of external crises, the public is more likely to accept a firm's evasive responses (Jin, Liu, and Austin, 2014). During Covid-19, silence does not seem to be an option for brands, however. Nor is it an option not to integrate social media into crisis management.

Brands, meanwhile, are participating in social media, showing compassion, concern, transparency, and renewed corporate social responsibility amidst Covid-19.

A countless number of social and societal marketing initiatives on social media could be mentioned as examples of such virtuous branded social media marketing tactics amidst Covid-19:

- Foster social change and adherence to government public health guidelines. Examples: brands have redesigned their logos to reinforce social distancing, as in the case of McDonalds, Audi, and the Olympics distancing their iconic arches or circles in their logos. As well as heavy use of Instagram stickers by brands and users alike in support of the #stayathome campaign, there has been extensive use of content marketing to reassure and inspire with positive messages, as in the case of Nike encouraging everyone to keep doing sport at home (with the support of the whole app and Nike digital ecosystem), and for mental and physical health with the campaigns #playinside and #playfortheworld.
- Launch societal causes, often in the form of fundraising campaigns and/or donations to support local hospitals, health care providers, and international health organizations. Examples: In less than two months, over 800 initiatives were activated in Italy by organizations for a total of €709 million in donations (according to <https://italianonprofit.it/aiuti-coronavirus/>, data update on May 2, 2020). Among specific campaigns, some early reactions to the Italian outbreak were particularly interesting. Two examples have been The Ferragnez (among the most influential Influencer couples on the web) and their crowdfunding campaign launched on March 9 via the GoFundMe platform, "*Corona Virus, rafforziamo la terapia intensiva*" in support of San Raffaele Hospital of Milan which raised €4.5M in a couple of weeks. Second, the #Together campaign in which Moncler announced via Instagram (on March 17, 2020) that it was donating €10M for 400 intensive care units in Milan, gathering 60K interactions, many in the form of "thank you" comments to the post.
- Leading by example and a commitment to offering tangible solutions: marketers in categories spanning food to cosmetics to apparel have repurposed manufacturing facilities to produce essential materials, including hand sanitizers (e.g., Amaro Ramazzotti, L'Oréal) and personal protective equipment like masks (e.g., Miroglio)

What is emerging is a plethora of purpose-driven campaigns based on brand values and established history championing a cause, including partnerships with users, influencers, and people outside the organization to cope with the crisis collectively.

Observing the massive response of brands to coronavirus, the need to add a further, more proactive and generous response to the crises emerges clearly. On the one hand, the existing literature proposes defensive reactions to disasters, such as in the work of Dutta

and Pullig (2011), in which three options are at the disposal of brands to respond to crises: denial, reduction-of-offensiveness, and corrective actions; or the four (partially overlapping) clusters proposed by Coombs (2014): denial, diminishment, rebuilding and bolstering. On the other hand, reactions to Covid-19 suggest that a "commitment to the common good" stance can be embraced by a brand in responding to the crisis. It could consist of actions (and social media updates and answers to questions from the public) to contribute to adapt to the new normal.

If the use of marketing to promote social objectives is not unique to marketing (it has a name, social marketing, and almost 50 years of history, having been introduced in 1971 by Kotler and Zaltman), the point here is about adopting social marketing seriously, planning social media marketing activities to make an impact on social changes, accompanying consumers during lockdown with positive messaging, while informing, inspiring and encouraging them. Brands should thus react proactively, with a clear communication strategy and utilizing their own social media channels to establish information authority and ensure the organization's accessibility (Jin, Liu, and Austin, 2014). Alongside the established (and well-studied) social platforms for crisis communication, such as Facebook and Twitter, the younger platforms have proven to be the most engaging, thanks to the power of images and short videos.

The campaign should connect to the core values of brands, even adding new purpose-driven efforts to take into consideration the realities of a world in crisis, via positive messaging that nurtures unity and builds confidence. While not incurring the risk of doing social advertising rather than social marketing, which would be more inappropriate than ever today, among deeply uncertain and emotionally distressed consumers.

Covid-19 could call for a new era of brand purpose, the next new normality in which businesses tangibly contribute to society's advancement and keep communicating self-pride, spelling out how each is serving the common good (Kotler, 2020).

Conclusion

Crises have a low probability of occurring but pose a significant threat to the survival of any organization. This paper contributes to the literature on crisis management, confirming the crucial role of social media as a tool for firms to respond to an emergency, disaster or crises. In a paralyzed physical world, consumers are heading online to socialize, while brands are navigating uncharted waters, rediscovering the social and societal role of social media and using social networks as a force for good amidst a global pandemic.

Consumers are expecting brands to be more responsible, do their part, and communicate about the actions they have taken to contribute to the community. To remain silent is not an option for firms. Social media seem to be the primary tool for updating and responding in real-time directly with all stakeholders, the media included (as they too are using social media as a source of information and to comment). An enhanced blend of social platforms could and should be used by brands to improve outreach and public engagement, by adding Instagram and TikTok to the more established (including in crisis management) Facebook and Twitter.

The other evidence that emerges when observing the brand response to Covid-19 is that there is another response that seems to be a viable option in a time of global pandemic, which we could call the "commitment to the common good." It is therefore vital to use the opportunity of this unprecedented crisis to start thinking about a renaissance in the

use of marketing and social media as a force for good. Firms nowadays are expected not just to deliver a better self, but a better society as well. For companies, fine-tuning their purpose strategies could be paramount in the months ahead, as many deal with the harsh economic and emotional pressures brought on by the pandemic. Branding self-pride, as well as informing the public in a transparent way, responding honestly, in one word showing the human face of the brand.

What is also noted is that brands should be careful not to exploit the current situation to promote their products and services. Instead, they should seek to play a meaningful role in the daily lives of consumers.

In conclusion, brands might have learned a lot in this unprecedented crisis, not just in terms of forced digital acceleration because of and during Covid-19 lockdown, but also calling for a new era of purpose-driven brands using social media as a place in which to serve the community and the common good.

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Managing “Large Projects” through the Covid-19 crisis

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Abstract

Large Projects are impacted by the Covid-19 health and economic crisis, with challenges in terms of project management resilience, contracting and governance fundamentals, but also opportunities for accelerating technical and business innovation. This paper outlines key topics from different angles: managerial, financial and sociological with both academic and practical insights.

Keywords: Project management, Infrastructure, PPP, Governance, Covid-19

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Managing “Large Projects” through the Covid-19 crisis

In mid-March 2020, the multi-billion-euro, 200km-long Grand Paris Express metro-rail infrastructure program is put on hold for safety reasons related to coronavirus lockdown in France. At the same time, the new Genoa bridge construction is pushing ahead in Italy, allowing an inauguration at the end of April, as a symbol of Italian resilience and hope after the Ponte Morandi collapse in 2018. And during this same month of March 2020, French teams at Vinci Construction, together with their British Joint Venture Partner Balfour Beatty, are closing the negotiation of a £5 billion contract for the HS2 UK high-speed train program for a planned start this year. On the other hand, many new airports or oil & gas projects are being put on hold worldwide.

The Large Projects that are core to the infrastructure business weighing about 4% of the world GDP are heavily impacted by the Covid-19 health and economic crisis and are taking different routes. It raises new questions in terms of project management resilience, contracting and governance fundamentals, but also appetite for potential opportunities or innovations.

Before discussing the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on Large Projects, it is important to note that in essence Project Management is adapted to weathering crises, as managing a project is first and foremost about managing risks across a set of contingencies. Typically, a mechanistic management system with separate tasks optimized through dedicated performance processes, which is central to the industrial sector, is appropriate for stable conditions, whereas an organic form, with a continual adjustment of individual tasks in interaction with others, typically structuring Large Projects organizations, is appropriate to changing conditions such as in a crisis, which gives rise constantly to fresh problems and unforeseen requirements for actions which cannot be broken down or distributed (Burns and Stalker - 1961).

Coherently, Risk Management is core to Project Management. The basics that are performed upfront and during the lifetime of any Large Project are fully applicable, and actually being applied, to the current Covid-19 crisis: establishing the context, including defining a set of success criteria against which the consequences of identified risks can be measured, identifying the risks that may impact the project, analysing and evaluating the risks, which is basically assessing how often a given risk may occur and how seriously it might impact the project, treating the risks, which is either reducing the likelihood or consequences of important risks or developing a Risk Action Plan to be activated should preidentified risks occur, monitoring risks along the project lifetime and, last but not the least, communicating and consulting through the project lifetime with the main stakeholders (Cooper, Grey, Raymond, Walker - 2005)

Therefore, the natural reaction of all major project managers facing the Covid-19 crisis was to both update their risks analysis and activate their existing Risk Action Plans. Very quickly, specific organizational set-ups were put in place, such as Covid-19 war rooms or business resilience teams, allowing managers to centralize all essential information in one place and decide on the strategy and actions. Given the nature of the Covid-19 crisis, the Health & Safety teams have quickly become central in Large Projects management, imposing strict protective measures (e.g. distancing on construction job sites). Other typical action plans encompassed replacing suppliers who were unable to perform, strict cash management, and close monitoring of accounts receivable, etc.

However, this unique crisis is challenging many Risk Action Plans in at least three critical domains: organization, financial management and sourcing.

In terms of organization, distancing on job sites, total travel bans for project engineers, and non-physical business meetings for leaders are all typical current issues that were often not predicted in existing Risk Action Plans. How do you manage a port project in Africa when you are a Chinese contractor with your project managers stuck in China? How do you manage a tunnelling program underground with hundreds of workers in a confined space? How do you monitor the engineering progress of a new metro in Eastern Europe when your main engineering teams are sitting in home-offices around Paris? In many ways, this crisis is changing working processes: management team war rooms are happening through secured video-conferencing, the home-office is being generalized for most engineers who are working across borders with virtual tools, companies are adapting network and software capacities, health tracking systems are being implemented on construction job sites. Beyond the current crisis, it is likely that the Large Projects ecosystems are learning to work in a different way, to face the crisis today, but also possibly gaining in efficiency for the long run.

In terms of financial management, Infrastructure Projects may currently be facing critical issues related to delays, reduced productivity and cost overruns. All usually combine to put the expected project financial margin and cash-curb at risk. As the issue of a global health emergency, like a pandemic, is not considered as “Force Majeure” in most contractual agreements, project managers cannot rely on insurance to mitigate those extra financial burdens which might be heavy in terms of direct project losses or even penalties. Project managers are left with a few options, such as renegotiating schedules with sponsors and / or sharing cost overruns with contractors and suppliers along the overall project value chain.

In terms of funding for large project infrastructures, how will the current crisis affect the financing sources between public authorities and private lenders? Will future Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) allow for the kind of new innovative funding schemes which have been tested in recent years in different areas, like data monetization-based funding or cost savings-based investment models (Naulleau-2019)? There is clearly a trend in most countries to leverage infrastructure projects as a preferred option for economic recovery with record announcements in terms of the funding to be made available by public authorities and agencies. Will those huge amounts of capital be leveraged through PPPs in mature OECD economies or will some emerging mistrust for the private sector prevent public authorities from cooperating with the private sector? This is an important question as infrastructure project risks analysis may be considered to be even more thoroughly investigated in PPP schemes than in classical investment models. In Asia, for example, some massive infrastructure-based stimulus programs through direct procurement models following the 2008 crisis led to a number of irrelevant investments in “ghost infrastructures” lacking traffic or significant use by users or citizens.

In terms of sourcing, Risk Action Plans were established to find back-up suppliers and multiple sources etc. but few plans had envisioned a complete collapse of entire industrial ecosystems or such huge logistics issues with large import bans, a lack of transporters etc. Many companies are openly reviewing options in terms of stocks (e.g. PPE – Personal Protective Equipment such as masks), supply chain localization or even internalization of outsourced supplies and services.

Beyond immediate project crisis management, the Covid-19 economic storm also affects relations among stakeholders, as we will see now.

The main direct impact is on contractual relations with few options, as we have seen above. Skills in contract management but also soft skills in relationship management are highly critical in order to negotiate revised terms, while preserving confidence for future business relations.

Beyond the contractual aspects, a Large Project, like any complex organization as described in organizational institutionalism theories, is a triptych combining a shared vision, a unique ecosystem of actors with a legitimate leadership, and a set of rules accepted by these actors. Systemic crises like Covid-19 have an impact on every dimension of such as triptych.

Visions are being challenged: for example, some are questioning whether it is useful to build new regional airports, other are discussing the long-term business implications of the China-led Belt & Road infrastructure program, many are insisting on priority being given to health and wellbeing infrastructure investment, others are debating whether the Covid-19 crisis reveals an urgent need for more sustainability in projects or, on the other hand, whether projects should be got back on track fast with fewer ecological constraints – to mention just a few on-going debates that will directly affect the visions driving large projects.

The network of actors and leadership style is also being challenged with questions already emerging, such as on the global versus local debate. Additionally, leadership is being questioned in terms of legitimacy: in the current stormy business context, cognitive legitimacy consisting in appearing to be doing what is right for society, and procedural legitimacy which consists in following established processes, expertise and norms, may appear as much stronger resources for leadership legitimacy, than the usual pragmatic source consisting in technical and managerial certainties and commitments to results, as defined by sociological studies on management legitimacy (Suchman – 1995). With such a huge crisis with long-term impacts, the I-know-what-to-do posture may provide some reassurance initially, but could be very difficult to sustain by leaders in the long run – here again, Covid-19 may lead to new best practices.

Last but not the least, governance ruling is also under some kind of stress-test. At least two specific governance topics are emerging for Large Infrastructure projects. First, crisis management often leads to centralizing information and operational decisions at Executive Committee or even Board of Directors levels, as fast prioritization is critical. As the Covid-19 crisis is likely to last for many months, the issue will be to define how long the organization should keep such short-cuts, and what the new normal governance system will be. Second, as is typical in large systemic national crises, the role of States is increasing and yet other bodies, such as NGOs or workers' unions, may have a big impact on projects as this crisis questions current economic models. Third, legal matters related to workers protection are all the more complex to handle for project managers as the protection schemes are often questioned and even modified.

Last but not the least, beyond project management resilience objectives, contractual and governance matters, the Covid-19 crisis is also triggering innovations and business transformation in an accelerated manner, in a Schumpeterian creative destruction momentum.

It is important here to note that, where Innovation is often rejected during the project execution phase, new designs or solutions are, on the contrary, a driver of the Large Project institutionalization process, where the project design and organization is crystalizing (Swetchine–2016). As we have seen above, the Covid-19 crisis is challenging Large Projects, be it in terms of vision, ecosystems or governance ruling. In a way, we might consider that many Large Projects are being challenged and re-shaped to some extent, often with new objectives, timing and even actors – opening the door for innovation.

We can already see key topics that may trigger innovation for the management of Large Projects, during and after the Covid-19: efficiency schemes, sustainable development and business agility.

Efficiency is a challenge, as the Covid-19 crisis imposes new rules for Large Projects, such as rotating shifts, staff distancing on job sites or complex logistics, that are worsening an already difficult reality, as studies show that the overall productivity of infrastructure projects has been rather flat for the past 20 years. We already see some changes. For example, the current crisis is accelerating digitization processes, typically with the generalization of digital approvals, such as e-permitting. Other typical changes relate to contracting models, typically with faster payment schemes. Actually, there is a myriad of actions being launched nowadays to boost project productivity from the award through to design and execution; all these innovative actions are likely to boost productivity for good, once the Covid-19 crisis is over.

Sustainable Development is a second boiling topic and a tough debate that we see emerging. For example, the European Commission Green Deal is seen by some as the main driver for the forthcoming EU recovery packages, or by others as a past dream to be forgotten. Beyond politics, the Covid-19 crisis is questioning our models of development: More energy production? More metros or more roads? Smart cities around IT systems or around green mobility? More airports or more rail tracks? More hospitals or more stadiums? All these questions are on the table and are likely to bring important business transformations.

Last but not the least, to weather the current fast-changing situation, business agility is even more essential now than ever before for Large Projects. First, it is about the ability of doing big business with fewer support staff and via mostly digital interactions, such as concluding a £5 billion contract overseas encompassing hundreds of engineering structures (viaducts, tunnels, interconnections, etc.). Second, it is about capturing new business opportunities, for sure around digital and cloud systems, but also in many other domains, such as urban infrastructure clean-up, medical waste treatment or advanced construction material solutions to gain time, just to name a few. Third, agility is also about business models, for example around financing schemes, with political debates to come, for example on people personal data monetization, while public bodies financing capabilities will obviously be under pressure.

Managing Large Projects through such a unique crisis as Covid-19 is a challenge. Succeeding is all the more important as infrastructure development, from metros to 5G networks, from off-shore wind farms to transport corridors, from maritime structures to military facilities, will be at the core of the forthcoming Keynesian stimulus packages around the world.

As in any crisis, there will be losers – and winners.

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Digital transformation as the key to revival after the pandemic

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Abstract

The pace of digital transformation in companies is set to accelerate as a result of the pandemic. Past data has shown that companies can very often do better by adopting technologies. This impact paper argues that digital transformation is a key pathway for companies to recover and rebound from the pandemic. It highlights where businesses can deploy digital solutions to make quick wins. Considerations on how digital technologies can be applied are also discussed.

Keywords: Digital transformation, AI, Operational improvement, Automation, Processes

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Digital transformation as the key to revival after the pandemic

“There are decades in which nothing happens, and there are weeks in which decades happen,” Lenin once said. While he was probably not thinking of a pandemic when saying this, the description is not far removed from what we have been experiencing since the beginning of March. Throughout the lockdown, companies have been busy handling urgent matters, such as protecting and furloughing jobs, as well as managing costs and cash.

Yet, now is also the time for businesses to prepare for the rebound and rebuild, if not completely rethink how they could charge into the unknown future. This could be a well-rewarded pursuit. A recent study finds that in the previous four economic downturns, some 14 percent of companies managed to increase both their sales growth rate and EBIT margin despite the challenging circumstances (Reeves et al., 2019). So, clearly, it is possible to thrive in tough times. For certain, there are always winners and losers in every economic crisis – video streaming, e-commerce and online collaborative tools have been doing brisk trade during the lockdown while airlines, brick and mortar retailers and conference organisers have suffered deeply, if not irrecoverably. Yet, making and breaking in the future is neither pre-destined nor pre-determined: with the right mindset and strategy, companies can gain advantages in adversity.

Digital transformation likely represents a crucial means to recovery and revival. Evidence of companies stepping up their efforts in such activity is accumulating. A new survey reveals that 38 percent and 31 percent of managers answered “we need to re-evaluate” and “we are taking steps to change”, respectively, when responding to how the coronavirus event is affecting their decisions on digital transformation (EY, 2020). In another study, 70 percent of executives surveyed in Austria, Germany and Switzerland claimed the pandemic had pushed them to accelerate the pace of digital transformation within their firms (Malev, 2020). These findings are not surprising: companies that are more aggressive in digitalising their activities are more likely to end up achieving superior economic performance (Bughin *et al.*, 2017). Thus, in the post-pandemic marketplace, any businesses intending to operate in the “business-as-usual” fashion will have a higher chance of slipping behind, watching their technology-driven rivals pushing ahead and thriving.

Areas for digital transformation after the pandemic

The pandemic has mercilessly and forcefully altered the entire competitive landscape and rewritten many business rules. To excel in the new normal, companies must consider redoubling their efforts to embrace digital solutions. Companies can differentiate themselves through three broad categories of digital capability: customer experience, the business model and operational processes. In practice, however, the first two areas may not confer competitive advantage in the short run. In contrast, putting technologies into improving processing activities can often lead to quicker results. The pandemic and imposed lockdown have unveiled at least three operational dimensions that are ripe for improvements with digital technologies:

Cash (management) is always king. The instant economic crisis has laid bare just how critical cash preservation and management is in the fight for economic survival. The ability to get hold of cash provides a better guarantee for companies to weather future

downturns. Technologies can, for example, be used to assess customer credit risk. Re-ordering algorithms, on the other hand, can help optimise inventories, thereby releasing cash for other purposes. At the same time, companies can automate payments and billings to stretch accounts receivable and payable terms to the fullest.

Company-wide remote working is (actually) possible. According to a survey conducted in the US, only one third of people were working from home before the pandemic (McKeever, 2020). The global lockdown has sent millions of employees to work from home. Surely, there are no shortage of challenges raised by this new mode of working, but the experience has made it clear that remote working is a viable, if not desirable, alternative and some companies are now questioning the need for office space (Thomas *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, employees may come to realise the benefits of home-based working and demand to keep on doing so. Mobile and collaboration technologies can free workers from desks, paper reports and status meetings and help them act together like a well-rehearsed orchestra.

Resilience is more important than efficiency. Companies in past decades have been obsessed with the pursuit of efficiency, building systems that seek to maximise it. Yet, this has also made the systems fragile. It is now clear to many that there is always an optimal level of slack for any business system – and that level is not zero. As it turns out, slack in the right amount contributes to greater resilience. In other words, the opposite of efficiency is not inefficiency; it is robustness. Current technologies offer businesses in all industries plenty of opportunities to make their operations more robust. They can range from something as small as a very “dumb” Internet of Things device (that requires no batteries) to track and manage assets²⁸ to establishing a full-scale blockchain to simplify the running of supply chain (Orcutt, 2020).

Considerations for digital transformation

Just as the pandemic has highlighted *where* digital improvements can be made, it has also lent insight into *how* to best prepare for the new normal.

Start with automating repetitive processes. Companies that are introducing a novel technology for the first time should concentrate on using it for operational improvements. For example, one of the best spots to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) is to use it to replace tasks that are costly, routine and labour-intensive (Tse *et al.*, 2019). This is because it is far easier to establish – and achieve – the expected return on investment through cost savings. Indeed, as the UK CEO of a global insurance giant once pointed out to me, such savings are subjected to increase as operation scales up.

Understanding operationalisation is more important than the technologies themselves. It is easy to forget that technologies do not work in a vacuum. Take, for instance, deploying AI. All too often, managers subscribe to the mistaken view that having the most sophisticated AI models is the way to gain the most benefits from this technology. Yet, such a model, no matter how powerful it is, is worthless if it cannot be properly integrated into the larger business system. As an analogy, an AI model is like a performance car engine. But what any business is ultimately after is the ability to get from point A to point B, not an exquisite piece of engineering. To do so, the rest of the vehicle is necessary to

²⁸ An example is Meshtrack, which draws power from the surrounding lighting. It is a chip that is so cheap and small, making it possible to be placed in small items such as hand tools and personal equipment (<https://www.ximplar.com/products/meshtrack/>).

make the journey and maximise what the engine can offer. Therefore, AI operations (AIOps for short) – the rest of the car – is of paramount importance to capture the value that the AI models can provide.

Think how the business portfolio can be enhanced. Many companies see crises as things to be coped with. But this should not be the case. Naturally, with so many immediate issues to resolve, it may be difficult to hold a long-term view and come up with a strategy for such a horizon. In a similar fashion, technological solutions should not merely be used for quick (cost-cutting) wins. Companies should rethink how digital transformation can take place at the corporate strategy level. By creating new priorities and technology-driven strategies for different parts of the business, companies have a much better chance of identifying and supporting new growth pillars, as a direct result of the world's heightened acceptance and usage of technologies due to the pandemic.

Conclusion

In April 1815, the eruption of Mount Tambora in today's Indonesia was the largest ever recorded. It also created a significant amount of ash and dust. In 1816, Europe suffered from an unseasonably cold summer (partially due to the eruption), following the end of the Napoleonic War. The aftermath: as food prices soared, millions of people – and horses – died from disease and starvation. Yet, it took this calamity for a new technology to emerge: the *Laufmaschine* was invented to replace horses. This, in turn, ended up as the bicycle we know today. The current pandemic should be no difference. It could lead to novel technologies, opening up new possibilities and crafting surprising propositions. How – indeed, whether – this can happen depends on how willing firms are to experiment with new technologies and to quicken the pace of digital transformation. While it is hard to tell what lies ahead of us, it is clear and certain that companies should seize this moment and step up their efforts in digital transformation.

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Digital transformation, covid-19 crisis, digital transformation

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Abstract

This impact paper focuses on the relation between the covid-19 crisis and digital transformation. During the crisis, digital technologies have been a powerful enabler for the business continuity (and also social life continuity) in the context of confinement. Analysing what has happened, we outline successes but also limitations of this “go digital” injunction: digital divides, inappropriate systems, misunderstandings of the potential of AI. We highlight that makeshift reactions - useful for handling the crisis - are not necessarily fuelling the more profound digital transformation - neither do they necessarily accelerate it. They may also cause difficulties – shadow IT, information security breaches, psychosocial impact. However, they have forced many to consider further some IT-based tools they would not have considered previously. The crisis showed there is still a long way to go to reinvent our organisations and business models in digital transformation. This endeavour may lead to unexpected side effects, such as a shifting balance between cities and countryside.

Keywords: Digital transformation, Covid-19, Crisis, Smart city, Security

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Digital transformation, covid-19 crisis, digital transformation

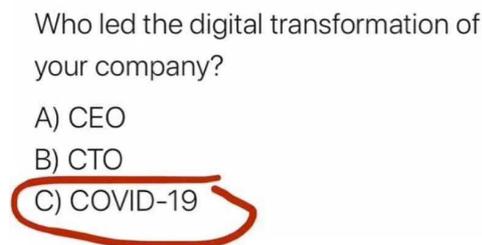
It all happened quite fast, in the time scale of the world.

A virus infected human beings for the first time – the coronavirus SARS-COV-2 – and started spreading the covid-19 disease all over the world. This triggered a public health crisis, leading in a couple of months to the sudden confinement of most of the world's population.

This sudden “stay home” injunction unleashed a sort of digital deluge – for working from home, for getting entertained from home, for keeping social relations from home, for consuming from home, etc. Like it or not, a lot of people and organizations have gone more digital.

This led some to think the covid-19 would be a powerful accelerator for digital transformation. Figure 1 pictures a meme largely shared on social media supporting this analysis.

Figure 1: A social media meme supporting the covid-19 would be an accelerator for the digital transformation



The crisis creates a disruption. It follows, we tend to think to the after-crisis, we tend to imagine what the day after will be, what the world of the day after will be. The covid-19 crisis may let us think that this “world of the day after” will finally be a digitally transformed world, for the better, truly for the better...

In this paper we will question this assumption. We first draw some insights of the digital dimension of the covid-19 crisis. Then we will go one step further analyzing what the impact of this crisis could be on the longer term as far as it concerns digital transformation and how to get the best out of it.

Going digital as a shock absorber. #resilience

Resilience is a concept used in many different fields (ecology, psychology, organizational studies, engineering, crisis management, and others). Roughly, resilience is about a stable system, some change, and the ability of the system to cope with this change and to go back to a state similar to its initial state.

“Graceful degradation” can help resilience. A degradation is said to be “graceful” when the degraded system is still somewhat functional. Originally a computing concept, it aims at differentiating between systems which stop working when one of their components is deficient and systems which continue working – of course in a degraded way.

When the confinement was decided, all of a sudden people had to avoid physical proximity as much as possible and ideally they had to stay home. This broke many of the usual ways of working and living!

The use of digital tools helped the continuity of our activities despite these new constraints. For instance, tools such as (in alphabetical order) Bluejeans, Google Hangout, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Zoom, and others, allow synchronous interactions through videoconferencing. We can continue meeting without moving to gather in the same place!

The good old email continues allowing asynchronous communication.

Tools such as the Google suite or Office 365 enable collaborative work on shared documents.

Hopefully, you can continue working from your laptop at home the way you were working in your office with your desktop computer because you have an external access to the corporate servers of your company. Maybe you have always been working “in the cloud”! In this case you have always worked remotely from your files: it does not change much whether your distant location (from them) is your office or home!

Thanks to these IT tools, a part of professional activities has not been stopped by the confinement. There may be some degradation in the way of working and the output of this work, but there is continuity.

This is the same for students (and their teachers!): let's go from learning to distance learning!

Fortunately, life is not only work! What about friends, family and entertainment? The tools we have mentioned already allow to organize friendly (distant) meetings (including having a drink together but in a distant way – popular “apéro-vidéos” in French, video-drinks, cocktail-videos...).

For your entertainment, video streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney Plus may be useful. So are online video game platforms.

Thus, faced by a sudden confinement, digital tools can contribute to graceful degradation and resilience.

This is true... except when this is not. Indeed, what about network coverage? What about availability of relevant equipment? What about skills (to use the tools)? What about authorization?

We have all experienced video freezing, people speaking “from a fish tank”, people getting disconnected, reconnected, disconnected again... The truth is that a video-conference is still not as simple and reliable as a phone call, with situations - better or worse - depending on the physical locations of the participants.

We have all experienced the live tutorial to explain how to share a document / deactivate the microphone / invite an additional participant... This is not because a tool is available on a computer that the user of this computer knows how to use it!

Authorization is an interesting topic. When the confinement started, some people realized they did not have the right to remotely access the corporate servers whereas some of their

colleagues did. For example, some did not have VPN accesses whereas some others did. This raises the question of trust in management. Information security reasons may explain this discrimination among staff members, but they have to be clearly explained... and have to be relevant!

What we are shaping here is a set of digital divides, from technical origins, from skill origins or created by management/organization choices. These digital divides are grounded in social divide, in generational divide, in access to education, in how roles, rewarding, gratitude and trust are designed and implemented in an organization.

Going digital may reveal existing flaws. For some preexisting problems, going digital makes them explicit and exacerbates them. We may blame it on digital practice, but sometimes the problem was there before.

Digital transformation? Bricolage is not construction

Facing the crisis, everyone did his/her best with available resources. This is the same at the organizational level. Unless some plan was ready to cope with a sudden confinement, this was a stage of bricolage – a mix of improvisation and DIY. Bricolage is a very good thing! It is related to an entre-/intrapreneur mindset.

However, doing so, all the constraints, all the possible implications have probably not been considered. Here we will focus on two aspects which could have negative consequences: shadow IT and Information security.

In an organization, the choice of information technologies (IT) is usually coordinated by the IT/IS department. This choice is driven by the assessment of different technologies, by their compatibility with what already exists in the company, by budget constraints, by an anticipation of needs, etc. Shadow IT is IT selected, deployed and used by part of the staff of the organization, without going through the usual selection process handled by the IT/IS department.

Shadow IT is likely to have dramatically expanded during the covid-19 crisis. If there was no recommendation as to which videoconferencing tool to use, everyone picks up one among all the freely accessible tools. Some may have chosen a different tool than the one recommended because they felt it fits their situation better (network constraints, technical constraints, need for some functionalities...). Some may have created a Whatsapp group with the colleagues they work the most with. Some may have shared documents through their personal Google drives...

After the crisis, IT/IS departments will have to shed light on the shadow. Which technologies have been used? Do they raise issues within the perspective of the global information system? Should they be integrated? On the other hand, should we force the staff to abandon them and to use other tools? Did their use cause problems which have to be solved?

In addition to shadow IT, and overlapping it partially, there is the topic of information security. The more an organization goes digital the more it is at risk in terms of cyber-attacks. The digital transformation is necessarily a two-sided endeavour: creating more value out of digital information and better protecting the value created out of digital information. If one focuses on creating value, without adapting security to this new type of value creation, value is created for others: it will be looted!

In the rush to find answers to the new constraints imposed by sudden confinement, companies went massively digital - and so did we in our personal lives. The purpose here was to maintain the ongoing creation of value. Nevertheless, was enough attention paid to the subsequent new risk exposure? Indeed, was any attention at all paid to information security?

The crisis unleashed the best and the worst of human nature. Several public bodies (among which, the Council of Europe, Interpol, Europol, ANSSI, CERT-EU) stated that cybercriminality increased dramatically, taking advantage of people going digital rapidly, without being prepared enough. Several hospitals – at the heart of the crisis response – have been cyberattacked (for example Paris hospitals were cyber-attacked on March 22nd).

This raises multiple issues:

- Evaluate the damage of cyberattacks which may have occurred and resolve them when possible;
- Evaluate the risk for the future of possible misbehavior during the crisis;
- Accelerate the increase of Information Security Awareness within the company (and in society)(Meiller 2019)

Digital transformation? Reaction is not action

IT has a direct impact on time and space. In a nutshell, they reduce distances and duration and they offer new possibilities for temporal parallelism and rapid interlacing of activities (see (Meiller 2018a) for a deeper analysis).

These possibilities have been exploited to cope with the confinement. All of the sudden, we could not physically move therefore we have used IT to free ourselves from physical constraints.

It has been shown that these possibilities contribute to a feeling of acceleration of society (Aubert 2018; Rosa 2013). This can lead to positive outputs but also to negative ones (such as burnout). This crisis, with its rapid and unlimited use of technologies, is pushing this acceleration, including its negative effects, leading to people suffering from exhaustion, nervousness and irritability while working from home.

We reacted faced with such adversity with the tools at hand. There is no strategy, no optimization, no thinking of what the best way to get the most out of these technologies would be. This is just a reaction.

This step was useful for handling the crisis, but this is not digital transformation.

There are two ways of creating value out of IT. The most valuable one is to consider the new possibilities of IT and based on them to reengineer processes and to improve business models. This is complex, but this is what creates the most value.

Another way, easier but yet valuable, is to equip existing processes with IT tools. This is just the tip of the iceberg of digital transformation, but this is already something.

This is not what has been done during the covid-19 crisis – remember: bricolage, reaction... However, the awareness of the existence of some IT tools has increased. A lot of people were forced by the exceptional context to consider these tools: to realize they exist, to

know more about their functionalities and even to step up and use them. In a classical model of integration of an IT tool in an organization, this is the assimilation aspect (de Vaujany 2009) ref. As of now, two other aspects are missing:

- Adoption by the organization – which implies some analysis on the subject
- Appropriation by the users – not only to use some basic features to palliate at least partially the changes imposed by the crisis, but to create usages which get the most out of these tools in every context.

Digital transformation? Understanding decision making better

At the heart of the digital transformation is the processing of digital information.

Let's focus on decision making and data processing during the covid-19 crisis. First, a simple example: to make decisions in the face of a pandemic, we need data about how the pandemic is spreading. Collecting these data (in particular the number of deaths) may seem easy, but the reality proved to be the opposite. There is no right or wrong here, just a blatant illustration showing that data collection is not straightforward. Interconnections between systems do not necessarily exist. An information system is designed for some purposes and it may be difficult to use it for something else. There is no magic behind digital transformation! Just tools and methods offering great opportunities but coming with their own constraints.

The second example is the one of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and more specifically the one of machine learning. Some expected a lot from machine learning to find a solution to the covid-19 crisis. This is a sign of great misunderstanding! Machine learning identifies (if any) correlations in a set of data. Within AI, machine learning is on the artificial experience side: based on past observations, identifying regularities.

In considering the covid-19 crisis, there are no past observations... This is not our second or third covid-19 crisis! Consequently, machine learning is useless here.

Machine learning can help to solve specific problems related to the covid-19 crisis. This is the case for instance in medical research, because some of the characteristics of the current virus are shared with other known viruses (which have already been studied).

However, you should not expect these tools to solve an issue which has never been faced in the past. Machine learning may anticipate a new occurrence of something which has already happened, but it cannot predict a “new future”.

Now that a variety of responses has been tried to handle the crisis (strict confinement, no confinement, confinement with exceptions, etc.) we will have data to fuel machine learning algorithms so that they help us determine what seems to work better... for next time.

This leads to two key points concerning digital transformation:

1. The potential and limitations of decision-making tools have to be clearly understood by their users and we should think carefully how to integrate these tools in decision making processes.
2. Decision makers are the ones making decisions. They have to make decisions even when they do not have all the information. Of course, they must exploit as much as possible available data and tools rationalizing decision making (AI tools for

instance), but they should not be blocked when data and tools are not sufficient to determine which decision would be the “best”. Organizations and individuals will always need to be able to make choices under uncertainty(Meiller 2018b).

From smart cities to smart countryside?

Another aspect of the Covid-19 crisis in the perspective of digital transformation is to show cities and countryside in a new light. Many people have experienced that their work can be done away from the office. Therefore, professional criteria would not be a part of the attractiveness of cities anymore. As cities come also with high rents, air pollution, higher risk of contagion during an epidemic, etc., this may create an alternative to the ever growing megalopolis, with more and more people in the countryside, linked to their companies, to entertainment, to distant medical services, and so on, through efficient digital equipment and associated organizations.

It is not obvious whether it would be better for the environment. Such a major increase in the use of networks and IT would come with more energy consumption. Spreading people would prevent mutualization of transport (subway, buses...). For the same reason, it is easier to optimize some services in a city. Of course, this would facilitate local agriculture and short food supply chains, this would reduce issues related to high densities of population, and this would better optimize the use of space (merging living space and working space), etc.

Socially, it would create new divides, between the ones who can choose not to live in the city and the ones who have to because their job is not compatible with distant working.

Conclusion

For sure, the ongoing digital transformation of our societies and companies has helped coping with the confinement imposed by the covid-19 crisis. It has been (and still is) a major contributor to resilience.

However, the crisis showed a lot still needs to be done in terms of digital transformation. The digital divide is blatant. The networks, tools and organizations need further improvement.

Will this accelerate the overall digital transformation?

We cannot be sure. The actual impact of the crisis has been to give more visibility to some digital tools and to help hesitant people to step forward and to use them.

Now the more complex is yet to be done. At the very least, reflect on the bricolage-based practices emerging during the crisis and think of the ways the use of these tools may improve the existing processes in companies, in a perennial way. Then go further: reinvent organizations and business models based on the changes IT can bring.

By focusing attention on the tools, the current crisis may be counterproductive. Indeed, the digital transformation is also about persons and about organization. It is about management, business models and creativity.

Let's be optimistic and think the will to leave the crisis behind, the will to change things, will lead to reinvent organizations and ecosystems, boosting the digital transformation.

Let's not solely rely on the crisis but on our understanding of digital transformation and on our willingness!

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Two sides of the same coin: Why entrepreneurs can transform the crisis into business opportunities to create more impactful and long-lasting ventures

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Abstract

This impact paper explains why entrepreneurs can transform the COVID-19 crisis into business opportunities for long-lasting ventures. We describe three must-haves of an entrepreneurial mindset that help us to tackle the fundamental structural faults of our current economic system. By doing so, entrepreneurs can act as microinstitutional agents, pushing us into the phase of performing grand changes that lead us to a more sustainable future for our next generation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Family entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial mindset, Longevity, Impact

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Two sides of the same coin: Why entrepreneurs can transform the crisis into business opportunities to create more impactful and long-lasting ventures

Entrepreneurs play a critical role in our market economies and are typically described as the powerhouse of a national economy, activating and facilitating economic activity. We know that entrepreneurs can initiate economic development by breaking up its current status through innovations. More recent studies (Sydow et al., in press) describe entrepreneurs also as microinstitutional agents that promote institutional bottom-up change, such as the support of market functioning and the facilitation of market access. Therefore, entrepreneurs are a critical determinant of the level of success, growth, and prosperity in economies. Effects that become even more important in a moment of crisis. To better understand why we believe that entrepreneurs can transform the COVID-19-pandemic crisis into business opportunities, we need first to clarify the key economic faults that have become more evident due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One side of the coin: economic faults behind the COVID-19 crisis

Individuals such as Greta Thunberg and her Fridays For Future movement have already tried to convince us that our well-known 'normal' is one of our key problems and that we should not go back to where we were pre-COVID-19. If we are honest, we should recognize that our economic system has had tremendous flaws for decades. What has happened now is that the tornado of the COVID-19 pandemic has simply swirled up our systems and undoubtedly disclosed the weaknesses in our societies, politics, and economies. Although they have always been there, as a subliminal part of our daily lives, now they have become visible for all to see.

We summarize three fundamental categories of structural faults in our economies and whose effects are intensified by COVID-19:

Global over-consumption of natural resources

The Global Footprint Network²⁹ showed in 2019 that if we continue living as we are used to, we would need the natural resources of 1,75 earths, highlighting the fact that we currently use more resources than we have available. Our over-consumption is furthermore connected to the production of waste, with which we have filled our planet in the last few decades. In 2019, the World Economic Forum³⁰ published a study that shows that we eat a credit card's worth of plastic a week. Moreover, global sea levels are rising, glaciers are melting away, and forests are dying because we have caused extremely high greenhouse gas levels. By continuing with the destruction of biodiversity, rapid urbanization and population growth, we will greatly increase the likelihood of another pandemic (Gössling et al., 2020), as David Quammen recently pointed out in his critical opinion in the New York Times:³¹ "We cut the trees; we kill the animals or cage them and send them to markets. We disrupt ecosystems, and we shake viruses loose from their natural hosts. When that happens, they need a new host. Often, we are it." He argues that

²⁹ For more info: <https://www.footprintnetwork.org/2019/06/26/press-release-june-2019-earth-overshoot-day/>

³⁰ For more info : <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/06/you-eat-a-credit-card-s-worth-of-plastic-a-week-research-says/>

³¹ For more info: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/opinion/coronavirus-china.html>

we currently live in the Anthropocene era, the geological age in which human beings determine the earth. From his personal perspective, one of the critical hidden costs seems to be the resulting transmission of disease from wildlife to humans.

Lifestyle of fast-consumption

Ryanair, Airbnb, H&M, Zara, and McDonalds (just to name some examples) are an integral part of our lives. Although giants nowadays, they were once started by entrepreneurs such as Erling Persson (H&M) and Brian Chesky, Nathan Blecharczyk and Joe Gebbia (Airbnb), who were able to orchestrate a whole ecosystem around their firms characterized by the ideas of fast tourism, fast fashion, and fast food. They all contribute to mass consumption of inexpensive and rapidly produced products/services that lead to a massive negative environmental impact. The global fast fashion sector generates 92 million tons of waste per year and 79 trillion liters of water are used each year (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Short-term rentals in cities transform neighborhoods into “tourist enclaves” (Furukawa & Onuki, 2019, p. 2). Some critical voices argue that Paris, for instance, has 100,000 empty homes and 100,000 second homes that are for short-term rentals instead of providing affordable housing to their local inhabitants. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, Airbnb’s bookings have collapsed by 96% and they are now offering apartments to health workers and fancy online experiences. At the same time, European cities such as Paris and Amsterdam can finally recover by digesting the impact of daily tourists. Venice’s usually polluted canals have turned significantly clearer, stressing the fact that we over-use our cities through intense mass tourism.³²

Social injustice

In contrast to developing economies, countries within the EU have been characterized by a solid middle class. However, recent European surveys have disclosed a rising trend towards a widening gap between rich and poor, especially in larger European cities.³³ This subliminal trend has become even more evident during the COVID-19 crisis, in which we have realized which professions are relevant to make our economic system work. Surprisingly, there are some professions that have been traditionally less visible and respected within society, and have now been turned into “forgotten heroes”,³⁴ such as supermarket employees, nurses and hospital cleaners. Cases of social injustice might become even more critical if we think about a future “global distribution of covid-19 vaccines” scenario in which richer countries could monopolize production and supply of vaccine, thus leaving poorer countries behind. Even though the WHO has recently stated that they want to ensure everyone everywhere can have access to new covid-19 vaccines, there remains a relatively high degree of uncertainty and complexity to establish appropriate policies for an equal global distribution. A challenge that we have already faced during previous pandemics, such as the swine flu pandemic in 2009 (Versluis et al., 2019).

Second side of the coin: transforming the crisis into business opportunities

³² For more info: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-04-02/will-airbnb-become-obsolete-after-the-coronavirus>

³³ For more info: https://ec.europa.eu/budget/euprojects/node/2237_en

³⁴ For more info: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52359101>

The COVID-19 crisis seems set to cause severe economic damage that will shape our global economy. However, if we look back in history, we have faced several serious crises which have then been followed by economic prosperity. To highlight some examples, Trigema was founded right after the first World War in 1919 by two brothers, Josef and Eugen Mayer, in the South of Germany. Nowadays, it is the largest manufacturer of sportswear and casual fashion which is purely made in Germany.³⁵ Or Frescobaldi, a winery from Tuscany, that has produced high-quality wines for 700 years.³⁶ Its history has been shaped by external shocks such as the “Italian Wars” (1494-1559), the War of Spanish Succession, two World Wars and several bankruptcies. Those examples demonstrate that a crisis and/or bankruptcy for several business sectors can at the same time offer new opportunities for others that want to fill the voids with long-lasting businesses, such as the founders of Trigema and Frescobaldi. Both have turned their new ventures into long-lasting family firms.

We believe that it is intriguing to analyze this type of entrepreneurs to illuminate how they can transform crises into business opportunities that create more impactful and long-lasting ventures. Therefore, we should deep dive to the very starting point of entrepreneurial action, namely, the entrepreneurial mindset which guides the cognitive research for business opportunities. Here, in the origin of entrepreneurial action, we can decide which type of business ideas are first recognized, and then started. Haynie, Shepherd, Mosakowski and Earley (2010, p. 217) defined an entrepreneurial mindset as the “ability to sense, act, and mobilize under certain conditions”.

Yet, we argue that three vital must-haves of an entrepreneurial mindset have crystalized out of our analysis in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

Be prosocial and balance a plurality of values

One of the first things that management students get introduced to is the term “homo economicus”, representing a view of humans as self-interested agents seeking optimal and utility-maximizing outcomes. It has shaped several key business objectives such as profit maximization, economies of scale, and the scalability of a business model. However, “homo economicus” seems to be an oversimplification of who we are and the motivations that drive our action, thus leading to mindsets and key objectives that underrepresent the complexity of human beings. If we want to find business-oriented individuals that experience a plurality of values, we can look at family entrepreneurs who are continuously embedded in their family identity (i.e. role as father/mother) as well as in their business identity (i.e. role as general manager), and are trying to establish an equilibrium (Ciravegna et al., 2020). Frescobaldi was founded by members of the family 700 years ago and from there on we can observe how single individuals of the family were able to successfully incorporate shared family values into their business objectives. “For 700 years, the Frescobaldi Family has combined tradition, experience and innovation with creativity and the pursuit of excellence.”³⁷ With this statement, Frescobaldi demonstrate their commitment to blending a strong family tradition with business innovation. By doing so, they were able to establish a firm which is not simply interested in profit maximization, but which is composed of a family with all its social relationships, that wants to be proactively involved in the political and sociological history of Tuscany. Wolfgang Grupp, the current CEO of Trigema, stated “Our actions must not be solely guided by goals such

³⁵ For more info: <https://www.trigema.de/en/unternehmen/geschichte/>

³⁶ For more info: <https://en.frescobaldi.com/>

³⁷ <https://en.frescobaldi.com/company/family/>

as increased power and greater market share, but by solidarity, respect for all members of our community, justice and sustainability.”³⁸ Both examples display a blend between prosocial attributes and business success that are shaped by individual mindsets. A mindset which is closer to some fundamental characteristics of humanity, such as prosocial attitudes shaped by fairness and altruism (Samara et al., 2019). Yet, paradoxically, we have started to define some of our basic elements of humanity as something ‘particular’ which you can notice in the trend of social entrepreneurs and the surrounding ecosystem of impact investors that are guided by creating both social impact and profit. It seems surprising to us that we have introduced new types of entrepreneurs to describe a prosocial mindset, while actually the restrictive orientation towards economic goals seems to be an oversimplification. In the face of COVID-19, we hope that there is a trend toward re-discovering the value of a mindset which is shaped by prosocial attitudes, blending economic goals with fairness and altruism.

Be a founder of a business that you would like your grandchildren to see

According to the GEM national report (2019), more than 100 million start-ups are launched every year globally, which is about three startups per second, underlying the fact that there are plenty of new business ideas outside. We literally live in a world where new ideas are abundant. So, we need entrepreneurs that ‘make sense of an overabundance of novel opportunities’ and that start ventures with a powerful purpose and the potential to endure more generations. Entrepreneurs should not be in love with their product or service, they should continuously re-evaluate their meaning and purpose to establish a firm that can innovate overtime (Verganti, 2017). As we can see in the case of Trigema, it was one of the first companies in Germany that turned its production of clothes into the production of face masks. Moreover, the founders of Frescobaldi were pioneers in longevity as they succeeded to establish a firm that is currently in its 31st generation. They focus on heritage practices that give precedence to long-term generation of family wealth over short-term preferences for specific governance forms. Thus, their business practices are oriented towards the idea of passing on a healthy business to the subsequent generation. Their mindset is shaped by the idea of creating long-lasting relationships with their stakeholders and creating a vital community culture. For instance, long-term community engagement helped them during the Second World War, when their most important wine production site was first occupied, and then bombed by the Nazis. Luckily, the Frescobaldi family was supported by the local population and by a large network of stakeholders, including its employees, so that they were able to overcome the crisis (Ciravegna et al., 2019). Whereas Trigema states that it offers their “employees’ children a job guarantee” to illustrate their long-term orientation. Both activities underline the fact that the family firms identify themselves as active members in their environment and that they want to create long-lasting impact through their businesses. This long-term orientation should be embedded in an entrepreneurial mindset as it seems to facilitate entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into impactful ventures that endure more generations. Therefore, entrepreneurs, even though they are not planning to establish a family firm, should thrive for being a founder of a business that they would like at least their grandchildren to see, because what we need are new impactful ventures that are responsible members within their environment.

³⁸ For more info : (<https://www.trigema.de/en/company/philosophy/>)

Show empathy with the people in your network to navigate through stormy times

We have seen that during the COVID-19 crisis, female leaders such as Angela Merkel (Germany), Mette Frederiksen (Denmark), and Sanna Marin (Finland) have demonstrated resilience and success in navigating their countries through the uncertainty of the pandemic. Although there are plenty of countries with male leaders that have done well, it does seem that one trait that they all have in common has been revealed, namely empathy. Empathy is defined as a subjective capability of and willingness to recognize and understand the feelings and the perspective of others. Typical elements to describe someone as empathetic are: caring, compassionate, supportive, tolerant, and ready-to-help (Payne et al., 2011). For instance, Angela Merkel bemoaned “every death as that of a father or grandfather, a mother, or grandmother, a partner ...”³⁹ during her speech to call on the shared responsibility of each individual in the society during the pandemic. The owner of Trigema used her words to talk to his employees in a video on the website in which he guaranteed all their jobs while at the same time asking for their commitment and responsibility. Showing empathy seems to be a strong weapon to get the commitment of key stakeholders during a stormy period. It seems to function as a driver of getting a social network into action.

In the face of COVID-19, empathy has been shown to be a facilitator of stakeholder engagement by clearly outlining the reasons or benefits for them to contribute. Understanding the feelings and thoughts of your stakeholders allows you to customize your call-to-action and thus stakeholders can better identify their personal meaning. Therefore, we believe that empathy will play a key role in the entrepreneurial mindset to guarantee that individuals are able to navigate their ventures through stormy seas.

Conclusion

We know that entrepreneurs can function as microinstitutional agents (Sydow et al., in press) to promote bottom-up institutional change. In order to exploit this power of entrepreneurs, we have explained why entrepreneurs can transform the COVID-19 crisis into business opportunities for long-lasting ventures. We have identified three must-haves of an entrepreneurial mindset, namely, (1) be prosocial and balance a plurality of values (2) be a founder of a business that you would like your grandchildren to see (3) show empathy with the people in your network to navigate through stormy times, that help us to tackle the fundamental structural faults of our economic system.

By doing so, we might be able to finally go from the phase of understanding the great challenges to the phase of making great changes that might not only lead us out of this economic crisis but, more importantly, lead us to a more sustainable future for our next generations.

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³⁹ For more info: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/03/18/coronavirus-germanys-biggest-challenge-since-second-world-war/>

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Industry: A prototype that is better prepared than others for the end of the crisis?

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Abstract

This paper questions the industrial sector which has almost become a barometer of the crisis and is under the spotlight of the media and analysis. We wonder whether these companies might not be better equipped than others to emerge from the crisis, having become accustomed to managing constant change and already begun their digital transformations. Based on our research conducted in the "A Factory for the Future" Chair, we stress that this preparation for the exit from the crisis implies putting the human being first. It appears that the industrial sector is already focused on four key questions that are central to its future challenges: what skills are expected, how to manage them tomorrow, what adjustments to expect and what future for the HR function. These are questions that must remain central in the post-crisis period, in our opinion.

Keywords: Industry 4.0, Human, HRM, Digitalization.

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Industry: A prototype that is better prepared than others for the end of the crisis?

The Coronavirus crisis is immense, leaving no sector of the economy or society untouched. One sector is particularly under the spotlight of the media and analysis: Industry. It has almost become the barometer of the crisis and the activity of factories in particular has served as a signal at the various stages of this crisis.

From January, the shutdown of the electronic component manufacturing plants in Wuhan paralyzed global giants such as Apple, Nintendo and Hitachi.⁴⁰ At the same time, car manufacturers started to close their Chinese factories⁴¹ and France discovered its reliance on producers of raw materials for its medicines.⁴² Each new announcement of closure, often unprecedented for the company making it, became one more step in the inexorable advance of the pandemic, everywhere and for everyone. It also pointed out the diversity of activities within industry, with some no longer considered essential (automotive, aeronautics, maritime, railways, etc.) while others continued their vital activities, sometimes in a reduced manner in order to preserve the health of their employees (energy, medicines). The decisions of each of the divisions to close or reduce the activity of their plants were often experienced as electric shocks, not only for the employees, but also for the company, which is used to the continuous activity of these flagships of the economy.

Secondly, industrial companies have demonstrated their ability to react and adapt. Many of these companies have succeeded in transferring their knowledge and know-how to serve the health sector. A Givenchy perfume factory (LVMH), for example, began producing hydroalcoholic gel in just a few days,⁴³ while Michelin developed and produced masks at the end of April,⁴⁴ and many others have also transformed their production systems, sometimes far removed from their initial activities, to equip healthcare workers and then all citizens. This industry is therefore one of the symbols of the necessity but also of the concrete implementation of solutions to the health crisis.

Today, when Renault, Arcelor Mittal or ST Microelectronics start up their business again in France, they are signaling a drop in temperature in the crisis, without however signifying the end of the panic fever. These industrial companies certainly show that it is possible to think about preventive gestures, to rethink the organization of work on assembly lines, or to generalize teleworking for certain categories of employees. While they are in the process of getting their sub-contractors back to work, they also point out that this will be difficult for everyone, including huge industrial companies.⁴⁵

Thus, industry is considered a thermometer of the crisis and could, in our opinion, be better armed than other sectors to emerge from the crisis.

⁴⁰ "Apple, Nintendo, Hitachi... Comment le coronavirus paralyse la fabrication de produits électroniques", L'Usine Digitale, 6 February 2020.

⁴¹ "Renault prolonge la fermeture de son unique usine chinoise à cause du coronavirus", L'Usine Nouvelle, 13 February.

⁴² "Pénurie en vue : le coronavirus menace la production mondiale d'antibiotiques", Atlantico, 19 February 2020.

⁴³ "La mode se paie le luxe de la solidarité", Le Monde, 30 April 2020.

⁴⁴ "Comment Michelin va fabriquer des millions de masques", LesEchos, 14 April 2020.

⁴⁵ "We are experiencing a crisis of unparalleled magnitude in aeronautics and we learn every day" Philippe Petitcolin, CEO of Safran, 27 March 2020.

Through our research work in the "A Factory for the Future" Chair at ESCP BS,⁴⁶ we can identify two key factors for the future of our industry:

- its preparation, due to its familiarity with crises and the digital transformation processes already underway,
- and the place already given to the human being and the questions associated with this role in the reflections conducted on productive systems.

An Industry prepared for the post-crisis period

A continuous preparation for difficult situations

Industry has almost always had to deal with unforeseen and/or difficult situations. Proof of this is to be found in its key words: delocalization, deindustrialization and de-structuring. All these words, which characterize its history, share the same Latin suffix "de". This suffix alone sums up the losses, situations of cessation of activities and/or destruction of productive capacities that have marked industrial history. Many companies have been forced to question their business models, sometimes repeatedly, to think about a new division of labor in the world, to part with non-strategic parts of their activities, and to constantly face increased competition and economic, environmental and societal uncertainties. Many industrialists were already familiar with the management of shutdowns, business slowdowns and reorganizations, etc. Of course, they were certainly not prepared for the magnitude, duration and multiple uncertainties of this crisis, but they do have practices to hold on to, and systems already in use to refer to. They are therefore one step ahead of other more protected sectors.

A collective preparation for digital transformations

Industrial history has been marked by four revolutions since the end of the 19th century and the introduction of mechanization. Today, "Industry 4.0", described as the 4th industrial revolution by the German government in 2013⁴⁷ (Johansson et al., 2017), is based on organizations in which many digital tools are introduced, or even widely distributed, ranging from the use of robots and artificial intelligence to the implementation of "closed door machining" and the processing and sharing of computerized data. The crisis has highlighted the need to deploy these digital tools everywhere and for everyone, while controlling the associated data. By having no other choice than to digitalize their production systems, to think about security or the use of their data, industrial companies are one step ahead of other sectors. This lead is all the more crucial today, in that it was organized collectively. In the case of France, many industrialists have joined forces to think together about these digital processes, benchmark their practices, and anticipate the effects of this digitalization. Through these groups, they knew that their organizations would have to be rethought in the light of this inevitable digitalization. Of course, not all of them were engaged to the same extent in these major transformations, but they all knew that to remain competitive, they had to deploy them more widely. The crisis has certainly led them to accelerate certain processes. It is also forcing them to consider the digitalization of some parts of their activities which are sometimes relegated to the

⁴⁶ <https://www.escpeurope.eu/fr/faculty-research/chairs-and-professorships/chair-factory-for-future>

⁴⁷ Recommendations for implementing the strategic initiative Industrie 4.0 – Final report of the Industrie 4.0 Working Group (Kagerman, Wahlster, & Helbig, 2013).

background, for example the digitalization of support functions which are now more particularly concerned by the introduction of remote work.

Thus, industrialists have assets to manage and must find an exit from this situation. For us, their preparation is based on a key resource: people. The partners of the "Factory for the Future" Chair, the Safran and Michelin groups, met to discuss the place and ways of managing human resources in the digitalization of factories. The discussions on this subject are a rich source of information to consider a way to get out of the crisis.

The human being at the center of preparations to emerge from the crisis

Manufacturing companies do seem more prepared as they have already asked themselves four key questions about their strategic resource for emerging from the crisis - their employees.

What skills for the future?

Digital transformations initiated in industry appear to be inseparable from questions about work methods and workplaces, new organizations and the skills required to accompany these transformations. The quantitative effects of these changes in terms of job reductions or, on the contrary, the creation of new jobs (according to the Swedish report, e.g. Johansson et al., 2017), have been a particular focus of study in recent years. But beyond that, the industrial sector had also become aware that all these changes could not take place without reflection and action on the qualitative aspects of these transformations, i.e. the skills expected of these workers in the factory of the future. Contradictory movements were thus identified, of upskilling of "operators 4.0.", i.e. with augmented, collaborative or analytical skills (Romero et al., 2016), or conversely, a loss of skills (deskilling), with tasks that are more fragmented and less knowledge-intensive (Abrahamsson & Johansson, 2006). And the answers to these questions can only be plural. In the context of research in the Chair, we are studying the fact that the famous "soft skills", which are very much in vogue today, will not be the only skills expected tomorrow. The challenge is also to think about the technical skills that will be indispensable tomorrow, for example those in data management, analysis and security, but also others that are sometimes manual, and the systems that will make it possible to acquire and transmit these skills that are often rare on the labor market. Industrial companies are therefore already familiar with these questions about the skills expected in the future. The challenge lies more in the cohabitation of skills than in the substitution of skills. The ambidexterity of operators or of certain functions, i.e. the ability to be both in the use of existing knowledge and know-how while moving towards innovations, is therefore key for tomorrow. In this sense, the reflections on the value of the man/woman in relation to machines and on the expected skills will have to be pursued in this crisis context, and become key for other sectors.

How to manage these competencies in the future?

Industry 4.0 refers to new techniques and methods, but also to new modes of management and human behavior (Sousa and Rocha, 2019). It therefore raises questions about how to manage human resources in this change. It is not a question of "simply" asking who or what strategic skills will be needed tomorrow, but also of knowing how to

identify these human resources, attract them, encourage them to develop internally, develop them, and potentially also how to help them remain employable in order to work elsewhere. This makes the roles of Human Resources Management (HRM) even more strategic. Together with the Chair's partners, we have initiated work on these issues, which are now crucial to managing the crisis. The short-time work plans set up in many companies are not just a question of quantitative workforce management. They require prior reflection on the career paths of employees, both internally and externally. And those who had already understood the importance of this HRM, as is the case in industry, have already reached a first level of answers.

What adjustments to expect?

In one of our research projects in the Chair (Galindo, Garbe & Vignal, 2019), we showed that the digital changes initiated in factories led to a return to the gaps classically identified in the literature between the policies initiated, practices implemented and feelings towards these practices. Contrary to the "myth of HRM fits" (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009), it is almost impossible to have a perfect alignment between strategy and HRM, and even between HRM practices (Wright and Nishii, 2013). The digital transformations initiated in factories were thus, in our research, associated with gaps caused by excessively centralized organizations or the short term view, by a lack of human and IT resources, or by the diversity of employee profiles, for example. These gaps between intentions and achievements therefore lead to a certain prudence in terms of the actions initiated, and to a gradual approach to implementation and effective use of these tools. Post-crisis management is associated with this question of the expected effects of the policies that are initiated. Any decision is, and will be, associated with a chain of decision-making, translation, appropriation by different actors, and therefore a potential succession of gaps between the initial project and its effects on the actors concerned. Foreseeing this issue from the outset will prevent these industrialists from falling into known pitfalls.

What roles for the HR function?

Although the focus is on the management of companies when announcing plant closings, factory reopenings and partial layoffs, the actions are largely carried out and rely heavily on the HR function. The actors of this function have occupied the role of a business partner more than ever before, setting up teleworking systems, managing the illness of certain employees, the repatriation of others, and short-time working. Industry 4.0 was already questioning their roles and the future prospects of the function, a subject we are currently studying in the Chair. Post-crisis management makes this question even more crucial.

These four questions must, in our opinion, remain central to managing the exit from the crisis. Although we do not have definitive answers to these questions, it appears that the industrial sector has already placed them at the center of their future challenges.

Conclusion

More generally, the crisis has turned the spotlight on the human being and on all the questions related to their place in organizations, today and tomorrow. Whatever the situation, it appears that workers are central to the challenges, both to preserve their health and their activity, which are intimately linked in countries such as India and to a lesser extent in all other countries. It also appears that the human being will be at the origin of the necessary changes to get out of this global crisis. And with their ongoing

digital transformations, at least some industrial companies had already asked themselves these questions and sketched out the first avenues of response that will be an undeniable asset for the future.

Our research therefore shows that some manufacturers are therefore benefitting from policies and practices initiated several years ago. Nevertheless, it must also be pointed that not all industrialists had started these thinking processes, often due to a lack of resources, whether in France, Europe or even more so in certain regions of the world. The situation is even "apocalyptic" for some. If the generalization of the situation of large French industrial groups is difficult, however, their cases show that industry occupies a more symbolic place than ever in this period of crisis. It allows us to weigh up the gravity of the situation, the need to urgently review production methods, and the capacities of each individual to face these unprecedented parameters. Above all, it brings us back the debates on human issues that may have been lacking in recent years, overwhelmed by financial and technological challenges. Let us hope that this human urgency is not volatile, and that it becomes permanent, at last.

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Corporate mergers for a global scale: A bad good Idea?*

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Abstract

With the crisis of the Coronavirus, many see in the globalization of companies a quick and easy explanation for all our misfortunes. Based on the experience of the recent case of the non-merger between Alstom and Siemens, this paper reminds us that the discourse around the globalization of companies is a myth for many. The relevant market for goods and services is still very often the regional market, and forcing industrial mergers to get a so-called global scale could essentially result in negative effects for consumers in the home region of the companies.

Keywords: Corporate globalization, Regional integration, International mergers

*This Impact Paper is derived from a first version published in French in The Conversation (Coeurderoy, 2019)

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Corporate mergers for a global scale. A bad good idea?

With the Coronavirus crisis, many stakeholders of all kinds have called strongly for a relocation of the activities involved in the production of goods and services. Mask shortage aside, which many interpreted as the crisis of industrial reliance on China, it has been much argued that the globalization of companies has become excessive and that it is necessary to set in motion a salutary movement of return to the country, or at least to the region of origin.

These recent debates only exacerbate a discourse that has already been audible for several years. The recent case of the failed merger between Alstom and Siemens was a perfect illustration of this. In this text, on the basis of this case, I would like to show the need to calm down the discourse around corporate globalization. This reminds us that the relevant market for goods and services is usually the regional market (Europe, America or Asia). In this sense, forcing industrial mergers to go ahead in order to obtain a so-called global scale could essentially result in negative effects for consumers in the regional market of origin.

The Alstom-Siemens non-merger and its discontents

Last year, the Alstom-Siemens veto by the European competition authority raised a wave of furious protests in business and political circles. Despite EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager's explanations, French Finance Minister Bruno Lemaire fiercely expressed his grievances against the decision, arguing that European companies need to become stronger on the global stage. "Let's have a look at reality — we are facing a huge challenge with the rise of the Chinese industry. What do we do? Shall we divide the European forces, or try to merge the European forces from the industrial point of view"? Bruno Le Maire told CNBC's Hadley Gamble at the World Government Summit in Dubai (Turak, 2019). "Often European companies are competing globally with US or Asian firms that are very strong in their home markets," commented Peter Altmaier, a close ally of Angela Merkel, in an interview with FT (Chazan, 2019). "So Europe should also allow companies to exist and become global players that are big enough to compete effectively."

Box 1

The conception and abortion of the project

In 2017, Alstom and Siemens Mobility, two former rivals, decided to combine their operations in a merger of equals. The combined entity would be known as Siemens Alstom and would be a global leader in the rail transportation market. More specifically, France and Germany wanted to create a European rail giant that could compete with China's State-controlled giant CRRC.

The European Commission prohibited Siemens' proposed acquisition of Alstom under the EU Merger Regulation. The decision followed an in-depth investigation by the Commission of the takeover, "which would have combined Siemens' and Alstom's transport equipment and service activities in a new company fully controlled by Siemens. It would have brought together the two largest suppliers of various types of

railway and metro signalling systems, as well as of rolling stock in Europe. Both companies also have leading positions globally.

The merger would have created the undisputed market leader in some signalling markets and a dominant player in very high-speed trains. It would have significantly reduced competition in both these areas, depriving customers, including train operators and rail infrastructure managers, of a choice of suppliers and products.

(...) Stakeholders were worried that the proposed transaction would significantly harm competition and reduce innovation in signalling systems and very high-speed rolling stock, lead to the foreclosure of smaller competitors and to higher prices and less choice for customers.

(...) The Commission had serious concerns that the proposed transaction would significantly impede effective competition in two main areas: (i) signalling systems, which are essential to keep rail and metro travel safe by preventing collisions, and (ii) very high-speed trains, which are trains operating at speeds of 300 km per hour or more.

(...) The remedies offered by the parties did not adequately address the Commission's competition concerns. In particular:

- In mainline signalling systems, the remedy proposed was a complex mix of Siemens and Alstom assets, with some assets transferred in whole or part, and others licensed or copied. Businesses and production sites would have to be split, with personnel transferred in some cases but not others. Moreover, the buyer of the assets would have had to continue to be dependent on the merged entity for a number of licence and service agreements. As a result, the proposed remedy did not consist of a stand-alone and future proof business that a buyer could have used to effectively and independently compete against the merged company.

- In very high-speed rolling stock, the parties offered to divest a train currently not capable of running at very high speeds (Alstom's Pendolino), or, alternatively, a licence for Siemens' Velaro very high-speed technology. The licence was subject to multiple restrictive terms and carve-outs, which essentially would not have given the buyer the ability and incentive to develop a competing very high-speed train in the first place."

The Commission thought "that the remedies offered by Siemens were not enough to address the serious competition concerns and would not have been sufficient to prevent higher prices and less choice for railway operators and infrastructure managers. As a result, the Commission has prohibited the proposed transaction." (EC 2019)

On the one side, some support the necessity to grow and achieve a global scale through regional mergers. On the other side, people maintain that if the relevant market remains regional only, merging means creating monopoly rents. Hence, to be or not to be global? That is the question, we could say.

But are we so sure that globalization, and more specifically corporate globalization, is so widespread across the world? Is it really so often that the relevant market is the global

market in products and services? Or is it more in words and narratives? A closer look at research in international business studies provides a subtler perspective.

Do not confuse economic globalization and corporate globalization in product and service markets

In an article I wrote with co-authors Alain Verbeke (University of Calgary, Vrije Universiteit Brussel & University of Reading) and Tanja Matt (Technical University of Munich) for the *Journal of International Business Studies* (Verbeke et al., 2018), we explored the issue of corporate globalization, which is widely used and poorly known. At a macro-level, the concept refers to the growth and broadening scope of international economic exchange relationships of any one country with all other countries around the world, as measured by trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, and other types of exchanges (capital, people, technology, ideas, effective institutional practices).

It is widely accepted among economic and management scholars that globalization drives net benefits, resulting from lower resource usage per unit of output, and the international diffusion of better industry practices, ranging from high-quality accounting systems to proprietary technologies. Moreover, the globalization of information flows has dramatically increased the worldwide awareness of great challenges, such as climate change impacts.

Unfortunately, in popular narratives spread by many business and political leaders, corporate globalization has been associated with many discontents – mostly devoid of a sound factual basis but driven by perceptions of alleged undesirable societal effects, such as the rise of inequalities.

This being said, corporate globalization's role has primarily been to provide broader geographic access to life-saving medications such as vaccines, as well as medical services (thus being instrumental in creating a public good which has – through supporting human overpopulation – in turn been instrumental to the demise of many other public goods and the rise of several public bads). It has also facilitated the easier distribution of essential goods to serve basic needs, and the diffusion of efficiency-enhancing institutional practices and management methods. Most negative spillovers of international business activities, apart from highly-visible cases of market power abuse, have largely been caused by ineffective societal institutions, supposed to regulate economic activities but failing to do so.

People who criticize macro-level globalization typically cannot defeat the argument about the net benefits of globalization (with the qualification that inequalities will also materialize, requiring policy measures to improve distributional justice). Like Miguel de Cervantes's character in *The Ingenious Gentleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha*, critics who argue that global firms are a malign presence in host countries and thrive on alleged malevolent decision-making processes are, in fact, battling imaginary enemies. They attack windmills, which they fear are ferocious giants.

There is, however, a recent de-globalization narrative at the macro-level with negative spillovers at the firm-level, as observed in an article published in *The Economist*: it predicted the rise of “a more fragmented and parochial kind of capitalism, and quite possibly a less efficient one (...) the infatuation with global companies will come to be seen as a passing episode in business history.” But who has, or ever had “unreasoned passion”

for the global firm? What exactly are these global companies, supposedly the outcome of a corporate globalization process? A closer look at the reality of corporate globalization shows that fully-fledged global companies were and are still the exception rather than the rule in international business.

Global and regional scales in product and service markets

In a paper published almost two decades ago, but still largely valid, Alain Verbeke and Alan M Rugman identified only nine “global firms” in the Fortune Global 500, defined as firms with a balanced distribution of sales across the world (i.e., having less than 50% of sales in their home region, and at least 20% of in each of the two host regions of the triad of North America, Europe and Asia). In subsequent work with Chang Hoon Oh, Alan M Rugman confirmed the quasi-absence of global firms with evenly distributed sales and assets across the world (Oh and Rugman, 2014). In a more recent assessment of Fortune Global 500 companies, we had the opportunity to confirm – again – that although the number of global companies has increased, it remains very much a minority (around 30).

Hence, as pointed out by Buckley and Ghauri (2004), if international capital markets have largely transcended regional integration policies and operate at a global scale, the situation is not the same for the product and service markets. Evidence shows that it is primarily in the field of the creation and development of regional goods and services markets that firms have the capability to achieve economies of scale across several countries and to benefit from cross border synergies. Note also that most often, the labour markets mainly remain at the country level. Basically, the level of globalization substantially varies according to the market of interest.

Verbeke and Asmussen (2016) pointed out that global corporate success simply happens in exceptional circumstances only. As they write, “such exceptional circumstances include both demand side and supply side components. At the demand side, an instant global interest from internationally dispersed customers for a niche market product, combined with low marketing mix adaptation requirements and low cost means of marketing and delivery, can increase the non-location boundedness of firm specific advantages. At the supply side, an advanced technology or service offering, duly protected from competitive imitation, will have a similar effect” (2016). But in general, successful international expansion is very costly and hard to realize because it requires huge and complex recombination of corporate resources with the need for leveraging resources and knowledge in host countries – a complexity substantially inhibiting operations at a real global scale.

There would thus seem to be a big gap between the discourse on corporate globalization and the reality of company activities on product and service markets. For most of the cases, even for the largest companies, the relevant internationalization level is not the global scale but the regional one, as advocated by Pankaj Ghemawat (2018) in a recent book, among others. Pankaj Ghemawat rightly notes that globalization is often held up as a scapegoat for all the evils of the world, especially since there are currently few individuals and organizations willing to speak out in its defence. He also reminds us that while the dangers of the new protectionism should not be exaggerated, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate these dangers (Coeurderoy, 2020).

Myths often thrive by telling convincing stories for unsolved problems. The best way to deal with them is to develop further empirical studies on corporate globalization, building upon adequate firm-level data, and augmented with insight gained from senior

management in the firms analysed. You can rest assured that these studies will mostly demonstrate the vulnerability, rather than the ferociousness, of the few global firms, the few born globals and the few truly global value chains, presently in existence.

Conclusion

The permanence of this gap between the discourse on corporate globalization and the reality of company activities on product and service markets generates many myths around globalization, carrying big fears and many shortcuts, like Bruno Le Maire's arguments for the Alstom-Siemens case in the railway industry. There is indeed a Chinese company adequately-sized for the Chinese market and doing business the Chinese way, but almost only in China. And there is a big American company in the USA (GE) too. But can we so easily infer from the addition of regional markets that we have got a global market? Creating regional champions for global expectations when the reality of the product or service market is regional ultimately results in an industrial policy that supports corporate rents. That is a shortcut for future corporate globalization, and a dangerous one in cases of mergers like Alstom-Siemens for the European consumer, who could be the local victim of this global myth! Coronavirus or not, we need to keep calm about corporate globalization.

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[Covid 19 and the scale-up of the platform revolution

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Abstract

Most companies operating with traditional business models experience hardship and suffer a serious financial hit amongst the coronavirus outbreak. However, the pandemic crisis opens a big opportunity for online platforms to show off the unique benefits of their new business model, in particular the opportunities to scale. This impact paper addresses the question of challenges and opportunities that scaling ventures shall apprehend in order to survive (and thrive) in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis and the inevitable recession times that lie ahead.

Keywords: Platform, Scale-up, New business model, Strategy

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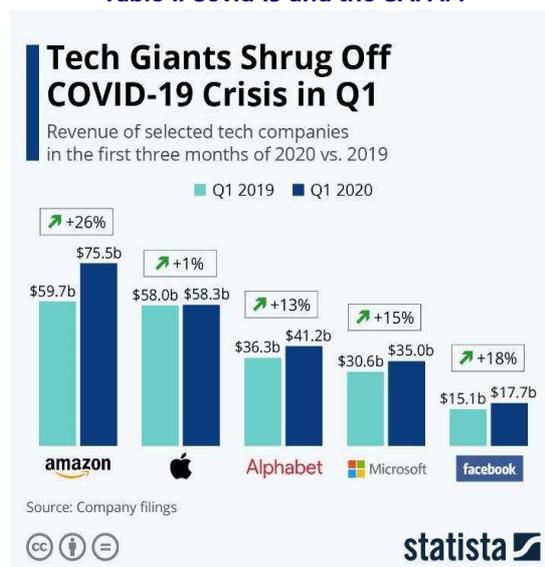
Covid19 and the scale-up of the platform revolution

Most companies operating with traditional business models experience hardship and suffer a serious financial hit amongst the coronavirus outbreak. However, the pandemic crisis opens a big opportunity for online platforms to show off the unique benefits of the new business model, in particular the opportunities to scale. This article addresses the question of challenges and opportunities that scaling ventures shall apprehend in order to survive (and thrive) in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis and the inevitable recession times that lie ahead.

The mechanics of the online platform business model

Let's take two extreme examples of global enterprises whose reaction towards the crisis was so opposite. First, Airbus, the world's largest airplane manufacturer that has just issued a statement announcing a huge financial loss of 481 million euros in the first quarter of the year 2020. The company's CEO proclaimed that the aerospace industry overall is facing the 'gravest crisis' in history (Le Point, 2020). With a large proportion of global airlines putting their fleet on hold, this mirrors today's reality of the travel industry where the pandemic has disturbed travel plans of people from over 200 countries. Then, on another edge of extreme, consider an online shop Shopify whose stocks more than doubled since mid March. Amazon can serve as another thriving example with its stock price going up by 16% since January 2020. This same trend is quite vivid with the other GAFAM tech companies (Google, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft) coming out strong from the Covid-19 pandemic thus far (table 1). Of course, we could say that the difference between the two extreme examples lie in the different industries they operate in. However, one more relevant difference is that while Airbus has a traditional business model with linear value chain creation, Shopify or Amazon are digital platforms based on online sales that leverage the power of networks and enable scaling up.

Table 1: Covid 19 and the GAFAM



Source: Statista (2020)

Let's start with a quick overview of what a platform is as this term has a wide variety of interpretations. People with some technology acumen typically associate them with software and hardware development products underlying a certain technological

architecture. Executives and CEOs tend to think of platforms as leaders of a particular industry, such as Amazon in retail or Uber for ride hailing. It is also clear that a platform, as a concept based on the (at least) two-sided interactions of sellers and buyers, has been around for centuries with the existence of goods markets for instance. However, with the rise of digital technologies, platforms as business and technology models have become key for value creation in modern global economies (Coeurderoy and al., 2019). The phenomenon of network effects is key to understanding the platform model of value creation. They occur when products and services proposed to a given group of participants gain value with their increased number. A Facebook with only one member would be worthless. However, as the number of members rises, its value increases. This is because every new user can theoretically gain access to all existing users within the same network and can potentially invite new members to join this same network. This translates to the network growing exponentially in a very fast way. Network effects can be *direct*, when platform users benefit from a big number of network participants, such as friends on Facebook; and *indirect*, when the network becomes attractive to other contributors or partners such as software developers or advertisers.

Network effects are directly related to the way in which value is created by platforms which is through the matchmaking, the interactions and the positive externalities that the growing number of platform users bring. In the book *Platform Strategy* by Reillier & Reillier (2017) authors also mention the importance of the critical mass as it assumes a platform needs to attract the right number of participants on both sides of the market, before it is able to scale up. Further, the aspect of single homing versus multihoming rises with the participants incentive to participate in only one or in several platform networks. Finally, Reillier & Reillier draw attention to the price elasticity which dictates the adaptability of prices as per demand and competition between platforms in similar industries.

On the contrary, traditional companies and biggest industrial giants like Airbus use the linear 'value chain' business model coined by Michael Porter in the 1980s. The 'value chain' assumes a series of processes that a certain company or industry needs to go through before delivering a final product. Like a train manufacturer that needs to first acquire manufacturing materials (input) before transforming them into a train (output) that then can be sold. The process stays linear and lacks the agility that technology platforms leverage through adaptation and adjustment. Even Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, in his open letter to stakeholders, said that to win through the crisis companies need to be "aggressive and agile" (CB Insights Research, 2020). This agility, user-centricity and adaptability seems to be a real strength of the technology-based platforms that thrive despite the pandemic.

The power of scaling-up

Now what is scaling all about? Consider a company like Slack Technologies, a platform allowing for teams-targeted communication. The company had 10 million registered active users back on March 10th 2020 and jumped to 12,5 million users at the end of March (The Verge, 2020). Slack was able to grow fast because it already had the infrastructure to accommodate the additional 2,5 million users and the sufficient support personnel to serve those new users. The company grew its revenue without having to make any heavy asset or personnel investments. That is what represents the notion of scaling. It occurs when revenue increases at a fast pace without necessarily increasing resources or investments. In case of platforms, those direct and indirect network effects (demand side)

combined with a very low marginal cost results in the scale up effect. This is also a case of Zoom, a global video teleconferencing platform whose shares soared by 140% in 2020, despite the security issues that arose.

With the beauty of a fast growth however, comes a danger of security and privacy challenges. We all recall the Facebook - Cambridge Analytica scandal from 2018 where the openness of the Facebook platform has been questioned as data from millions of user profiles have been exploited as a weapon of voter manipulation. This, as Cusumano, Gawer and Yoffie propose, is a matter of responsibility, liability and trust (2019). Facebook has undoubtedly suffered from that lack of user trust ever since the incident. More recently, Zoom Video Communications faced some serious security challenges. With the Covid-19 crisis and people all over the world being locked down home, the video conferencing platform Zoom has become the default virtual meeting platform for many. As thousands of new users joined the platform's network by downloading the Zoom App, the security issues started to occur. With repeated incidents of "Zoombombing" meetings crushed by uninvited participants sharing inappropriate content with other people, Zoom's trust and reputation has been damaged. Several big companies including Tesla, Daimler AG, Ericsson and Bank of America banned its employees from using the tool (The Street, 2020). Despite those worrying incidents, Zoom's shares soared by 140% since the beginning of 2020. One reason for that is the sheer demand and another, the quick and solid response of Zoom's CEO Eric Yuan who created a 90-day action plan to remove the security issues and further promised to regain trust of its clients.

The new landscape of scale-up competition

It is clear that the Covid-19 crisis has contributed to making more visible new forms of competition and business leadership with digital platforms thriving despite the economic hardship. The scaling platform-based ventures that operate amidst the pandemic experience some key competitive challenges or opportunities (Ayache Wiszniowska, 2020).

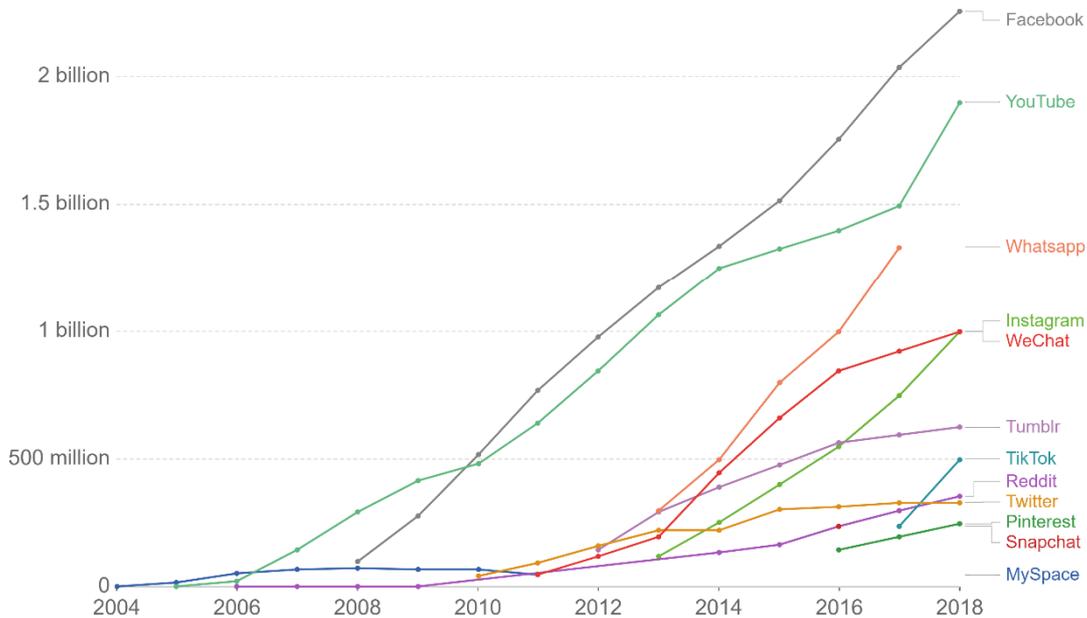
The "out of the blue" X factor

First, competition is challenged by a permanent "out of the blue" X factor with rapid and unexpected growth. The case of social media and of their "fast and furious" quest of users has dramatically changed the media world but also the society in a few years (table 2). During this covid 19 crisis, this is the case of Zoom or Slack for instance, whose openness, ease of use, digital infrastructure and ideal niche of remote work assistance has fit extremely well with the crisis-based and crisis aftermath market needs. This opportunity needs to meet with an appropriate response and client offering as the competition starts to get fierce amongst digital platforms.

Table 2: The scale up of social media platforms

Number of people using social media platforms, 2004 to 2018

Estimates correspond to monthly active users (MAUs). Facebook, for example, measures MAUs as users that have logged in during the past 30 days. See source for more details.



Source: Statista and TNW (2019)

CC BY

Source: Ortiz-Ospina E. (2019)

The “15 minutes of fame” factor

Second, all of us know the famous quote attributed to Andy Warhol that “in the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes.” It led to the concept of “15 minutes of fame”—the idea that anyone can access celebrity through fast blow-up by the media. Today, and more in the future, companies in the world of on-line platforms may experience a “15 minutes of fame” effect and quickly become known in a given market field. The new stars for instance, are the online grocery shopping platforms whose challenge now is to turn the market need into a sustainable advantage that scales beyond the Covid-19 crisis times. The main second-effect issue, of course, is to stay alive after 15 minutes and not go back to the unknown... Only a small number will not become falling stars;

The “Achillis heel” syndrome

Finally, these companies may be concerned by a “Achillis heel” syndrome, where high performance, exponential user growth and increased security risk tend to result in the need for quick re-invention, adaptation, technology advancement and a new managerial skill set that can lead through the crisis time ahead. Lack of those skills and techniques can turn the growth opportunity into a threat. Successful scale-up leaders need to focus on the opportunities that the current situation offers and think innovatively about their products and services as well as new sources of investments. They need to focus on digitalization of offerings and operations as well as on building collaborative, agile teams that adapt to fast-changing conditions.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that many traditional companies with a traditional business model struggle to keep their ventures afloat, the Covid-19 pandemic is an acceleration for entry into the platform society and the subsequent scaleup. However, it's a new world of uncertain conditions, new threats and new needs. It's a world of rapid rise and fall of platform based companies which need to leverage the opportunities while at the same time reducing the level of incurred risk and securing for the future.

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The European monetary union at risk

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Abstract

This paper analyses the recent ruling by the German Federal Constitutional Court against the backdrop of increasing risks of debt unsustainability in the Euro Area. It concludes that an unresolved trade-off between discipline and risk sharing in the European monetary union will jeopardize the survival of the euro.

Keywords: Fiscal policy, Public debt, Monetary policy, Euro

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The European Monetary Union at Risk

The lockdown of most EU countries in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has produced disruptions in the production process and brought consumption and investment to a halt. Against the backdrop of these supply and demand shocks, EU Member States have implemented different public policies, deferring or waiving tax payments and social security contributions, raising spending on the health sector, and providing more generous welfare payments to short-time working schemes.

Euro Area (EA) countries have not been equal *vis-à-vis* the intensity of the health crisis, and they are not equal in terms of their fiscal capacities to cope with the lockdown shock. The scars of the former global financial crisis and ensuing so-called “European sovereign debt crisis” remain in some countries where public debt-to-GDP ratios are still very high. Larger public deficits in these countries raise the fear of a higher risk of default.

Quite strikingly, EU fiscal cooperation has long stalled. In the early days of the lockdown, the escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact was activated, giving rise to a temporary lifting of European fiscal constraints. There was also a softening of State Aid regulations. Then, it took a month for European Member States to go a step further. The European Stability Mechanism will include a Pandemic Crisis support of no more than 2 percentage points of country-specific GDP. The European Investment Bank will extend its financial support to small and medium sized companies by €200 billion. The Commission will also devote €100 billion to a temporary support on unemployment risk in an emergency. Creel et al. (2020b) have calculated that these three measures would provide a net gain to Italy and Greece of less than 0.1 percent of their respective GDP, while the gain would be even less for all other EA Member States.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has also committed to being the lender of last resort of banks, through a favourably-priced long-term refinancing operation (LTROs) at the negative deposit facility rate or below, and it extended its Asset Purchase Programme by €120 billion, then by an additional €750 billion a few days later with the temporary Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP).

This paper highlights two important issues related to the macro management of the Euro Area (the ability of the ECB to pursue its PEPP and the fiscal margins for manoeuvre of EA Member States) and concludes on the necessity to solve the trade-off between discipline and risk sharing in the European monetary union.

Has the German Federal Constitutional Court announced the end of the PEPP?

The German Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) ruling on the Public Sector Purchase Programme (PSPP) on 5 May 2020 sparked new uncertainty at a moment when uncertainty was already high. Yet the FCC did not oppose a former judgment by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU): “(it) did not find a violation of the prohibition of monetary financing of Member States budgets”. Therefore, it disagrees that PSPP “effectively circumvents” provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Meanwhile, the FCC considers that the judgment of the CJEU is “incomprehensible” for it was not based upon a clear and prior diagnosis of the economic

policy consequences of the implementation of PSPP. More importantly, the conformity of PSPP with the TFEU relates to the conditions that the ECB has put forth and fulfilled so far in the implementation of the purchase programme. Let me briefly comment on the latest points.

Not surprisingly, many macroeconomists have been puzzled by the FCC's distinction between "monetary policy objective" and "the economic policy effects arising from the programme". It looks as if the FCC thought that achieving the monetary policy objective of the ECB did not require interactions with other macroeconomic and financial variables. Actually, monetary policy can deliver its objective via the good functioning of monetary channels of transmission. The most direct one is the interest rate channel: if consumer price inflation goes up and above the target, the central bank can raise its policy rate and it will in turn push the long-term interest rate up and dampen aggregate demand. What works when consumer price inflation goes up works symmetrically when it goes down and below the target... unless the policy rate has reached a lower bound, like a zero-policy-rate. If it happens (and it did!), the central bank must resort to other instruments and transmission channels to deliver: credit, asset price, exchange rate, and balance sheet channels. Hence, "the economic policy effects arising from the programme" are the very reason behind the implementation of the PSPP. It should be remembered that disentangling monetary effects from economic effects is not easy, for the interrelationships are many. Moreover, the "monetary policy objective" that the FCC isolates is the price stability objective. In so doing, the FCC fails to give due consideration to the secondary objectives that the TFEU attributes to the ECB, like "aiming at full employment and social progress" and "the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States".

Now, on monetary financing of Member State budgets. A first remark: the TFEU provision prohibiting monetary financing underpins the independence of the ECB *vis-à-vis* governments. It is therefore a bit puzzling that the FCC ruling weakens the ECB's independence by challenging the CJEU rulings and demanding that the ECB argues that its policy fulfilled the principle of proportionality between the monetary policy objective and the economic policy effects. While the independence of the ECB does not rule out control of its actions (these controls exist), its actions will be made impossible if 19 different Constitutional Courts rule on its decisions.

Second, the FCC judgment argues that "a manifest circumvention of the prohibition of monetary financing is not ascertainable, especially because (...) the purchase limit of 33% per international securities identification number is observed (and) purchases are carried out according to the ECB's capital key". The FCC goes on and argues that "the PSPP does not provide (...) a risk-sharing programme – which would (...) be impermissible under (German) primary law – in relation to bonds of the Member States purchased by national central banks".

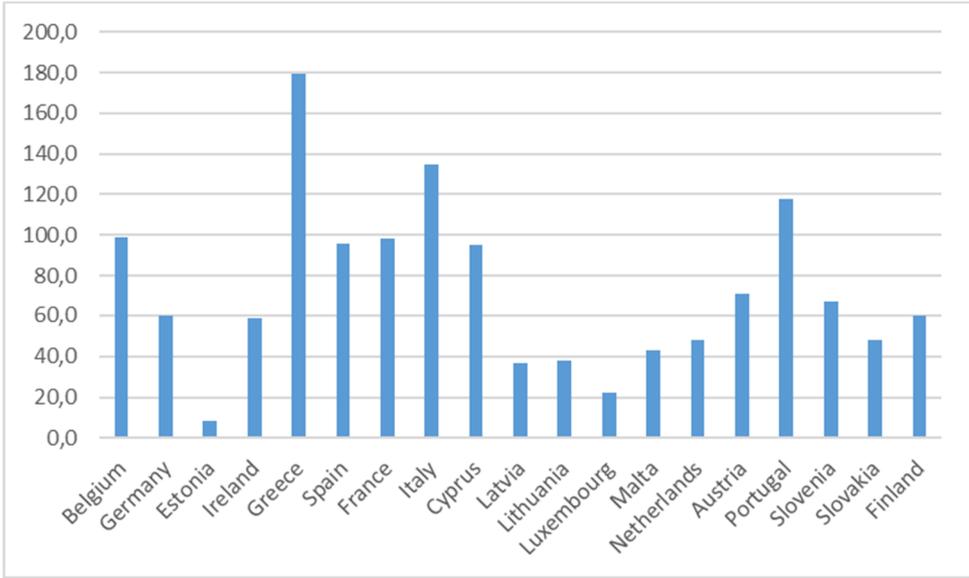
While these arguments leave the PSPP innocent of bypassing the prohibition of monetary financing, they will act as a Damocles' sword on the PEPP. The FCC's ruling of 5 May 2020 comes as a threat to the capacity of the ECB to implement the measures it has taken in the context of the coronavirus crisis. Actually, on 18 March 2020, the ECB announced that, "while the benchmark allocation across jurisdictions will continue to be the capital key of the national central banks, (PEPP) purchases will be conducted in a flexible manner. This allows for fluctuations in the distribution of purchase flows over time, across asset classes and among jurisdictions". It continued arguing that "to the extent that some self-imposed limits might hamper action that the ECB is required to take in order to fulfil its mandate,

the (ECB) Governing Council will consider revising them to the extent necessary to make its action proportionate to the risks that we face". It is clear that the FCC implicitly objects to these new monetary settings. As for the requirement of European solidarity, as laid down in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), the FCC also rules out a risk-sharing mechanism. This latter outcome may be another hurdle to the management of the current coronavirus crisis.

Fiscal space in the Euro Area

Since the inception of the lockdown policies in Europe, governments have resorted to higher public spending and tax deferrals and exemptions to limit the real costs of the crisis. They have had to raise domestic public debt, although some of them had not yet fully recovered from the previous crisis and its consequences on their public finances. In 2019, half of the EA Member States had a debt-to-GDP ratio above the 60 percent threshold, some with debt way above 100 percent (Greece, Italy and Portugal).

Figure 1: Public debt in the Euro Area in 2019 (in percent of GDP)



Source: Fiscal Space World Bank Database

It is possible to study the sustainability of public finances in the Euro Area against the backdrop of predictions on the long-term interest rate and future economic growth rate, under different public debt targets. Kose et al. (2017) recall that one simple indicator of the ability of governments to pay the interest on their debts and to pay back these debts is the difference, call it the fiscal space, between their actual fiscal policy and the fiscal policy that would stabilize their debt-to-GDP ratio at a given target. For instance, if the difference between the GDP growth rate and the long-term interest rate is equal to 5 percent, a public deficit equal to 3 percent of GDP is sufficient to stabilize debt at 60 percent of GDP. Well, a difference of 5 percent between economic growth and the interest rate did happen, in the late eighties maybe, but the situation has worsened much since. If GDP drops by 8 percent and the long-term interest rate remains low, say at 0 percent, the public surplus necessary to stabilize debt at 60 percent of GDP is 4.8 percent of GDP. This is enormous and unachievable in the midst of a crisis like coronavirus. Hence, the issue of debt sustainability.

Drawing on the Kose et al. (2017) method and data, I have made numerical simulations of fiscal space in the euro area under 12 different situations (low growth, high growth, low interest rates, high interest rates, debt target at 60 percent of GDP or higher, and a mix of them, see Creel, 2020 for details). Overall, simulations point to great uncertainty surrounding the capacity of Member States to pay back their public debts. Unless nominal long-term interest rates remain low and economic growth resumes at its pre-Covid-19 median level, most EA countries will fail to address debt sustainability without fiscal consolidation. In the worst-case scenario of high interest rates and long recession, even Germany would lack sufficient fiscal space to stabilize its debt-to-GDP ratio.

It therefore appears that debt stability is a shared concern for most EA Member States, with the exception of Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta.

Conclusion

The latter outcome shows the tensions between, on the one hand, the crucial necessity to use fiscal room for manoeuvre to dampen the lockdown shock on supply and demand and, on the other hand, the absence of fiscal room for manoeuvre if interest rates go up. Hence, it is necessary that the ECB should be able and allowed to cancel interest rate pressures, wherever they may happen in the Euro Area, with conventional and less conventional policies, otherwise debts will sky rocket. The ruling by the German Federal Constitutional Court has fuelled this risk.

It is also of the utmost importance to understand that the former tensions also relate to the trade-off between risk-sharing and fiscal discipline that has spoiled European intergovernmental negotiations for so long. Without some forms of risk-sharing, such as Coronabonds or Perpetual Bonds (see Creel et al., 2020a), some Member States of the Euro Area will not be able to exit the coronavirus crisis and they may be forced to exit the Area. Can the European monetary union afford that? I do not think so.

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Macroeconomic Impacts of the ECB's Pandemic Emergency

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Abstract

This article uses a standard Dynamic General Equilibrium framework to study the macroeconomic impacts of the 2020 lockdown and the ECB's Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP) on the Euro economy.

Keywords: PEPP, Unconventional Monetary Policy, The Great Lockdown, Economic Policy

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Macroeconomic Impacts of the ECB's Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme

The Corona crisis has forced the European Central Bank into action. The ECB has committed to a host of interventions, such as lowering the standing facilities to the historic value of -0.75, providing up to €3 trillion in available liquidity and implementing the Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP), which is the subject of this article. The ECB's Asset Purchase Program (APP) was started in March 2015. The stock of Eurosystem APP bonds stood at €2,783 billion at the end of March 2020 (ECB report). The APP that was at its lowest level in 2019 has been reinforced in 2020 under the PEPP, by injecting an envelope of €750 billion in addition to the €120 billion planned before the crisis. This program, representing about 7.3% of Euro Area GDP, is temporary until the end of 2020 and is likely to be continued in 2021. The economic history, especially the Great Recession in 2008, outlines that such actions are necessary to address the significant challenge posed by the Corona outbreak to our economy.

Figure 1: Economic recession due to the Corona outbreak. Source: Eurostat 2020

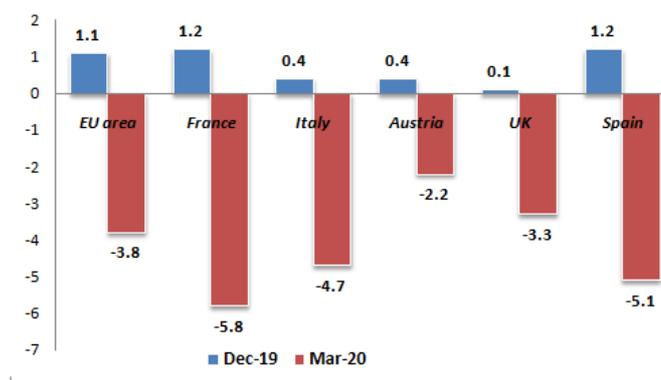


Figure 1 shows the recession caused by the outbreak in the Euro Area. The pandemic reversed all our forecasts for growth and medium-term inflation which were targeted by the previous easing in financial conditions. If this challenge is not addressed correctly, it could threaten our financial stability and may lead to a macro-financial feedback loop that would create a situation similar to the Great Recession. As a result, quick actions are required to ensure that this shock does not escalate into a huge financial crisis with self-fulfilling spirals and chains of bankruptcy. This article uses a standard Dynamic General Equilibrium Framework (Auray et al., 2018) to study the impact of the lockdown and the PEPP on the Euro economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already influenced every aspect of our lives. It has economic, humanitarian and social consequences which will stay with us for longer than a season. Economically speaking, the COVID-19 pandemic can be considered an intense shock to economic sectors from the external to real economy. The most visible impact, and potentially the most significant one, is the devastation of the labor market caused by the imposition of the Great Lockdown, a unique event in our history.

Figure 2: Impact of the lockdown in two scenarios: i) if the labor market recovers fast, ii) if the labor market recovers slowly.

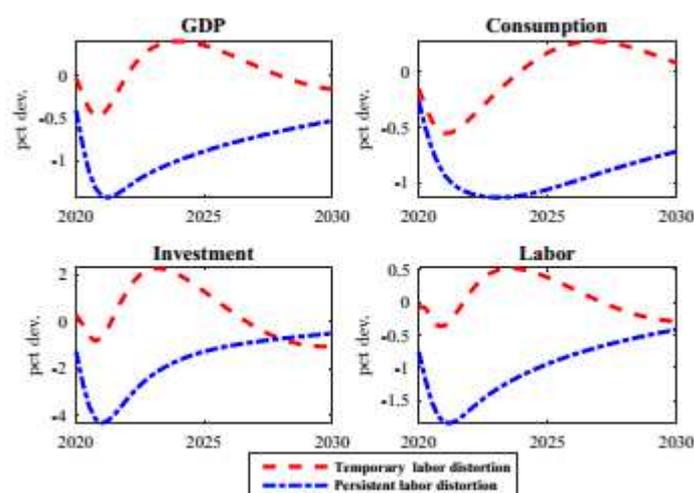
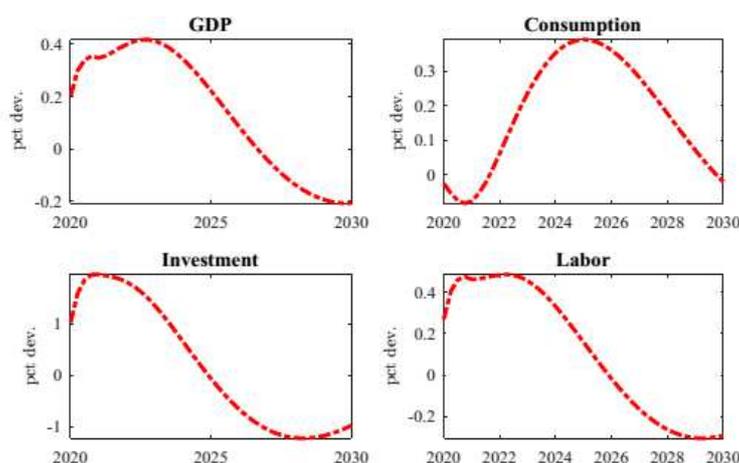


Figure 2 compares the response of the economy to the labor market distortion in two scenarios:⁴⁸if the labor market is able to recover rapidly and return to its pre-crisis situation, or if the labor market is not flexible enough and the distortions persist. The figure indicates that the economic response to the lockdown is highly dependent on the ability of the labor market to absorb such shocks. If the labor market recovers fast, the impact of the lockdown disappears in less than 2 years. However, if the shock persists, the damage is more severe and long lasting. Initiatives such as Partial Unemployment are pivotal but more is expected from governments to support the labor market and assure a fast recovery. This is in line with ECB president Christine Lagarde's warning that Euro Area economic growth depends "crucially on the duration of the containment measures and the success of policies to mitigate the economic consequences for businesses and workers."

Figure 3: Impact of the ECB's PEPP in response to the Corona outbreak 2020.

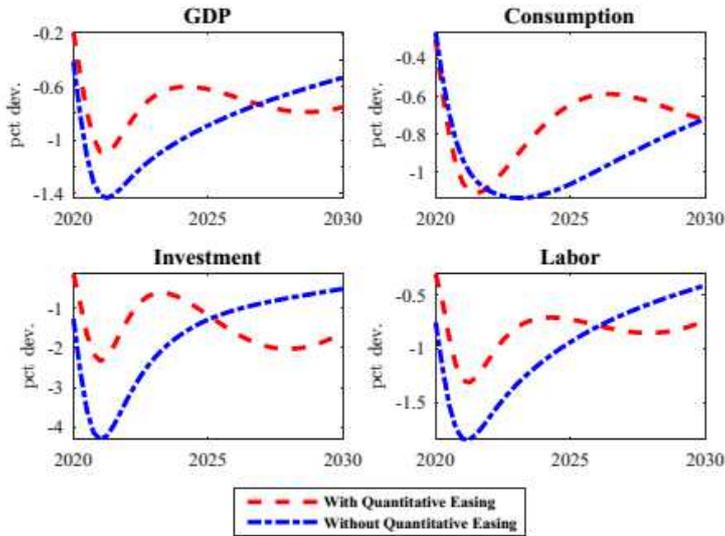


The PEPP aims to address illiquidity. The ECB estimate shows that the European governments namely Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands will issue more than €1 trillion of sovereign bonds in 2020. As a result, a higher premium is needed by investors to absorb such a huge supply in the balance sheet. The PEPP helps this action

⁴⁸The shock is a 10% negative shock to the labor disutility of households. By its nature but not its volume, this shock provides a similar situation to the current lockdown situation.

by reducing the duration risk. Figure 3 illustrates the impact of a pure PEPP without considering the impact of the lockdown. The figure shows that such a program has a positive impact on GDP, investment and labor participation. Figure 4 indicates that the PEPP is not necessarily enough to totally absorb the adverse impact of the lockdown but could be of great assistance in reducing the damage. These measures help stability, improve market liquidity and mitigate volatility. In addition, they have positive impacts on welfare (in the form of consumption percentage equivalent) as it is presented in Table 1.

Figure 4: Impact of the ECB’s PEPP in the presence of the lockdown if the labor market distortion persists.



The bottom line of this article is that monetary policy will not suffice for a recovery to occur. Monetary policy without additional fiscal responses "would strain the bounds of monetary policy, calling into question the effectiveness of the institution that deploys it" (Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey).

Table 1: Welfare effects of the PEPP 2020

Vision	Percentage
5 years	0.0246
10 years	0.2310
lifetime	0.0304

This crisis has affected both the supply and demand sides of the economy. The PEPP is of great benefit but is not enough. First, governments need to run some structural reforms to invigorate the labor market and reduce distortions. Second, governments should fully support their health system. Third, timely and targeted fiscal policy is needed to help households and firms regain what they lost during the crisis.

Conclusion

This article can be concluded neatly by a quote from Kristalina Georgieva, IMF Managing Director: "We strongly support the extraordinary fiscal actions many countries have already taken to boost health systems and protect affected workers and firms. We welcome the moves of major central banks to ease monetary policy. These bold efforts are not only in the interest of each country, but of the global economy as a whole. Even more will be needed, especially on the fiscal front."

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Now is not the time to be afraid of debt*

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Abstract

Governments are trying to alleviate the widespread liquidity problems caused by the COVID-19 crisis by facilitating access to loans and guaranteeing debt. However, entrepreneurs frequently do not apply for a loan, even if the company would be in need of financing (Nguyen et al., 2020). In the context of an economic downturn, this self-rationing behavior is expected to become more pronounced, and can generate large economic problems. Research suggests self-rationing can be related to burdensome application procedures and the anticipation of being refused a loan, but is often also motivated by inherent debt aversion that is likely grounded in cultural factors. To reduce the risk of widespread underuse, effective credit support programs should therefore not only be designed with streamlined application procedures and simple-to-understand features, but should also be accompanied by a communication effort targeted at reducing debt aversion and other forms of borrower discouragement.

Keywords: Borrower discouragement, Debt aversion, Education, Financial constraints, SMEs

* This short paper summarizes the results of Nguyen, T. H., Nguyen, M. H., Troege, M. & Nguyen, T. H. A. 2020. "Debt aversion, education and credit self-rationing in SMEs." *Small Business Economics*, 1-19. in light of the current economic crisis.

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Now is not the time to be afraid of debt

Governments and organizations around the world have reacted to the liquidity crisis triggered by the COVID-19 by providing different types of financial support. However, almost all of the proposed tools rely on the supply of subsidized or guaranteed debt. This is not only problematic because new debt adds to the already high debt level of many companies, but also because many SMEs will be reluctant to apply for loans in the first place, even if their companies are in dire need of financing (Kon and Storey, 2003). This type of credit self-rationing has been found to be particularly severe during an economic crisis with serious consequences (Cowling et al., 2016).

We know that even in normal times many SMEs do not invest enough. The traditional explanation for this underinvestment relies on supply-side financial constraints. A large literature builds on Stiglitz and Weiss (1981)'s seminal insight that asymmetric information can lead to credit rationing and thus a sub-optimal level of investment. These findings provide the rationale for a large variety of policies aiming at improving access to finance around the world and also serve as underlying motivation for the large effort that is currently underway to prevent widespread liquidation of companies affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Credit self-rationing

Recently, however, researchers have begun to understand the importance of demand side credit rationing rather than the supply side rationing. In other words, often it is not the lenders who refuse to provide credit, but entrepreneurs who self-ration loans, i.e. knowingly restrict the firm's use of debt to a suboptimal level. This phenomenon, often called borrower discouragement in the literature, is widespread in both developed markets as well as emerging markets, and has been documented in several European countries (Bhaird et al., 2016, Brown et al., 2011). Empirically, the percentage of discouraged borrowers has been found to range from less than 10% to as high as 44.36%.

Cowling et al. (2016) study the UK's SMEs and show that borrower discouragement rises during the 2008's global financial crisis. They also find that discouraged borrowers overestimate the extent of contraction in credit availability due to the economic downturn, and 55.6% of them would have got loans had they applied. Consequently, they estimate that under-investment resulting from borrower discouragement is in the billions of pounds during that crisis.

Designing debt-based support programs

This has important consequences for the design of the tools to stabilize companies in the current crisis. Credit self-rationing will limit the effects of efforts targeted at improving the supply of finance through loan subsidies and monetary expansion. Moreover, self-rationing SMEs will lower their economic activity which, through network externalities, will create negative spillovers on other firms. The resulting multiplier effect can reduce long term economic growth. In extreme cases, underfinanced companies will fail during or after the crisis, and then cause the failure of firms to which they are connected in the supply chain. These risk externalities can cause the interruption of the entire supply chains and result in severe economic distress.

It is therefore essential to identify the reasons for self-rationing and address the causes with appropriate policy measures. The literature essentially provides two types of explanations. Kon and Storey (2003) argue that self-rationing is a rational behavior if firms anticipate high loan application costs and low loan acceptance rates. These views are corroborated by the fact that discouraged borrowers have been found to be riskier and less creditworthy (Han et al., 2009). Self-rationing may therefore be a rational strategy to avoid wasting resources on a costly application with little chance of success.

Nguyen et al. (2020) show, however, that this type of rational borrower discouragement is not the only reason for self-rationing. They identify irrational debt aversion or fear of debt as another reason for self-rationing. In their data base of Vietnamese SMEs, debt-averse entrepreneurs are defined as those who indicate that they did not apply for formal loans specifically because they do not want to incur debt. In other words, they avoid bank loans not because they are discouraged by application costs or a low probability of success, but because they think that debt is per se undesirable. In their sample, 6.9% of all firm-years are discouraged from applying for loans due to the apprehension of a difficult application process, whereas, 11.6% do not apply because they are debt-averse. This suggests that self-rationing due to irrational debt aversion or inability to deal with loan application process is no less a problem than rational borrower discouragement.

Reducing self-rationing

How can this kind of irrational self-rationing be addressed? Nguyen et al. (2020) show that credit self-rationing is related to the educational background of the entrepreneur: Entrepreneurs with university degrees are less likely to be discouraged from applying for formal loans due to perceived difficulties in loan application process, and are less likely to exhibit debt aversion. This mentality has concrete consequences: Entrepreneurs with lower educational levels more frequently report administrative difficulties during the application process. They also actually use less debt, especially less bank loans, and at the same time are more likely to perceive their firms to be financially constrained.

Nguyen et al. (2020) argue that education reduces debt aversion and borrower discouragement through three channels. Most straightforwardly, education will be correlated with greater cognitive ability and a better ability to deal with ambiguity and complexity and (Dollinger, 1984). Debt financing requires the entrepreneur to evaluate expected returns on investments to the borrowing costs and increased risk. This is a complex task, especially in an economic recession when risk and asymmetric information are particularly high. Preparing a loan application is also a time-consuming that requires human resources. More educated entrepreneurs are better able to deal with such complex process and thus more welcoming of debt financing in general and bank loans in particular. A second important potential channel for the relationship between education and debt aversion is risk-aversion. The literature has documented a negative relationship between education and risk-aversion (Riley Jr and Chow, 1992). This channel will be particularly important in the current environment. The current crisis already provides massive economic risk and many entrepreneurs will hesitate to add further risk by increasing their firms' leverage. Finally, cultural aspects might contribute to debt aversion. Debt is viewed negatively in many cultures. For example, many religions impose a ban on debt or interest and these cultural aspects may contribute to the debt aversion of less educated entrepreneurs. Parker (2006) suggests that education can alleviate a bias toward former beliefs and information. Thus, more educated entrepreneurs may be less affected by this culturally rooted bias against debt.

While advocating for better formal education can alleviate these problems in long term, it is an unlikely solution for the imminent economic downturn due to the COVID-19. Rather, the banks and governmental agencies should aim at streamlining application process to reduce subjective application costs for entrepreneurs. However, there must be a balance between the qualities of being rigorous and being borrower-friendly. Moreover, as the application procedure is very structured, the extent to which it can be simplified may be limited. Despite these constraints, the bank can empower its own staff with the ability to advice, counsel and even educate the borrowers throughout this burdensome process, alleviating their apprehensions and discouragement.

Additionally, a clear and far-reaching communication of credit availability and the credit-supporting policies is also essential. As pointed out by Cowling et al. (2016), entrepreneurs can over-estimate the extent of credit rationing in an economic downturn. In such a time of high uncertainty and asymmetric information, proactive communication from lenders and supervisory agencies are needed to keep borrowers informed and to ease their discouragement.

Conclusion

The success of government sponsored support programs for companies relies on the large scale-adoption of subsidized debt by entrepreneurs. Existing research on the use of debt by SMEs suggests that achieving this will not be an easy task. Even if banks are willing to lend, entrepreneurs are often reluctant to contract the debt that their companies would require. This is not only because they want to avoid burdensome application procedures, but also because they are risk averse, have limited information processing capacities and are averse to debt for various reasons. A strategy of counseling, educating and keeping borrowers informed is necessary to brace entrepreneurs for the imminent economic impact of the COVID-19.

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Coronavirus and financial markets: Uncertainties and lessons from an unprecedented crisis

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Abstract

This impact paper investigates the consequences of the Covid crisis on financial markets, focusing on the wide divergence between equity and commodity markets, the risky involvement of non-professional investors, and the rehabilitation of the banking sector.

Keywords: Financial markets, Commodities, Banking sector, Covid crisis

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Coronavirus and financial markets: Uncertainties and lessons from an unprecedented crisis

While the Coronavirus health crisis has placed our globalized society in an unprecedented situation, it is also a great post-Subprime fire test for the financial markets. Following the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the financial markets were unanimously decried as being its source. The current crisis, which is primarily an economic crisis and whose source is totally exogenous to the functioning of the markets, nevertheless provides an opportunity to test their viability, efficiency and usefulness in a context of global crisis. In financial theory, such events are called "Black Swans" (Nassim Taleb (2007)) because they are totally unexpected and their overall impact on the markets is not predictable. Such events help to redefine the role and limits of financial markets and should serve as an element of study and comparison for market participants, as well as for regulators and governments.

In order to learn the lessons from this situation that markets have never seen before, it seems important to assess the extent to which markets represent a synthesis of available information, as Eugene Fama (1998) assumes in his theory of efficient markets. The opposing movements in equity and commodity markets suggest that financial markets, and particularly equity markets, are currently out of touch with reality. Furthermore, in view of the democratization of financial products among non-professional investors, it is also necessary to analyze the extent to which individual savers are exposed to current market conditions, at a time when some ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) are recording record flows. Finally, 12 years after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the role of banks in the economy continues to change and could prove decisive in any potential economic recovery and market stabilization.

The wide divergence of equity and commodity markets

The academic doxa still perceives financial markets as a synthetic representation of available information. However, in our world with its uninterrupted flow of often contradictory news, information is plural and therefore threatens the informational efficiency underlying orthodox financial theories. But what happens when financial markets offer us several distinct representations of reality? This is what is shown by the divergence between equity and commodity markets today. While the equity markets are being buoyed by the exceptional expansionary measures taken by central banks and states to reduce the economic impact of lockdown measures and have already rebounded close to the all-time highs they had reached before the start of the health crisis, the commodity markets, particularly gas and oil, are still in the throes of a historic crisis whose repercussions threaten the future of the energy industry in the long term. This is

evidenced by the prices of U.S. crude oil, whose major index, WTI (West Texas Intermediate), plunged into negative territory for the first time in history on April 20, dropping to a price of -\$40.32/barrel. So how do we explain such a divergence? The key explanation lies in the fact that energy commodity markets, unlike equity markets, are always linked to the macroeconomic reality that drives supply and demand dynamics on a daily basis. The price of WTI became negative for the first time on the eve of the expiry of the May contract. Traders who had to roll their futures position from May to June in order not to receive physical delivery were then faced with the scarcity of storage facilities and were therefore willing to pay to get rid of the oil they did not want or could not physically receive. It was therefore a tangible reality that caught up with the oil market. Although they are sustainable in the medium term, the historically low levels of energy indexes will lead to a profound rethinking of our global energy production model, while pushing traders and analysts in these markets to rethink their forecasting models in order to include scenarios never before imagined in concrete terms. This return to reality has not yet been experienced by the equity markets, however, which are still being boosted by the aggressive policies of central banks. The Financial Times even describes this divergence between the depressed economy and rising equity market to be "so extreme it is leaving many analysts scrambling for explanations". This major dislocation shows that the different markets are offering distinct diagnoses in a new situation where uncertainty is the rule.

Risky involvement of non-professional investors

The fall in oil prices was also very much noticed by non-professional investors and savers as a whole, seeking to take advantage of apparently attractive levels with hopes of rapid capital gains. The colossal flows into the oil ETFs, these funds that aim to replicate the performance of a fund or asset, bear witness to this. USO (United States Oil Fund), the major US oil-indexed ETF, has seen the amount of its assets under management soar by more than USD 2 billion since the beginning of the year. However, these flows from inexperienced investors represent a major danger for the latter and once again highlight the dangers of asymmetric information resulting from the democratization of certain financial products. As the oil market is currently in a contango situation (the spot price is lower than the futures price), investing in spot oil carries a significant roll cost ("negative roll yield"): during a roll period, funds not wishing to receive physical oil will have to sell the (cheaper) expiring contract to buy the (more expensive) contract of the following month. This roll call is something less experienced investors are largely unaware of and puts the managers of these ETFs in difficulty. The USO fund managers have had to review their roll policy more than 3 times in recent weeks in order to reduce the cost and market impact of their massive roll operations (the futures contracts held by USO have represented as

much as 20% of the total market, thus endangering the liquidity of the futures market). The health crisis once again points the finger at herd behavior among agents who are not very rational and whose information is limited, to say the least. Misinformation of non-professional agents was already central to the Subprime crisis and continues to plague the retail derivatives market. We can therefore see current events as a new opportunity to call for better regulation of the transmission of information to non-professional investors, as the reforms introduced by MiFID II have had only a limited impact on this issue.

Banking sector: All is forgiven?

If there is one point on which this crisis is the opposite of 2008 it is on the role of banks. While the banks were found guilty of the Subprime crisis, they are now potentially supporting the economic recovery and hope to see their image improve in public opinion. By granting loans that are often guaranteed by the State in order to finance an economy in free fall, the banks have the opportunity to restore their image to some extent. Also, when banks' results are published, it is noted that the role of their market activities paradoxically mitigates the impact of the health crisis on their results. The rise in transaction volumes and explosion in volatility on all financial markets has boosted the earnings of the banks' trading divisions. The example of Barclays whose trading revenues were up 77% in the first quarter of 2020, thereby allowing provisions for credit losses to be increased, is particularly telling. We can therefore expect banks that still have significant market divisions to outperform those that have already relegated these activities to the retail sector. This trend is all the more paradoxical since most banks have tended to focus their strategy on cutting back trading activities, which were often decried after the Subprime crisis and whose declining margins have squeezed earnings.

Faced with the economic difficulties caused by the lockdown policies implemented by governments to contain the virus, banks have posted record provisions in their balance sheets to prepare for possible massive credit losses. The behavior of central banks in the face of these uncertainties then shows a further paradox compared to the previous crisis, as some of them are advising commercial banks not to be too prudent in their provisioning levels, so as not to discourage lending to businesses and individuals in the context of the future economic recovery. Such is the case of the Bank of England, which advised English banks not to be too cautious in the provisions made in the first quarter of 2020. Central banks are therefore advising commercial banks to take more risk, while the latter are being particularly cautious. The current health crisis has indeed pushed the banking industry into an unprecedented situation giving rise to particularly counter-intuitive paradoxes.

Conclusion

Although the crisis did not start in the financial markets, it will nevertheless have profound impacts that will affect the financial industry over the long term. There has been a dislocation of markets by asset class, an explosion of ETF flows increasing the risks for less informed investors, and a rethinking of the role and model of banks. It is also likely that this crisis will have a lasting impact on the risk appetite of all investors, traders and banks.

Regulators will also have to learn from the lessons of this crisis. We might well wonder whether the ban on short selling introduced on certain securities, which has been widely criticized by some market participants, has really had a favorable impact in terms of stabilizing markets, or has simply reduced market liquidity in times of stress.

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Beyond well-intentioned housing policies: The adverse effects of rent control

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Abstract

In order to respond to their electorate's demands for affordable housing, many politicians turn to rent control. In this “impact paper”, we argue that in reality undesirable effects take precedence and other avenues must therefore be considered to respond to the housing crisis.

Keywords: Rent control, Housing affordability

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Beyond well-intentioned housing policies: The adverse effects of rent control

The dates of both the Paris and London 2020 mayoral elections have changed due to the unprecedented global outbreak of Covid-19, however, the one consistency is the polemical issue that is the housing crisis. Among others, rent price control is one of the fundamental topics of contention running at the heart of candidates' mayoral campaigns in both capital cities.

According to the Valuation Office Agency, London has experienced a 35% increase in the average monthly rent prices between 2011 and 2018. The city's monthly 2019 average is more than double that of the rest of the country and according to the latest English Housing Survey, the proportion of household income spent on rent was considerably higher for private renters in London (42%) than for the rest of England (30%). As a result, Sadiq Khan, the current Mayor of London, has urged the government to provide him with extra power to install rent caps to combat this worrying inflation. Khan wants to implement a rent control system in order to provide tenants with more affordable housing and to encourage investment in new and existing rental housing.

Nevertheless, Jonathan Cribb, the senior research economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, has argued that despite providing short-term benefits for tenants, the overall quality of accommodation shall suffer in the long run as landlords will neglect maintenance in order to reduce costs in response to their lowered rental income, thus negatively impacting London's living conditions. Landlords' investment returns shall be reduced and as a result many will abandon income-property investment, leading to a reduction in private rental accommodation on offer, an increase in competition and, as a result, a surge in rental prices: the complete opposite of the desired effect.

However, the government has announced plans to eradicate 'no-fault' evictions, to ban unjust rental fees and to cap tenancy deposits, saving London's tenants £240m a year; a step in the right direction to ameliorate the local housing market.

The Conservative mayoral candidate for the London mayoral election, Shaun Bailey, has similarly criticised Khan's manifesto and claimed that construction of more homes is the only answer to the housing crisis.

Paris does not paint such a dissimilar picture. Ever since Anne Hidalgo was elected Mayor of Paris in 2014, she has been battling to contain the surge of Parisian real estate prices and rents which is pushing families out of the capital and has resulted in a decrease in the population. In August 2015, she and her team introduced rental price caps in Paris to solve this housing crisis. Having been removed in November 2017 and then reinstated in July 2019, rent control remains central to Anne Hidalgo's 2020 campaign. By contrast, Rachida Dati, her main competitor, promises to put a stop to the current rent caps if she is to be elected.

Since their instauration in 2019, these obligatory rental price controls are formalised each year, and Paris is divided into 14 geographical sectors, each with their own average reference price for each category of residential property. Owners are provided with a maximum (20% above the average reference price) and a minimum (30% below the average reference price) reference rent price - any failure to abide to these regulations

results in a monetary sanction. Their purpose? To limit the increase in rental prices, to reduce those already too high and to ultimately halt the depopulation of the French capital.

On the adverse effects of rent control

During a time of political movements and campaigns, it's important to look back on the depoliticised research on rent control undertaken in San Francisco and Germany.

San Francisco itself was first subjected to rent control in 1994 and the effects in the short term were by and large positive: the majority of the tenants from the groups studied remained in the city and they were 10-20% more likely to remain in their current housing situation. However, in the long run, homeowners naturally attempted to remove their properties from the constraints of the rent price caps, leading to a 15% reduction in accommodation on offer, a general increase in the rent prices, and the gentrification of the affected areas.

The reason for the increase in rent prices was two-fold. First of all, there was an increase in the competition for the diminishing number of accommodation exempt from the rent control. Second, renovation works undertaken by owners in order to circumnavigate the rent control in turn improved the quality and therefore augmented the price of housing on offer. All in all, the city-wide negative consequences of the rent control greatly exceeded its benefits for the tenants.

Germany more recently implemented rent controls in 2015, and itself experienced short-term problems, in particular regarding the prices of non-capped accommodation. The artificial increase of the competition for housing subject to rent control encouraged high-income households to turn to housing outside this cap, therefore also inflating their rent prices.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

As both case studies indicate, Parisian and London voters should be aware that in the short-term rent control may be favourable for tenants but in the long-term it will increase rent prices and decrease the availability of accommodation, proving costly for future generations. Solution? Luque et al. 2019 and Luque 2020 argue in favour of tax credit for developers to encourage their investments in income-property and to prevent a reduction in the availability of affordable accommodation in the housing market, thus insuring the tenants against surges in rental prices through the housing supply channel.

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A perspective on impact of covid-19 on European business: The risks of de-globalization and the promises of regionalization

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Abstract

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the world's business landscape is potentially facing tremendous changes. The objective of this impact paper is to draw the attention to the largest European companies which could be particularly affected, by comparison with their counterparts in the economic triad. Based on the analysis of the top 25 multinationals in the Global Fortune 500 list, we see that European corporations are less present but more host region oriented than their competitors and less oriented towards the industries of the new economy. We conclude from this analysis that: (1) in the short run, Europe could be the main victim of a strong post covid-19 de-globalization wave; and (2) in the longer run, for future competitiveness, Europe would need to help champion new industries emerge with a solid regional basis.

Keywords: Covid-19, Globalization, Regionalization, MNEs

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A perspective on impact of covid-19 on European business: The risks of de-globalization and the promises of regionalization

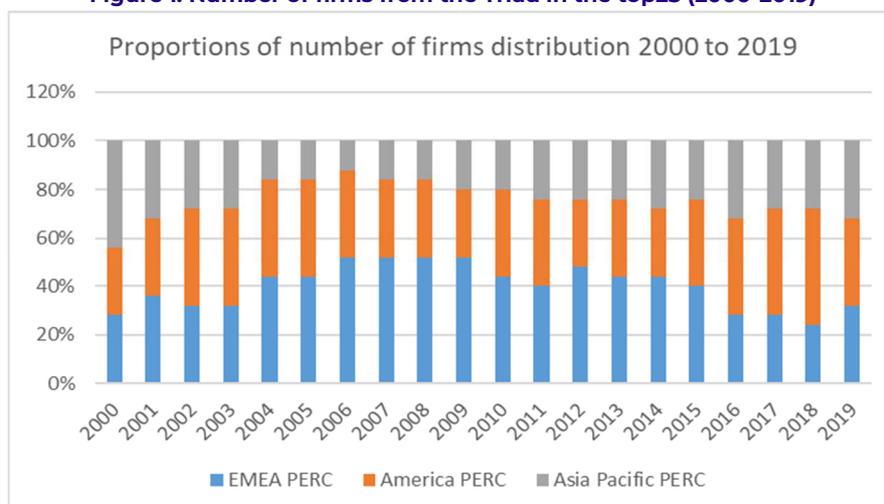
The purpose of this impact paper is to analyse the short term and long term effects of covid-19 on European companies. The analysis has been carried out by comparing the development over the past two decades with the status quo of the largest MNEs in Europe, Asia pacific and America. An important impact of covid-19 on the global economy is that it may lead to de-globalization. This paper will be divided into four section. In the first part, using the classification by Rugman & Verbeke (2008), we look into the geographical distribution of the world 's largest MNEs and the allocation of their aggregated revenues. We observe a certain decline in European presence. In the second part, we assess the geographic distribution of MNE's revenues across the triad in 2019. We find out that European countries are more exposed to host region markets. In the third part, we detail the main countries where the headquarters of these MNEs are located. In the fourth section, we look at the main industries of these MNEs in each region, as well as the trends of regional industries in recent years. We observe that the largest European companies are more active in the “old economy” industries.

Data source

Regarding data sources, we focus our attention on the top 25 multinationals from 2000 to 2019 in the Fortune global 500 ranking (Fortune, 2020). Furthermore, using the Orbis database and annual reports, we collect the geographic sales data of each company in 2019 in EMEA (Europe Middle East and Africa), Americas and APAC (Asia Pacific). The division of these three regions, namely triad, is first introduced by Rugman & Verbeke (2004), intended to facilitate information presentation by company and relevant levels of comparability, at the level of global business. This analysis is part of a wider research programme on globalization (Coeurderoy and Duplat, 2019; Verbeke, Coeurderoy and Matt, 2018; Yang, 2020).

A “retreat” of European firms among the top MNEs

Figure 1: Number of firms from the Triad in the top25 (2000-2019)

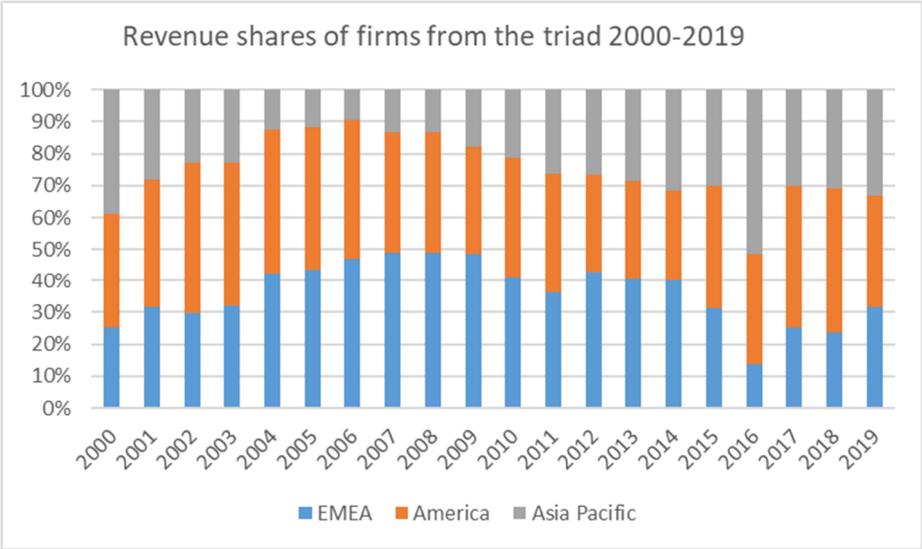


Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020)

First, we can see from the graph above, that the most prosperous period for European companies was from 2006 to 2009, when half of the top 25 in the Fortune 500 ranking were from Europe. But from 2008, following the financial crisis, Asian companies have gradually caught up their positions, while European companies have gradually disappeared from the list. In the last decade, we observe that the share of European MNEs comes back to the level of 2000 (around 30%) from around 50% at the end of 2000s. It seems that European companies have particularly suffered from the financial crisis. The situation of American companies is exactly the opposite of Europe. After 2008, the number of American companies gradually surpassed that of European companies. Contrary to what is so often claimed that Asian companies have been rising since recent years, their peak was 2000 (more than 40% companies in the list are Asian). In the past ten years, the progress of Asian companies has been slow, and so far has not yet reached the level of 2000.

However, the number of companies can only give us a limited view of the international competitiveness of each region, because the relative size of the company is also a factor that cannot be ignored. So, we add the revenues of companies from the triad, and calculate the percentages of the sum of each region from 2000 to 2019. In Table 2, we can see that the trends of annual revenue share from triad companies is more or less the same as the trends of the percentage of number of companies. From 2006 to 2009, the share of European companies' total revenue accounted for more than half of the world's total revenue, and had shrunk to 30% by 2019. Affected by the fall in oil prices in 2015, oil & gas companies such as BP in Europe experienced a significant decline in revenue in 2016.

Figure 2: Revenue shares of firms from the Triad in the top25 (2000-2019)



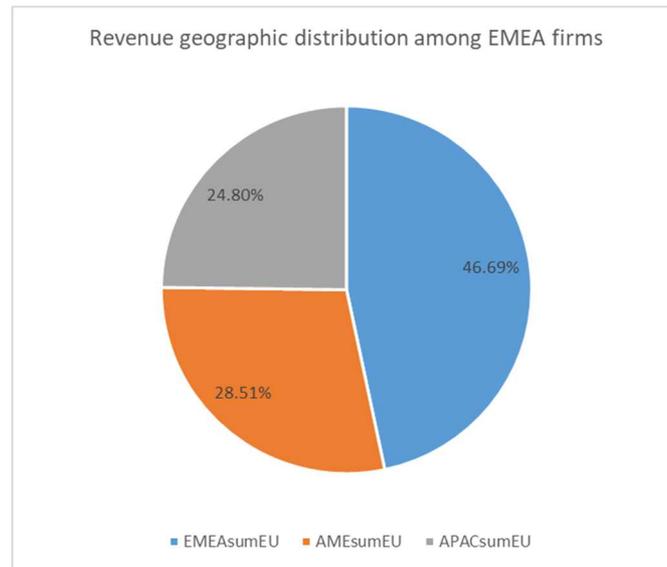
Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020)

European multinationals are more dependent upon host regions

Let's take a look on the geographic distribution of revenues for European companies (Table 3), American companies (Table 4) and Asian companies (Table 5). As shown below, 46.69% of EMEA's revenue comes from the European market. 28.51% comes from Americas market, and 24.8% of sales revenue comes from APAC. European MNEs are highly open to host regions. European firms are on average fully-fledged global firms. Following Rugman and Verbeke (2004) classification, global firms are defined as those with a balanced

distribution of sales across the world (i.e., having less than 50% of sales in their home region, and at least 20% in each of the two host regions of the triad of North America, Europe and Asia).

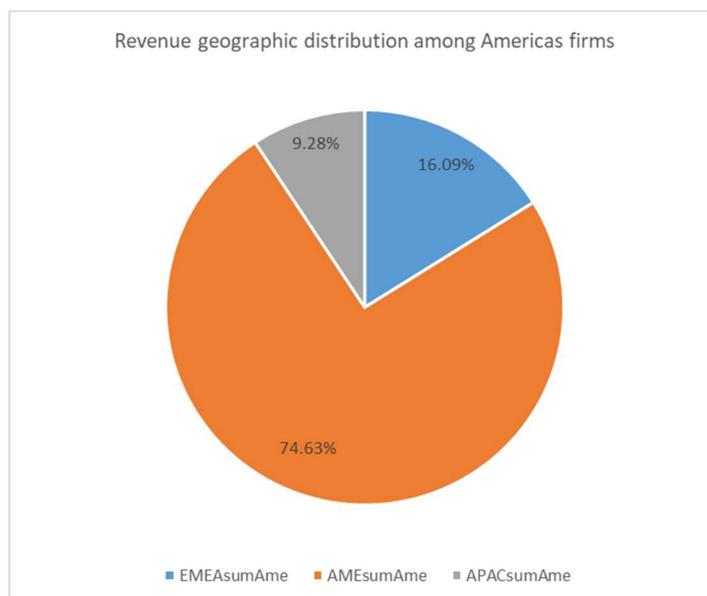
Figure 3: Geographic distribution of revenues by EMEA Multinationals



Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020) and company reports

For American firms, 74.63% of their revenues comes from the Americas market, 16.09% comes from EMEA, and only 9.28% comes from APAC. On the whole, US MNEs base their international competitiveness on a strong presence in the American region. They are in the main still home region based MNEs. Again, this observation is based on Rugman & Verbeke classification.

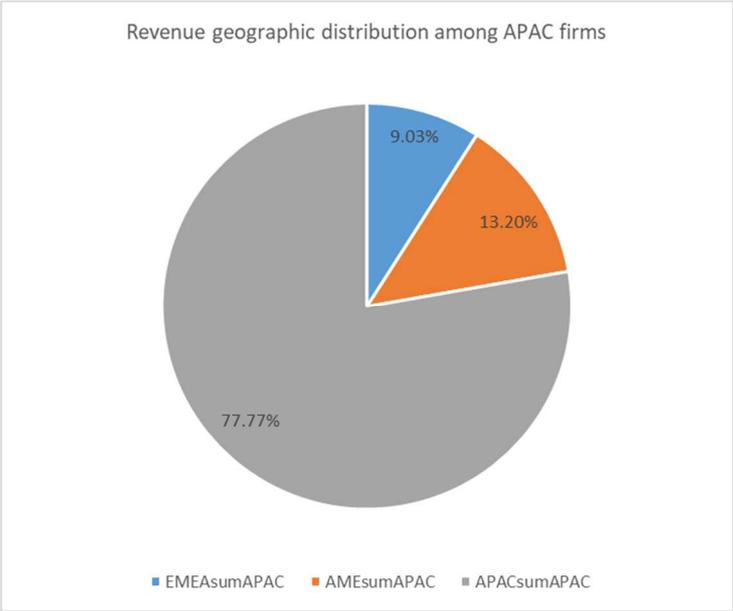
Figure 4: Geographic distribution of revenues by American Multinationals



Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020) and company reports

As for APAC firms, 77.77% of their revenues comes from APAC region, 13.2% comes from the American market, and only 9.03% comes from EMEA. It is worth mentioning that the rise of Chinese MNEs income mainly comes from China's domestic market. The presence of Chinese companies outside Asia is still very limited and does not directly compete with European companies.

Figure 5: Geographic distribution of revenues by Asian Multinationals



Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020) and company reports

From the comparison of the three figures above, from an aggregated or average point of view, we find that the revenues of European companies are more evenly distributed relatively speaking among the triad of the world, and that the majority of the income sources of Asian and American companies are both within their own home sphere of the triad. Basically, our findings, like those found by Rugman & Verbeke (2004), are that the world's largest MNEs, except for European companies, have an average of around 75% of sales within their home region. By contrast, European companies are over dependent on the host region market, with an average of only 46.69% of sales from the home region.

European multinationals are competing in more fragmented regions

From the chart below, we can see that from 2000 to 2019, the largest proportion has been the United States (except in 2000), and it continues to expand over the year. In recent years, American companies accounted for almost half of all positions. Only American companies appear in the ranking in the Americas.

Figure 6: Main countries of origin for the top25 MNEs (2000-2019)



Source: authors' calculation from Fortune (2020)

Secondly, Asian companies appearing in the ranking are mainly Chinese (out of eight Asian companies, four companies are Chinese), followed by Japan. From 2000 to 2003, Japanese companies shared almost the same share as American companies, but since 2004 till now, Japanese companies' share continued to shrink. By comparison, Chinese companies expanded rapidly, from 2005 to 2019. And since 2007, they have accounted for 10% -20% for each year.

The distribution in the European region is much more dispersed. From 2000 to 2019, a total of 25 countries appeared in the ranking. The share of European companies is relatively stable over time, and the top few are also those countries with the strongest comprehensive strength; that is, Germany, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom. Among all major countries, the proportions of Chinese and American companies are the most important, and are still growing.

Based on the observations above, we can infer that the company's international competitiveness is related to its domestic market. Larger domestic markets can not only permit the company to increase production scale and thereby produce economies of scale, but also to generate greater market diversity. Market diversity can promote the existence and development of niche market, thereby enhancing the comparative advantages of regional companies. From an institutional and cultural angle, similar systems and cultures help reduce transaction costs such as information search and bargaining costs, as well as the cost of monitoring transactions.

Previous studies have confirmed our observations. Arora & Gambardella (1997) pointed out that larger markets, by accommodating a larger number of firms, are likely to have market leaders that are more efficient than those in smaller markets, even in the absence of economies of scale. And the disadvantages associated with smaller domestic markets is even larger in activities that depend on product specific competencies than those based on generic competencies.

At the same time, global presence is being largely ignored, because it demands a huge investment in time and money. Even so, we should see that the extent and persistence of regionalization in economic activity reflects the continuing importance not only of geographic distance but also of cultural, administrative, and, to some extent, economic

distance (Ghemawat, 2005). The integration of European business is not only about promoting wider competition within the European market, but also the exploitation of cultural, political and economic commonalities.

European multinationals are more dependent upon the “old economy”

In 2019, there were eight European companies, including four oil & gas companies, two automobile companies, a holding company and a commodities company. Among the eight Asian companies on the list, there were two oil & gas companies, an electric power company, an automotive company, a consumer electronics company, a commodities company, a construction company and an electronic parts company. As for the American companies, there were three healthcare companies, a retail company, an oil & gas company, a consumer electronics company, a holding company, an e-commerce company and a telecommunication company.

From 2000 to 2019, among the top 25 companies, oil and automobile companies had always accounted for 60% -80% of European companies. American companies were also highly dependent on the oil and automotive industries before 2015 (40%-70%), but then quickly turned to emerging industries, such as healthcare, consumer electronics and ecommerce. The development of oil and automotive industries among Asian companies lagged behind, and we can see it was not until 2006 that Asian oil & gas companies began to appear on the list. There have been less major car companies in Asia than in the other two regions. And the high-tech Asian companies are mainly electronics and consumer electronics.

With the over concentration of industries, there is a risk. As we mentioned previously, the fall in oil prices in 2015 exerted a huge impact on European companies. Furthermore, industries are constantly evolving. In the past two decades, many industries have disappeared from and others appeared in the ranking. For example, from 2000 to 2003, there were several Japanese general trading companies, which later fell out of the ranking. Another example is the financial services industry, which emerged from 2000 to 2014, but disappeared after 2015. Other such industries include information technology, conglomerates, insurance, technology and banking. Some industries have always occupied an important share in the ranking, including oil and gas (especially from 2009 to 2013, the industry accounted for the largest proportion), automobile (though we observe a significant decrease in 2019), retail. In addition, there are several emerging industries, i.e. healthcare, holding, consumer electronics, commodities, and electricity. Among these industries, the rising momentum of healthcare and holding industries are especially obvious, but these emerging industries are concentrated within the United States.

The reason why we analyse the status quo of European industry is because covid-19 could lead to a radical, even irreversible change to the global economy. From an industry perspective, we can foresee a large number of innovations in the medical and biotechnology industries in the future. Moreover, due to the rapid rise in the demand for personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and tracing, and the surge for healthcare capacity, the related industries could experience rapid development. At present, these industries are concentrated within the United States. Europe should increase investment in these industries and plan in advance. Additionally, during this epidemic, we saw that car makers, like Ford, Tesla and GM have been helping to solve the shortage of ventilators and masks through the flexible production lines of their Industry 4.0 factories. This example opens up a perspective on the future of manufacturing development. The

production mode of Industry 4.0 will allow the production of various commodities to be answered through one single manufacturing facility. This may redefine the upstream and downstream of the supply chain. Countries may accelerate the adoption of the flexible production model of Industry 4.0, thereby reducing the dependence of key products on the international supply chain. This should be an opportunity for Europe to increase the investment of innovation through Industry 4.0 and increase exposure to the future of manufacturing industry.

Conclusion

This impact paper mainly investigates the current status of business internationalization by analysing the geographic origin and sales revenue distribution within the 25 largest MNEs in the world. Contrary to the widely adopted viewpoint of a highly globalized economy, we see that the degree of regionalization cannot be omitted, and will exist for a long time to come. Through analysis of the geographical distribution and income distribution of the triad, we see that European companies have the highest dependence on host regions, while Asian companies have the highest dependence on home regions. We believe that the dependence of European business on the global economy under certain circumstances, will create a vulnerability among European companies.

Based on the theory of transaction costs and economies of scale, market diversity, and previous empirical findings of significantly positive relationship between the domestic market size and company competitiveness, we believe that regionalization and integration in Europe, instead of market protectionism and isolationism, will help to improve the international competitiveness of European companies. As a conclusion, EU countries should be more united to form an integrated economy and larger internal market, in order to enhance the competitiveness of European companies.

Finally, yet importantly, by comparison of the triad industry distribution, we found that European companies rely heavily on traditional industries, oil & gas and automotive industries, which will increase potential systemic risks, such as the economic black swan event or destructive technological innovation.

We can conclude from this analysis that: (1) in the short run, Europe could be the main victim of a strong post covid-19 de-globalization wave; and (2) in the longer run, Europe for its future competitiveness will need to help champions in new industries emerge with a solid regional basis. We believe that European companies should definitively increase the efforts for investments that Industry 4.0 provides, specifically for the healthcare industry. Industry 4.0 could be a great opportunity for European companies to reinvest in regional manufacturing, and to be prepared to respond to the potential threats of de-globalization.

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How COVID-19 reshuffles the European innovation ecosystem

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Abstract

This impact paper first addresses how COVID-19 has challenged the European innovation ecosystem particularly the identities and doings of cluster organizations and the maker movement. Second, the paper discusses how the crises created bridges between these different worlds. Finally, we reflect more generally how the crisis might finally push the cluster ecosystems away from the predominant “Triple Helix” innovation model (composed of government, academia and industry) towards the “Quadruple Helix” innovation model (composed of government, academia, industry and civil society).

Keywords: Cluster, Maker Movement, Innovation, Trust, Civil society

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How COVID-19 reshuffles the European innovation ecosystem

Since the beginning of the 21st century, European countries have introduced cluster policies to structure and support their national innovation ecosystems (Galié et al 2013, Bonnafous-Boucher et al 2015). Before COVID-19, being a member of a cluster organization was the inescapable place to be for a company that wants to innovate and scale up in Europe. However, the social economy actors (such as for example cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations, foundations, and social enterprises) were quite absent from this ecosystem. Will this change after the crisis is over?

Under the current COVID-19 crisis, the cluster ecosystem is the place to be to have a head start on crucial information, be it about governmental aid programs, funding for urgent needed innovations or how to be useful for disrupted European value chains. However, the fast and agile response from social economy actors quickly challenged the “ivory towers” of innovation. Existing companies were still weighing the benefits and risks of changing their modes of productions while the maker movement was already able to propose innovative solutions (for example protective shields, ventilators) to help civil society, companies, or hospitals to face the crises. However, even though they were quick to innovate, the institutional environment for finding funding or accessing mass production were more difficult. The “European Cluster Alliance” and the “European Cluster Collaboration Platform”, crucial matchmakers since the outbreak of the crises, are now actively going towards these “free” and less “institutionalized” social economy actors. Even though their identities could not be further apart, both worlds recognize that they could benefit from each other.

COVID-19, triggering soul-searching for clusters and makers

The industrial policies of the beginning of the 21st century were inevitably linked with cluster policies around the world. In parallel, a more grassroots movement appeared: the maker movement. While the cluster approach is mainly driven by the wish to increase the competitiveness of established companies by improving their innovation capacity, the maker movement is mainly driven by an open sharing culture that focuses on community development and the improvement of society (Capdevilla, 2013). In the academic cluster literature, the amounts of patents registered in each region or the ability of cluster organisations’ members to access financial subsidies, are often indicators for clusters’ success. This could not be further away from the open source philosophy of the maker movement and their philosophy of a peer-to-peer approach in helping each other improve one’s skills and experiment with innovative technologies and production methods.

To schematize, before COVID-19, the cluster approach was already far advanced in its institutionalization process while the maker movement was still in its teenager stage, trying to collectively and openly experiment and explore the world. However, not surprisingly, a pandemic like COVID-19 suddenly propelled the maker movement overnight from a teenager to an adult. Not only their strong philosophy to help society but also their agility and open source approach, allowed them to innovate in a period that was not possible for established companies.

David Cuartielles, the co-founder of the Spanish Arduino platform, the world’s leading open-source hardware and software ecosystem, underlines that on day zero of the pandemic there were three possible options (ECCP Webinar, 2020): Either the

governments had the money to obtain existing equipment to deal with the crises (option A); or national companies got help from the public sector to ramp-up production or even modify existing production lines (option B); or finally civic society needed to step in (option C). Extremely fast, it was clear that option A was not enough, and option B was too slow to react. Due to the uncertain temporality of the crises, there was a lack of immediate innovation ability and willingness from companies. Stéphan Vérin, from the French Cluster Euramaterials, for example, explained (ECCP Webinar, 2020) that companies still thought about the bitter aftertaste generated by the Grippe A (H1N1) in 2009. In 2009, companies of the textile cluster in northern France reacted rapidly to the potential pandemic threat by innovating and setting up new supply chains for mass production in the mask industry. However, as the crisis did not unfold, after some months, all government investments were suddenly withdrawn again, and companies closed down or stopped the production of masks as everything moved to China where production was much cheaper.

In March, during the brief time lapse of uncertainty about the magnitude of the crisis, the Maker community started to step in at once. Overnight, they became the distributed manufacturing force to cover the urgent needs of medical professionals, but they also became one of the leading innovators for producing such urgent equipment faster and cheaper. For example, from the middle of March onwards, the volunteer group “Makers for Life” grouped together 250 people to try to conceive a cheaper and quicker way to produce ventilators (Vanzini, 2020). 20 people of this group even decided to group-isolate in the Palace, a local start-up incubator in Nantes, to develop the first prototype of the MakAir ventilator. Helped by the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region and the CEA (French public research body), the ventilator developed by the “Makers for Life” community was able to enter the preclinic test period and is waiting now for the green light of the ANSM (French equivalent of the European Medicines Agency) to enter the clinical testing period. Industrials are already ready to step in for large mass-production if the testing proves successful.

This process seems completely upside-down compared to the life within a cluster ecosystem where innovating is more a question of years than of one of months. Before COVID-19, getting funding through, for example, a French cluster organization is very often a struggle of several months (or even years). First, one must become known and trusted by the community through networking and then projects often need several rounds of submissions to be official labelled by a cluster organization and thus eligible for certain government funding. Additionally, the constant fear that during this period somebody else might reverse-engineer one’s idea is often present. However, once a cluster organisation has labelled a project, funding might be considerable. This goes hand in hand with being – from this point on – a trusted “insider”, a crucial element in cluster ecosystems.

The current crisis underlines antagonistic problems within the two universes: agility for the cluster ecosystem and institutionalism for the maker movement. In the past, the maker movement was always proud of being composed out of free electrons that work together and that strive to improve society. Their philosophy is rooted in openness and flexibility without any external influences. However, the current crisis also shows that accessing urgently needed funding is a difficult endeavour when one is not officially speaking with one voice. The maker movement undoubtedly stepped in where nobody else could have. However, David Cuartielles also underlines that this crisis has generated an identity crisis for the movement and that behind the scene a lot of fighting is going on, in terms of deciding which direction the movement should go (ECCP Webinar, 2020).

The agility and openness of makers might bluff the cluster ecosystem and the institutionalism of the cluster ecosystem might bluff the maker movement, but for both universes the current crisis might be the start of a soul-searching in the coming months. Since March 2020, the European Cluster Alliance (ECA) has created a small bridge between these two universes to learn and gain from each other.

ECA, building bridges between antagonistic worlds

In September 2019, during the Regional Economic and Diplomacy Summit in Warsaw, the European Cluster Alliance (ECA) was officially launched *“to give Europe’s clusters a common voice and promote the inter-cluster collaboration”* (ECCP News, 2020). The ECA is a bottom up initiative, launched by European national cluster associations (for example from France, Spain, Hungary, Romania) and currently grouping together 13 national cluster associations representing more than 740 European clusters organizations. The objective of the ECA is to generate *“synergies in collaborative approaches and speaking with a stronger, joint voice both at European level but also in dialogue with national and regional policy makers to seek more effective, fact-based policies to support the competitiveness of their members, in particular SMEs, through the use of clusters”* (ECCP News, 2020). The ECA operates in addition to the two more top down associations, namely the European Cluster Excellence Association (ECEA), focusing mainly on appraising and labelling European clusters, and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), concentrating mainly on mapping, connecting and supporting European clusters to find global partners.

However, nobody could have predicted that this newly-found association would play such a crucial role in the near future. On the 28th of February the ECA chose its board of directors and elected Antonio Novo Guerrero (chairman of the Spanish federation Clusters.es) as president. From March 1st, beginning with Italy, European countries, one by one, introduced restrictive measures and lockdowns to try holding back the pandemic. Conscious of the important role the cluster ecosystem can play in fighting the pandemic, the ECA agreed to create the European Alliance Against Coronavirus on the 23rd of March and launched it only three days later. A record for institutional reactivity. On the 27th of March, Antonio Novo Guerrero, the association’s president, started daily one-hour morning videoconferences, 7 days a week, and has not stopped since then. Convinced that the crises can only be tackled by openness and a shared leadership approach, all types of experts (coming from different universe such as civil society, clusters, social economy, public administration, academics, etc.) are free to participate and express needs or potential solutions to tackle urgent issues. With a very structured meeting framework, but at the same time with a very open and inclusive approach, ECA tries to tackle immediate needs (such as key technologies) but also back to work, skills & educational, funding or flexible value chain issues.

For example, EuraMaterials, the French Textile cluster, presented its experience of handling the crisis on the 2nd of April during one of the ECA’s morning meetings. One day later, the president of EuraMaterials had been contacted by the president of the ECA to send details about the new French regulations regarding masks. On the 8th of April, the Spanish Ministry of Industry published an official regulation enabling the French standards in Spain. A real success of reactivity for such a young association (ECCP Webinar, 2020).

The European Alliance Against Coronavirus brought a large spectrum of actors around a virtual table that didn't necessarily know each other or how to interact. The urgency of the situation allowed to put institutional and ideology barriers aside to participate in solving a common global crisis. Quickly learning from best practices in Europe and creating purpose-driven European networks were at the center of their preoccupation. ECA, thanks to a very engaged president, was able to create trust among the various distributed actors. Trust, which can be defined as *"the mutual confidence that no party to an exchange will exploit the other's vulnerability"* (Sabel, 1993) is normally difficult to create in economic spaces.

Historically, the cluster literature allocates a particular role to the managers that are animating cluster ecosystems to create bridges and relational glue between normally competing actors (Colletti, 2010). In the case of the ECA, this might be true as well. Two elements are particularly interesting and important to underline. First the ECA agreed to create the "European Alliance Against Coronavirus" in the middle of March where the word "cluster" is not visible. This underlines their wish to have a shared leadership approach, particularly integrating the social economic sphere as well. Second, the current president of the ECA is Spanish and in Spain the Maker Movement is particularly active and strong. Creating a bridge and link between the maker movement and cluster ecosystems was thus possibly easier than under other circumstances. Both elements might have facilitated the creation of small bridges between the maker movement and the cluster ecosystem.

Moving from a Triple Helix to a Quadruple Helix innovation model?

Since the launch of cluster policies in the 2000s, the main objective has been the development of breakthrough innovations by promoting interaction between universities, industry and government. This idea stems from the "triple helix" model (Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1998) where governments foster innovative environments that are favorable for valorizing and commercializing research and development from university spin-offs. The university and public laboratories became pivotal players in fostering knowledge-based initiatives through collaborations with (and between) firms (small and large) operating in distinct sectors and at different technological levels.

However, this triple helix model now seems, little by little, outpaced and less in line with the open innovation strategies of firms, which increasingly integrate not only other organizations but also users in their innovation process. Thus, instead of speaking of a triple helix (Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1998), Carayannis & Campbell (2017) propose the notion of a "quadruple helix" by adding users to the triple helix model. Within the quadruple helix, users are at the heart of innovation and innovation is meant to be at the service of civil society. This requires an open innovation strategy to stimulate user-driven design collaborations. However, for cluster ecosystems that are historically based on a triple helix model and often guided by patents and closed research circles within their established ecosystems the question of openness towards civil society and the social economy is difficult to tackle. The question of the future might be how to sustainably create a cluster ecosystem that is actively based on a quadruple helix model. A question that cluster managers will definitely need to address in the future is how cluster ecosystems can properly integrate civil society and social economic actors in their ecosystems, allowing them to express their agility without overwhelming them with the cluster's bureaucracy.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has led to a reshuffling of the European innovation ecosystem. The Maker movement, be it in Spain, France or elsewhere in Europe, was able to innovate in a record period of time to address urgent societal needs (for example ventilators, face shields). These free maker electrons had an agility where more institutionalized entities could not have followed. However, the free electrons were not able to speak with one voice which prevented them to access funding and support easily. The current crisis showed that both universes might need each other in one way or the other to advance tackling future challenges.

The deployment of the quadruple helix model, which had already started within certain clusters before COVID-19, has certainly accelerated since the start of the crisis. As the ECA example shows, a shared leadership approach seems particularly important to generate trust and collaboration across different universes. Additionally, we can observe that the major health and societal crisis is giving rise to an accelerated movement of deinstitutionalisation of clusters (for example ECAs informal daily morning meetings which are all recorded and accessible for whomsoever wishes) and institutionalisation of civil society actors (for example maker movement participating in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform Webinar).

In any case, after political responses from European countries were initially somehow not aligned and disorganized, civil society actors and cluster ecosystems were able to engage very quickly in a search for European solutions. Thanks to the framework provided by the ECA, they did not hesitate in working together across borders on a European level. An encouraging sign that our European identity is functioning at the roots and that this identity will survive in a post COVID-19 future!

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Rethinking the national system of innovative entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This impact paper focuses on consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic for higher education research and innovation and the entrepreneurship system. This impact paper shows through a bottom up approach, how this disruptive context calls for rethinking links between the components of this system while integrating new methods and approaches towards building a performant, impactful and sustainable national system of innovative entrepreneurship, consistent with the European strategy for innovation.

Keywords: absorptive capacity, knowledge creation, national system of innovative entrepreneurship, technological specializations, Europe

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Rethinking the national system of innovative entrepreneurship

The Covid-19 crisis has become a global and virulent pandemic with 4 million cases registered in 227 countries (according to WHO, May 3, 2020). In France, as in other European countries, this unexpected and disruptive context has undermined three pillars of development, namely the social, health and economic dimensions, with an increase in unemployment, the weakening of the social structure that threatens the spectrums of a long-lasting decline. This darker side of the crisis has consequently led the national public authorities to adopt a defensive strategy of job maintenance, substantial support to companies in order to avoid bankruptcies and financial support for health research in order to find a rapid and efficient scientific solution.

Beyond these dramatic facts, we are witnessing the acceleration of a change towards a technological paradigm which has affected all sectors, particularly that of higher education, research and innovation. This new paradigm has first and foremost forced adaptation, and secondly may lead to the unavoidable need to rethink the future of academia, the research and innovation sub-system, itself anchored within the framework of an innovation system, at the structural, organizational, coordination and funding levels, in order to improve its performance and sustainability.

To remind ourselves, an innovation system is composed of economic structures and public institutions whose actions consist in implementing a national innovation strategy, and in which the type and quality of interactions between its actors have impacts on the technological pace and trajectory of a country (Lundvall, Edquist, 1993). In this system, the education, research and innovation subsystem play a central role in ensuring productivity and strategic competitiveness. This subsystem is mainly made up of higher education institutions, research centres, transfer institutions, a network of companies and infrastructures that facilitate the resources allocation, coordinate actions and communicate in order to generate knowledge and transfer it towards innovative products and solutions.

A "glocal" model of higher education

Concerning higher education, this disruption has paradoxically allowed a rapid and accelerated adoption of digital technologies, ensuring the maintenance of distance education at the national level. On a more global level, this context has allowed a spontaneous opening up of online courses, free access to knowledge as well as a colossal sharing of experiences, of pedagogical and disciplinary methods. Therefore, it will be necessary to rethink and re-adapt the integration of virtual and hybrid teaching in student and teacher life, that has at this time been forced on institutions by the urgency of this unanticipated context, but which will probably be normalized in the future, making the digital tool an integrated yet structural part of teaching.

This outlook is all more crucial with regards to the European initiative "European University" launched by the European Commission and strongly supported by France to form, by 2025, European higher education and research around key themes, and which aims at ensuring the quality and excellence of higher education, improving the international and virtual mobility of students and all concerned stakeholders in higher education institutions, establishing transnational joint programs and diplomas between

the university partners forming these alliances, and by integrating advanced pedagogies as well as the use of the latest technologies.

Adaptation must therefore be extended to the adoption of digitalization in an intelligent way towards a pedagogical excellence, the expansion of knowledge, student mobility and that of the teaching community. This implies rethinking the business model of higher education institutions for the future. There are no immediate nor accurate solutions to these questions, but possible streams for exploration should be considered, particularly: How can higher education institutions maintain their national identities while opening up to the world through digitalization?; Must they be transformed into “global” institutions, while maintaining their local roots? These questions should be analysed in conjunction with the research and innovation component, since it is above all a global and systemic process.

The sovereignty of the national research and innovation system....

In the field of research and innovation, the covid-19 crisis was connected with a large, accelerated and multidisciplinary flow of exchanges, with wider sharing of information and scientific knowledge, facilitated in particular by the 'use of digital technologies such as high computing, complex and sophisticated digital programs, thus ensuring the processing of condensed streams and instantaneous data. These digital engines have above all allowed virtual cross-border scientific collaborations, breaking down the physical frontiers between regions within a single country, and between countries, in a spirit of solidarity and as a single human identity.

From a systemic perspective, the context plays a pivotal role in the innovation process, notably in phase of knowledge accumulation. This crisis shows the role played by the enlargement of scientific sources of knowledge accumulation in accumulating external knowledge, in developing collaborative knowledge and in producing new knowledge that will allow proposing an innovative solution to eradicate the virus. The global dimension will benefit from being supported and integrated into a better structured collaborative framework that would facilitate its dynamics and performance over the long term.

The context of this crisis has mobilized an armada of researchers with a diversity of scientific backgrounds and with multidisciplinary skills, including epistemologists, engineers in hard sciences, biologists and many others as well as practitioners, who have pooled their knowledge, their disciplinary and technical skills to gather, share and produce new knowledge in order to find solutions to the health and social issues of the more broadly global virus Covid-19. What the French president of the republic said when he declared on March 24 that *"... I have gathered today our best researchers in diagnosis and treatment. Our efforts in research will be totally mobilized in the combat against the Covid-19 virus.*

From the cognitive perspective, this crisis has highlighted the virtues of the dynamics of accumulation and production of knowledge processes, through virtual interactions between researchers from different horizons and from different countries, and has contributed to fuelling the process of cumulative learning, particularly with exploratory learning, learning by transformation and learning by exploitation (Narula, 2003; Lane et al. 2006) and interactive learning, that have consequently allowed dynamic feedback mechanisms and internal adaptations that fuel an innovation process (Ben Slimane, 2011). The effects of these broader social interactions on the accumulation of knowledge, reveal the need to support these mechanisms to improve scientific agility, to ensure a better

coordination and communication, as sources of development of absorption capacity (Zou et al, 2018), supporting smart learning and the creativity of collaborative networks in order to overcome future social, environmental and technological challenges, in a spirit of cooperation.

The technological specializations for the future

From the strategic perspective, it would be important to ensure continuous national technological sovereignty over areas that would constitute French specializations for the future. But from a systemic point of view for the innovation process, it is necessary to support the national anchoring of research and innovation in order to be able to benefit from the wider interactions. Indeed, the production of new knowledge is not systematic. It depends on the presence of a sufficient and renewed knowledge basis and on the existence of human capital, who through its skills, its productive abilities and its experiences, contributes to the development of a technological absorption capacity (Ben Slimane, 2011). These drivers of absorptive capacity must be supported within the framework of the national plan for research and innovation, which had already described the national strategy for research and innovation for the future ten years, including support for exchanges between public and private laboratories, the opening up of research and innovation efforts for better coordination between the actors.

This context informs us of the need for more sustained and substantial investment in resources and tools to allocate to scientific research but also R&D, in order to support the development of strategic specializations in key sectors (technological, social or environmental) and support the various forms of research and innovation be it driven by market needs, to advance science, to respond to social, environmental or health challenges, or to remain at the forefront of technological advances and disruptions. Particularly, targeted infrastructure and financial resources around strategic and future themes should be provided towards national technological sovereignty over the long term and thus, with national specialization, France could be better involved in a European specialization strategy.

..and innovative entrepreneurship

The final link in the education, research and innovation system is transfer, which relies heavily on innovative entrepreneurship. Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship becomes critical and must be culturally anchored in order to break down the dichotomy between the components of the system. At the higher education level, entrepreneurship must be extended as well as for university students, as for engineering schools and grandes écoles. Students should be specially trained towards entrepreneurial culture, entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurial skills. In addition, interdisciplinary collaboration through collaborative projects must extend to the humanities and social sciences in order to promote the detection of entrepreneurial opportunities and ensure the transfer of research results, transferring them to the market.

Government policies aimed at encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives must be strengthened and structured around sectoral research priorities. This involvement should be converted into targeted incentives, in particular administrative and legislative reforms as well as the substantially financial support of innovative entrepreneurial activities (Mani 2011) as well as developing financial tools and private networks to campaign for them in the prototyping phase, the seed stages, and the product development stage. Public policy

should also develop appropriate regulatory and legal systems, but also financial support for innovation and R&D (Autio et al. 2014). This vision involves sustainable private funding by providing substantial support (spaces, equipment, incubation or acceleration structures, mentoring, advice, funding, etc.) thus contributing to the creation of economic value and jobs.

A high-performance national system of innovative entrepreneurship should highlight the symbiotic relationship between the triptych of entrepreneurship, innovation and development by supporting the possible synergies and potential complementarities between the actors of the system (Ben Slimane, Mhenni, 2020). In this perspective, the interaction between the various components of the system should contribute to meeting the challenge of transferring knowledge to the market, creating new innovative entrepreneurial opportunities, and scientific and technological specializations enhancing the employability and competitiveness of the national system of innovative entrepreneurship.

Conclusion: towards European expansion

The structural and operational upheavals deriving from the context of this crisis call for the unavoidable need to rethink education, research and the innovation subsystem, towards setting up French specializations for the future as well as subsequent investments. This exploration should not be dissociated from the European research and innovation plan (2021 to 2027) aiming to develop clusters of multidisciplinary European higher education, research and innovation, focused on key areas, and that aim to be strategic, innovative and inclusive, taking into account environmental and technological societal issues with a final goal to strengthen European identity and its positioning in research and innovation, and its global competitiveness.

This global approach must be preceded by a nationally localized approach, which strengthens the performance of an innovative national entrepreneurship system and which is consistent with the dual Euro-French identity, in order to benefit from a system of broader partnerships, allowing the transfer of ideas to the market to be ensured and the development of innovative entrepreneurship activities in Europe to be supported.

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Rush for resources or preservation of common goods? Two scenarios for managing resources in the Anthropocene era

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic is being apprehended by many experts as one of the symptoms of the Anthropocene, the new geological era characterised by the structural impact of human activities on the dynamic of our ecosystems. While the Anthropocene era will accelerate crises and pressures on the natural heritage, what approach will our economic and managerial systems take to natural resources? Two scenarios are possible: an acceleration of predatory dynamics, a grab for natural resources, leading to an acceleration of the ecological crisis and a radical increase in inequalities, or a reasoned political choice to adopt a model of moderate energy and resource consumption, preserving our habitat and thinking about the commons.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Covid-19, Ecosystem, Circular economy, Resources

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Rush for resources or preservation of common goods? Two scenarios for managing resources in the Anthropocene era

Covid-19: a disease of the Anthropocene era

While the Covid-19 epidemic is generating inordinate impacts and is severely affecting every country in the world, recent history has been marked by other illnesses – HIV, Ebola, avian flu, and SARS – that have the same origin: cross-species transmission from animals to humans. These are thus all 'zoonoses' or zoonotic diseases. For many experts, the multiplication of zoonotic diseases can only be explained by the growing footprint of human activities on natural ecosystems: deforestation, extraction of fossil fuels, overexploitation of land, etc. The IPCC (2019) special report on climate change and land use points to the fact that the destruction of ecosystems brought on by the extraction of natural resources (minerals, fossils, agrarian, animals, forests, etc.) is the origin of increasingly frequent cases of zoonotic diseases being transmitted to humans. The 2019 IPBES report, the equivalent of IPCC for biodiversity, has exactly the same thrust. These scientific observations call into question the assumption that the current pandemic is a 'microbial invasion' and suggest instead that it is one of the consequences of the 'human invasion' of natural ecosystems (Shah, 2016). In other words, Covid-19 is a disease of the Anthropocene age. First theorised by Paul Josef Crutzen, winner of the Nobel prize in chemistry in 1995, the Anthropocene era, whose etymological meaning is 'the Age of Humans', is a controversial but powerful concept. It refers to a new geological epoch that would have begun around 1750 (Industrial Revolution), following the Holocene – the interglacial geological era marked by stable average temperatures around 15°C over the past 12000 years. Since the Industrial Revolution, the human footprint on ecosystems has become so large that it is producing a veritable geological impact on the biosphere and the terrestrial system. Some scholars use the term 'Capitalocene' to point to the capitalist and extractivist mode of development based on the exploitation of resources by large corporations, deemed to be the source of observed dysfunctions in ecosystems (Bonneuil, 2017). Zoonoses are appearing as one of the multiple consequences on natural ecosystems of the unbridled extraction and exploitation of natural resources that characterise the current dominant economic models (Bednik, 2019). The Anthropocene era is also marked by the interconnectedness and internationalisation of economic systems, embodied in global value chains that are structured by reserves of natural resources, competencies and the availability of low-cost labour. This international connectedness has obviously contributed to the rapid propagation of the virus around the world.

As the Anthropocene era accelerates crises and pressure on the natural heritage, but also the spread of these crises throughout human societies, how will the Covid-19 crisis transform our relationship with natural resources?

Two trends are already discernible

Certain long-term trends already appear to be taking shape concerning the post-Covid world capitalism dynamic. First of all, large companies and countries have become aware that organising global value chains on just-in-time principles has consequences other than economic optimisation; such chains are also a source of fragility and create new dependencies between countries and companies. We can therefore expect that countries

and companies will take a lesson from the crisis and will try to reduce their exposure to such supply chain risks and will seek to increase their control over resources, such as energy resources, and their food sovereignty.

Second, it seems that we are entering a new era in international relations. Although combatting the Covid-19 crisis calls for stronger international cooperation, as well as international aid to help the weakest countries, we are witnessing, on the contrary, the legitimacy and financing of the WHO being called into question by the United States and other countries. Against a backdrop of rising nationalism over the past several years, we can expect to see increasingly interventionist government actions becoming generalised in an international context that is less predictable, less coordinated and less 'free market', with a rise in regional, bilateral and national logics.

Third trend: resources that are currently abundant and therefore inexpensive, though obviously threatened, such as wood, water, energy or sand, will become scarce in the coming decades. Is this future so far away? It is hard to say exactly, but the tensions on numerous resources are already visible. The example of rare earth elements, vital for the electronics industry and green energies is already well documented. Sand, which is omnipresent in our daily lives (essential for many industries such as construction and glassmaking), is the second most exploited resource after water, but one whose availability is increasingly threatened by the growing demand. Desert sand, which is available in large quantities, is unusable as it is too fine. Various sources have warned of a shortage, as maritime extraction threatens coasts and ecosystems, and sand 'mafias' are taking root in different countries (Hackney et al., 2019).

If constraints linked to natural resources are destined to exacerbate in the coming years, how are we going to manage scarcity and rethink our relationship with resources? To continue Bruno Latour's (2017) line of questioning, the question we are facing in the Anthropocene era is 'Where to land?' and above all 'How to land?'. Let's imagine two fictional scenarios, from the future vantage point of 2035, of how natural resources may be managed in a post-Covid world.

Scenario 1: Like before, but worse... Tensions and a rush for resources

To combat the economic and social crisis caused by Covid-19, the vast majority of countries have sought to jump-start national consumption and get their economy moving again using tried-and-tested growth models. Coming to the rescue of the industries most severely affected by the crisis, whose economic weight was considerable, companies and governments have more or less consciously sought to revive former growth models, characterised by high energy consumption and ever more rapid product turnover in a logic of intensive innovation. While these efforts have not managed to restore growth and consumption in a lasting way, they have spurred a sharp rise in global energy consumption and pressure on resources, exacerbated by continued demographic growth at the global level.

In colliding ever more forcefully with planetary boundaries, these growth modes have only intensified anthropogenic pressures on ecosystems. This accelerated erosion of nature and the multiplication of climate crises has taken on such proportions that the habitability of the planet is called into question in several parts of the world. From an economic perspective, the period has been marked by massive natural resource appropriation. Indeed, whenever there was no substitute for a resource that is indispensable for basic needs (water, wood, sand, agrarian resources, rare earth elements), the growing scarcity

of resources made them ever more strategic, generating competition between companies and also between countries to safeguard their supplies and/or benefit from an economic rent. Diplomatic warfare and economic warfare have gradually merged, with a return to stronger forms of state interventionism, resulting in the nationalisation of companies and more robust use of influence than in the past.

We have also witnessed an upstream shift in the locus of potential sources of value in production chains — the exact opposite of the process observed in the previous two or three decades in the West, which had seen most companies selling off their productive assets to lighten their balance sheet and focus instead on immaterial activities (brand management, marketing, distribution network).

The economy has thus gradually become rationed by increasingly limited resources, monopolised by a small number of firms and countries. In this economy in which supply is rationed by the decreasing availability of natural resources, successful companies are now those that control natural resources. Owing to the astronomical rise in prices for indispensable natural resources, the situation has obviously become increasingly unequal and conflictive, between individuals, social groups and countries. In 2035, the vast majority are subjected to moderation, while the remaining powerful enjoy an increasingly costly final feast.

Scenario 2: Landing in the Anthropocene – resilience, moderation in resource use and preservation of the natural commons

The Covid-19 crisis triggered an awareness of the extreme vulnerability of our economic, social and natural systems. Many countries around the world quickly set in motion an ambitious plan to reduce exposure to these new risks. Launching an ambitious industrial strategy, they pursued two clear objectives: regaining sovereignty over all vital aspects of their economic systems (entailing business relocation) and also switching to low or non-carbon-based energy sources and coming up with models based on a much more moderate use of resources. Economic activities were relocated, especially in the area of agriculture and raw materials, but not as before. Alongside the sacred cow of GDP, public decision makers quickly integrated a new indicator to guide policy while taking risks into account: the ‘resilience indicator’. Developed by an interdisciplinary panel of biologists, climatologists, ecologists, sociologists, managers and experts in geopolitics, this resilience indicator measures the exposure of economies and societies to the risks of the Anthropocene era.

More sustainable models, hitherto embryonic, became the norm. Anticipating natural resource crises, businesses and government reorganised the economy on the basis of circular principles, aimed at moderation in resource use. The implementation of these models – conceived in opposition to linear, extractivist, energy-consuming capitalism – allowed countries to gain time and to contain resource crises and their environmental and social impacts. Naturally this did not occur without friction and it was necessary to take determined action, to establish a hierarchy of priorities, and to make difficult trade-offs in order to achieve this goal of moderation. The introduction of a new system of taxation for individuals and businesses was a decisive undertaking to tax the use of certain resources, to finance necessary investments and to make the transition socially acceptable. An ecological transition revenue was introduced to rethink social justice in a context of increasingly scarce resources and rising energy and transportation prices – a potentially explosive situation from a social point of view.

By the end of this painful yet necessary transition, entire sectors had been transformed. For example, owning a private car became too expensive for most households. The norm now is renting or car sharing. The construction sector has massively shifted towards the thermal renovation of housing. Entire sectors such as digital technology and transportation have been reoriented to pursue moderation. Agriculture has been reorganised around the principles of agro-ecology, permaculture, and other approaches that are less resource intensive. The creation of local 'technological loops' has also made it possible to rethink the economy for a post-global value chain world and to restructure key sectors at the local territorial level (healthcare, electronics, clothing, furniture). This new territorial industrialisation, which must further reduce its energy consumption, is characterised by new employment opportunities in the areas of maintenance, product service and repair, and the reconditioning and recycling of raw materials and products.

These transformations did not occur in a uniform way. At the international level, the pressures on resources and ecosystems have not disappeared, but they have diminished and that is already quite significant because it preserves the habitability of the planet and limits geopolitical conflicts. Not every country and business has adopted these models at the same pace, but those that have done so soon found themselves less exposed to social and environmental crises than their neighbours who remained in the old paradigm. Countries and businesses have gradually followed suit in adopting the new models. At the international level, the 'Alliance for the Anthropocene' was formed to revive international cooperation and provide it with a common framework. After having formalised a set of rules, laws and market regulations aimed at a more reasoned use of resources, member countries established a framework to jointly manage 'common bads' (pandemics, ocean plastics, global warming, etc.) in solidarity with each other. Furthermore, they launched an initiative to rewrite the law on global common goods in order to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity and take them out of the commercial sphere. Finally, a new vision of resources is taking shape: not only perceived and managed as an appropriable good, but as an inalienable common good to be preserved.

To make a landing... rebuild economic institutions, law and the concept of resources

These scenarios are fictional. As such, rather than adopting a truly predictive logic, their aim is to help us envisage possible futures.

Scenario 1, which takes the form of a dystopia, appears unfortunately to be the most likely given the current mechanisms for restarting the economy to cope with the post-Covid economic and social crisis. Scenario 2 describes a more desirable though admittedly utopian path. How might a utopia be made possible and where should we begin?

The conditions are multiple, but we can identify several priorities. The first urgent matter is to reform our economic institutions, and in particular our vision and our tools for measuring progress. Our political, financial, and social institutions are all structured around the dogma of GDP growth, an indicator whose numerous limitations were pointed out by Kuznets (its creator). GDP absolutely does not take into account negative impacts on our natural heritage, because the depletion of natural resources and their waste are treated in accounting terms as value creation. Similarly, it is completely blind to exposure to the risks of the Anthropocene era (Raworth, 2017). To 'rediscover the meaning of limits' (Papaux & Bourg, 2010), it is necessary to switch lenses and to enrich our vision with other indicators (O'Neill et al., 2018). A composite indicator of resilience to the risks of the

Anthropocene era remains to be invented, but it should be a priority in reshaping our relationship with resources in a post-Covid world. Such indicators should not be the preserve of governments, but should also be diffused and adapted at the company level, at the heart of strategic thinking and organisational management.

The second challenge is to reorient the market, rejecting the idea that the 'free market' can respond to issues of resource depletion. Indeed, the market only values the scarcity of resources, not their preservation – even less so their restoration. This difference is fundamental: when a massively exploited resource becomes rare, it means that its depletion is already very far advanced. It is useless then to think that market mechanisms alone will be able to restore supplies of that resource, which are governed by biological and geological timeframes that quite distinct from the market's time horizons (just think that it takes several hundred years to form a grain of sand through erosion). At most, the market may prompt the emergence of substitutes, if they exist or may be developed.

Finally, a third challenge is to rethink the mechanisms of international governance and to transform the institutional legal framework relating to the environment. Achieving such a process, which is undeniably complex and ambitious, would entail a veritable transformation in our understanding of what constitutes a resource, as a common good, and abandoning the anthropocentric bias in our relationship with nature (Descola, 2015).

In addition to measures implemented through a strengthening of the role of government and regulations on different geographic scales, the governance of business also needs to be rethought to move beyond the dominant model of shareholder governance. This model operates through the appropriation of value by shareholders to the detriment of other stakeholders – more local and rooted in their territory – who have an interest in the preservation of local resources. The role of hybrid governance forms, cooperatives, associations, and family businesses with a commitment to the long term and in search of resolutely multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder performance will be more and more decisive.

Conclusion

With its promise to identify more resource-efficient, profitable business models, the circular economy has enjoyed great popularity in recent years in economic and political circles. Innovative and promising models have been identified thanks to the circular economy. However, these models remain embryonic and operate on a scale that is insufficient to face current challenges.

The future scenarios exercise initiated in this article through the use of fiction allows us to put forward two messages. First, the goal of generalising the circular economy and moderation in resource use is currently hindered by the circular economy's lack of a real institutional structure, a backbone made up of laws and indicators integrated in the management of companies and economic systems.

Second, the circular economy is often defined as an economy of resources. We must nevertheless raise questions about the future of the circular economy in a post-Covid world in which the issues of resource access will become ever more acute. Will the circular economy become an economy of *resource scarcity*, at the risk of intensifying predatory behaviour and the race to grab resources, or an economy of *resource preservation*, which promotes common goods at the global and local levels?

These different elements converge on the idea that in a post-Covid world the horizon of the circular economy will shift: not only the identification of business models, but a profound transformation of our economic, managerial and social institutions. This is what it would take for the circular economy to help us avoid an emergency landing or a crash into the Anthropocene era and allow us to shape the conditions for a negotiated landing.

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Corporate social responsibility beyond philanthropy? Sustainable and responsible business in times of Covid-19

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Abstract

This impact paper examines the role CSR may play in helping businesses respond to the Covid-19 crisis in a sustainable and responsible manner. Beyond the "CSR-as-usual" that many companies resort to as a short-term response to the crisis, the paper explores the potential of sustainability-driven multi-stakeholder approaches as a means towards medium- and long-term resilience.

Keywords: CSR - sustainability - systemic change - stakeholder management

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Corporate social responsibility beyond philanthropy? Sustainable and responsible business in times of Covid-19

The world is currently facing a unique and unprecedented crisis and no one at the moment is able to predict how long it will take for the economy to recover. As for the social consequences of this pandemic, causes for concern are mounting every day.

A striking phenomenon in the developed world has been the renewed legitimacy of the State as the main engine of economic recovery. Public authorities today are granted the leading role, not only when it comes to health matters, but also regarding social and economic policy.

This re-embeddedness of politics is no doubt a turning point in recent history. Yet this does not mean that the private sector should not take on its responsibility regarding the pandemic. Large companies, especially multinational firms, have a decisive role to play, all the more so in most of the developing world where national governments, for various reasons, are not in a position to provide adequate responses. A study conducted in 2018 and based on a rigorous methodology demonstrated that two-thirds of the world's top 100 economic entities were companies vs less than one-third national governments.⁴⁹

As a matter of fact, be it in the developed or developing world, it should be borne in mind that multinational firms draw in their wake hundreds, sometimes even thousands of SMEs — suppliers, subcontractors, often family businesses, scattered around the world. Hence the crucial role of big business in providing adequate responses to the crisis.

This impact paper focuses on CSR and its crucial role in the current situation, not only as a much-needed short-term response, but more importantly as a catalyst for systemic change in the medium to long-term. The rationale behind this is that the business world definitely needs to move away from "CSR and business as usual" in order to engage in sustainability-driven policies, eventually leading to deeply transformed business models.

The short-term response

Although CSR has become a buzzword in management, it remains a fuzzy concept taking very diverse forms. From its emergence in the 1950s in the U.S. to its internationalization, first in Europe in the 1990s, then across the world in the 2000s, CSR practice has evolved from ethical to utilitarian motives to more recently sustainability-driven strategies. Yet, by and large, the prevailing form of CSR around the world remains the most traditional one, based on ethics and philanthropy, in other words, "CSR as usual".⁵⁰

"CSR as usual"

When looking at the current CSR responses to the pandemic, it comes as no surprise to see that the traditional philanthropy-based form of CSR largely prevails.⁵¹ Based on the universal "give back to the community" principle, this type of CSR is an easy way for businesses to offer a quick and effective response. It allows them to provide a direct

⁴⁹ See Babic, Heemskerk & Fichner, "Who is more powerful? States or corporations?", *The Conversation*, July 2018.

⁵⁰ On the history and development of CSR, see Delbard, 2020.

⁵¹ This is confirmed by recent surveys such as Globescan's "purposeful leadership in a time of crisis" (April 2020). Retrieved on May 7, 2020 from <https://globescan.com/purposeful-leadership-time-of-crisis/>

tangible benefit to society while enhancing the company's reputation and image. As a result, many companies have been seen donating surgical masks and other types of PPE (personal protective equipment), setting up emergency relief funds or providing relief packages.

Interestingly enough, while corporate philanthropy remains by and large a valid response to the emergency,⁵² several large companies, especially in Europe, have rapidly taken one step further by adopting a collaborative approach, focused on specific categories of people impacted by the pandemic.⁵³

"Stakeholders have names and faces and children"

"Stakeholders have names and faces and children. Executives and academics, especially, must understand that business is fully situated in the realm of humanity. " (Freeman, 2010)

The current crisis is raising fundamental questions, such as the relevance of our prevailing business and management model, i.e. the shareholder value maximization model, as exemplified by Milton Friedman's famous/notorious statement, *"the sole responsibility of business is to make profits"* (Friedman, 1970). Is it still "socially conceivable" to claim that the sole focus of CEOs and top managers should be on the company's shareholders and their financial expectations?

The stakeholder theory that emerged as a counter-model in the 1980s but remained to a large extent an empty shell, due to its inherent flaws and poor effectiveness,⁵⁴ is finally taking concrete shape. As Freeman⁵⁵ (2010) put it, stakeholders should not be viewed as abstract constructs but as fully-fledged human beings, which particularly resonates in the current traumatic context. Consequently, the aim of management ought to be pursuing objectives shared by all key stakeholders, thus enabling the usual trade-offs to be avoided. The fact of adopting a more holistic view of the company's ecosystem and balancing out the respective interests of stakeholders has been exemplified by the debate over the distribution of dividends. Surprisingly enough, the fact of cancelling the distribution of dividends this year was largely supported not only by unions and social activists, but also by political and economic leaders. As a result, 35% of the French CAC 40 companies have decided not to pay any dividend, while 35% are cutting them and 17.5% maintaining them.⁵⁶ The point here is not to name and shame, but to view this question as a unique opportunity to rethink value creation from a stakeholder perspective.

Several companies have shown great responsiveness by adopting specific measures for their stakeholders. To take some of the most significant examples, local businesses engaged in their territories as well as global giants (in the car and manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, textile industries, etc.) rapidly shifted their production lines to

⁵² Even though philanthropy is subjected to many criticisms such as its lack of efficiency and limited time horizon.

⁵³ With some (often) new generation CEOs being quite vocal in the media on this necessity (e.g. Danone's Emmanuel Faber or Accor's Sébastien Bazin).

⁵⁴ It is indeed a firm-centric approach focused on bilateral relations between the firm and its different stakeholders so that it does not clearly take into account the interactions between stakeholders (whose interests and motives may vary a lot). Nor does it propose a viable managerial approach to finding a common approach to managing these diverging interests (see for instance Delbard, 2020).

⁵⁵ Generally considered to be the father of stakeholder theory.

⁵⁶ Retrieved from Zonebourse.com on May 8, 2020. This question is quite complex since companies may decide to cancel, cut or maintain dividends for diverse and possibly opposite reasons (financial situation, socially-oriented view or not, etc.). In addition, some may decide to cancel dividends this year and distribute twice as many next year...

contribute to the collective effort. Regarding employees, several large multinationals have displayed their sense of care by securing income and benefits to all of their employees across the globe.⁵⁷ The same goes for payments to suppliers and the commitment to accelerate the payment process.

The table below summarizes some of the most common measures taken towards 4 key stakeholders.

Table 2: Examples of Stakeholder-driven policies

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSES	EXAMPLES
GOVERNMENT	MODIFYING PRODUCTION LINES	supply of PPE (ventilators, masks, hydro gel, etc.)
EMPLOYEES	EXTENDED CARE	secured income and benefit package to all employees
CUSTOMERS	SERVICE & ADVOCACY	access-free content, information and advice, adapted solutions
SUPPLIERS	COMMITMENT	honouring payment obligations, long-term commitments

Looking beyond: the need for systemic change

The whole world is expecting a rampant recession with massive drops in GDP, waves of business failures and lay-offs and worsening poverty levels, among other consequences. Some have already pleaded for the return to a Friedman-like business-as-usual scenario, meaning a deregulated business environment allowing for flexibility and freedom of action.

One key lesson from the current crisis is that many companies are not following suit. On the contrary, some are even pledging to reinforce their long-term vision aligned with economic, social and environmental sustainability objectives. Aware of the difficulties they will face in the months to come, they are keen on maintaining a long-term vision based on a strong stakeholder-oriented view. Some even claim that the crisis could help them be stronger in the future.

These positions are representative of a new approach to CSR that developed in the wake of the emergence of sustainable development in the 1990s.⁵⁸ Within a few years, the pressing importance of sustainability challenges led to a fundamental repositioning of CSR. Elkington (1997) developed and popularized the triple bottom line approach, Porter & Kramer (2006, 2011) had a major influence on business practitioners in demonstrating that by moving away from traditional philanthropy and aligning it with general strategic objectives, CSR could be a driver for new competitive advantages, eventually contributing to creating value for the company as well as for the society (the "shared value" concept, 2011).

⁵⁷ See for instance Danone's commitments (official press release, April 21, 2020).
⁵⁸ With the 1987 U.N. Brundtland Report followed by the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

A distinctively European approach (European Commission, 2011)⁵⁹ advocates the *integration* of social, environmental and human right concerns into the company's strategy and operations. CSR then means sustainability for the business world. By embedding social and environmental issues into their strategies, companies are gradually transforming their value chains and business models, eventually "politicizing" their role in society, as described by the political CSR school of thought.⁶⁰ According to the CSR integration pyramid below, they have reached the third and final stage, that of "strategic CSR".



Figure 1: CSR integration pyramid (Delbard, 2020)⁶¹

Here again, the current pandemic has brought about numerous debates and discussions over the necessity to further embed sustainability into our ways of production and consumption. Surveys and the media stress the attention given by consumers to local/national production, while the issue of healthy and traceable products is more acute than ever. Global value chains, with their inconsistencies and absurdities, are being strongly challenged and the cost-driven obsession questioned in the face of health, social and environmental challenges. The potential links between the pandemic and our predatory behavior on the environment are also being highlighted.

Long-term vision and purpose

The stakeholder perspective definitely pushes businesses to reinvent themselves. Among all the pressing issues, sustainability-driven CSR appears a necessity for the post-Covid 19 world since "CSR as usual" is most likely to be viewed as superfluous expenses that are not contributing to the recovery or to value creation.

Although it may seem counterintuitive to some, only a long-term vision will enable companies to overcome the crisis and adapt to a rapidly-mutating world. The difficulty lies in the ability to cope with short-term challenges while looking ahead. Looking beyond requires visionary leadership and a sense of purpose, i.e. the ability to balance profit and the *raison d'être* of the company, i.e. its contribution to people and the planet.

This inevitably pushes companies to rethink their business models, with priority issues such as governance and organizational models (*how to shift from shareholder-based to stakeholder-based governance?*), supply chains (*how to transform global and dispersed supply chains into local and sustainable ones?*), product/service portfolios (*how to be*

⁵⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0681>

⁶⁰ See for instance Scherer & Palazzo, 2007. Political CSR is structured around neo-institutional and stakeholder theories.

⁶¹ This pyramid comprises 3 levels of CSR integration, 1) short-term and "peripheral" philanthropy, 2) the compliance stage when companies start formalizing and internalizing CSR by adopting processes, norms and standards, based on a risk-management approach, 3) strategic CSR corresponding to the embeddedness phase leading to a profound and disruptive value chain transformation process.

more sustainable thanks to the products/services offered? How to disengage from unsustainable activities and remain profitable?).

Over the last few years, the need to put forward a sense of purpose has gained in visibility and legitimacy, thanks to initiatives such as the B Corp label,⁶² already granted to almost 3,000 companies⁶³ in 60 countries. In the legal field, several countries have created new forms of business, such as benefit corporations in several States of the U.S., community interest companies in the U.K., *entreprises à mission* (mission-driven companies) in France,⁶⁴ *Società Benefit* (benefit companies) in Italy, to name a few.

In any case, one of the most intricate challenges is how to find the best compromise between economic, social and environmental concerns. Indeed, the current pandemic entices businesses to focus on the economic and social dimensions, given the dramatic impact of the crisis on poverty, livelihoods and employment. Meanwhile, climate change and other vital ecological concerns such as biodiversity loss or resource scarcity are still critical and should not be overlooked.⁶⁵

Change has already been under way over the last few years: several large companies are currently striving to embed key CSR issues into their strategic visions and operations. Under pressure from consumers, citizens or regulators, they are engaged in innovative circular inclusive approaches, and are redesigning their product portfolios and supply chains. Our assumption is that these companies are better equipped to face the current crisis and overcome it.

A new mindset for renewed corporate legitimacy

At the end of the day, the ability for companies to act as fully responsible and sustainable actors largely depends on a much less visible dimension, which is the need for a shift in mindset.

Indeed, businesses need to learn how to abandon the well-established profit-driven short-term view and adopt a balanced “profit and purpose” perspective, which requires empathy, transparency and acting for the common good in the long-term.

This obviously requires a radical rethink and redefinition of relations with stakeholders, based on cooperation and care. How to engage employees by demonstrating empathy and benevolence? How to be more transparent and committed towards consumers? How to be capable of meeting the needs of lower-income people while focusing on quality and sustainability? How to engage in long-term trust-based relations with suppliers? How to collaborate with government on general interest causes? How to be able to sit with NGOs at the same table to share common objectives?... All these questions need to be urgently addressed.

Once again, we are fully aware of the challenges ahead, and perfectly know that the “more than usual business” scenario is the most likely in several cases. Nevertheless, in this

⁶² A U.S. private label born in 2006 (based on a stringent methodology) promoting companies which manage to balance profit and purpose, i.e. fully integrate social and environmental objectives into their business models and products/services.

⁶³ Among which brands such as Nature et Découvertes, Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, Natura or Ecover.

⁶⁴ See Levillain & Segrestin, 2019.

⁶⁵ The temporary “positive” impact of the crisis on the environment is nothing else but a dangerous lure. At the same time, it may help boost environmental awareness among citizens.

momentous period, the ability of private actors to roll out responsible and sustainable strategies could prove to be a decisive differentiation factor in the longer run.

Seen from a European standpoint, this much-needed paradigm shift will not be made possible without the support of two main actors: government and public decision-makers on the one hand, consumers on the other. Without clear signals sent from public actors and without our decisions as consumers to change our consumption habits, the private sector might be driven back to the old "the business of business is business" slogan.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to stress how relevant CSR was in the current context in helping businesses fully take on their responsibilities towards society. The second key objective was to show that the transformation of CSR from the traditional short-term philanthropy to a sustainability-driven strategy is absolutely necessary, as a means to enable businesses to overcome the crisis and think long term. In addition, this shift in mindset and paradigm will not be made possible without a complete overhaul of the way companies interact with their stakeholders. The pandemic serves as a catalyst since businesses, more than ever, need to think of their role in protecting and caring about their employees and the community at large, and act accordingly.

Finally, as a business school professor, I am thinking of this new generation of fresh graduates looking forward to entering the workplace: I know from experience that a large majority is looking for companies offering them meaningful and purposeful missions so that they can feel they contribute to providing sustainable solutions to our planet and its people.

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Spain, the Best Health System in the World?

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Abstract

This impact paper aims to review health care and its implications for personal finance decisions in the new light of the post-Covid19 facts in Spain. In 2017, we published two articles entitled "El mejor sistema sanitario del mundo... ¿en España?" ("The Best Health System in the World... in Spain?") in the blog of OpSeeker, a fintech start-up that aims to improve people's financial health. The message in the title was a very popular one among certain politicians, so we decided to explain why it was not true and what the disastrous personal financial implications of this lie were. As things turned out, in February 2020 as the Covid19 crisis was starting in the country, Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez stated openly that Spanish citizens did not need to worry because they were perfectly protected against Covid19 for this reason. The facts were to show the great error of this, with disastrous consequences for our country (Jiménez, David 2020).

Keywords: Personal Finance, Insurance, Covid19

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Spain, the Best Health System in the World?

In February 2017, we published two articles in OpSeeker titled "El mejor sistema sanitario del mundo... ¿en España? (I/II)" ("The Best Health System in the World... in Spain? (I/II)"). This message was a very popular one among certain politicians in Spain, despite of the OMS ranking us in 23rd spot in the world in that same year (Ortega, Eduardo 2017), and since we felt that this fallacy could have negative consequences for the financial health of our readers and users, we were obliged to write about the situation and its possible disastrous financial implications.

OpSeeker

OpSeeker is a Spanish fintech start-up founded in 2016 by two ESCP alumni (one of them is Gonzalo Camiña Ceballos, co-author of this paper), an ESCP Finance Professor (Carlos Casanueva Nárdiz, co-author of this paper) and an engineer. On its webpage, OpSeeker states: "A clear mission: to nudge our users to manage their money maximizing their financial health... What We Do: Build online tools to help financial institutions prepare and drive individuals towards better financial habits." Over the past 4 years, OpSeeker has achieved some important accomplishments related with these objectives. For example, in July 2018 OpSeeker won the Metlife Foundation Inclusion Plus Competition for the best start-up in Spain and Portugal focusing on financial inclusion, which included a €40,000 donation and a trip to New York to participate in the Metlife Financial Inclusion Summit.

Pre-Covid19 status quo

Insurance products play a key role in improving people´s financial health in many ways. For this reason, we wrote two articles in 2017 for OpSeeker: "Los seguros, el gran instrumento para mejorar nuestra salud financiera (Insurance, a great instrument to improve our financial health)" and "Los seguros y la lotería: el Ying y el Yang de las finanzas (Insurance and the lottery: the Ying and Yang of finance)".

Specifically, health insurance issues have a huge impact on personal financial prosperity. For example, long-term investment decisions must take account of our personal health insurance plan for our old age, because it is during those years that the most money will be needed.

Before the Covid19 crisis, we were facing an important problem. Despite the great necessity of discussing the Spanish healthcare situation, both public and private, it was very difficult to have this conversation because Spaniards were contaminated by the political mantra that Spain had one of the best health systems in the world. By doing a quick search with the keywords "España mejor sistema de salud público del mundo", it is easy to find articles dating from the 2010s about how Spain has the best healthcare system in the world, despite the lack of facts to support any such claims. We decided that we had to speak out against this lie. The way we started the article sadly proved to be premonitory:

"The Best Health System in the World... in Spain? The title of this post takes us back a few years to when it was popular among Spanish politicians to say that Spain had the best financial system in the world. It now seems that this statement was not exactly true. Will the same thing happen with the health system?"

Nowadays, it is very common to hear politicians saying that Spain has one of the best health systems in the world. However, at OpSeeker we don't think like that. We believe the situation is complex and the solution is bad... The implications of this situation for our personal finances are huge..."

Post-Covid19 experience

We did not think that something like Covid19 was going to be the issue that would make the problems of our healthcare system salient, but it has been. It therefore seems interesting to analyse the problems we identified in 2017 in the new light of the Post-Covid19 experience in order to try to discover new possible solutions.

We will begin by reviewing some private health insurance industry issues and then the some public health system challenges.

Private Health Insurance Industry issues

In the OpSeeker publication of February 2017 we highlighted the following issue:

"... the private health insurance typology changed in Spain at the end of the 20th century. Health insurance was no longer a tariff-level system in which, by contract, premiums could only increase by inflation each year. It was replaced by annual renewable health insurance contracts... the problem with this is that the price increases exponentially on approaching old age, when the coverage is most needed and people are not able to pay for it... losing their coverage when is most needed.

But the worst part is that Spaniards are not aware of this problem. This tariff technification, as it was called in the insurance industry, was not explained to customers... It is interesting to note that in many other countries, like Germany, Netherlands or USA, health insurance is taken out under a life coverage contract, eliminating the price increase risk as you get old. Of course, this explains why insurance companies in these countries have set aside billions in provisions in their balance sheets to face future liabilities."

On Saturday March 14, the Spanish Government declared a state of emergency and the private health system was then placed under the command of the public health system. If you were an old Covid-19 patient, it might happen that you were not prioritized for access to an intensive care unit, despite the fact you were paying for and held private insurance, due to the overflow from the public health system.

If Spaniards were not covering their old-age health and financial risks sufficiently with private insurance before, they are unlikely to be keener to do so now after the Covid19 crisis. Is it really smart to save money via a health insurance policy throughout your life in order to protect your finances in old age if you have seen the Government seizing your rights when they consider it necessary? It is probably less interesting than before the crisis.

Therefore, Spaniards will likely see the public health system as being the solution, even more than before the crisis. We will therefore review some challenges in this area.

Public Health System Challenges

We published a post on this topic in OpSeeker in February 2017:

“... on this complex topic, we will simply dare ask some questions that worry us... First question: We worry a lot about the pension plan system due to the age pyramid problem, but is it not even worse for the health system, because it is in old age that most of the health costs arise?... Second question: Nowadays there are already huge budget issues that are being managed through waiting lists... what will happen 15 or 30 years from today with the increase in demand resulting from age pyramid pressure? Will the waiting lists be longer?... Third question: ... it looks as if there are certain groups in Spain with more social power, who have the ability to solve waiting list problems. These groups know how to navigate their way through the system... Should the public health system not be equally good or bad for everybody?... Is it sustainable to have a system in which people try to find pragmatic shortcuts to the normal procedures?...”

In the Post-Covid19 area, at least one thing is true. Nobody believes the “Spanish best health system” mantra any more. Hard facts have revealed the reality to Spaniards. Tough as this may be, we believe it is a huge step forward, and probably the first one toward finding truthful solutions for the country’s health system and solving one of the most challenging financial problems people are facing.

Conclusion

Due to the Covid19 crisis, the message from politicians that Spain has the best health system in the world has disappeared as hard facts have proved it was not true. As a result, Spaniards are now much more likely to demand a profound and serious debate about present and future health challenges. This should have very positive personal financial implications for everybody. Due to the Spanish population’s experience during the Covid19 crisis, it is likely that the solutions will probably rely more than before on the public health system, with all its challenges, and less on a private insurance industry which was already weak before the crisis and has suffered a loss of credibility after it.

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“The world is changing so rapidly I have little time to be astonished.” Some reflections on Leadership in High-Tech for addressing tectonic shifts and fault lines in our Society

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Abstract

This impact paper proposes that the current situation generated due to Covid-19 can qualify as a mimetic representation of the endogenous and exogenous forces governing relationships in our Companies and Society; it contributes to dissolving established structures of binary classifications; it invokes reflecting on the structuring of economic and political power in companies and in Society and it requires the leaders at the helm of High-Tech to get involved in civic matters and in new approaches to contributing to societal discourse. This work addresses some of the fault lines and puts forward propositions.

Keywords: Covid-19, Leadership, Mindset, Decision making processes

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“The world is changing so rapidly I have little time to be astonished”

Some reflections on Leadership in High-Tech for addressing the tectonic shifts and fault lines in our Society

This impact paper proposes that the current situation generated due to Covid-19 can qualify as a mimetic representation of the endogenous and exogenous forces governing relationships in our Societies. Some observers suggest that “it will make [the Global Financial Crisis] 2008-2009 like a flesh wound”⁶⁶ and that many businesses will be “shut forever; jobs ... don’t return. ... businesses won’t open again.”⁶⁷ It is certainly an exogenous shock of unwarranted dimensions. It has been affirmed that there is not “any comparison [with past cycles as] ... past cycles have all been financial whether the Great Recession or whether 2008-2009 ... the question was ‘when do we get financial recovery?’ When we go back to 1973-1974, 1981, 1990, which were all financial [crises] ..., but this is a challenge we have no frame of reference for ... and the scale of it is just enormous. ... the problem is universal ... we don’t have any frame of reference ... we can go back to ...”⁶⁸

At the same time, the outcomes are - and will be - shaped by the decisions taken by our leaders. There is no determinism. It has been noted that it is “very dangerous to believe that technology is deterministic. ... in the twentieth century, [leaders] used the same technologies to build communist dictatorships and fascist regimes as well as liberal democracies. They all used [the same technologies], but in different ways. So, the new technologies [of our 21st century] can do good things like improve our healthcare ... and we can keep it focused on that and prevent its abuse. It can be prevented.”⁶⁹ It has been suggested that “[i]t is undoubtable, however, that the new technological revolutions will gather momentum in the next few decades, and will confront humankind with the hardest trials we have ever encountered.”⁷⁰ The decisions made by our leaders will influence our future and whether our companies, and in turn our Society, will come out of it in a better shape is not given, but is something “every [company; Society] has to earn every day by how it behaves ... [as] pandemics expose all your strengths and weaknesses.”⁷¹

Our leaders’ response depends on their mind-set, decision-making processes, and operating routines and will define the way in which our companies and Society will come out of this situation. This *impact paper* discusses how mind-set and decision-making processes play a role in contributing to dissolving established structures of binary classifications; structuring of economic and political power in companies and in Society and requiring the leaders at the

⁶⁶ Mohamed A. El-Erian on Yahoo! Finance on April 30, 2020: “El-Erian: We will have the worst recession since the Great Depression”, source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9HvukE56yM>; Minute 00:32-00:36; accessed on May 10, 2020.

⁶⁷ Lloyd Blankfein, former Goldman Sachs chairman and CEO, on May 7, 2020, on "Squawk Box" of CNBC Television: “Former Goldman CEO Lloyd Blankfein on reopening the economy, PPP loans and more”, source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0tJvI3fRZg>; Minute 03:02-04:18; accessed on May 10, 2020.

⁶⁸ Sam Zell, chairman and founder of Equity Group Investments Inc on Bloomberg interviewed by Erik Schatzker on May 5, 2020: “Billionaire Sam Zell on Market Valuations, Real Estate, Post-Virus Economy”, source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tR9qd65EBnc>; Minute 02:56-04:12; accessed on May 10, 2020.

⁶⁹ Yuval Noah Harari on May 5, 2020 on BBC HARDtalk: “Coronavirus: Yuval Noah Harari, philosopher and historian, on the legacy of Covid-19 - BBC HARDtalk”, source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfVrin7Ybp8>; Minute 16:09-17:00; accessed on May 20, 2020.

⁷⁰ Yuval Noah Harari (2018). 21 Lessons for the 21st Century. Jonathan Cape: London: page 17.

⁷¹ Thomas Friedman on India Today on April 28, 2020: “India Today eConclave: Thomas Friedman On Battle Against COVID-19, Post-corona World”, source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxQdO_Hl6pA; Minute 04:24-04:37; accessed on May 10, 2020.

helm of High-Tech to get involved in civic matters and contributing to solving societal difficulties.

Leadership Mindset in response to Covid-19

Endogenous and exogenous forces govern the reactions to Covid-19. In academic discourse, the term “mindset” has multiple conceptualizations, with scholars debating whether there are multiple mindsets, how they operate, and how they differ from goals and attitudes (Freitas et al., 2004; Murphy and Dweck, 2016; Rucker and Galinsky, 2016). Mindset can be characterized as a complex belief/knowledge structure that, when activated and accessible, has consequences for preferences, goals, choices, and behaviors (Freitas et al., 2004).

Exogenous shocks require firms to exhibit the ability to absorb new knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Todorova and Durisin, 2007; Zahara and George, 2002). Piaget, for example, suggested that the development of systems of meaning is just as important as logical thinking in shaping behavior (Piaget, 1928/1969). Cognitive science discusses how development of new cognitive structures follows two alternative processes: assimilation and transformation (Marshall, 1995). When the new knowledge fits existing cognitive schemas well, it is assimilated. When the new knowledge cannot be assimilated, the cognitive structures must be altered and “firms transform their knowledge structures when knowledge cannot be assimilated” (Todorova and Durisin, 2007: 778).

The situation created by Covid-19 is set to require leaders and their organizations to transform their knowledge structures. For example, fitness trackers could be used to fight against Coronavirus; the collection of data on heart rate and respiratory rate, their activity, and sleeping patterns might enable to detect changes taking place days before outbreak.⁷² Companies that have been set up to exploit personal data in order to maximize shareholder value are now collaborating with Public Health Care institutions. Already before Covid-19, digital tools have changed how people engage with healthcare and organization, as the *Nuffield Council on Bioethics* pointed to ethical dilemmas that need to be addressed.⁷³ Executives who exhibit a mindset based purely on rent appropriation and lead their organizations by assessing the value of an individual in its customer base, based on the future cash flow streams she/he can generate, will encounter criticism and provoke public backlash even given the presence of benefits of tracking.

The leaders of High-Tech companies are starting to face challenges and public backlash. For example, the Federal Trade Commission sued Facebook back in 2012 over eight privacy violations, stating that Facebook made deceptive claims about users’ ability to control their personal data. In a recent settlement in April 2020, the judge, Timothy J. Kelly of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia noted the “unscrupulous way in which the United States alleges Facebook violated both the law and the administrative order is stunning” given Facebook “willingness to deceive its users outright, such as allegedly telling the public that it would not share their personal information with third parties when it was continuing to do so.” He stated that “Facebook purportedly acted improperly”. He noted that the complaints about Facebook “call into question the adequacy of laws governing how technology companies that collect and monetize Americans’ personal information must treat that information. But those concerns are largely for Congress; they are not relevant here,” Judge

⁷² Zolfagharifard, Ellie (2020). Testing equipment is in short supply. Could our fitness trackers help to fill the gap? *The Daily Telegraph*. April 11. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/04/11/fitness-tracker-could-help-reveal-have-coronavirus/>

⁷³ Nuffield Council on Bioethics (2010). *Medical profiling and online medicine: The ethics of ‘personalised healthcare’ in a consumer age*. Nuffield Press, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, U.K.

Kelly wrote, adding that if it happened again, courts “may not apply quite the same deference to the terms of a proposed resolution.”⁷⁴ Even the Editorial Board of the *Financial Times* stated that “[t]he algorithms that control content ... should be open to scrutiny.”⁷⁵

The economic power of data is unquestioned and gains significance in the situation triggered by Covid-19. At the same time, it is the case that Covid-19 might contribute to the consolidation and control of data in automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, media, advertising, retail and even autonomous tech in the hands of few (Chinese and U.S.-based) firms. Societies will find it difficult to accept that individuals contribute to advancing social benefits and the social good by sharing their private data in order for those companies to use this data - shared for advancing social benefits - to maximize their private rent seeking. The leaders of companies cannot confine their role in Society to maximizing shareholder value. Leadership is required to understand the relevance of civic contributions in order to obtain and maintain societal acceptance of their conduct. It is rather this kind of mindset which addresses the situation provoked by the Coronavirus, more than the property of technologies and their usefulness, which will define company success.

Decision-making processes in the face of Covid-19

Covid-19 puts the established decision-making process in many firms in disarray. Strategic decision processes create a context for innovation helping firms remain competitive in their businesses (Hart, 1992). The value of a processual approach has been shown for research on organizational ambidexterity, paradoxes, and innovation (e.g., Burgelman and Grove, 2007).

The situation triggered by Covid-19 contributes to uncovering unquestioned routines and tacit concepts which guide human practice in firms. By becoming explicit it makes them accessible for questioning. At the same time, the contingency of the existing and plurality of the alternative interpretations becomes obvious (e.g., Feyerabend 1987, Rorty 1989). There's research studying whether the factors proposed by prior theorizing are implemented by managers in their daily practices in their attempt to do so (Durisin and Todorova, 2012); it suggests that firms are at the risk of becoming exposed to a second-order competence trap. This involves the application of managerial tools like, for example, “cycle of bandura,” or the “pyramid of resistance” that might have been appropriate for a specific managerial task in another context but which are not appropriate for the nature of the specific managerial task in such very different circumstances.

Companies' information flows, decision authorities, and decision-making process have been set up for different contexts. For example, Emmanuel Faber, chief executive of Danone SA, noted in April 2020: “All our systems used to be lean and mean and super-optimised for efficiency. Suddenly all that gets blown up [due to Covid-19] ...” Not surprisingly, he told his executive committee: “Forget the three-year plan. It doesn't exist anymore. Just get through the next 10 days, then the next month, and so on.” Further, he changed the company's information flows, decision authorities, and decision-making process. Ten days into France's lockdown, Mr Faber set out by car from his Paris apartment; over the next 14 hours and

⁷⁴ Nanos, Elura (2020). Federal Judge Stunned by Facebook's 'Unscrupulous' Violation of the Law, Warns of Much Deeper Problems. *Law & Crime*. April, 24; <https://lawandcrime.com/lawsuit/federal-judge-stunned-by-facebooks-unscrupulous-violation-of-the-law-warns-of-much-deeper-problems/>

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⁷⁵ The Editorial Board (2020). Facebook's content proposals are too weak. Stringent regulation needed to ensure removal of harmful content. *Financial Times*, February 19. <https://www.ft.com/content/7812f150-525e-11ea-90ad-25e377c0eelf>

roughly 600km, he checked on how employees and operations were holding up.⁷⁶ At Danone as for other companies, for all the reactivity of the last few weeks with its hundreds of changes, there is no end in sight.

If leadership reacts by dedicating more time and effort to the same decision-making processes they run the risk of being very efficient but helplessly ineffective. In the context of Covid-19, the contradictions between argumentation and explanation provided, are often uncovered; this crisis brings to the surface the implicit and tacit or even unconscious dimensions of practice. The Covid-19 situation can present an opportunity for systematic interpretation of these contradictions.

While many companies are doing so, it must be clear that this has to be actively pursued. Awkwardly, it is not sure that High-Tech leaders are widely doing so. For example, recent events at Facebook give a picture of opinions being ignored if they are not in line with the leader in charge – and not only, but also, since the events provoked by Covid-19. Long-time independent director Erskine Bowles, White House Chief of Staff during the Clinton administration and former president of the University of North Carolina system, left the board in April 2020. After his departure, Mr. Bowles privately criticized Facebook leadership for failing to take his advice on politics, according to a person who had direct knowledge of what he said. Mr. Bowles declined to comment. In October 2019, it was announced that Susan Desmond-Hellmann, Facebook's lead independent director of several years standing, was leaving the board. She conveyed to some people that she left Facebook in part because she didn't think the board was operating properly, and that Facebook's management did not consider the board's feedback, as was stated by an insider. Reached for comment April 2020 after the announcement of her joining the board of Pfizer Inc., she said Facebook's press release was accurate. Recently Chris Cox, chief product officer, a long-time friend of Mark Zuckerberg⁷⁷ and viewed as a potential successor to him, unexpectedly stepped down after 13 years. Mr. Cox worried that recent modifications would impede detection of criminal activity such as terrorism and child trafficking, according to people who had been briefed on the matter. It has been reported that in the wake of the Federal Trade Commission settlement Mark Zuckerberg and Marc Andreessen, one of the longest-serving directors, were "at each other's throats." Mr. Andreessen expressed his frustration to some about whether Facebook would be able and willing to comply with the terms and considered leaving the board. A spokeswoman for Andreessen Horowitz declined to comment. In mid-March 2020, days after the coronavirus was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, Facebook announced that Kenneth Chenault, the former American Express Co. CEO, would be leaving the board. He and Jeffrey D. Zients, a former economic adviser to President Obama, had spearheaded a group of independent directors who started holding separate meetings several months before, worried that their perspectives were being dismissed as Facebook faced regulatory difficulties, other people familiar with the matter stated. Mr. Chenault joined since the Berkshire Hathaway board replacing Bill Gates. As was noted in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Mark Zuckerberg is "navigating this moment without key advisers who might be able to help him spot potential pitfalls"⁷⁸ It is not to be neglected that the new people joining the organization may well be new voices enabling to

⁷⁶ Abboud, Leila (2020). Culture war: How Danone kept making yoghurt in the pandemic. *Financial Times*, April 27. <https://www.ft.com/content/e8245a0a-773d-4666-9c44-132bd21c88f1>

⁷⁷ Kuchler, Hannah (2018). Facebook: the court of King Mark. Mark Zuckerberg is taking control of Instagram and WhatsApp to protect the 'prized child'. But are his team up to the challenges? *Financial Times*, September 28. <https://www.ft.com/content/3ad4b4a4-c303-11e8-8d55-54197280d3f7>

⁷⁸ Seetharaman, Deepa and Glazer, Emily (2020). Mark Zuckerberg Asserts Control of Facebook, Pushing Aside Dissenters; The 35-year-old tycoon has recast the company's board of directors and sought a high-profile role for the social-media giant in the Covid-19 pandemic. *The Wall Street Journal*, April, 28. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mark-zuckerberg-asserts-control-of-facebook-pushing-aside-dissenters-11588106984>

foresee such potential pitfalls; this will of course only occur if those people are not friend, or indeed friends of friends, or persons who were previously on the payroll of Mark Zuckerberg. If such is the case, these new voices joining will only reinforce the current practices rather than enable the firm to expose unquestioned routines and tacit concepts which guide managerial decision making and practice.

The situation generated by Covid-19 is dissolving established structures. This creates a vacuum to structuring economic and political power; in firms, it may contribute to making unquestioned routines accessible for questioning. If not followed up, the abilities that drove firms to being successful will instead become core rigidities (Leonard-Baron, 1992). Leaders at the helm of High-Tech are encouraged to undertake a structured evaluation of self-evident boundaries and routinized activities, establish new links and relationships, and get involved in new approaches to contributing to societal discourse.

Firms not engaging in such activity are at risk of becoming exposed to a second-order competence trap. It is the strategic decision-making processes the leaders establish more than the depth of technological advancements - within and across domains - that will be a factor of company success.

Concluding comments

Thirty years ago and shortly after the Berlin Wall came down, Václav Havel addressed the U.S. Congress in early 1990. This happened less than four months into his new role of President of Czechoslovakia, before even Czechoslovakia held its first free elections in 44 years. He stated: "The human face of the world is changing so rapidly that ... in the flood of work, we have literally no time even to be astonished."⁷⁹

Many leaders will feel the same in face of the massive number of activities needed to be taken up and performed as a response to Covid-19. Many will feel overwhelmed. We can build, as we hope this article does, an argument why in this new situation leaders in High-Tech will have to become more involved in civic issues and why with Covid-19 hitting their companies, leaders should aim at getting involved in new approaches to contributing to societal discourse, too.

The responsibility to carry this out is up to the leaders and it is their actions that will define whether in the end they are only out for themselves or not. Their actions will count. It is not Covid-19, but their reactions that will demonstrate whether humanistic leadership practices have been set in motion and whether there will be change for the better in the sphere of us as human beings.

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⁷⁹ Václav Havel (1990). Vaclav Havel's speech to [U.S.] congress. *The Washington Post*, February 22. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/02/22/text-of-havels-speech-to-congress/df98e177-778e-4c26-bd96-980089c4fcb2/>

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Robots in daily life: A post-Covid-19 perspective

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Abstract

This impact paper offers an overview of how robots equipped with AI may influence various sectors after the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, the paper focuses on the education, retail and hospitality, and healthcare sectors. The paper argues that as robots' intuitive and empathetic intelligence capabilities improve, there will likely be an increase in robot applications in the aforementioned sectors. The paper also presents implications for policy makers, firms and educational institutions.

Keywords: Robots, Artificial intelligence, Covid-19, Society

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Robots in daily life: A post COVID-19 perspective

With the rise of the robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) industries, there is growing concern about their dangers. Currently, there is ample debate about whether the increased usage of robots and AI can lead to an economic crisis due to job losses (Coelli & Borland, 2019; Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2017). A recent article argued that robots will have an impact on society and in particular on the educational, retail and hospitality, and healthcare sectors (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2018). However, robots equipped with AI (herein robots) can also improve our lives and even help us in times of need. The current Covid-19 crisis exemplifies a practical application of how robots can become our allies in fighting the virus. Further, these applications may serve as a catalyst in terms of how these robots are perceived and used in the aforementioned sectors. To illustrate the potential development of robots in various sectors once the pandemic has been controlled, the remainder of the article is structured as follows.

First, this paper provides an overview of how robots are already influencing the educational, retail and hospitality, and healthcare sectors. In particular, the discussion on the healthcare sector will be enriched with current insights from the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, the paper offers a perspective on how robots may further impact these sectors in post Covid-19 times. The paper uses the four intelligences framework advanced by Huang and Rust (2018) to build these arguments. This framework is grounded on robots' and AI's capabilities of accomplishing tasks that require different types of intelligence. Lastly, the paper will offer a conclusion statement with some key implications for policy makers, firms and educational institutions.

The “NOW”

The Educational Sector

The new Global Education Monitoring Report estimates annual education spending by households, governments and donors globally at US\$4.7 trillion (UNESCO; 2019). Education is an integral part of society and robots are already starting to play a role in this sector. Although still in its infancy, there are already examples of robots being used as educational assistants or even as teachers in classrooms (Bicchi & Tamburrini, 2015; Li, Kizilcec, Bailenson, & Ju, 2016). These robots are able to interact with students, monitor their learning state, and teach them specific skills (Chang, Lee, Chao, Wang, & Chen, 2010). Interestingly, studies are offering support for this trend, showing positive effects of robot usage on children's math and language capabilities (Brown, Kerwin, & Howard, 2013).

The Retail and Hospitality Sectors

Robots are being integrated into the retail and hospitality sectors. Large global retailers such as Amazon and Alibaba are using robots in their distribution centers (Grewal, Roggeveen, & Nordfält, 2017; Wen, He & Zhu, 2018). However, there are also applications in retail spaces and hotels where customers interact directly with service robots. Robots in these settings perform tasks such as providing information, advertising products, or greeting visitors (Kumar, Anand, & Song, 2017). For example, robots in the “Henn na Hotel” in Japan take the roles of concierge, receptionist and waiter (Park, 2020). At this point, hotels cannot fully function with robots alone and human support is still needed for some tasks. Nevertheless,

according to the hotel manager, using these robots is lowering costs, which makes the hotel more affordable while also offering customers a unique service experience (theguardian, 2015). Moreover, there may also be a novelty effect that allows robot hotels to catch the attention of the press and potential customers.

The Healthcare Sector

Many industrialized nations, including in Europe, are experiencing an aging society. Aging societies generally also entail increases in health care needs, specifically elderly care. Various sources suggest that countries are facing labor shortages in the healthcare sector (Köhler & Goldmann, 2010; Liu, Goryakin, Maeda, Bruckner, & Scheffler, 2016). For example, the WHO (2016) states that there are an estimated 7.3 million nurses and midwives in the European Region, but also highlights that this number is insufficient to meet current and projected future needs. This need has served as a catalyst for companies to develop robots that can support activities in the health- and elderly care sector. For instance, the Care-O-bot, is able to speak, learn and remind patients of their daily routine (e.g. when to take their medicine). Such robots serve as a support system for health professionals as they free up their time for other patient centered activities. Furthermore, research is already offering evidence of the positive effects of these robots on patients as they are reducing patients' loneliness, as well as helping in dementia care and stroke rehabilitation (e.g., Robinson, MacDonald, Kerse, & Broadbent, 2013). Interestingly, there are also timely examples showing the use of robots during the coronavirus pandemic.

As outlined in a recent article (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2020), robots are serving as allies to humans in the fight against the coronavirus. Various sources offer accounts of how robots are being used in Wuhan, China and Thailand to deliver medicine to patients or measure their vitals (BBC, 2020; Channelnewsasia, 2020). These measures can reduce fatigue in healthcare staff while providing timely patient support. Moreover, they reduce contact between humans, thus reducing the likelihood of additional infections. Further innovations in Chinese hospitals entail the use of robots equipped with UV lights to disinfect rooms (Ackerman, 2020). Coronavirus-related solutions also go beyond the hospital settings as many citizens are quarantined in their homes. In order to serve these citizens, the Chinese government has employed logistics robots (autonomous vehicles) to deliver food and medical supplies (Arthur & Shuhui, 2020). These recent applications set the stage for what may be ahead after the corona pandemic.

The “FUTURE”

The Four intelligences and the future

Service can be provided by humans and/or machines and depending on the nature of service (i.e. task), different intelligences are required. Huang and Rust (2018) describe these four intelligences as follows:

Mechanical intelligence is the ability to perform routine, repeated tasks automatically. Mechanical AI has a relative advantage over humans as this AI can be extremely consistent (e.g. no human fatigue and offering consistent results). *Analytical intelligence* is the ability to process information to solve problems and to also learn from this experience. This includes

AI that is able to process and synthesize large amounts of data and learn from them (e.g. the use of Big Data). *Intuitive intelligence* is the ability to think creatively and adjust effectively to novel situations and challenges. Tasks that are complex, creative, experiential or holistic and context dependent require intuitive intelligence. The complex nature of the tasks renders them reliant on intuition for successful service provision (e.g. complex and personalized service arrangements). *Empathetic intelligence* is the ability to recognize and understand other peoples' emotions, respond in an appropriate manner, while also influencing others' emotions. Empathetic tasks require high social and emotional knowledge and presence to satisfy the requirements of a job.

It should be noted that some of these AI applications can also be virtual (e.g. using a computer with a screen) and do not require a robot "body". However, the discussion in this section is rather focused on robots equipped with AI (i.e. embodied AI), as some tasks require a physical presence. Looking toward the future, a key question is how the above-mentioned sectors can benefit from the integration of robots in their activities.

Currently, robots are already fairly proficient at performing mechanical and analytical tasks. Covering these tasks will free up time for human staff to dedicate themselves to tasks that require intuitive and empathetic intelligence. This task-based distinction is important, because although progress is being made, robots are still not in a position to cover tasks associated with intuitive and empathetic intelligence at the level of humans. Consequently, for optimal performance, stakeholders should seek collaboration between humans and machines in order to leverage the advantages of both entities. In doing so, stakeholders are able to generate synergies, which can lead to optimization of resources that will also benefit the service recipient (e.g. customer, patient, student).

In the educational sector, robots can already process analytical information and respond and offer quantitative feedback to students (e.g. test scores, failure rate). Nevertheless, these abilities may not be sufficient to offer a complete learning experience for various reasons. First, student behavior, especially in children, is not always predictable and linear. Second, students also display different abilities and personalities that may require the teacher to offer emotional support. Third, problem solving is not exclusive to analytical thinking and creativity is also valued. Hence, for robots to become more independent teachers, it will be essential that these educational robots improve their intuitive and empathetic intelligence. As outlined by Huang and Rust (2018), strides are being made in particular in the realm of intuitive intelligence. However, there is still arguably a significant gap in terms of robots reaching human-level empathetic intelligence, thus suggesting that humans will need to lead educational tasks requiring a strong emotional component in the near-to-mid-term future.

As outlined above, in retail and hospitality, robots are able to draw historical data from shoppers or visitors to make specific recommendations. These functions rely mainly on analytical intelligence. Looking toward the future, robots will be in a position to offer more customized and creative service provisions by tapping into intuitive intelligence. For instance, robots will be able to use their visual and auditory sensors to evaluate shoppers' physical attributes and mood to make recommendations (Bertacchini, Bilotta, & Pantano, 2017). Furthermore, research suggests that humans seek empathetic and friendly service interactions when dealing with robots (Barnett, Foos, Gruber, Keeling, Keeling, & Nasr, 2014; Bertacchini et al., 2017). Therefore, it is likely that we will see an increase in robot usage in retail and hospitality settings as the development of empathetic intelligence progresses.

The healthcare sector is already experiencing applications of robots and AI, especially during the current coronavirus pandemic. Once again, current applications are largely drawing on mechanical (e.g. transport of medicine) and analytical intelligence (providing treatment feedback and patient reminders). However, especially in moments of severe stress and anxiety such as a health crisis, it is essential to protect the mental well-being of victims (Harbers, de Greeff, Kruijff-Korbayová, Neerincx, & Hindriks, 2017). In such situations, humans may still be superior to robots as critical situations can require a large degree of improvisation and emotional affinity. Thus, collaborations between humans and robots in patient care are likely the most fruitful avenue for the future. This will allow an optimization of resources that accounts for human and robots strengths and weaknesses. It should be noted that similar to the other sectors, as robots improve in their intuitive and empathetic capabilities, responsibilities in patient care may shift progressively from humans to robots.

Conclusions

Overall, current applications of robots during the coronavirus pandemic may serve as a foundation to potentially improve social acceptance and the integration of robots in the marketplace. Irrespective of the current pandemic, based on projections by the Boston Consulting Group (2017), there will be an increase in robot usage beyond health-related applications, touching many areas of daily life. In this respect is important that policy makers, firms and educational institutions introduce mechanism to deal with these upcoming changes. As outlined in prior work (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2018), it is recommended to create governing bodies that establish international regulations and guidelines to manage the integration of robots and AI in various sectors. These governing bodies should take an interdisciplinary approach and include experts from various areas, such as computer scientists, engineers, psychologists, sociologists, law professionals, philosophers, policy and ethics experts and management scholars. Such variety is crucial to design regulations that capture the complexity and impact of these technologies in a variety of domains (e.g. psychological well-being, employment). Firms would also benefit including professionals that can liaise directly with these governing bodies. The benefits would be twofold. First, to ensure that robot and AI related applications in their business adhere to the established and ever-evolving standards. Second, to collaborate with the governing bodies by providing direct market feedback. Like governing bodies, firms should also integrate expert advisors from a variety of domains as part of their advisory board. At a local level, educational programs should be offered at public centers and schools. These programs could provide citizens with knowledge about (a) how to deal with these new technologies and (b) illustrate also the benefits robots and AI may entail for their lives. Finally, society needs to be prepared for the integration of robots and AI. The corona virus pandemic is showing us that, if applied correctly, robots can be our allies in many areas of daily life, thus shaping an optimistic outlook toward what is to come.

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Covid-19: The collective visibility of couriers or the beginnings of a new social contract

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Abstract

This impact paper discusses possible effects of the Coronavirus health crisis on the future of delivery platform couriers. Usually invisible individually to the eyes of society, these workers are gaining in collective visibility in the context of the current health crisis. The continuity of their activity, at a time when only essential services for the life of the Nation are being maintained, highlights their key role as the last link in these platforms' value chain. In today's exceptional conditions, this spotlight provides an opportunity to draw the lines of a new social contract for these independent workers.

Keywords: gig economy, social visibility, social utility, labor relations, responsibility

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Covid-19: The collective visibility of couriers or the beginnings of a new social contract

Paris, Milan and Madrid, the images are all the same, showing empty and quiet streets; a silence broken at times by the noise of platform couriers' bicycles and mopeds. Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Glovo, Stuart, Foodora, to name a few, continue their activities during the lockdown. Usually forgotten and disregarded, these couriers have suddenly become much more visible and risen to the level of indispensable workers. Given this physical and social visibility, this contribution focuses on the effects of the health crisis on the way couriers are organizing. In General, hyper-individualized in their relationship with the platform, this crisis could, in our opinion, shape the beginnings of a collective identity for couriers, key to the development of a new "social contract" for this largely ignored population.

This paper is part of a doctoral project on solidarity practices and common identity building processes among platform workers (Kriem, 2020). In terms of methodology, several data sources have been used: (i) couriers' stories and statements to better understand their experiences and expectations; (ii) platforms' external communication materials to learn about their strategies in managing the crisis; (iii) press articles to assess the changes in the context; (iv) unions' press releases and publications to evaluate their role in the couriers' organization process; (v) couriers' interactions on social networks to explore emerging solidarity practices; and (vi) video excerpts and pictures of collective events happening during this crisis, which are available online, to study the forms of collective action taken by couriers. The data scope covers the last two months (from March to early May), to collect information shared throughout the lockdown period. The data gathered also covers several countries in order to ensure a comprehensive overview: France, Spain, Italy and Canada, which offer some interesting examples of organization among couriers.

The coronavirus health crisis and the increase in social visibility of couriers

The maintained activity of food delivery platforms

While the functioning of many Societies is reduced to the essential components of their survival, namely care, protection and feeding, food delivery platforms have kept on working, in line with government guidelines. By promoting health practices, diversifying the scope of their activities and offering free delivery services, these platforms are trying to minimize the risks of restaurants closing and to seize the opportunities arising from the population being confined at home. By building partnerships with supermarkets and running their own grocery stores, they stand as an alternative to store line-ups and saturated drive-thru services. Examples of Glovo Market in Barcelona and Milan, L'Epicerie de Deliveroo in Paris and the partnership between Uber Eats and Carrefour confirm the aim of multiple sources of income in times of crisis.

Keeping this delivery business going and attracting clients relies on the implementation of health and safety measures and the promise of contactless delivery. By creating meal recovery areas in restaurants, respecting social distancing and placing orders at the client's door, the platforms want to reassure them that there is no physical contact between couriers, restaurant staff and clients.

A spotlight on the courier's job

By putting a number of sectors out of business and keeping food delivery platforms running, the current health crisis has turned the spotlight on the couriers' job and raised their physical, media and institutional visibility. Always highly recognizable thanks to their work equipment, they ride through empty streets to meet clients' demands. With colorful jackets, bags with corporate logos, bicycles and mopeds as transportation means, the physical markers of this job are many and enable the public to identify these workers and the couriers to recognize each other. Invading the public space, they also invite themselves into homes in times of confinement. In front of their screens, the confined people discover the interviews conducted with couriers on their daily life in times of crisis. Reports, television news and press articles give the floor to these workers and show the current interest of the audiovisual and digital media for this category of workers. At the institutional level, the involvement of unions and members of parliament regarding the issues faced by couriers in this health context underlines a greater political visibility and a growing place in political speeches and programs, albeit still limited.

The social utility of couriers and the first signs of symbolic recognition

These unusual circumstances highlight the specificities of this job and bring out the first elements of social visibility. After dealing with forms of invisibility, defined as a set of processes leading to a feeling of non-recognition and social disregard (Beaud, Confavreux, Lindgaard, 2008; Clifford, 1963), the current crisis highlights the social utility of couriers and their role in the survival of food businesses that have been forced to close their doors. This enhanced status and first form of symbolic recognition can be seen, for instance, in the giving of more attractive tips, as a sign of gratitude and of clients' awareness of the risks taken.

By no longer blending in with the crowd and by contributing to the sustainability of local businesses, couriers gain physical and social visibility in the current context. These passive forms of visibility are in fact combined with an active and collective visibility. By conducting joint actions, couriers are now more visible as a collective.

Emerging signs of a collective identity

Physical and space markers related to the coronavirus crisis

By playing a part in making the physical and spatial isolation of couriers and their competition stronger, the present health context may seem at first glance untimely for the development of solidarity practices and collective actions. The recent health provisions seem more likely to underscore the hyper-individualized nature of the courier's relationship with the platform. If anything, the traditional barriers to the organization of couriers are intensified: territorial spread, irregular working schedules, competition between couriers and challenges to the right of association. Beyond these obstacles, which are parts of the platforms' operating scheme and which have been widely documented, the consequences of the coronavirus crisis and the methods to manage it clearly hinder the couriers' possibilities to meet and mobilize. Gatherings are prohibited, social distancing is mandatory, infected couriers are placed in quarantine while others have decided to temporarily stop their activity.

A retrospective look is therefore crucial to better understand the effects of these changes on the couriers' organization. The mobilization and solidarity moments that took place before

the start of the health crisis showed the importance of having access to physical or virtual spaces, free from the surveillance and control of the platforms, thanks to the digitization of the managerial position (Tassinari & Macarrone, 2020; Gandini, 2019). The street, as a workspace for couriers, has been a tool for socialization and organization. As a place of exchange between workers during waiting times, on central squares, in parks or outside restaurants, the street has been the place of day-to-day acts of mutual sharing and support (jokes, advices on bicycle maintenance, organization of sport events, etc.) (Cant, 2019). Building on this embryonic solidarity, the street became the space of emergence of the first forms of active solidarity (Atzeni, 2010), through distribution of tracts, pasting of posters and protest marches.

The street, to use the slogan of French guilds, is the "factory" of platform workers. At a time when access to the street, the hotbed of couriers' labor unrest, is limited and controlled (mandatory certificate for leaving home, police checkpoints, limited public transport traffic, etc.), it is legitimate to question their ability to go beyond the individualized nature of the job. In fact, the coronavirus crisis is participating in the emergence of new physical and spatial markers. In this context, the territorial visibility of couriers is materialized through gatherings in front of restaurants, despite security measures, demonstrations respecting the rule of social distancing and the establishment of meeting points to distribute individual protective equipment (masks, disposable gloves, etc.) collected by groups of couriers.

Space management is thus at the heart of the response to this crisis. This context brings to light the material and geographic needs of couriers, mainly providing them with water points to wash their hands, creating storage areas for uncontaminated work tools and implementing distribution units of protection equipment in strategic areas, accessible to all of them.

Social markers linked to the coronavirus crisis

In the framework of this crisis, the collective identity-building process of couriers is grounded in various social interactions, both within the group and in its relationship with the rest of the society. Despite the obstacles, several forms of collective action have emerged in Europe and the rest of the world, with the aim of: (i) providing couriers with individual protection tools, (ii) raising funds and advocating for access to public aids, and (iii) calling for an improvement of working conditions.

Given the couriers' level of exposure to the risk of contamination, collectives have organized themselves to gather and distribute safety equipment. In Valencia, the Riders x Derechos group has distributed masks and disposable gloves in the streets, given by the city hall and the local police.

Calls for solidarity and advocacy actions towards governments were meant to reduce the financial burden of the health crisis, by appealing to people's generosity and calling for the generalization of governmental financial aid to all couriers. In Canada, these organizational efforts were illustrated by the distribution of meal baskets for couriers and the launch of the "Foodsters United Hardship Fund", an online fundraising.

Finally, holding protest marches in Spain and Canada has given the couriers a more theatrical visibility. In April, the spontaneous protest tour of several dozen couriers in the streets of Madrid, on bicycles or mopeds, to protest against the fare cut by the Glovo platform, took on a scenic dimension. The noise of engines and horns, the uniformity of the couriers' clothing

and the omnipresence of the platforms' color codes are evidence of the staging of the courier's job. In Toronto, the symbolic date of May 1st was an opportunity for Foodora's couriers to contest the platform's decision to leave the country and stop its activities there on May 11. Dozens of couriers protested on the way to the company's headquarters. Holding up signs and repeating slogans, their professional identity was emphasized by the visibility of their work equipment during the demonstration.

Community-based markers related to the coronavirus crisis

Studying the emerging signs of a collective identity implies analyzing the means by which a sense of community and a common vision can be built. Social networks, the main communication tools for couriers today, allow us to learn about the nature of interactions between them. They help assess the sense of belonging to the group, its influence, the fulfilment of their needs and their shared emotions, all of which are characteristic of a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). For example, the exchanges observed on Facebook groups focused on:

- Raising awareness of health risks and sharing good practices: refusing to enter buildings during deliveries, ways to get protection equipment, etc.
- Sharing technical knowledge: terms and conditions of access to financial aid, etc.
- Experience sharing regarding the job during the crisis: frequency and content of orders, amount of tips, clients' behavior, etc.
- Expression of emotional support: sharing jokes, using a fellowship glossary, etc.

The beginnings of a new "social contract", based on a co-responsibility principle

This increase in the visibility of couriers represents an opportunity to draw the boundaries of a new social contract for independent workers. Understood as a set of unwritten norms and laws governing the professional relationship, this pact could combine co-responsibility and value co-creation.

The courier, a key player for value creation in the platform model

The ongoing health situation has thus fostered the emergence of new forms of solidarity and organization among platform workers. While the future evolution of this segment remains uncertain and drawing conclusions from this crisis is hasty, the emphasis on the courier's job, in the unusual conditions we are experiencing today, has revealed the key contribution of the courier to the value creation of the platform ecosystem (Coeurderoy et al., 2019). Thus, this multi-sided model (Cusumano, Gawer & Yoffie, 2019), which brings together several groups of users (restaurants, clients and couriers), requires all the components of the chain to be taken into account in the platform value creation process.

Structuring a principle of co-responsibility

The coronavirus crisis has been an opportunity to reflect on the accountability of all stakeholders. The requests made to the platforms have included, for instance, the implementation of control mechanisms to ensure compliance with security measures and the creation of multilingual training to respond to the diverse socio-cultural profiles of couriers. The key role of clients in the ethical use of platforms has also been pointed out.

Orders of convenience (sweets, alcoholic beverages, etc.) rather than necessity have been strongly criticized, for example. Similarly, clients have been encouraged by courier groups to adopt safety measures (picking up the order at the entrance of the building, washing their hands before and after receipt, etc.), to give tips and support the collective efforts of couriers. Thirdly, the responsibility of restaurants has also been referred to, recalling the usual lack of hygiene awareness and precautions in the fast food industry. Couriers' stories in the context of health crises reflect the poor compliance with safety measures by restaurant staff when rushing to prepare orders. Finally, the responsibility of couriers has also been discussed in regard to renting professional accounts to undocumented migrants, in exchange of payment and exploiting their precarious situation.

The creation of the first mechanisms of collective visibility

The establishment of a new social contract could therefore draw on the efforts made before the coronavirus crisis. At the end of 2019, the Deliveroo platform had indeed announced the future creation of the first Courier Forum in France. The purpose of this consultative body is to bring together the management of Deliveroo and the representatives elected by the couriers once a quarter to discuss strategic issues. The conclusions of the meetings would be shared with all workers. The conditions considered for the candidates' eligibility are based on a minimum number of weeks of seniority and a minimum number of orders placed over the past few months.

Conclusion

Through the angle of the health crisis, the job of courier has gained collective visibility. More than a sum of individuals, couriers, through their solidarity practices and new forms of organization, are gradually emerging as a community. If at this stage, this embryonic process does not make it possible to reject the hypothesis of a return to the previous world in the coming weeks or months, it may also herald new modes of cooperation and shed light on the emergence of a new social contract, based on co-responsibility and co-creation of value.

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COVID-19 mobility tracking and contact tracing applications: acceleration of a political technological utopia?

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Abstract

This impact paper explores how, in the current crisis, governments around the world are using or designing mobility tracking and contact tracing applications. We examine the technological utopianism that led to the worldwide adoption of these new surveillance technologies –analysed as a panopticon without tower– in order to understand the consequences to expect after the COVID crisis. There is an urgent need to consider the political dimension of what is presented as a mere technological solution to solve the crisis.

Keywords: Techno-utopianism, Surveillance, Foucault, Quantified self

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COVID-19 mobility tracking and contact tracing applications: acceleration of a political technological utopia?

COVID-19 apps: building a new surveillance system

Diagnosis: the current multiplication of digital systems of disease detection

With the success of several Asian countries in containing the virus, systems of digital disease detection appear as the perfect solution to face the sanitary crisis. The idea is to build smartphone-based tracing apps based on participatory surveillance. Every part of the world has its own system or is racing to build one. Official governmental tracing applications already exist in countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Ghana, India, Israel, Malaysia, North Macedonia, Norway, Singapore. The United Kingdom, Ireland and France are currently designing an official application. Australia and New Zealand are considering using Singapore's protocols, and Austria and Switzerland adopting an open-source solution. Other surveillance systems already exist such as the one developed by the startup BlueDot in Canada, an outbreak risk software which spotted Coronavirus at an early stage. Google and Apple are currently designing a "decentralized" solution with a contact tracing application available for every smartphone. A new term has even been coined for these solutions, "COVID-19 apps". *"COVID-19 apps are mobile software applications designed to aid contact tracing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e. the process of identifying persons ("contacts") who may have been in contact with an infected individual."* (Wikipedia, n.d.).

The principle of participatory surveillance in contrast to that of traditional healthcare surveillance is that individuals are directly part of the system. They generate relevant information for surveillance like symptoms, mobility and contact tracking. Users self-report their symptoms, then data is sent in real time to the cloud, and algorithms track patterns so as to form groups of individuals with identical symptoms. Thanks to this information, decision makers are aware of risk areas. As some Silicon Valley's experts phrase it, participatory surveillance is, above all, a way *"to empower individuals about how to remain safe and healthy in their community"*. During the online summit on COVID-19 organized by the Singularity University - a Silicon Valley think tank, incubator and education program founded in 2009 by the futurist Ray Kurzweil, Google's director of artificial intelligence, and Peter Diamandis, chairman of the X Prize foundation - experts from the Singularity University from around the entire world joined to discuss the challenges, solutions, and future impacts of this worldwide sanitary crisis (Singularity University, 2020). Some of them, like Onicio Leal Neto, showed the importance of participatory surveillance, especially in projects carried out during the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Other experts like Marianna Dahan condemned China which took extreme measures *"to contain the spread with an infringement of personal liberties"*. They are calling for policies similar to the ones taken in such Asian countries as South Korea and Taiwan. These countries are presented as examples because they collected "essential information" to fight against the pandemic, with total transparency, ensuring the freedom of their citizens. This data collection is, in their eyes, essential to avoid a repeat of the EBOLA crisis, where in countries which did not implement such measures, like the Republic of Congo, it took three years to contain the epidemic.

New technologies of surveillance – A panopticon without tower

“Don't let a good crisis go to waste”. With COVID-19, governmentality can extend its grip on society. Today, technologies of surveillance are extended to the control, the surveillance and the regulation of the entire population. *“Before the crisis, these technologies already existed but only for specific cases such as the surveillance of terrorists, or for patients suffering from HIV in countries like Taiwan or China. Today, these technologies are extended to the whole population”* (Preciado, 2020). What is more, with participatory applications, the public becomes self-involved in the surveillance structure. Comparing this sanitary situation with the plagued city of the 17th century, we can see that the two situations are extremely similar:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. (Foucault, 1977)

For Foucault, in the plagued city, the power of the state is visible, the surveillance explicit. He opposes this model of surveillance to the panopticons. Bentham's panopticon is an architectural figure used originally for prisons: at the center stands a tower of surveillance and at *“the periphery, an annular building”* for the prisoners. The idea is that the prisoners do not know whether there is anyone in the tower. They discipline themselves continuously because of this suspicion of been observed. According to Foucault, *“the Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheral ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.”* With the panopticon, the power is distributed as it is uncertain whether there is someone in the surveillance tower. In that case, individuals modify their attitude because of the possibility of being watched.

Today, like in the plagued city, governments are enforcing laws to control individuals such as making people stay home, closing shops and public areas, or enforcing social distancing. However, with participatory applications the public becomes self-involved in the surveillance structure. The current “plagued city” adopted a panopticon-type decentralized system of surveillance. There is therefore a mix between the panoptic and the plagued-city surveillance. What is more, we stay home, but our home is no longer a closed space. It is a worldwide open space, electrified and digitalized (Preciado, 2020). It is because this place is connected that each citizen can take part in the generalized surveillance. With COVID-19 apps, the difference with the Panopticon described by Foucault is that we do not need the tower anymore. We are modifying our behaviors without the tower, just by providing data. This suppression of the tower seems to be in the essence of the panopticon schema. *“Without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, [it] was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function”* (Foucault, 1977). It is therefore key to understand how the panopticon schema became a generalized function in our societies. It requires understanding the sociological and cultural roots of these new forms of surveillance. The expansion of a techno-utopianism perspective during the past thirty years sheds some light on how governments and experts came to envision these measures as the best solution and how citizens became involved in global surveillance.

Exploring the societal and political roots of a new surveillance system

From quantified self and techno-utopianism to COVID-19 apps

The measures of surveillance based on mobility tracking and contact tracing implemented during the COVID-19 are in line with movements like the quantified self. The quantified self is a belief that thanks to advances in science and technology, we can improve each individual, and also society. It is a form of technological utopianism that emerged in the 1990s in the Bay Area in the context of the American counterculture and the advent of the information age. The Californian ideology (Barbrook & Cameron, 1996) “*combines the freewheeling spirit of the hippies and the entrepreneurial zeal of the yuppies. This amalgamation of opposites has been achieved through a profound faith in the emancipatory potential of the new information technologies.*” (p. 45). The link between these two a priori antithetical movements is the digital utopia, the profound belief that advances in science and technology will lead to a form of utopian society. This unique mindset also appears in contemporary movements such as transhumanism, whose aim is to improve the human race with the help of technologies, “*to eliminate ageing and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities*” (Bostrom, 2003). The quantified self is the global cultural phenomenon of self-tracking in order to improve physical, mental, emotional performance. By using self-tracking tools, this community of users aims to gain “self-knowledge through numbers”. The term was coined in 2007 by the two Wired editors Gary Wolf and Kevin Kelly. During the Singularity University summit, experts like Sabine Seymour explained how individuals are now able to “*use data to monitor [their] lifestyle (from food to exercise) to boost [their] body's resilience against diseases*”. The boundary between the quantified self as a way to improve our health, and the mobility tracking and contact tracing measures as a means to tackle the virus is extremely blurred.

In a Foucauldian perspective, this movement of quantified self represents a form of modern panopticon, exactly the same as the COVID-19 apps. They follow the same panoptic form: we are providing information and modifying our behaviors so to speak “without the tower”, just by providing the data. With modernity, in order to ensure discipline, we are not using technologies of violence and death anymore (no more public punishment). On the contrary, we are using biopolitical technologies, technologies able to manage and maximize the life of the whole population (Preciado, 2020). The quantified self is an example of this new model of peaceful surveillance continued with COVID-19 tracking measures. Marianna Dahan, an expert from Singularity University's online summit, explains that South Korea, contrary to China, is a good example of implementation of surveillance practices, as they handled it “*without jeopardizing human rights*”. Indeed, “*they have used digital identity to inform mobile phone owners, to establish a climate of transparency and accountability, and not something of coercion*”. As such, to her eyes, they represent a political model we need to follow and implement.

A technological or a political issue?

In between ideology and utopia (Amsallem, 2017a), these optimistic views of the future see science and technology as a way to solve humanity's biggest problems, such as the COVID pandemic. Technological advances in information technology but also more recently in nanotechnology, biotechnology, computer science, artificial intelligence are converging, producing an acceleration of technological advances (Amsallem, 2017b). These technologies are growing so fast that, according to Ray Kurzweil, Google's director of artificial intelligence

and co-founder of the Singularity University, Singularity –the time when machines will be smarter than men– could happen by 2045. What is put forward as powerful advances in technologies is in fact highly political. It is a political project based on the use of technologies to solve societal problems (Alexandre, 2011; Turner, Vannini, Le Crosnier, & Cardon, 2012). Some authors highlight the expansion of what they consider a Silicon Valley political ideology (Alexandre, 2011). This ideology generates debates especially in Europe. Reports from the European Commission in 2004 and the European Parliament in 2009 emphasise the need to consider the societal and ethical issues linked to projects such as gene editing and robotics (Amsallem, 2017b). However, the boundary between science fiction and reality, between reparation and augmentation, between humans and machines is becoming more and more blurred (Alexandre, 2011; Bostrom, 2003). We are already enhancing ourselves in order to counter diseases or determine our biological future. In her 2009 TED talk, “My 12 pairs of legs”, Aimee Mullins shares her experience of this blurred frontier when talking to a friend of hers at a fancy party: *““But you’re so tall!” And I said, “I know. Isn’t it fun?” (...) And she looked at me, and she said, “But Aimee, that’s not fair”. And the incredible thing was she really meant it. It’s not fair that you can change your height, as you want it. And that’s when I knew - that’s when I knew that the conversation with society has changed profoundly in this last decade. It is no longer a conversation about overcoming deficiency. It’s a conversation about augmentation”* (Mullins, 2009). As Aimee exemplifies it, she is no longer perceived as a disabled person but as an enhanced person likely to *“design their bodies from a place of empowerment”*. With the crisis, the boundary between reparation and augmentation is becoming even more porous.

Accelerating techno-utopianism with COVID-19: for what future society?

In a situation of sanitary emergency and global emotional distress, the current pandemic represents an opportunity for techno-utopians to prepare society for more extreme solutions. The idea is not as much to adopt radical measures today – as many experts are calling today to respect privacy in the collection of data in Europe and United States – but to promote the techno-utopian political project in the long term.

The pandemic can be envisioned as a global political campaign in favor of a techno-utopian society. A number of experts are indeed emphasizing the need to prepare for future emergencies. For instance, Jamie Metz, a Singularity University expert, claims that bigger challenges than the Coronavirus are coming our way such as *“climate change, oceans, thinking about the future of artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous killers AI, can’t be sufficiently addressed because we haven’t laid the foundations for that kind of processes”*. According to him, we therefore need to develop technologies likely to build this “new normal”. For Bradley Twyham, *“the reality is that for all of its hype AI has not been leveraged where it counts the most during this pandemic”*. Artificial Intelligence for instance can be used, in his opinion, for augmenting policy and decision making, for making predictions based on artificial intelligence solutions like BlueDot, for assisting doctors or even for finding potential treatments much more quickly. For Sabine Seymour, the aim is to *“democratize healthcare data to use biometrics data captured around different devices and then use that data for disease predictions”*. What these experts are presenting are not just technological advances but their vision of a future society: a political program. To their eyes, the current threat reveals the essential role of technology when facing future pandemics and challenges. As a consequence, in their opinion, the crisis represents an opportunity for change in the “right direction”. For Dr. Tiffany Vora, the question is *“how do we harness the energy from this*

crisis to make this world a better place.” And Christina Gerakiteys answers: “*We take the best of the technology that we are experiencing, and the best of humanity, and that is what we are going to come up with the moonshots, that help us progress, get out of this situation*”. These Singularity University experts, able to “predict the future” and to provide tools to “solve the crisis”, can be perceived as a glimmer of hope in a worldwide disastrous situation. Amid the generalized mood of powerlessness, they make people feel anything is possible.

The massive adoption of COVID apps is a sign of the political penetration of technoutopianism. We are now immersed in a logic of crisis prevision through technologies. It is time to consider these measures for what they are: a political project. It is only by considering the political consequences of this project for our societies that we will fully comprehend the societal, ethical, business consequences of this situation. If we follow the reasoning of solving every issue with moonshot innovations, the day will come when we will think it is not fair to die.

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To what extent should the preservation of life remain the primary objective of economic policies?

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Abstract

Today, the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic (reduction in global production, disruption of supply chains, postponement of investment projects, stock market nervousness, etc.) are prompting governments to reveal the price they attach to what they intend to preserve by "quarantine": human life. However, when it comes to public decisions, human life does not have an infinite price. In particular, governments will have to weigh the impact of the virus on fragile people with low life expectancy, the deprivation of liberty imposed on those "quarantined" and the recession level for the national economy. To what extent, then, should the preservation of life remain the primary objective of economic policies?

Keywords: Health crisis, Economic policies, Public health

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To what extent should the preservation of life remain the primary objective of economic policies?

The health crisis that we are going through reveals the tension that exists between two logics: one of economic interests and the other of human life. The link between these two notions is all the more difficult to define, as there is no common measure between them. Philosophical thinking on the “right measure” is of no help to us. Thinkers, except perhaps Plato or Weber, rarely discussed this notion.

Few situations in the past allowed us to observe, on a day to day basis, the immediate consequences of economic decisions on human lives. There are two ways to react facing this pandemic: pay **with** or pay **for** lives. The choice for Western societies can be summarised in a question of risk aversion. How many deaths are they willing to accept? This question is usually encountered in times of war (“body count”). Governments take into account the fact that their measures may become less popular if the number of dead soldiers increases.

Saving lives by stopping the economy “whatever it takes”: this was the reaction of the French government when it had to deal with the invasion of the coronavirus epidemic on national territory. What should we think about this option? The key issue in the debate is to what extent human life can be valued in monetary terms in order to make choices that will be efficient and measurable enough. The argument: “health is priceless” is discredited. The controversy involves not only economic motives but also values and beliefs in the political, ethical or even religious fields. Consequently, can we both preserve the national economy and the lives of citizens and to what extent should the preservation of human life remain the primary objective of economic policies?

Does human life have a price?

The first reaction is to consider this question as being unsettling. On the one hand, one could then answer that it is unthinkable to price life because the exercise is tough or even impossible to do so and, on the other hand, because of its immorality. This would presuppose that a human being is a commodity. However, practices such as the slave trade, which lasted for almost 300 years, were able to price it.

Furthermore, according to most ethical and religious belief systems, each and every life is sacred. Its value would therefore be infinite. So, should a government devote all its human, material and financial resources to reducing risks and preventing death knowing that an individual is sometimes more valuable by rather being dead than alive⁸⁰? Human life would thus not have a sole price but many (price of a saved life - which we are discussing with the health crisis -, price of an accidental death, price of collective life...).

To know price of a life is very interesting, particularly within the political and economic framework. Pricing human life trade-offs are made every day, everywhere. It is possible to establish the price of life at the microeconomic level (ransom) as at the macroeconomic level: Authorities⁸¹ make appropriate decisions by comparing costs and benefits based on an

⁸⁰ According to a document from the Court of Los Angeles County related to Michael Jackson estate, the singer's assets had generated gross profit over \$ 1.7 billion as of December 31, 2018, 10 years after his death!

⁸¹ Fourteen centuries ago, the Anglo-Saxon sovereign Ethelbert was the first monarch to monetize life. The principle of the “wergild” (“price of man”) was included in the codes of laws enacted during his reign. This payment was intended to put an end to the bloody settling of scores arising from homicides. The amounts to be paid varied according to the victim's status: it was more expensive to kill a prince than a mere peasant.

estimated value: the “statistical value of human life⁸²”. While giving excessive power to bureaucrats, this assessment makes explicit what was implicit.

The value of human life refers, to a certain extent, to the price that individuals are willing to pay to obtain a reduction in the probability of their death. In practice, it became more and more common to evaluate it, for instance at the level of insurance compensation, especially for road accidents or medical accidents.

Towards a minimum price?

However, is price of a life the same for every human being? Despite the ideals of justice, the answer is “no” because that price is variable. It depends on many criteria, which are difficult to measure. Biological life (human lifespan) cannot solely define a ‘life price’. It is also necessary to take into account all the conditions, particularly material conditions, in which he / she spends his / her life (money spent during a lifetime, price of his / her body, value of display of affection received from others, age of the person, time remaining before death etc.).

However, this “life price” would not be an international standard but that of an individual in a specific geo-economic context (country, historical period, social class...). Let us take the example of the amounts allocated to the relatives of those who died during the attacks on the World Trade Center. The families of the poor, single or elderly victims received only a fraction of the sums received by young, wealthy victims with young children. Even in the 21st century, the authorities offered a “wergild” to these families to avoid a long legal battle.

It might thus be wise to consider a process that would set a base price for human life, a non-negotiable minimum threshold, an international standard that would be binding on all. This determination would make it possible to hold a State or a company responsible if it did not invest sufficiently in health protection and health for its citizens, employees and consumers. It would also make it possible to respond to the challenges of today's world: universal access to healthcare, reduction of inequalities impacting on globalisation, care for the elderly, etc.

State governance

In times of peace, governments regularly have to make difficult trade-offs in education, infrastructure, social affairs, etc. Budget constraints always guide their choices. Every expenditure therefore has an opportunity cost. For governments, the only way to deprive themselves of economic analysis would be to have an unlimited budget. This is not the case in every country. Citizens / users / taxpayers do not seem to be ready to pay more taxes, so choices must be made in the most enlightened, human-centered and ethical way possible. This is why, even if they are controversial and imperfect, economic evaluations of the ‘life price’ have a noble goal: avoiding the irrationality of political decisions.

In terms of state governance, the daily decisions reflect the price implicitly attached to life. In terms of road safety, answering a smartphone while driving, not fastening one’s seatbelt, being insured or not ... are all decisions that reflect an implicit price of safety and consequently, an appreciation for life. For example, how much does a government have to pay to prevent hundreds of tragedies on the roads? From road checking points to safety campaigns, it could empty the government coffers! The same is true in the health sector,

⁸² Ratio between the amount of money that Society is ready to pay to protect its citizens from a risk and the probability of the risk occurrence (cf. road safety, environment, health...).

where the consumption of toxic substances or certain types of food significantly increases the likelihood of illnesses or even death.

The fact remains that the “statistical value of human life” is not a substitute for public decision-making. The policy maker may consider, at any time, as legitimate to depart from the conclusions to which such calculations lead. The usefulness of this benchmark enables a price on the additional cost of the decision, putting it in perspective with other possible uses of public funds. Such a calculation can therefore clarify and strengthen the public debate.

On the other hand, for some, the lockdown strategy weighs so heavily on economic activity that it is not worthwhile. In the United States, some conservative politicians have stated that it may be better to sacrifice the lives of some (senior) people than to sacrifice the economy. However, the choice of lockdown is the result of urgent public health policy decisions, not of economic trade-offs and calculations. We went into confinement to prevent hospital emergency departments from saturation, as our health systems were not ready to face such circumstances. The current health crisis thus sheds a light on the future. If we price human life, we must then respond appropriately and prepare our health and welfare systems for future events of this kind. Ultimately, while the State is both responsible for the health and safety of its citizens and for the economic interests of the nation, the decisions taken - whether to strengthen lockdown or to stimulate the economy - reveal a price for human life. It is confronted with a difficult choice because the economic costs of lockdown measures have repercussions on the future. Can it choose between saving lives today and darkening the lives of future generations? Traditionally, political leaders tend to favour the present time. To what extent? Do they have a strong desire to protect citizens from the most vital risk to humankind: the risk of death?

In a world of limited resources, whoever the policy maker, all the risks facing man cannot be completely eliminated. Inevitably there is therefore a level of risk beyond which leaders will no longer invest additional resources to reinforce security. This threshold and the trade-offs that are associated with it in terms of the level of risks and the means to be used to reduce them, must be the subject of intense political, psychological, economic, ethical and even religious debate.

According to a study from the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique*, the lockdown has saved the lives of 60,000 French people. France has thus been prevented from a profound tragedy. Along with many other countries, it has chosen health at the expense of the economy... The strategies of Sweden and the Netherlands relied on individual civic-mindedness rather than on coercion. Regimes that are more authoritarian sacrificed individual liberties to collective salvation and political stability. European nations seem to have adopted an intermediate position that varies according to extant knowledge and the context. History will tell us which countries will have taken decisions which are most in line with the aspirations and interests of their peoples.

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Educating the leaders of the post-Covid future

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrust the world abruptly into a “new normal”, a situation in which a new paradigm of society appears to be emerging. I begin by describing the contours of this paradigm, before looking at the implications it carries for the education dispensed to the business leaders of the future. I then present a teaching philosophy founded on three major pillars: learning, acquisition of expertise and the behaviour required of responsible future leaders. I conclude by analysing three skill groups of essential importance: managerial techniques, relational aptitudes and decision-making capacities.

Keywords: Crisis, Globalisation 4.0, Paradigm, Leadership, Skills

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Educating the Leaders of the Post-Covid Future

Over the two centuries of its existence, ESCP Business School has traversed countless crises and four major industrial revolutions. Through it all, ESCP has always succeeded in adapting its teaching to prepare future leaders for the challenges they will face. The current crisis shows that the nature and priority of our operations is in the process of changing. Managing extraordinary situations is becoming a regular, familiar experience. Meanwhile, managing day-to-day operations is becoming an exceptional activity (Laulusa, 2009). We are entering a new normal, and a new paradigm of society seems to be emerging. I propose to begin by describing the contours of this paradigm, before looking at the implications it carries for the education dispensed to the leaders of the future.

A new paradigm of society

What will the new world look like? And what should we expect from it?

A world in a state of perpetual transformation

Our world is being reshaped by two major transformations. Firstly, a constant succession of crises of various natures,⁸³ often overlapping and interacting. Since the foundation of ESCP Business School, in 1819, the world has been rocked by political crises such as the Springtime of the Peoples in 1848, and economic crises such as the Great Deflation of 1873 and the Great Depression of 1929. As for military crises, the last century saw two world wars followed by great migratory upheaval. More recently, we have been living through times of ecological and identity crisis. And now, the world is mired in an unprecedented public health crisis courtesy of Covid-19!⁸⁴ The current pandemic looks set to disrupt the lives of 2.6 billion workers, according to the International Labour Organisation.⁸⁵

The received wisdom is that such crises arrive unexpectedly. And yet, they are often the logical consequence of specific actions and non-actions.

Furthermore, the process we now know as globalisation 4.0 has been accelerated by the fourth industrial revolution, driven by digital technologies, artificial intelligence and cyber-physical systems. The global village is becoming ever-more interconnected, physical flows are melding with virtual flows. Big data is becoming more and more accessible and more rapidly shared, virtually instantly in many cases. Meanwhile, industries are appropriating these new technologies to serve their own interests. This phenomenon is reflected in the proliferation of neologisms such as Fintech (finance + technology), Edtech (education + technology), Proptech (*property + technology*), Biotech (biology + technology) and Foodtech. The breakthroughs and opportunities on offer continue to astonish. Consider the example of Impossible Foods, a Californian “unicorn” founded in 2011 and dedicated to creating plant-based meat and cheese alternatives in order to drive down carbon emissions: by March 2020, the company had attracted upwards of \$1.2 billion in investment.

All the while, the economy is becomingly increasingly “Uberized.” The term “gig economy” has become common parlance, characterised by independent workers paid on a job-by-job basis and working for several companies at once. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has

⁸³ Public health, security, economic, social, migration, identity, societal, ecological etc

⁸⁴ Affecting 205 countries as of 18 April 2020, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

⁸⁵ Press release dated 7 April 2020

become a major concern in this rapidly-transforming world. Inclusiveness and diversity are an asset for creativity and a catalyst to progress. Rocio Lorenzo et al. (2017) studied 171 European companies and found that diversity is conducive to innovation.

Towards a new model of society

Against this backdrop of dramatic change, a consensus appears to be emerging in favour of a new model of society for *homo economicus* which is a departure from capitalism in its current form. This feeling is embodied in the title of an article which appeared in the Financial Times on 18 September 2019: “Capitalism: time for a reset.”

In the modern age, economic growth has been associated with several phases of capitalism and multiple models of value creation. Industrial capitalism first of all, with the accumulation of profits and a strong emphasis on the value of productive assets. Another model is proprietary capitalism, centred upon annuities and not far removed from financial capitalism, where wealth creation depends upon the robustness of the financial model and its allocation of future cash flows. Other variants have included human (managerial) capitalism, where relational skills and management capacities are highly-valued, and entrepreneurial capitalism powered by Schumpeter’s “creative destruction.” We might also add our contemporary state of technological, digital or data-driven capitalism, wherein value creation is dictated by intangible dimensions, digital platforms and user numbers.

But what does the capitalism of the future, or the future of capitalism, look like? Where is our model for sustainable, inclusive growth? It is very difficult to offer a simple answer, given the multiplicity of stakeholders involved.

On the one hand, we know what we want and what we do not want for our society. Without claiming to be either objective or exhaustive, it seems fair to say that we are all in favour of a society which is developed, peaceful, respectful, driven by values of solidarity and existing in harmony with nature, with a healthy population living better and for longer. As simple as that! We do not want to endure crisis after crisis, and yet they appear to be inevitable. Turbulence and disruption are becoming the new normal in contemporary society. This has led some countries to redefine their understanding of globalisation in terms of their dependence or independence in relation to other countries in the processes of manufacturing and supplying priority and essential goods. The first priority of businesses is no longer to protect their competitive advantage, but to diversify their risks and secure their sovereignty.

On the other hand, this new model of capitalism requires an inclusive, sustainable model involving a multiplicity of responsible partners. It is nonetheless somewhat similar to the theory of stakeholder capitalism as developed by Edward Freeman et al. (2007).⁸⁶ According to this theory, value creation should no longer focus primarily on shareholders and owners, but instead be expanded to embrace all stakeholders: managers, employees, investors, clients, suppliers, the government and all other communities who have a relationship with, or a stake in, the company’s activities. As the authors put it, “stakeholder capitalism is based on freedom, rights, and the creation by consent of positive obligations” (2007, p.311). Stakeholder capitalism proposes six founding principles: cooperation, commitment, responsibility, human complexity, continuous creation and emergent competition (Freeman et al., 2007). But this model notably fails to address the fundamental question of

⁸⁶ In reality, the term ‘stakeholder’ is a concept borrowed from strategic management, as discussed in Freeman’s 1984 work *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (reprinted Cambridge, 2010)

environmental impact. One way of remedying this would be to propose the collective creation of values in the plural: human, economic, social and ecological. The human and organisational dimensions of stakeholders must thus be supplemented with an essential environmental dimension: nature. As the saying goes, “no nature, no future.” Values’ creation is thus a matter of optimising three interweaving priorities: business performance, personal well-being and environmental sustainability, all in the interests of collective prosperity.

What consequences will this have for the way we educate future leaders?

In this context, how can we best prepare tomorrow’s leaders for the challenges they will face? I propose to begin with a survey of educational philosophy before discussing the skills which will be of crucial importance in the future.

Philosophy of education

All business schools have a responsibility to prepare the managers and leaders of the future, teaching them how to navigate the pitfalls of a VUCA world.⁸⁷ They share a philosophy of education underpinned by three composite principles.

In order to comprehend the modern world, and the world of tomorrow, business schools need to focus on **multi-disciplinary** understanding and wide-ranging expertise: **knowledge**. That means sharing and discussing the most pertinent principles and theories, helping learners to construct their own systems of thought and analytical frameworks, informed by a comprehensive, cross-cutting and interconnected appreciation of subjects, while also enabling them to adapt in an unpredictable environment and move between different cultures with ease.

The second principle is the acquisition of dual skills, hybrid expertise in a multicultural environment: what we call **know-how**. For example, ESCP Business School has a long-standing policy of establishing complementary academic partnerships informed by the school’s ABCDE strategy (Art, Business, Cultures, Diplomacy and Engineering), including partnerships with some of the leading institutions in France and worldwide. This programme gives students the opportunity to learn and practice other skills, acquainting themselves with different ways of thinking.

The third principle concerns the behaviour and attitude expected of future leaders: **social skills** which in many respects represent a combination of the first two principles: knowledge and know-how. Business schools must ensure that their students develop their leadership capacities and their understanding of the meaning of work, of social contribution, of the values which drive them and which underpin their societal obligations, preparing them to make a positive impact and create a society which is fairer, more sustainable and more innovative.

The imperative skills of the future

These three core principles inform our efforts to teach the skills which will be essential in the near future. While we may not be able to predict exactly what tomorrow’s jobs will look like, we know that they will be heavily influenced by emerging technologies such as AI, Machine Learning, IoT, robotics, virtual and augmented reality (Mueller et al., 2019). Johnson and

⁸⁷ Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous

Suskewicz (2020) propose an alternative approach, which they call *future-back thinking*, designed to identify the essential skills of future leadership. At time of writing, we are also working on an iterative loop in which these key skills could transform our future.

In light of which, it appears more important than ever to focus on developing three essential imperatives of organisational management.

The first imperative corresponds to **technical and managerial disciplines**, *hard skills* which the whole organisation needs in order to develop and create value for clients and, henceforth, stakeholders. These skills have traditionally been attached to the managerial functions of organisations, covering strategy, marketing, sales, production, innovation, human resources, communication, accounting, management control, finance, logistics and technologies linked to information systems. More recently, the organisational structure of companies has evolved; their structure is no longer defined by hierarchical units, nor is it matrix-based, focusing instead on the importance of platforms. In this new configuration, the fundamental technical skills required of managers will probably remain broadly the same.

What is likely to change, however, is that managers will be expected to be multi-specialists, with advanced skills in multiple domains. This will require the acquisition and deployment of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary technical expertise which encompasses future impacts such as the ecological transition and the rise of cyber-physical systems. For example, applicants for finance-focused positions will be expected to be well-versed in green finance, embedded systems, ethics and conformity, all in a multi-cultural environment where remote working is the norm. The skills demanded of a role will no longer be expressed vertically, but transversally too. The leaders of the future will also be expected to constantly adapt, equipping themselves with agile technical skills in order to find creative solutions to complex problems. Creativity and technical and managerial innovation will be highly-prized. During public health crises such as the present one, the priority for operations' managers is to engineer flexibility into production processes with the help of a back-up operational strategy (also known as "hedging operations"), in order to respond to uncertainty by finding alternative supply sources, for example, and identifying new, short delivery circuits. In the future, cyber-physical systems (CPS) will make it possible to pilot autonomous, agile and adaptable production systems which are responsive to external conditions. This will involve considerable input from technical and technological intelligence, closely associated with the acquisition of ABCDE capacities (AI, Big Data, CPS, Design, Ecology).

The second imperative corresponds to the **fundamental relational capacities** which leaders need to develop. That means focusing on the interpersonal, cultural, emotional and social intelligence of effective leaders. This is a matter of developing multiple aptitudes. Examples might include the capacity to show resilience in the face of adversity, or to handle different cultural and interpersonal situations arising at work, negotiation, communication with stakeholders, networking, and of course the ability to motivate and galvanise a multicultural team. In order to master these aptitudes, managers must have a good grasp of associated concepts such as power, respect and trust in different cultural contexts. Moreover, the current crisis has made it more important than ever to learn how to form interpersonal bonds remotely. Social bonding is all the more necessary since the role of future leaders will be to create, federate and steer communities of leaders within their organisations. The ability to create such connections remotely will become a highly sought-after skill. Above and beyond human relationships, the future will see us increasingly cooperating and interacting with robots, a new form of relational aptitude. When facial recognition technology is capable of using artificial intelligence in order to identify the emotions expressed by individuals,

computers' capacity to understand and learn about human interaction in a multicultural environment will also be improved.

The third imperative is **decision-making capacities**. Making decisions is one of the fundamental requirements of leadership. How do we make decisions of strategic importance – such as whether or not to buy a tech firm – without making mistakes? In these moments we use rational, intuitive intelligence.

Kahneman et al. (2019) have demonstrated that structured, rational assessment leads to better decision-making. These authors propose a method called Mediating Assessment Protocol (MAP), based on a precise scoring system for assessment criteria defined in advance and which correspond perfectly to the major questions surrounding the decision. Decisions can thus be made on the basis of holistic evaluations. In practice, decisions often appear to be the fruit of systemic, analytical and intuitive approaches. Andrew Likerian (2020, p.104) makes a similar point, arguing that judgment is “the ability to combine personal qualities with relevant knowledge and experience to form opinions and make decisions.” In his view, good judgement is founded upon six fundamental components: learning, confidence, experience, detachment, options and deliverables (Likerian, 2020).

What emerges here is the importance of all-round attitude, critical judgement and a sense of perspective. It therefore seems essential and necessary to work on boosting discernment, i.e. the capacity to distinguish and evaluate in a lucid, informed manner. In a world where big data and crises collide, with fake news running rampant, the ability to determine the veracity of data and information is of primary importance. For example, the edition of the New York Times dated 18 April 2020 reports on conspiracy theories suggesting that Bill Gates had advance notice of the upcoming pandemic, using that information to invest in and promote vaccination solutions involving microchips. This egregious rumour was shared by 1.2 million people on social media, and was even picked up by several television networks! In the meantime, however, the rapid pace of change requires us to take better decisions more rapidly. I feel that expanding the use of business simulations or business games, based on the sort of algorithms that power other multi-player online games, will be a useful way of honing our reflexes in order to better anticipate, decide, take risks and respond rapidly in an unpredictable and constantly-shifting context.

Conclusion

Educating our future leaders to navigate between cultures, crises and technological revolutions is crucial to ensuring our future collective prosperity. This will require life-long learning of new aptitudes and skills, especially as major transformations continue to reshape our society. The real obstacle to change is not a lack of technological knowledge, but our unwillingness to change. It's in our culture! Changing that attitude is the first step towards acquiring new skills. It is our model for a progressive model of thought, for a better, more sustainable world.

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Covid-19: A (potential) chance for the digitalization of higher education

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Abstract

The digital transformation of the higher education sector has been rather slow and, as such, mirrored academia's reputation of being inflexible and opposed to change. The Corona crisis has drastically changed this, forcing universities and higher education institutions to move entirely online in just a couple of days. Covid-19 might be considered the biggest edtech (educational technology) experiment organized so far. This article aims at analyzing Corona's likely impact on the post-crisis period in higher education, as well as to clarify several points of attention.

Keywords: Academia, Digitalization, Edtech, Higher education, Universities

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Covid-19: A (potential) chance for the digitalization of higher education

The digital transformation of higher education has the same reputation as the higher education sector itself: rigid and reluctant to change. It is therefore not surprising that the MOOCs (massive open online courses, Kaplan and Haenlein 2016) which were proclaimed as the future model of education some ten years ago have not taken off. Academics have remained reluctant to stand in front of the camera, either because of great respect for this unknown world or for fear of making themselves redundant. Universities often unfamiliar with the digital sphere did not know how to adapt business models, compensation models, or settle legal questions around intellectual property.

The Corona crisis has changed this rigidity radically, with thousands of universities forced to go 100 percent online in just a few days. Covid-19 could be considered the biggest edtech (educational technology) experiment in the recent history of education. This article aims at analyzing Corona's potential influence on the post-crisis period, as well as providing some food for thought.

Convinced opponents persuaded by the crisis

Covid-19 has forced and motivated nearly all professors, many among them hardline enemies of online teaching, to take their first, second, and third steps in the digital world for educational purposes. Many of them have turned from convinced opponents of online teaching to advocates of digital teaching possibilities. Several students, especially the more advanced ones, have also learned to appreciate online learning. One can only assume that the demand for virtual programs or hybrid formats, i.e., classes taking place partly online and partly face-to-face, will increase in the future. Finally, even the most virulent adversaries among university leaders have been forced to accept the new digital era of teaching. This has strengthened a recent argument for fewer trips, less air travel, and more online learning, driven by ongoing debates on the importance of sustainable development.

Reforming not only the formats

Digital transformation changes teaching formats, but also course contents. Due to digitalization and advances in artificial intelligence (AI), we do not know the future jobs which will exist and the corresponding skills that students will need to master in the years to come (Kaplan 2019). Therefore, future employees will have to show high adaptability to a variety of contexts and realities. Such flexibility can be fostered among students by teaching them an entrepreneurial mindset and topics such as innovation and creativity. Also, a more multidisciplinary approach to education could help. Teaching students the basic concepts of several disciplines enables them to go deeper into those subjects, which may, in the future, be demanded on the job.

Physical space more important than ever

A false good idea would be to believe that thanks to digitalization, physical buildings could be abandoned. University is about more than just learning content. Studying also means creating networks, friendships, and – in some cases – finding one's significant other. Socializing is, for the most part, easier to do in the real than in the virtual world. Also, students become attached to their (physical) alma mater by creating valuable memories studying and

spending time there. Such attachment is of the utmost importance since students turn into alumni and potential donors. With (public) funding of higher education in constant decline, the importance of funding from former students will increase in relevance in the years to come (Pucciarelli and Kaplan 2016, 2019). Buildings need to translate this new reality. Instead of amphitheatres and lecture halls, universities need more space dedicated to teamwork and co-working, exchanges, and discussions between fellow students, between students and professors, and why not alumni and the entire university community. Buildings need to enable a stimulating student life and foster a pleasant atmosphere. Only like this will students (and professors) want to physically come to university and get strongly and permanently attached to their alma mater.

Inequalities to be considered

The massive shift to the online educational world has also shown deep inequalities, not only in terms of IT equipment and bandwidth, but also with regards to students' capacity for online (self-) learning. This reinforces the argument that a university is not only a place of teaching, but also a place of socialization, care, and coaching. Inequalities also exist among teaching professionals regarding their online experience and skills. With the outbreak of Covid-19, most universities organized intensive courses to train teaching staff on distance courses, sometimes with mixed results. Professors discovered learning analytics made available on Blackboard, Moodle, and Co. However, instead of using this data for pedagogical improvement, some of them used this information to control their students better, justifying their poor course performance. Additional and continuous training for teachers will be necessary. These inequalities on both students' and professors' side will need to be considered when designing the future.

Distance learning creating proximity

We often hear that online teaching does not create the same proximity as face-to-face teaching. This subject is of particular importance given the importance of creating student attachment to their university. However, the virtual sphere offers several possibilities to create a feeling of closeness (Mucharraz and Venuti 2020). For example, many institutions offer study exchanges with partner institutions all over the world and these are periods when contact is often lost with students. The same applies to internship periods. The digital sphere, combined with pedagogical innovation, could partly remedy this. In the end, it is a question of finding the proper balance between the online and the offline world.

Pedagogical innovation is key

To truly benefit from the digital possibilities, real pedagogical innovation is needed, rather than marginal changes (Thibierge 2020). One could imagine programs where students spend their first year working at a company while attending online courses to learn basic concepts and theories. This first program part could be followed by an on-campus period with a focus on the application of concepts, discussions, and exchanges between students and participants. The last year could again be spent in the company with specific online tutoring sessions and alike. For multi-location institutions, the virtual components could create an additional link between different campuses (Kaplan 2018b). One could imagine core courses taking place simultaneously on different sites with student teams made up of members from different physical locations remotely working together on various group works. Online teaching will undoubtedly become of higher importance in any study program.

In order to differentiate oneself from the competition, pedagogical innovation might tip the scales (Kaplan 2018a).

Budget impact unknown

The online world undoubtedly creates additional revenue opportunities as the higher education market becomes even more globalized than it currently is (Kaplan 2017). Nevertheless, it also creates a more competitive environment with institutions an ocean away suddenly becoming serious competitors. Besides, high-quality online courses will require new infrastructures and considerable resources (Kaplan and Pucciarelli 2016). One may also wonder whether students and executive education participants will be willing to pay the same tuition fees for online programs as for face-to-face teaching. If this were not the case, and under the assumption that these programs may cannibalize some of the programs already in place, this new virtual era will pose severe headaches to many leaders in the higher education sector.

Covid-19: Opportunity or threat?

To conclude, the health crisis has propelled the digital transformation of higher education. However, it must be made clear that online courses during the crisis have not always had the quality that a student would typically expect in times of non-crisis. During this period, only a few students complained about the courses that were transferred to the virtual sphere in emergency mode. Most of them were thankful for universities' rapidity and flexibility. Also, few professors asked questions about remuneration or even intellectual property. This climate will doubtlessly change after the crisis, and higher education will need to find responses to several academic, budget, legal, as well as operational questions. Education after the crisis will likely no longer be the same as before the crisis. Universities will have to take these questions seriously to turn Covid-19 into a real opportunity and to avoid the post-crisis situation becoming just like things were before the crisis.

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Covid-19 and the future of international student mobility

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Abstract

This impact paper focuses on the immediate and longer-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic for the higher education sector. We are already seeing disruption to the market through campus closures, travel bans, and restrictions on the mobility of staff and students. Many courses and activities have migrated on-line or have been suspended. It remains unclear how long such restrictions will last but few assume a full return to campus before the end of 2020 and all anticipate a long shadow effect. Focusing primarily on the impact of the crisis on international student mobility and futures, the paper addresses the challenges for institutions in managing and responding to changing mobility flows and dynamics. The paper touches on emerging arguments about the future of international education in a post Covid19 era and argues for measured adjustment to our prevailing mobility culture and practices. This is linked to research investigations into the benefits of mobility experiences for the development of both personal and professional skills.

Keywords: International education, Student mobility, Higher education

Covid-19 and the Future of international student mobility

The phenomenon

The cross-border movement of students is a defining feature of the higher education landscape. Annual growth rates in outward student mobility have averaged 10% over the last two decades and the number of HE students going abroad each year has reached somewhere in the order of 5 million persons.

But what does the Covid-19 pandemic mean for international student mobility (ISM)? Will growth rates slow or numbers even decline from their 2019 peak? With the OECD forecasting a future total of 8 million internationally mobile students by 2025 (OECD, 2017), is it time to correct this assumption and re-set? If so, what will the future of international student mobility actually look like after the crisis?

Assessing the damage of the coronavirus

The Covid-19 pandemic represents a dramatic disruption to ISM flows and one more significant than either the global financial crisis of 2007/8 or SARS outbreak of 2003. The global impact of Covid-19 has been swift and immediate. In the spring of 2020, Australia saw a dramatic decline in international student numbers with its critical Chinese supply route all but cut off. Its semester one loss of an estimated 150,000 Chinese students will now be followed by second semester declines leading to across-the-board cost reductions and requests for emergency funding. A swathe of international exchange programmes and summer schools have been suspended or postponed as international students face lockdowns, travel bans, and campus closures. Millions are unexpectedly completing or continuing degree programmes on-line and the plans of many to study abroad from the autumn term look under threat with restrictions forecast to persist for months to come. Several popular study destinations including New Zealand, Australia and the United States remain closed to international entrants and it is unlikely that a full return to on campus education will apply in Europe and North America at the beginning of the academic year. Here in Europe, institutions are assuming significant shortfalls in Fall 2020 entry to programmes heavily reliant upon international registrations. Institutions are gearing for a mix of on campus and on-line provision, the former with some form of social distancing at least at outset. Universities UK, the body that represents British higher education, has warned of a potential drop in income in the coming academic year of £7bn, approximately one third of all tuition fees from international students (FT, Apr.21, 2020).

Indeed, a multitude of studies are reporting the seriousness of the coronavirus for international student flows throughout the remainder of 2020. Research by the EAIE on the European Higher Education Areas (EHEA) highlights quick impact. A survey based on 805 responses from individuals working in HEIs across the EHEA reveals that nearly three-quarters characterise the current and future effects on inbound student mobility as either somewhat significant or very significant. A Report by World Education Services (WES) reveals that 72% of international education professionals in North America expect a decline in the undergraduate market for international students. This assumed drop in institutional registrations by overseas students is also predicted at graduate level by 59% of professionals. The British Council Report on Chinese student intentions published in April 2020 shows that of the 8,481 respondents who have applied to study at U.K. institutions this Fall, 22% say they

are likely or very likely to cancel their study plans and 39 per cent are undecided. Finally, a large-scale QS survey published last month revealed that 1 in 2 respondents felt that the coronavirus had impacted their plans to study abroad. Of these respondents, 47% had decided to defer their entry until next year, 13% to switch country and 8% to abandon their plans altogether.

The general pattern of these studies and surveys will come as no surprise. Nor will identification of the likely barriers, both psychological and material, to students moving abroad to study this year. It is clear that apart from the threat of lockdowns and travel bans being extended into the summer months students looking to study abroad are concerned about health and well-being abroad, finances, language test delays, visa and applications difficulties. Problems are also anticipated with the practicalities and cost of international travel and diminished post-study work opportunities in the context of a forecast global recession.

Taking a breath

So, what are the immediate and future prospects for international student mobility and how are these best managed?

Taking a breath here, one might say that whilst the short-term picture is less than encouraging, the long-term picture is not unhealthy. Most of the cited studies reporting disruption to study flows in 2020 also highlight people's longer-term interest in studying abroad despite the virus. People are willing to put their international study plans on hold for a while but seem less willing to abandon them entirely. Indeed, there are several reasons to believe that this interruption a to people's plans and to the normal character of things will last just as long as the coronavirus crisis itself and the cast of its shadow. Those maintaining this view will quickly point to the temporary impact of earlier crises such as 9/11, MERS, SARS and the 2007/8 financial crisis, although recovery times across the sector were not always short. The longitudinal data too shows that the global demand for study opportunities abroad has increased with remarkable consistency over the last 30 years with the total number of tertiary students enrolled outside of their home countries climbing particularly steeply from the late 1980s onwards. Whilst growth in outbound mobility flattened out somewhat over the last ten years, it has continued to climb under the combined effect of push (encouraging outward mobility) and pull (encouraging inward mobility) factors. As the OECD (2017) puts it:

“The skills’ needs of increasingly knowledge-based and innovation-driven economies have spurred demand for tertiary education worldwide, while local education capacities have not always evolved fast enough to meet a growing domestic demand. Rising wealth in emerging economies has further prompted the children in a growing middle class to look for educational opportunities abroad. At the same time, factors such as economic (e.g., costs of international flights), technological (e.g., the spread of the Internet and social media to maintain contacts across borders) and cultural (e.g., use of English as a common working and teaching language) have contributed to making international mobility substantially more affordable and less irreversible than in the past.”

In many countries, a record number of young people are entering the peak higher education age brackets. Increasing compatibility and comparability across national education systems, credit-system integration, and national action plans designed to stimulate mobility are other significant forces still very much at play.

Indeed, a defining quality of the present industry is that at both state and institutional level, leading players are competing for mobile students and talent in a semi-globalised market in which mobile students have become an important source of talent and revenue. The competition is aggressive and any shock to the market as in the case of the coronavirus is keenly felt.

Altered states?

The Covid-19 crisis does not itself negate the strength of those drivers of growth, but it does throw up other developments that may point to real and lasting change. Indeed, several commentators have begun to point to the pandemic as a possible tipping-point. The growth and expansion of transnational education (TNE) provision and adoption of online teaching and learning had, in truth, begun to slow the rate of growth in ISM, with the former a question of bringing foreign qualification and providers to local settings. Today however, the world has been dragged to a new normal and some are entertaining a vision of a new type of international higher education.

Reflecting on the realities of the Covid-19 crisis in a recent thought piece published in University World News, White and Lee (2020) observe:

“We are hunkered down in our homes in a sudden, harsh, no-mobility world. This complete shutdown of mobility has exposed an existing reality: We already live in a world in which mobility is not necessary, and sometimes perhaps not even desirable, for meaningful cross-border exchange or an international education.... These events as a consequence of COVID-19 have hastened the dawn of a new post-mobility world, or one in which physical travel is unnecessary for the creation and transmission of knowledge across borders”

Such reasoning would direct attention to the power and accessibility of distance-based learning and/or to internationalisation “at home” strategies. It also points to viable alternatives to physical mobility such as Virtual Mobility (VM) where individuals in a virtual learning environment can engage in cross-border collaboration with people from different backgrounds and cultures with the effect of enhancing intercultural understanding and the exchange of knowledge (Vriens et al. 2010).

It is clearly true that international education has long been synonymous with mobility. We have been living and working in a mobility paradigm that has gone largely unchallenged. Even the first wave of TNE that focused on local market access and implants has given way to a second wave of regional hub operations and international campus networks fostering intra-regional mobility. White and Lee (2020) are right to remark that internationalisation has been “predominantly regarded as a border-crossing phenomenon”.

However, any championing of a “post-mobility” world or perspective should be questioned. Yes, physical mobility in international education leads to a carbon footprint that has to be reduced or “off-set”. This is a serious challenge to those of us associated with physical mobility of both staff and students. Yes, the vast potential of internationalisation remains untapped if most of the world’s students lack authentic international learning because of barriers to their personal mobility. And, yes, private and collaborative on-line learning can provide learning gains and advances at relatively low cost. All of this is plainly correct, but a post-mobility model of internationalisation is difficult to envisage for as long as the majority of international students have an aversion to on-line solutions and a preference for study abroad. Participation challenges would also apply in the form of poor connectivity in many regions/countries and limits to international websites. Even in the current crisis period,

providers have faced these difficulties including the effects of Chinese firewalls. Moreover, a post mobility world would come at some significant cost to the student consumer (if taken to the extreme) and begs the question as to what relationship should exist between the worlds of education and business. Do we also envisage a post-mobility world for business?

Mobility benefits and management capacity

A number of detailed studies have in fact provided compelling evidence that study abroad experiences help to develop a wide range of soft or transversal skills such as problem solving and autonomous decision-making that are critical to successful management practice. Surveys based on participant feedback and/or interviews with returnees from mobility programmes and study abroad placements, have consistently emphasized the acquisition of such skills, also linking international mobility experiences to higher levels of independence and self-efficacy. Exposure to foreign cultures and environments is also associated with the development of multi-cultural skills, language skills, and a more international consciousness. According to one prominent study, mobility programmes “not only increase human capital in individuals but also their cosmopolitan orientation” (Jacobone and Moro 2015). There is also some evidence that one real benefit of international experience through study abroad is the kind of transformational learning that follows from the many disorienting dilemmas one faces when outside of the comfort zone of one’s home environment (Mezirow, 1991).

Looking at the relationship between personal attributes and professional development, many see study abroad in a country as a step and investment towards working or building a career there. But even where such ambition does not apply, research indicates that extended periods abroad for the purpose of study and/or training lead to the development of transversal skills (self-efficacy) and a strengthened ability to manage change and difference (see Brandenburg et al.: 2014). This also links to the relationship between study abroad and ‘global competence’ which equates with the capacity to “understand the cultural norms and expectations of others... [in order] to interact, communicate and work effectively outside of one’s environment” (Hunter, 2004, p. 130-131). Whilst academic mobility does not guarantee this competence it does typically require individuals to operate outside of their comfort zones and to engage with alternative cultural norms and attributes. The broad conclusion is that mobility experiences have the potential to contribute to graduates’ success by equipping them to work and manage across cultures and in international setting.

Another line of investigation has given highlight to the potential for improved degree outcomes and enhancement of academic learning. Pointing to earlier research that has given suggestion that outward mobility can improve academic performance (see Sutton and Rubin 2004), one UK focused study contends that the process of personal development linked to outward mobility is likely to result in improved course marks and enhanced degree outcomes, just as much as it is likely to improve career placement and prospects (Bridger 2015).

In sum, physical mobility across national borders for the purpose of study or training does have tangible benefits. These have been evidenced in relation to stand-alone mobility (where the consumer buys degree education or a course of study abroad and moves to consume the service) and in examples of inter-institutional mobility (e.g. exchanges, pathway programmes and double degrees). Though lesser researched, it would be assumed that cases of intra-institutional mobility (e.g. rotational degree programmes at multi-locational schools and universities) would lead to the same sort of benefits if not potentially a higher set of skills and stronger international networks. It remains unclear how courses delivered exclusively on-line

or delivered to students sitting at home or in cafes could deliver such benefits despite the capacity for virtual mobility and on-line inter-cultural collaboration? This is not to say that they cannot do so to a greater or lesser extent but, at present, there is a less convincing body of evidence. Virtual Mobility (VM) promotion is a strategic priority for the European Commission at least and has clear potential. Nonetheless, traditional uptake of virtual mobility in higher education in Europe has been quite modest to date.

So, where next?

The evidence suggests that even in the midst of this coronavirus crisis, many young people continue to choose to study abroad on an in-person basis. There is no doubt that the crisis will accelerate the development of online education, but this does not mean that demand for face-to-face higher education will decline dramatically or even significantly on a long-term basis. As Simon Marginson (2020) observes: “The organic classroom has personal and status benefits that cannot be replaced... [and] if the next academic year begins on an online basis, platforms will need to be better quality than the temporary adaptations now being put in place”.

The crisis should in fact lead to an acceleration of the development of online education alongside and in complement to in-person education once resumed. Organisations will see the benefit of this combination after experience of migrating teaching activities on-line as a crisis measure. Different providers will clearly vary in emphasis depending on their experience, markets and positioning. Some already have vast experience and strong digital learning brands.

Higher education has again been disrupted and traditional mobility flows will take some time to settle or mutate. There is not least the weight of impact of a pending global recession and this will surely depress supply even after residual restrictions are lifted. Most analysts forecast a drop in globally mobile students the question is only how steep that drop will be and how long the aftereffects of the crisis?

The reality of Covid-19 has also been a patchwork of national realities, responses and scenarios. This means that some states having entered into their crisis first and/or will open up sooner than others. This will bring some distortion to the market for a period along with the reputational damage that some countries (including the U.K.) may have suffered or gains others may even have made. Student choices will, for a period at least, be informed by such considerations.

ISM itself will continue to take many different forms from the dominant stand-alone model of the individual consumer “buying” a degree course or course of study abroad to the varying forms of inter-institutional and intra-institutional mobility now evidenced. Open virtual mobility should now emerge more clearly on this landscape as a means by which those unable to move physically across borders can enjoy some its qualities and benefits.

What we should be targeting is less a “post mobility” world and more a “responsible” mobility world. One where traditional physical mobility in its different manifestations remains open to young people but to more of them at lower cost and with clear purpose. One where physical mobility can co-exist and intersect with virtual mobility, which can provide a useful platform for internationalisation at home. One where some of the concerns about international student mobility are rightfully addressed, not least in relation to the environmental aspect and to matters of personal safety and security. Though unwelcome and destructive to man

and our economies, the coronavirus pandemic is a unique opportunity to transform the higher education sector and one which must be grasped.

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Digital learning at ESCP: what we would like to do and what we will have to do

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Abstract

In the current crisis digital technologies have enabled us to guarantee the continuity of our educational service, but at the same time the lockdown linked to Covid-19 shows us the limits of digitalization. We experience that it is not enough to see and hear each other to have a complete human life. Other senses than hearing and seeing come into play. We are not brains in a box, contrary to some views coming from proponents of artificial intelligence. All this argues in favour of on-site teaching. However, as long as social distancing measures and the wearing of masks are maintained, on-campus social life and face-to-face teaching will likely be very limited. On this basis, this article proposes the main lines of the organization of teaching at ESCP during Covid-19 and later on, combining on-site and online teaching, making a clever and innovative use of digital technologies.

Keywords: Digital learning, Active learning, Online learning, Phygital, On-site teaching

Digital learning at ESCP: what we would like to do and what we will have to do

The limits of digitalization

My daughter celebrated her 15th birthday near the end of the lockdown. That day we invited her two best friends to spend the afternoon at home. For the first time in almost two months, she was able to hug, kiss, touch and talk with them just like before the Covid-19 outbreak. Seeing them happy to find themselves "as before" was a revealing moment. It confirmed to me what we have all experienced during this confinement: digital technologies help us a lot to maintain our professional activity, they also help us to maintain a social life, but that is not enough to live a full life as human beings.

On the basis of the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hubert Dreyfus draws up the limits of online education (Dreyfus, 2008). Having a body means that to live fully as human beings we need all five senses to interact with our fellow humans. However, digital technologies only mediate hearing and seeing⁸⁸, but not smell, taste and touch. Moreover, experience shows that when the density of interactions (i.e. the number of interactions per unit of time) between people is high, the technologies we have do not allow us to properly mediate this type of conversation. In order to be fully socialized as human beings we need physical contact and to interact with other humans without the mediation of technology.

It follows from the above that for a complete learning experience it is best to have face-to-face teaching and a social life on-site, whether that site is an elementary school, a high school, a university or a business school campus. What is obvious for children and teenagers is also necessary for young people who are not yet fully socialized, i.e. (in our case) for Bachelor and Master in Management students (and even for Specialized Master or for Master of Science students). The case of participants in Executive Education programmes is different: these students are already socialized, work on a full-time basis, often have a family life, and unlike younger students, find advantage in not having to go systematically to campus in order to access education.

Learning innovation and digital technologies

In the field of business education a recurrent complaint regarding the effectiveness of the educational system has been observed (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Mintzberg, 2004). The knowing-doing gap has been pointed as one of the main reasons for this lack of effectiveness (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000). Some scholars made proposals to bridge this knowing-doing gap (Schön, 1987). Based on the distinctions made by British philosopher Gilbert Ryle on "know that" and "know how" (Ryle, 1949), I propose some distinctions on learning:

- Learn about... (e.g. negotiation, communication, history, medicine, software design, etc.);
- Learn to do... (e.g. how to negotiate, how to communicate well, how to run a research in history, how to diagnose illnesses, how to design software, etc.);

⁸⁸ As Dreyfus says, even in a videoconference looking at someone in the eyes through a screen is not the same than looking at someone in the eyes.

- Learn to be... (e.g. a negotiator, a communicator, a researcher in the field of history, a doctor, a software designer, etc.).

Bearing in mind these learning distinctions and the knowing-doing gap, it can be said that in order to improve the effectiveness of business education we should focus more on educational practices that allow to learn how to do things and how to become a professional (a negotiator, a manager, etc.). These practices are not only traditional case studies, but also, and even better, assignments that throw students into professional situations. This is usually done in Problem-Based Learning (PBL), experiential learning, reflective learning, and sometimes a good use of gamification. In other words, when using active learning methods and techniques.

In this context (active learning methods and on-site teaching), how can digital technologies enhance business education? Before the Internet, all innovations in this field were devoted to on-site learning (Papert, 1984; Schank, 1995). Unfortunately, with the rise of the Internet and as a consequence the rise of online learning, few research and educational innovations have focused on on-site teaching since then. Computer-based simulations and business games are a notable exception. Moreover, these tools allow not only to apply general knowledge to specific professional situations, but also to train students as reflective practitioners (Vasquez Bronfman, 2013). However, technology-enhanced on-site learning is still a matter of future research.

What has been done at ESCP regarding digital learning

Since the 1980's, ESCP Business School has been using a computer-based business game to be played by all students of the Grande École program. During the 1990's several experiments were carried out using the Internet to support and improve on-site teaching. Later, in 2010, a new business game was selected, a Web-based one, but ESCP still did not offer online learning. It was in the fall of 2013 that the School launched some online courses in Executive Education at the Madrid campus. At the same time, on the same pioneering campus, the courses of ESCP's first 100% online programme, the Executive Master in International Business (EMIB), began to be developed. The EMIB was launched first in Spanish (October 2014), then in English (October 2016) and finally in French (September 2018). Other programmes and online courses have been created, such as the core courses of the Executive MBA and some catch-up courses, MOOCs, as well as several programmes in Executive Education. All this has created a base of digitized learning material, and especially a body of professors involved in digital learning, which were decisive when the Covid-19 crisis arrived.

When on Sunday, February 23rd, the director of our Turin campus informed us that the campus was to close its doors the next day, along with all the other educational institutions in northern Italy, this triggered a tsunami of activity that swept everything in its path. In a very short period of time we had to invent what had to be done in order to ensure the online switch of ESCP: digital technologies, telecommunications infrastructure, logistics, and above all training of all professors in the use of Blackboard Collaborate, the School's synchronous online teaching tool. During the week of March 16, all campuses were closed to students and hundreds of online courses were taught by all ESCP professors, thus ensuring the continuity of our educational service. This exceptional outcome was achieved thanks to the involvement of the programme staff and of some particularly creative and innovative pioneering professors, the School's digital learning team action, the agile approach used to implement this transformation, the total support of the management for these initiatives, but also thanks

to the creativity and learning capacity of the professors who were able to adapt to the new situation in record time.

Which digital learning in times of Covid-19 and beyond?

From the above we can specify a long-term digital learning strategy for ESCP Business School. In the programs aimed at the younger students - Bachelor and Master in Management, even MS/MSc and full time MBA) - we should favour on-site teaching focusing on active learning methods and the use of digital technologies to support and enhance these learning methods. Online learning should be offered when it is convenient for everyone: catch-up courses, the need to get ECTS while on internship outside Europe, optimising the use of square meters on our campuses, etc. It will be in all cases blended learning, where the online part must combine synchronous and asynchronous learning, but for these populations and in these programmes, the online part should remain a minority. Teaching must be "phygital" (physical and digital).

On the contrary, in Executive Education, the programmes must be fully online or blended, but in the "blend" the online part must be more important, usually the dominant part. Here, active learning should even more be a priority because it can also be based on situations that the participants experience in their own workplaces.

However, while in most of our programmes we should focus in the long term on on-site teaching and thus on a "phygital" approach to technology-enhanced learning, the Covid-19 epidemic situation suggests that we will not be able to implement this in the short term. As long as social distancing measures and the wearing of masks are maintained, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to implement active on-site learning methods. Indeed, what kind of on-site teaching can be carried out when students are required to keep a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from each other and wear sanitary masks? Mainly lectures with few questions from students. It will be difficult to do teamwork, interactions between students will be minimal, the permanent use of the mask will literally become suffocating, and as a result social life on campus will suffer significantly. We must try to implement interactive on-site learning activities, but it is possible that under these conditions students will prefer online courses, especially if these courses use active learning techniques and allow interactions between students ... in a safe environment.

Therefore, by September 2020 ESCP Business School should be able to offer an online track of all its programs, especially the Bachelor and the Master in Management. This online track should use active learning methods and cleverly combine synchronous and asynchronous online learning. Despite the short time we have left to implement it, the creativity and immense learning capacity of our professors, demonstrated during the school's online switch in March, makes it reasonable to bet on its success.

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Covid-19 and business schools: Challenges, threats and opportunities

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Abstract

This impact paper analyzes the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis on all the stakeholders of higher education institutions: the institutions themselves, professors, students, candidates and companies.

Keywords: Higher Education, Business schools, Covid-19 crisis, Crisis management.

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Covid-19 and business schools: Challenges, threats and opportunities

Higher education is often said to be counter-cyclical. In other words, during economic crises, individuals tend to study more. It is therefore legitimate to ask whether this will be verified here, even if it does seem very ambitious and presumptuous to try to say what the world will be like after.

The pandemic has taken everyone by surprise. The political and health decision to confine populations had direct and immediate consequences on management schools. The crisis forced institutions to react very quickly, questioning and disrupting deeply-rooted habits (with the cancellation of oral exams for the French preparatory classes, for example). After a first phase of reactions, a more difficult and prospective moment is now ahead of us, as we take account of the total uncertainty about the coming academic year.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the impact of this crisis on all the stakeholders of higher education institutions: the institutions themselves, professors, students, candidates and companies.

Continuity of academic activity in times of lockdown

In a very short period of time, teaching and learning habits had to be transformed. Lockdown meant school closures. Faculty and program directors had to ensure academic continuity, including, but not limited to, the provision of online courses. It was necessary to digitalize all student services (end of semester exams, careers guidance, library, sports, psychological support, etc.). Faced with the urgency and demands of the situation, and the responsibility of institutions towards their students, this was sometimes done in "degraded" mode. For example, business schools have not all shown the same agility in organizing and delivering distance learning courses. Some of them managed to do so almost overnight. Others had to cancel courses for almost 3 weeks to allow time to train teachers and deliver online courses. Some institutions, particularly international ones, also had to organize the repatriation of their students with the help of consulates, while reassuring the families.

No sooner had the online courses been put in place, than it was necessary to organize online exams, while maintaining academic requirements, equal treatment of students and technical feasibility. Since students do not all enjoy the same lockdown conditions, it was necessary to ensure that some students were not disadvantaged by the proposed online exams.

While this reactive phase is now behind us, the most difficult part is now ahead. Threats arising from uncertainty as to the duration and intensity of the health situation appear both for the institution in its "business as usual" operations, and for our students in terms of their employability. There is every reason to believe that the risk of an epidemic will continue, meaning that it will be impossible to gather hundreds of students in lecture halls from September onwards, since measures of social distancing will have to be enforced. Schools and universities could then become genuine "clusters" of the disease. This major health risk now requires the urgent adoption of a teaching reform for the next academic year.

Next academic year: a VUCA case study

Volatility, Uncertainty, Constraints and Ambiguity... these 4 words perfectly define the current situation of management schools. Planning an academic year (which is usually done months in advance) is an unprecedented challenge when no one knows whether the (EU and non-EU) borders will re-opened in September, whether admitted students will be able to visit campuses, whether VISAs will be issued, whether social distancing measures will be in place, whether a new lockdown will be ordered in case of a resurgence of the epidemic, and so on. This widespread uncertainty affects all the aspects of the institutions: from admissions to course planning and the financial survival of the schools.

Schools will need to be creative and nimble in working through several simultaneous scenarios as the health situation evolves over the coming months. This will only be possible with strong support from faculty and administrative teams. In times of crisis, it is necessary to show organizational solidarity and institutional involvement, even if this means having to go outside our comfort zone.

Students: between lockdown, online exams and professional uncertainty

The lockdown experience is different for each student. Some have been able to return to the family sphere, while others have had to remain totally isolated in their student housing. All of them have had to change their learning habits with the transition to online courses, sometimes asynchronously. No doubt they will be happy to return to the classroom with a teacher in front of them whenever that is possible.

Although busy with classes and exams, they were soon confronted with a major anxiety: the postponement and/or cancellation of internships and job offers. Many institutions require a certain number of months of professional experience for graduation. Not all internships were cancelled, however, and many companies have allowed students to continue from home, making the experience sometimes difficult and always far below students' expectations.

On the other hand, students who are about to finish their schooling and who were supposed to sign for their first job find themselves destitute, after 5 years of study. Some of these students at the end of their studies may be tempted to extend their studies for another year with additional training, giving them the impression of avoiding unemployment while the economic crisis passes, and hoping that they will find a job more easily one year later.

The candidates: will they be willing to take risks?

The admissions departments of all institutions are currently under pressure. They are all aware that applicants may not show up and fear record cancellation rates. And there are many reasons to drop (or postpone) admission. Will admitted candidates have the physical ability to come? Are they willing to go far from home given the health risks? Are they willing to pay for expensive studies to have online courses in case of a recurrence of the epidemic? Are they willing to engage in expensive education when their parents may be hit hard by the economic crisis? Will they be willing to take risks? Nothing is less certain. Schools are fully aware of this and could be tempted to admit many more candidates in order to secure their income, sometimes to the detriment of selectivity and quality. Or to admit more candidates present on the national territory, jeopardizing the international diversity that is so important for rankings. These short-term solutions could have disastrous medium-term consequences

for business schools, which would see their rankings deteriorate sharply and companies stop recruiting their students, if they adopt this kind of habit.

Partner companies: full-scale crash test

All business schools boast a strong network of partner companies (often via their alumni) that traditionally recruit many young graduates from their institution. However, these same companies have postponed or even cancelled internships and apprenticeship contracts. The job offers that usually flourish at this time of year have simply disappeared. This crisis will allow schools to see who their real partners are, those who have maintained the internships via teleworking, who have continued to recruit. The latter will become privileged partners of the schools which, in the future, will reserve access to them for their students.

Academic requirements and quality versus the economic survival of schools: the battle has already begun.

The Covid crisis could jeopardize those schools in fragile financial health and some of them could go bankrupt. This sector of higher education, although very muted, is characterized by fierce competition between schools. The many schools that have seen their government financing disappear almost completely over the last few years have only the tuition fees paid by students as their sole source of funding. The question of the size of the institution has become central, and more and more institutions have to recruit more and more students in order to be financially viable.

While it has sometimes been painful to move to online courses, some professors have been "converted". Even if, in the rush, these courses have sometimes been held in "degraded" mode, some schools see this paradigm shift as an opportunity for the future. One of the central issues for institutions is the critical size to be financially independent, but the digitalization of courses makes it possible to significantly increase the volume of students taking these courses. The temptation will therefore be great to digitalize courses as much as possible, but this could cost them a lot of money, paradoxically, and given the cost of the studies on offer in business schools, students do expect to have face-to-face classes. Some candidates may not want to go to certain institutions that offer a large part of their curriculum online.

In addition, the health crisis makes everything much more complicated than usual. There have always been many candidates who were not able to pass the standardized tests required to apply (GMAT, TOEFL...), but some schools, under the pretext of equal treatment between candidates, have already announced that, exceptionally, they will not demand them, as international students are not sure they will be able to come, and may be tempted to postpone (or cancel) their admission. In addition, companies will be tempted to "freeze" executive education courses. The consequences of the crisis could be fatal for some schools and the temptation will be great to sacrifice high standards and academic quality in the name of economic survival. However, this solution will not be viable.

Surprisingly, it seems that schools with a large proportion of national students and no executive education could be less impacted by the crisis.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions are sometimes accused of being ageing systems that are resistant to change. The Covid crisis has already shown that some institutions have reacted with agility and resilience to this unprecedented situation. However, the most difficult part is ahead of us. The schools that manage to get through the crisis without abandoning academic standards and quality, while remaining financially sound, will be the big winners. Even if the Covid crisis does generate an economic crisis, this situation will definitely be different from the previous ones and in this unprecedented situation, business schools are likely to be impacted profoundly, becoming cyclical, contrary to what we might have thought hitherto.

Online courses versus face-to-face courses: identical twins or siblings?

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Abstract

This impact paper operates a comparison between online and face-to-face courses. Online courses share many of the characteristics of face-to-face courses, but with a magnification effect: drawbacks are exacerbated, differences are amplified. In the end, does it make sense to compare these two teaching modalities?

Keywords: Online teaching, Pedagogy, Andragogy

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Online courses versus face-to-face courses: identical twins or siblings?

As of mid-March 2020, ESCP business school decided to close its Paris campus, both for students and professors. In the space of a weekend, all face-to-face classes were to switch immediately to a 100% online format. Faced with this unprecedented situation, each professor was confronted with an alternative: either try to transpose in an online format the exact equivalent of what was happening in the classroom, or assume that online courses, being delivered through a totally different medium with differing constraints, had to be completely reinvented. We can take two analogies to illustrate these alternatives. The author of this work is old enough to have lived through military service in France, and during the days spent in the field of operations, each soldier received a survival ration. Thus, in the wild, the soldier would take out a cardboard box containing the equivalent of an airplane meal tray from his package. It would be a mistake to compare the quality of this survival ration to a "normal" meal, e.g. one that could be eaten at a restaurant or at home. Indeed, in military life, one was either in the field of operations with survival rations, or hosted at the barracks with meals in the canteen. A good point of comparison is thus to assess to what extent the survival ration is an equivalent to a meal in the privates' canteen (and not the officers' mess!). The survival ration was indeed a replica of a military canteen meal, within the constraints of the field in the wild: no possibility of heating, with limitations to weight and size... As a result, the quality had been degraded in this process, but the result could nonetheless be categorized as a military meal. This is the same for switching abruptly to online teaching. We are in a situation where we tried to replicate an experience while taking into account the new constraints of the environment, thereby degrading the product.

To contrast this, let's take a second illustration. The author of these lines is also old enough to have known a world before e-mail. A long time ago, people from the Mailing Room would show up every morning at our desks to deliver letters in paper format. We would read it, write the reply or have it typed by our secretary, and the reply would be put in an envelope a few days later and sent by post. When e-mail arrived in France, the majority of users mistakenly thought that it was just a change of format: from paper letters, we switched to electronic mail. In fact, this led to a lot of unproductive behaviour, because the reality was way more complex. Indeed, we were confronted with a completely new mode of communication that should have invented its own rules rather than copying the rules of paper mail by analogy. If this step had been done, perhaps e-mail would be much more effective in the functioning of organizations today. These 2 illustrations can be analogised to the switch to online courses. First, there was urgency. The idea of the survival ration sets the tone: how to get by in the jungle, all on your own, i.e. deprived of all the usual logistics of barracks and headquarters? Should we therefore opt for a strategy to try and copycat the face-to-face experience – with an imperfect result for sure – or try to reinvent the whole course in this new format – a time-consuming strategy, to say the least. After 2 months of practicing online courses, we can make a comparison with face-to-face courses, and the differences between both modalities can be summed up in a single generic idea: *the online course exacerbates and amplifies the characteristics of the face-to-face course*. Let's unfold those comparisons in the remainder of this article.

Before the class – preparation

The ratio of invisible hours to visible hours

In a typical face-to-face course, we know there is preparation. The professor adapts the structure of the session, prepares documentation and exercises, and reviews the major concepts that he or she wishes to convey both in substance and in form. But in addition to these hours of “classical” preparation, online teaching requires further hours. Indeed, if one decides to do his or her lecture exactly as he or she has been used to doing in a classroom environment, the outcome is bound to have a degraded quality: some actions are impossible to perform, such as moving closer to some students; other actions are possible, but with much less fluidity, such as grabbing a marker and writing key words or diagrams on the board. In order to obtain the same results, it is then necessary to plan alternate ways, i.e. search for numerical tools, train and practice with those tools, and design teaching sequences that are specific to the online course. This additional time corresponds to invisible hours: in fact, the only hours visible to the students are the class hours (face-to-face or online), while the hours of preparation are invisible to them. But in the case of an online course, this ratio will be exacerbated. Indeed, for a face-to-face course, let's assume that it takes one hour of preparation to provide 3 hours of class time; the same course, if done online, will instead require between 3 and 10 hours of preparation for those same 3 hours of class time. The ratio of invisible hours to visible hours is therefore multiplied by 3 to 10 when going online. Those numbers might vary, but the online class will always require many more invisible hours to invest in.

The question of quality

All this extra preparation does not even guarantee that the course will have the same level of quality. The metrics we propose here are much more intuitive than measured, but they give an order of magnitude. If a professor decided to do her online course exactly the way she was used to doing with her face-to-face course, she would probably have a course quality degradation of 40% when compared to the face-to-face experience. In other words, the quality of the online course would be 60% of the quality of the face-to-face course. Certainly, hours of preparation dedicated specifically to online courses will help reduce this gap in quality but, in our experience, they will not annul it completely. In fact, according to our estimate, the 3 to 10 hours of digital preparation that we mentioned will bring the quality of online courses from 60% up to 80-90% of the quality of the face-to-face course. To reach an equivalent level of quality (100%), we would have to invest a lot of extra time on top, or decide that we don't want to make a clone of the face-to-face class: the online course then becomes another product, another promise, another experience...

During the class

Interacting with black screens

One point should be made clear from the outset: in all the online courses delivered, the students not only muted their microphones (at our request, to avoid background noise), but they also turned off their cameras. In spite of several strategies (e.g. asking to start the class with a round of greetings where each student in turn switches on their camera and

microphone to say hello), the students kept their cameras off during whole classes⁸⁹. Even though the professors reminded them that they had 3 ways to react and participate (click on "raise your hand", type in the chat, activate the microphone), the interaction was much weaker than in the classroom. Indeed, in a classroom, a student who does not wish to participate knows some tricks very well. S/he will keep their eyes down when a question is asked or will wait for the teacher to focus on some students who point out themselves by their micro movements (nodding, chatting, direct look...). In the case of an online course, each student feels protected by his black screen. He is doubly at a distance – physical distance for sure, but also distant from the senses, since he is literally invisible to the teacher's eyes...

Transmitting and receiving signals: an energy issue

Those black screens point to our first observation: switching to an online course encourages more pure lecturing. As an example, if in a face-to-face class, a professor's performance is a mix of 60% lectures (the professor talks and answers questions) and 40% animation / exercises / discussion, then it is likely that switching to an online course will increase the lecturing part (in our example, from 60% to 80%, perhaps more), simply because animation will be much harder to maintain – due in part to technical issues, but also because of lower student participation.

Another related problem is interaction fatigue. Anyone who has ever taught knows that this activity takes a toll on energy on 3 levels at least: physical energy; mental energy; nervous / emotional energy. This can be partly compensated by energizers: a good atmosphere in a group of students, a successful interaction, stimulating exchanges, all this helps to recharge the professor's energy battery. If we now make the comparison, we will realize that in an online course, energy drainers will be exacerbated while energizers will be more limited than in face-to-face interaction. Indeed, in a classroom, the professor relies on a multitude of senses: the use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic channels simultaneously, and the feeding off all these signals in order to direct the rhythm and allocate energy. All our colleagues know this: we professors have a form of 6th sense that allows us to detect a drop in attention, increasing boredom, or even realize that we are losing control over what is happening in the classroom... By contrast, when we are in an online course, faced with black screens, we lose a very large part, if not all, of this ability. In addition, even if the students switched their cameras on, this problem would probably not be solved. Our mirror neurons feed on all the micro-expressions on the students' faces, and even though this is done unconsciously, it participates globally in our reception of messages and signals. In communication by camera, we lose a very large part of these micro signals. Our brain will then try to compensate frantically for this lack of information as it is used to doing in real life. During this confinement, how many times have we heard colleagues say that a day of videoconferencing meetings tires them much more than a day of face-to-face meetings? Well, the exact same thing happens for an online course...

What about fluidity?

When we are in a classroom, we are used to doing things in an extremely fluid way: starting to answer a student's question while walking to the whiteboard, grabbing a felt tip pen, starting to draw while talking, grabbing the eraser then rewriting, while at the same time, from the corner of our eyes, we check that the student and their classmates are following our

⁸⁹ Interestingly enough, when the students were sent in small groups to « private rooms », they would switch their cameras on for each other – and they would switch them off again when regrouped in the whole class.

reasoning. In comparison, the same sequence in an online course will require juggling different tools, clicking on icons or activating keyboard shortcuts (that we have had to memorize), and the fluidity will never be the same as in the classroom. Another disrupter of fluidity is alerts and notifications. In a classroom, when a student raises his hand, he usually does it silently and we automatically record this visual signal without stopping our presentation. Now, let's imagine that during one of his lectures in the classroom, a professor had to check his e-mails – and answer them on the fly! Each time a new email arrives, an alert sounds, forcing the professor to read the email and then decide whether or not to answer it, while continuing to lecture. It is very likely that this professor will lose a lot of his concentration and thus, his fluidity. This is exactly what happens with online courses. We are explaining a concept by sharing the screen, and we hear a "ding" which means that either a student has raised her hand or someone has posted a message on the chat. In our brain, the "lecturing" zone must continue while the "reading" zone reads the message and the "decision" zone selects the answer to adopt: ignore, process later, answer now... No wonder that the brain can be overwhelmed.

Technology, savior or burden?

In a conventional classroom, technical problems have recurring characteristics. Firstly, these problems are limited to the equipment used: the computer, the video projector and possibly the microphone. Then, when a problem arises, we can rely on dedicated support services. Finally, we always have a plan B, or even a plan C. If our USB key doesn't work, we can retrieve slides from the cloud; if we really can't access our slides, we can tell students to follow the class on their paper handouts; in the worst case, we can even improvise a class using only the whiteboard and felt tip pen. In comparison, in an online course, technical problems will be exacerbated within those 3 axes. Firstly, an online course generally uses many more tools than just a computer. The video capture platform with document sharing, a drawing software, an online survey application, not to mention shared documents for collaborative work... There is probably a computer law somewhere that postulates that the more tools you use, the greater the likelihood that a technical problem will arise. This is a simple common sense observation. When it comes to troubleshooting, the online professor will then be on his own. This means that the professor now has a double hat. In addition to his historical professor / researcher / animator hat, he now has to put on the outfit of Mario the digital plumber, with the necessity of being really swift, because everything is happening live. This implies additional stress, since we are outside our area of expertise, but in the eyes of the participants, we are in charge of reinstating good teaching conditions whenever a problem arises. This digital stress will be all the more amplified since there are very rarely plan Bs in case of technical problems: either the online tools work seamlessly, or we have to abandon a whole section of what was planned when some tools go haywire. As a consequence, we lose a great deal of granularity in our response to technical problems, since it becomes binary: fix it or lose it.

A modified relationship to time

We have to get used to the fact that in an online course, everything happens more slowly. When the professor asks a question, there is a lag before the question reaches the students (it can take several seconds). The students then have to think it through and decide whether they want to answer; if so, then they have to type their answer in the chat or click on "raise your hand", and once again, there is a time lag before these signals are transmitted and reach the professor's computer. All in all, between the moment the teacher asks the question and

the moment he gets a reaction from the audience, silence looms for a time that is doubled or tripled as compared to the same situation in face-to-face classes. Considering that, in real life, some colleagues are already uncomfortable waiting for 10-15 seconds before students react, then what about the experience of an online course, when after one of our questions, we have to stare during 20-30 seconds at a black (and silent) screen, waiting for a signal from the far reaches of the digital universe?

This warped time also triggers a new relationship with silence, exacerbated by the fact that we are like those blind fish in the dark depths of the oceans, i.e. very limited in our perception. Let us illustrate this with a typical event. Coming back after a break. In the real world, the professor announces a break, and gives a time to be back. When the time is over, she can actually see how many students are back in the classroom. In contrast, in an online course, we usually specify that students should not disconnect their computers, so at the end of the break, we find ourselves staring at those black, silent screens, not knowing whether the students are actually back or not. One solution is to make a chat call ("please type 'back' when you have returned to your computer"). At times, it really feels like we are in a Turing test: the remote correspondent answers us, but we are not sure whether it is a human being or a chat-bot (i.e. an artificial intelligence, programmed to respond to chat messages)!

Scripting, in order to control time and uncertainty

In the case of an online course, we need to do much more detailed scripting. Indeed, in a face-to-face class, we can rely on our competence as experts in our field, allowing for digressions and improvisations. In other words, we are like jazzmen, relying for a part on their sheet music, but also mastering our instrument so well that we can improvise an exercise on the fly, or set up a situation or an explanation that are contingent to whatever is happening in the room at that moment. Comparatively, and for all the reasons mentioned above, the online course will make us run many more risks when we try to improvise. Teaching online then becomes a strategy for managing – and in this case, minimizing – the risks of a failed experiment.

Here are some metrics that we have observed. In a face-to-face course, a 3-hour session is generally broken down into 3 to 5 parts, with elastic timing: nothing is really written down, it really depends on the interactions with the students, and the key priority is to finish on time, having dealt with all the elements that had been planned. In comparison, a 3-hour online course session is usually scripted with at least fifteen different sequences. Instructions on the online tools that will be used, round table to greet each other, a first survey to test the level of knowledge of a concept, then lecture on the concept with 3-4 shared slides, then work in small groups for 10 minutes followed by a collective debriefing, etc. In fact, the same happens in the real world. If an observer were present during a face-to-face class, she would probably identify between 15 and 30 distinct sequences in the 3 hours of the class. But the major difference lies in the scripting. In real life, sequences just happen, some of them being improvised on the fly, whereas in an online course, sequences have to be neatly planned and prepared, with the associated tools (survey application, shared documents, links to videos...), and this requires a much more detailed written script.

We can conclude on a positive note. Of course, online courses will exacerbate the characteristics of the classroom courses, but this exacerbation does not always go in a negative direction. Co-teaching, for example, leads to a positive amplification in an online course. Co-teaching in a face-to-face course represents a very pleasant moment of sharing between colleagues, but when it comes to online teaching, doing the course together with

a colleague will definitely change a lot of things for the better. We can literally unload some of our burden on our colleague for certain parts of the course; it allows us to work in parallel on side issues (answering the chat, preparing a survey), and the students benefit from a live broadcast of the discussion between 2 experts, a bit like being invited on a TV show. Not only is it an enriched experience, but it is also an opportunity to consume much less energy than being alone in front of the screen.

After class

Once a class is over, there are usually many things to do. As for face-to-face courses, this means answering questions by e-mail, posting additional documents or even writing clarifications and guidelines. In the case of online courses, there are at least 2 additional elements that will add service time. First, it will be necessary to retrieve and format the fruit of the students' work online, whether it is the results of surveys, contributions made in collaborative documents or the structuring of ideas made by the teacher in the form of mind maps, all the elements that have been produced live during the class must be retrieved, formatted, and delivered electronically to the students. Comparatively speaking, in a face-to-face class, each student is responsible for the notes he decides to take (or not to take), and the professor is not a notes provider. In other words, for a face-to-face class, the professor only needs to write a PowerPoint presentation before the course; in an online course, the professor will need to write two PowerPoint presentations, one before the course, and one after the course. The second service element specific to the online course has to do with time, in the form of asynchronicity. Indeed, while many students will attend the online course live (synchronous), other students can choose to view the recorded video of the course. Some may do this the day after the live session, others may take a week or more before logging in and watching the course. This means that service requests (questions, clarifications...) will take a longer period of time, depending on when the student actually watched the course video.

Conclusion

We started this article with an apprehensive question: should we strive to make online courses carbon copies of their face-to-face equivalent, or should we instead shift the frame of reference, and consider the online course as a separate product with different codes and expectations? In short, identical twins or siblings? Our angle of analysis has been to show that, from experience, online courses tend to increase / exaggerate / amplify the problems of face-to-face courses. In our opinion, they really are two different media that no longer need to be compared point by point, but rather appreciated for their differences. The face-to-face class is similar to a theater play (for lecturing) or a board game (for animation / discussion / experience). The online course finds its analogies rather in a radio show (for lecturing) or in a music festival like Woodstock: the precise planning is decided in advance, the timing is rigorous... and even if we don't know exactly what technical problems will arise or what pieces the different musicians will play, the performance will be recorded and preserved. After theatre (the 3rd art), rhetoric (the 5th art) or cinema (the 7th art), will online courses eventually become an art in their own right?

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[Will future learning and teaching be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

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Abstract

This impact paper is presenting how our post-pandemic pedagogical approaches will be affected across the higher education ecosystem: training students in an interconnected world, redefining and adapting the role of trainers, considering blended learning as a key asset for higher education institutions, and managing the complexity of learning technologies. This might just be the required disruption to get us all to rethink how we educate and how we adapt our teaching approach to a truly student-centred learning approach.

Keywords: student-centred learning, learning technology, blended learning, interactive-oriented training.

Will future learning and teaching be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

In recent weeks, higher education institutions have demonstrated their significant ability to adapt very quickly to the crisis, with flexibility. But how many of those had anticipated this kind of crisis by implementing a more sustainable educational approach? It is already widely accepted that the Covid-19 crisis is not only a short-term emergency, but a turning point in different social behaviours. One of the most relevant changing behaviours is that working, teaching or learning online will no longer be considered a second alternative. In many cases, it will be our best alternative.

It's clear that some industries (productivity and collaboration services, online platforms, streaming, telemedicine and digital transformation in general) will benefit from a post-Covid-19 era. When it comes to learning, it would be relevant for higher education institutions to reflect on the profound implications of this crisis for the future. At the same time, those designing a strategy for higher education institutions must figure out whether Covid-19 creates a completely new scenario or is only accelerating a disruption process that was already happening and that they did not want to acknowledge.

For a time, trainers around the world have been talking about the need to rethink how we educate future generations. This might be the disruption that we needed to make us rethink how we educate, what we need to teach and what we are preparing our students for. So as educators learn (or improve) new ways to communicate with our students outside of the classrooms, it's a good time to reflect on how this crisis can help us design what learning should be like for current and future generations.

The generations we are teaching now have grown up in a truly globalized world. Those students who belong to Generation Z are probably reflecting on the future of their education as a result of a truly global pandemic, with exams and all kinds of academic events cancelled. This generation is defined by technology and their expectations are related to instant communication and feedback. This is also a generation that sees the power of working collaboratively to solve the world's greatest challenges: sustainability, customization and collective responsibility are keywords of their agenda.

The next generation, the Alpha one, will be the first 100% digital generation. This generation is the one for whom technology is simply an extension of their own identity, and social media a way of life. Students of this generation may not be aware of the impact of this global pandemic, but surely, technology will be unconsciously present in their way of learning. I'm sure that other trainers are wondering how we should prepare our students for the future. Some international reports about the future of work (Manyika et al., 2017; Vanson Bourne 2018) show that around 85% of job positions in 2030 haven't been invented yet. That means the Alpha generation students will work in jobs that don't even exist today. This current crisis may well change our perspective on future learning and teaching. I would like to share some thoughts about how our pedagogy will be affected across the future higher education ecosystem.

Reflecting on how we train students in an interconnected world

Covid-19 is a pandemic that illustrates how globally interconnected we are: problems and isolated actions no longer exist. Successful trainers and students in the coming years must

be able to understand this interrelationship and navigate across limits to take advantage of their differences and work in a truly collaborative way.

In this ever-changing global environment, the next generations will require resilience and adaptability, skills that are proving essential to manage effectively throughout this pandemic. Some of the most important skills employers will be looking for will be creativity, communication and collaboration, along with empathy and emotional intelligence; as well as being able to work in different time zones and take advantage of collective intelligence through effective teamwork. There will be a great opportunity for those higher education institutions knowing how to unlock the massive advantage of collective knowledge, that is, how to transform the student into a producer of content and knowledge.

Thinking about how to redefine the role of trainers

The notion of trainers as the owners of the knowledge delivering it to their students no longer fits the expectations of the next generation. Since students can gain access to knowledge and even learn a technical skill by a few clicks on their devices, we will need to rethink the role of the trainer in the classroom. This means that the role of trainers should evolve: they are to act as facilitators, using their experience and knowledge to identify which micro learning pieces must be engaged to develop a certain skill.

Discussing whether online and blended learning will be strategic assets

Most trainers (and higher education institutions) were working with online education before Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is a great variation in the degree to which online education was core to the strategic goals of each higher education institution. I think all this will change after this crisis. Now, the governing councils of higher education institutions are understanding that online training is not just a source of potential new income. Instead, online training is being recognized as a core asset of educational institutions' resilience and academic continuity plan. This post-pandemic understanding will change the decision process of higher education institutions recognizing the importance of planning, managing and financing online initiatives. Online and blended learning management will be integrated into existing academic leadership structures and processes.

Demystifying and unlocking the complexity of learning technologies

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced higher education institutions to suddenly take advantage of and use the set of technological tools available to create content for remote learning for students scattered around the world. Trainers are experiencing new possibilities for teaching differently and with more flexibility. Teaching and learning are core capabilities of all higher education institutions. Universities and Business Schools that invested in their learning design paths, with professional instructional designers, are able to efficiently manage the transition to remote teaching. The scale and intensity of higher education institutions and business partnerships (technology providers) is likely to increase. And the instructional design capabilities of the institutions will be increased and centralized as core skills for trainers.

The remote teaching and learning efforts that all of our teachers and students are now involved in are unlike what we used to picture when thinking about traditional online education. Quality online learning programs are high-contribution operations, requiring both time to develop and significant investments to execute. However, this does not mean that

the change required to shift to remote teaching will be negative for student learning (Chen et al, 2020). The greatest benefits of virtual instruction will happen when both teachers and students return to their physical classrooms to exchange ideas and to discuss job-oriented situations.

The need to teach and learn with asynchronous and synchronous tools will yield significant benefits when these tools are used in face-to-face teaching, facilitating a more interactive and practice-oriented training. We now have a much more shared understanding that digital tools are complements to face-to-face learning. Valuable classroom time will be used more productively for discussion, debate and guided practice.

Conclusion

After working for approximately fifteen years designing and managing face-to-face, online and blended programs, for both Universities and Business Schools, I think we are being presented with a great opportunity to align our teaching methods with the learning expectations of future generations.

Very soon, all trainers will realize that by personalizing our teaching and learning pathways by connecting different pieces of knowledge and expertise, we can obtain a more unique learning experience which will more accurately meet specific market or recruiting needs. This matching process is already technology-assisted.

When my students have to solve a complex challenge, I always like to tell them "the only limit to solve it is our imagination". At the moment, higher education institutions have a great opportunity to gain legitimacy by demonstrating that they are a great source of knowledge and expertise for society and that they can adapt their processes to deliver a truly student-centred learning approach. Are we ready to step up?

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Crise du Covid-19 et commerce : Quels futurs impacts possibles sur les comportements des acheteurs et sur les stratégies des distributeurs ?

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Résumé

Cet article exploratoire, produit dans le cadre de la Chaire « Prospective du commerce dans la société 4.0 » soutenue par les entreprises BearingPoint et E.Leclerc, s'intéresse à l'impact potentiel de la crise du Covid-19 sur le secteur du commerce et de la distribution.

A partir d'interviews d'experts, d'articles de presse et de contributions académiques, notamment tirées des recherches de la Chaire, est menée une exploration des possibles impacts de la crise du Covid-19 sur les futurs comportements des acheteurs et sur l'évolution possible du secteur. Un jeu d'hypothèses prospectives et l'identification d'enjeux d'importance pour les opérateurs du secteur en sont extraits. Il en ressort que la crise du Covid-19 pourrait favoriser l'accélération de tendances préexistantes au sein de la population française, telles que le développement du « consommer moins mais mieux » ou la fluidification et la simplification du parcours « phygital » de l'acheteur. Un certain nombre d'effets de cliquet pourraient se produire comme l'augmentation des achats en ligne et en drive de produits de consommation courante et d'épicerie ou le recours aux circuits courts et locaux. Mais, des enjeux importants de mise en œuvre viennent modérer ces possibles mutations du secteur.

Mots-clés : Commerce, Covid-19, Phygital, Comportements des acheteurs

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Crise du Covid-19 et commerce : Quels futurs impacts possibles sur les comportements des acheteurs et sur les stratégies des distributeurs ?

La pandémie Covid-19 fait émerger une crise à l'échelle mondiale. La notion de crise est associée à une incertitude qui porte sur le présent et l'avenir et à une perte de repères (Libaert, 2018). Dans le cas d'une crise sanitaire comme celle que le monde connaît, la peur naît de la présence d'un élément impalpable, invisible, qui se transmet par le contact et l'air ambiant. Les moyens de prévention mis en place ont entraîné des changements brutaux et imprévus dans les modes de vie, mais aussi dans de multiples secteurs de l'économie, notamment dans la consommation et le commerce.

La Chaire « Prospective du commerce dans la société 4.0 », sous l'égide de la Fondation ESCP, ayant les entreprises BearingPoint et E.Leclerc pour partenaires et qui mène des travaux prospectifs sur les mutations du commerce et de la distribution présentes et à venir, entame des recherches sur les impacts de la crise du Covid-19 sur les comportements futurs des acheteurs et sur le secteur du commerce et de la distribution.

Comme l'énonce Goetzmann (2020) sur la base d'une fine analyse multi-facteurs, même s'il y a fort à croire que la crise sanitaire va changer habitudes et modes de consommation, il est bien trop tôt pour être affirmatif sur le futur.

Mais de quel futur s'agit-il ? S'il est d'usage en matière de travaux prospectifs de poser l'horizon dans le cadre duquel le chercheur travail (à cinq ans, à dix ans,...), il est peu fréquent de définir un point de départ, d'autant plus s'il est différé. En l'espèce, il s'agit d'un moment où un vaccin contre ce virus sera effectif et où les mesures-barrières auront disparu des lieux publics, notamment des commerces. Il s'agit donc de qualifier le point de départ des hypothèses identifiées par les expressions « une fois la crise du Covid-19 atténuée » ou « post-crise du Covid-19 »... en espérant que cela fasse sens d'un point de vue médical.

L'objectif de cet article est de mener une première et modeste exploration de ces possibles impacts post-crise du Covid-19. L'analyse est conduite grâce à un processus de triangulation d'interviews d'experts, d'articles de presse et de contributions scientifiques, notamment des chercheurs de la Chaire E.Leclerc/Bearing Point.

Crise du Covid-19 : de possibles impacts sur les comportements futurs des acheteurs, entre accélération de tendances et effets de cliquet

Les comportements d'achat durant le confinement

Il convient d'identifier dans un premier temps les principales caractéristiques des comportements d'achat lors de la période de confinement afin de les prendre comme une base de travail et afin de les isoler en tant que telles :

- certaines familles de produits ont été stockés en quantité, notamment le sucre, la farine, les oeufs. Par exemple, du 16 mars au 12 avril, 611 millions d'oeufs ont été vendus aux consommateurs français, soit une hausse de 44 % par rapport à la même période en 2019⁹⁰ ;

⁹⁰ Voir : LSA (site web). Lundi 4 mai 2020 - 15:35 GMT+ 1166 words. [Coronavirus] +44 % d'oeufs achetés depuis le début du confinement.

- la nature et la quantité d'achats peuvent être interprétées d'un point de vue géographique pour plusieurs raisons : 1,5 à 1,7 million de résidents métropolitains ont rejoint leur département de résidence ; 620 000 à 810 000 résidents étrangers de passage en France sont rentrés dans leur pays de résidence et 11% des résidents parisiens se sont réfugiés en province⁹¹

Le confinement a eu divers effets sur les achats alimentaires :

- une réduction du circuit d'achat privilégiant les circuits courts, les supérettes et supermarchés de centres-villes (baisse globale des ventes en hypermarchés selon Nielsen), ainsi que la livraison à domicile ou le *click-and-collect*. Ainsi, un article de LSA rapporte que selon Kantar, le chiffre d'affaires de ces formats digitaux a augmenté de 25,5% sur le premier trimestre 2020 par rapport à la même période l'an passé⁹². Par exemple, Houra.fr a enregistré une hausse des commandes pouvant aller jusqu'à +400% selon les régions. Selon Nielsen France, plus d'un million de foyers supplémentaires ont essayé le *drive* sur la première semaine de confinement, dont près de 500 000 retraités. Monoprix de son côté, a connu une croissance de 900% du nombre d'inscriptions *online* avec plus de 100 000 livraisons à assurer chaque jour⁹³ ;

- les achats de produits non alimentaires ont été significativement réduits du fait de la fermeture des magasins physiques, les Français ne se focalisant que sur les biens de première nécessité. Entre mi-mars et mi-mai, le confinement a engendré une perte de 54 Milliards d'euros et trois secteurs concentrent 63% de cette perte : l'automobile (-11,6 milliards d'euros), l'équipement de la maison (-11,5 milliards d'euros) et la restauration (-10,7 milliards d'euros)⁹⁴ ;

- 63% des Français achètent moins de produits non alimentaires en ligne⁹⁵. Le Boncoin, par exemple, a enregistré une baisse de son audience de l'ordre de 30 à 40% les premiers jours de confinement⁹⁶. S'agissant des enseignes du commerce vestimentaire, les ventes sur Internet n'ont pas permis de compenser la perte de chiffre d'affaires en point de vente. La Fédération nationale de l'habillement (FNH) évoque, pour les enseignes adhérentes, une perte de chiffre d'affaires de l'ordre de 40% en 2020⁹⁷.

Les comportements d'achat possibles une fois la crise sanitaire atténuée

Sur la base tant de l'observation des comportements d'achat durant le confinement que de premières explorations et analyses de conjectures d'experts, six hypothèses prospectives ont été identifiées.

⁹¹ Voir : INSEE. Communiqué de presse. Population présente sur le territoire avant et après le début du confinement. Premiers résultats (8 avril 2020).

⁹² Voir : LSA (site web). mardi 5 mai 2020 - 07:18 GMT+ 1 302 words. 62% des Français déclarent privilégier les MDD.

⁹³ Voir : LSA (site web). jeudi 7 mai 2020 - 15:40 GMT+ 1 3825 words. Covid-19, l'urgence d'adapter son offre [Tribune La conso demain], Xavier Terlet, spécialiste de l'innovation produits et directeur Général de ProtéinesXTC.

⁹⁴ Voir : LSA (site web). jeudi 7 mai 2020 - 14:28 GMT+ 1 869 words. [Coronavirus] Déjà plus de 54 Mds € de manque à gagner pour le commerce !).

⁹⁵ Voir : Enquête Harris Interactive. Les Zooms de l'Observatoire Cetelem 2020. Thème 2 : Coronavirus : d'aujourd'hui au premier jour d'après. Enquête 2/3 : « Vécu et leçons du confinement : quels changements se dessinent pour le jour d'après ? ». Avril 2020. Magalie Gérard, Directrice adjointe du Département Politique-Opinion Morgane Hauser, Chef de groupe au Département Politique – Opinion Anaïs Prunier, Chargée d'études au Département Politique-Opinion.

⁹⁶ Voir : Antoine Jouteau (Le Boncoin) « Le Boncoin continue d'accueillir chaque semaine de nouveaux collaborateurs » Justine Gay. JDN. <https://www.journaldunet.com/economie/immobilier/1490637-leboncoin-face-a-la-crise-coronavirus-interview-antoine-jouteau/>

⁹⁷ Voir : LSA (site web). Jeudi 30 avril 2020 - 16:31 GMT+ 1 351 words. [Coronavirus] Vers une baisse du chiffre d'affaires de 40% en 2020 pour la mode ?

H1 : le réenchantement après le désenchantement

Une première hypothèse possible (H1) est qu'après le confinement, les acheteurs éprouvent le besoin de restaurer le plaisir hédonique lié à l'expérience d'achat. Il s'agirait notamment d'un retour aux activités sociales, aux sorties conviviales et à des rencontres dont l'absence génère une frustration actuellement. Soixante-sept pour cent des Français manquent d'interactions sociales et 47% ont envie de retrouver le plaisir de faire des achats, notamment hédoniques, comme avant la période de confinement (54% pour les 25-34 ans)⁹⁸. Les restaurants et bistros, ainsi que les centres commerciaux et hypermarchés connaîtraient alors une activité maximale dès que les mesures sanitaires le permettront.

On retrouve ici, un cadre analytique propre au courant postmoderne qui, dans la lignée de la pensée de Max Weber, envisage un recours systématique au réenchantement hédonique suite à des phases de désenchantement (politique, économique, social,...). Ce réenchantement quasi vital se manifestant en priorité à travers la consommation de produits gratifiants et la fréquentation de centres commerciaux et autres parcs d'attraction (Ferreira Freitas, 1996 ; Andrieu, Badot et Macé, 2004 ; Lipovestky et Serroy, 2013).

H2 : la rétractation sur les produits de première nécessité et les premiers prix

Toutefois, une hypothèse contraire est possible (H2) : celle de la rétractation des achats sur le strict nécessaire et sur les premiers prix en grande et moyenne surface. En effet, l'éventuelle reprise de l'activité du commerce et de la distribution dépend de plusieurs facteurs :

- les effets à venir de la crise sanitaire sur le revenu disponible. 31% des Français affirment que leur revenu a été dégradé durant le confinement⁹⁹. Les défaillances d'entreprise ne sont pas encore toutes connues et nous ignorons dans quelle mesure le chômage remontera et dans quels délais. Or les foyers impactés négativement par la crise du Covid-19 correspondent également à la frange de la population habituée à l'hyperconsommation¹⁰⁰ ;

- certains Français restent exclus des possibilités offertes par la *click-and-collect* et la livraison à domicile et globalement du parcours client « phygital » (combinant le commerce physique et le commerce digital), par manque de moyens financiers, matériels, ou simplement cognitifs. D'ailleurs, 14,6% des Français ne disposent pas d'un accès à Internet¹⁰¹.

H3 : la valorisation des circuits courts et des produits « bio »

Une troisième hypothèse (H3) tend à valoriser le développement des circuits courts et l'augmentation des achats de produits « bio » (qui ne représentaient que moins de 5% des ventes de produits alimentaires avant la crise sanitaire). Cela devrait dépendre d'une prise de conscience du bénéfice lié à la consommation de ces produits perçus comme plus écologiques et responsables, mais sous réserve d'un consentement à payer souvent plus élevé dans les enquêtes déclaratives que dans les comportements d'achats réels (Badot, Lemoine et Ochs, 2018). L'obligation au confinement a fait émerger une envie de travailler

⁹⁸ Voir : Enquête Harris Interactive. Les Zooms de l'Observatoire Cetelem 2020. Thème 2 : Coronavirus : d'aujourd'hui au premier jour d'après. Enquête 2/3 : « Vécu et leçons du confinement : quels changements se dessinent pour le jour d'après ? ». Avril 2020. Magalie Gérard, Directrice adjointe du Département Politique-Opinion Morgane Hauser, Chef de groupe au Département Politique-Opinion Anaïs Prunier, Chargée d'études au Département Politique-Opinion

⁹⁹ Voir : Kantar, enquête Online menée entre le 9 et le 13 avril 2020, <https://www.kantarworldpanel.com/fr>

¹⁰⁰ Voir : *L'Observatoire des perspectives utopiques. Explorer les perspectives utopiques qui façonnent aujourd'hui les aspirations et les imaginaires des citoyens et des consommateurs*, L'Obsoco, Octobre 2019.

¹⁰¹ Voir : Etude Médiamétrie, mars 2020.

autrement, grâce à l'instauration du télétravail comme pratique courante et la possibilité, de fait, de vivre à la campagne plutôt qu'à la métropole. En outre, les problèmes d'approvisionnement en matériel sanitaire, tests et médicaments lors de la crise du Covid-19 a fait prendre conscience de la nécessité de relocalisation des industries en France. Si les entreprises mettent à profit ce constat, les provinces pourraient voir se développer de nouvelles usines, régénérant une activité économique dans les campagnes et leur repeuplement. Peut-être un effet de cliquet en faveur des circuits courts et des produits du terroir se produira une fois la crise sanitaire atténuée. Cela viendrait rendre massivement manifeste un système utopique à très forte latence dans la société française : celui d'une vie plus proche de la nature, fondée sur des valeurs écologiques et recourant à une consommation responsable de produits plus « authentiques » (Badot et Moati, 2020).

H4 : la progression des canaux digitaux et « phygitaux » pour l'alimentaire

Enfin, le confinement a mis en exergue des divergences nettes dans la nature des circuits de distribution en fonction du type de produit acheté. Les produits de base et les achats usuels ont été achetés à travers le *click-and-collect*, le *drive*, la livraison à domicile, les superettes de proximité et les circuits courts. Les Français ont pris l'habitude de ces modes d'achat — notamment des processus digitaux et « phygitaux » — et pourraient garder cette habitude en période post-Covid-19 (H4). Ce qui représenterait un véritable effet de cliquet car, avant le confinement, les achats d'épicerie en ligne ou au *drive* représentaient moins de 5% des ventes de produits de consommation. Les deux principales limites étaient la non-habitude d'achat de produits d'épicerie et d'hygiène beauté hors grandes et moyennes surfaces et le faible consentement à payer les coûts de livraison. Ceux-ci reflétant d'ailleurs des coûts internes de gestion de la chaîne d'approvisionnement très élevés du fait de la complexité de la fabrication des paniers et des charges logistiques, notamment pour les derniers kilomètres.

H5 : le retour du « burrowing »

Un mouvement de fond présent avant le confinement, motivé par « consommer moins mais mieux », le « Do it Yourself », le recentrage sur la vie de famille et le besoin de nature pourrait s'accélérer en période post-Covid-19 (H5). Enjeu économique pour soutenir l'économie française (87%), mais également enjeu social, pour soutenir les producteurs et professions en difficulté (89%), consommer Français est un objectif pour 83% des Français en cette période¹⁰². De nouvelles populations résidant en province pourraient permettre d'entretenir les circuits courts et de réinstaurer une forme de maillage territorial.

Ces tendances au repli sur le foyer et sur des activités comme la cuisine, la couture et le bricolage (« *burrowing* ») avaient déjà été identifiées suite à des périodes de crise et analysées, notamment par Faith Popcorn dès les années 1990 (Popcorn, 1992 ; Popcorn et Hanft, 2001). Les raisons convoquaient déjà la sauvegarde du pouvoir d'achat et la réhabilitation de valeurs pré-industrielles comme antidotes à la surconsommation.

H6 : le « sans contact » et le « sans effort »

¹⁰² Voir : Enquête Harris Interactive. Les Zooms de l'Observatoire Cetelem 2020. Thème 2 : Coronavirus : d'aujourd'hui au premier jour d'après. Enquête 2/3 : « Vécu et leçons du confinement : quels changements se dessinent pour le jour d'après ? ». Avril 2020. Magalie Gérard, Directrice adjointe du Département Politique -Opinion Morgane Hauser, Chef de groupe au Département Politique-Opinion Anaïs Prunier, Chargée d'études au Département Politique-Opinion.

L'hypothèse numéro 6 repose sur un jeu de mot qui élargit le sens pré-crise sanitaire (associé aux moyens de paiement) à l'acception actuelle plus générale associée aux gestes-barrières. S'il y a de fortes chances qu'une fois le vaccin anti-Covid-19 trouvé, les mesures-barrières disparaîtront des lieux publics et commerciaux, il pourrait en être autrement des processus d'achat. En effet, les initiatives offrant une fluidification des parcours d'achat et la minimisation des efforts des acheteurs pourraient largement se développer. Il est notamment question du paiement en ligne (le plafond de paiement sans contact ayant été réévalué de 30 à 50 Euros) et de la disparition des espèces. On assistera sans doute à la propagation de *marketplaces* et de sites marchands d'offres locaux facilitant la réservation, la récupération ou la livraison de produits de consommation courante (en parallèle du besoin en circuits courts). Ce dernier impact étant néanmoins fortement dépendant de la capacité des opérateurs à mettre sur le marché des systèmes d'une grande simplicité et à un faible coût (Clément et Badot, 2019).

Crise du Covid-19 : de possibles impacts manifestes sur les distributeurs et sur les commerçants mais modérés par de nombreux enjeux endogènes et exogènes au secteur

De nouveau, afin d'isoler l'impact de la crise du Covid-19 sur la stratégie des commerçants et des distributeurs lors de la période de confinement, les principaux traits doivent être identifiés au préalable.

La fermeture des commerces dits non essentiels, notamment des restaurants, a entraîné la vente via des circuits parallèles par des producteurs locaux et le transfert des références vendues vers des *marketplaces* permettant leur écoulement via les *drives*, le *click-and-collect* et la livraison à domicile. Par exemple, des enseignes de bricolage comme Leroy Merlin ou Mr Bricolage ont mis en place du *click-and-collect* avec efficacité comme substitut à l'achat en magasin.

Plusieurs phénomènes ont été observés :

- les ventes alimentaires de produits frais se sont organisées en circuits courts, accélérant ainsi la désintermédiation ;
- les services logistiques des enseignes alimentaires se sont réorganisés vers le *drive*, le *click-and-collect* et la livraison à domicile et ce, malgré des coûts déjà élevés en période normale ;
- les services marketing, notamment dans les enseignes vestimentaires, ont multiplié leurs actions dans les réseaux sociaux et en marketing direct pour maintenir le lien avec les consommateurs.

Ces tendances pourraient se pérenniser si le secteur du commerce et de la distribution parvient à relever de nombreux défis qui concernent notamment :

- les défaillances d'entreprises, en particulier des fournisseurs de petite taille ou très spécialisés, ce qui diminuerait la possibilité d'une offre démassifiée et moins industrielle souhaitée par la demande ;
- le montant des baux commerciaux qui est un sujet qui n'a pas attendu la crise du Covid-19 pour organiser les discussions entre bailleurs et commerces. Sans doute, à terme, le système

transactionnel devra-t-il s'ouvrir à un spectre plus large convoquant des mesures de régulation, tant d'ailleurs pour les périphéries de villes que pour leurs centres ;

- les conséquences du possible fort développement du télétravail sur le commerce environnant les lieux d'implantation des entreprises. En effet, la superficie des bureaux pourrait diminuer et le nombre de salariés hors domicile en conséquence, ce qui poserait problème aux restaurateurs et autres points de vente ciblant les salariés et les *commuters* ;

- l'intégration massive de producteurs locaux et/ou de circuits courts dans les canaux d'approvisionnement des consommateurs qui risque d'entraîner une hausse des prix de vente des produits du fait de coûts d'achat et de coordination élevés. L'autre enjeu sera d'assurer un approvisionnement régulier et homogène à des consommateurs exigeants et aux dispositions mentales et aux comportements souvent disjoints voire, contradictoires ;

- la logistique du commerce alimentaire via les *drives* et le e-commerce (livraison à domicile) qui peine, de longue date, à trouver des gains de productivité du fait d'un effet de ciseau entre les coûts de manipulation, de robotisation et de livraison de produits variés, fragiles, frais et souvent de petite taille et le consentement à payer de consommateurs habitués au *discount* sur ces familles de produits depuis des décennies. *E.Leclerc* et *Lidl* ne sont-ils pas les leaders de ce segment ? En outre, une forte baisse du revenu disponible du fait d'une crise économique et sociale possible ne ferait qu'amplifier cet effet de ciseau ;

- le désintérêt pour les produits non alimentaires et pour les achats d'impulsion du fait d'une rétractation économique et quasi philosophique sur des produits de première nécessité de meilleure qualité. Cette tendance manifeste, en oeuvre depuis longtemps, fragilise le segment non alimentaire à cause d'une pluralité de facteurs (baisse du revenu affecté, progression du e-commerce autour des 25%/30% de parts de marché, oligopolisation du secteur par des « *category killers* » d'envergure mondiale, achats d'occasion,...). Si cette tendance devait s'accentuer du fait des habitudes acquises et conscientisées lors du confinement, elle conduirait sans doute à la fermeture de nombreux points de vente voire, à la fragilisation des centres commerciaux ;

- l'accessibilité technologique et financière des *marketplaces* digitales aux « petits producteurs » et aux commerçants indépendants qui sont souvent déboussolés par la complexité des coûts (au sens large) d'entrée et d'entretien dans ces systèmes informatiques et logistiques. Or, dès avant la crise sanitaire et sans doute beaucoup plus après, la qualité du *merchandising* (nombre de référence, qualité visuelle des produits en conformité avec la réalité, ergonomie du site, fluidité du parcours client,...) comme la simplicité du processus de la commande à la livraison sont des facteurs-clé de succès. Le renfort de parties prenantes comme les collectivités locales ou les Chambres de commerce sur la base de programmes nationaux devrait aider en la matière.

Au total, les impacts de la crise du Covid-19 sur le secteur du commerce et de la distribution, devrait varier en fonction de plusieurs facteurs : type de produit (produits de première nécessité vs achats de réflexion ou d'impulsion), qualité de l'expérience sensorielle et émotionnelle de l'acheteur, capacité des producteurs et des logisticiens à maintenir l'accessibilité des produits dans les circuits courts, implications des acteurs publics locaux et nationaux à soutenir, accompagner et réguler les réorientations à venir, etc.

Conclusion

Une première exploration du sujet de l'impact de la crise du Covid-19 sur les futurs comportements des acheteurs et sur le secteur du commerce et de la distribution une fois la crise atténuée donne à imaginer l'accélération de tendances à l'oeuvre bien avant la crise sanitaire et de possibles effets de cliquet suite aux habitudes prises et conscientisées lors du confinement. Sans doute des facteurs exogènes au strict champ de la consommation finale comme la propagation du télétravail et la relocalisation d'industries en France auront-ils des conséquences importantes sur le secteur.

Aléas, incertitude et complexité sont autant de composantes liées à la situation de crise Covid-19 qui engendrent sentiment d'impuissance et d'incontrôlabilité de la situation. Lorsque les entreprises présentes sur le territoire parviendront à mieux identifier leurs repères et certitudes, ainsi que les facteurs décisionnels, elles pourront alors choisir leurs investissements avec pertinence.

En revanche, une prolongation de cette crise, que ce soit sur un plan sanitaire, économique ou social, maintiendra les incertitudes et multipliera les risques. L'effet de cliquet sera alors d'autant plus important et la résilience, moindre.

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Le dirigeant résilient, une ressource d'optimisme à l'ère post-Covid

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Abstract

A l'issue d'une crise organisationnelle comme celle déclenchée par le Covid-19 et plusieurs semaines de confinement global, le rôle des managers et dirigeants auprès de leurs équipes sera plus crucial encore qu'en temps ordinaires. A l'ère post-Covid, les collaborateurs exigeront à la fois des preuves de sens, des marques de réassurance et une attitude de lucidité proactive de la part de leurs responsables. Cela impliquera pour ces derniers d'adopter au quotidien une série attitudes concrètes réellement productrices de résilience collective.

Mots-clés : Post-crisis management, Optimism, Resilience, Positive leadership

Le dirigeant résilient, une ressource d'optimisme à l'ère post-Covid

A l'heure des grands bouleversements organisationnels déclenchés à l'échelle mondiale par la pandémie du Covid-19, il incombe à celles et ceux qui pilotent, qui ont pour mission de faire tenir le cap au navire, d'entretenir les acteurs dans l'espérance de lendemains meilleurs. Que l'on soit un acteur politique, un entraîneur sportif ou un dirigeant d'entreprise, la capacité à fabriquer de l'optimisme responsable demeure au cœur de tout processus de résilience collective à l'heure de la post-catastrophe.

En phase de convalescence organisationnelle, l'optimisme du dirigeant représente pour toute organisation humaine un capital sans équivalent, qu'il s'agisse d'enthousiasme, de motivation ou d'énergie ; un capital à protéger certes, mais aussi à faire fructifier. Ce que l'on recherche en période post-crise, ce sont non seulement des hommes et des femmes optimistes par tempérament, mais surtout des hommes et des femmes capables d'instaurer avec les autres (collègues, collaborateurs, clients, sous-traitants, fournisseurs, etc.) un mode de relation orienté sur une dynamique de résilience et de reconstruction. Le savoir-être rejoint ici le savoir-faire, à travers la mise en application de principes de comportement générateurs d'inspiration, d'énergie et d'enthousiasme.

La situation politique, économique et sociale actuelle - après plusieurs semaines d'un confinement sans précédent dans l'histoire récente - génère beaucoup d'anxiété pour un grand nombre d'acteurs. Ralentissement à tous les étages, perte des repères anciens et de la visibilité sur le futur à court terme, crainte de l'obsolescence des compétences « d'avant » et de la disqualification professionnelle, peur de l'imprévisible sous toutes ses formes, tels sont les ingrédients du doute et de la perte de confiance en soi et en la société, terrain d'élection du pessimisme collectif post-Covid.

Face à cela, insérés dans un monde qui exige d'eux toujours plus de performance, qu'attendons-nous de ceux qui nous dirigent ? Sans doute trois choses assez simples en fait, mais dont le point commun sera toujours de nourrir la dynamique de résilience organisationnelle, que ce soit celle des individus ou des équipes.

- 1) En période d'incertitude post-crise, la première attente des acteurs sociaux concerne probablement la fourniture régulière par leurs dirigeants de *preuves de sens*, à savoir une émulsion subtile mêlant le rappel de la direction du changement (objectif, but, ligne de mire), l'utilité de ce qui leur est demandé (contribution) et la place occupée par eux, en tant que personnes, dans ce processus (reconnaissance).
- 2) La deuxième attente est aussi celle de *marques de réassurance*, que cette dernière porte sur la compétence du dirigeant lui-même ou sur la confiance qu'il ou elle met dans sa propre action et celle de ses troupes ainsi que dans leur capacité à affronter de façon déterminée et créative les ruptures et remises en question du moment.
- 3) La troisième attente enfin, est celle d'un climat réellement adapté aux périodes de mutation et de réforme, climat que l'on pourrait qualifier de *lucidité positive et proactive*. Face aux tensions nées des enjeux du confinement et d'une conjoncture désormais marquée par la raréfaction des moyens et des ressources (financières, matérielles, humaines, etc.), l'atmosphère entretenue par le dirigeant doit en effet permettre à son équipe d'affronter les difficultés sans risquer le doute ou le sentiment d'impuissance, voire le désespoir.

A quoi reconnaît-on un dirigeant résilient ? Tout d'abord au fait que c'est... un dirigeant comme les autres, c'est-à-dire un responsable qui tente envers et contre tout d'atteindre des objectifs - politiques, économiques, sportifs, entrepreneuriaux - à travers la mobilisation d'autres personnes. Le dirigeant résilient, comme tout dirigeant, doit donc faire réussir une collectivité humaine sonnée par la crise, c'est-à-dire aider ses membres à atteindre les objectifs fixés (même adaptés), les rendre plus autonomes face aux conséquences de l'épreuve et leur permettre, à terme, d'évoluer dans un monde proposant de nouvelles règles du jeu.

Ce n'est donc pas sur la finalité de son action que le dirigeant résilient va faire la différence mais sur ses principes et méthodes d'action. On peut globalement reconnaître un tel dirigeant à travers quatre attitudes fondamentales :

1) Le dirigeant résilient concentre l'essentiel de son action sur les forces, c'est-à-dire sur les qualités des structures et des personnes ainsi que sur leur potentiel d'évolution et de changement.

Pour un dirigeant résilient, les hommes et les femmes qui l'entourent disposent de deux types de ressources d'action face au changement : des *points forts* à cultiver et renforcer et éventuellement des *points d'effort*, sur lesquels existe une marge de manœuvre et où il est possible de s'améliorer et de progresser. Concernant les *points faibles*, à savoir les gros défauts, les carences structurelles, etc. ils sont une réalité objective mais ne peuvent être utilisés durablement pour produire une performance, qu'elle soit industrielle, sportive, sociétale ou autre. On ne peut donc que les ignorer, « faire avec » voire les neutraliser en les compensant, par exemple à travers un développement extrême de certains autres points forts.

2) Le dirigeant résilient sait privilégier les solutions efficaces, même partielles et temporaires.

Certains, en particulier au sommet, aiment à se nourrir de l'analyse méticuleuse des causes des échecs et des raisons de la défaite. Ce faisant, ils produisent presque toujours à terme autour d'eux de la rancœur et des regrets, débouchant inmanquablement sur la justification et la recherche de coupables. Les dirigeants pessimistes, sous couvert de réalisme, apprécient aussi de mettre à l'épreuve le perfectionnisme qui les habite, à travers la recherche - souvent vaine - de solutions idéales, en tous points parfaites, et qui régleraient en une seule fois la totalité des problèmes. Ils en finissent même par admettre, plus ou moins ouvertement, l'impossibilité de tout changement ou de toute réforme.

Le dirigeant résilient quant à lui, voit les choses différemment. Savoir « pourquoi » on en est arrivé là, surtout en cas de difficulté majeure, est certes intéressant ; mais la recherche des causes – surtout dans le cadre de situations complexes - constitue souvent une perte de temps. Confronté au « *pourquoi* » des analystes, le dirigeant résilient privilégiera toujours dans un premier temps le « *comment faire pour* », c'est-à-dire la recherche immédiate de voies alternatives ou d'opportunités nouvelles nées de la difficulté rencontrée. Les grands leaders n'ont pas besoin de connaître l'origine ou le responsable de l'obstacle dressé devant eux et leurs troupes pour commencer à explorer des chemins destinés à le contourner.

3) Le dirigeant résilient traque les « petites victoires » et capitalise sur elles.

Chacun aime à être félicité *après* avoir gagné. Mais chaque jour étant un nouveau jour, ce n'est pas parce que l'on est félicité aujourd'hui que l'on sera davantage motivé demain, ni que l'on gagnera à coup sûr. En revanche, c'est bien le fait d'être encouragé *pendant* qu'on

est en train de faire un effort, d'apporter sa pierre au défi collectif, qui contribue à entretenir notre confiance en nous-mêmes, notre désir de poursuivre l'effort et notre optimisme quant à la réussite à venir.

Le dirigeant résilient garde certes l'œil rivé sur la ligne de mire de la reconstruction à mener à terme. Mais pour autant, il ne perd jamais une occasion de célébrer avec ses troupes une victoire d'étape, un match remporté, un obstacle franchi avec brio, un effort qui a payé, une avancée technique ou un nouveau contrat. Bref, le dirigeant résilient aime prendre ceux qu'il conduit en « flagrant délit de réussite », aussi modeste soit-elle. C'est d'ailleurs dans ces occasions que le dirigeant peut entraîner ses troupes à la pratique du « style optimiste », en analysant avec eux en quoi ce succès est dû à leur action propre, en quoi il illustre des compétences durables possédées par la communauté et en quoi il a vocation à se reproduire dès que possible...

4) Le dirigeant résilient pousse à la persévérance et à la prise de risque.

« Le succès », disait Winston Churchill, « c'est d'aller d'échec en échec sans perdre son enthousiasme ». Si les dirigeants pessimistes anticipent et redoutent systématiquement l'échec, que ce soit pour eux ou leurs équipes, les optimistes – donc les plus résilients - savent quant à eux que l'échec – aussi désagréable soit-il - fait partie de la vie et qu'il n'est, à ce titre, qu'un ingrédient du succès comme les autres. Peut-être un peu plus amer, et encore... Etre préparé aux revers de fortune et à l'échec, pour un dirigeant résilient c'est à la fois savoir ce que l'on fera – et ce que l'équipe fera - si les choses tournent mal ; et c'est se donner par avance le droit de réessayer, de tenter à nouveau sa chance.

Et quel meilleur carburant, pour la résilience du dirigeant, que son optimisme, cette extraordinaire capacité à mettre le réel sous tension positive ? Car si l'optimisme est un facteur de réussite si puissant, en particulier dans les périodes post-crise, c'est essentiellement parce qu'il crée les conditions individuelles et collectives du rebond et de la persévérance face aux aléas inhérents à tous les « jour d'après ». Un dirigeant optimiste est donc, dans tous les cas de figures, un dirigeant qui accorde (et s'accorde) le droit à l'erreur, dès lors que cette erreur peut-être analysée et représenter une source d'apprentissage collectif. Un dirigeant optimiste, à l'heure de la reconstruction, est aussi celui ou celle qui donne à ceux qui l'entourent la permission d'innover, de faire bouger les lignes.

Un dirigeant optimiste est finalement celui dont on pourra dire: « *Face aux turbulences nées des épreuves et des difficultés, il/elle nous a donné envie d'essayer, nous a permis de ne pas réussir tout de suite, et nous a poussé à recommencer jusqu'à ce que nous gagnons au final la partie de la transformation !* ».

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Crise, inertie, incertitude et management

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Abstract

Cet article explore les relations entre les notions de crise, d'inertie, d'incertitude et de management et discute notamment le paradoxe apparent entre l'inertie, qui est une des caractéristiques essentielles des organisations, et l'incertitude dans laquelle nous plonge la crise du Covid-19. L'idée centrale est que concevoir une organisation ou une stratégie capable d'anticiper ce type de crise est un projet absurde.

Mots-clés : Crise, inertie, incertitude, management, stratégie

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Crise, inertie, incertitude et management

En Europe et ailleurs, nombreux sont ceux qui affirment que la pandémie de Covid-19 – et plus encore l'arrêt de l'économie qu'elle a entraîné – constituent une occasion unique de réformer en profondeur les pratiques de gestion, les techniques de management, les réflexions stratégiques, et donc tout à la fois l'économie et la société. S'appuyant sur le principe selon lequel « il ne faut jamais gâcher une crise » (qui s'accompagne de l'inévitable idéogramme chinois désignant à la fois « danger » et « opportunité »), ils postulent que nous avons franchi un cap définitif et que le « monde d'après » sera profondément différent du « monde d'avant ».

Or, on peut raisonnablement supposer que les organisations ne vont pas radicalement changer. En effet, parmi les idées qui traversent la littérature de management, celle d'inertie organisationnelle est peut-être l'une des plus essentielles. De la théorie comportementale de la firme de Cyert et March (1963) à la stratégie Océan Bleu de Kim et Mauborgne (2005), du dilemme exploration/exploitation de March (1991) à l'incrémentalisme de Johnson (Whittington et *al.*, 2020) et de la théorie institutionnelle de DiMaggio et Powell (1985) à la notion de disruption définie par Christensen (1997), on retrouve la même constatation : une des principales caractéristiques des organisations est leur inertie.

L'inertie et l'organisation

De nombreux travaux, à la fois en théorie des organisations, en stratégie d'entreprise et en management de l'innovation, reposent sur l'idée que les organisations sont des systèmes qui cherchent à toujours appliquer les mêmes routines, à reproduire des recettes de succès et à parfaire leurs procédures, au risque de s'enfermer dans des dérives stratégiques. Ce que désire avant tout une organisation, c'est faire son métier ; ce que veut avant tout chacune des fonctions qui la compose, c'est fonctionner. Face à ce conservatisme, une stratégie fréquemment recommandée consiste alors à contester le *statu quo* et à s'écarter de la masse, à déplacer le champ concurrentiel. Cependant, cela finit par créer une nouvelle inertie, qui à son tour enferme l'innovateur sur sa propre trajectoire (Christensen, 1997).

Comment maintenir cette inertie alors que, par nature, le contexte concurrentiel, réglementaire, technologique et environnemental évolue ? Cyert et March (1963) ont montré qu'une organisation saine doit présenter du *slack*, c'est-à-dire un volant de ressources excédentaires, non affectées, qui permet de répondre aux imprévus et de pallier les inévitables imperfections des processus. Si tout l'ordonnancement de l'action collective repose sur des systèmes optimisés, le moindre grain de sable peut gripper la machine. C'est la raison pour laquelle il est prudent de toujours veiller à la redondance des compétences ordinaires, à la multiplicité des procédures, à la présence d'un matelas budgétaire, à la disponibilité d'une main-d'œuvre surnuméraire, et même de faire en sorte que tout cela, à son tour, soit encadré dans les routines. Or, bien entendu, la saine gestion, telle qu'elle est enseignée dans les écoles, consiste justement à éliminer le *slack*, à optimiser les systèmes, à choisir les approches les plus efficaces et à supprimer tout ce qui n'est pas absolument nécessaire. La chasse aux gaspillages, la meilleure utilisation des ressources et la lisibilité des lignes hiérarchiques imposent la primauté de l'efficacité sur l'efficacéité. Entre deux projets d'investissement, c'est le plus rentable qui sera privilégié, et entre deux responsables, c'est le plus économe qui sera promu. Là est justement la responsabilité du dirigeant stratège : arbitrer entre la saine gestion et la capacité d'adaptation, veiller à toujours laisser des zones

de flou dans les processus les plus optimisés, éviter que la réalité du quotidien ne finisse par l'emporter sur l'éventualité de l'exceptionnel.

Des analyses plus fines (Saussois et Laroche, 1991) ont souligné le rôle délétère de l'apprentissage fautif, classique en théorie des organisations : un système qui fonctionne pendant une longue période de temps semble démontrer sa solidité, alors qu'il ne fait que s'approcher de sa rupture. Même si la répétition des succès quotidiens d'une organisation donne l'impression de confirmer son bien-fondé, c'est justement son optimisation – parfois au travers de la normalisation de la déviance – qui la conduit à sa limite.

Cependant, c'est oublier un peu vite que sans inertie, une organisation ne peut tout simplement pas fonctionner (Laroche, 1996). S'il fallait toujours tout réinventer, si chacun était dans l'improvisation et l'innovation permanentes, l'interaction serait proprement impossible. Si nous pouvons vivre et travailler ensemble, c'est justement parce que nos actes sont prévisibles. C'est sur l'inertie de nos comportements que repose la confiance que nous inspirons. Notre fiabilité se mesure à l'aune de notre constance. C'est la nature même de l'action collective que de construire des routines et des habitudes, des procédures et des règles, des répétitions et de l'apprentissage. N'oublions pas que selon l'approche par les coûts de transaction (Coase, 1937), l'entreprise s'est imposée face au marché car elle permet une gestion plus efficiente de la répétitivité des transactions. Là où des relations marchandes impliqueraient une constante reconstruction des relations, l'entreprise, grâce à sa permanence, grâce à son inertie, a permis l'émergence de la production de masse et de la prospérité collective.

L'inertie et la stratégie

De même, tous les outils classiques de la stratégie d'entreprise postulent la continuité. Que ce soit la courbe d'expérience, le PESTEL, la matrice BCG, le SWOT ou les 5(+1) forces de la concurrence, les modèles les plus reconnus (Whittington et *al.*, 2020) reposent sur l'hypothèse que le présent – quand ce n'est pas le passé – est un bon prédicteur du futur. Si l'incertitude est totale, si la nature, l'ampleur et les conséquences des changements sont inconnus, les concepts et les modèles de la stratégie, tels qu'ils sont enseignés dans les écoles et les universités, sont tout simplement inutiles.

Il est d'ailleurs bon de rappeler que dans un environnement authentiquement imprévisible, la notion même de stratégie n'a pas de sens. Par définition, la stratégie consiste à allouer des ressources qui engagent l'entreprise dans le long terme, afin d'obtenir une performance supérieure. Or, si toute anticipation est impossible, s'engager dans une allocation de ressources (qu'elles soient humaines, financières, physiques ou technologiques) revient à être ni plus ni moins qu'un parieur, mais certainement pas un stratège.

De fait, face à l'incertitude, la stratégie doit céder la place à des techniques de survie telles que l'ancrage, l'agilité et l'imitation (Fréry, 2014) :

1. L'ancrage, à la manière d'une plateforme pétrolière, consiste à espérer que l'orage passera et postule qu'il faut vivre sur ses réserves en attendant des jours meilleurs. On met alors en place une organisation résiliente, capable de reprendre son état initial une fois la pression retombée.
2. L'agilité est la posture rigoureusement inverse : comme un bouchon qui flotte à la surface, il faut se laisser balloter jusqu'à ce que le calme revienne, ce qui passe

notamment par la transformation des coûts fixes en coûts variables (grâce à l'externalisation), afin d'abaisser le seuil de rentabilité.

3. L'imitation part d'une simple constatation : pour un décideur, le pire est d'être le seul à prendre une mauvaise décision. Si à l'inverse tout le monde a pris la même mauvaise décision au même moment, la responsabilité sera collective, et donc beaucoup moins lourde à porter. Placés en situation d'incertitude, les dirigeants ont donc tendance à tous agir de la même manière.

Cependant, tout cela n'a rien à voir avec de la stratégie : l'ancrage s'oppose à toute évolution de l'existant, l'agilité consiste à désallouer des ressources, et l'imitation est la négation de l'avantage concurrentiel. Ces techniques peuvent au mieux permettre la survie, mais elles sont incapables de conduire au succès. Lorsque l'incertitude règne, lorsque seule la survie compte, la stratégie est inutile et la réussite ne peut être que fortuite.

Vouloir surmonter l'incertitude est un projet absurde

Au total, peut-on affirmer que la pandémie aurait pu être bien mieux anticipée, mieux préparée et mieux gérée si nos décideurs avaient bien travaillé, si de bonnes stratégies avaient été déployées et si nos organisations avaient été bien conçues ? Face au Covid-19, peut-on dire que nos responsables ont trahi leur rôle de stratèges, ont oublié l'impératif du *slack* et ont privilégié les économies immédiates ?

Rien n'est moins sûr, car vouloir construire des organisations capables de surmonter l'incertitude est un projet absurde.

Nassim Taleb, l'inventeur du concept de Cygne Noir (2007) – c'est-à-dire un événement qui rend brusquement caduques toutes les observations historiques – a souligné que le Covid-19 n'était justement pas un Cygne Noir, puisque des pandémies comparables avaient déjà eu lieu, notamment en 1918, en 1958 et en 1968, et que plusieurs experts, jusqu'à récemment, en avaient identifié la menace. Si les organisations publiques et privées ont été prises au dépourvu, ce ne serait donc pas par surprise, mais par aveuglement ou par amnésie.

Or, à quoi aurait bien pu ressembler une stratégie conçue pour tenir compte d'un événement de cette nature ? Comment aurait-il dû être pris en compte dans les calculs de valeur actuelle nette, dans les extrapolations de courbe d'expérience ou dans la mesure de l'intensité concurrentielle ? La seule énormité de ce scénario aurait éclipsé toute autre considération jusqu'à monopoliser l'intégralité des ressources : seul le plan de survie se serait imposé. En un mot, cela aurait été un parfait exemple d'anti-stratégie.

En effet, qu'aurait-il fallu faire pour assurer un *slack* capable de résister à un événement de cette ampleur ? Quelles ressources aurait-il fallu sanctuariser pour résister à une hypothétique épidémie, dont il était impossible d'anticiper, ni la gravité, ni la date, ni la nature ? D'ailleurs, pourquoi se limiter à l'éventualité d'une épidémie ? Bien d'autres crises nous menacent : catastrophes naturelles liées ou non au réchauffement climatique, conflit nucléaire, cyberattaque, attentat chimique ou biologique, etc. (et c'est le « etc. » qui est le plus important dans cette liste). Toutes ces menaces nécessitent des mesures préventives différentes et impliquent d'immobiliser des ressources distinctes. De loin en loin, tous nos efforts devraient donc être réservés à l'anticipation des crises futures, et au total, ce principe de prévention rendrait notre présent invivable et l'aspiration au bonheur suspecte. Comme le disait avec malice Aldous Huxley : « La médecine fait de tels progrès que bientôt plus personne ne sera en bonne santé. »

Conclusion

Dans ces conditions, que recommander pour l'après Covid-19 ? Le principe du *slack* est pertinent pour les organisations confrontées à des incertitudes stratégiques que l'on pourrait qualifier de « normales » : apparition d'un concurrent, défection d'un client, émergence d'une innovation technologique, changement d'une réglementation, conséquences d'une réorganisation. Dans toutes ces situations, les dirigeants doivent veiller à préserver du *slack*, éventuellement contre l'avis des managers et surtout des actionnaires. En revanche, ce principe est peu utile face à une incertitude de l'ampleur de celle que nous traversons actuellement. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas de la responsabilité des dirigeants d'entreprises d'anticiper des incertitudes de cette nature. Qu'auraient dû faire les patrons d'Air France, du Club Med ou d'Accor pour se prémunir du risque d'une disparition totale de leur activité pendant plusieurs mois, sinon provoquer une paralysie tout aussi délétère ? Nous devons rester modestes sur la portée et les ambitions de nos outils de management : ils sont conçus pour améliorer le quotidien, ce qui est déjà beaucoup, mais pas pour éviter l'exceptionnel.

Le Covid-19 est une tragédie pour chacune de ses victimes, même si au regard de l'histoire, d'autres pandémies ont été beaucoup plus mortelles. Ce qui constitue un événement historique totalement inédit, ce n'est pas cette maladie elle-même, mais l'arrêt global de l'économie qu'une escalade de décisions – et d'absence de décisions – a entraîné. Jamais dans l'histoire plus de 2,5 milliards d'êtres humains n'ont été placés en confinement et nul ne peut anticiper quelles en seront les conséquences. De fait, ce dont nous risquons le plus de souffrir, ce n'est pas de la maladie, mais de nos tentatives d'y échapper.

Pour autant, l'humanité a connu d'autres crises bien plus dévastatrices, dont deux guerres mondiales à vingt ans d'intervalle, sans compter la peste noire, la variole et la grippe espagnole. Or, à chaque fois, l'économie, vaille que vaille, a fini par reprendre sa place. Le quotidien, peu à peu, l'a emporté sur l'exceptionnel. L'homéostasie s'est imposée.

Le management est la conduite de l'action collective, et l'objectif ultime de la stratégie d'entreprise est le progrès. Puisque les crises sont inévitables, nous devons rester humbles mais déterminés. Vouloir se protéger de tout, « quoi qu'il en coûte », relève d'un absolutisme hygiéniste dont les conséquences sont pires que les causes. Tant qu'à être résignés au prochain choc, préférons l'action à la précaution et la recherche de la prospérité à la tyrannie de l'abstinence.

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[Hôpital : le jour d'après ?

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Abstract

La crise épidémique transformera en profondeur le système hospitalier. Il sera en effet difficile de revenir à ce que les soignants nomment une logique managériale. Les transformations verront le jour autour de trois axes: informatisation, coordination, évolution de la gouvernance

Mots-clés : Hôpital, Bureaucratie professionnelle, Coordination, Gouvernance

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Hôpital le jour d'après ?

La crise épidémique nourrira de vives controverses sur les bienfaits du management, mais c'est certainement dans le domaine de la santé qu'il sera difficile de revenir à ce que les soignants nomment une logique managériale, le plus souvent assimilée d'ailleurs à une logique comptable. Les soignants (médecins, infirmières...) pratiquement visibles tous les jours à la télévision viennent de reprendre la main vis-à-vis de l'opinion publique et il sera bien difficile pour l'agence nationale d'appui à la performance (ANAP) d'élaborer des contrats de performance entre les ARS et les hôpitaux et cela en toute quiétude syndicale. Le langage managérial avec son cortège d'énoncés péremptores jargonneux comme « *Tout en restant dans une démarche d'excellence, il [faut] désormais transformer l'hôpital de stock en hôpital de flux.* »¹⁰³ perdra sa capacité performative¹⁰⁴ et les analogies hôtelières (comme celle de *bed manager*) risquent d'être incongrues. Il sera bien difficile en effet de faire comme si rien ne s'était passé et de gérer l'hôpital comme avant.

Pour les consultants qui maniaient avec plus ou moins de précaution la métaphore de l'entreprise pour justifier la nécessaire transformation de l'organisation de l'hôpital et de son mode de gouvernance, il s'agissait de transformer une organisation où les salariés préfèrent exprimer leur loyauté à l'organisation plutôt qu'un engagement contractuel à remplir des objectifs précis mesurables donc évaluables. Les théoriciens¹⁰⁵ nomment ces organisations des *bureaucraties professionnelles* pour souligner le fait que la partie clef de l'organisation est celle occupée par des professionnels qui par leur savoir et leur savoir-faire n'ont pas besoin d'un sommet pour leur dire ce qu'ils doivent faire et comment ils doivent le faire. Le sommet peut changer mais la base demeure, en résonance au proverbe *les chiens aboient la caravane passe* pour souligner le mépris de la base pour un sommet qui ne ferait qu'aboyer des ordres. L'impasse des consultants a été de ne pas comprendre qu'en particulier dans le secteur public *la culture hospitalière* agit comme une colle sociale invisible qui permet d'éviter les discours sur l'engagement nécessaire de tous autour d'un objectif commun, discours qui a du sens pour les entreprises qui sont à la peine pour construire un collectif de travail doté d'un fort sentiment d'appartenance. Aujourd'hui les salariés des hôpitaux publics se vivent plutôt comme les « hommes de l'organisation » un peu comme W. F. White¹⁰⁶ ou encore Chester Barnard¹⁰⁷ les décrivaient dans les années soixante. L'APHP, premier employeur d'Ile de France (100 000 salariés) est l'archétype d'une organisation qui assure un service de santé 24 heures sur 24 et affirme sur son site internet que, *c'est un devoir et une fierté*.¹⁰⁸ Le personnel est recruté pour sa capacité à être loyal envers l'organisation qui l'emploie et dont il est fier, laquelle saura en tenir compte en lui accordant des latitudes d'action et du temps pour agir en autonomie. Dans une bureaucratie professionnelle, le sommet assure un loyalisme global et préfère s'engager sur des objectifs généraux, des messages de mandants vaguement formulés pour reprendre les analyses de Jacques Girin¹⁰⁹. C'est ce type de comportement et le flou qu'il génère qui peuvent aussi produire des dérives

¹⁰³ Stéphane Velut (2019) *L'Hôpital, une nouvelle industrie*, Gallimard collection « Tracts ».

¹⁰⁴ Aggeri Frank *Qu'est-ce que la performativité peut apporter aux recherches en management et sur les organisations : Mise en perspective théorique et cadre d'analyse*, Management 2017 (1) 28-69

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¹⁰⁸ www.aphp.fr

¹⁰⁹ Girin J. (1990) « *L'analyse empirique des situations de gestion : éléments de théorie et de méthode* », in Martinet A.-C. [ed] *Epistémologies et sciences de gestion*, Paris, Economica, pp. 141-182.

telles que les grands patrons se comportant comme des mandarins, une division excessive du travail, un cloisonnement des tâches, des doublons dans les informations, des gaspillages. Les partisans d'une nouvelle gestion hospitalière ont donc voulu introduire de nouveaux outils de gestion pour mesurer et évaluer l'activité et cela en toute rigueur scientifique avec un sommet qui gouverne enfin avec des objectifs précis. La meilleure illustration de ces changements est la réforme de 2004 instaurant la tarification à l'activité (T2A) pour financer les établissements hospitaliers et introduisant ce que les économistes nomment des mécanismes de type marché aussi bien pour le public que pour le privé. Cette réforme était de fait marquée par la recherche d'une rationalisation des allocations budgétaires, allocations souvent marquées par des pratiques critiquables. *Toute ma vie, j'ai vu des chefs de service "faire de la cavalerie", c'est-à-dire demander dix postes, sachant qu'ils n'en avaient besoin que de six. Je pense que c'est là un très mauvais mode de gestion et qu'il vaut mieux dire : « Je n'en demande que cinq, mais, si je suis en difficulté, je reviendrai vers vous pour obtenir ce sixième poste. »*¹¹⁰

Pour comprendre le pourquoi de cette réforme, il convient de rappeler l'étrangeté et la perversité du système d'allocation budgétaire antérieur à l'introduction de la T2A. Ce système dit de budget global consistait à appliquer un coefficient pratiquement uniforme d'augmentation annuelle du budget des hôpitaux. De ce fait les établissements le plus richement dotés et sans augmentation d'activité bénéficiaient de budgets confortables alors que d'autres établissements moins bien dotés et en activité croissante se trouvaient lourdement pénalisés. La mise en œuvre de la T2A a cependant induit de sérieux effets secondaires indésirables écrasant le terrain sous le coup d'une norme aveugle aux reliefs. Cela a été particulièrement vrai pour la psychiatrie dont les protocoles thérapeutiques peuvent difficilement s'insérer dans des nomenclatures. Même dans les activités MCO (médecine, chirurgie, obstétrique) la tarification de nombreuses actions interventions a posé problème. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, il est anormal qu'une exploration fonctionnelle puisse être tarifée de la même façon selon que le patient soit un adulte coopérant ou au contraire un enfant ou une personne âgée ou handicapée. La course aux ajustements s'est avérée une source de complexité inextricable et a contribué à discréditer le système. Ces faiblesses objectives de la T2A associées à un manque d'informations et de pédagogie ont suscité des critiques souvent excessives, parfois dogmatiques, et du coup la réforme n'a jamais été véritablement intégrée à la culture hospitalière publique. L'actuel pouvoir exécutif en est d'ailleurs conscient puisqu'une nouvelle réforme budgétaire hospitalière, annoncée dans le programme électoral d'Emmanuel Macron, est toujours à l'étude et risque de l'être encore longtemps.

Le problème de fond de la T2A comme de nombreuses mesures proposées dans le rapport Larcher (2007) et contenues dans les lois « Hôpital, Patients, Santé, Territoires » (HPST, 2009) et de « Modernisation de notre Système de Santé » (2016) tient au fait que ces réformes remettaient en cause la bureaucratie professionnelle et qu'elles soulignaient le refus de faire des soignants la partie stratégique de l'organisation. Les réformes successives ont été d'autant plus mal vécues par les soignants qu'elles impliquent une remise en cause du fondement historique de l'organisation hospitalière par services. L'approche vite caricaturée comme « comptable » a permis alors de souligner les failles de l'organisation : *on me dit gérez par objectifs ! Je veux bien...mais qu'on me donne d'abord des moyens compatibles avec les objectifs qu'on me demande d'atteindre...*

¹¹⁰ *La leçon de management du patron d'un grand service de chirurgie* Marc-Olivier Bitker Chef du service d'Urologie et de Transplantation rénale de l'hôpital universitaire de la Pitié-Salpêtrière, compte rendu Ecole de Paris du management séance la vie des affaires 6 avril 2018

Ces discussions interminables entre objectifs et moyens, entre soignants et gestionnaires ont nourri des dialogues de sourds et ont fissuré la cohésion sociale entre les différents métiers de l'hôpital, les soignants se plaignant de passer leur temps à nourrir la machine bureaucratique en mal d'indicateurs. Laquelle machine n'avait de cesse de recruter des gestionnaires pour « aider » les soignants dans leurs nouvelles tâches administratives. Ainsi nombreux sont les médecins qui déplorent qu'au sein de l'APHP, 21% du personnel ne soit ni médecins, chirurgiens ou pharmaciens, ni internes, ni ne font partie du personnel soignant, paramédical ou socio-éducatif. Pour eux la technostructure consomme de façon excessive les ressources limitées de l'hôpital et relève de l'imposture.

Cette dualité identitaire et de pouvoir a généré une confusion sémantique entre rentabilité et performance, entre efficacité et efficience, entre ce qui relève de l'organisation et ce qui relève du management et elle a entretenu de multiples malentendus. Toutefois des soignants ont su lever ces malentendus comme ce chef de service de CHU « *il n'y a pas de management sans projet. Lors de ma candidature, j'avais donc soumis un projet de service, par lequel je m'engageais sur quatre points. Le premier concernait l'organisation de la transplantation en commun avec les néphrologues, le deuxième portait sur la prise de rendez-vous en consultation externe, le troisième visait le développement de l'activité du service, que j'avais fixé à 30% en quatre ans, et le dernier était la réorganisation de la sortie des patients par le biais d'une consultation dédiée* »

Se posent alors de vraies questions de coordination dans la conduite d'un projet. Comment mettre en œuvre des opérations transversales entre les différentes fonctions verticales qui, chacune, abritent des manières d'agir et ne souhaitent pas les voir perturber ? Coordonner suppose en effet de se frotter à d'autres routines ou à ce que Herbert Simon¹¹¹ nomme des procédures d'opération standard. Les travaux de recherche en management ont souligné le problème que rencontrent les organisations pour à la fois différencier les tâches, les métiers et en même temps les intégrer et l'hôpital ne fait pas exception à ce constat des chercheurs. Les travaux de Christophe Midler¹¹² ont été pionniers pour montrer l'efficacité d'un chef de projet capable d'assurer l'intégration des différentes fonctions. Là encore, administrer suppose en effet coordonner et s'agissant de la politique sanitaire, le décloisonnement ne sera possible que par la mise en commun de toutes les activités sous la houlette d'un chef de projet capable de s'assurer que dire n'est pas faire et que *sur le terrain* les choses se fassent. C'est en effet sur des problèmes de coordination que bien souvent la mise en œuvre d'une politique bloque. On le voit aujourd'hui avec la coordination impulsée par les ARS pour faire travailler ensemble les hôpitaux publics et les cliniques privées qui véhiculent les uns vis-à-vis des autres des méfiances croisées sur les façons de faire. Le rôle de coordination des ARS ne s'arrête d'ailleurs pas là puisque leur mission s'étend aux établissements médico-sociaux, aux responsables de l'activité pharmaceutique et aux organismes de prévention et d'éducation sanitaires. Dans cette période de crise sanitaire aigüe, le manque ressenti de coordination fait converger les critiques sur les ARS, critiques souvent excessives voire injustifiées. Les ARS font alors office de bouc émissaire¹¹³, mais les victimes se situant au plus haut niveau de la hiérarchie sanitaire, leur sacrifice expiatoire est socialement accepté voire apprécié.

¹¹¹ Simon, H. (1960) *The new science of management decision* New York, harper

¹¹² Midler, C. (1996 deuxième édition) *L'auto qui n'existait pas : management des projets et transformation de l'entreprise*, Paris, Interéditions

¹¹³ G.Bonazzi *Pour une sociologie du bouc émissaire dans les organisations complexes* Sociologie du travail, Année 1980 22-3 pp.300-323

Conclusion

Après la crise profonde actuelle, le système hospitalier et ses acteurs salués tous les jours à 20 heures se verra certes récompensé par la nation mais de profondes transformations verront le jour. On peut les organiser autour de trois axes qui d'ailleurs se complètent : informatisation, coordination et évolution de la gouvernance.

L'informatisation croissante des activités sanitaires permet par la collecte massive de données et par leur traitement intelligent de démultiplier l'information des professionnels de santé dans leurs champs de compétence spécifiques et potentiellement d'améliorer leurs relations avec leurs patients. Cette digitalisation de la médecine se développera d'autant plus vite que les plateformes numériques se sont multipliées pendant la crise et que les patients ont découvert les consultations en ligne. La responsabilité de cette évolution digitale vertueuse incombera aux informaticiens mais le changement ne sera efficace que si ces informaticiens se perçoivent comme prestataires au service des professionnels de santé et non comme des producteurs de contraintes.

La coordination et la recherche de synergies doivent également être des priorités pour donner leur efficacité maximale aux ressources considérables dédiées à la santé. Avec 12% du PIB consacrés aux dépenses de santé la France se situe dans le peloton de tête des nations. Cette coordination doit se faire à de multiples niveaux : coordination à l'intérieur des établissements entre les pôles et les services, coordination entre les établissements d'un même territoire et cela quel que soit leur statut, coopération et entraide entre territoires, coordination entre l'hôpital et la médecine de ville, complémentarité entre les établissements hospitaliers et les établissements médico-sociaux. Tous ces principes visant à lutter contre un *hôpital-centrisme* étaient contenus dans la Loi HPST de 2009 mais la grande leçon à tirer de la crise actuelle est que ces principes ne trouveront une application concrète que par une œuvre tissée par les acteurs de première ligne dans l'exercice de leurs activités et non par des décrets d'instances de « tutelle ».

L'amélioration de l'information par l'informatisation et la nécessaire coordination de toutes les composantes du système de santé appellent enfin un renouveau de la gouvernance sanitaire. Cela suppose tout d'abord que l'on favorise la compréhension mutuelle de tous les acteurs du système de santé. Dans cette perspective, échanges d'expérience, coopération sur le terrain et formations sont à développer d'autant plus facilement que la crise a préparé le terrain de la coopération. De façon plus radicale, peut-être est-il temps de proposer la métaphore de la pyramide inversée popularisée dans de nombreuses organisations performantes. Le principe est de donner aux opérateurs de première ligne la priorité en matière de choix d'activités et d'axes de développement dans des champs d'excellence forgés en interne et légitimés à l'extérieur. La technostructure, redimensionnée à une taille qu'elle n'aurait jamais dû dépasser, n'interviendrait alors que comme support pour aider à la réalisation des opérations et pour assurer la stabilité de l'organisation. Cette inversion permettrait de remettre le management à une place qu'il n'aurait jamais dû quitter sachant qu'il est plus facile pour un médecin d'apprendre les rudiments des techniques de gestion que pour un gestionnaire de maîtriser les techniques de transplantation cardiaque ou rénale. Cette crise a profondément bouleversé l'hôpital public lui redonnant à la fois une cohésion insoupçonnée face à l'urgence et une occasion pour rebattre les cartes entre le savoir des gestionnaires et le savoir des soignants.

Covid-19 et secteurs exposés : les risques de la contestation au travail

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Abstract

Cet article analyse les conséquences du Covid-19 sur l'organisation du travail à partir d'une enquête en cours sur la grève de l'hiver dernier à la RATP, constituée de récits de vie de chauffeurs de bus. Nous appuyant sur un programme de recherche au croisement de la Labor Process Theory et des apports du post-structuralisme d'inspiration foucauldienne, nous avons en effet relevé qu'au cours de cette grève, les questions de subjectivité recoupaient, sans s'y réduire, une délimitation en termes de classes sociales. Cette intersection prend forme autour de ce que nous avons nommé trois « plis » du sujet : les plis du pouvoir, de l'organisation sociale du temps, et du rapport à l'imaginaire. Nous nous demanderons si ces tendances peuvent non seulement éclairer les enjeux et risques actuels liés à l'organisation du travail post-Covid, mais aussi dans quelle mesure il s'agit là de prémices de plus grande ampleur indiquant ou non une « crise de gouvernement », telle que la définit Michel Foucault, et dépassant l'organisation du travail. Enfin, nous soulignerons la pertinence de ces interrogations et leurs conséquences tant pour la recherche que pour la prise de décision et la pratique du management.

Mots clés : Grève, Subjectivité, Foucault

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Le Covid-19 et la contestation au travail, entre continuité et rupture

En France, mais aussi dans le monde et particulièrement en Europe, les premières conséquences du Covid-19 font état d'un effondrement des principaux indicateurs macro-économiques pour les mois de mars et d'avril. Les facteurs concourant à une reprise en V de l'économie s'amenuisent à mesure que se prolongent les mesures de confinement et les effets d'hystérèse qui leur sont consécutifs. Les perspectives épidémiologiques, en sus des interrogations suscitées par la levée prochaine du confinement, semblent confirmer l'hypothèse d'une seconde vague, et même de vagues successives de contamination (The Lancet, 2020). Pour imprévisibles qu'elles soient, les conséquences de la pandémie, tant économiques que sociales, rendent donc caduques, du moins à court-terme, toute perspective d'un retour à la normale (Lichfield, 2020).

Aux Etats-Unis, des mouvements de grève spectaculaires semblent émerger en réaction aux conséquences sanitaires et sociales du Covid-19. Certains ont durement touché Amazon, menaçant de faire s'évaporer ses bénéfices des derniers mois ; tandis qu'avec le confinement, le mouvement semble même prendre de l'ampleur (The Intercept, 2020). En France, le géant de la distribution n'a pas été épargné, contraint de fermer ses entrepôts jusqu'au 5 mai pour raisons de sécurité. D'autres appels à la grève, en défense des conditions de travail, se sont également déclarés dans les secteurs les plus exposés, notamment du commerce et de la distribution ; l'usine Renault de Sandouville, dont la réouverture était prévue ce 11 mai, restera finalement fermée par une décision du tribunal du Havre saisi par la CGT.

Certains ont pu, dans l'espace médiatique, noter le réveil d'une subjectivité nouvelle, mâtinée d'un « imaginaire de lutte des classes » (Sainte-Marie, 2020). Si notre recherche à la RATP indique que la subjectivité au travail est un processus hétérogène et contradictoire, s'actualisant selon certaines lignes de faille, plutôt qu'une ascension aux relents eschatologiques, il convient de se demander dans quelle mesure ces mouvements de grève sont uniquement conjoncturels, ou bien indiquent au contraire l'émergence d'une nouvelle subjectivité au travail marquée par ces récents mouvements de contestation. Dans quelle mesure le contexte du Covid-19 est-il propice à l'actualisation de ces tendances, et en fonction de quelles perspectives ?

Pour ce faire, nous apporterons dans un premier quelques définitions conceptuelles à même de cerner la question de la subjectivité au travail, et préciser son importance pour la recherche et la pratique du management aujourd'hui. Dans un second temps, nous analyserons les tendances dans l'organisation du travail et risques potentiels engendrés par le Covid-19 à l'aune de notre enquête en cours à la RATP. Enfin, nous développerons quelques pistes programmatiques et pratiques issues de nos conclusions préliminaires.

Biopolitique et classes sociales : le sujet du travail

La subjectivité au travail est un enjeu primordial dans les organisations contemporaines, irréductible a priori à une essence stabilisée telle que l'appartenance de classe ; les développements en sciences de gestion issus du post-structuralisme ayant ainsi mis à jour la part contingente et hétérogène propre à tout sujet (Knights, 2016 ; Knights, Willmott, 1989). Une notion centrale qui sert ici de ligne directrice pour analyser les effets subjectifs des rapports de pouvoir au sein de l'organisation du travail est celle de « biopolitique » forgée par Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1976). Si cette notion a pu connaître une fortune diverse, ainsi que de nombreux réaménagements et redéfinitions, il s'agit fondamentalement pour Foucault

d'esquisser une définition du pouvoir qui s'affranchisse d'une conception uniquement répressive, et ainsi mettre au jour ses effets « positifs ». Le pouvoir n'est alors plus seulement répression d'une subjectivité *a priori* aliénée (Alvesson, Willmott, 2000) ; au contraire, renversant ce paradigme naturaliste, Foucault démontre combien ce sont les rapports de pouvoir qui façonnent le sujet à travers un processus de subjectivation.

Pour autant, si cette conception héritée des approches poststructuralistes permet d'évacuer tout présupposé essentialiste, restituant ainsi au sujet une part essentielle de contingence, et donc de liberté, il n'en reste pas moins que, d'un point de vue théorique – mais aussi, comme nous le verrons, pratique – les rapports de pouvoir épousent largement, sans s'y superposer, ceux des classes sociales. D'où la nécessité, pour le complexifier et le nuancer, d'emprunter à un paradigme d'inspiration marxiste en termes de classes sociales.

C'est donc un programme de recherche à la jonction de ces deux traditions qui reste à explorer, empruntant tant à Marx que Foucault ; programme voué à mettre en évidence la dimension à la fois « construite » de la subjectivité, déterminée certes par les rapports de pouvoir, mais aussi sa dimension « relationnelle », portant son attention le rapport dialectique entre les formes de pouvoir, notamment entre classes sociales, et les processus de subjectivation (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001). Autant d'intersections qui forment des « plis », c'est-à-dire une certaine *figure* du sujet (Deleuze, 1986).

De la grève de l'hiver à la contestation post-Covid : les figures du sujet au travail

Autour de quels enjeux sont voués à se recomposer ces plis singuliers entre les rapports de pouvoir et le sujet au travail ? Quelles seront ces nouvelles figures de la contestation au travail qui émergeront dans la situation post-Covid ?

Le choix de faire primer la vie sur l'organisation sociale n'est certes pas nouveau (Dagnaud, 2020). Mais il s'actualise dans une tendance marquée par des mouvements de contestation de large ampleur tels que les Gilets jaunes et la grève de l'hiver dernier dans les transports. Aussi l'inégale exposition aux risques de mortalité prend-elle une ampleur inédite ; jusque-là invisibilisés, des travailleurs « essentiels » se retrouvent désormais en première ligne face au risque de contamination. La composition démographique des travailleurs les plus exposés démontre qu'il s'agit pour la plupart de ceux-là mêmes dont l'espérance de vie s'en trouve déjà réduite en raison des facteurs de comorbidité et risques sanitaires liés à leurs conditions de travail en temps normal : caissières, infirmiers, livreurs, éboueurs, chauffeurs de bus... (Rothwell, Reeves, 2020). C'est pourquoi cette contradiction entre la valeur sociale attribuée au travail et sa rémunération, matérielle et symbolique, constitue la « grammaire » de contestations sociales à venir.

En cela, parmi les salariés que nous avons interrogés¹¹⁴, cette grève constituait pour certains le premier véritable engagement dans une grève aussi longue ; quant aux trajectoires sociales, toutes sont marquées par cette hétérogénéité des facteurs subjectifs et objectifs. S'il demeure impossible, ou à tout le moins réducteur, de considérer l'appartenance de classe comme l'unique facteur déterminant l'engagement dans un processus de contestation, nous avons néanmoins, de façon préliminaire, cerné trois pôles dynamiques (ou « plis ») autour desquels s'est noué ce conflit, au croisement du temps long du parcours de vie et du temps

¹¹⁴ Issu d'une enquête en cours constituée d'entretiens qualitatifs (récits de vie) avec des chauffeurs de bus engagés dans la grève de cet hiver.

court de l'événement de la grève. L'organisation sociale suppose en effet des formes institutionnelles réelles (rapports de pouvoir) et imaginaires (de l'ordre des représentations) structurant une certaine organisation sociale du temps (rapport de temps). Ces processus de subjectivation, définissent, nous le pensons, des tendances durables dans l'organisation du travail post-Covid.

Premier pli : au croisement du sujet et des rapports au pouvoir. Au sein de l'organisation du travail, il s'agit certes du conflit direct ouvert au moment de la grève avec la hiérarchie, mais aussi, comme nous avons pu le constater, d'une remise en cause de toute forme de pouvoir institué, y compris des organisations syndicales ; certains grévistes s'étant mobilisés pour protester contre ce qu'ils jugent être l'inertie des instances syndicales. A ce titre, le renversement opéré par le confinement dans la hiérarchie symbolique des professions a démontré la nécessité de celles dites « essentielles », dont dépend la reproduction sociale. Les tensions déjà à l'œuvre entre « cols blancs » et « cols bleus » ne manqueront pas de s'exaspérer en raison de l'inégale exposition aux risques de contamination en fonction des rapports de pouvoir propres à l'entreprise, et, plus généralement, en vigueur dans l'organisation sociale.

Second pli : le sujet et l'organisation (sociale) du temps. Si toute économie est une économie sociale du temps, alors bien plus qu'une inégalité en termes d'espace (d'espace de confinement, notamment), le Covid-19 pourrait bien réactiver des conflits autour du temps de travail ; au sein de l'entreprise, mais aussi dans la répartition sociale du temps : en fonctions des catégories sociales ou encore entre vie professionnelle et vie personnelle. L'organisation sociale du temps a en effet joué un rôle majeur dans le conflit au travail à la RATP : le temps de travail (horaires décalés), mais aussi concernant la répartition entre temps de travail social et temps de vie, la réforme des retraites étant perçue comme un empiètement, voire une annexion, du premier sur le second. L'exemple du télétravail est à ce titre ambivalent ; bien qu'octroyant une flexibilité accrue, il prédispose aussi à rompre la frontière symbolique qui semblait régir la répartition entre vie professionnelle et privée ; plus encore, la possibilité pour certains de télé-travailler équivaut à un pouvoir du temps sur l'espace : la flexibilité des horaires de travail octroie un surcroît de liberté largement perçu comme une injustice. En cela, si l'ampleur de l'effondrement économique tend à se confirmer, cette discordance des temps pourrait bien se manifester, en particulier pour les secteurs les plus exposés, par le refus de sacrifier leur temps de vie aux dépens du temps de travail.

Troisième et dernier pli : le rapport entre le sujet et l'imaginaire, personnel et collectif. On découvre, plutôt que des représentations binaires réparties entre le consentement au travail et l'entrée dans la contestation, toute une zone grise où se situe un ensemble de possibilité et de « territoires inexplorés » de l'imaginaire au sein des organisations (Gabriel, 1995) entre la contestation et le consentement. La grève contre la réforme des retraites n'avait en effet pas seulement catalysé un imaginaire empreint de références révolutionnaires ou de « luttes de classes » ; elle fut aussi l'occasion d'une évasion intense, presque extatique, hors de l'imaginaire dominant ; moment de considération, de contemplation même, de la possibilité d'un ordre social radicalement différent. Nos résultats indiquent qu'il n'est pas de passage mécanique du consentement à la contestation du travail, mais toute une gamme d'actions contradictoires, qui seront autant de tentatives de repenser et renégocier un imaginaire radical ; autrement dit, d'un nouvel imaginaire au travail et du travail en temps de pandémie.

Le schéma proposé ci-dessous, qui résume nos propos, est à considérer en trois dimensions ; prenant la forme d'un « origami » plutôt qu'une figure bi-dimensionnelle. Cette métaphore du « pli » sert à désigner l'intériorisation des rapports sociaux par l'individu. Le sujet au travail

n'est ni une figurine de plomb à l'intériorité immuable, ni un flux perpétuel de sensations : c'est à l'articulation de ces différents plis qu'il convient d'étudier le processus qui façonne un sujet. Leur agencement, selon certaines lignes, forment ainsi une certaine « figure » du sujet au travail.

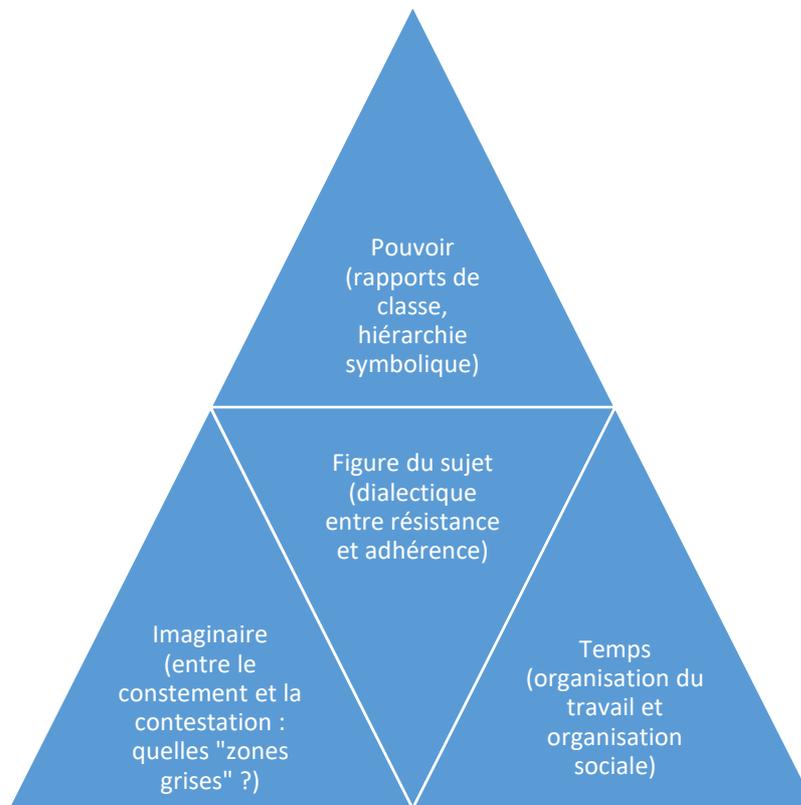


Schéma résumant le processus de subjectivation au croisement des différents plis.

Conclusion : Business as (un)usual : les prémices d'une « crise de gouvernement » ?

Le propre des grandes crises tient à leur capacité à redéfinir les grands accords institutionnels qui structurent notre société. Si une grève a pu contraindre Amazon à fermer ses dépôts, entamant ainsi ses profits, nul doute que de tels phénomènes seront appelés à se multiplier au vu de la crise économique et sociale en cours. Ce que nous apprend notre recherche sur les conséquences biographiques de l'engagement dans une grève, c'est que ses effets perdurent bien au-delà de l'événement en tant que tel. C'est une expérience de rupture. L'organisation actuelle du travail, ses contours sociaux, juridiques, économiques, seront amenés à se transformer sous la contrainte de la pandémie. Faut-il pour autant y déceler les prémices d'une crise qui, de l'organisation du travail, risque de se transformer en une « crise de gouvernement » ?

« Par gouvernement, écrit Foucault, j'entends l'ensemble des institutions et pratiques à travers lesquelles on guide les hommes depuis l'administration jusqu'à l'éducation. [...] C'est cet ensemble de procédures, de techniques, de méthodes qui garantissent le guidage des hommes les uns par les autres qui me semble, aujourd'hui, en crise, autant dans le monde occidental que dans le monde socialiste. Là aussi, les gens ressentent de plus en plus de

malaise, de difficultés, d'intolérance pour la façon dont on les guide. Il s'agit d'un phénomène qui s'exprime dans des formes de résistance, parfois de révolte à l'égard de questions qui concernent aussi bien le quotidien que des grandes décisions comme l'implantation d'une industrie atomique ou le fait de placer les gens dans tel ou tel bloc économique-politique dans lequel ils ne se reconnaissent pas. [...] L'ensemble des procédés par lesquels les hommes se dirigent les uns les autres sont remis en question non pas, évidemment, par ceux qui dirigent, qui gouvernent, même s'ils ne peuvent pas ne pas prendre acte des difficultés. Nous sommes peut-être au début d'une grande crise de réévaluation du problème du gouvernement. » (Foucault, 1978).

Passage saisissant, frappant par son intempestivité. Selon Foucault, ces crises concentrent certes une multiplicité de déterminants, mais dont les prodromes surgissent sous la forme de « contre-conduites », pratiques rétives aux procédures qui agencent l'organisation sociale. Ce sont précisément autour des enjeux du pouvoir, du temps et de l'imaginaire que, selon nous, pourraient se cristalliser ces « contre-conduites » préfiguratrices. En quoi cela peut-il – et même doit-il – intéresser tant le chercheur en management que le décideur ?

Pour la recherche, il s'agit d'ouvrir un champ d'études attentif à l'histoire du présent sans céder à l'écueil du présentisme ; issu de la confrontation de différents paradigmes, ce programme de travail dont la médiation entre les disciplines allant de la psychodynamique du travail, de l'économie aux sciences de gestion en passant par les sciences politiques, jetterait un regard neuf sur les processus dynamiques qui structurent l'organisation sociale du travail et ses évolutions.

Pour la prise de décision, il est essentiel de cerner dans quelle mesure le Covid-19, par ses effets « objectifs », vient bouleverser la subjectivité des salariés ; et dont les mouvements de grève, actuels et potentiels, sont autant d'expressions. Outre la nécessité d'apprendre à composer avec un climat d'incertitude, on ne saurait se laisser abuser par cette illusion de sécurité : les tendances de fond qui ont sapé l'organisation économique et sociale sont susceptibles de s'actualiser, et de façon particulièrement aigüe, dans ce nouveau contexte.

Aussi est-il impératif pour la recherche en science de gestion et la pratique du management de se saisir non seulement de ces nouvelles lignes de fracture dans l'organisation du travail, mais aussi d'embrasser la pluridisciplinarité des perspectives afin de saisir l'ordre tumultueux et kaléidoscopique du temps présent. Business as usual? Maybe not.

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Toutes « affaires cessées » ou la vertu d'un management de la controverse dans les organisations

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Résumé

L'ampleur de la crise sanitaire remet à vif des sujets si existentiels que cela va forcément générer voire exacerber des dissensus -exprimés ou non- au sein des collectifs de travail. La mise en place d'espaces d'analyse de controverse (Latour, 2017) dans les organisations offrent une méthode réflexive doublée d'une grille d'analyse particulièrement propices à dépasser les décalages d'opinions: pour imaginer des modes d'actions collectives qui défendent la viabilité du monde - dont notre humanité dépend.

Mots-clés : Management, Controverse, Transition, Crise, Changement de paradigme

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Toutes « affaires cessées » ou la vertu d'un management de la controverse dans les organisations

« Notre société sépare plus qu'elle ne relie, ce qui fait de nous des êtres en mal de reliance » (Morin, 2006, p. 114)

La controverse confinée : une crise silencieuse dans la crise ?

Le confinement lié au Covid-19, en ce qu'il modifie et réduit drastiquement les modes de vie des sociétés, acte une rupture dans le cours de l'Histoire. Objet d'une véritable mise à l'épreuve -au double sens de probation et de peine endurée- comme le propose Paul Ricoeur, les questions vitales qu'il (res)suscite imprègnent profondément la sensibilité collective, mais aussi chaque individu, en son for intérieur. Les individus se raccrochent aux valeurs individuelles et collectives auxquelles ils sont fondamentalement attachés, à l'appréciation intime de ce qui fait vie, la protège et la menace. Une analyse prospective du MIT a récemment conclu au point d'un non-retour à « la vie d'avant » (Strauss-Kahn, 2020). Après des années d'austérité budgétaire et de déréglementation économique, l'ardente priorité pour les institutions européennes est celle d'intervenir efficacement pour protéger la santé et le bien-être de la population. Dans pareille conjoncture où la crise impose une « transition »¹¹⁵ à tous les domaines de la vie humaine, les peurs qu'elle suscite remettent forcément à vif la question aussi de l'utilité et la responsabilité des entreprises, qui sont censées servir avant tout l'intérêt de la société toute entière. Outre que cette crise sanitaire sous-tende une crise plurielle de l'avoir, de l'être et du pouvoir (Ibid.), alors que le lien social est confiné et représente désormais un risque vital, les individus n'ont paradoxalement jamais autant œuvré pour la restauration du collectif- pour faire société et être ensemble. Nous pourrions poser là l'hypothèse d'une transition ontologique profonde.

A sa modeste mesure, cette contribution esquisse des pistes de réflexion et des hypothèses pratiques pour regarder la crise sanitaire sous un aspect qui relève d'un enjeu autant anthropologique que philosophique pour le management de l'après Covid-19 :

- en tant que « boîte noire » qui renferme d'opaques dissensus au sein du système de valeurs d'une société déjà bien fracturée
- en ce qu'elle présente une réelle opportunité en matière de gouvernance partagée. Un management créatif, en promouvant des espaces d'analyse d'un pluralisme ontologique dans les organisations, a là, l'opportunité de dépasser les décalages d'opinions pour imaginer des modes d'actions collectives visant à contribuer à la viabilité du monde.

Un détour par la philosophie nous offrira de poser les jalons d'un style de pensée (Hacking, 1992) qui permette de penser une transition ontologique en cours et de circonscrire ainsi une nouvelle forme de pensée scientifique (Kuhn, 2008). Nous verrons ensuite en quoi les récents travaux de Bruno Latour (2017) offrent une méthode réflexive doublée d'une grille d'analyse particulièrement propices à réinstaurer de la reliance collective, pris comme « le partage des solitudes acceptées et l'échange des différences respectées » (Morin, 2006).

¹¹⁵Transition écologique, énergétique, sociale, solidaire, économique, démocratique, numérique managériale. Le mot « transition » a été élu mot de l'année en 2014 par le jury du festival du mot, présidé par Alain Rey.

L'horizon brouillé des limites de l'humain

Notre outillage conceptuel, hérité de Platon, Aristote et Descartes nous permet difficilement de nous représenter les transitions infimes car, par définition, tout concept fige une idée. Par exemple, la neige qui fond n'en est déjà plus. François Jullien a rapatrié de la philosophie chinoise, sous l'idée de « transformations silencieuses », tout ce qui décrit une attention portée à des états d'entre deux, aux transitions à l'œuvre. Cela rejoint l'idée d'une masse floue d'informations, pourtant perceptibles et perçues, mais pas encore portées à la conscience ; phénomène que Leibniz avait mis au jour sous le terme d'aperceptions. De la même manière avec la crise sanitaire, c'est comme si soudainement, face à un danger palpable, en bute à une réalité apparente, tout un ensemble d'aperceptions enchâssées au dérèglement de l'écologie¹¹⁶ dans son ensemble-qui étaient là avant- vinrent à se révéler à la conscience individuelle et collective ; comme si « face à des menaces conscientes mais vécues comme des abstractions, nous rest[ions] paralysés par l'angoisse. À l'inverse, en présence d'une cause identifiée, c'est bien la peur que nous ressentons. Et la peur, contrairement à l'angoisse sans objet, pousse à l'agir »¹¹⁷. La représentation formelle d'une figure critique semble donc être l'étape-clé qui éveille les consciences pour enclencher des actions salutaires. Telle une inflexion à une nouvelle forme d'ontologie, un vent de « changement de paradigme » ¹¹⁸ s'était mis à souffler largement dans quasiment tous les domaines de la vie depuis quelques décennies. La menace générale qui planait, ayant désormais un visage commun- le Covid 19 - précipite l'ardente nécessité de construire un au-delà¹¹⁹, d'opérer une bifurcation avec l'état du cours du monde présent.

Thomas Kuhn, dans « la structure des révolutions scientifiques » (Kuhn, 2008), définit le paradigme comme un ensemble d'observations, de questions, de méthodologie et d'interprétation des acquis de la science. C'est donc de représentation et d'interprétation du monde dont il s'agit, mais aussi d'actions à mener par l'Homme pour qu'il puisse y perpétuer son expérience de la vie. Impossible alors d'envisager l'idée que l'Homme doive emprunter une nouvelle direction dans l'Histoire pour continuer d'exister, sans y inclure ses dimensions existentielles : subjective, émotionnelle et imaginaire. Parler de transition dans les domaines climatique, économique, politique ou managérial caractériserait donc un style de raisonnement scientifique (Hacking, 1992) qui implique de penser et pronostiquer un futur déjà là. La transition, caractéristique d'une recherche de logique d'action plutôt que de fins, se fait alors la voix d'une forme de pensée scientifique de transformation ou d'innovation d'un autre type. A l'inverse du progrès¹²⁰ qui annonçait la certitude d'un avenir meilleur, la transition décrit une sorte d'inclination métaphysique à penser une action collective en train de se faire.

¹¹⁶ Ecologie telle que définie dans l'encyclopédie de l'Agora comme « *le rapport triangulaire entre les individus d'une espèce, l'activité organisée de cette espèce et l'environnement de cette activité* » (Jacques Muller). <http://agora.qc.ca/>

¹¹⁷Le philosophe et psychanalyste M. Benasayag était récemment interviewé sur les effets de la crise : <https://up-magazine.info/decryptages/analyses/44719-penser-et-agir-par-temps-de-pandemie/>

¹¹⁸« Changement de paradigme » sur le moteur de recherche de Google Scholar recense : 1300 articles entre 1990 et 2000 ; 8300 entre 2000-2010 ; et 16 100 entre 2010 et 2020

¹¹⁹ Pour évoquer la transition dans son sens étymologique : de « *trans-ire* », aller au-delà

¹²⁰ <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/progr%C3%A8s>. D'un point de vue sémantique, « progrès » induit l'idée de changement, tout en désignant l'anticipation-qualitative et méliorative- de sa finalité. De cette amélioration de la vie a germé le goût de la nouveauté et de celui-ci, l'auto justification de la science du progrès (Hatchuel, le Masson, & Weil, 2005)

L'esprit de transition

Le philosophe Pascal Chabot a récemment défini la transition comme : « le changement auquel s'ajoute la pensée [...] Le concept de transition ne résume pas le réel mais attire le regard vers quelques moments-clés et quelques lieux où s'inscrit la suite » (Chabot, 2015). Outre une parenté saisissante entre la définition de Chabot sur la transition et celle que donne Merleau Ponty de l'institution, il y est donc question de connaissance intrinsèque, de réflexivité et de compréhension d'un changement en cours, donc forcément aussi question de capacité d'analyse d'un ensemble institué et à instituer au sens large. Merleau Ponty définit l'institution comme « ces évènements d'une expérience qui la dotent de dimensions durables par rapport auxquelles toute une série d'autres expériences auront sens, formeront une suite pensable ou une histoire- ou encore ces événements qui déposent en moi un sens, non pas à titre de survivance et de résidu, mais comme appel à une suite, exigence d'un avenir » (2015, p. 46).

L'hypothèse d'une transition ontologique profonde implique donc d'anticiper sur l'instauration de changements, qu'une conduite collective rendra possibles. Pourtant un principe pratique « objectif » implique d'ordonner préalablement une « suite pensable », telle qu'évoquée par Merleau Ponty, soit de dresser un tableau observable d'où pourront être tirées de véritables leçons de l'Histoire. C'est alors à nouveaux frais que la question d'une technique se pose, mais du point de vue réflexif cette fois – une modalité réflexive qui permette une remontée à la conscience collective de pratiques consensuelles devenues reflexes, offrant un décalage par rapport au cœur d'un système institué¹²¹. Comment, en effet, penser autrement l'agir d'un ensemble de pratiques, sans s'en excentrer un tant soit peu ? Une thèse de Simondon sur la technique offre un pont fort intéressant entre la transition et l'institution pour renouveler une pensée de l'action : en appréhendant la technique non plus comme simple objet ou moyen, mais comme « chose qui institue une participation ». La transition serait alors à voir comme une opportunité de « progrès » réflexif pour l'Homme, l'amenant à explorer d'autres « techniques » ou façons d'agir puisque, forte des avancées de la technologie et de la connaissance, la société actuelle a une grande chance par rapport aux générations qui l'ont précédée : elle a la possibilité de choisir des moyens de sa participation. Pourtant, l'esprit de transition que nous tentons de circonscrire n'est par essence pas univoque, du fait que les individus tissent, de par leur subjectivité, leur image du monde à partir de leurs expériences.

Face à la déroute : des attentes contraires

L'horizon de la société contemporaine, au regard de contributions scientifiques récentes, relève de projections en tout genre. L'avenir se fait une gigantesque arène de possibles, mêlés d'imaginaires, pour penser des agir de transition. L'hyperindustrie et des siècles de modifications d'écosystèmes par l'Homme, font qu'au nom de cet « appel à une suite, exigence d'un avenir », tel que posée par Chabot, des théories anticipent sur des changements futurs souhaitables. De ces pensables et imaginables, surgit un dissensus qui fait s'affronter des communautés de pensées. Qu'elles soient technophiles ou technophobes, ces théories se fondent sur des croyances ou des imaginaires tantôt « post futuristes », tantôt « post archaïque ». A gros traits, on retrouve d'un côté, la logique

¹²¹ Qu'il soit politique, économique, technologique, social

technicienne et ingénieure, investie dans la deep tech¹²², la silver économie¹²³ ou le transhumanisme¹²⁴; de l'autre, l'ethos artisanal, défenseur de low tech¹²⁵, de mouvement cittaslow¹²⁶, de néo luddisme¹²⁷. Difficile, à première vue, de tendre vers une dialectique entre progrès utile et progrès subtil (Chabot, 2015) au regard de ces représentations ontologiques, inconciliables en apparence.

Ces conceptions adverses ne sont-elles pourtant pas les deux faces d'une même volonté d'être, qui demeure confinée dans l'implicite et le non-dit ? L'entreprise commune n'est-elle pas celle d'une direction de la vie à donner, de la quête ontologique de l'Homme à se refigurer comme sujet de son histoire ? Comment alors concrètement réinstaller le fondement de « cette thématique de la « transition » dans l'espace discursif du débat » (Bouilloud, 2000, p. 172), sans tomber dans l'exercice d'une confrontation argumentative de ce que devrait être la « Science », ou dans une rhétorique stérile d'administration de preuves de la « Vérité », a fortiori quand les consensus qui ont prévalu à la constitution des différents ethoses de pensée restent opaques ?

La réponse semble être contenue dans la question : seule une analyse élargie de controverse (Latour, 2017) peut les rendre explicites, les déconfiner.

A l'heure où les disputes d'experts scientifiques prolifèrent dans les médias et sont relayées à grande échelle par les réseaux sociaux ; le « grand public » est appelé à être juge de toutes sortes de sujets spécialistes (homéopathie, climat, vaccins, OGM, anthropocène, PMA, hydroxy-chloroquine ...). Les vents polémiques sont d'autant plus vifs qu'ils concernent tout un chacun, ontologiquement. Pourtant, les communions ou discordes qui en découlent se déroulent hors du temps social, dans un effet de miroir qui ne laisse aucune place à la représentation différée ou indirecte. Les sensations instantanées que produisent ces masses d'informations – admises de fait comme expertises – font valeur d'opinion le plus souvent et génèrent des animosités souvent houleuses. Parfois elles entravent la réflexion jusqu'à priver de discernement le spectateur qui opère alors une mise au confinement de sa pensée. Une science a donc un effet sur la société et, à échelle organisationnelle, sur les collectifs de travail. Dire cela nécessite de penser un équipement qui aiderait à orienter la pensée réflexive d'un public large sous l'effet d'énoncés scientifiques ; a fortiori parce qu'un public large n'a pas vocation à devenir expert en tout.

Déconfiner la controverse dans les organisations : faire de nécessité,

vertu

La place du management, donc, dans l'ère de l'après Covid-19, pourrait largement dépendre de l'idée que les humains se font de l'activité productive et des valeurs sur lesquelles elle

¹²²Les jeunes pousses disruptives, ou de rupture, basées sur des technologies avancées et substantiellement novatrices. Source Wikipédia.

¹²³ C'est une notion récente qui désigne l'ensemble des marchés, activités et enjeux économiques liés aux personnes âgées de plus de 60 ans. Source Wikipédia

¹²⁴Mouvement international prônant l'usage des sciences et des techniques afin d'améliorer la condition humaine notamment par l'augmentation des capacités physiques et mentales des êtres humains. Source Wikipédia

¹²⁵ou basse technologie ; désigne un ensemble de techniques simples, pratiques, économiques et populaires. Elles peuvent faire appel au recyclage de machines (plus ou moins récemment) tombées en désuétude. Source Wikipédia

¹²⁶ Communauté de villes qui s'engagent à ralentir le rythme de vie de leurs citoyens. Ce mouvement s'inscrit dans les mouvements de la décroissance économique et du nouvel urbanisme. Source Wikipédia

¹²⁷Désigne une mouvance activiste d'orientation technophobe, c'est-à-dire manifestant son opposition à tout ou partie du progrès technique et se concrétisant par le parasitage ou la destruction d'équipements ou encore des occupations de terrain visant à empêcher la construction de grandes infrastructures ("zones à défendre").Source Wikipédia

repose, mais aussi des orientations de transitions que le management défend. Si à l'aune de cette crise inédite, l'impératif ne se limite plus à des questions de redistribution des richesses mais relève plus que tout de la viabilité même de l'espèce humaine, chaque « monde privé »¹²⁸ de transition devient aussi un destin public et politique.

En établissant une méthode pour cartographier des controverses, Latour propose d'accompagner les « énoncés flottants » par l'investigation de leur condition de productions : « Qui les a dits ? À qui ? Dans quelles circonstances ? Avec quels types de preuves ? Contre qui ? Pour quel but ? De quel point de vue ? D'après les principes de quelle profession ? Avec quel financement ? » (Latour, 2017). Il invite à réouvrir les « boîtes noires » de ces mondes privés de l'opinion telles des boîtes de Pandore pour dévoiler les prises de position, les décisions, les stratégies, les incertitudes, les controverses et finalement les consensus qui ont prévalu à leur constitution.

Puisque la transition caractérise le « changement auquel s'ajoute la pensée » (Chabot, 2015), il ne s'agit pas de livrer un dispositif d'ingénierie du consensus -clés en main, mais d'installer une pratique de la controverse, qui reposerait sur la coopération ou l'union de notions antagonistes (Morin, 2006). C'est en cela que réside la force de l'ensemble des méthodes proposées par Bruno Latour : en l'élaboration d'un savoir reconstruit qui émerge d'une co-construction autour de l'analyse d'une controverse. Ils se fondent sur un « relationnisme pratique qui cherche, dans un protocole de mise en relation et de parangonnage, à éviter les ravages du relativisme – cet absolutisme du point de vue » (Latour, 2012, p. 479).

Controverser en ce sens, consiste à dialoguer en profondeur avec la pensée et la conviction d'autrui. A l'inverse de vouloir faire adhérer ou imposer une vision, il s'agit de passer par des exercices pratiques comme, par exemple, celui d'une prise de parole visant à défendre les arguments d'une communauté « adverse ». L'analyse et l'expérience de la controverse constituent un dispositif dynamique de reliance alors capable, non seulement de mettre à nu les mécanismes de représentation socio-historique, mais plus que tout « d'articuler ce qui est séparé et de relier ce qui est disjoint » (Morin, 2006).

Conclusion : Pour un cynisme libérateur, toutes affaires cessantes !

Selon Oscar Wilde, « le cynisme consiste à voir les choses telles qu'elles sont et non telles qu'elles devraient être ». Peut-être est-ce à nouveaux frais qu'il faille repenser la vertu d'un cynisme qui permettrait de cartographier la question d'un « pluralisme ontologique » dans l'espace discursif en partant des plus simples questions autodescriptives au sein des organisations : « de quoi et de qui dépendons-nous ? A quoi tenons-nous ? Que sommes-nous prêts à défendre pour subsister ? » (Latour, 2017) Cela nécessite de faire l'effort de rentrer dans le champ de croyances et des conceptions de parties adverses, pour y chercher des voies de dégagement. Ces espaces permettraient de réintroduire au sein même des organisations, une figure morale d'empathie qui offre de comprendre comment celui qu'on (mal dé) nomme « adversaire ou ennemi » pour défendre telle position plutôt qu'une autre, a sans doute, au fond, les mêmes aspirations existentielles que « nous ».

Le management¹²⁹ -pris comme « ensemble des personnes qui élaborent la politique et l'administration de l'entreprise » - a là, l'opportunité de faire de nécessité de production, vertu générale d'entreprendre des actions unanimement tournées vers la viabilité du monde, dont l'humanité dépend.

¹²⁸ Je reprends ici la formule du titre du livre d'Olivier Schwartz (2012), *Le monde privé des ouvriers*. Quadrige, PUF

¹²⁹ <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/management>

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Quand le travail à distance réinterroge le travail : leçons managériales issues de la crise du covid-19

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Abstract

Alors que le déconfinement s'engage prudemment, que les entreprises rouvrent leurs portes et que les salariés se préparent mentalement à retourner physiquement dans leurs espaces de travail, il est temps de tirer les premières leçons de cette crise inédite du point de vue managérial. Dans cet article, nous proposons d'envisager la crise comme un accélérateur des transformations managériales¹³⁰, et l'occasion de réinventer le management à l'ère post-industrielle.

Mots-clés : Télétravail, Management à distance

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¹³⁰ Dejoux C., Léon E. (2018). Métamorphose des managers à l'ère du numérique et de l'intelligence artificielle, Pearson

Quand le travail à distance réinterroge le travail : leçons managériales issues de la crise du covid-19

Nous avons appris au travers de cette crise à travailler et manager différemment. Soit. Mais cet apprentissage involontaire, s'est fait dans l'urgence, dans le stress voire parfois dans la douleur. Un changement aussi drastique de nos habitudes de travail ne pouvait s'effectuer que sous la contrainte. On est bien loin des projets de télétravail progressif, avec des pilotes, des retours d'expériences, etc. D'ailleurs, peut-on vraiment parler de télétravail ? Du jour au lendemain, les salariés qui le pouvaient se sont retrouvés à poursuivre leur activité professionnelle à distance, confinés à leurs domiciles, installés tant bien que mal dans un espace de travail inadapté (table de salle à manger, canapé, comptoir de la cuisine), équipés ou pas d'outils leur permettant de travailler à distance, et entourés de leurs familles vivant la même situation. Du jour au lendemain, il a fallu inventer une nouvelle segmentation entre la vie professionnelle et la vie privée. En l'espace de 24h, nous sommes tous devenus des experts du travail et du management à distance...

La primauté de la maturité managériale

La crise a permis de mettre en exergue un élément clé dans la transformation digitale des organisations : il s'agit moins d'outils, aussi sophistiqués soient-ils, que d'état d'esprit. Bien évidemment, un niveau minimum d'équipement et de connexion est nécessaire pour fonctionner correctement à distance ! Cependant la maturité digitale d'une entreprise se mesure d'abord et avant tout à la capacité et la volonté d'expérimenter de nouvelles manières de travailler, plus ouvertes, plus horizontales. Au-delà des discours, les dernières semaines ont permis de distinguer clairement ce qui relève de la maturité digitale (au niveau de l'entreprise) de ce qui relève de la maturité managériale. Face à un travail à distance subi, brutal et à temps complet, c'est d'abord d'intelligence et de maturité managériales dont nous avons besoin.

Je propose de distinguer ici trois postures du manager à distance : celui qui a tenté, envers et contre tout, de faire « pareil à distance », celui qui n'a pas supporté l'éloignement de ses collaborateurs, et celui qui a su évoluer avec la situation.

Manager avec des œillères

Notre premier manager est celui qui a tenté, coûte que coûte, de poursuivre son activité telle qu'elle se déroulait auparavant en présentiel. Une seule préoccupation : occulter la distance. Citons ainsi les managers qui, passant leurs vies en réunion, ont continué de le faire, à distance. Il ne leur aura pas fallu longtemps pour réaliser que la réunion en présentiel et la réunion à distance sont sensiblement différentes. La réunion à distance demande une concentration supérieure¹³¹, car il est beaucoup plus difficile (et parfois impossible) de décoder le non verbal des participants. Elle fatigue également davantage puisque l'on reste devant son écran, sans aucune pause. Elle est anxiogène car tout un chacun voit en permanence sa propre image s'afficher sur l'ordinateur de son manager, de ses collègues ou de ses collaborateurs. Et cette anxiété est accentuée par le fait que, en cette période difficile, les interruptions familiales sont fréquentes et difficilement contrôlables, surtout pour les personnes ayant de jeunes enfants à domicile. Pour autant, le manager qui ne veut

¹³¹ <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200421-why-zoom-video-chats-are-so-exhausting>

pas changer poursuivra le même rythme de réunions, autorisera généreusement 45 minutes pour la pause déjeuner, et ne verra dans la distance qu'un pis-aller au présentiel sans jamais se saisir des opportunités que la distance apporte. Finalement, dans ce cas de figure, la proximité apparaît comme le paradis perdu.

Manager dans l'angoisse

Le deuxième cas de figure est celui du manager angoissé, car si les équipes existent sans manager, un manager peut-il exister sans ses équipes ? Le management à distance est de ce point de vue anxiogène et c'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles le télétravail a tant peiné à se développer en France. Pour gérer au mieux l'éloignement, et maintenir sa légitimité en tant que chef, ce manager va amplifier des comportements de type « micro-management », et chercher à tout savoir, à tout contrôler. L'explosion des logiciels de télésurveillance aux Etats-Unis en est une parfaite illustration. Certains logiciels permettent ainsi de prendre une photo et du collaborateur et de l'écran de son ordinateur à intervalles réguliers pour vérifier qu'il « travaille »¹³².

La distance génère chez certains managers un besoin quasi-pathologique de reporting. Et si le collaborateur à distance ressent cela, il saura calmer les angoisses de son supérieur hiérarchique en l'informant de tout ce qui se passe, en le mettant en copie de tous les échanges... Si le ce dernier frôle alors le burn-out, il ne pourra s'en prendre qu'à lui-même ! Dans cette catégorie figurent notamment les managers qui n'ont pas compris que le temps de présence n'est révélateur que... de la présence, et non pas du travail effectué. Ce sont ces mêmes managers qui insisteront pour que la réunion d'équipe ait lieu tous les matins entre 8h30 et 9h, insisteront aussi pour faire un point tous les soirs, à l'heure précise à laquelle le contrat de travail donne au salarié le droit de se déconnecter. Ont-ils pour autant compris et entendu les besoins et attentes de leurs collaborateurs dans cette période si compliquée ? On est en droit de se poser la question.

Manager autrement

Le troisième cas de figure est celui du manager évolutif. Celui qui a rapidement compris que le confinement exigeait de nouvelles méthodes de travail et qui a décidé de profiter de cette période insolite pour progresser et faire progresser ses équipes. Ce manager-là a abandonné toute forme de surveillance des heures de travail de ses équipes. A distance, c'est le management par objectifs qui doit primer. Encore faut-il être en mesure de définir ces objectifs, de les suivre dans le temps et de les contrôler à intervalles réguliers. Il faut aussi apprendre à faire confiance. C'est d'ailleurs le mot clé de la relation à distance, qu'elle soit professionnelle ou affective. Malheureusement, il s'agit souvent d'un mot valise, parfois utilisé pour culpabiliser les managers qui ne délègueraient pas suffisamment. Or la confiance n'exclut pas le contrôle ! Il me semble utile à ce stade de distinguer deux types de confiance : la confiance en matière de compétences, et la confiance interpersonnelle. Vous pouvez avoir toute confiance dans les compétences d'un collaborateur, ce qui veut dire que vous avez confiance dans ce qu'il vous dit et dans sa capacité à tenir ses engagements professionnels... tout en sachant qu'il sera le premier à divulguer des informations que vous jugez confidentielles. Vous pouvez aussi avoir toute confiance dans la discrétion d'une personne, dans sa capacité à montrer de l'empathie... et la juger

¹³² <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/2/21195584/coronavirus-remote-work-from-home-employee-monitoring>

totallement incompétente sur les tâches à réaliser. La confusion sémantique qui règne autour du thème de la confiance ne favorise pas une bonne gestion de la distance.

Dans une situation classique de télétravail, la confiance en matière de compétences professionnelles est la plus prisée, car c'est elle qui permettra d'atteindre les résultats. D'ailleurs, les grilles classiques de leadership nous enseignent depuis fort longtemps que la délégation fonctionne si et seulement si le collaborateur fait preuve d'une réelle autonomie professionnelle. Mais, une fois de plus, nous ne vivons pas une situation classique de télétravail ! Dans le cas du confinement, c'est d'abord et avant tout la capacité du manager à conserver ou à créer une relation de confiance interpersonnelle qui aura fait la différence. Les managers bienveillants, à l'écoute des besoins de leurs équipes, et des individus qui les composent, en capacité d'organiser le travail non seulement en fonction de leurs contraintes mais également de celles de leurs collaborateurs sont ceux qui auront été le plus appréciés pendant cette période difficile. D'une certaine manière, la crise aura mis en évidence l'intérêt du « servant leadership »¹³³, le leadership au service de sa communauté, de son équipe.

Le management à l'ère post industrielle

Et si le Covid-19 avait finalement été l'occasion, de manière accélérée, d'adopter un management en lien avec les évolutions du monde ?

La fin de l'ère industrielle ?

Pendant longtemps, le travail, s'est apparenté à du temps passé dans un lieu. Cette logique, issue de l'ère industrielle, s'imposait lorsque la présence était synonyme de production, comme dans le cas du travail à la chaîne. Les *call centers* sont les dignes héritiers de ce type de logique puisque toute l'activité est mesurable et mesurée. Mais le monde a changé. Nous vivons à une époque où le travail s'est affranchi pour beaucoup d'un espace-temps dédié, surtout pour les *knowledge workers* qui manipulent avant tout des symboles, pour reprendre l'expression de Robert Reich¹³⁴, et non pas des objets.

Pour autant, la logique industrielle reste très présente dans les représentations du travail¹³⁵. Les réticences à laisser les salariés travailler à distance en témoignent. Alors qu'une étude de la fondation Concorde considérait que 26% des salariés français étaient éligibles à un télétravail à temps partiel¹³⁶, ils n'étaient finalement que 3% à le pratiquer régulièrement en 2017, d'après l'INSEE¹³⁷. Une recherche menée aux Etats-Unis par Cable et Elsbach¹³⁸ nous apporte un nouvel éclairage. Dans cette étude, les auteurs démontrent que la présence physique sur le lieu de travail est perçue comme un signe de fiabilité, et que le fait d'être présent au-delà des heures de travail comme un signe d'engagement. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'un prisme uniquement français, contrairement à ce que l'on entend souvent !

¹³³ Van Dierendonck D. (2010), Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis, *Journal of Management*

¹³⁴ Reich R. (1997), L'économie mondialisée, Dunod

¹³⁵ Galambaud (2014), *Réinventer le management des ressources humaines*, Editions Liaisons

¹³⁶ <https://www.fondationconcorde.com/etudes/accompagner-la-mise-en-place-du-teletravail/>

¹³⁷ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4238573?sommaire=4238635>

¹³⁸ Elsbach K.D., Cable D.M., Sherman J.W. (2010). How passive "face time" affects perceptions of employees: Evidence of spontaneous trait inference, *Human Relations*, 63(6), 735-760

L'occasion de réinterroger nos certitudes

Au cours des dernières semaines, nous avons compris que, pour travailler à distance, il ne suffisait pas de faire la même chose qu'en présentiel. La distance est un révélateur des carences managériales. Elle ne tolère pas l'improvisation. En ce qui concerne les managers, ce n'est plus le charisme qui agit, mais la disponibilité et la réactivité qu'ils manifestent vis-à-vis des demandes de leurs collaborateurs. Un manager organisé, réactif, attentif aux autres, à l'écoute des besoins de ses équipes aura plus de valeur à distance qu'un leader charismatique. Les réunions à distance en sont la preuve. Alors qu'à proximité le retard des uns et des autres permet aux présents des échanges informels en amont de la réunion, l'attente pendant plusieurs minutes de la connexion à distance des absents irrite ceux qui sont « à l'heure ». Alors qu'à proximité, nombre de réunions se déroulent avec un ordre du jour pour le moins approximatif, la réunion à distance nécessite à la fois un déroulé précis, des temps de parole dédiés, une préparation en amont de ceux qui vont s'exprimer (et savent donc qu'ils vont le faire). Alors qu'à proximité, nombre de personnes se demandent pour quelles raisons elles se retrouvent dans cette réunion, et passeront une partie du temps à gérer leurs courriers électroniques, la réunion à distance – en format visio – les prive de toute liberté de faire autre chose. Il faut donc s'assurer que tous ceux qui sont là... ont vraiment besoin d'être là.

Allons-nous voir aujourd'hui un nouveau modèle d'entreprise émerger où le télétravail serait la norme et la présence au bureau l'exception ? Les dernières annonces de PSA¹³⁹ vont dans ce sens. Pour autant, il faudra être d'autant plus attentif à ce qui se passe lorsque nous sommes à proximité les uns des autres. Venir au bureau, aujourd'hui, s'apparente à prendre un risque. Si nous devons prendre ce risque, il faut que ce qui se passe au bureau en vaille la peine. Il va donc falloir être particulièrement vigilant sur tous les éléments qu'un contexte de proximité tenait pour acquis : la communication non verbale, la socialisation, les échanges informels, les partages de connaissances tacites, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns. Il est temps désormais de réfléchir en profondeur sur les méthodes de travail mises en œuvre à distance, sur les modes de communication utilisés, sur les normes de comportement à adopter en présentiel et à distance. A distance, nous avons appris à travailler, à être efficaces. Mais nous n'en sommes qu'au début de l'apprentissage...

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¹³⁹ <https://www.lesechos.fr/industrie-services/automobile/psa-fait-du-teletravail-la-regle-pas-l'exception-1201054>

[L'industrie : un prototype mieux préparé que d'autres à la sortie de crise ?

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Résumé

Ce papier permet de s'interroger sur le secteur de l'Industrie placé sous les feux des médias et des analyses, et quasiment devenu un baromètre de la crise. Nous nous demandons si ces entreprises ne sont pas mieux armées que d'autres pour sortir de la crise, en étant habituées à gérer des changements incessants et en ayant amorcé leurs transformations digitales. A partir de nos travaux de recherche conduits dans le cadre de la Chaire « Une Usine pour le Futur », nous soulignons que cette préparation à la sortie de crise requiert de mettre au premier plan l'Humain. Il apparaît que le secteur industriel avait justement déjà placé au centre de ses enjeux futurs quatre questions clefs sur les compétences attendues et les manières de les gérer demain, questions qui doivent, selon nous, garder une place centrale dans l'après-crise.

Mots clés : Industrie 4.0, Humain, GRH, Digitalisation

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L'industrie : un prototype mieux préparé que d'autres à la sortie de crise ?

La crise du Coronavirus est gigantesque, ne laissant aucun secteur de l'Economie et de la Société à l'abri. Un secteur est particulièrement placé sous les feux des médias et des analyses, celui de l'Industrie. Ce secteur est quasiment devenu le baromètre de la crise. En effet, l'activité des usines a notamment servi de signal aux différentes étapes de cette crise.

Dès le mois de Janvier, l'arrêt de l'activité des usines de fabrication de composants électroniques à Wuhan paralysait des géants mondiaux comme Apple, Nintendo ou Hitachi¹⁴⁰. Dans le même temps, les constructeurs automobiles ont commencé à fermer leurs usines chinoises¹⁴¹. La France découvrait ainsi sa dépendance à l'égard de producteurs de matières premières pour ses médicaments¹⁴². Chaque nouvelle annonce de fermeture, souvent inédite pour l'entreprise citée, est alors devenue un palier de plus de l'inexorable avancée de la pandémie, partout et pour tous. Elle signalait aussi la diversité des activités au sein de l'Industrie, certaines n'étant plus considérées comme indispensables face à l'urgence de la santé (automobile, aéronautique, maritime, ferroviaire...), tandis que d'autres poursuivaient leurs activités vitales, parfois de manière réduite afin de préserver la santé de leurs salariés (énergie, médicaments). Les décisions de chacune des Directions de fermer ou de réduire l'activité d'usines ont été souvent vécues comme des électrochocs, non seulement pour les salariés, mais aussi pour la Société habituée à l'activité en continue de ces fleurons de l'Economie.

Dans un deuxième temps, des entreprises industrielles ont démontré leurs capacités de réaction et d'adaptation. Nombre de ces sociétés ont su transférer leurs savoirs et savoir-faire pour se mettre au service de la santé. Une usine de parfums Givenchy (LVMH) s'est mis par exemple à produire en quelques jours du gel hydroalcoolique¹⁴³ tandis que Michelin a développé et produit dès la fin avril des masques¹⁴⁴, et tant d'autres ont transformé aussi leurs systèmes productifs, parfois bien loin de leurs activités initiales, pour équiper les soignants puis tous les citoyens. Cette Industrie est alors un des symboles de la nécessité, mais aussi de la mise en œuvre concrète de solutions face à la crise sanitaire.

Aujourd'hui, quand Renault, Arcelor Mittal ou ST Microelectronics reprennent leurs activités en France, elles signalent une baisse de température face à la crise, sans pour autant signifier la fin de la fièvre de panique. Ces entreprises industrielles montrent certes qu'il est possible de penser les gestes barrière, de repenser l'organisation du travail sur des chaînes de montage, de généraliser le télétravail pour certaines catégories de salariés. Si elles engagent dans leur sillon la reprise d'activité au sein de leurs sous-traitants, elles signalent aussi que cette reprise sera difficile pour tous, y compris pour des mastodontes industriels¹⁴⁵.

Ainsi, l'Industrie, considérée comme un thermomètre de la crise, pourrait être, selon nous, mieux armée que d'autres secteurs pour sortir de la crise.

¹⁴⁰ « Apple, Nintendo, Hitachi... Comment le coronavirus paralyse la fabrication de produits électroniques », L'Usine Digitale, 06 Février 2020.

¹⁴¹ « Renault prolonge la fermeture de son unique usine chinoise à cause du coronavirus », L'Usine Nouvelle, 13 février.

¹⁴² « Pénurie en vue : le coronavirus menace la production mondiale d'antibiotiques », Atlantico, 19 février 2020.

¹⁴³ « La mode se paie le luxe de la solidarité », Le Monde, 30 avril 2020.

¹⁴⁴ « Comment Michelin va fabriquer des millions de masques », Les Echos, 14 avril 2020.

¹⁴⁵ « Nous vivons une crise d'une ampleur inégalée dans l'aéronautique et on en apprend tous les jours » selon les mots de Philippe Petitcolin, le directeur général de Safran, lors de la conférence téléphonique de presse, 27/03/20.

A travers nos travaux de recherche conduits dans le cadre de la Chaire « Une Usine pour le Futur » à l'ESCP BS¹⁴⁶, nous pouvons identifier deux armes clés pour le demain de notre Industrie :

- sa préparation, du fait de sa familiarité avec les crises et des processus de transformations digitales déjà initiés,
- et la place déjà donnée à l'Humain et les questions associées à ce rôle dans les réflexions conduites sur les systèmes productifs.

Une industrie préparée à l'après-crise

Une préparation continue aux situations difficiles

L'Industrie a quasiment toujours eu à gérer des situations imprévues et /ou difficiles. Preuve en est avec ses maîtres-mots que sont la délocalisation, la désindustrialisation, la déstructuration. Tous ces mots qui caractérisent son histoire, partagent le même suffixe latin « dé ». Ce suffixe résume à lui seul la perte, les situations de cessation d'activités et/ou de destructions de capacités productives qui ont jalonné l'histoire industrielle. Nombre d'entreprises ont été obligées de remettre en cause, parfois à de multiples reprises, leurs *business models*, à penser une nouvelle division du travail dans le Monde, à se séparer de pans non stratégiques de leurs activités et à constamment faire face à une concurrence accrue et à des aléas économiques, environnementaux et sociétaux. Beaucoup d'industriels connaissaient donc déjà la gestion d'arrêts d'usines, les ralentissements d'activité, les réorganisations ... Bien sûr, ils n'étaient certainement pas préparés à l'ampleur, à la durée et aux multiples incertitudes de cette crise. Mais ils ont des pratiques auxquelles se raccrocher, et des dispositifs déjà utilisés auxquels se référer. Ils ont ainsi un temps d'avance sur d'autres secteurs plus préservés.

Une préparation collective aux transformations digitales

L'histoire industrielle est marquée par quatre révolutions depuis la fin du XIXème et l'introduction de la mécanisation. Aujourd'hui, « L'Industrie 4.0. ». qualifiée dès 2013 de 4ième révolution industrielle par le gouvernement allemand¹⁴⁷ (Johansson et al., 2017) repose sur des organisations dans lesquelles de nombreux outils digitaux sont introduits, voire largement diffusés, allant de l'utilisation de robots, de l'Intelligence Artificielle, à la mise en œuvre du « *close door machining* », et ce, en passant par l'exploitation et le partage de données informatisées. La crise a justement mis en lumière l'impératif de déployer ces outils digitaux partout et pour tous, tout en maîtrisant les données associées. Les entreprises industrielles, en n'ayant pas d'autres choix que de digitaliser leurs systèmes de production, de penser la sécurité ou l'exploitation de leurs données, ont ainsi un temps d'avance sur d'autres secteurs. Ce temps d'avance est d'autant plus crucial aujourd'hui, qu'il était organisé collectivement. En effet, dans le cas de la France, beaucoup d'industriels se sont associés pour penser ensemble¹⁴⁸ ces processus digitaux, pour *benchmarker* leurs pratiques, et anticiper les effets de cette digitalisation. A travers ces regroupements, ils savaient que leurs organisations devraient être repensées à l'aune de cette incontournable digitalisation. Certes tous n'étaient pas engagés de la même manière dans ces

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.escpeurope.eu/fr/faculty-research/chairs-and-professorships/chair-factory-for-future>

¹⁴⁷ *Recommendations for implementing the strategic initiative Industrie 4.0 – Final report of the Industrie 4.0 Working Group* (Kagerman, Wahlster, & Helbig, 2013).

¹⁴⁸ De nombreux groupements industriels se sont organisés autour de ces questions, outre les Chaires comme celles de l'ESCP. Citons par exemple en France l'Alliance Industrie du Futur : <http://www.industrie-dufutur.org>.

transformations majeures. Mais tous savaient qu'ils devaient, pour rester compétitifs, les déployer plus largement. La crise les conduit certainement à accélérer certains processus. Elle les contraint aussi à penser la digitalisation de pans de leurs activités parfois relégués au second plan, par exemple la digitalisation des fonctions support aujourd'hui particulièrement concernées par la mise en place du télétravail.

Ainsi, les Industriels présentent des atouts certains pour gérer et sortir de cette crise. Leur préparation repose selon nous sur une ressource clef : l'Humain. Les partenaires de la Chaire « Une Usine pour le Futur », les groupes Safran et Michelin, s'étaient justement retrouvés autour de cette question de la place et des manières de gérer l'Humain dans la digitalisation des usines. Les réflexions menées à ce sujet sont riches d'enseignements pour envisager la sortie de crise.

L'humain au centre de la préparation de la sortie de crise

Les entreprises industrielles semblent ainsi d'autant plus préparées, qu'elles se sont déjà posées quatre questions clefs sur les ressources clefs et stratégiques pour la sortie de crise, leurs salariés.

Quelles compétences pour le futur ?

Les transformations digitales initiées dans l'Industrie apparaissent indissociables de questionnements sur les modes et lieux de de travail, sur les formes organisationnelles à mettre en place et sur les compétences requises pour accompagner ces transformations. Les effets quantitatifs de ces changements en termes de réductions d'emplois ou au contraire sur les créations de nouveaux (selon le rapport suédois dédié, e.g. Johansson et al., 2017) ont été particulièrement étudiés ces dernières années. Mais au-delà, le secteur industriel avait aussi pris conscience du fait que tous ces changements ne pourraient se faire sans des réflexions et actions sur les aspects qualitatifs de ces transformations, à savoir les compétences attendues pour ces travailleurs de l'usine du futur. Des mouvements contradictoires étaient ainsi identifiés, de montée en compétences (*upskilling*) d'opérateurs qualifiés de 4.0., c'est-à-dire augmentés, collaboratifs ou analytiques (Romero et al., 2016), ou à l'inverse, de perte de compétences (*deskilling*), avec des tâches plus fragmentées et moins sollicitantes en savoirs (Abrahamsson & Johansson, 2006). Et les réponses à ces questions ne peuvent qu'être plurielles. Nous approfondissons ainsi, dans le cadre de recherches menées dans la Chaire, le fait que les fameuses « *soft skills* », très à la mode actuellement, ne pourront pas être les seules compétences attendues demain. L'enjeu est aussi de réfléchir aux compétences techniques indispensables demain, par exemple celles de gestion, d'analyse et de sécurité des données, mais aussi d'autres parfois manuelles, et les dispositifs permettant d'acquérir et de transmettre ces compétences rares sur le marché du travail. Les entreprises industrielles sont donc déjà familières de ces questionnements autour des compétences attendues dans le futur. Et comme nous l'étudions, le défi réside plus dans la cohabitation des compétences que dans la substitution des compétences. L'ambidextrie des opérateurs ou de certaines fonctions, c'est-à-dire la capacité d'être à la fois dans l'exploitation des savoirs et savoir-faire existants tout en allant vers des innovations, est donc clef pour demain. En ce sens, les réflexions déjà menées sur la valeur ajoutée de l'homme face à la machine et sur les compétences attendues, devront être poursuivies dans ce contexte de crise, et devenir clefs pour d'autres secteurs.

Comment gérer ces compétences dans le futur ?

L'« Industrie 4.0. » renvoie à des nouvelles techniques et méthodes, mais aussi à des nouveaux modes de management et de comportements humains (Sousa et Rocha, 2019). Elle pose donc des questions sur la manière de gérer les ressources humaines dans ce changement. Il ne s'agit pas de se demander « simplement » de qui ou de quelles compétences stratégiques aura-t-on besoin demain, mais aussi de savoir comment identifier ces ressources humaines, les attirer, les amener à se développer en interne, les valoriser, et potentiellement aussi comment les aider à rester employables pour aller travailler ailleurs. Dès lors, les rôles de la Gestion des Ressources Humaines (GRH) apparaissent encore plus stratégiques. Avec les partenaires de la Chaire, nous avons initié ces réflexions, aujourd'hui cruciales pour gérer la crise. Les plans de chômage partiel mis en place dans nombre d'entreprises, pas seulement industrielles, ne relèvent en effet pas seulement d'une gestion quantitative des effectifs. Ils supposent d'avoir mené des réflexions préalables sur les parcours professionnels proposés aux salariés, en interne et en externe. Et celles qui, comme dans l'Industrie, avaient déjà vu l'importance de cette GRH, ont déjà franchi un premier palier de réponses.

Quels ajustements prévoir ?

Dans un projet de recherche conduit au sein de la Chaire (Galindo, Garbe & Vignal, 2019), nous avons montré que les changements digitaux initiés dans les usines conduisaient à retrouver des décalages classiquement identifiés dans la littérature entre les politiques initiées, les pratiques mises en place et le ressenti à l'égard de ces pratiques. Contrairement au « mythe des *fits* de la GRH » (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009), il est quasi impossible d'avoir un alignement parfait entre la stratégie et la GRH, et même entre les pratiques de GRH entre elles (Wright et Nishii, 2013). Les transformations digitales initiées dans les usines étaient ainsi, dans notre recherche, associées à des décalages causés par exemple par des modes d'organisation trop centralisés et ancrés sur le court terme, un manque de ressources humaines et informatiques, ou par la diversité des profils des salariés. Ces « *gaps* » entre les intentions et les réalisations conduisent dès lors à une certaine prudence quant aux actions initiées, et à une progressivité dans la mise en place et l'utilisation effective de ces outils. La gestion de l'après-crise s'inscrit dans cette question des effets attendus des politiques initiées. Toute décision est, et sera associée, à une chaîne de prises de décisions, de traductions, d'appropriations par différents acteurs, et donc à une succession potentielle de décalages entre le projet initial et ses effets auprès des acteurs concernés. Prévoir cette question dès le départ évitera à ces industriels de tomber dans des travers déjà connus.

Quels rôles pour la fonction RH ?

Si les Directions des entreprises sont mises en avant lors des annonces de fermetures, réouvertures et chômages partiels, les actions sont relayées et reposent en interne grandement sur la fonction RH. Occupant ainsi plus que jamais un rôle de *Business Partner* tant attendu, ce sont les acteurs de cette fonction qui ont dû mettre en place des dispositifs de télétravail, gérer la maladie de certains salariés, les rapatriements d'autres, les mises en chômage partiel. L'« Industrie 4.0. » questionnait déjà leurs rôles et la prospective de la fonction, sujet que nous sommes en train d'étudier dans la Chaire. La gestion de l'après-crise rend cette question encore plus cruciale.

Ces quatre questions doivent, selon nous, garder une place centrale dans la gestion de la sortie de crise. Sans pour autant avoir des réponses définitives à ces interrogations, il apparaît que le secteur industriel les avait déjà placées au centre de leurs enjeux futurs.

Conclusion

Plus généralement, la crise met donc au premier plan l'Humain, et tous les questionnements liés à sa place aujourd'hui et demain dans les organisations. Quelles que soient les situations, il apparaît que les travailleurs sont au cœur des défis, à la fois pour préserver leur santé et leur activité, plus qu'intimement liés par exemple dans des pays comme l'Inde et à des degrés moindres dans tous les autres pays. Il apparaît aussi que l'Humain sera à l'origine des évolutions nécessaires à la sortie de cette crise mondiale. Et avec leurs transformations digitales en cours, les entreprises industrielles s'étaient, du moins pour certaines, déjà posées ces questions et avaient esquissé des premières voies de réponses qui leur donneront un atout indéniable pour l'avenir.

Nos recherches montrent donc que certains industriels bénéficient aujourd'hui des politiques et pratiques initiées depuis plusieurs années. Néanmoins, force est aussi de constater que tous les industriels n'avaient pas engagé ces réflexions, souvent par manque de moyens, que ce soit en France, en Europe et bien plus encore dans certaines régions du monde. La situation est même « apocalyptique » pour certains¹⁴⁹. Si la généralisation de la situation de grands groupes industriels français est difficile, leurs cas montrent cependant que l'Industrie occupe plus que jamais une place symbolique en cette période de crise. Elle permet de prendre le pouls de la gravité la situation, des nécessités de revoir dans l'urgence les modes de production, et des capacités de chacun à faire face à ces paramètres inédits. Elle replace surtout les débats autour de questionnements humains qui ont pu faire défaut ces dernières années, écrasés par des enjeux financiers et technologiques. Souhaitons que cette urgence humaine ne soit pas fugace, et qu'elle devienne – enfin - permanente.

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Covid 19 et la révolution des plateformes en hypercroissance

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Résumé

La plupart des entreprises fonctionnant avec des business models traditionnels connaissent des difficultés et subissent un sérieux coup financier lors de l'épidémie de coronavirus. Toutefois, la crise pandémique offre aux plateformes en ligne une grande opportunité de montrer les avantages uniques de leur nouveau modèle d'entreprise, en particulier les possibilités d'expansion extrêmement rapide (scale-up). Cet article aborde la question des défis et des opportunités que les entreprises en hypercroissance doivent appréhender pour survivre (et prospérer) au lendemain de la crise du coronavirus et des inévitables périodes de récession qui s'annoncent.

Mots clés : *Plateforme, Scale-up, Business models, Stratégie*

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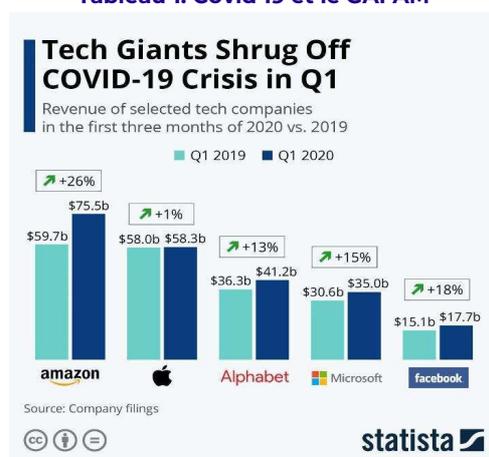
Covid19 et la révolution des plateformes en hypercroissance

La plupart des entreprises fonctionnant avec des modèles d'affaire traditionnels connaissent des difficultés et subissent un sérieux coup financier lors de l'épidémie de coronavirus. Toutefois, la crise pandémique offre aux plateformes en ligne une grande opportunité de montrer les avantages uniques du nouveau modèle d'entreprise, en particulier les possibilités d'extension. Cet article aborde la question des défis et des opportunités que les entreprises en hypercroissance doivent appréhender pour survivre (et prospérer) au lendemain de la crise des coronavirus et des inévitables périodes de récession qui s'annoncent.

Les mécanismes du business model de la plateforme en ligne

Prenons deux exemples extrêmes d'entreprises mondiales dont la réaction face à la crise a été si opposée. Tout d'abord, Airbus, le plus grand constructeur d'avions du monde, vient de publier une déclaration annonçant une énorme perte financière de 481 millions d'euros au premier trimestre de l'année 2020. Le PDG de l'entreprise a déclaré que l'industrie aérospatiale dans son ensemble est confrontée à la "crise la plus grave" de son histoire (Le Point, 2020). Une grande partie des compagnies aériennes mondiales ayant mis leur flotte en attente, cette situation reflète la réalité actuelle de l'industrie du transport, où la pandémie a perturbé les projets de voyage des personnes dans plus de 200 pays. A l'autre extrême, considérons une boutique en ligne Shopify dont les stocks ont plus que doublé depuis la mi-mars. Amazon peut servir d'autre exemple : l'entreprise prospère avec son cours de bourse qui a augmenté de 16 % depuis janvier 2020. Cette même tendance est très nette pour les autres GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook et Microsoft) qui sont jusqu'à présent sorties renforcées de la pandémie de Covid-19 (tableau 1). Bien sûr, on peut dire que la différence entre les deux exemples extrêmes réside dans les seules différences sectorielles. Toutefois, une différence plus pertinente est que, alors qu'Airbus conserve encore un business model traditionnel avec une création de chaîne de valeur linéaire, Shopify ou Amazon sont des plateformes numériques basées sur les ventes en ligne qui exploitent la puissance des réseaux et permettent une hypercroissance (scale-up).

Tableau 1: Covid 19 et le GAFAM



Source: Statista (2020)

Commençons par un rapide aperçu de ce qu'est une plateforme, car ce terme a une grande variété d'interprétations. Les personnes ayant un certain sens de la technologie les associent généralement à des produits de développement en logiciel et matériel sous-

jacents à une certaine architecture technologique. Les cadres et les PDG ont tendance à considérer les plateformes comme les leaders d'un secteur particulier, comme Amazon dans le commerce de détail ou Uber pour le service de transport. Il est également clair qu'une plateforme, en tant que concept basé sur les interactions (au moins) bilatérales des vendeurs et des acheteurs, existe depuis des siècles avec l'existence des marchés de biens par exemple. Toutefois, avec le développement des technologies numériques, les plateformes en tant que modèles organisationnels et technologiques sont devenues essentielles pour la création de valeur dans les économies mondiales modernes (Coeurderoy et al., 2019). Le phénomène des effets de réseau est essentiel pour comprendre le modèle de plateforme en tant que création de valeur. Ils se produisent lorsque les produits et services proposés à un groupe donné de participants prennent de la valeur avec l'augmentation de leur nombre. Un Facebook avec un seul membre serait sans valeur. Ainsi, plus le nombre de membres augmente, plus sa valeur augmente. En effet, chaque nouvel utilisateur peut théoriquement avoir accès à tous les utilisateurs existants au sein du même réseau et peut éventuellement inviter de nouveaux membres à rejoindre ce même réseau. Cela se traduit par une croissance exponentielle et très rapide du réseau. Les effets du réseau peuvent être directs, lorsque les utilisateurs de la plateforme bénéficient d'un grand nombre de participants au réseau, comme des amis sur Facebook ; et indirects, lorsque le réseau devient attractif pour d'autres contributeurs ou partenaires comme les développeurs de logiciels ou les publicitaires.

Les effets de réseau sont directement liés à la manière dont la valeur est créée par les plateformes, c'est-à-dire par le rapprochement, les interactions et les externalités positives qu'apporte le nombre croissant d'utilisateurs des plateformes. Dans le livre *Platform Strategy* de Reillier & Reillier (2017), les auteurs mentionnent également l'importance de la masse critique, car elle suppose qu'une plateforme doit attirer le bon nombre de participants des deux côtés du marché, avant de pouvoir se développer. De plus, l'aspect du 'single homing' par rapport au 'multihoming' augmente avec l'incitation des participants à ne participer qu'à un ou plusieurs réseaux de plateforme. Enfin, Reillier & Reillier attirent l'attention sur l'élasticité des prix qui dicte l'adaptabilité des prix en fonction de la demande et la concurrence entre les plateformes dans des secteurs similaires.

Au contraire, les entreprises traditionnelles et les plus grands géants industriels comme Airbus utilisent le modèle commercial de la "chaîne de valeur" linéaire, définie par Michael Porter dans les années 1980. La "chaîne de valeur" suppose une série de processus qu'une certaine entreprise ou industrie doit suivre avant de livrer un produit final. Comme un fabricant de trains qui doit d'abord acquérir des matériaux de fabrication (intrants) avant de les transformer en un train (extrants) qui peut ensuite être vendu. Le processus reste linéaire et ne possède pas l'agilité que les plateformes technologiques mettent à profit en s'adaptant et en s'ajustant. Même Jeff Bezos, le PDG d'Amazon, dans sa lettre ouverte aux parties prenantes, a déclaré que pour sortir gagnantes de la crise, les entreprises doivent être "agressives et agiles" (CB Insights Research, 2020). Cette agilité, cette orientation vers l'utilisateur et cette adaptabilité semblent être une véritable force des plateformes technologiques qui prospèrent malgré la pandémie.

Le pouvoir des Scale-ups

A quoi se réfère-t-on quand on parle de 'scaling' pour une entreprise ? Prenons une entreprise comme Slack Technologies, une plateforme permettant une communication ciblée sur les équipes. La société comptait 10 millions d'utilisateurs actifs enregistrés le 10

mars 2020 et est passée à 12,5 millions d'utilisateurs à la fin du mois de mars (The Verge, 2020). Slack a pu se développer rapidement car elle disposait déjà de l'infrastructure nécessaire pour accueillir les 2,5 millions d'utilisateurs supplémentaires et du personnel suffisant pour servir ces nouveaux utilisateurs. La société a augmenté ses revenus sans avoir à faire de gros investissements en termes d'actifs ou de personnel. C'est ce que représente la notion de "scaling". Elle se produit lorsque les recettes augmentent rapidement sans nécessairement augmenter les ressources ou les investissements. Dans le cas des plateformes, ces effets de réseau directs et indirects (côté demande) combinés à un coût marginal très faible se traduisent par un effet d'hypercroissance. C'est également le cas de Zoom, une plateforme mondiale de vidéoconférence dont les parts ont grimpé de 140 % en 2020, malgré les problèmes de sécurité qui se sont posés.

La beauté d'une croissance rapide s'accompagne toutefois d'un risque de problèmes de sécurité et de respect de la vie privée. Nous nous souvenons tous du scandale Facebook - Cambridge Analytica de 2018, où l'ouverture de la plateforme Facebook a été remise en question, les données de millions de profils d'utilisateurs ayant été exploitées comme une arme de manipulation des électeurs. Comme le proposent Cusumano, Gawer et Yoffie, c'est une question de responsabilité et de confiance (2019). Facebook a sans aucun doute souffert de ce manque de confiance des utilisateurs depuis l'incident. Plus récemment, Zoom Video Communications a été confronté à de sérieux problèmes de sécurité. Avec la crise du Covid-19 et le fait que les gens du monde entier sont confinés chez eux, la plateforme de vidéoconférence Zoom est devenue la plateforme de réunion virtuelle par défaut pour beaucoup. Lorsque des milliers de nouveaux utilisateurs ont rejoint le réseau de la plateforme en téléchargeant l'application Zoom, les problèmes de sécurité ont commencé à se poser. Avec les incidents répétés de réunions piraté par des participants non invités partageant des contenus inappropriés avec d'autres personnes, la confiance et la réputation de Zoom ont été endommagées. Plusieurs grandes entreprises, dont Tesla, Daimler AG, Ericsson et Bank of America, ont interdit à leurs employés d'utiliser l'outil (The Street, 2020). Malgré ces incidents inquiétants, les actions de Zoom ont grimpé de 140 % depuis le début de l'année 2020. Une des raisons de cette hausse est la demande pure et simple et une autre, la réponse rapide et solide du PDG de Zoom, Eric Yuan, qui a mis en place un plan d'action de 90 jours pour éliminer les problèmes de sécurité et a promis de regagner la confiance de ses clients.

Le nouveau paysage de la concurrence des scale-ups

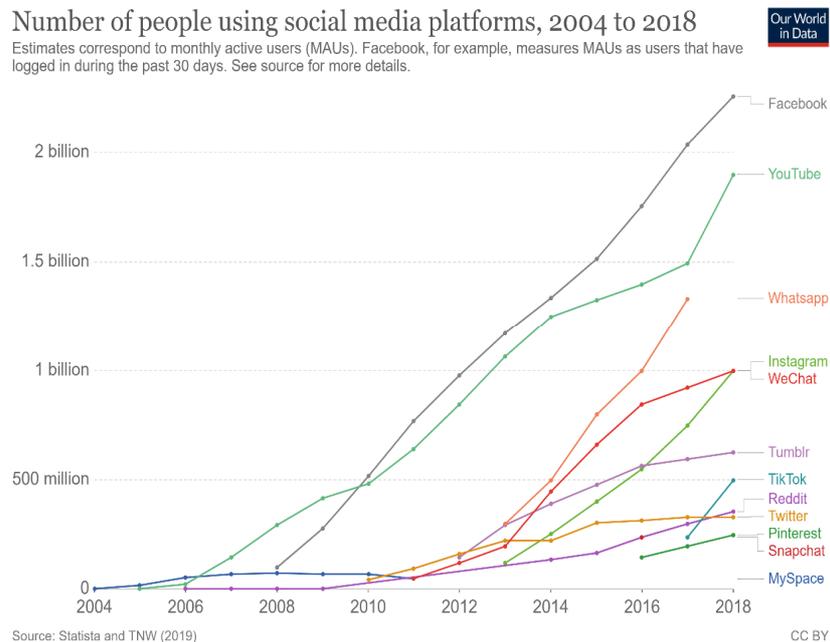
Il est clair que la crise du Covid-19 a contribué à rendre plus visibles de nouvelles formes de concurrence et de leadership commercial avec des plateformes numériques prospères malgré les difficultés économiques. Les entreprises basées sur des plateformes qui opèrent dans le contexte de la pandémie font face à des défis ou des opportunités concurrentielles clés (Ayache Wiszniowska, 2020).

Le "hors du commun X facteur"

Tout d'abord, la concurrence est confrontée à un facteur X permanent "hors du commun" avec une croissance rapide et inattendue. Le cas des médias sociaux et de leur quête "rapide et furieuse" des utilisateurs a radicalement changé le monde des médias mais aussi la société, en quelques années (tableau 2). Dans le cadre de la crise actuelle, c'est le cas de Zoom ou Slack par exemple, dont l'ouverture, la facilité d'utilisation, l'infrastructure numérique et le créneau idéal de l'assistance au travail à distance se sont extrêmement bien adaptés aux besoins du marché en période de crise et de post-crise. Cette opportunité

doit trouver une réponse et une offre clients appropriée alors que la concurrence commence à être féroce entre les plateformes numériques.

Tableau 2 : Le scale-ups des plateformes de médias sociaux



Source: Ortiz-Ospina E. (2019)

Le facteur "15 minutes de gloire"

Deuxièmement, nous connaissons tous la célèbre citation attribuée à Andy Warhol selon laquelle "À l'avenir, chacun aura droit à 15 minutes de célébrité mondiale". Elle a conduit au concept de "15 minutes de célébrité" - l'idée que tout le monde peut accéder à la célébrité grâce à l'explosion rapide des médias. Aujourd'hui, et plus encore à l'avenir, les entreprises du monde des plateformes en ligne peuvent connaître un effet "15 minutes de gloire" et se faire rapidement connaître dans un domaine de marché donné. Les nouvelles stars, par exemple, sont les plateformes d'achat en ligne de produits alimentaires dont le défi consiste maintenant à transformer le besoin du marché en un avantage durable qui s'étend au-delà de la période de crise de Covid-19. Le principal enjeu du second effet est bien sûr de rester en vie au bout de ces 15 minutes et de ne pas retourner vers l'inconnu... Seul un petit nombre ne deviendra pas étoile filante ;

Le syndrome du "talon d'Achille"

Enfin, ces entreprises peuvent être concernées par un syndrome du "talon d'Achille", où les hautes performances, la croissance exponentielle des utilisateurs et le risque accru en matière de sécurité ont tendance à entraîner la nécessité d'une réinvention, d'une adaptation, d'un progrès technologique rapide et d'un nouvel ensemble de compétences managériales qui peuvent permettre de traverser la crise à l'avenir. Le manque de ces compétences et techniques peut transformer l'opportunité de croissance en une menace. Pour réussir, les leaders des entreprises en hypercroissance doivent se concentrer sur les possibilités offertes par la situation actuelle et réfléchir de manière innovante à leurs produits et services ainsi qu'aux nouvelles sources d'investissement. Ils doivent se

concentrer sur la numérisation des offres et des opérations ainsi que sur la constitution d'équipes collaboratives et agiles qui s'adaptent à des conditions en évolution rapide.

Conclusion

Malgré le fait que de nombreuses entreprises traditionnelles ayant un modèle économique traditionnel luttent pour maintenir leurs entreprises à flot, la pandémie de Covid-19 est une accélération de l'entrée dans la société de la plateforme et de la phase de scaling qui s'ensuit. Cependant, il s'agit d'un nouveau monde de conditions incertaines, de nouvelles menaces et de nouveaux besoins. C'est un monde de montées et de chutes rapides des entreprises basées sur des plateformes qui doivent tirer parti des opportunités tout en réduisant le niveau de risque encouru et en assurant l'avenir.

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**Crise sanitaire, économique et financière :
Faut-il assouplir les exigences réglementaires des banques en
matière de liquidité et de fonds propres ?**

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Crise sanitaire, économique et financière :

Faut-il assouplir les exigences réglementaires des banques en matière de liquidité et de fonds propres ?

D'où venons-nous ?

Au sortir de la crise financière de 2008, puis de la crise grecque de 2010-2011, l'insuffisance de fonds propres et de réserve de liquidités sécurisée est apparue comme une évidence aux régulateurs de nombreux pays. Les sauvetages des établissements par les États se sont généralisés au cours de la période sans pour autant que l'entrée des États au capital (notamment dans le cas des banques anglaises et néerlandaises) conduise à proprement parler à une nationalisation du secteur bancaire. Depuis, l'Europe bancaire, via le mécanisme de supervision unique, a produit un cadre réglementaire largement issu de Bâle 3, qui a renforcé les exigences en fonds propres et imposé des exigences de liquidité via une série de ratios quantitatifs. Les États ont juré qu'on ne les reprendrait plus à sauver le secteur bancaire et ont mis en place un mécanisme de résolution censé ne plus solliciter les finances publiques et donc les contribuables. Ce mécanisme a globalement fonctionné dans les cas chypriotes, grecs et italiens, au cas près des banques vénitiennes pour lesquelles l'état italien est intervenu directement.

Si les États sont restés en retrait ces dernières années, le relai a été pris par les banques centrales qui, via les politiques d'expansion monétaire (*quantitative easing*), sont entrées dans un rôle non conventionnel en approvisionnant les acteurs en liquidité. En Europe, l'arrêt de cette pratique, momentanément fin 2018 jusqu'en novembre 2019, a rapidement mis en tension le secteur financier dans sa capacité à financer l'économie sur un rythme élevé, à tel point que cette pratique de l'expansion monétaire a semblé devoir être pérennisée. La désexpansion initiée par la Fed (*tapering*) n'a duré que quelques trimestres avant une réactivation précipitée en octobre 2019 face à un début de crise de liquidité.

Ce bref historique montre à minima les mesures d'assistance récurrentes que pratiquent les États et les banques centrales envers ce secteur, bien qu'ils s'en défendent souvent, en se retranchant derrière l'argument du très fort niveau de supervision et des exigences de fonds propres et de liquidité qui se sont notoirement renforcées. L'idée fondamentale était que les banques devaient être capables de se débrouiller seules face à des situations de crise. Ce principe général n'aura pas tenu bien longtemps face à la vague épidémique coronavirus. Et nous assistons pour la première fois à une action concertée États / Banques centrales pour permettre au secteur bancaire de « passer », sans s'effondrer, la crise économique qui s'annonce. Pour l'heure c'est le côté inédit de cette crise qui justifie à nouveau cette intervention, mais n'est-ce pas finalement le propre des crises actuelles et à venir d'être inédites ? Au-delà des montants en milliards annoncés dans les minutes qui ont suivi les annonces de confinement, certaines mesures, moins médiatiques, ont conduit à aménager certaines exigences réglementaires à la baisse et certains commencent à même parler de dérégulation.

Qu'est-il proposé ?

En matière de fonds propres deux séries d'aménagements ont été institués par des textes récents dédiés à la crise actuelle aussi bien en Europe qu'aux USA. La première consiste à ne pas enregistrer les pertes immédiates liées au non remboursement des crédits par les entreprises notamment. Ces non remboursements auraient dû conduire à passer des

provisions supplémentaires pour déprécier la part restant due des crédits non remboursés ou des crédits qui viennent d'être restructurés et dont les échéances ont été suspendues pour quelques mois (principe *Forbearance* ou délai de grâce). En limitant le montant des provisions, les prochains résultats nets trimestriels et annuels sont un peu préservés et les fonds propres sont moins affectés. Dans le même ordre d'idée, les prêts bénéficiant d'une garantie de l'État ne seront pas soumis à des exigences de fonds propres supplémentaires.

Toujours en matière de fonds propres, les seuils et exigences minimales fixés et renforcés ces dernières années sont en train d'être relâchés. Ainsi il serait possible d'opérer en dessous de certains seuils fixés dans le cadre des *stress test* du Pilier 2 bâlois, voire même de mobiliser les coussins de capital de la meilleure qualité pour opérer en dessous des seuils réglementaires des coussins de conservation, contracycliques et même systémiques, autrement dit en dessous des seuils imposés aux banques par la BCE. La limite redescendrait ainsi à 8 %, qui reste le montant de l'exigence minimale de fonds propres au regard des actifs pondérés du risque. Point important, alors qu'en temps normal le non-respect de ces coussins, en particulier le coussin de conservation, interdit automatiquement la distribution de dividendes et de bonus aux dirigeants, la BCE n'a pas envisagé de restriction. Ce sont les États qui ont appelé à la modération en la matière.

Une autre solution, nous venant plutôt de la FED consiste à modifier la formule de calcul du ratio de levier, ratio de solvabilité sans pondération des risques, principalement retenu par les banques du pays. L'idée consiste donc à retirer la dette souveraine américaine du dénominateur de ce ratio et à la considérer comme non porteuse de risques. Ainsi le seuil réglementaire ne bouge pas mais l'assiette d'évaluation de l'exposition au défaut se réduit. En Europe, la dette souveraine était déjà exemptée de l'exigence de capitaux réglementaires dans le règlement concernant les exigences prudentielles applicables aux établissements de crédit (dit CRR pour *capital requirements regulation*).

Par ailleurs il y a une demande forte des banques pour que les mesures votées en décembre 2017 dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la nouvelle directive sur les fonds propres réglementaires (dite CRD V) ne soient pas appliquées dans les prochaines années car ces mesures envisageaient une nouvelle augmentation des exigences en lien avec la réalisation des *stress tests* et le poids réduit aux modèles internes (introduction d'un « l'output floor »), ainsi que la qualité du dispositif de supervision interne (Pilier 2). En outre le « paquet » suivant dit « Bâle IV » défavoriserait les banques européennes par rapport à leurs homologues américaines qui titrisent systématiquement les crédits : il n'est pas certain que la crise actuelle soit le meilleur moment pour nous engager dans une telle réforme du financement de l'économie. »

S'agissant de la liquidité, le débat à court terme est celui du maintien de la liquidité disponible à horizon d'un mois via la mesure du Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR). Le seuil réglementaire est de 100 % et beaucoup de banques ont constitué des marges de sécurité avec des valeurs autour de 120 %. Ce ratio a directement émergé de la crise Lehman Brothers et du constat de la possibilité de disparition d'une banque en quelques jours au regard de son risque de liquidité. L'idée est de maintenir, dans un scénario de stress de la consommation des dépôts à vue et de non remboursement des crédits, une réserve de liquidité équivalente aux sorties nettes de cash. La BCE a relâché la contrainte des 100 % et accepté que les banques passent momentanément en dessous, sans préciser de combien et pour quelle durée.

L'appréciation de la situation de chaque banque et les conditions de dérogation aux principes réglementaires en vigueur seront le fait d'une appréciation individuelle de chaque

établissement en lien avec l'équipe de surveillance conjointe (*Joint Supervisory Team*) lorsque cet établissement est sous supervision BCE.

Nous souhaitons cependant émettre quelques recommandations quant à la mise en œuvre de ce dispositif et revenir sur sa justification au regard de la philosophie qui a présidé à la mise en place de ce cadre réglementaire.

Jusqu'où peut-on aller ?

Lorsque l'on réfléchit à rendre un peu plus flexibles des règles de ce type, il faut absolument veiller à garantir une bonne identification des risques et être en mesure de distinguer les emprunteurs réellement viables en dehors de la situation de crise en cours. Ces mesures ne doivent pas permettre à des acteurs structurellement en difficulté de poursuivre leur activité. D'autant que les aides d'urgence des gouvernements risquent d'entraîner des effets pervers si elles sont employées à resolvabiliser de telles entreprises non viables. Aussi la réglementation et sa mise en œuvre doivent-elle garantir une bonne mesure de la dégradation de la qualité des actifs. L'introduction d'une flexibilité dans un cadre réglementaire est un exercice d'équilibre qui peut donner lieu à des traitements inégalitaires entre les pays et entre les établissements au regard de leur profil de risques.

Mais avant même d'envisager ces assouplissements, n'aurait-on pas pu voir dans quelles mesures les banques, qui ont fait des efforts en matière de liquidité et des fonds propres étaient en mesure de résister au choc que nous vivons ? Certes, la crise actuelle appelle de la réactivité, y compris sous l'angle réglementaire, mais cela n'empêche pas de mieux fonder les ajustements opérés. En permettant un assouplissement réglementaire immédiat, les établissements ne sont pas mis à l'épreuve et nous ne testons pas les capacités de résistance censées désormais exister. S'il est vrai qu'annoncer que le non-respect de certains seuils est acceptable, cela présente l'inconvénient de ne pas pouvoir tester la capacité de résilience et la pertinence des niveaux de sécurité autour des ratios réglementaires.

Les banques elles-mêmes, ainsi que les analystes financiers et les gestionnaires d'actifs, ont pris l'habitude de mesurer une « distance au seuil » entre l'exigence réglementaire et les résultats observés. Plus cette distance est éloignée, plus la banque est réputée solide. Il ne faudrait pas qu'à la faveur de cette expérience les banques réduisent leurs marges de sécurité, ayant acquis la conviction qu'en cas de situation imprévisible, le cadre réglementaire ne comptera plus.

Par ailleurs, dans le cadre du pilier 2 Bâlois, les établissements ainsi que la BCE réalisent des stress tests censés simuler leur résistance à des chocs externes. S'ils n'avaient pas envisagé une crise sanitaire, ces stress tests ont forcément simulé une augmentation des défaillances d'emprunteurs en situation de récession économique. A-t-on mis ces scénarios en face de la situation actuelle ? L'occasion est aujourd'hui donnée de montrer la crédibilité des scénarios de stress et de vérifier si vraiment nous avons réellement les bons ordres de grandeur dans les simulations.

Enfin la question se pose, dans une phase de relance de l'activité, de restaurer ou d'assurer une capacité de prise de risque à minima équivalente et sans doute supérieure à ce qu'elle était avant la crise. Nos échanges avec les autorités de régulation nous montrent que, loin d'avoir l'ambition d'empêcher les banques de prendre des risques, la volonté est de faire en sorte que chaque établissement assume avec ses ressources rares (on désigne ainsi les fonds propres et la liquidité) sa propre politique de risque en lien avec son positionnement

stratégique. Ainsi, des établissements acceptant de financer les entreprises et l'investissement, notamment les PME, sont naturellement plus exposés aux risques que ceux davantage positionnés sur le particulier ou la grande entreprise. La réglementation ne fait pas de différence au regard de la stratégie menée par chaque banque et de la clientèle servie, ce qui, dans les circonstances actuelles, pose une difficulté sur les conditions d'application. Plutôt que d'afficher des mesures générales d'assouplissement, ne devrait-on pas plutôt promouvoir des mesures plus ciblées, donc sans doute temporairement plus sélectives, avec une incitation donnée aux établissements assurant le sauvetage et la relance de notre tissu productif local ? Pour cela, il n'est pas nécessaire d'inventer des dispositifs nouveaux ou des assouplissements inédits : un calibrage fin du facteur de réfaction pour les PME (*SME supporting factor*), tel qu'il apparaît à l'article 501 de CRR2, peut tout à fait être anticipé dans le cadre de la supervision.

L'Europe survivra-t-elle à la crise du coronavirus ?

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Abstract

This impact paper deals with the European reaction to the Coronavirus crisis. According to Jacques Delors' definition, the EU model is guided by competition to stimulate, cooperation to reinforce, solidarity to unite. Member States have reacted mostly nationally given the limited EU competences in health and economic policy, and they didn't show the same level of performance and resilience throughout the crisis. But EU cooperation was real albeit limited, and the cooperation evolved towards solidarity especially in financial terms in order to preserve the integrity of the Eurozone, to help the most affected countries, and to encourage EU economic recovery. Guided by a compromise between national responsibility and European solidarity, the EU is about to overcome this new existential crisis.

Mots clés : Europe Geopolitics Economics Health State

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L'Europe survivra-t-elle à la crise du coronavirus ?

La crise du coronavirus est une nouvelle épreuve pour l'Union européenne, après la crise de la zone euro (2010-2012), la crise migratoire (2015-2016), et le Brexit (2016). L'Europe n'a pas bonne presse et a été accusée de tous les maux, de ne pas avoir anticipé l'épidémie, de ne pas avoir empêché la réaction en ordre dispersé des Etats, et finalement de ne pas faire preuve d'assez de solidarité. Ces critiques sont-elles justifiées ?

Pour juger l'action de l'Europe à sa juste mesure, il faut revenir au triptyque de Jacques Delors qui la fonde sur trois principes : la compétition qui stimule, la coopération qui renforce, la solidarité qui unit.

La compétition inévitable des nations

Si l'UE n'a pas fait plus pour gérer la pandémie, c'est d'abord parce qu'elle n'a qu'une « compétence d'appui » aux Etats membres en matière de santé (art. 6 TFUE), et une « compétence partagée » avec les Etats seulement sur les « enjeux communs de sécurité en matière de santé publique » (art. 4 et 168 TFUE, ce qui couvre la prévention, la recherche, les normes et la coopération, mais pas l'organisation et la fourniture de services de santé et de soins médicaux). Peut-être que l'UE et les Etats ensemble auraient pu faire mieux pour anticiper cette crise, mais pour être juste, si beaucoup avaient prédit qu'une épidémie surviendrait un jour, personne en Occident n'avait décrit la forme qu'elle prendrait ni l'ampleur des conséquences.

Le coronavirus n'a été arrêté par aucune frontière et a frappé tous les pays européens, mais force est de constater que le choc n'a pas été entièrement symétrique. Une compétition des modèles nationaux se fait ainsi jour à trois niveaux.

D'abord sur la résilience des systèmes de soins. Si l'Italie, l'Espagne, la France et le Royaume-Uni ont déjà payé un lourd tribut (plus de 20000 décès à la fin avril), l'Allemagne enregistre 6000 décès pour un nombre de cas déclarés comparables, ce qui peut s'expliquer par sa plus grande capacité de tests (mis au point dès janvier par le Professeur Drosten) et de lits en soins intensifs.

Ensuite sur les mesures prises pour endiguer la maladie. Le confinement général, décidé le 10 mars en Italie et généralisé à travers toute l'Europe dans les jours suivants, a été précoce relativement à la propagation de l'épidémie, et donc plus efficace, dans certains pays qui apparaissent comme moins touchés (Autriche, Danemark, Allemagne, Grèce, Portugal). Alors que les pays latins de culture catholique (France, Espagne, Italie) ont décidé un confinement autoritaire, les pays nordiques de culture protestante ont choisi un confinement plus libéral et ont davantage débattu de l'arbitrage avec le coût économique et le respect des libertés. La Suède est même allée jusqu'à refuser le confinement obligatoire, ce qui est cependant atténué par les consignes de distanciation sociale et la discipline de la population. Et après avoir confiné en ordre dispersé, les pays déconfinent à présent en ordre dispersé (les écoles et commerces ont rouvert dès après Pâques en Autriche, au Danemark, en Allemagne).

Enfin la compétition se fait jour dans les conséquences économiques de la crise. Les pays les plus touchés et les plus confinés sont aussi les plus endettés et risquent de subir plus lourdement le choc en termes de dérive du déficit public et de la dette. Certes, le choc économique révèle l'interdépendance systémique de l'économie mondiale, et les économies allemande et néerlandaise tournées vers les exportations vont aussi souffrir de la chute du commerce international. Mais la crise risque de renforcer le clivage Nord / Sud qui a été à la source de la crise de la zone euro à partir de 2010 et qui s'est peu résorbé (les pays du Nord et de l'Est de l'UE sont à moins de 60 % d'endettement public par rapport au PIB, les pays latins à 100 % ou plus). Cela fait mieux comprendre les réticences des pays nordiques à aller vers la mutualisation des dépenses et des dettes (comme l'a dit crûment Gernot Blümel, ministre des finances autrichien, « il est immoral que les pays qui ne respectent pas les règles quand tout va bien demandent ensuite à ce que l'on fasse preuve de solidarité à leur égard »).

Une coordination limitée mais réelle

Si les Etats ont réagi en ordre dispersé à l'épidémie, y compris en restaurant unilatéralement les contrôles aux frontières, il est injuste de reprocher à l'Union européenne une absence de coordination et de coopération.

Dès le 9 janvier, une semaine après que la cellule de crise de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé ait été activée, le mécanisme d'alerte précoce du Centre européen de prévention et de contrôle des maladies (ECDC) était à son tour activé. Dès le 28 janvier, le mécanisme européen de protection civile était lui aussi activé pour soutenir les opérations de rapatriement de résidents européens bloqués par les mesures de quarantaine. Les ministres de la santé de l'Union européenne commençaient à discuter de la réaction à la pandémie à leur réunion du 13 février, les ministres de l'économie et des finances des répercussions économiques de la crise par une visioconférence le 4 mars, et les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement se sont concertés par vidéoconférence à quatre reprises déjà (10 mars, 17 mars, 26 mars, 23 avril).

Cette coordination a consisté pour l'essentiel à ratifier a posteriori les mesures nationales (restauration des contrôles aux frontières par les Etats, contrôle aux frontières extérieures, restriction des voyages non essentiels vers l'UE) et à relâcher les disciplines pour permettre aux Etats de faire face au choc sanitaire et économique (règles en matière d'aides d'Etat, activation de la clause générale d'exemption du pacte de stabilité budgétaire). La Commission européenne a en même temps aidé à la passation de commandes groupées de matériel médical et financé une assistance médicale aux Etats. Et à présent elle s'efforce de coordonner les stratégies de déconfinement, y compris dans l'utilisation des technologies de traçage intrusives, ce qui est une condition pour une levée progressive et concertée des restrictions à la libre circulation.

Par ailleurs, la Commission a veillé à ce que l'état d'exception que crée le retour des contrôles aux frontières n'empêche pas la poursuite de la libre-circulation des marchandises (« voies vertes » aux frontières, non mise en quarantaine des routiers), de la circulation des travailleurs transfrontaliers ou saisonniers, et des relocalisations de demandeurs d'asile. L'UE a aussi maintenu sa vigilance sur d'autres aspects, comme le respect de l'état de droit (en liaison avec le Conseil de l'Europe) en Hongrie ou en Pologne, le contrôle des investissements stratégiques étrangers, ou la réponse à la désinformation en provenance de Chine et de Russie.

La solidarité jusqu'où ?

Cette crise étant une crise systémique, une crise de l'interdépendance mondiale, la coordination a heureusement évolué vers la solidarité. La Commission a raclé ses fonds de tiroirs en réallouant des fonds non utilisés pour la politique de cohésion et en dégagant un budget d'assistance médicale. Le mécanisme européen de protection civile a financé environ 10 % des opérations de rapatriements de citoyens européens. Les pays européens ont fait preuve d'entraide en poursuivant la coopération transfrontalière et en organisant le transfert de certains patients vers des pays moins durement touchés comme l'Allemagne.

Mais c'est surtout en termes de solidarité financière que l'Union a agi fortement pour faire face à la récession entraînée par les mesures de confinement, et pour répondre aux nouveaux risques d'éclatement de l'union monétaire sous la pression des marchés. Après des déclarations initiales malencontreuses de Christine Lagarde disant que la Banque centrale européenne n'était pas là pour « refermer les spreads », la BCE a sorti le bazooka dès le 18 mars en décidant un programme de rachat de titres publics à hauteur de 750 milliards €, et s'est ainsi affirmée presque sans hésitation, dans la continuité du rôle qu'elle s'est donné depuis 2010, comme le garant en dernier ressort de l'intégrité de la zone euro.

Ces mesures monétaires ont été complétées par un paquet de mesures financières décidées par l'Eurogroupe du 9 avril à hauteur de 540 milliards € (instrument SURE proposé par la Commission pour financer les mesures de chômage partiel ; prêts de la Banque européenne d'investissement, garantis par les Etats, aux entreprises ; ligne de crédit du Mécanisme européen de stabilité, créé en 2012, pour aider les Etats à faire face aux dépenses liées à la crise du coronavirus).

Les mesures décidées par l'UE équivalent à environ 10 % de son PIB total et s'ajoutent aux mesures budgétaires prises par les Etats afin de faire face aux surcoûts de la crise et de préparer la relance économique une fois que le confinement sera levé. Elles visent à soulager les pays surendettés, à leur permettre d'emprunter à des taux faibles, à les mettre à l'abri de la spéculation des marchés, mais elles ne les désendettent pas. D'autres mesures seront peut-être nécessaires si des attaques spéculatives contre les Etats les plus faibles (notamment l'Italie, qui devrait voir passer son taux d'endettement public de 135 à 160 % de son PIB) devaient reprendre. Il n'y a pas à ce stade d'accord sur des emprunts mutualisés (« coronabonds ») ni sur un fonds de relance financé en commun (le « plan Marshall » évoqué par Mme von der Leyen). Ces questions devront être abordées en lien avec la négociation du cadre financier pluriannuel 2021-2027, qui achoppait déjà sur les problèmes de transferts (contributions nettes, « juste retour »).

La solidarité se heurte ici à une limite déjà évoquée : autant les pays nordiques, parfois qualifiés de « radins », sont prêts à se laisser forcer la main pour prendre des mesures de sauvetage systémique de la zone euro et du marché intérieur dont ils bénéficient (les vendeurs ont besoin d'acheteurs), autant ils demeurent réticents dans l'évolution vers une « union de transferts » et exigeront, comme ce fut cas avec la Grèce et d'autres, que l'assistance soit assortie de contreparties strictes (réformes structurelles, assainissement des finances publiques pour rembourser les dettes accumulées). Or l'Union européenne ne pourra pas sortir renforcée de la crise si elle n'est pas au rendez-vous de la solidarité et si les Etats membres plus riches, qui ont plus de marges de manœuvre, n'apportent pas leur juste

concours à la relance générale de la machine économique (y compris par la relance de leur demande).

Notons d'ailleurs que la solidarité ne se pose pas seulement à l'échelle européenne mais aussi à l'échelle mondiale, l'Europe ayant mobilisé un premier paquet de 20 milliards € d'aide et souscrit à un moratoire sur les dettes pour les pays les plus pauvres fragilisés par la pandémie.

Conclusion

Contrairement à ce que certains disent ou pensent, l'Europe a déjà largement pris le chemin pour surmonter cette nouvelle crise existentielle. Comme dans tout système fédéral, la concurrence des entités fédérées est un facteur d'émulation qui a aussi ses mérites. Il faudra tirer le bilan des politiques qui ont été menées et s'inspirer des pays qui ont mieux géré la crise. Il faudra aussi renforcer les compétences et les moyens de l'Union européenne pour améliorer la résilience collective face à une prochaine épidémie (souveraineté sanitaire, autonomie stratégique). Il faudra enfin refonder le pacte de confiance, basé sur un juste équilibre entre la responsabilité des Etats et la nécessaire solidarité qu'implique l'appartenance à une communauté de destin. Le moteur franco-allemand a ici une responsabilité centrale, alors que les deux pays vont assumer la présidence de l'UE au 2^e semestre 2020 (Allemagne) et au 1^{er} semestre 2022 (France).

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Repenser le système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant

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Abstract

Cet article explore les conséquences de la pandémie de Covid-19 sur le système d'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche, d'innovation et de l'entrepreneuriat innovant. Il explique à travers une approche ascendante, comment ce contexte perturbateur appelle à repenser les liens entre les composants de ce système tout en intégrant de nouvelles méthodes et d'approches pour développer un système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant performant impactant, durable et en cohérence avec les objectifs européens dans ce domaine.

Mots clés : Connaissances, Apprentissage, Capacité d'absorption, Système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant, Spécialisations technologiques, Europe

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Repenser le système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant

La crise du Covid-19 s'est voulue mondiale et présente un caractère pandémique, virulent avec 4 millions de cas enregistrés dans 227 pays (selon OMS, 3 mai 2020). En France et comme dans d'autres pays européens, ce contexte inopiné et turbulent a mis à mal trois piliers du développement, à savoir les dimensions sociale, sanitaire et économique, notamment par une hausse du chômage, l'affaiblissement de la structure sociale faisant ainsi craindre le spectre d'une décroissance durable. Cette face noire de la crise a conduit en conséquence les pouvoirs publics nationaux à adopter une stratégie défensive de maintien de l'emploi, l'aide aux entreprises pour éviter les faillites et à un soutien financier substantiel de la recherche pour la santé afin de trouver une solution scientifique rapide et efficace.

Au-delà de ces constats dramatiques, nous assistons à l'accélération d'un changement de paradigme technologique qui a affecté tous les domaines et particulièrement celui de l'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche, de l'innovation. Ce nouveau paradigme a dans une première étape contraint à l'adaptation, et dans un deuxième temps il amène à l'inévitable nécessité de repenser le futur de du système académique et scientifique, au niveau structurel, organisationnel, de coordination et de financement, dans une perspective de performance et de soutenabilité, lui-même ancré dans le cadre d'un système de d'innovation.

Pour rappel, un système d'innovation est constitué de structures économiques et d'institutions publiques dont les actions s'inscrivent dans une perspective d'implémentation d'une stratégie nationale d'innovation, et laquelle, le type et la qualité des interactions entre ses acteurs influencent le rythme et la trajectoire technologique d'un pays (Lundvall, Edquist, 1993). Dans ce système, le sous-système d'enseignement, de recherche et d'innovation, jouent un rôle central dans la productivité et la compétitivité stratégique. Ce dernier est composé principalement d'institutions d'enseignement supérieur, de centres de recherche, d'institutions de transfert, d'un réseau d'entreprises et d'infrastructures et de moyens permettant d'utiliser des ressources de coordonner les actions et de communiquer pour produire des connaissances et les valoriser en produits et solutions innovants.

Un modèle « glocal » de l'enseignement supérieur

Au niveau de la sphère de l'enseignement supérieur, ce contexte disruptif a paradoxalement favorisé l'adoption rapide et accélérée des technologies digitales pour assurer le maintien de l'enseignement à distance au niveau national. Sur le plan plus global, ce contexte a permis une ouverture spontanée de certains cours en ligne, à l'accès gratuit aux connaissances ainsi qu'à un partage massif des expériences et des méthodes pédagogiques et disciplinaires. Il faudrait repenser en conséquence, l'intégration des dispositifs d'enseignement virtuels et hybrides dans la vie étudiante et des enseignants avec une adaptation qui était aujourd'hui forcée par l'urgence du contexte non anticipé, mais qui sera probablement amenée à se normaliser dans l'avenir et faisant de l'outil digital une partie intégrante voire structurante de l'enseignement.

Cette réflexion est d'autant plus actuelle au regard de l'initiative européenne « European University » lancée par la commission européenne et fortement soutenue par la France pour former d'ici à l'horizon 2025, des campus européens d'enseignement supérieur et de

recherche autour de thématiques clés, qui permettent d'assurer la qualité et l'excellence dans l'enseignement supérieur, d'améliorer la mobilité virtuelle des étudiants et de l'ensemble des parties prenantes des institutions d'enseignement supérieur, la mise en place de programmes communs transnationaux et diplômants entre les partenaires universitaires de ces alliances, et en intégrant des pédagogies avancées et l'utilisation des dernières technologies, et qui soient diplômants.

Ainsi l'adaptation doit laisser la place à l'adoption de la digitalisation d'une manière intelligente et au service de l'excellence pédagogique, de l'expansion du savoir, de la mobilité étudiante et celle de la communauté des enseignants. Ce qui implique une réflexion sur le business model des institutions d'enseignement supérieur du futur. Il n'y a pas de solutions immédiates à ces questions, mais des axes de réflexion possible doivent être intégrés notamment : Comment les institutions d'enseignement supérieur pourraient-elles maintenir leurs identités nationales avec une ouverture sur le monde grâce à la digitalisation, doivent-elles se transformer en institutions « globales », tout en bénéficiant de l'ancrage local ? Ces interrogations devraient être analysées en lien avec la composante recherche et innovation, car il s'agit avant tout d'un processus global et systémique.

La souveraineté du système national et la production des connaissances

Dans le domaine de la recherche et de l'innovation, la crise du covid-19 s'est accompagnée d'un flux important, accéléré et multidisciplinaire d'échanges et de partage élargi d'informations et des connaissances scientifiques, facilités notamment par l'utilisation de technologies digitales comme les calculateurs et les programmes numériques complexes et sophistiqués assurant ainsi le traitement de flux condensés de données instantanées. Ces outils digitaux ont surtout favorisé des collaborations scientifiques transfrontalières virtuelles brisant les frontières physiques entre régions d'un même pays et entre pays, dans un esprit de solidarité et pour former une seule identité humaine.

Dans un processus d'innovation, le contexte joue un rôle dans l'accumulation des connaissances tacites et codifiées. Cette crise montre le rôle joué par l'élargissement des connaissances scientifiques sur le développement de connaissances collaboratives et dans la production de nouvelles connaissances dans une perspective de proposition d'une solution innovante pour l'éradiquer. La dimension globalisée gagnera à être soutenue et intégrée dans un cadre de collaboration mieux structurée qui faciliterait sa dynamique et sa performance sur le long terme.

Le contexte de crise a mobilisé une armada de chercheurs d'horizons scientifiques diverses et avec des compétences multidisciplinaires notamment des épistémologues, des ingénieurs en sciences dures, des biologistes et bien d'autres ainsi que des praticiens, qui ont mis en commun leurs connaissances, leurs compétences disciplinaires et techniques pour accumuler, partager et produire de nouvelles connaissances et ainsi trouver des solutions à ce défi sanitaire, social et surtout mondial, qu'est le virus Covid-19. Ce qu'affichait le président de la république en déclarant le 24 Mars, que « *...Je réunis aujourd'hui nos meilleurs chercheurs pour progresser sur les diagnostics et les traitements. Notre effort de recherche est totalement mobilisé dans la lutte contre le COVID-19* ».

Sur le plan cognitif, cette crise a mis en avant les vertus de la dynamique du processus d'accumulation et de production de connaissances à travers les interactions virtuelles entre chercheurs de différents horizons et de différents pays et a contribué à l'alimentation du

processus d'apprentissage cumulatif grâce notamment à l'apprentissage exploratoire, l'apprentissage par la transformation et l'apprentissage par l'exploitation (Narula, 2003 ; Lane et al. 2006) et l'apprentissage interactif favorisant par conséquent des mécanismes de rétroaction dynamiques et évolutives et des adaptations internes qui alimentent un processus d'innovation (Ben Slimane, 2011). Les effets de ces interactions sociales élargies sur de l'accumulation des connaissances révèlent la nécessité de soutenir ces mécanismes pour favoriser une agilité scientifique, une meilleure coordination et communication, comme sources de développement de la capacité d'absorption (Zou et al, 2018), l'amélioration de l'apprentissage intelligent et la créativité des réseaux et des collaborations pour ainsi relever les défis sociaux et environnementaux et technologiques futurs, dans un esprit de coopération.

Les spécialisations technologiques du futur

Sur le plan stratégique, il serait important d'assurer la souveraineté technologique nationale continue sur des domaines qui constitueraient les spécialisations françaises du futur. Mais d'un point de vue systémique du processus d'innovation il faut soutenir l'ancrage national de la recherche et d'innovation pour pouvoir tirer profit des interactions élargies. En effet, la production de nouvelles connaissances n'est pas systématique. Elle dépend d'une part de la présence d'une base de connaissances suffisante et renouvelée et de la présence de capital humain, qui grâce à ses compétences, ses capacités productives, son expérience contribue au développement d'une capacité d'absorption technologique (Ben Slimane, 2011). Ces déterminants de la capacité d'absorption doivent être soutenus dans le cadre du plan national pour la recherche et l'innovation, qui avait déjà décrit la stratégie nationale pour la recherche et l'innovation depuis une dizaine d'année, dont le soutien aux échanges entre laboratoires publics et privés, le décloisonnement des efforts de recherche et d'innovation pour une meilleure coordination entre les acteurs.

Ce contexte nous renseigne sur la nécessité d'un investissement plus soutenu et pérenne dans les ressources et les moyens pour la recherche fondamentale mais aussi la R&D, en vue de soutenir le développement des spécialisations stratégiques dans des secteurs clés (technologiques, sociaux ou environnementaux) et soutenir les différentes formes de recherche et d'innovation qu'elle soit tirée par les besoins du marché, ou pour faire avancer la science, répondre à des défis sociaux, environnementaux ou sanitaires, ou pour demeurer à la pointe des avancées technologiques et de ruptures, notamment par la fourniture d'infrastructures et des moyens financiers ciblés autour de thèmes stratégiques et futurs pour soutenir la souveraineté technologique nationale sur le long terme. Ainsi, en développement des secteurs de spécialisation technologiques nationaux, la France pourrait mieux s'impliquer dans les spécialisations européennes.

.. et l'entrepreneuriat innovant

Le dernier maillon du système de l'enseignement, de la recherche et de l'innovation est le transfert dans une perspective de valorisation économique, et qui s'appuie fortement l'entrepreneuriat innovant. L'entrepreneuriat à forte intensité de connaissance devient déterminant et doit faire l'objet d'un ancrage culturel dans le système pour briser la dichotomie entre les composants du système. D'abord, au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur, l'entrepreneuriat doit être généralisé aussi bien pour les étudiants des universités, que dans les écoles d'ingénieurs et grandes écoles. Les étudiants doivent être particulièrement formés à la culture entrepreneuriale, au comportement entrepreneurial et aux compétences entrepreneuriales. Par ailleurs, la collaboration interdisciplinaire à

travers les projets de collaboration doivent s'étendre aux sciences humaines et sociales afin de favoriser la détection des opportunités entrepreneuriales et assurer le transfert des résultats de la recherche et à les mettre sur le marché.

La politique de l'État visant l'encouragement des initiatives entrepreneuriales doit être renforcée et structurée autour de priorités sectorielles de recherche. Cette implication prend la forme d'incitations diversifiées et ciblées, notamment les réformes administratives et législatives ainsi que la création des institutions appropriées, qui soutiennent le financement des activités entrepreneuriales innovantes (Mani 2011) ainsi que dans les stades d'amorçage, de développement de produits, en passant par la phase de prototype. La politique publique doit aussi supporter le transfert des résultats de la recherche vers le marché, notamment en développant les dispositifs réglementaires, juridiques, mais aussi de soutien financier à l'innovation et à la R&D (Autio *et al.* 2014). Cette vision implique le financement privé pérenne en apportant un soutien substantiel (espaces, équipements, structures d'incubation ou d'accélération, mentorat, conseil, financement...) contribuant ainsi à la création de valeur économique et d'emplois.

Le système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant performant doit mettre en avant la relation symbiotique entre le triptyque entrepreneuriat, innovation et développement en soutenant les synergies possibles et les complémentarités potentielles entre acteurs du système (Ben Slimane, Mhenni, 2020). Dans cette perspective, l'interaction entre les différents composants du système devrait contribuer à relever le défi du transfert des connaissances vers le marché, de créer de nouvelles opportunités entrepreneuriales innovantes, et les spécialisations scientifiques et technologiques renforçant l'employabilité et la compétitivité du système national d'entrepreneuriat innovant.

Conclusion : vers une expansion européenne

Les bouleversements structurels et opérationnels inhérents de ce contexte de crise appellent à l'inévitable nécessité de renforcer le système d'enseignement, de recherche et d'innovation, dans une perspective de définition des spécialisations françaises du futur ainsi qu'aux investissements qui en découlent. Cette réflexion ne doit pas être dissociée du plan européen de la recherche et de l'innovation (2021 à 2027) visant à développer des clusters d'enseignement supérieur, de recherche et d'innovation européens multidisciplinaires, axés sur des domaines stratégiques qui se veulent stratégiques, innovants et inclusifs en tenant compte des questions sociétales environnementales et technologiques. L'objectif étant de renforcer l'identité européenne et son positionnement dans la recherche et l'innovation, d'assurer la compétitivité de l'Europe.

Cette approche globale doit être précédée d'une démarche nationalement localisée, qui renforce la performance d'un système nationale d'entrepreneuriat innovant et qui soit en cohérence avec la double identité euro-française, pour pouvoir bénéficier un système de partenaires élargis permettant pour assurer le transfert d'idées sur le marché et pour soutenir le développement des activités d'entrepreneuriat innovant en Europe.

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[Ruée sur les ressources ou préservation des biens communs ? Deux scénarios de gestion des ressources dans l'Anthropocène

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Abstract

La pandémie du covid est appréhendée par beaucoup d'experts comme l'un des symptômes de l'Anthropocène, cette nouvelle ère caractérisée par l'impact structurant des activités humaines sur la dynamique de nos écosystèmes. Alors que l'anthropocène va accélérer les pressions et les crises sur le patrimoine naturel, comment nos systèmes économiques et managériaux vont-ils intégrer les ressources naturelles ? Deux scénarii s'offrent à nous : une accélération des dynamiques prédatrices, d'accaparement des ressources naturelles menant à une accélération de la crise écologique et un accroissement radical des inégalités, ou un choix politique et délibéré d'adoption d'un modèle sobre en consommation d'énergie et ressources, préservant notre milieu et pensant les communs.

Mots clés : Anthropocène, Covid, Ecosystème, Economie circulaire, Ressources

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Ruée sur les ressources ou préservation des biens communs ? Deux scénarios de gestion des ressources dans l'Anthropocène

Covid : maladie de l'anthropocène

Si l'épidémie de Covid-19 provoque des effets démesurés et touche de plein fouet les pays du monde entier, l'histoire récente a été marquée par d'autres maladies, HIV, Ebola, grippe aviaire ou SARS, ayant la même origine : la transmission de l'animal à l'homme. Ces maladies sont toutes des zoonoses. Et pour beaucoup d'experts la multiplication des zoonoses ne peut s'expliquer que par l'empreinte croissante des activités humaines sur les écosystèmes naturels : déforestation, extraction des ressources fossiles, surexploitation des sols, etc. Ainsi, le rapport spécial du GIEC (2019) sur le changement climatique et l'utilisation des terres, attire l'attention sur le fait que la destruction des écosystèmes liée à l'extraction de ressources naturelles (minérales, fossiles, agricoles, animales, sylvicoles, etc.) est à l'origine d'épisodes de zoonoses de plus en plus fréquemment transférées aux humains. Le rapport de l'IPBES, l'équivalent du Giec pour la biodiversité, va exactement dans le même sens. Ces constats scientifiques remettent en discussion l'appréhension de la pandémie actuelle comme « invasion microbienne » et suggèrent qu'elle serait plutôt l'une des conséquences de l'« invasion de l'homme » sur les écosystèmes naturels (Shah 2016). Autrement dit, le covid serait une maladie de l'Anthropocène. Théorisé pour la première fois par Paul Josef Crutzen, prix Nobel de Chimie en 1995, l'anthropocène, concept controversé mais puissant, signifie étymologiquement « L'Âge de l'Homme ». Ce serait une nouvelle ère géologique, ayant commencé en 1750 (Révolution Industrielle) et succédant à l'holocène, ère géologique interglaciaire marquée par une stabilité de la température moyenne autour de 15 degrés, durant les 12000 dernières années. Mais depuis la Révolution Industrielle, l'empreinte humaine sur les écosystèmes serait devenue si importante qu'elle produirait une véritable influence géologique sur la biosphère et le système terrestre. Certains auteurs parlent de « Capitalocène » pour pointer du doigt le mode de développement capitaliste et extractiviste basé sur l'exploitation des ressources par des grosses firmes qui seraient ainsi à l'origine des dysfonctionnements écosystémiques observés (Bonneuil 2017). Les zoonoses apparaissent comme l'une des multiples conséquences engendrées sur les écosystèmes naturels par l'extraction et l'exploitation débridées de ressources naturelles, propres aux modèles économiques dominants (Bednik 2019). L'anthropocène est aussi marqué par la connectivité et l'internationalisation des systèmes économiques, qui s'incarnent dans des chaînes de valeur globales structurées par les gisements de ressources naturelles, de compétences et la disponibilité de main d'œuvre à bas coût. Cette connectivité internationale a évidemment favorisé la propagation rapide du virus à l'échelle mondiale.

Alors que l'anthropocène va accélérer les pressions et les crises sur le patrimoine naturel mais aussi la diffusion de ces crises dans les sociétés, comment la crise du covid-19 va-t-elle transformer notre rapport aux ressources naturelles ?

Des tendances déjà visibles

D'ores et déjà, certaines tendances de fond semblent se dessiner sur la dynamique du capitalisme mondial post-covid. En premier lieu, grandes entreprises et Etats ont pris conscience que l'organisation internationale de la production en flux tendus sur des chaînes de valeur globales ne font pas que créer de l'optimisation économique. Elles sont

aussi source de fragilité et créent de nouveaux rapports de dépendance entre pays et entreprises. On doit ainsi s'attendre à ce qu'Etats mais aussi entreprises tirent cette leçon de la crise, cherchent à réduire leur exposition à de tels risques d'approvisionnement et à accroître leur contrôle sur les ressources, énergétiques par exemple, et leur souveraineté alimentaire.

Ensuite, il semble que nous entrons dans une nouvelle ère en matière de relations internationales : alors même que la crise nécessiterait une coordination internationale plus forte –ainsi qu'une aide internationale pour accompagner les pays les plus faibles-, on assiste au contraire à une remise en question de la légitimité et du financement de l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé par les Etats-Unis et d'autres pays. Sous fond de montée des logiques nationalistes à l'œuvre depuis plusieurs années, on peut s'attendre à voir se généraliser des formes d'action étatiques plus interventionnistes, dans un contexte international moins prévisible, moins coordonné et moins « libéralisé » sur le plan économique, avec des logiques plus régionales, bilatérales, voire nationales.

Troisième tendance : des ressources aujourd'hui encore abondantes –donc peu coûteuses, bien qu'évidemment menacées-, tels que le bois, l'eau, l'énergie ou le sable vont devenir rares dans les prochaines décennies. Est-ce un avenir si lointain ? Difficile à dire précisément, mais les tensions sur de nombreuses ressources sont déjà visibles. L'exemple des terres rares, indispensable pour l'industrie électronique et les énergies vertes est désormais bien documenté. Le sable, omniprésent dans notre vie quotidienne (il est essentiel pour de multiples secteurs tels que la construction ou la verrerie), est la seconde ressource la plus exploitée au monde après l'eau, mais sa disponibilité est de plus en plus menacée par une demande internationale croissante : le sable du désert, disponible en grande quantité, est inexploitable car trop lisse. Différentes sources alertent d'une pénurie, alors que les extractions maritimes menacent les côtes comme les écosystèmes, tandis que des mafias du sable se développent dans différents pays (Hackney et al. 2019).

Si les contraintes liées aux ressources naturelles sont amenées à se renforcer dans les années qui viennent, comment allons-nous gérer la rareté et repenser notre relation aux ressources? Pour prolonger le questionnement de Bruno Latour (2017), la question à laquelle nous sommes confrontés à l'heure de l'anthropocène est « où atterrir ? » et surtout « comment atterrir » ? Imaginons deux scénarios fictionnels, à l'horizon 2035, de prise en compte des ressources naturelles dans un monde post-covid.

Scénario 1 : Comme avant, en pire... Tensions et ruée sur les ressources

Pour lutter contre la crise économique et sociale liée au Covid, l'immense majorité des Etats a cherché à relancer la consommation et redémarrer leur économie en s'appuyant sur les modèles de croissance déjà éprouvés. Venant au secours des industries les plus durement affectées par la crise dont le poids économique était considérable, entreprises et Etats ont plus ou moins consciemment cherché à ressusciter les modèles de croissance passés, à forte intensité énergétique et favorisant le renouvellement toujours plus rapide des produits, dans une logique d'innovation intensive. Si ces actions ne sont pas parvenues à relancer durablement la croissance et la consommation, elles ont fait repartir à la hausse la consommation d'énergie mondiale et la pression sur les ressources, accentuée par la poursuite de l'accroissement démographique au niveau global.

En se heurtant de plus en plus violemment aux limites planétaires, les modes de croissance n'ont fait qu'accroître les pressions anthropiques sur les écosystèmes. Cette érosion accélérée de la nature et la multiplication de crises climatiques a pris des proportions telles

que c'est l'habitabilité de la planète est remise en question dans plusieurs parties du globe. D'un point de vue économique, la période a été marquée par un grand mouvement d'appropriation des ressources naturelles. En effet, à chaque fois qu'il n'existait pas de substitut à une ressource indispensable aux besoins fondamentaux (eau, bois, sable, ressources agricole, terres rares), la rareté croissante des ressources a rendu leur accès toujours plus stratégique, générant des dynamiques de compétition entre firmes mais aussi entre Etats pour sécuriser leurs approvisionnements et/ou bénéficier d'un effet de rente. Guerre diplomatique et guerre économique se sont progressivement confondues, avec un retour à des formes d'interventionnisme public plus fort au sein des entreprises, se traduisant par des nationalisations ou des logiques d'influence beaucoup plus affirmées que de par le passé.

On a aussi assisté à un déplacement des gisements de valeur vers l'amont des chaînes de production, à l'exact opposé du processus que l'on avait observé depuis deux à trois décennies dans les pays occidentaux, qui avaient vu la plupart des entreprises se délester de leurs actifs productifs pour alléger leur bilan et se focaliser sur des activités immatérielles (gestion de marque, marketing et réseau de distribution).

L'économie est ainsi progressivement devenue rationnée par des ressources de plus en plus limitées, concentrées par un nombre limité de firmes et d'Etats. Dans cette économie de l'offre rationnée par la disponibilité décroissante de ressources naturelles, les entreprises gagnantes sont désormais celles qui contrôlent les ressources naturelles. Sous l'influence de l'explosion des prix de matières premières indispensables, la situation devient évidemment de plus en plus inégalitaire et conflictuelle, entre individus, groupes sociaux et Etats. En 2035, la sobriété est subie pour la grande majorité, pendant que les derniers puissants s'offrent une dernière danse, de plus en plus couteuse.

Scenario 2 : atterrir dans l'anthropocène : résilience, sobriété en ressource et préservation des communs naturels

Covid 19 a été le déclencheur d'une prise de conscience de l'extrême vulnérabilité de nos systèmes économiques, sociaux et naturels. Rapidement, plusieurs Etats à travers le globe se sont lancés dans un plan ambitieux visant à réduire l'exposition à ces nouveaux risques. Relançant une stratégie industrielle ambitieuse, ils poursuivaient deux objectifs clairs : regagner en souveraineté sur tous les aspects vitaux des systèmes économiques (ce qui impliquait de relocaliser), mais aussi dé-carboner l'énergie et inventer des modèles beaucoup plus sobres en ressource. Des activités ont été relocalisées notamment dans le champ de l'agriculture et des matières premières, mais pas à l'identique. A côté du sacro-saint PIB, les décideurs publics et privés ont rapidement intégré un nouvel indicateur pour orienter leurs choix tout en intégrant les risques : *l'indice de résilience*. Conçu par un panel interdisciplinaire regroupant biologistes, climatologues, écologistes, sociologues, gestionnaires et experts en géopolitique, cet *indice de résilience* mesure l'exposition des économies et sociétés aux risques de l'anthropocène.

Des modèles plus soutenables, jusqu'alors embryonnaires, sont devenus la norme. Anticipant des crises sur les ressources, entreprises et Etat ont réorganisé l'économie autour de principes circulaires, visant la sobriété et l'économie de la ressource. La diffusion de ces nouveaux modèles, conçus en opposition au capitalisme linéaire, extractiviste et énergivore, ont permis de gagner du temps et contenir les crises sur les ressources et leurs impacts environnementaux et sociaux. Bien sûr, cela ne s'est pas fait sans heurts et il a fallu une action volontariste, hiérarchiser les priorités, et procéder à des arbitrages difficiles afin

d'organiser la sobriété. La création d'une fiscalité pour la transition pour les particuliers et les entreprises a été un chantier décisif pour taxer l'usage de certaines ressources, financer les investissements nécessaires et rendre la transition acceptable socialement. Un revenu de transition écologique a été introduit pour repenser la justice sociale dans un contexte de raréfaction des ressources et d'augmentation du prix de l'énergie et des transports, potentiellement explosifs d'un point de vue social.

Au terme de ce changement douloureux mais indispensable, des secteurs entiers se sont transformés : la possession d'une voiture particulière est souvent trop coûteuse pour la plupart des ménages. Désormais la norme est la location et la mutualisation. Le secteur du bâtiment s'est massivement orienté vers la rénovation thermique des logements. Des secteurs entiers, tels que le numérique ou les transports ont été réorientés pour organiser la sobriété. L'agriculture s'est réorganisée autour des principes d'agro-écologie, de permaculture, ou d'autres approches moins intensives en ressources. La création de *boucles technologiques* locales a aussi permis de penser une économie « post chaînes de valeur globales », pour repenser territorialement des secteurs clés (santé, électronique, habillement, mobilier). Cette nouvelle industrialisation territoriale, qui doit encore réduire son intensité énergétique, se caractérise par de nouveaux gisements d'emploi liés à l'entretien, la réparation des objets, le reconditionnement et le recyclage des matières premières et des produits.

Ces transformations n'ont pas eu lieu de manière homogène. Au niveau international, les pressions sur les ressources et les écosystèmes n'ont pas disparu, elles ont ralenti, et c'est déjà énorme car cela permet de préserver l'habitabilité de la planète et de limiter les conflits géopolitiques. Tous les pays et entreprises n'ont pas adopté ces modèles au même rythme, mais ceux qui l'ont fait se sont rapidement trouvés moins exposés aux crises sociales et environnementales que leurs voisins restés dans l'ancien paradigme. Progressivement, pays et entreprises ont emboîté le pas pour adopter les nouveaux modèles. Au niveau international, l'« *alliance pour l'anthropocène* » s'est constituée pour relancer la coopération internationale et lui donner un cadre commun : après avoir formalisé un ensemble de règles, de lois et de règles de marché favorisant un usage plus raisonné des ressources, les pays membres ont établi un cadre afin de gérer solidairement les « *maux communs* » (pandémies, *ocean plastics*, réchauffement climatique, etc.). Enfin, ils ont lancé une initiative de refonte du droit des biens communs globaux, afin de préserver les écosystèmes et la biodiversité et les faire sortir du périmètre marchand. Finalement, une nouvelle vision de la ressource fait son chemin : non plus seulement perçue et gérée comme un bien appropriable, mais comme un bien commun inaliénable à préserver.

Pour atterrir... refonder les institutions économiques, le droit et le concept de ressource

Ces scénarios sont fictifs. En tant que tels, plutôt que de s'inscrire dans une logique réellement prédictive, ils ont vocation à aider à se projeter dans des futurs possibles.

Le scénario 1, qui s'inscrit comme une dystopie, semble malheureusement le plus probable au vu des mécanismes actuels de relance de l'économie pour faire face à la crise économique et sociale post-covid. Le scénario 2 dresse une voie plus souhaitable mais utopique. Dès lors comment rendre l'utopie possible et par où commencer ?

Les conditions sont multiples, mais on peut identifier plusieurs priorités. La première urgence est de réformer nos institutions économiques, et en particulier notre vision et nos

outils de mesure du progrès. Nos institutions politiques, financières et sociales sont toutes structurées autour du dogme de la croissance du PIB, indicateur dont Kuznets (son créateur) avait lui-même pointé les nombreuses limites. Le PIB ne prend aucunement en compte les atteintes au patrimoine naturel, puisqu'il comptabilise l'épuisement des ressources naturelles et leur gaspillage comme une création de valeur. De même il est complètement aveugle à l'exposition aux risques de l'anthropocène (Raworth 2017). Pour « redécouvrir le sens des limites » (Papaux et Bourg 2010), il est indispensable de changer de lunettes et enrichir la vision d'autres indicateurs (O'Neill et al. 2018). Un indice synthétique de résilience aux risques de l'anthropocène reste à inventer, mais il devrait s'agir d'un chantier prioritaire pour refonder notre relation aux ressources dans un monde post-covid. De tels indicateurs ne doivent pas rester uniquement le fait des gouvernants, mais doivent également être déclinés au niveau de l'entreprise, au cœur de la pensée stratégique et du pilotage des organisations.

Le deuxième enjeu est d'orienter le marché, et de ne pas penser que le marché « libre » pourrait répondre aux enjeux d'épuisement des ressources. En effet, le marché ne valorise que la rareté des ressources, pas leur préservation, et encore moins leur restauration. Cette différence est fondamentale : lorsqu'une ressource massivement exploitée devient rare, c'est que son niveau de dégradation est très avancé. Inutile alors de croire que le seul mécanisme du marché permettra de restaurer les stocks de ressource, qui s'inscrivent dans des durées biologiques ou géologiques qui n'ont souvent rien à voir avec l'horizon de temps du marché (il suffit de songer que plusieurs centaines d'années sont nécessaires à la composition d'un grain de sable par le mécanisme d'érosion). Tout au plus le marché permet-il de faire émerger des substituts, lorsque ceux-ci existent ou peuvent-être développés.

Enfin, un troisième enjeu est de repenser des mécanismes de gouvernance internationale et de transformer le cadre juridique institutionnel de l'environnement. L'aboutissement d'un tel processus, indéniablement complexe et ambitieux, implique un véritable changement d'appréhension de la notion même de ressource, en tant que bien commun et l'abandon du biais anthropocentrique dans notre relation à la nature (Descola 2015).

Au-delà des mesures portées par un renforcement du rôle de l'état et des régulations aux différentes échelles géographiques, la gouvernance de l'entreprise semble également devoir être repensée au-delà du modèle dominant de la gouvernance actionnariale. Celle-ci se traduit en effet par une logique d'appropriation de la valeur par l'actionnaire au détriment d'autres parties prenantes, plus locales et inscrites dans des territoires, ayant un intérêt à la préservation des ressources locales. Le rôle des gouvernances hybrides, coopératives, associations, entreprises familiales avec une inscription dans le long terme et en quête d'une performance résolument multidimensionnelle et multi-parties prenantes sera de plus en plus déterminant.

Conclusion

Avec sa promesse d'identifier des modèles économiques profitables plus efficaces en ressources, l'économie circulaire a connu un très fort engouement au cours de ces dernières années dans les milieux économiques et politiques. L'économie circulaire a ainsi permis l'identification de modèles innovants et prometteurs. Pour autant ces modèles restent embryonnaires et opèrent à une échelle qui n'est pas à la hauteur des enjeux actuels.

L'exercice de projection initié dans cet article nous permet, par le recours à la fiction, d'avancer deux messages. D'abord, pour généraliser l'économie circulaire et la sobriété en

ressources, il manque aujourd'hui à l'économie circulaire une réelle armature institutionnelle, une colonne vertébrale faites de lois et d'indicateurs de mesure intégrés au cœur du pilotage des entreprises et des systèmes économiques.

Deuxièmement, l'économie circulaire est souvent définie comme une économie de la ressource. Il faut cependant se questionner sur le futur de l'économie circulaire dans un monde post-covid, dans lequel les problématiques d'accès aux ressources vont devenir de plus en plus fortes. L'économie circulaire deviendra-t-elle une économie de la « rareté des ressources », au risque d'accentuer la course à l'accaparement et à la prédation, ou une économie de la « préservation des ressources », qui promeut les biens communs tant au niveau global que local ?

Ces différents éléments convergent vers l'idée que dans un monde post-covid, l'horizon de l'économie circulaire change : au-delà de l'identification de *business models*, c'est la transformation de nos institutions économiques, managériales et sociales qui est en jeu. C'est à ce prix que l'économie circulaire pourra nous aider à éviter un atterrissage d'urgence ou un crash dans l'anthropocène, et inventer les conditions d'un atterrissage négocié.

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[Entre terreur et idéalisation, une analyse de la crise déclenchée par le Covid19

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Résumé

La terridéalité désigne un système psychique collectif, alliance de terreur et d'idéalisation engendrant une pseudo-réalité fantasmatique. En postulant qu'elle structure la société hypermoderne, comment s'exprime-t-elle dans la crise déclenchée par le Covid19 ? Cette analyse ouvre des possibilités d'influer consciemment sur deux perspectives divergentes, ou une destructivité accrue, ou bien un avenir collectivement plus vivable.

Mots-clés : Terreur, Idéalisation, Terridéalité, Crise, Délibération

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Entre terreur et idéalisation, une analyse de la crise déclenchée par le Covid-19

Une analyse de la crise sous le prisme de la terridéalité

Les phénomènes inconscients traversent les individus, les groupes, les organisations et la société toute entière. L'extension de la psychanalyse (Kaës, 2015) aux organisations (Arnaud, Vidaillet et Fugier, 2018) s'appuie sur ce constat. En particulier, cette approche permet de comprendre le burn-out comme symptôme d'un ensemble de processus subjectifs reliant les individus, les groupes et les organisations.

Cet ensemble, nommé terridéalité (Pelletier, 2019), est le résultat de la théorisation par la grounded theory de données d'accompagnement de personnes en burn-out, individuellement et collectivement. Il offre une synthèse d'une véritable « fabrique du burn-out », ce dernier syndrome étant posé comme symptôme d'un ensemble de processus complexes reliant des dimensions individuelle, relationnelle et organisationnelle.

Ce concept de terridéalité désigne une alliance entre terreur et idéalisation, qui engendre une pseudo-réalité dont le chiffre est le totem, cachant la réalité devenue tabou. Dépassant largement la problématique du burn-out, ces résultats convergent avec les dynamiques structurantes de la société hypermoderne (Aubert et al., 2004).

Si nous partons du postulat qu'un tel système terridéale structure notre société prise dans cette crise du Covid-19, quelles en sont les expressions et qu'apporte cette analyse ?

Mobilisons à cet effet trois niveaux d'analyse successifs : celui des tabou et totem révélés par cette crise ; celui des trois composantes structurant cette terridéalité ; enfin, celui des voies de dégageant ouvertes par la destabilisation de ce système, mobilisant l'intelligence collective et en particulier les espaces de délibération dans les organisations.

Entre tabou et totem, une illusion pour cacher notre vulnérabilité

La terridéalité se manifeste par une pseudo-réalité, une illusion dont la fonction est de cacher un tabou, derrière le totem du chiffre. Dans cette crise, le tabou semble bel et bien la vulnérabilité des corps humains confrontés à la maladie et à la mort. Si cette réalité n'est pas nouvelle, intéressons-nous à la manière dont la société s'en défend, individuellement et collectivement, dans cette crise.

Le covid-19 affectant la santé humaine, la médecine est centrale ici, à la fois en tant que rempart contre cette réalité, comme discipline scientifique, industrie et organisation de soins structurée à de multiples échelles.

Avant cette crise, l'organisation des soins a été l'objet de restructurations, suivant des logiques gestionnaires administrées par des chiffres servant des objectifs de rentabilité. Dans ce paradigme, les questions de relation de soin et de souffrance, des personnels comme des patients, étaient d'autant moins audibles qu'il était difficile d'en rendre compte. En parallèle, la médecine comme discipline a vu ses scientifiques mis en concurrence mondiale, dépêchés d'obtenir des résultats en des temps compatibles avec des exigences chiffrées de rentabilité, au risque de minimiser celles liées au métier. Quant à l'industrie du médicament, elle a suivi la dynamique de production mondialisée à moindre coût, ses

enjeux vitaux ayant été sous-estimés. Le chiffre est ainsi devenu hégémonique en médecine.

Dans un système terridéal, le chiffre est érigé comme totem, dont la fonction est de cacher une réalité. Ici, il pourrait s'agir de se défendre de la vulnérabilité humaine, celle des patients, des personnels soignants, des scientifiques dont le métier repose sur l'incertitude et non sur l'affirmation, mais aussi des productions délocalisées dans des conditions de travail et de transport aux impacts minimisés.

Cette crise révèle notre vulnérabilité. Elle nous y confronte de manière soudaine et brutale. Tous les protagonistes s'en trouvent dépassés, voire désorganisés. Notre vulnérabilité nous terrifie. Nous n'y sommes plus habitués, ayant pour habitude de gérer les malades par l'hôpital et les personnes âgées par les EHPAD. Quant aux personnes handicapées, malgré les discours, elles peinent à trouver une place dans la société.

Cette vulnérabilité soudainement visible engendre de la terreur, plus ou moins consciente, face à laquelle le besoin d'idéalisation constitue une défense puissante (Eiguer, 1995). Dans cette crise, il se porte tout naturellement sur les personnels soignants, mais aussi sur les Professeurs en médecine se devant trouver des solutions dans l'urgence, quitte à ne pas tout à fait respecter leurs règles de métier. Dans cette alliance entre terreur et idéalisation, nous pouvons continuer à nous croire protégés, mais cela pourrait ne pas durer.

Une économie sociopsychique de la destructivité : analyse du pire

D'un point de vue managérial comme sociétal, cette illusion collective a un coût. Elle nécessite la projection de cet idéal sur des héros. Il leur est demandé de nous sauver, au risque de leur vie, mais surtout en dépassant - ce qui caractérise les héros - leurs limites les plus élémentaires. Si cette illusion a une fonction sociétale de réassurance, elle ne peut tenir que pendant un temps limité, une telle assignation relayée médiatiquement les mettant en danger personnellement.

En effet, de tels héros, dont la fonction est d'être porteurs de l'idéalisation pour un groupe, risquent, quand ils ne peuvent plus assumer cette fonction sociale par nature surhumaine, de devenir des porteurs du négatif. D'un point de vue personnel individuel, ils peuvent tomber de haut, tel Icare, dans des burn-outs ou autres décompensations. Se sentant alors coupables d'avoir failli, mais surtout dénonçant - à leur corps défendant - cette illusion d'absence de limites, ils risquent de devenir, d'un point de vue social collectif, des boucs-émissaires. Ils en étaient d'ailleurs proches avant cela, leurs revendications étant ignorées, alors qu'ils étaient déjà en sous-effectif chronique et souffraient de burn-out dans des proportions élevées.

Plus encore, dans cette dynamique terridéale faite d'idéalisation défensive produisant des boucs-émissaires, des scandales, sanitaires, politiques ou autres, commencent à émerger et pourraient prendre de l'ampleur. Ce processus, connu depuis la nuit des temps, permet à un groupe social de décharger la violence qu'il ne parvient pas à transformer sur quelques individus, sans remettre en question ce qui l'a engendrée. Le système s'en trouve ainsi autoalimenté, la projection de la violence alimentant la terreur comme l'idéalisation, ce qui engendre une radicalisation de toutes les défenses. Elles empêchent de transformer la destructivité (Bion, 1965), d'où la nécessité de projeter la violence que celle-ci génère, etc.

La terridéalité constitue une emprise psychique collective dont il est très difficile de sortir, tant ses différentes composantes viennent se compléter pour fermer le système. Il s'agit

d'une véritable économie psychique, inconsciente et collective, qui fait commerce de la destructivité en la faisant croître (Pelletier, 2019). Les désignations de ces trois composantes sont : paranoïde, perverse et cryptique. Quand le système est particulièrement agissant, elles deviennent patentes. Passer par cette analyse du pire s'avère, dans un second temps, propice à l'identification de modalités permettant de s'en dégager.

La composante paranoïde de la terridéalité se caractérise par des discours tout en positivité et la projection du négatif sur certaines personnes. Elle s'inscrit dans la toute-puissance des idées, au mépris de la réalité. Son injonction inconsciente¹⁵⁰ caractéristique est « L'idéal, c'est toujours plus ». La composante perverse se caractérise par l'injonction « Ce qui compte, c'est le compteur ». Le chiffre, érigé comme totem, permet toutes formes d'instrumentalisations, y compris des relations. Quant à la composante cryptique, elle a pour fonction d'évacuer le négatif pour le groupe social. Porteuse de l'injonction « Tout doit disparaître, dans une accélération spatiale et temporelle », elle nécessite la consommation de victimes, réduites à l'impuissance ou à la toute-puissance.

Après une période de début de crise, marquée par une certaine sidération face à l'inconnu menaçant, ces composantes risquent de gagner en puissance, isolément et en faisant système.

La composante paranoïde pourrait s'exprimer par une destructivité projetée par certains sur des dirigeants, dans une toute-puissance des idées refaisant l'histoire a posteriori. Ces derniers pourraient être tentés de déréguler le travail, dans un idéal de retour rapide à l'équilibre économique, au risque de mépriser à nouveau la réalité des besoins psychocorporels et sociaux des individus, comme leur vulnérabilité. De même, la surveillance généralisée des individus, justifiée par des raisons sanitaires et étayant une méfiance banalisée, pourrait alimenter une terreur diffuse alimentant toutes formes de violences et de radicalisations, justifiant plus encore cette surveillance. Dans le management, le travail à distance peut renforcer une méfiance qui était déjà là, chez le manager comme chez le managé, imposant a contrario de rétablir certaines garanties et modalités de dialogue nécessaires à la confiance. D'un point de vue international, des comportements paranoïdes de projection de la faute, sur les chinois par exemple, se sont déjà exprimés. Ces accusations pourraient accentuer des risques quant à l'organisation de la production de médicaments, par exemple. Dans cette dynamique de fuite en avant déresponsabilisante, des coupables seront nécessairement désignés, dans des décharges alimentant plutôt la crise et pouvant s'inscrire dans une stratégie de cynisme pervers (Eiguer, 1995) anticipant sur des enjeux commerciaux.

La composante perverse instrumentalise la destructivité pour produire du chiffre. Au niveau des individus, elle se nourrit de la sidération. Celle-ci entrave la capacité de penser, d'être en liens et de percevoir intimement des ressentis essentiels à l'empathie. Peut alors proliférer une pensée d'emprunt (Dejours, 2009), forme de prêt-à-penser instrumentalisant, y compris dans les relations. Ces dernières servent alors des fins narcissiques, voire de divertissement plus ou moins mortifère. Au niveau sociétal, cela peut se traduire par des niveaux d'audience élevée des médias, qui informent sans apporter de profondeur dans les analyses et les controverses. Les divertissements prolifèrent également, offrant un repli d'autant plus rassurant qu'il confisque le sentiment de vulnérabilité, confiné ailleurs. Au nom de la survie économique, des comportements opportunistes sont également à

¹⁵⁰ Ce terme d'injonction inconsciente désigne une obligation implicite transmise par l'environnement et s'exerçant sur le sujet de manière inconsciente. Il s'agit d'un processus à l'interface entre psychologie et sociologie, restituant une intrication sociopsychique.

craindre, dans une spéculation sur les produits de première nécessité, ce qui risquerait de creuser les inégalités et l'inflation de la violence. De ce point de vue, si les chiffres concernaient dans un premier temps sur le nombre de morts, de manière quasi exclusive et théâtralisée, commencent à émerger des données socio-économiques plutôt assourdissantes. Dès lors, des décisions managériales de suppression d'effectifs pourraient saisir l'opportunité de cette crise, au-delà des situations réelles, pour s'imposer de manière péremptoire et dérégulée, ce qui commence déjà à être annoncé. Enfin, dans le secteur sanitaire mondialisé, si des médicaments ou des vaccins sont trouvés, comment seront-ils commercialisés, vers quelles populations prioritaires et à quels prix, au sein des pays et entre eux ? En l'absence de consensus préalable, dont le bénéfice est de faciliter toutes les formes de dérégulation de ce marché - prometteur - de l'invulnérabilité, cette question pourrait engendrer des réactions en chaînes de surenchère paranoïde. Les attaques frontales contre l'OMS pourraient participer de cette dynamique de prise de pouvoir générant à la fois toute-puissance et impuissance.

Quant à la **composante cryptique**, elle a pour fonction d'évacuer le négatif pour le groupe, dans une consommation de victimes et de boucs-émissaires qui alimente la dynamique générale, par la terreur et l'idéalisation défensive. Au-delà même des victimes directes et des populations à risques, cette dynamique creuse les inégalités. Ainsi, les personnes les plus durement impactées étaient déjà défavorisées, dans des logements invivables, exposés à la contagion par leurs métiers et par une santé publique défaillante en matière de prévention. Pour le management, se pose aussi un certain nombre de questions liées à cette composante : comment de ne pas pénaliser les personnels à risques en respectant la confidentialité des questions de santé, comment de ne pas surcharger des parents isolés sans qu'ils se sentent menacés de licenciement, comment éviter les règlements de compte et les boucs-émissaires, toutes formes de violences ordinaires dont les enjeux sont démultipliés par cette crise ? Si ces enjeux sont perçus individuellement, ils impactent aussi fortement l'organisation. En effet, la terreur d'être supprimé de l'organisation peut inciter les sujets à travailler plus, mais elle empêche leurs capacités à mobiliser de l'intelligence collective, ainsi que des capacités d'adaptation, de créativité et d'innovation, pourtant indispensables en temps de crise. Il est d'ailleurs aisé de distinguer d'une part les organisations qui ont pu mobiliser de la créativité pour répondre à l'urgence, et d'autre part celles dont les salariés se sont retranchés dans le confinement, notamment faute de disposer de conditions managériales et organisationnelles indispensables à toute prise d'initiative.

Le système formé de ces trois composantes engendre une économie sociopsychique de la destructivité dont nous avons exploré quelques expressions, ce qui peut laisser une impression de pessimisme. Pour autant, cette perspective du pire peut laisser émerger une intelligence de la crise dont nous pourrions nous saisir pour créer de nouveaux équilibres.

Comment sortir de cette dynamique terridale ?

Cette analyse des processus sociopsychiques exacerbés dans cette crise nous engage à tenter de sortir de cette économie de la destructivité. Supposons un instant que cette conjoncture ait du sens, quelle intelligibilité pourrions-nous lui accorder pour être à même d'améliorer la situation qui lui succédera, par rapport à celle qui l'a précédée ?

La pandémie actuelle nous invite à reconsidérer un certain nombre des six injonctions porteuses de terridéalité, pourtant solidement établies dans nos imaginaires collectifs. Là, « *L'idéal, c'est toujours plus* » ne tient plus, du fait des limites imposées notamment aux

déplacements et à la consommation. « *Ce qui compte, c'est le compteur* » s'applique désormais au décompte des décès, plus qu'à la performance, pour le moment. « *Si tu as un problème, tu es un problème* » a laissé la place à l'évidence de l'entraide et du lien social pour tenter de compenser la distanciation physique. Pour autant, tout n'a pas fondamentalement changé, subsiste l'injonction à « *Etre un super-héros, sinon rien* », puisque « *Tout est possible, avec des solutions* ». Mais le système d'emprise ne tient plus tout à fait¹⁵¹.

Dans ce moment de vacillement, cette crise peut nous inviter à ne plus tout attendre de la médecine, préférant assumer en responsabilité la réalité de nos vulnérabilités physiques. Elle nous enseigne à quel point nous avons besoin des relations sociales, combien le temps passé avec nos proches est essentiel et finalement comment la productivité du travail peut ne plus avoir la priorité sur nos vies. Saurons-nous garder quelque chose de cette expérience, quand s'imposera l'injonction à rattraper le temps et l'argent « perdus » ? Comment cette crise peut-elle être source d'apprentissages changeant durablement nos modes de vie et de travail ?

Dans le travail, la menace sanitaire va imposer de modifier bon nombre de pratiques et d'organisations. Cela va nécessiter de recréer des espaces de délibération (Detchessahar, 2013 ; Abord de Chatillon et Desmarais, 2017), y compris à distance, pour s'accorder sur ces changements. De tels espaces constituent aussi de véritables opportunités pour décoloniser nos imaginaires (Weston et Imas, 2017) des injonctions terridéales, pour retrouver des capacités collectives de transformation de la destructivité, par le dialogue, ce qui mobilise des capacités de créativité accrue. Au-delà des chiffres et des discours dont le caractère illusoire se trouve démasqué dans cette crise, il s'agit là d'une opportunité pour retrouver ce qui compte vraiment pour nous, collectivement et durablement.

D'un point de vue managérial, cela nécessite que les personnes puissent exprimer leurs limites singulières et leurs avis, sans craintes que cela ne soit utilisé contre leurs propres intérêts. La période qui va suivre pourra ainsi être l'occasion d'une professionnalisation du management, dans une capacité renouvelée de concertation. Le management à distance pourrait, paradoxalement, en offrir l'opportunité. Il repose sur la capacité des managers à établir les conditions de la confiance, dans l'écoute et le dialogue.

Pour autant, cette période sera caractérisée par une forte tension économique. Elle pourrait aussi voir des formes de violence s'exprimer sans mesure, justifiant de manière dérégulée des réductions d'effectifs, des fermetures de sites et toutes formes de prises de pouvoir opportunistes servant des minorités prédatrices dominantes.

Dans cette période de bifurcation de nos devenirs, gageons que l'intelligence collective saura s'imposer, nous amenant à nous recentrer sur nos enjeux vitaux, individuels et collectifs, présents et futurs, en toute responsabilité.

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¹⁵¹ La sixième injonction est « *Tout doit disparaître, dans une accélération spatiale et temporelle* ». Certains de ses aspects semblent rester agissants, d'autres évoluent, c'est pourquoi elle n'est pas citée ici.

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Pandémie et santé numérique : assurer la sécurité de l'accès aux soins de premier recours

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Abstract

Cet article permet d'apporter des éclairages sur la manière d'assurer la sécurité des soins de premier recours dans un contexte où les pandémies risquent de se succéder. La gestion de la sécurité des patients pendant la crise sanitaire a eu des effets inattendus, notamment celui du développement de la télémédecine en France. Si la téléconsultation s'est montrée efficace en période de pandémie, sa pérennisation, hors crise sanitaire, demeure sujette à discussion.

Mots-clés : Sécurité, Soins premiers recours, Télémédecine, COVID-19, Isolement

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Pandémie et santé numérique : assurer la sécurité de l'accès aux soins de premier recours

Quand le Covid-19 a commencé à se répandre à l'extérieur de Wuhan, puis dans les pays proches de la Chine (Corée du sud, Japon), l'épidémie ne semblait pas si dangereuse en termes de mortalité, ni si invasive. Les autorités sanitaires ont donc réfléchi exclusivement à une stratégie de limitation stricte des cas, dont la prise en charge devait se faire uniquement en milieu hospitalier fermé. Cette phase s'est rapidement trouvée dépassée, et désormais tout repose sur le premier niveau de soins, pour les diagnostics, l'adressage selon un parcours de soin déterminé, l'enquête épidémiologique, et le suivi à domicile des cas ne nécessitant pas de soins de réanimation. Ce premier niveau de soin est donc, pour la première fois depuis longtemps, reconnu comme essentiel pour assurer l'équilibre du système de santé tout entier. Sauf exception, les professionnels ont accepté leur mission, sans équipement de protection, sans traitement spécifique en vue avant plusieurs mois, et sans l'espoir de la mise au point d'un vaccin avant une bonne année. La question de la sécurité reste posée pour les patients et l'ensemble des professionnels de santé, en l'absence de tests diagnostiques disponibles. Nous allons voir que la recherche de la sécurité de l'accès aux soins de premier recours a eu des effets intéressants sur les pratiques médicales.

L'impact de la pandémie sur les soins de premier recours

En France, la peur panique liée à la pandémie du Covid-19 a complètement modifié le comportement des patients. Avant la pandémie, notre système de santé n'étant pas contraignant, les patients ne respectaient pas totalement le point d'accès du système de santé préconisé par les autorités sanitaires. Ce premier point de contact aux soins, appelé soins de premier recours (ou de proximité ou de niveau 1), est effectué principalement par les médecins généralistes et accessoirement par quelques médecins spécialistes (pédiatres, gynécologues et ophtalmologistes) et par d'autres professionnels de santé (infirmières, kinésithérapeutes, podologues). Jusqu'alors, il était fréquent de constater que les patients se rendaient directement à l'hôpital (niveau 3) plutôt que d'aller consulter un médecin de ville (niveau 1). Deux raisons pouvaient expliquer ces pratiques. La première est d'ordre économique. Les médecins généralistes ne pratiquant que rarement le tiers payant, les populations défavorisées privilégient l'hôpital et notamment les services d'urgence où aucune contribution financière n'est réclamée avant un mois en moyenne. La deuxième raison est de l'ordre de la permanence des soins. Les médecins généralistes n'assurant pas systématiquement de garde la nuit en dehors des jours ouvrables, en cas de détresse les patients préfèrent se rendre directement aux services d'urgence d'un établissement de santé. Or depuis l'apparition de la pandémie, nous constatons non seulement une désaffection des services d'urgences, mais aussi des soins de premier recours pour l'ensemble de la population, à l'exception des patients atteints par le COVID-19. Selon Nicolas Revel, le directeur général de la Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie, une baisse spectaculaire de 40 % de l'activité des médecins généralistes libéraux a été observée lors des trois dernières semaines de confinement.

Les conséquences de ce comportement en termes de santé publique sont inquiétantes. Les actions de prévention, telles que par exemple, les programmes de vaccination des jeunes enfants, ne sont plus réalisées. Les actions de dépistage, notamment pour certains cancers, sont repoussées. De même le suivi des maladies chroniques (diabète, BPCO, ...) n'est plus assuré. Tous ces décalages volontaires contribuent éventuellement à aggraver

dangereusement les pathologies initiales. Il existe néanmoins un point positif à cette conduite irrationnelle des patients. La pandémie a fait prendre conscience à la population que l'hôpital est un lieu où circulent de nombreuses bactéries et virus, et découragera peut-être certains patients à encombrer les services d'urgence pour des pathologies bénignes.

Cette désaffection pour les soins de premier recours a eu un impact économique extrêmement défavorable sur les revenus des professionnels de santé. Les médecins généralistes accusent une perte de recettes très significative due à la baisse des consultations des patients non COVID-19, et concomitamment, une augmentation du coût de la prise en charge des patients Covid-19 due au prix des équipements de protection (masques, sur-blouses, solution hydro-alcoolique principalement), multiplié par un facteur de 4 à 10. Le ministère de la santé, le 29 avril, a mis en place des aides financières destinées à compenser les charges de fonctionnement de ces professionnels de santé. Enfin, plus indirectement, les retards de prévention, de dépistage et de traitement ont contribué à l'augmentation de la gravité des cas traités par les établissements de santé. Ce recours tardif engendre des soins plus complexes et donc plus coûteux. Ce supplément de coût ne sera pas nécessairement totalement indemnisé par l'assurance maladie par le biais d'une modification de la tarification à l'activité (T2A), principal instrument du financement des hôpitaux.

La gestion de la sécurité des patients pendant la crise sanitaire

Les solutions validées épidémiologiquement pour assurer la sécurité des populations sont l'hygiène et l'isolement (Peak C.M., et al 2017).

Il s'agit bien ici de l'isolement physique. Il peut être conçu selon deux principales modalités. La première consiste à aménager un parcours dédié pour les patients (suspects ou avérés) Covid-19 après triage préalable à distance, effectué le plus souvent par un secrétariat téléphonique disposant d'un algorithme de tri. Les flux des patients Covid-19 sont alors séparés des autres patients et suivent une trajectoire prédéterminée et balisée, le plus fréquemment dans des sites dédiés, mais parfois au sein d'un établissement continuant à recevoir d'autres publics. Au pic de la pandémie, nous avons pu voir, par exemple, des structures provisoires dédiées aux consultations implantées dans des parcs et jusqu'à des stades aménagés en hôpitaux pour recevoir les patients Covid-19 à traiter. Cependant cet aménagement de l'espace est relativement coûteux et parfois impossible à réaliser. C'est pourquoi la deuxième modalité d'isolement, consistant à aménager des plages horaires pour chaque catégorie de patients, lui est généralement préférée, et notamment dans les cabinets de soins primaires. En organisant en fin de journée (ou fin de demi-journée) des consultations pour les patients Covid-19, cela laisse le temps d'effectuer un bio-nettoyage complet des lieux pour accueillir sans risque la patientèle autre.

Un nouveau type d'isolement est l'isolement virtuel. Le patient n'est pas physiquement présent mais grâce à l'utilisation des technologies de l'information, il est possible d'assurer une pratique médicale à distance. En France, cette pratique, appelée télé-médecine, est encadrée par la loi HPST (hôpital, Patient, Santé et Territoire) de 2009. Elle comprend les actes de téléconsultation, de télé-expertise, de télésurveillance, de téléassistance et de régulation. Avant la pandémie, les téléconsultations ne représentaient que 2% du total de consultations prises en charge par la sécurité sociale. Cette proportion s'élève à environ 28% dans les pays scandinaves. Pendant la pandémie, les téléconsultations ont connu un formidable essor, passant de 4000 à 80 000 en cinq jours mi-mars et, à 486 369 actes facturés à l'Assurance maladie entre le 23 et le 29 mars (Halimi S., 2020). Durant cette période, 44 % des médecins

généralistes ont réalisé au moins une téléconsultation. Les pouvoirs publics ont certes encouragé cette pratique en signant le décret du 20 mars visant à assouplir les conditions techniques d'utilisation de la téléconsultation (ont été admis tous les logiciels grand-public de transmission de l'image et du son, et même le téléphone) et en proposant des tarifs identiques à ceux des consultations en présentiel. Cependant, ces changements de comportement des professionnels et des patients semblent être surtout imputables à la crainte du virus, car selon le baromètre carnet de santé, réalisé par ODOXA pour la MNH, Le Figaro Santé et France-info, 38% des patients interrogés auraient renoncé aux soins par crainte d'être contaminés (Roy S., 2020).

Les enseignements de la pandémie

Un retour d'expérience exhaustif de cette crise est encore certainement prématuré. Cependant à ce stade, cette pandémie a permis de professionnaliser certaines pratiques. En effet, la recherche de la sécurité des patients a conduit les professionnels à pratiquer des triages systématiques à distance, à raisonner en termes de flux de patients et à les organiser de manière spécifique dans l'espace et dans le temps. Ces réflexions, très utiles, permettront certainement d'améliorer la prise en charge des patients mais auront aussi des effets bénéfiques sur l'organisation et la gestion des cabinets médicaux.

Cependant, l'impact le plus inattendu des mesures de sécurité a été l'élargissement de l'éventail des pratiques médicales par l'essor de la télémédecine et plus particulièrement de la téléconsultation. Nous sommes encore loin des expériences de certains pays scandinaves qui utilisent le potentiel de la télémédecine non seulement comme un outil de tri des patients mais comme un véritable outil de soins. Le Danemark, par exemple, pratique la télémédecine pour permettre le retour à domicile d'enfants prématurés avant l'autonomie de la tétée. Avec cette technique, les parents communiquent régulièrement avec le service de soins intensifs de néonatalogie et renseignent à distance le dossier médical de l'enfant. Sous la direction de l'équipe soignante, les parents sont même capables de repositionner la sonde gastrique de leur enfant.

Néanmoins, en France les pratiques de téléconsultation et de télé-soins se régularisent très vite, et des solutions complètes permettant des transmissions d'images, de documents, de prescriptions, dans des conditions totalement sécurisées et en lien avec le dossier du patient, ont gagné en quelques semaines une popularité inattendue, même pour des consultations de pédiatrie, de gériatrie et de psychiatrie.

Les conditions de pérennisation de la télémédecine

Si les effets de cette pandémie ont permis de vaincre les résistances des patients et des professionnels de santé à l'égard de la télémédecine, les conditions de sa pérennisation restent à définir en fonction de quatre critères : son éligibilité, sa faisabilité technique, son acceptabilité par les publics et sa prise en charge financière.

La télémédecine n'est plus une innovation. Elle est apparue en France, il y a déjà une dizaine d'années. Son timide développement, en particulier comme outil de soin, est dû en partie au coût d'utilisation perçu comme trop important. En effet, de nombreux protocoles prévoient l'envoi d'une infirmière au domicile des patients pour prendre les constantes de ces derniers et réaliser certains actes. Le moment est peut-être opportun pour organiser de nouvelles réunions de consensus visant à établir précisément les critères d'éligibilité des pathologies (stade, risques, modalités de suivi...) qui pourraient être traitées par cette voie singulière.

Un autre frein important au développement de la télémédecine est d'ordre technique, notamment l'absence d'interopérabilité des systèmes d'information des différents acteurs. La résolution de ce dernier point prendra du temps mais n'est pas incontournable : des standards internationaux existent. D'ailleurs quelques sociétés privées marchandes ont réussi à surmonter ces problématiques au point de devenir les leaders de l'organisation de consultation en ligne pendant la crise sanitaire. Doctolib, par exemple, a mis à disposition sa plateforme pour la téléconsultation (Rochette C., 2020). Cependant, elle est uniquement accessible en échange du numéro de carte bancaire du patient mais sans sécurisation par son numéro de sécurité sociale.

L'acceptabilité par les publics de cette nouvelle pratique semble être en bonne voie. Sous la contrainte financière, les professionnels se sont approprié l'outil. Les patients par crainte d'être contaminés ont accepté dans un premier temps des prestations assez basiques telles que le renouvellement d'ordonnances. Puis, un certain nombre d'entre eux ont trouvé l'expérience efficace et rapide au point de la réitérer.

Si les mentalités semblent prêtes au développement de la télémédecine, il reste le point crucial du financement (Ohannessian R., Duong T-A., Odone, A. 2020). En période de crise, les tarifs pratiqués par l'assurance maladie pour la téléconsultation étaient identiques à ceux pour la consultation en présentiel. Les praticiens ont alors pu mesurer, avec l'expérience du quotidien, l'absence de gain en productivité par comparaison avec une consultation « classique » : une téléconsultation nécessite, du fait de son rythme propre et de l'absence d'examen physique (l'infirmière éventuellement présente ne compense pas, et ajoute un coût pour l'assurance maladie) une préparation importante : relecture complète du dossier, de ses pièces attachées (prescriptions, résultats d'examen). Elle est suivie d'échanges documentaires, de l'envoi d'une prescription : la durée totale n'est jamais inférieure à 30 minutes, contre 15 à 20 pour le même acte en face-à-face. Des compléments de rémunération sont à l'étude.

Conclusion

Mise à l'épreuve d'une utilisation en masse, et avec des publics variés, la téléconsultation est en position d'assurer le tri préalable et le suivi de patients. Dans ces deux cas, la téléconsultation s'est montrée efficace en période de pandémie. Si l'analyse des ressources directement engagées ne démontre pas d'avantages économiques à cette pratique par rapport à la consultation en face-à-face, c'est la sécurité de cette approche qui procure un bénéfice partagé :

- Pour les patients, en conservant un accès sans risque de contagion, sans délai notable, à un premier niveau de soin.
- Pour les médecins et les professions associées, en évitant les pertes de production et de recettes résultant d'une possible contamination. Certains médecins suspectés d'être infectés ont pu poursuivre leur activité en la pratiquant à distance.
- Pour le système de santé et l'assurance maladie, en conservant des professionnels de santé en état de poursuivre leurs missions auprès de la population, et donc en diminuant les coûts d'un recours tardif à des soins plus complexes et plus coûteux.

Il est donc certain que cet outil continue de se développer en situation de crise sanitaire. En dehors de ces circonstances, les conclusions doivent être étayées par des études s'attachant à quantifier plus finement ces bénéfices indirects.

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L'loT, moteur d'une société préventive en devenir

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Abstract

En nous plongeant dans une crise économique soudaine et brutale, la crise sanitaire provoquée par le COVID-19 va accélérer le passage d'une société curative vers une société préventive. Dans ce contexte, l'loT (Internet of Things) a un rôle crucial à jouer pour favoriser cette transition.

Mots-clés : loT, Internet of Things, Prévention

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L'IoT, moteur d'une société préventive en devenir

Le COVID-19 nous pousse à réfléchir au manque de préparation à la gestion d'un risque majeur et connu, la pandémie. Les conséquences, qu'elles soient sanitaires (plus de 250 000 morts dans le monde début mai) ou économiques (récession, chômage de masse, faillites d'entreprises, etc.), sont dramatiques.

A la date du 10 mai où nous écrivons ce texte, la Corée du Sud fait figure d'exemple : ce pays est parvenu à protéger la santé de sa population sans recourir au confinement et à préserver son activité économique. Pour ce faire, les pouvoirs publics, en partenariat avec le secteur privé, ont mis en place un dispositif technologique largement adopté par la population qui repose sur une plateforme (*Smart Quarantine Information System*) associée à des solutions connectées IoT (ex : bracelet connecté, caméra à reconnaissance faciale) et alimentée par les données de santé des citoyens collectées par une application mobile dédiée.

Vers une approche préventive

Si la performance des dispositifs et l'exploit technologique sont admirables, le vrai succès est à attribuer à l'adhésion partagée des pouvoirs publics, des entreprises et du peuple coréen à une approche préventive. En effet, les pouvoirs publics ont investi pour la coordination et la mise en œuvre du dispositif, les entreprises du privé ont mis à disposition leurs actifs technologiques et les citoyens ont participé à l'effort collectif en donnant accès à des données très personnelles. Il est vrai que le traumatisme causé par l'épidémie de MERS en 2015, - épidémie qui avait paralysé l'économie sud-coréenne et conduit le gouvernement à débloquer une aide de 18 milliards d'euros -, a joué un rôle déclencheur. Le problème n'était pas de prévoir quand, comment et avec quelle ampleur une nouvelle épidémie aurait lieu mais de prévenir cette éventualité en allant au-devant de risques majeurs pour les éviter.

La Corée du Sud est donc doublement exemplaire : pour sa réponse redoutablement efficace à la crise Covid-19 et pour sa volonté de se transformer vers une société de la prévention. N'est-ce pas là ce que nous pouvons attendre de cette crise ? Qu'elle accélère le passage d'une société curative – subissant et réagissant a posteriori à des événements dont les dommages peuvent être au mieux atténués – vers une société préventive – qui s'organise pour éviter d'être prise au dépourvu ? Société, entreprises ou individus, nous serons tous gagnants. Ne soyons pas pour autant naïfs : il ne s'agit pas de se préparer à toutes les éventualités, mais d'identifier des événements risqués récurrents et néfastes -épidémies ou maladies chroniques, panne ou dysfonctionnement, gaspillage des ressources, pollution, saturation des villes, etc., et d'établir le protocole des actions préventives.

L'IoT, maillon essentiel d'un dispositif à vocation préventive

Dans cette perspective, l'IoT et ses algorithmes prédictifs embarqués nous semblent un maillon essentiel de ce dispositif à vocation préventive grâce à sa connectivité en temps réel, la richesse des données et sa capacité algorithmique. Pour rappel, l'IoT est un système d'échange en temps réel d'informations collectées à partir de capteurs dont sont munis les objets (Things) comme les machines, les robots ou les téléphones. La puissance de l'IoT en général et son pouvoir prédictif en particulier proviennent à la fois de la temporalité des informations disponibles en temps réel, de la richesse des données fournies par les capteurs et par les croisements avec d'autres sources d'information, de leur analyse par des algorithmes et enfin de l'inter-connectivité favorisant l'échange des informations. Les

algorithmes peuvent être plus ou moins sophistiqués et souvent de simples règles logiques (Si ... alors) peuvent suffire pour prévoir avec précision un état et provoquer une action. Par exemple, « Si température > 39° et individu a croisé une personne atteinte du virus au cours des 5 derniers jours, alors individu très probablement contaminé et envoi d'un message ».

L'adoption de solutions s'appuyant sur l'IoT n'a de sens que si l'ensemble des acteurs – entreprises, individus et société – y trouvent un bénéfice. Alors, à quelle création de valeur favorisée par l'IoT peut-on s'attendre en période post Covid ?

Les conséquences économiques de la crise covid-19 sur les entreprises sont gigantesques. Plusieurs semaines de confinement où l'activité s'effondre modifient complètement la donne et obligent les dirigeants à repenser leurs entreprises, les modèles économiques, les moyens de production, la gestion des collaborateurs, etc. Il va falloir retrouver une santé financière, réduire les coûts d'exploitation et optimiser le CAPEX. La crise sera certainement l'occasion de repenser les moyens de production. Pour certains, cela se traduira par une relocalisation des usines situées actuellement en Chine. Pour d'autres historiquement orientés autour d'une production de masse, la crise Covid-19 impose un ralentissement dans la capacité de production. C'est donc l'opportunité d'adopter une nouvelle vision industrielle produisant en quantités limitées, voire à l'unité pour répondre aux besoins de personnalisation des clients, tout en maîtrisant les coûts. Cette mutation s'insère dans une approche préventive via une production plus juste et plus proche des besoins, prévenant ainsi contre le gâchis de marchandises produites en masse et détruites par manque de débouchés. L'industrial IoT (IIoT aussi appelée industrie 4.0) est la technologie qui permettra de résoudre l'équation visant à réduire les coûts tout en produisant en quantités limitées. Automatisation, maintenance prédictive, qui sont au cœur de l'IIoT, permettront d'accroître l'efficacité industrielle. Avant la crise, McKinsey estimait que la maintenance prédictive – reposant sur l'implantation de capteurs connectés et d'algorithmes prédictifs - permettrait aux entreprises de faire des économies substantielles grâce à la réduction des coûts de maintenance évaluée entre 10 à 40%, une réduction du nombre de pannes de moitié et une diminution du montant investi dans les nouvelles machines de 3 à 5% grâce à une durée de vie augmentée.

Pour que les ventes se concrétisent, il va falloir être à l'écoute de des clients en manque de trésorerie et proposer de nouvelles solutions de tarification. Le modèle de tarification à l'usage (*pay per use*) nous semble ainsi particulièrement pertinent. Pour que ce modèle de tarification à l'usage soit réalisable et rentable, il doit s'appuyer sur les technologies de l'IoT, qui assurent premièrement la mesure de l'usage et sa facturation, et deuxièmement la maintenance prédictive de la solution (par exemple, une machine-outil), pour réduire les pannes, allonger sa durée de vie et son utilisation par le client. C'est donc le choix d'un nouveau business model ancré dans le préventif que la crise covid devrait stimuler.

Le COVID a accéléré l'appropriation de nouvelles technologies digitales par les particuliers. Confinés, ils ont découvert multiples utilisations du numérique. Par exemple, Withings a proposé d'utiliser ses montres connectées et ses thermomètres connectés pour suivre l'état de santé des patients à distance. A Wuhan, les robots connectés ont permis de distribuer les médicaments des patients infectés. L'utilisation des applications du type Stopcovid aura pour conséquence de familiariser les particuliers avec des solutions digitales à visée préventive. En bref, la crise est un accélérateur de la transformation digitale des particuliers qui devrait avoir pour conséquence de stimuler l'adoption des objets connectés (encore bien timide avant la crise).

Ainsi, le secteur de la e-santé devrait prendre son envol. La transformation digitale des particuliers devrait permettre un traitement préventif plus efficace des maladies et en particulier des maladies chroniques : diagnostics améliorés, fréquence de suivi augmentée, données additionnelles collectées. Par exemple, grâce au glucomètre connecté, un diabétique peut savoir en temps réel quand il doit s'hydrater ou prendre son traitement basé sur la captation de ses constantes. Aussi, les solutions connectées dans la e-santé permettent aux patients de reprendre le contrôle sur leur santé en gagnant en responsabilisation et en autonomie.

La vulnérabilité des EPHAD pendant la crise incitera sans doute à envisager plus fortement le maintien des personnes âgées à domicile avec des services couplant technologie connectée (e.g. caméra, détecteur de mouvement, capteur de température, etc.) et visites & appels téléphoniques. Par exemple, en France, le dispositif « Mieux vieillir au domicile » proposé par La Poste combine objets connectés et visites du facteur.

Un autre secteur, celui de l'assurance, devrait bénéficier d'une appétence plus marquée par les particuliers pour les objets connectés. En intégrant des appareils connectés de smart home dans les contrats d'assurance habitation, les assureurs pourraient passer d'une approche curative (sinistre-remboursement) à une offre préventive (ex : prévention des fuites, des cambriolages, des incendies) offrant à l'utilisateur un modèle vertueux : économies (sur la prime d'assurance mais aussi sur les dépenses énergétiques), confort (plus d'incidents à gérer) et impact environnemental réduit. Pour les assureurs, cela générerait des revenus additionnels mais consoliderait aussi sa part de marché au moyen d'une relation client renforcé.

Grâce à l'IoT, les pouvoirs publics ont la possibilité de mener leur mission d'intérêt général de manière efficiente. La crise du covid met les villes au cœur de la gestion de la crise. L'exemple de la Corée du Sud montre aussi le rôle central des villes connectées dans le dispositif préventif. Ainsi, l'après covid devrait stimuler les villes à s'équiper en solutions IoT connectées dans la perspective de prévenir les risques majeurs qu'ils soient d'ordre sanitaires, environnementaux ou sociaux. La visée de smart city est de protéger les ressources, qu'elles soient financières ou naturelle, grâce à la prévention et la prédiction. Prenons un seul exemple, celui des transports, l'implémentation de capteurs connectés dans la ville permettrait de réduire le temps de trajet en voiture, de réduire les accidents de 30% et de rendre plus attractif les transports en commun. Au-delà des économies réalisées, l'impact environnemental serait fortement réduit. Plus globalement, la généralisation de l'IoT permettrait aux villes de mettre en place un plan de continuité en cas d'incidents majeurs et de diminuer leur impact. Sans modifier radicalement les modes de consommation, elle permettrait de préserver les ressources naturelles.

Nous avons donc toutes les raisons d'être optimistes sur la généralisation de l'IoT dans les espaces publics et privés afin d'accélérer notre passage vers une société de la prévention. Néanmoins, la création de valeur produite par ces IoT ne garantit pas à elle seule une adoption massive de ces objets. D'autres mouvements – déjà en cours – doivent s'accélérer pour créer un climat de confiance et en particulier un mouvement éthique et géopolitique. Éthique d'abord parce que de nombreuses objections s'élèvent craignant une société de la surveillance, liberticide dans laquelle l'individu n'aurait plus de contrôle sur ces données personnelles. Il y a donc un travail à mener sur les procédures de collecte et d'utilisation de ces données qui devront être rigoureuses, transparentes et honnêtes. Rappelons par exemple qu'en Corée du Sud, le dispositif mis en place pour faire face au virus repose sur un corpus de lois restrictives (proche de la RGPD et complété par des lois relatives aux situations d'épidémies), que les données sont détruites au bout de 15 jours et que leur usage est

strictement limité au traitement du virus. Un mouvement géopolitique européen ensuite car les craintes d'une Europe dépendante d'acteurs du numérique étrangers est réelle. La mise en place d'une souveraineté numérique européenne que ce soit en termes de localisation des données des IoT, d'indépendance vis-à-vis des fournisseurs de plateformes et de sécurité des données est en effet clé. Rappelons que la Corée du Sud – à l'instar de la Russie, de la Chine et des Etats-Unis – est propriétaire des plateformes numériques qu'elle utilise.

Conclusion

En conclusion, dans cet article, nous avons voulu montrer que l'IoT est la brique technologique qui rend possible la transformation de nos sociétés vers une approche préventive. La crise aura été l'occasion de réveiller les consciences, la période post-Covid sera la réalisation.

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Vers une incontournable refondation de l'événement ?

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Abstract

Malgré l'essor et la rapidité de diffusion des technologies digitales et virtuelles à travers le monde, leur adoption est encore lente dans l'industrie événementielle. Depuis le début de la pandémie COVID19, l'annulation en cascade des événements, dès mars 2020 et pour un temps indéterminé, constitue un coup dur sans précédent qui pourrait précipiter la disparition de nombreux événements et acteurs de la filière. Mais cette crise apparaît aussi comme l'opportunité d'opérer une transition vers la refondation de l'événement. Quel que soit son format (physique, digital, phygital ou virtuel), l'événement post-COVID19 devrait dépasser le simple statut de vitrine d'un ordre social pour devenir la plateforme de transformations individuelles, collectives et sociétales.

Mots clés : Foires, salons, congrès, événements, Covid-19, phygital

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Vers une incontournable refondation de l'événement ?

Rencontres événementielles vs digital : petite histoire d'une relation paradoxale

En France, les professionnels de l'industrie événementielle (salons, foires, congrès, événements *corporate*), historiquement spécialisés dans la conception et la production de rencontres physiques dans un espace-temps donné d'écosystèmes d'acteurs mus par des motivations ciblées (affaires, sciences, connaissances, innovations, débats, divertissement, etc.) ont entretenu des rapports paradoxaux avec le canal digital au cours des vingt dernières années.

Première phase de l'histoire : la peur. L'avènement des usages d'outils digitaux au début des années 2000 fut d'abord vécu comme un choc auquel les professionnels de l'événement ne s'étaient pas préparés. De nouveaux acteurs numériques allaient potentiellement dés-/ré-intermédiaire le marché de l'organisation événementielle par de nouveaux formats de salons et congrès virtuels. Moins chers, disponibles en permanence, moins consommateurs de temps, ces événements virtuels se voulaient très prometteurs. Or toutes les initiatives de salons virtualisés, reposant pour la plupart sur le principe de reproduction numérique à l'identique de la spécialisation d'un salon ont échoué, à défaut de communautés participantes, d'expériences d'interactions performantes et de modèles économiques viables.

Seconde phase de l'histoire : la méfiance. Arrivée dans les années 2010, la profession de l'événement, qui avait cru voir son déclin avec l'avènement du digital, a non seulement survécu, mais qui plus est, vu son activité continuer à croître globalement (hors crise financière de 2008). Le problème est qu'elle ne s'est pas demandé pourquoi elle n'avait pas disparu, continuant à afficher un désintérêt voire, une désaffection à l'égard de la question du « digital », considéré par opposition au « physique ». Les professionnels de l'événement ont pourtant de quoi s'interroger voire s'inquiéter, les *pure players* du digital venant bouleverser leurs principes sur plusieurs plans :

- ils désintermédiatisent des pans entiers de secteurs économiques, supprimant des acteurs intermédiaires clés dans les chaînes traditionnelles de relations commerciales animées par les événements notamment de type salons inter-entreprises ;
- ils créent leurs propres plateformes de relations commerciales, informationnelles, communicationnelles et créatives, concurrençant directement les plateformes événementielles ;
- ils commencent à produire leurs propres événements au service de leurs communautés, susceptibles de venir concurrencer les événements historiques.

Cette concurrence a le mérite de poser la question de la valeur proposée par l'intermédiaire, qu'il soit physique ou digital.

Troisième phase de l'histoire : le rapprochement. A partir de 2015, les professionnels de l'événement commencent à prendre conscience que les plateformes de rencontres physiques et digitales ne sont pas antinomiques mais symbiotiques. Sans que la recherche académique n'ait pu être mobilisée sur cette question, c'est pragmatiquement que certains

organisateurs, persuadés que plus les gens échangent, plus ils ont besoin de se rencontrer, s'engagent sur de nouvelles stratégies de continuité relationnelle de leurs communautés dans un cycle perpétuel d'animation physique et digitale, fondées sur une quadruple capitalisation :

- exploiter les réseaux sociaux pour inciter à la rencontre physique en tant que moment ultime d'une intensité particulière dans le cycle de vie de la communauté ;
- exploiter les outils digitaux sur l'événement en vue de la facilitation et de l'enrichissement de l'expérience vécue par les participants ;
- exploiter sur les réseaux sociaux les contenus conversationnels, scientifiques et iconographiques issus de cette rencontre événementielle pour faire rayonner la communauté ;
- exploiter les données issues des réseaux sociaux pour mieux connaître les membres de la communauté, leurs besoins et leurs motivations.

Ainsi, certains salons professionnels ou dédiés au grand public et des congrès scientifiques ont-ils pris l'initiative d'investir dans des stratégies d'hybridation physique/digital à travers le développement de plateformes comme *Cloud of Fashion* (Première Vision), *Sevella* (SPAS organisation), *Cinando* (Marché du Film), *MOM* (Maison & Objet), *The Lingerie Place* (Eurovet), *e-Pitti* (Pitti Immagine), ou encore *365* (Congrès européen de la Cardiologie). Ces plateformes proposent, en tout ou partie, trois types de fonctionnalités :

- « *content place* », dans l'objectif de pousser et éditorialiser du contenu (catalogues, informations, veille, tendances, technologies, savoirs,...) ;
- « *connection place* », dans l'objectif de faciliter les contacts qualifiés (contacts utiles d'affaires, contacts prescripteurs, contacts innovateurs,...) ;
- « *market place* », dans l'objectif de faciliter le commerce (passer des commandes et faire des achats).

Cette stratégie sous-tend un changement potentiellement radical pour les professionnels de l'événement quant à leur valeur ajoutée, qui ne se situerait ainsi moins dans l'expertise d'organisation opérationnelle d'aménagement spatial et de mise en rencontre et en interaction physique, que dans l'animation voire, l'accompagnement permanent d'écosystèmes d'acteurs. L'événement ne serait plus une fin en soi mais bien un moyen vers d'autres finalités. Jusqu'à aujourd'hui, les professionnels du secteur n'ont toutefois pas pu mener à bien massivement, ni les investissements nécessaires, ni les tests de viabilité de nouveaux modèles économiques.

Une quatrième phase de l'histoire : la crise du COVID-19 ?

Vivons-nous actuellement une quatrième phase de cette histoire ? En 2020, la crise sanitaire du COVID-19, contrairement aux précédentes crises de la période récente (financières, sécuritaires ou sociales) a ceci de particulier qu'elle empêche la rencontre physique sur une période relativement longue, incitant les professionnels de l'événement à la conception et l'expérimentation de nouveaux formats événementiels. Cette fois, les technologies digitales semblent être la solution : l'outil digital-virtuel comme remplacement de l'outil physique par l'organisation notamment de salons virtualisés (reprenant une logique de reproduction spécialisée d'un événement physique), mais également de téléconférences ou webinars (fondés sur une approche de mises en relation d'acteurs par le contenu).

Cette petite histoire des relations qu'entretiennent les événements physiques avec le digital, considéré tantôt comme concurrent, tantôt comme sauveur, n'est toutefois pas suffisante pour imaginer la refondation nécessaire des événements. Les outils événementiels et numériques ont tous deux pour point commun la rencontre : des esprits, des objets, des rapports à l'objet, des rapports à l'altérité, etc. Ce ne sont toutefois que des outils. La technique n'est pas la réponse. L'ambition de refondation doit poser non pas la question du comment mais, celle du pourquoi. Des interrogations importantes apparaissent alors :

- Qu'elle soit physique ou digitale-virtuelle, pourquoi une rencontre ?
- Quel sens donner à faire se rencontrer un écosystème d'acteurs ?
- Vers quels horizons accompagner durablement cet écosystème ?
- Quelles visions lui apporter et quelles solutions lui suggérer ?

La refondation de l'événement soulève ainsi auprès de ses professionnels des questions sur la valeur stratégique sous-jacente au phénomène événement, tant sur les écosystèmes accompagnés que sur les objectifs et modalités de leur accompagnement ; questions exacerbées par un contexte climatique dont on pense qu'il devrait désormais engendrer des bouleversements systémiques majeurs. La recherche menée dans le cadre du Professorship VIPARIS-UNIMEV-ESCP vise à proposer des grilles d'analyse et des recommandations dans la perspective d'une refondation de l'événement.

A travers une vision élargie de l'expérience des participants, intégratrice des perspectives des multiples parties prenantes (visiteurs, exposants, congressistes, organisateurs, prestataires de services), les premiers enseignements de cette recherche¹⁵² mettent en lumière le problème du désengagement et la nécessité de dépasser le statut actuel d'événement-vitrine d'un marché (Litre Valentin et Badot, 2020). Pour y parvenir, l'un des défis majeurs réside en la capacité de réunir leurs forces autour d'une vision commune et la création d'un sens commun de la rencontre, vecteur d'un engagement durable.

L'événement-transition : sacralisation, sens commun et engagement des acteurs

En partant du principe que l'événement marchand est un rite collectif séculier au sens de Moore et Myerhoff (1977), la question de la nature de la phase de transition qui s'y opère, au sens anthropologique du terme, est centrale (Turner, 1969, 1974). Qu'elle ait lieu dans un cadre religieux ou séculier, la sacralisation de l'espace, du temps et des contenus de l'événement-rite crée les conditions de la rupture nécessaire à l'émergence d'un sens commun par l'aplatissement, voire l'inversion, des ordres hiérarchiques et le renoncement aux postures individualistes. Chacun des acteurs parvient alors à s'engager dans l'exercice d'un rôle spécifique dans le but de régénérer, renforcer et pérenniser la communauté rassemblée.

Or, l'analyse des données de la recherche met en exergue une triple désacralisation des dimensions de l'événement :

- de l'espace : régression de l'esthétique rituelle répondant à une logique de standardisation et d'optimisation du mètre carré au sol ;

¹⁵² Basée sur une ethnographie multi-sites de 35 événements en Europe et Amérique du Nord conduite entre Octobre 2016 et Mars 2020.

- du contenu de l'événement : juxtaposition de marchandises et d'acteurs guidée par cette même logique ;
- de l'expérience du temps : loin d'être une rupture extraordinaire, le temps de l'événement devient une accélération de l'ordinaire.

Cette désacralisation conduit à l'appauvrissement du sens de la rencontre et au désengagement des acteurs. Le renvoi les uns aux autres, de la responsabilité de la (pauvre) performance¹⁵³ de l'événement-rite constitue un exemple parlant. Dans nombre des cas observés, le rite ne fait qu'entretenir un ordre basé sur l'asymétrie de pouvoirs et sur une fausse fidélité — *spurious loyalty* — (Morgan et Hunt, 1994).

Cette cohésion artificielle est tôt ou tard condamnée à des bouleversements profonds. Lorsque les participants perdent confiance en leurs rites, les résultats peuvent être néfastes pour le rite et ses acteurs (Girard, 2001). L'engagement des visiteurs et exposants aux côtés des organisateurs et prestataires de services, en tant que co-acteurs, co-responsables, de la performance rituelle¹⁵⁴ est utile à la pérennité de l'événement-rite ainsi qu'à celle de la communauté rassemblée autour de lui. Mais un tel engagement ne peut être construit que sur le partage de valeurs communes et un travail de préparation collaboratif où place est faite à l'identification des problématiques, des conflits sous-jacents et des pistes de résolution.

Pour être efficace, l'événement-transition doit, non seulement, créer le cadre propice à l'engagement mais aussi, il faut que l'engagement porte ses fruits en opérant les transformations nécessaires, autant au niveau individuel que collectif. L'avant et l'après événement, constituent des phases clés de la performance rituelle transformative. Le temps du rite dépasse largement le temps du spectacle. Les « vrais » rites, commencent avec le temps de préparation des participants (physique, apparence, anticipation des besoins, comme par exemple en vue de l'élaboration du repas commun, l'agencement de l'espace, les répétitions...), intègrent les moments de relâchement (*cooliness*) durant le programme, et se poursuivent durant le temps post-rituel, correspondant à la phase de réintégration des participants dans leur quotidien, la plupart du temps négligée autant dans la performance théâtrale qu'événementielle (Schechner, 2008).

De la même façon, quand un événement se résume à du théâtre, même le plus spectaculaire, le visiteur consomme une expérience extraordinaire mais rien ne l'engage à revenir, même pas la promesse d'un événement encore plus spectaculaire. Son absence ne le met pas en danger. En revanche, si les visiteurs-spectateurs désertent massivement, ils mettent en danger la pérennité de l'événement. Dans l'événement-transition, ne pas assumer son rôle ou ne pas reconduire sa participation équivaut, surtout pour un exposant, à abandonner sa place dans la communauté. Mais il arrive qu'il prenne le risque de partir, bien souvent suite à des mésententes. S'il est suivi par d'autres, c'est le schisme et très probablement, la fin de l'événement, et/ou le début d'une nouvelle communauté avec un nouvel événement.

¹⁵³ Au sens de Schechner (2008). Les événements collectifs marchands sont des rituels séculiers qui utilisent le théâtre. Mais bien souvent ils ne sont que du théâtre ce qui crée une séparation entre spectateurs (visiteurs) et performers (exposants, organisateurs). Lorsque, au contraire, ils sont conçus comme des performances rituelles, visiteurs, exposants, organisateurs et autres prestataires, deviennent les co-acteurs d'un même événement rite dans lequel ils ont un rôle à assumer.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

La coopération comme forme de gouvernance de l'événement-transformation

Le « faire ensemble » constitue un puissant levier d'engagement du client (Addis et Holbrook, 2001 ; Caru et Cova, 2007). Dans la relation au consommateur final, la *co-crédation* de l'expérience de consommation est un processus de collaboration qui repose sur l'*empowerment* du consommateur dans la création de ses propres expériences (Badot *et al.*, 2015). Dans le terrain du marketing entre entreprises, la concertation est présentée comme une démarche efficace et hautement ritualisée (Rinallo et Golfetto, 2006) permettant aux concurrents, co-acteurs d'un événement, de s'unir contre un « ennemi » commun qu'ils perçoivent comme une menace pour leur marché¹⁵⁵. Toutefois, nos résultats appellent à ne pas sous-estimer les dérives vers une escalade mimétique (Girard, 2001) que cette forme de collaboration peut entraîner : l'ennemi commun réunit la communauté tant qu'il incarne le mal mais, une fois le bouc émissaire sacrifié, la vraie problématique sous-jacente, reste cachée et irrésolue.

Les premiers enseignements de cette recherche amènent à convoquer la voie du système de coopération comme forme de gouvernance de l'événement-transformation. Quand elle est basée sur la confiance, la coopération facilite à la fois l'engagement et la remise en cause de tous les acteurs (Morgan et Hunt, 1994 ; Lane et Bachmann, 1998 ; Sennet, 2013).

Cependant, la création d'un système de coopération comme point de départ d'une transition rituelle opérant des transformations individuelles et collectives peut paraître impossible dans le cadre des grands événements marchands. Ceci en raison de la quantité et de la diversité des visiteurs (participant à titre individuel ou au nom d'une organisation), d'exposants (appartenant à une large variété de communautés occupationnelles), des origines (locaux ou étrangers des quatre coins du globe), à quoi s'ajoute le millefeuille des acteurs de la filière événementielle et de leur « milieu »¹⁵⁶.

Comment, dans ce contexte, créer les conditions propices à l'événement-transformation ?

La voie de l'hybridation physique-digitale-virtuelle

Dans la plupart des grands événements, des applications mobiles téléchargeables sont désormais banalisées et depuis quelques années des plateformes « phygitales » sont développées. Ces technologies permettent une expérience « ATAWADAC »¹⁵⁷ caractérisée par une accessibilité 24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7, les 365 jours de l'année ainsi que l'abolition d'obstacles géographiques, géopolitiques, économiques, sanitaires, linguistiques pour peu que l'utilisateur ait la possibilité de se connecter¹⁵⁸. Leur empreinte carbone est insignifiante comparée à celle générée par le déplacement massif d'individus et des marchandises dans le cadre des événements physiques. De plus, le fait que la présence de l'utilisateur soit

¹⁵⁵ Les auteurs décrivent la stratégie d'un groupement d'acteurs de deux salons leaders de l'industrie textile européenne face à la concurrence asiatique.

¹⁵⁶ Les auteurs définissent ainsi le réseau local d'acteurs des secteurs publics et privés, poursuivant ou non un but économique, avec lequel une entreprise interagit. La relation que celle-ci peut établir avec son milieu déterminera sa capacité à maximiser les chances de réussite de ses projets.

¹⁵⁷ *Any Time, Any Where, Any Device, Any Content*.

¹⁵⁸ « Sur les 7,7 milliards d'humains sur Terre en 2019, 5,1 milliards possèdent un téléphone mobile et 4,4 milliards utilisent Internet (soit 57 % d'entre eux). En un an, le nombre d'utilisateurs du web s'est accru de 9,1 %, tandis que la population mondiale n'a progressé que de 1,1 %. Les réseaux sociaux ont eux aussi vu leur public s'accroître et comptent 3,48 milliards d'adeptes, soit 45 % de l'humanité. Source : L'usage d'Internet dans le monde en cinq chiffres. Les Echos, 9 février 2019. » <https://www.lesechos.fr/tech-medias/hightech/lusage-dinternet-dans-le-monde-en-cinq-chiffres-963228>. Dernière consultation 9 mai 2020.

intermédiée par un écran et, dans le cas des environnements virtuels, par un avatar, libère l'individu des facteurs de blocage physiques, psychologiques et culturels le rendant plus communicatif et créatif ¹⁵⁹. Malgré leur potentiel, ces plateformes restent encore sous-exploitées, la plupart d'entre elles n'étant que des répliques « *online* » d'un échange physique client-fournisseur.

A titre d'exemple, la recherche pionnière de Gerry Stahl conduite entre 2003 et 2014 dans le cadre du projet Virtual Math Teams a démontré le potentiel des petits groupes interagissant à travers des technologies digitales. Soutenus par des outils de CSCL¹⁶⁰, ces petits groupes deviennent de véritables moteurs de l'intelligence collective qui co-construisent un sens commun, surmontent les écueils inhérents à la diversité des profils et résolvent les problèmes qui leur sont posés. Le tout, de façon beaucoup plus efficace que des individus isolés ou des groupes plus larges et homogènes, telles les communautés occupationnelles. L'engouement pour les jeux en réseau et les activités de socialisation dans l'univers digital et virtuel a également attiré une abondante recherche scientifique dans diverses disciplines. Cependant, de nombreux axes d'application, dont celui des événements, restent encore inexplorés.

Conclusion

Agissant comme un test grandeur nature et en conditions réelles, la pandémie COVID-19 a confronté toute l'humanité à la vulnérabilité de ses certitudes. Elle a mis à l'épreuve sa capacité de résilience et la responsabilité sociétale des individus et de leurs organisations. Pouvons-nous nous contenter de rester au stade de ces constats et accepter de repartir — dès que le contexte socio-économique le permettra — dans les mêmes travers qui ont conduit jusque-là ? Un tel comportement serait non seulement discutable d'un point de vue éthique mais surtout révélateur de l'incapacité d'apprendre des bouleversements provoqués par cette transition forcée. Pour les acteurs de la filière événementielle, cette crise devrait être une opportunité majeure pour opérer une transition vers la refondation de l'événement. Quel que soit son format (physique, virtuel/digital ou hybride), l'événement post-COVID19 devrait dépasser le simple statut de vitrine d'un ordre social asymétrique et infructueux, pour devenir la plateforme de transformations individuelles, collectives et sociétales.

Les technologies de communication digitales et virtuelles intégrées dans le *continuum* avant/pendant/après l'événement ouvrent des perspectives inédites pour la mise en place du système de coopération nécessaire à ces transformations. Elles permettent d'intégrer la voix de l'altérité via la coordination du travail à distance de la multitude de participants concernés par le secteur dans lequel l'événement s'inscrit, tout en découplant son impact.

C'est dans ce processus vertueux de coopération, transition et transformation dont le l'événement constitue la cristallisation, processus nourricier d'un sens commun facilité par les technologies, que semble se trouver la clé de cette refondation.

¹⁵⁹ Parmi ces blocages : ceux occasionnés par le handicap, la réclusion, la maladie, l'âge, le sexe et le genre, la timidité ou la crainte d'être discriminé, etc.

¹⁶⁰ *Computer Supported Collaborative Learning*.

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Covid-19 : La visibilité collective des livreurs ou les prémices d'un nouveau contrat social

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Abstract

Cette contribution discute des effets possibles de la crise sanitaire du Coronavirus sur l'avenir des coursiers des plateformes de livraison. Habituellement invisibles individuellement au regard de la société, ces travailleurs acquièrent une visibilité collective dans le cadre de la crise sanitaire actuelle. La continuité de leur activité, à l'heure où seuls les services essentiels à la vie de la Nation sont maintenus, met à jour leur rôle critique comme dernier maillon dans la chaîne de valeur de ces plateformes. Cette mise en lumière, dans les conditions hors normes que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, donne l'opportunité de dessiner les prémices d'un nouveau contrat social pour ces travailleurs indépendants.

Mots clés: Economie de plateforme, Visibilité sociale, Utilité sociale, Dialogue social, Responsabilité

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Covid-19 : La visibilité collective des livreurs ou les prémices d'un nouveau contrat social

Paris, Milan, Madrid, les images se ressemblent et montrent des rues désertes et silencieuses. Un silence qui s'interrompt parfois par le bruit des vélos et scooters des coursiers de plateformes de livraison de repas. Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Glovo, Stuart, Foodora, pour en citer certains, continuent leurs activités en temps de confinement. Ces coursiers, généralement oubliés et peu considérés, deviennent soudainement beaucoup plus visibles et accèdent au rang d'indispensables. Face à cette mise en visibilité physique et sociale, cette contribution s'intéresse aux effets de la crise sanitaire sur les modes d'organisation des coursiers. D'ordinaire hyper-individualisés dans leur relation à la plateforme, cette crise pourrait, selon nous, apporter les prémices d'une identité collective des livreurs, essentielle à l'essor d'un nouveau « contrat social » pour une population jusqu'alors largement ignorée.

Ce travail s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un projet doctoral axé sur les pratiques de solidarités et le processus de construction d'une identité commune entre travailleurs de plateformes (Kriem, 2020). Sur le plan méthodologique, plusieurs sources de données ont été exploitées pour la réalisation de ce document: (i) le visionnage des témoignages de livreurs pour avoir une meilleure compréhension de leurs vécus et attentes; (ii) l'étude de la communication externe des plateformes pour prendre connaissance des orientations prises en termes de gestion de la crise ; (iii) le suivi des articles de presse pour avoir une bonne appréciation de l'évolution du contexte ; (iv) l'analyse des communiqués de presse et des publications des acteurs syndicaux pour évaluer leur rôle dans les modalités d'organisation des livreurs; (v) l'observation des interactions entre livreurs sur les réseaux sociaux pour identifier les pratiques de solidarité émergentes ; et (vi) le visionnage d'extraits vidéos et l'observation de photos, accessibles en ligne, d'événements collectifs ayant lieu pendant la crise, pour étudier les modes d'actions collectives des livreurs. Le périmètre de collecte des données s'étend sur les deux derniers mois (de mars à début mai), pour recueillir les informations partagées pendant toute la durée du confinement. Pour disposer d'une vision globale, les données réunies portent sur plusieurs pays : La France, l'Espagne, l'Italie et le Canada, qui offrent des exemples intéressants d'organisation des livreurs.

La crise sanitaire du coronavirus et le gain de visibilité sociale des livreurs

Le maintien de l'activité des plateformes de livraison de repas

A l'heure où le fonctionnement de nombreuses Sociétés est cantonné aux composantes essentielles à leur survie, à savoir le soin, la protection et l'alimentation, les plateformes de livraison de repas poursuivent leur activité, en accord avec les directives gouvernementales. Par la promotion de bonnes pratiques sanitaires, la diversification de leurs services et la gratuité des frais de port, ces plateformes cherchent à contenir les risques liés à la fermeture des restaurants et à saisir les opportunités relatives au confinement de la population. En développant des partenariats avec les commerces de grande distribution et en gérant des épicerie en propre, elles proposent la livraison de courses d'appoint et de denrées alimentaires et se posent en alternative aux files d'attente des magasins et à la saturation des services de drive. Les exemples de Glovo Market à Barcelone et Milan, de L'Épicerie de

Deliveroo à Paris et du partenariat entre Uber Eats et Carrefour confirment cette volonté de multiplier les sources de revenus en période de crise.

Le maintien de cette activité de livraison et la capacité à attirer la clientèle repose dès lors sur l'adoption de précautions sanitaires et sur la promesse d'une livraison sans contact. Grâce à la création d'espaces de récupération des repas dans les restaurants, au respect de la distanciation sociale et au dépôt des commandes devant la porte des clients, les plateformes se veulent rassurantes sur l'absence de contacts physiques entre livreurs, personnel de restaurants et consommateurs.

Une mise en lumière de la profession de coursier

De par la mise à l'arrêt de multiples secteurs d'activité et le maintien de l'exercice des plateformes de livraison de repas, la crise sanitaire actuelle a participé à mettre le projecteur sur le métier des coursiers et à accroître leur visibilité physique, médiatique et institutionnelle. Aisément reconnaissables à leur équipement de travail, ils sillonnent les rues désertes pour répondre aux demandes des clients. Blousons aux couleurs vives, sacs au logo de l'entreprise, vélos et motos comme modes de déplacement, les marqueurs matériels de cette profession sont multiples et permettent au public de distinguer ces travailleurs et aux livreurs de se reconnaître entre eux. Envahissant l'espace public, ces coursiers s'invitent également dans les maisons, en temps de confinement. Devant leurs écrans, les personnes confinées découvrent les multiples témoignages de livreurs sur leur quotidien en temps de crise. Reportages, journaux télévisés et articles de presse donnent la parole à ces coursiers et attestent de l'intérêt prononcé des médias audiovisuels et numériques pour cette catégorie de travailleurs en période de pandémie. Sur le plan institutionnel, la mobilisation de syndicats et de députés autour des problématiques rencontrées par les livreurs dans ce contexte sanitaire souligne un renforcement de la visibilité politique des livreurs et une place croissante, bien que limitée, dans les discours et les programmes politiques.

L'utilité sociale des livreurs et les premiers signes de reconnaissance symbolique

Ces circonstances hors normes participent à mettre en avant les spécificités de cette profession et font apparaître les premiers éléments d'une visibilité sociale des livreurs. D'ordinaire confrontés à des formes d'invisibilité, définie comme un ensemble de processus conduisant à un sentiment de non-reconnaissance et de mépris social (Beaud, Confavreux, Lindgaard, 2008 ; Clifford, 1963), la crise actuelle met en évidence l'utilité sociale des coursiers et leur rôle dans la survie des commerces alimentaires, contraints à la fermeture. Cette revalorisation symbolique et statutaire s'exprime par exemple à travers l'attribution de pourboires plus intéressants, signes de gratitude et de prise de conscience par les clients des risques encourus.

Ne se fondant plus dans la foule et participant à la pérennité des commerces, les livreurs gagnent ainsi en visibilité physique et sociale dans le contexte actuel. A ces formes passives de visibilité se superpose en réalité une visibilité active et collective. En menant des actions communes, les coursiers apparaissent en effet aujourd'hui davantage en tant que collectif.

Les signes émergents d'une identité collective

Des marqueurs physiques et spatiaux liés à la crise du coronavirus

En participant à renforcer l'isolement physique et spatial des livreurs et leur mise en concurrence, le contexte sanitaire actuel peut à première vue sembler inopportun pour le déploiement de pratiques de solidarité et le développement d'actions collectives. Les récentes dispositions sanitaires semblent effectivement propices à accentuer le caractère hyper-individualisé de la relation du livreur à la plateforme. En l'occurrence, les barrières classiques à l'organisation des coursiers sont exacerbées : dispersion territoriale, rythmes de travail irréguliers, compétition entre les livreurs et remise en question du droit d'association. Au-delà de ces obstacles, qui relèvent du schéma de fonctionnement des plateformes et qui ont été largement documentés, les conséquences de la crise du coronavirus et les modalités de gestion de celle-ci limitent indéniablement les possibilités de rencontre et de mobilisation des livreurs. Les rassemblements sont interdits, la distanciation sociale est obligatoire, les livreurs contaminés sont mis en quarantaine tandis que d'autres ont pris la décision d'arrêter temporairement leur activité.

Adopter un regard rétrospectif est alors essentiel pour comprendre les effets de ces changements sur l'organisation des livreurs. Les épisodes de mobilisation et les pratiques de solidarité survenus avant le démarrage de cette crise sanitaire étaient révélateurs de l'importance de l'accès des livreurs à des espaces physiques ou virtuels, libres des mécanismes de surveillance et de contrôle des plateformes, grâce à la digitalisation de la fonction managériale (Tassinari & Macarrone, 2020 ; Gandini, 2019). La rue, espace de travail des livreurs, était un outil de socialisation et d'organisation. Terrain d'échanges entre les coursiers pendant les temps d'attentes, sur les places centrales, dans les parcs ou à l'extérieur des restaurants, la rue était le lieu d'actes quotidiens de partage et de soutien mutuels (discussions humoristiques, conseils sur l'entretien du vélo, organisation d'événements sportifs...) (Cant, 2019). Prenant appui sur cette solidarité embryonnaire, la rue est devenue l'espace d'émergence de premières formes de solidarité active (Atzeni, 2010), par la distribution de brochures, le collage d'affiches et l'organisation de marches protestataires.

La rue, pour reprendre le slogan de collectifs français de livreurs, est « l'usine » des travailleurs de plateforme. A l'heure où l'accès à la rue, foyer d'une agitation ouvrière des coursiers, est limité et contrôlé (port de l'attestation dérogatoire de sortie, contrôles policiers, limitation du trafic des transports en commun...), il est légitime de s'interroger sur leur capacité à dépasser le caractère individualisé du métier. En l'occurrence, la crise du coronavirus participe à l'émergence de nouveaux marqueurs physiques et spatiaux. La visibilité territoriale des livreurs se matérialise dans ce contexte à travers les attroupements devant les restaurants, en dépit des mesures de sécurité, à travers l'organisation de manifestations respectant les règles de distanciation sociale et à travers l'établissement de points de rencontre pour la distribution d'équipements de protection individuelle (masques, gants jetables, etc.) collectés par les collectifs de livreurs.

La gestion de l'espace est ainsi au cœur de la réponse à cette crise. Ce contexte met en effet en lumière les besoins matériels et territoriaux des livreurs, principalement celui de mettre à leur disposition des points d'eau pour se laver les mains, de créer des espaces de stockage des outils de travail non contaminés et de mettre en place des pôles de distribution du matériel de protection dans des zones stratégiques et accessibles à tous les livreurs.

Des marqueurs sociaux liés à la crise du coronavirus

La construction identitaire du collectif de livreurs prend appui, dans le cadre de cette crise, sur des interactions sociales plurielles, au sein du groupe et dans sa relation avec le reste de la société. Malgré les obstacles, plusieurs formes d'actions collectives ont pu émerger en

Europe et dans le reste du monde, et ce, dans l'objectif : (i) d'équiper les livreurs de dispositifs de protection individuelle, (ii) de collecter des fonds et de plaider pour l'accès aux aides gouvernementales et, (iii) de revendiquer une amélioration des conditions de travail en temps de crise.

Au regard du degré d'exposition des livreurs aux risques de contamination, les collectifs se sont organisés pour la collecte et la distribution de matériel de protection. A Valence, le collectif Riders x Derechos a procédé dans les rues de la ville à la distribution de masques et de gants jetables, obtenus auprès de la mairie et de la police locale.

Les appels à la solidarité et le plaidoyer auprès des pouvoirs publics ont eu pour objectif de réduire l'impact financier de la crise sanitaire, en sollicitant la générosité de la population et en appelant à la généralisation à tous les livreurs des aides financières gouvernementales dédiées aux travailleurs indépendants. Au Canada, ces logiques d'organisation se sont notamment illustrées à travers la distribution de paniers repas à l'intention des coursiers et le lancement d'une cagnotte en ligne, le « Foodsters united hardship Fund ».

Enfin, l'organisation de défilés protestataires des livreurs en Espagne et au Canada a permis de leur conférer une visibilité plus théâtrale. A Madrid, la tournée contestataire spontanée en avril de plusieurs dizaines de coursiers dans les rues, à vélo ou à moto, pour protester contre la baisse tarifaire de la plateforme Glovo, revêt une dimension scénique. Le bruit des moteurs et des klaxons, l'unité vestimentaire des livreurs et l'omniprésence des codes couleurs des plateformes témoignent de la mise en scène du métier de coursier. A Toronto, la date symbolique du 1er mai a été l'occasion pour les livreurs de Foodora de contester l'arrêt définitif de l'activité de la plateforme sur le territoire canadien, programmé au 11 mai. Des dizaines de livreurs ont protesté en direction du siège de l'entreprise. Brandissant des pancartes et répétant des slogans, leur identité professionnelle était mise en avant par la mise en visibilité de leur équipement de travail lors de la manifestation.

Des marqueurs communautaires liés à la crise du coronavirus

Penser les signes émergents d'une identité collective suppose l'analyse des éléments de construction d'un sens communautaire et d'une vision commune. Les réseaux sociaux, principaux outils de communication des livreurs à l'heure actuelle, permettent de prendre connaissance de la nature des interactions entre les livreurs. Ils permettent notamment d'évaluer le sentiment d'appartenance au groupe, son influence, la satisfaction des besoins et les émotions partagées, éléments caractéristiques du sens de la communauté (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Les échanges observés, à titre d'exemple sur les groupes Facebook de livreurs se concentraient notamment sur :

- La sensibilisation aux risques sanitaires et le partage de bonnes pratiques : le refus de monter dans les immeubles lors de la livraison, les moyens de se procurer du matériel de protection...
- Le partage de connaissances techniques : les modalités et les conditions d'accès aux aides financières...
- Le partage d'expériences de livraison en temps de crise : la fréquence et le contenu des commandes, le montant des pourboires, l'attitude des clients...
- L'expression d'un soutien émotionnel : le partage de blagues, l'utilisation d'un lexique de la camaraderie...

Les prémices d'un nouveau « contrat social », fondé sur le principe de co-responsabilité

Ce gain de visibilité des coursiers constitue une opportunité de dessiner les contours d'un nouveau contrat social pour les travailleurs indépendants. Entendu comme un ensemble de normes et de lois tacites régissant la relation professionnelle, ce pacte pourrait allier co-responsabilité et co-crédation de valeur.

Le livreur, un maillon essentiel dans la création de valeur des plateformes

Ainsi, le contexte sanitaire actuel a contribué à l'émergence de nouvelles formes de solidarité et d'organisation des travailleurs de plateformes. Si l'évolution future de ce secteur d'activité reste incertaine et s'il est hâtif de tirer les conclusions de cette crise, la mise en lumière du métier de coursier, dans les conditions hors normes que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, a dévoilé la contribution clé du livreur dans la création de valeur de l'écosystème de plateforme (Coeurderoy et al., 2019). Ce modèle multi-faces (Cusumano, Gawer & Yoffie, 2019) qui met en relation plusieurs groupes d'utilisateurs (restaurants, clients et livreurs), nécessite ainsi la prise en compte de l'ensemble des maillons de la chaîne, livreurs y compris, dans le processus de création de valeur de la plateforme.

La structuration d'un principe de co-responsabilité

La crise du coronavirus a constitué une occasion inédite de réflexion sur la responsabilisation de l'ensemble des parties prenantes. A titre d'illustration, les revendications exprimées à l'encontre des plateformes comprenaient la mise en place de mécanismes de contrôle pour veiller au respect des mesures de sécurité et la création de formations multilingues pour répondre à la diversité des profils socioculturels des livreurs. Le rôle clé des clients dans l'utilisation éthique des plateformes a également été mis en avant. Les commandes de confort (confiseries, boissons alcoolisées...) et non de nécessité ont par exemple fait l'objet de vives critiques. De même, les clients ont été encouragés par les collectifs de livreurs à adopter les mesures de sécurité (récupérer la commande en bas de l'immeuble, se laver les mains avant et après réception...), à donner des pourboires et à soutenir les efforts collectifs des livreurs. En troisième lieu, la responsabilité des restaurants a également été invoquée, rappelant le manque de formation aux réflexes d'hygiène et le manque de précautions habituels dans le milieu de la restauration rapide. Les témoignages de livreurs, en contexte de crise sanitaire, reflètent également une application limitée des mesures de sécurité par le personnel de restaurants, dans la précipitation des préparations des commandes. Enfin, la responsabilité des livreurs est également abordée dans le cas de la location de leurs comptes professionnels, moyennant contribution, aux personnes en situation irrégulière, exploitant alors leur précarité.

La création des premières instances de visibilité collective

L'instauration d'un nouveau contrat social pourrait alors s'inscrire dans la continuité des démarches initiées avant la crise du Coronavirus. En fin d'année 2019, la plateforme Deliveroo avait effectivement annoncé la création future du premier Forum des Livreurs en France. Cette instance consultative a pour objectif de réunir, une fois par trimestre, la direction de Deliveroo et les représentants élus par les livreurs, pour échanger sur des thématiques stratégiques. Les conclusions des réunions seraient partagées avec l'ensemble des livreurs.

Les conditions envisagées pour l'éligibilité des candidats reposent quant-à-elles sur un nombre minimum de semaines d'ancienneté et un nombre minimum de commandes effectuées au cours des derniers mois.

Conclusion

A travers le prisme de la crise sanitaire, le métier de coursier a gagné en visibilité collective. Plus qu'une somme d'individus, les livreurs, par leurs pratiques de solidarité et leurs nouvelles formes d'organisation, émergent progressivement en tant que communauté. Si à ce stade, ce processus embryonnaire ne permet pas de rejeter l'hypothèse d'un retour au monde d'avant dans les prochaines semaines ou les prochains mois, il peut tout aussi être annonciateur de nouveaux modes de coopération et éclairer sur l'émergence d'un nouveau contrat social, axé sur la co-responsabilité et la co-création de valeur.

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Jusqu'à quel point la préservation de la vie doit rester le premier objectif des politiques économique ?

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Abstract

Aujourd'hui, les conséquences économiques de la pandémie du coronavirus (réduction de la production mondiale, dérèglement des chaînes d'approvisionnement, ajournement de projets d'investissement, nervosité boursière...) incitent les États à révéler le prix qu'ils attachent à ce qu'entendent préserver les « mises en quarantaine » : la vie humaine. Pourtant, en matière de décisions publiques, celle-ci n'a pas un prix infini. Les gouvernements vont devoir, en particulier, soupeser le fait que le virus terrasse des personnes fragiles dont l'espérance de vie est faible, la privation de liberté imposée aux individus « mis en quarantaine » et un potentiel désastre économique national. Dès lors, jusqu'à quel point la préservation de la vie doit rester le premier objectif des politiques économiques ?

Mots clés : La crise sanitaire, Politiques économique, Santé publique

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Jusqu'à quel point la préservation de la vie doit rester le premier objectif des politiques économique ?

La crise sanitaire que nous traversons nous révèle la tension qui existe entre la logique des intérêts économiques et celle des vies humaines. Le lien entre ces deux notions est d'autant plus difficile à cerner qu'il n'y a pas de commune mesure entre elles. La réflexion philosophique autour de la « juste mesure » ne nous est d'aucune aide. Cette notion est peu abordée par les penseurs, excepté peut être par Platon ou Weber.

Rares, ont été, dans le passé, les situations qui nous ont permis d'observer aussi nettement, quasi-quotidiennement, les conséquences immédiates de décisions économiques sur des vies humaines. Face à cette pandémie, il existe deux manières de répondre : payer avec des vies ou payer pour des vies. Pour les sociétés occidentales, le choix revient à une question d'aversion au risque. Combien de décès sont-elles prêtes à accepter ? Cette interrogation se rencontre généralement en période de guerre (*body count*). Les gouvernants prennent en compte le fait que leurs mesures puissent devenir moins populaires si le nombre de soldats morts s'accroît.

Stopper l'économie pour sauver les vies, « quoi qu'il en coûte » : telle a été la réaction du gouvernement français lorsqu'il a dû faire face à l'arrivée de l'épidémie du coronavirus sur le territoire national. Que penser de cette option ? L'enjeu de la controverse est de savoir dans quelle mesure la vie humaine peut être valorisée en termes monétaires afin de rendre possible des choix efficaces et précisément quantifiés. L'argument selon lequel « la santé n'a pas de prix » est pris en défaut. La controverse mobilise non seulement des motifs économiques, mais aussi des valeurs et des convictions de nature politique, éthique ou même religieuse. Peut-on, dès lors, préserver, à la fois, l'économie nationale et la vie des citoyens ou jusqu'à quel point, la préservation de la vie humaine doit rester le premier objectif des politiques économiques ?

La vie humaine a-t-elle un prix ?

La première réaction est de juger la question, choquante. On pourrait, par la suite, répondre qu'il est impensable de mettre un prix sur une vie d'une part, car l'exercice est difficile voire impossible à réaliser et d'autre part, du fait de son immoralité : ceci supposerait que l'être humain soit une marchandise. Des pratiques, comme la traite négrière, ont su pourtant déterminer ce prix pendant près de 300 ans.

Par ailleurs, selon la plupart des systèmes de croyances éthiques et religieuses, chaque vie est sacrée. Sa valeur serait donc infinie. Si tel est le cas, un gouvernement doit-il alors consacrer toutes ses ressources humaines, matérielles et financières à réduire les risques et à prévenir la mort sachant que, parfois, un individu a plus de valeur en étant mort qu'en étant vivant¹⁶¹ ? La vie humaine n'aurait pas ainsi un unique prix mais des prix (prix de la vie sauvée - dont il est question avec la crise sanitaire -, prix de la mort accidentelle, prix de la vie collective...).

Connaître le prix d'une vie présente de nombreux intérêts notamment dans le cadre politico-économique. Sous toutes les latitudes, des arbitrages sont effectués, chaque jour, autour du

¹⁶¹ Selon un document de la Cour du comté de Los Angeles relatif à la succession de Michael Jackson, le patrimoine du chanteur avait généré un bénéfice brut supérieur à 1,7 milliard de dollars au 31 décembre 2018 soit 10 ans après sa mort !

prix de la vie humaine : au plan microéconomique, il est possible d'établir le tarif d'une vie (rançon). Au plan macroéconomique, les autorités¹⁶² comparent les coûts et les avantages à partir d'une estimation : la « valeur statistique de la vie¹⁶³ ». Tout en donnant un pouvoir démesuré aux bureaucrates, cette évaluation rend explicite ce qui était implicite.

La valeur de la vie humaine fait ainsi référence au prix que les individus sont prêts à payer pour obtenir une réduction de leur probabilité de décès. En pratique, son estimation s'est généralisée avec la définition, au cas par cas, du niveau de compensation assurantielle, notamment pour les accidents de la route ou les accidents médicaux.

Vers un prix minimum ?

Pour autant, le prix d'une vie est-il le même pour chaque être humain ? Malgré les idéaux de justice, la réponse est négative car le prix d'une vie n'est pas fixe. Il dépend de nombreux critères, difficiles à mesurer. La définition de la vie d'un individu ne peut être réduite uniquement à son acception biologique (durée d'existence d'un être vivant). Il convient aussi de prendre en compte notamment l'ensemble des conditions, en particulier matérielles, dans lesquelles il passe son existence (montant des dépenses effectuées au cours d'une vie, prix du corps, valeur sentimentale reçue d'autrui, âge de la personne, nombre d'années restant à vivre...).

Mais, ce prix ne serait pas une norme internationale mais celui d'un individu dans un contexte géoéconomique précis (pays, période historique, classe sociale...). Prenons l'exemple des montants alloués aux proches des disparus lors des attentats du World Trade Center. Les familles des victimes pauvres, célibataires ou âgées n'ont reçu qu'une fraction des sommes touchées par des victimes jeunes, riches et ayant de jeunes enfants. Même au XXI^{ème} siècle, les autorités ont offert un « wergeld » aux familles pour éviter une longue bataille judiciaire.

Il serait alors peut-être judicieux de réfléchir à un dispositif qui fixerait un prix de base de la vie humaine, un seuil minimum non négociable, une norme internationale qui s'imposerait à tous. Cette détermination permettrait de tenir pour responsable un État, une entreprise qui n'investirait pas suffisamment en matière de protection et de santé pour ses citoyens, pour ses salariés, pour ses consommateurs... Il permettrait, en outre, de répondre aux enjeux du monde actuel : accès aux soins universel, résorption des inégalités liées à la mondialisation, prise en charge des seniors...

La gouvernance étatique

En temps de paix, un gouvernement doit effectuer régulièrement des arbitrages difficiles en matière d'éducation, d'infrastructures, dans le domaine social... Ses choix sont toujours dictés par des contraintes budgétaires. Chaque dépense a, de ce fait, un coût d'opportunité. Pour un gouvernement, la seule manière de se priver des analyses économiques, serait d'avoir un budget illimité. Ce n'est le cas dans aucun pays. Les citoyens / usagers / contribuables ne semblent pas prêts à payer plus de taxes et d'impôts, il faut donc faire des choix, de la façon la plus éclairée, la plus humaine et la plus éthique possible. Voilà pourquoi même si elles sont

¹⁶² Il y a quatorze siècles, le souverain anglo-saxon Ethelbert aurait été le premier monarque à monétiser la vie. Dans les codes de lois édictés sous son règne figurait le principe du « wergeld » (« prix de l'homme ») qui prévoyait une compensation financière pour les familles des victimes de meurtre. Ce paiement devait mettre un terme aux sanglants règlements de compte qui découlaient des homicides. Les sommes à payer variaient selon le statut de la victime : il en coûtait plus cher de tuer un prince qu'un simple paysan.

¹⁶³ Rapport entre la somme d'argent que la Société est prête à déboursier pour protéger ces citoyens d'un risque et de la probabilité de ce risque (cf. sécurité routière, environnement, santé...).

controversées et imparfaites, les évaluations économiques du prix de la vie ont un but noble : elles évitent le côté irrationnel des décisions politiques.

En matière de gouvernance étatique, les décisions prises quotidiennement reflètent le prix attaché implicitement à la vie. En matière de sécurité routière, répondre au téléphone en conduisant, ne pas s'attacher à l'arrière d'un véhicule, prendre ou ne pas prendre une option en matière d'assurance... sont autant de décisions qui reflètent un prix implicite de la sécurité et donc une valeur attachée à la vie. Combien, par exemple, le gouvernement doit-il déboursier pour prévenir des centaines de tragédies sur les routes ? De contrôles routiers en campagnes de sécurité, il pourrait vider les coffres de l'État ! Il en va de même en matière de santé, où des comportements de consommation de substances toxiques, ou de certains types d'aliments, augmentent de manière significative la probabilité de survenue de maladies voire de décès.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que la valeur statistique de la vie humaine n'est pas une norme qui viendrait se substituer à la décision publique. Le dirigeant peut, à tout moment, estimer légitime de s'écarter des conclusions auxquelles conduisent de tels calculs. L'utilité de ce repère est de permettre de chiffrer le surcoût de la décision et met celle-ci en perspective avec d'autres usages possibles des fonds publics. Un tel calcul peut donc clarifier et renforcer le débat public.

Par ailleurs, pour certains, la stratégie de confinement pèse si lourdement sur l'activité économique qu'elle n'en vaut pas la peine. Aux États-Unis, certaines personnalités conservatrices ont déclaré qu'il valait peut-être mieux abandonner la vie de certaines personnes (seniors) que de sacrifier l'économie. Or, le choix du cantonnement est le résultat de décisions politiques de santé publique, prises dans l'urgence, et non d'arbitrages et de calculs économiques. Nous y sommes entrés pour éviter la saturation du Service des urgences des hôpitaux, nos systèmes de santé n'étant pas préparés à ce type de situations. La crise sanitaire actuelle nous éclaire ainsi sur l'avenir. Si nous accordons un prix à la vie humaine, alors nous devons agir en conséquence et préparer nos systèmes de santé et de protection sociale à de futurs évènements de ce genre.

En définitive, alors que l'Etat est responsable tant du point de vue de la sécurité sanitaire de ses citoyens que des intérêts économiques de la nation, les décisions qu'il prend (renforcer le confinement ou relancer l'économie) révèlent un prix de la vie humaine. Ses choix sont d'autant plus difficiles à opérer que les coûts économiques des mesures de confinement ont des répercussions sur l'avenir. Peut-il choisir entre sauver des vies aujourd'hui ou assombrir la vie des générations futures ? Traditionnellement, les dirigeants politiques ont tendance à privilégier le temps présent. Jusqu'à quel point ? Désirent-ils ardemment protéger les citoyens du risque le plus capital pour l'homme : le risque de mort ?

Dans un monde de ressources finies, quel que soit le dirigeant, l'ensemble des risques auxquels l'homme est confronté ne peut être totalement supprimé. Il y a donc inévitablement un niveau de risques au-delà duquel les dirigeants renoncent à investir des moyens supplémentaires pour renforcer la sécurité. Cette borne et les arbitrages qui lui sont associés entre le niveau de risques et les moyens à engager pour les réduire, doivent faire l'objet de vifs débats politiques, psychologiques, économiques, éthiques voire religieux.

Le confinement aurait permis de sauver la vie de 60 000 Français selon une étude de l'École des hautes études en santé publique. La France aurait donc échappé à une véritable hécatombe. Comme beaucoup d'autres pays, elle a fait le choix de la santé aux dépens de l'économie... La Suède ou les Pays-Bas misent sur le civisme individuel plus que sur la

coercition. Des régimes plus autoritaires sacrifient les libertés individuelles au salut collectif et à la stabilité politique. Les nations européennes semblent adopter une position intermédiaire qui varie selon les connaissances émergentes et leur contexte. L'Histoire dira quels pays auront pris les décisions les plus conformes aux aspirations et aux intérêts de leurs peuples.

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Former des leaders de demain après le Covid-19

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Abstract

La crise sanitaire du Covid-19 révèle que nous entrons dans une nouvelle normalité de laquelle un nouveau paradigme de société semble émerger. Après avoir décrit les contours de celui-ci, nous proposons de revoir ses implications pour l'enseignement afin de former les leaders de demain. Nous présentons ensuite la philosophie de l'enseignement fondée sur le triptyque : apprentissage, acquisition d'expertise et comportements à adopter en tant que futurs leaders responsables. Enfin, nous analysons les trois domaines de compétences impératives que sont les techniques managériales, les aptitudes relationnelles et décisionnelles.

Mots clés : Crises, Globalisation 4.0, Paradigme, Leadership, Compétences

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Former des leaders de demain après le Covid-19

Au cours de ses deux siècles d'existence, ESCP Business School a traversé différentes crises ainsi que les quatre grandes révolutions industrielles et a su adapter ses enseignements pour préparer les futurs leaders. La crise sanitaire actuelle révèle que la nature et la priorité de nos opérations changent. La gestion des situations exceptionnelles devient une activité régulière et normale. Et la gestion des opérations courantes devient une activité exceptionnelle (Laulusa, 2009). Nous entrons dans une nouvelle normalité et une société avec un nouveau paradigme semble émerger. Après avoir décrit les contours de celui-ci, nous proposons de revoir ses implications pour l'enseignement dans les écoles de commerce formant les leaders de demain.

Nouveau paradigme de la société

Vers quel nouveau monde tendons-nous ? Qu'attendons-nous de ce nouveau monde ?

Un monde en perpétuelle mutation

Notre monde est marqué par deux grandes mutations.

D'abord, nous constatons une récurrence de différentes crises¹⁶⁴ qui se conjuguent ou se succèdent. Depuis la création de ESCP Business School, en 1819, on peut rappeler des crises politiques comme celle européenne du Printemps des peuples de 1848, des crises économiques comme celle de la Grande Déflation en 1873 ou encore celle de la Grande Dépression de 1929. Pour les crises militaires, on peut mentionner les Guerres Mondiales de 1914 et de 1939, sans oublier les crises migratoires qui s'ensuivent. Plus récemment, nous vivons l'émergence de crise écologique et identitaire. Et maintenant, c'est une nouvelle crise sanitaire mondiale sans précédent avec le Covid-19¹⁶⁵! Elle bouleverserait plus de 2,6 milliards d'actifs selon l'Organisation Internationale du Travail¹⁶⁶.

Il est dit que le moment de leur apparition est imprévisible. Pourtant, ces crises sont souvent la conséquence de nos actions et non-actions.

Ensuite, nous observons la mondialisation 4.0 qui est accélérée par la quatrième révolution industrielle portée par les technologies numériques, l'intelligence artificielle et les systèmes de cyber-physiques. Le village mondial devient interconnecté, la circulation des flux physiques se combine aux flux virtuels. Les données massives (« big data ») sont rendues plus accessibles, leur partage est accéléré, voire quasi-instantané. Les industries s'accaparent ces nouvelles technologies pour en tirer profit. Et apparaissent des néologismes tels que la Fintech (finance+technologie), l'Edtech (éducation+technologie), la Proptech (*property+technology*) pour l'immobilier, la Biotech (biologie+ technologie) et la Foodtech pour l'alimentation. Les avancées et les opportunités surprennent. Par exemple, Impossible Foods, une licorne californienne fondée en 2011, a créé des viandes et des fromages végétaux pour limiter l'impact carbone et a réussi à lever 1,2 milliard de dollars depuis sa création jusqu'en mars 2020.

¹⁶⁴ sanitaire, sécuritaire, économique, sociale, migratoire, identitaire, sociétale, écologique, etc

¹⁶⁵ avec 205 pays affectés selon le Centre Européen de prévention et de contrôle des maladies au 18 avril 2020

¹⁶⁶ selon le communiqué du 7 avril 2020

L'économie devient de plus en plus ubérisée ; on parle de « gig economy », une économie axée sur le paiement à la tâche et favorisant les micro-entrepreneurs qui peuvent travailler pour plusieurs sociétés à la fois. La responsabilité sociétale des entreprises (RSE) devient un enjeu majeur dans ce monde en transformation. L'inclusivité et la diversité sont une richesse pour la créativité et le progrès de la Société. Rocio Lorenzo et *ali.* (2017) ont étudié 171 sociétés européennes et ont montré que la diversité favorise l'innovation.

Vers un nouveau modèle de société

Dans ce contexte de grandes mutations, un consensus semble émerger en faveur d'un nouveau modèle de société homo œconomicus, différent du capitalisme actuel, comme illustré par ce titre du Financial Times du 18 septembre 2019 sur la réinitialisation du capitalisme: « Capitalism : time for a reset ».

Dans notre société moderne, la croissance économique a souvent été associée à plusieurs phases de capitalisme et plusieurs modèles de création de valeur : tout d'abord, un capitalisme industriel, avec l'accumulation des profits, et où les actifs productifs sont principalement valorisés; on observe ensuite un capitalisme propriétaire, réalisé sur des rentes à générer, puis un capitalisme financier, où la création de richesse est fondée sur la robustesse du modèle financier actualisant la trésorerie future. Après, ont prédominé le capital humain (managérial) où les compétences humaines et de commandement sont appréciés, et le capitalisme entrepreneurial, où la création destructrice de Schumpeter est mise en exergue. Aujourd'hui, on peut parler d'un capitalisme technologique, numérique et des données, où la création de valeur repose sur des dimensions immatérielles, la plateforme digitale et le nombre d'utilisateurs fidèles.

Mais alors quel est le capitalisme du futur ou le futur capitalisme, moteur d'une croissance durable et inclusive ? Difficile d'y répondre tant cela engage de multiples parties prenantes au sein d'une société.

D'une part, nous savons ce que nous voulons et ce que nous ne voulons pas pour notre société. Sans être totalement objectifs et exhaustifs, nous désirons une société épanouie, développée, paisible, solidaire, respectueuse de et en harmonie avec la nature, avec une population en bonne santé et qui vivrait mieux et plus longtemps. *Ite missa est !* (La messe est dite !). Nous ne voulons pas subir ces différentes crises, pourtant leur survenance paraît inéluctable. Les phénomènes turbulents et perturbateurs deviennent une nouvelle forme de normalité de la société. Cela conduit certains pays à redéfinir la globalisation en termes de dépendance ou d'indépendance vis-à-vis d'autres pays sur le processus de production et d'approvisionnement des biens jugés prioritaires et essentiels. La priorité des firmes n'est plus l'avantage compétitif mais en premier lieu la diversification des risques et la souveraineté.

D'autre part, ce nouveau modèle de capitalisme se fonderait sur un paradigme inclusif et soutenable, aux multiples partenaires responsables. Ce disant, il se rapproche de la théorie du capitalisme des parties prenantes¹⁶⁷ évoquées par Edward Freeman et *ali.* (2007). Selon cette théorie, la création de valeur n'est plus destinée prioritairement aux actionnaires-propriétaires mais à toutes les parties prenantes : les managers, les salariés, les investisseurs, les clients, les fournisseurs, l'Etat et toutes les autres communautés qui ont une relation, un parti pris, ou un enjeu avec la firme. Comme le rappellent ces auteurs, le fondement du

¹⁶⁷ En réalité, le terme « parties prenantes » est d'abord un concept de management stratégique rappelé par Freeman dans son ouvrage de 1984 *Strategic Management : A Stakeholder Approach* (rééd. Cambridge, 2010)

« capitalisme des parties prenantes est basé sur la liberté, les droits et la création par un consentement des obligations positives » (2007, p.311). Ce capitalisme propose six principes : la coopération, l'engagement, la responsabilité, la complexité humaine, la création en continue, la compétition émergente (Freeman et ali., 2007). Mais les auteurs n'abordent pas l'impact essentiel de l'environnement dans ce modèle. Pour y pallier, une proposition serait une création collective de valeurs au pluriel : humaines, économiques, sociales et écologiques. Aux dimensions humaines et organisationnelles des parties prenantes, s'ajoute la dimension environnementale fondamentale qu'est la nature. Comme il est dit, « sans nature, pas de futur ». La création de valeurs serait alors la maximisation d'une performance triptyque, de l'entreprise, du bien-être du personnel et de la durabilité de l'environnement dans le cadre d'une prospérité collective.

Quels enseignements pour former des leaders de demain

Dans ce contexte, comment doit-on préparer des leaders de demain ? Nous rappelons d'abord la philosophie de l'enseignement puis nous évoquons les nouvelles compétences impératives requises demain.

La philosophie de l'enseignement

Toute école de commerce se doit de préparer les futurs managers et leaders à naviguer dans dans un monde VICA¹⁶⁸. Trois principes combinés sous-tendent la philosophie de l'enseignement.

Pour comprendre le monde d'aujourd'hui et de demain, les écoles de commerce doivent fournir des connaissances pluridisciplinaires et privilégier l'omniscience : on parle ici de **savoir-quoi**. Il s'agit de partager et d'échanger sur les meilleurs principes et théories pour permettre aux apprenants d'une part de concevoir leur propre modèle de pensée, leur grille d'analyse du monde et d'avoir une vision globale, transversale et interconnectée d'un problème, et d'autre part, de s'adapter dans un environnement imprévisible et de mieux se mouvoir entre les cultures.

Le deuxième principe est l'acquisition de doubles compétences, une expertise hybride dans un environnement multiculturel : on parle de **savoir-comment**. Depuis plusieurs années, ESCP Business School met par exemple en place des partenariats académiques complémentaires selon sa stratégie *ABCDE* (Art, Business, Cultures, Diplomacy and Engineering) avec quelques unes des meilleures institutions, en France et dans le monde. Cela permet aux étudiants d'élargir et de pratiquer d'autres compétences et d'acquérir d'autres modes de raisonnement.

Le troisième principe a trait aux bons comportements, aux bonnes attitudes attendues des futurs leaders : on parle de **savoir-être** qui peut découler de la combinaison des deux premiers, le savoir-quoi et le savoir-comment. Les écoles de commerce doivent faire travailler les apprenants sur les postures de leadership, sur le sens donné au travail, leur contribution à la société, les valeurs qui les animent et qui les engagent envers la société pour l'impacter positivement et concevoir une société plus juste, plus durable et plus innovante.

Les compétences impératives de demain

¹⁶⁸ Volatile, Incertain, Complexe et Ambigu

Ces trois principes orientent notre enseignement des compétences requises dans l'avenir. Si nous ne pouvons pas prédire les métiers de demain, nous savons que ceux-ci seront fortement associés aux nouvelles technologies émergentes telles que l'IA, le Machine Learning, l'IoT, la robotique, la réalité virtuelle et augmentée (Mueller et ali., 2019). Johnson et Suskewicz (2020) suggèrent une autre approche, celle du *future-back thinking* pour déterminer les compétences impératives du leadership de demain. De fait, nous pensons aussi à une boucle itérative où ces compétences impératives transformeront notre futur.

Dans ces perspectives, trois principaux domaines de compétences sont à développer pour le management et le développement des organisations.

Le premier domaine est lié aux **disciplines managériales et techniques**, les *hard skills* dont l'organisation toute entière a besoin pour se développer et créer de la valeur auprès des clients et maintenant des parties prenantes. Ces compétences ont été traditionnellement calées sur les fonctions managériales d'une organisation comme la stratégie, le marketing, la vente, la production, l'innovation, les ressources humaines, la communication, la comptabilité, le contrôle de gestion, la finance, la logistique et les technologies du système d'information. Nous observons aujourd'hui l'évolution organisationnelle des firmes; leur organisation est moins sous forme de U (unité hiérarchique), ou de M (matricielle) mais plutôt en P (Plateforme)). Dans cette configuration, les fondamentaux des nouvelles compétences techniques resteront probablement les mêmes que pour les compétences traditionnelles.

Ce qui va changer est d'une part, de posséder des multi-spécialisations ou multi-compétences augmentées. Il s'agit de l'acquisition et de la pratique d'un savoir-technique interdisciplinaire ou transdisciplinaire qui prend en compte des enjeux ayant des impacts futurs comme la transition écologique et les systèmes cyber-physiques. On demandera à un candidat pour une fonction financière de maîtriser par exemple à la fois la finance verte, les systèmes embarqués, l'éthique et la conformité et ceux-ci dans un environnement multiculturel et de télétravail. Les compétences d'une fonction ne sont plus seulement approfondies de manière verticale mais aussi de manière transversale. D'autre part, il convient d'adapter sans cesse et de rendre agile ces nouvelles compétences techniques pour la résolution créative de problèmes complexes. La créativité, l'innovation technique et managériale sont mises en valeur. En période de crise sanitaire, la priorité du management des opérations est de concevoir de la flexibilité dans le processus de production à partir d'une stratégie opérationnelle de couverture (dite « hedging operations ») pour gérer les incertitudes en trouvant par exemple des sources alternatives d'achat de produits et en identifiant des circuits courts de livraison. A l'avenir, les systèmes cyber-physiques (CPS) permettront de piloter une production autonome, agile et adaptable en fonction des conditions externes. On mobilise ici l'intelligence technique et technologique qui a trait notamment à l'apprentissage de compétences ABCDE (AI, Big Data, CPS, Design, Ecology).

Le deuxième domaine porte sur les **compétences relationnelles fondamentales** à accroître. On se focalise ici sur l'intelligence interpersonnelle, culturelle, émotionnelle, sociale qu'un leader doit maîtriser. Il s'agit de développer différentes aptitudes. On peut citer par exemple la capacité de résilience face à l'adversité, celle de répondre à différentes situations culturelles et interpersonnelles de travail, celle de négocier, de communiquer vis-à-vis des parties prenantes, celle de créer un réseau, de mobiliser et dynamiser une équipe multiculturelle. Ces aptitudes présupposent, d'une part l'apprentissage de concepts associés comme le pouvoir, le respect et la confiance dans différents univers culturels. D'autre part, la crise sanitaire actuelle renforce l'apprentissage des relations interpersonnelles à distance. Développer des liens sociaux (« social bonding ») est d'autant plus essentiel que le rôle d'un

leader sera de créer, fédérer et d'influencer une communauté de leaders au sein de son organisation. Initier ces liens en mode télétravail deviendra une compétence très recherchée. Au-delà des relations humaines, l'avenir nous amène à co-opérer, à interagir avec les robots, à inventer une nouvelle forme d'aptitude relationnelle. Le jour où la reconnaissance faciale via l'intelligence artificielle identifiera les émotions subjectives d'un individu, la compréhension et l'apprentissage de l'interaction entre humains dans un environnement multiculturel seront également améliorés.

Le troisième domaine concerne les **compétences décisionnelles**. L'une des fonctions mêmes du leader est la prise de décision. Comment fonder notre décision stratégique comme celle d'une acquisition d'une firme technologique sans se tromper ? On mobilise ici l'intelligence rationnelle et intuitive.

Kahneman et *ali.* (2019) soulignent qu'une évaluation structurée rationnelle conduit à une meilleure prise de décision. Ses auteurs suggèrent d'utiliser la méthode de Mediating Assessment Protocol (MAP) fondée sur une notation précise des critères d'*assessment* définis préalablement et qui répondent exactement aux questions liées à la décision. Celle-ci pourra ensuite être prise sur la base de cette évaluation holistique. Il apparaît dans la pratique qu'une décision relève souvent d'une approche systémique, analytique et intuitive. Andrew Likierman (2020, p.104) va dans ce sens et rappelle qu'un « jugement est la capacité de combiner les qualités personnelles avec une connaissance pertinente et une expérience pour former une opinion et prendre des décisions ». Un bon jugement est fondé sur six composantes : l'apprentissage, la confiance, l'expérience, le détachement, les options et le livrable (Likierman, 2020).

Ces éléments montrent l'importance de l'attitude globale, du sens critique et de la prise de recul. Il nous paraît alors nécessaire et essentiel de renforcer le discernement, c'est-à-dire la faculté de distinguer, d'apprécier différents objets de manière lucide, éclairée. Dans un monde de big data et de crises, s'assurer d'une part de la véracité des données et des informations est primordial à l'heure où les *fake news* deviennent courantes. Le New York Times du 18 avril 2020 relate, par exemple, les théories du complot selon lesquelles Bill Gates aurait eu connaissance préalable de la propagation de la pandémie et en aurait profité pour investir et promouvoir des vaccins à puce électronique. Cette fausse rumeur a quand même circulé plus de 1,2 million de fois sur les réseaux sociaux et les chaînes de télévision ! D'autre part, ce monde en grande mutation nous incitera à décider plus vite et mieux. Nous pensons que les jeux de business simulations, ou business games, basés sur les algorithmes à l'instar des jeux en ligne multi-joueurs façonneront davantage nos réflexes pour mieux anticiper, décider, prendre des risques, être réactif dans un environnement imprévisible et constamment en mouvement.

Conclusion

Ainsi, apprendre aux futurs leaders à se mouvoir entre les cultures, les crises et les révolutions technologiques est primordial aujourd'hui pour créer une prospérité collective. Cela passe par l'apprentissage de nouvelles aptitudes et compétences tout au long de la vie surtout quand les mutations du monde bouleversent notre société. L'obstacle au changement n'est pas les connaissances technologiques mais notre volonté à vouloir changer. C'est notre culture ! Changer de mentalité est le commencement de l'acquisition des compétences. C'est le modèle d'une pensée progressive de demain pour un monde meilleur et plus durable !

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[De la formation à la trans-formation*

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Abstract

Cet article revient sur la réaction d'ESCP Business School à la crise du Covid-19 et plus particulièrement sur sa capacité à transférer tous ses cours en ligne de façon quasi immédiate. Ces observations ont mis en évidence une grande agilité de l'organisation mais aussi des professeurs et du personnel administratif. Cette expérience d'un changement très rapide et assez profond permet d'en tirer un certain nombre d'apprentissages et de dresser des perspectives pour l'avenir du métier et de l'institution.

Mots Clés : Apprentissage, Enseignement en ligne, Pédagogie, Amélioration continue, Rôle du professeur

*A partir de 2 articles co-écrits avec Hervé Laroche et publiés dans Libellio

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De la formation à la trans-formation

La crise inédite provoquée par le Covid-19 a mis en évidence la capacité des professeurs et de l'organisation d'une école comme l'ESCP à apprendre et à s'adapter de façon très rapide et dynamique, démontrant agilité et résilience. Les professeurs se sont montrés particulièrement agiles et aptes à apprendre rapidement alors qu'ils sont plutôt réputés experts à partager leur savoir et à faire apprendre. L'observation de cette période un peu particulière permet aussi de dresser des perspectives quant à l'évolution du métier, le positionnement des différentes modalités d'apprentissage et la nécessaire adaptation de l'organisation.

Retour sur un enchaînement d'évènements qui ont démontré une grande agilité des professeurs et de l'organisation

Depuis la fin du mois de février et le confinement de certains étudiants et professeurs italiens, l'ESCP s'est préparée à transférer l'intégralité de son offre de cours en ligne. Ce mouvement s'est largement accéléré à partir du 2 mars, date de la fermeture du campus de Turin qui a marqué le début d'une série de fermetures en cascade, vidant progressivement mais rapidement tous les campus de leurs étudiants et souvent aussi de son personnel et de ses professeurs. Après Turin, vint Madrid le 9 mars, puis Berlin le 11 mars, et enfin Paris le 16 mars, suivi de près par Londres.

Cette situation totalement inédite nous a amené à réagir rapidement et à repenser à la fois l'organisation des cours, la pédagogie et la relation aux étudiants dans ce contexte très particulier.

Un apprentissage organisationnel rapide

Depuis fin février, plus de 2800 cours ont été transférés en ligne sur tous les programmes et tous les campus de l'école. Ce transfert quasi total a nécessité la mobilisation de 150 professeurs permanents mais aussi de plusieurs centaines d'intervenants extérieurs. Avant la crise provoquée par le Covid-19, l'ESCP bénéficiait déjà d'une offre de programmes en ligne (EMIB, online GMP, certificats en partenariat avec First Finance) mais l'enseignement à distance était limité à des programmes et cibles particuliers et seule une minorité de professeurs avaient expérimenté ces formats, asynchrones pour la plupart d'entre eux.

Dès la fermeture du campus de Turin, l'organisation, à travers une petite cellule consacrée au « *digital learning* » et composée d'ingénieurs pédagogiques et de quelques professeurs passionnés et innovants, a commencé à se préparer à l'éventualité d'une migration en ligne de tous les cours. En effet, au-delà du problème spécifique de Turin et de l'anticipation d'une contagion éventuelle vers d'autres pays et campus (même si les signaux politiques étaient alors bien faibles), l'ESCP a dû faire face à l'éparpillement progressif de ses étudiants internationaux. Ce mouvement a commencé par le programme *bachelor* dont les étudiants sont très internationaux et par définition très jeunes ; quel que soit leur campus de rattachement, ils ont décidé, avec l'assentiment des dirigeants du programme et souvent sous la pression de leurs parents inquiets, de regagner leur famille et leur pays d'origine avant qu'il ne soit trop tard.

Pour cette raison, les professeurs ont été mobilisés pour rendre leurs cours accessibles non seulement aux étudiants présents dans la salle mais aussi à ceux, de plus en plus nombreux,

à distance. L'idée était de les inciter, avant même la fermeture des campus, à utiliser la plateforme d'enseignement à distance choisie par l'école (Blackboard Collaborate) permettant de diffuser en « streaming » le cours donné en présentiel, aux étudiants physiquement éloignés. Cette diffusion était complétée par un enregistrement de telle sorte à offrir une écoute asynchrone, notamment dans le cas de problèmes de connexion ou de décalage horaire incompatible avec l'heure du cours.

Néanmoins, la plupart des professeurs n'avaient jamais utilisé la plateforme d'enseignement collaboratif à distance, même s'ils pouvaient s'être familiarisés avec Blackboard (LMS de l'école) pour y poster leur matériel pédagogique. Pour accélérer et diffuser ces pratiques, la cellule de digital learning s'est mobilisée pour organiser des formations en ligne d'une heure permettant la prise en main de la plateforme d'enseignement à distance. Tous les professeurs de tous les campus, permanents ou non, ainsi que certains membres du personnel administratif (chargés de programme et de scolarité) qui constituent des maillons clés de la bonne tenue des cours ont été invités à participer à ces formations. En trois semaines, deux cents personnes l'ont effectivement suivie. En complément, la formation en ligne a été intégralement enregistrée et rendue accessible à tous ce qui le souhaitaient qu'ils aient pu ou non suivre la formation en ligne. De plus, lorsque cela était encore possible, les professeurs ont été incités à réaliser leurs premières expériences d'enseignement à distance sur le campus (avec ou sans étudiants) afin d'assurer un support technique et pédagogique par les équipes élargies du digital. Enfin, une chaîne d'apprentissage s'est organisée autour des pionniers de ces pratiques. Concrètement, plusieurs professeurs ou membres du personnel administratif ayant déjà pratiqué l'outil ont formé à leur tour leurs intervenants ou collègues, diffusant rapidement à grande échelle.

Ce phénomène s'est largement propagé en partant du campus de Turin et a vite dépassé la simple utilisation de l'outil. Une chaîne de solidarité et de collaboration s'est mise en place entre les collègues des différents campus, devenus paradoxalement plus unis dans cette situation où il devenait impossible de se rencontrer physiquement. La structure multi-campus propre à l'ESCP et le décalage, même relatif, des événements dans ces différentes régions du monde, ont amené les professeurs à construire sur l'expérience des plus expérimentés qui sont à la fois les premiers touchés par la crise du Covid-19 (le campus de Turin notamment) et ceux déjà familiarisés avec l'enseignement en ligne dans d'autres contextes. Au-delà de la maîtrise de l'outil, il s'agissait aussi d'échanger rapidement sur les bonnes pratiques de la conduite d'un cours à distance, les difficultés rencontrées, la manière de les gérer, l'adaptation nécessaire des modalités et formats pédagogiques, les astuces... Une banque de ressources en ligne comprenant des ressources publiques (webinar de Blackboard et d'Harvard Publishing par exemple) et des sources « maison » (enregistrement de retours d'expériences de collègues pionniers, échanges avec la cellule digitale, kits d'utilisation de certains outils ou techniques tels que la prise en main d'un micro, la constitution des groupes en ligne, la réalisation d'examens en ligne, etc.) a été constituée et centralisée sur la plateforme pédagogique. Elle est enrichie très régulièrement et permet un apprentissage progressif des spécificités de l'enseignement à distance.

Afin de maintenir et animer la communauté des professeurs, des messages réguliers leur sont envoyés tant pour faire référence aux nouvelles ressources que pour les accompagner moralement dans cette évolution et faire face à des situations parfois difficiles personnellement. Certains de nos professeurs doivent s'isoler de leurs enfants et en viennent à enseigner dans leur cuisine par exemple. L'échange de bonnes pratiques et d'expériences comprend aussi ces dimensions.

L'amélioration continue des pratiques

Lors d'une première prise en main d'enseignement à distance, les professeurs choisissent en général un format traditionnel sous forme de « conférence » ponctuée par des interactions et échanges avec les étudiants. Ce choix fonctionne plutôt bien lorsqu'un lien est pré-existant entre le professeur et les étudiants et qu'il s'agit, comme dans la situation actuelle, de transférer en urgence les dernières séances d'un cours démarré il y a quelques mois. L'expérience montre ensuite qu'il est souhaitable d'adapter le format et la pédagogie à ce mode d'enseignement distant.

Après de premières expérimentations, certains professeurs se lancent ainsi dans la combinaison d'enseignement synchrone avec un apprentissage asynchrone. Le constat est qu'il est difficile de maintenir la concentration des étudiants en ligne pendant plus d'une heure ou une heure trente. De ce fait, un cours traditionnel a été découpé en différents modules dont certains sont enseignés à distance et d'autres consistent en l'apprentissage via des sources mises à disposition par le professeur (vidéo, articles, cas, exercices) pour lesquelles un travail individuel ou par groupe est demandé aux étudiants. Certains choisissent aussi d'introduire des outils de vote ou sondage dont certains sont imbriqués dans les plateformes telles que Blackboard Collaborate. D'autres outils tels Kahoot ou Mentimeter permettent aussi de dynamiser une session en introduisant de la « gamification ». Enfin, l'utilisation du digital a transformé certains séminaires en offrant une opportunité aux étudiants de travailler en mode projet avec des coéquipiers éparpillés à travers le monde et à surmonter les barrières de distance culturelle, sociale, horaires. Le projet d'envergure ainsi réalisé leur a permis d'apprendre en temps réel les difficultés du management interculturel et global ainsi que le besoin d'organiser le travail d'équipe pour stimuler la créativité et maximiser la qualité du résultat (Voir l'expérience du séminaire Big Picture avec L'Oreal réalisé en ligne pour la première fois : <https://www.escpeurope.eu/fr/node/33406>).

L'expérience montre aussi qu'il est clé de maintenir les interactions sociales à la fois entre le professeur et les étudiants et entre les étudiants eux-mêmes. La relation aux étudiants s'en trouve transformée non seulement du fait de ce mode d'apprentissage mais aussi du contexte anxiogène dans lequel un certain nombre d'entre eux sont placés. Il est plus important que jamais d'être particulièrement attentionné et à l'écoute des étudiants. Certains peuvent être dans des situations de souffrance physique ou sociale (seuls dans une chambre d'étudiant de 10m² à des milliers de kilomètres de leur famille). La relation digitale est leur seul lien avec le monde extérieur et le professeur gagne à faire preuve d'empathie vis-à-vis d'eux. Il est plus important que jamais d'animer une communauté en ligne. C'est en particulier ce que souligne un de nos collègues de Turin (<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/online-learning-can-still-be-social>). Pour reprendre le titre de cet article et insister davantage, l'enseignement en ligne doit être social. Et ceci doit être préparé en amont. En effet, l'adaptation aux caractéristiques spécifiques du public (âge, formation, culture, et dans le cas présent, situation physique, matérielle et morale particulière) ne peut se faire dans l'interaction naturellement riche de la salle de classe. En ligne, d'innombrables informations qui s'offrent naturellement et immédiatement dans un contexte de salle de cours demeurent inaccessibles. Ce qui se perçoit et se comprend avec un minimum d'attention et de sensibilité pour un enseignant un tant soit peu expérimenté peut demeurer totalement caché et ne jamais se révéler, du fait de la pauvreté des feedbacks reçus. En dehors des situations d'urgence comme celles vécues actuellement, il faut sans doute en retenir ce fait important : à la préparation pédagogique des sessions doit s'ajouter une préparation « sociale ». Les équipes d'encadrement (responsables de programmes ou de cours) et de

support (assistants et gestionnaires) ont un rôle important à jouer sur cette question. Cela devient une part de leur travail. La préparation d'ailleurs ne suffit sans doute pas : il faut une gestion sociale qui accompagne tout l'enseignement, dans la mesure où celle-ci ne peut se faire naturellement par le simple jeu de l'interaction. Bien entendu, en situation classique, il se peut que cette gestion sociale soit mal faite par l'intervenant. Mais en ligne, même l'intervenant sensibilisé et compétent aura des difficultés si cet aspect n'est pas explicitement préparé et géré. Les mêmes constats et apprentissages s'appliquent aux modalités d'évaluation. Là aussi, l'expérience récente a mis en évidence la nécessité de prendre du recul par rapport aux compétences et connaissances prioritaires à évaluer, et à mettre en œuvre le meilleur moyen de les tester tout en tenant compte des barrières techniques (connexion internet, équipement disponible notamment une caméra, fiabilité de la surveillance à distance), pratiques (fuseau horaire, difficulté à vérifier l'identité réelle de l'étudiant) et comportementales (risque de triche).

Dans le cas général, les comportements des professeurs mettent en évidence trois étapes d'appropriation de ce nouveau mode d'enseignement.

La première étape a consisté en un passage en ligne des cours présentiels. Les débutants commencent en général par transférer intégralement leur cours via l'outil. La remarque générale est que plus de temps est nécessaire par rapport au présentiel et qu'il faut encore davantage soigner les supports et la cadence du cours. Par ailleurs, il peut être complexe de gérer en même temps les interactions avec les étudiants et la bonne « réalisation » du cours. Il est non seulement nécessaire de bien maîtriser l'outil mais aussi d'être capable de jongler avec différentes fenêtres sur un écran parfois réduit.

Dans une deuxième étape, une réflexion plus approfondie est menée pour permettre une adaptation des cours à cette nouvelle configuration : séquençage du cours, révision des supports, des manières d'interagir avec les étudiants et des modalités pédagogiques. Par exemple, un outil de sondage intégré dans Blackboard Collaborate a souvent été mobilisé pour faire réagir les étudiants, les impliquer et vérifier leur niveau de compréhension.

Enfin, la troisième étape vise à repenser intégralement l'expérience des étudiants et le rôle du professeur pour l'amener à jouer le rôle de facilitateur et de coach et appliquer les principes de la classe inversée. Cette troisième étape implique la combinaison de modalités synchrones et a-synchrones et une reconception totale du cours.

Une complémentarité des modalités en ligne et sur site

Finalement, il importe de souligner que cours en ligne et cours présentiel sont davantage complémentaires que substituables. Si la substitution a été faite quasi intégralement et par nécessité dans le contexte de la crise du Covid-19, il est difficile d'envisager un transfert intégral de l'expérience étudiante sous un format digital. La construction de relations interpersonnelles et de réseaux, comme le rôle du corps et des émotions, s'en trouvent réduits. Les professeurs savent combien l'énergie dégagée par un groupe, le langage corporel, un sourire, une grimace comptent dans la conduite d'un cours et l'apprentissage. Ces dimensions sont largement affectées par le transfert en ligne. Par ailleurs, l'expérience étudiante dans une grande école ou une business school dépasse largement l'acquisition de connaissances et l'apprentissage en salle de cours. L'expérience associative, la participation à des projets étudiants, à la vie de l'école ou des challenges d'entreprises, le développement personnel, la construction d'un parcours personnalisé sont autant de dimensions de la vie étudiante dans une business school.

A l'inverse, les cours en ligne permettent de répondre à des attentes et besoins qui sont difficiles à réaliser en présentiel. Outre un accès facilité à l'apprentissage indépendamment des contraintes de lieu (accessible de n'importe où) et de temps (possibilité d'adapter le rythme et l'horaire pour tout cours a-synchrone), le mode digital stimule la créativité et permet d'expérimenter de nouvelles pratiques pédagogiques plus collaboratives. Ainsi, certains professeurs ont testé de nouvelles pratiques rendues possibles par l'outil digital telles que l'évaluation par les pairs et la co-construction d'une carte cognitive partagée à partir du tableau électronique disponible à tous sur l'outil. Il ne s'agit là que d'exemples mais ils confirment le bénéfice de combiner différents modes et différentes pédagogies. Par ailleurs, le mode digital permet de massifier certains apprentissages (exemple des vidéos disponibles à tous) tout en personnalisant le rythme et les interactions individuelles entre le professeur et chaque étudiant, ouvrant la voie à une personnalisation accrue de l'apprentissage.

Finalement, la crise du covid-19 permet de mettre en lumière l'importance de combiner les expériences pédagogiques et élargies sur site et en ligne. En mettant en lumière, les spécificités de ces deux modes d'apprentissage, il importe de se focaliser sur chacun d'entre eux afin d'en maximiser les bénéfices propres et de créer une valeur supplémentaire pour chaque étudiant. De ce fait, la pédagogie sur site comme la pédagogie en ligne s'en trouvent augmentées.

Vers une transformation du rôle du professeur et de l'organisation des cours

L'expérience actuelle laisse entrevoir l'importance de repenser aussi le rôle du professeur qui dépasse largement la construction et la transmission du savoir mais s'entend de plus en plus comme un « coach » et un facilitateur. Le rôle du professeur évolue de plus en plus comme accompagnateur des étudiants à s'approprier des connaissances et compétences, à faire émerger des débats au sein d'un groupe, à trouver du sens dans ce qu'ils font et à construire leurs propres projets. Ces réflexions amènent également à repenser les modes de gestion des professeurs, organisés autour du nombre d'heures de cours réalisés. La crise du Covid-19 nous amène à réfléchir à de nouvelles mesures qui s'appliqueraient dans différents contextes et rendraient plus pertinent le pilotage de l'activité du professeur et la répartition de son temps.

Enfin, cette expérience invite à reconsidérer le rôle du personnel de support dans ce contexte renouvelé où le support administratif change de visage et où la collaboration entre le professeur et le support technique devient clé. Bien sûr, on peut penser que les formules de cours en ligne gagneront en stabilité avec la montée en compétence des professeurs et des étudiants quant à l'utilisation des outils. Pour autant, faut-il souhaiter retrouver une division du travail similaire à celle qui prévaut actuellement avec les enseignements classiques en présentiel ? Dans l'organisation classique, les interactions entre les composantes technique, administrative et pédagogique sont réduites au minimum. L'enseignant investit la scène préparée par les supports administratif et technique, lesquels interviennent ensuite relativement peu. Les expériences issues de l'épisode Covid-19 suggèrent que, si les outils en ligne vont de pair avec une évolution du rôle du professeur, alors l'organisation du travail de production d'enseignement est sans doute à repenser autour d'une interaction plus forte entre les différentes composantes contribuant à ce service. Notamment, la notion d'équipes flexibles et reconfigurables centrées autour de cours considérés comme des projets

récurrents pourrait être une voie à explorer. L'année académique 2020/21 sera certainement charnière pour avancer dans ces directions.

Conclusion

Finalement, le contexte très spécifique de la crise provoqué par le Covid-19 révèle également la difficulté pour les dirigeants d'une business school de fixer et maintenir le cap, d'utiliser les outils et pratiques traditionnels de la stratégie, tant le niveau d'incertitude est élevé. Si nombre d'institutions annoncent déjà qu'elles tiendront leurs cours en ligne à la rentrée 2020, il est très difficile de se positionner et de savoir quelles seront les conditions sanitaires et les restrictions de déplacement en septembre. Le retour d'expérience des derniers mois comme les réflexions sur le futur donnent un exemple éclairant des stratégies émergentes imposées par des événements externes et guidées par un niveau très élevé d'incertitude. A la manière de l'incrémentalisme logique (Quinn, 1980), les décisions prises pendant cette crise relèvent d'une succession de choix réalisés par les acteurs sur le terrain et en particulier les professeurs, guidés par leur conscience professionnelle et la volonté de maintenir l'expérience pédagogique pour leurs étudiants. Par ailleurs, la solidarité et l'entraide observées durant cette période se rapproche étrangement de celle décrite par Simmel et als. (1995) pour lequel le conflit rapproche les êtres et a des bénéfices socialement positifs. Si la métaphore guerrière est régulièrement mobilisées pour désigner la lutte contre le covid-19, les effets qui en découlent se rapprochent également de situations de conflit. Les prochaines années nous éclaireront sur les éléments profonds et pérennes de ces transformations.

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[Les cours en ligne face aux cours en salle : vrais jumeaux ou faux frères ?

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Résumé

Cet impact paper investigate la comparaison entre cours en ligne et cours en salle. Les cours en ligne partagent beaucoup de caractéristiques des cours en face-à-face, mais avec un effet magnifiant : les défauts sont exacerbés, les différences sont amplifiées. Au final, ces deux modalités d'enseignement doivent-elles vraiment être comparées, ou au contraire, séparées ?

Mots clés : Enseignement en ligne, Pédagogie, Andragogie

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Les cours en ligne face aux cours en salle : vrais jumeaux ou faux frères ?

À la mi-mars, l'ESCP décide de fermer son campus de Paris, tant pour les étudiants que pour les professeurs. En l'espace d'un week-end, il est donc décidé de basculer immédiatement tous les cours en présentiel en un format 100 % en ligne. Face à cette situation sans précédent, chaque professeur était confronté à une alternative : soit essayer de transposer en ligne l'équivalent exact de ce qui se passait dans la salle de cours ; soit partir du principe qu'un cours en ligne se faisait selon un autre médium, avec d'autres contraintes, et qu'il fallait donc réinventer les pratiques. Illustrons ces extrêmes par deux analogies. L'auteur de ces lignes est suffisamment vieux pour avoir vécu le service militaire en France, et lors des journées passées sur le terrain, chaque soldat recevait une ration de survie. Ainsi, lors du bivouac, on sortait de son paquetage une boîte en carton qui contenait l'équivalent d'un plateau repas d'avion. L'erreur consisterait à juger cette ration de survie par rapport à un repas « normal », par exemple que l'on peut prendre au restaurant ou chez soi. En effet, dans la vie militaire, soit on était en opération sur le terrain avec des rations de survie, soit on était cantonné à la caserne avec des repas à la cantine. Le bon point de comparaison serait donc d'évaluer dans quelle mesure la ration de survie est équivalente à un repas à la cantine des troupes. En l'espèce, l'état-major avait essayé de répliquer à l'identique un repas de cantine militaire, sous contrainte des réalités du terrain : pas de possibilité de faire chauffer le repas, poids et encombrement à limiter... Certes, la qualité avait été dégradée, mais on restait toujours dans la catégorie d'un repas militaire. On est donc dans une situation où l'on a essayé de répliquer une expérience à l'identique tout en tenant compte des réalités du terrain. Par opposition, prenons une 2^{ème} illustration. L'auteur de ces lignes est assez vieux pour avoir connu un monde avant l'e-mail. Autrefois, un service du courrier passait dans les entreprises chaque matin pour distribuer des lettres au format papier. On en prenait connaissance, on rédigeait soi-même la réponse ou on la faisait taper par sa secrétaire, puis la réponse était mise sous enveloppe quelques jours après, et elle était envoyée par le courrier postal. Quand l'e-mail est arrivé en France, la majorité des utilisateurs a commis l'erreur de penser que c'était juste un changement de format : d'un courrier papier, on passait à un courrier électronique. En fait, cela a conduit à beaucoup de comportements déviants, car la réalité était plus complexe. En réalité, il s'agissait d'un tout nouveau mode de communication qui aurait dû inventer ses propres règles au lieu de copier celle du courrier papier par analogie. Si cela avait été fait, peut-être que l'e-mail aurait été plus efficace dans le fonctionnement des organisations. Ces 2 illustrations peuvent être appliquées au basculement à des cours en ligne. D'abord, il y avait urgence. L'idée de ration de survie donne le ton : comment se débrouiller dans la jungle, privé de toute la logistique habituelle du quartier général ? Par ailleurs, faut-il opter pour une stratégie de copie à l'identique – forcément imparfaite – ou une stratégie de réinvention – forcément consommatrice de temps. Après 2 mois de pratique de cours en ligne, la comparaison avec les cours en face à face s'impose, et on peut résumer les différences à une seule idée générique : **un cours en ligne exacerbe et amplifie les caractéristiques d'un cours en face à face**. Comparons donc ces deux systèmes pour nous en assurer.

Avant le cours – la préparation

Le ratio heures invisibles / heures visibles

Dans les cours en salle, il y a bien évidemment de la préparation : le professeur adapte la structure de la séance, il prépare de la documentation et des exercices, il révise les concepts majeurs qu'il souhaite faire passer tant dans le fond que dans la forme. À ces heures de préparation classique, il faut rajouter des heures supplémentaires dans le cas d'un cours en ligne. En effet, si un professeur décide de faire son cours exactement comme il le faisait en salle de cours, il obtiendra forcément une qualité dégradée : certaines actions sont désormais impossibles, par exemple le fait de se rapprocher ou de s'éloigner des étudiants ; d'autres actions sont possibles, mais avec beaucoup moins de fluidité, par exemple saisir un marqueur et noter au tableau les mots clés ou un schéma sur ce qu'on est en train de présenter. Il faut donc prévoir des manières alternatives d'obtenir les mêmes résultats, rechercher les outils numériques correspondants, se former et je s'entraîner, et enfin concevoir des séquences pédagogiques spécifiques à un cours en ligne. Ce temps additionnel correspond à des heures invisibles : en effet, les seules heures visibles par l'étudiant sont les heures de cours, tandis que les heures de préparation sont invisibles à ses yeux. Mais dans le cas d'un cours en ligne, le ratio est exacerbé. Prenons le cas d'un cours que l'auteur connaît bien, car il l'enseigne depuis des années. Pour un cours en face à face, supposons qu'il faut une heure de préparation pour assurer 3 heures de cours ; le même cours, s'il est fait en ligne, nécessitera plutôt de l'ordre de 3 à 10 heures de préparation pour ces mêmes 3 heures de cours. Le ratio heures invisibles/heures visibles est donc multiplié par 3 à 10 lors du passage en ligne.

Une problématique de qualité

Toute cette préparation supplémentaire ne garantit même pas que le cours aura le même niveau de qualité. Les métriques que nous proposons ici sont beaucoup plus intuitives que mesurées, mais elles donnent un ordre de grandeur : si un professeur décide de faire son cours en ligne exactement comme il faisait son cours en salle, il atteindra probablement une qualité de cours dégradée de 40 % par rapport à l'expérience en salle – en d'autres termes, le cours en ligne sera à 60 % du niveau de qualité du cours en salle. Bien sûr, chaque heure de préparation dédiée spécifiquement au cours en ligne permettra de réduire cette dégradation de qualité, mais sans toutefois l'annuler. En effet, selon notre estimation, les 3 à 10 heures de préparation numérique nécessaire permettent de passer d'une qualité de 60 % à une qualité de 80 – 90 % par rapport au cours en présentiel. Pour atteindre un niveau équivalent de qualité (100 %), il faudrait soit investir beaucoup d'heures supplémentaires, soit décréter que l'on ne cherche pas à faire une copie à l'identique : le cours en ligne devient alors un autre produit, une autre promesse, une autre expérience...

Pendant le cours

Enseigner face à des écrans noirs

Un point mérite d'être précisé d'entrée de jeu : dans tous les cours que nous avons animés en ligne, les étudiants avaient non seulement éteint leur micro (à notre demande, pour éviter les bruits de fond parasites), mais ils avaient aussi désactivé leur caméra. Malgré plusieurs stratégies mises en place (par exemple, demander à démarrer le cours par un tour de salut où chacun à son tour branche sa caméra et son micro pour dire bonjour à tout le monde), les étudiants sont restés pendant tous les cours avec leur caméra débranchée. Le professeur a eu beau rappeler aux étudiants qu'ils avaient à leur disposition 3 manières de réagir et de participer (cliquer sur « demander la parole », taper dans le tchat, activer le micro), l'interaction a été plus faible qu'en présentiel. En effet, dans une salle de cours, un étudiant qui ne souhaite pas participer connaît très bien quelques trucs : il va garder les yeux baissés

quand une question est posée ou il va attendre que le professeur se focalise sur certains étudiants qui s'auto désignent par leur micro mouvements (hochement de tête, discussion, regard franc...). Dans le cas d'un cours en ligne, **chaque étudiant se sent protégé par son écran noir** : il est doublement à distance – distance physique, bien sûr, mais aussi distance des sens, puisqu'il est littéralement invisible aux yeux du professeur...

Émission et réception des signaux : une problématique d'énergie

Ces écrans noirs pointent vers notre première observation : **le passage à un cours en ligne encourage à aller vers plus d'enseignement magistral**. Par exemple, si un professeur a l'habitude de mener ses cours physiques avec un mélange de 60 % de cours magistral (le professeur parle et répond aux questions) et 40 % d'animations / exercices / discussions, alors il y a fort à parier que le passage au cours en ligne augmentera la partie de cours magistral (dans notre exemple, elle pourra passer à 70 %, 80 % ou plus), tout simplement parce que la partie animation sera beaucoup plus difficile à maintenir (à cause de questions techniques d'une part, mais aussi à cause de la plus faible interaction des étudiants).

Un autre problème, qui est lié, tient à la fatigue de l'interaction. Toute personne qui a déjà enseigné sait que cela représente une grande dépense d'énergie sur au moins 3 niveaux : dépense d'énergie physique ; dépense d'énergie mentale ; dépense d'énergie nerveuse / émotionnelle. Mais il existe aussi des apporteurs d'énergie : une bonne ambiance dans un groupe d'étudiants, une animation réussie, des échanges nourris et stimulants, tout cela contribue à recharger la batterie d'énergie du professeur. **Comparativement, dans un cours en ligne, les dépenses d'énergie vont être exacerbées tandis que les recharges d'énergie vont être limitées**. En effet, sans forcément s'en rendre compte, le professeur s'appuie sur une multitude de sens dans sa salle de classe : il utilise simultanément les canaux visuels, auditif et kinesthésique, et il se nourrit de tous ces signaux pour diriger le cours et allouer son énergie. Tous nos collègues le savent : nous avons une forme de 6^{ème} sens qui nous permet de détecter les baisses d'attention, l'ennui croissant, voir une certaine perte de contrôle de ce qui se passe... Dans un cours en ligne, face à des écrans noirs, nous perdons une très grande partie, voire la totalité, de cette capacité. Et même si les étudiants branchaient leur caméra, le problème ne serait pas résolu pour autant : en effet, nos neurones miroirs se nourrissent de toutes les micro-expressions du visage de notre interlocuteur, et même si cela se fait à un niveau non conscient pour nous, cela participe globalement à notre captation des messages qui nous sont envoyés. Lors d'une communication par caméra interposée, nous perdons une très grande partie de ces micros signaux, ce qui conduit notre cerveau à essayer de compenser frénétiquement cette absence d'informations qu'il a l'habitude de collecter. Lors de ce confinement, que de fois avons-nous entendu des collègues indiquer qu'une journée de réunions en visioconférence les fatiguait beaucoup plus qu'une journée de réunions en physique. Il se passe exactement la même chose pour un cours...

Quid de la fluidité ?

Quand nous sommes dans une salle de cours, nous avons l'habitude de faire des choses de manière extrêmement fluide : commencer à répondre à une question d'un étudiant tout en se dirigeant vers le tableau blanc, saisir un feutre et le déboucher, commencer à dessiner tout en parlant, saisir le tampon effaceur pour supprimer une erreur, et réécrire, tandis que du coin de l'œil, nous vérifions que l'étudiant et ses camarades suivent bien le raisonnement. Comparativement, la même séquence dans un cours en ligne va nécessiter de jongler avec différents outils, de cliquer sur des icônes ou d'activer des raccourcis clavier que nous aurons préalablement mémorisés, et la fluidité ne sera jamais la même que dans une salle de cours.

Un autre perturbateur de fluidité porte sur les alertes : dans une salle de cours, quand un étudiant lève la main, il le fait généralement silencieusement et nous enregistrons automatiquement ce signal visuel sans pour autant nous arrêter dans notre présentation. Pour prendre une image, imaginons que pendant un de ses cours en salle, un professeur soit obligé de consulter ses mails – et d'y répondre ! À chaque fois qu'un nouveau mail arrive, une sonnerie retentit, forçant le professeur à prendre connaissance du mail puis à décider s'il y répond ou pas, tout en continuant de faire cours. Il est fort probable que le professeur perdrait une grande partie de sa concentration et donc de sa fluidité. C'est exactement ce qui arrive avec les cours en ligne : nous sommes en train d'expliquer un concept en ayant partagé l'écran, et nous entendons un « ding » qui signifie que soit un étudiant a demandé la parole, soit quelqu'un a posté un message sur le tchat. Il s'agit alors d'activer simultanément diverses parties de notre cerveau : la partie « enseignement oral » doit continuer son travail pendant que la partie « lecture » prend connaissance du message et que la partie « décision » sélectionne la réponse à adopter : ignorer, traiter plus tard, répondre maintenant...

La technique, aide ou fardeau ?

Dans une salle de cours classique, les problèmes techniques présentent généralement des caractéristiques récurrentes. D'abord, ces problèmes sont limités au matériel utilisé : l'ordinateur, le vidéoprojecteur et éventuellement, le micro. Ensuite, en cas de problème, il y a des services d'assistance dédiés. Enfin, si un problème technique surgit, on a toujours un plan B, voire un plan C : si ma clé USB ne marche pas, je peux récupérer mes diapositives depuis le cloud ; si je ne peux vraiment pas récupérer mes diapositives, je peux proposer aux étudiants de suivre le déroulé sur leur support papier ; au pire, je peux rebâtir un cours improvisé en utilisant le tableau blanc et les marqueurs. **Comparativement, les problèmes techniques dans un cours en ligne vont être exacerbés selon ces 3 axes.** Premièrement, un cours en ligne utilise généralement beaucoup plus d'outils : la plate-forme de captation vidéo avec partage de documents, un utilitaire de dessin, une application de sondage en ligne, des documents partagés pour travail collaboratif... Or, il y a probablement une loi informatique qui a postulé que plus on utilise d'outils, plus grande est la probabilité qu'un problème technique surgisse, car c'est une simple observation de bon sens. Pour ce qui est des services de dépannage, le professeur en ligne ne peut guère compter que sur lui-même. Il a donc désormais une double casquette : en complément de sa casquette historique d'enseignant / chercheur / animateur, il doit désormais enfile la salopette de Mario le plombier numérique, avec une exigence de rapidité, car tout se passe en live. Cela implique un stress supplémentaire, puisque nous sommes en dehors de notre domaine de compétence, mais aux yeux des participants, nous sommes responsables du rétablissement de bonnes conditions d'enseignement. Ce stress numérique sera d'autant plus exacerbé que dans un cours en ligne, il y a très rarement des plans B en cas de problèmes techniques : soit ça marche, soit on abandonne un pan entier de ce qui avait été prévu. On perd donc grandement dans la granularité de la réponse qui est faite aux problèmes techniques.

Un rapport au temps modifié

Il faut s'habituer au fait que dans un cours en ligne, tout se passe plus lentement. Quand on pose une question, il faut le temps de latence pour que la question arrive aux étudiants (cela peut prendre plusieurs secondes) ; puis l'étudiant réfléchit à la question et décide s'il souhaite y répondre ; si c'est le cas, il faut alors que l'étudiant tape sa réponse dans le tchat ou qu'il clique sur la demande de prise de parole ; enfin, un temps de latence s'écoule avant que ces signaux soient transmis à l'enseignant. Au total, entre le moment où le professeur pose sa

question et le moment où il obtient une réaction de la part de son auditoire, le temps de silence est facilement doublé ou triplé par rapport à la même situation dans une salle de cours. Or, dans une salle de cours, quand il s'agit d'attendre 10 – 15 secondes avant que les étudiants réagissent, cela représente déjà un délai inconfortable pour certains professeurs. Que dire alors de l'expérience d'un cours en ligne, quand il s'agit plutôt de 20 à 30 secondes à fixer des écrans noirs et silencieux en attendant qu'il se passe quelque chose (ou pas) suite à notre question ?

Ce rapport au temps est aussi un rapport au silence, exacerbé par le fait que **nous sommes un peu comme ces poissons aveugles dans les profondeurs obscures des océans**, c'est-à-dire très limités dans notre perception. Prenons un exemple : le retour de la pause. Dans le monde réel, nous fixons une heure de retour de la pause, et nous pouvons constater visuellement le nombre d'étudiants qui est revenu à l'heure. Par opposition, dans un cours en ligne, comme on a spécifié que les étudiants ne doivent pas se déconnecter pendant le temps de pause, on se retrouve à la fin de la pause face à des écrans noirs et silencieux, tout en ne sachant pas si les étudiants sont effectivement revenus. Il s'agit alors de faire un appel par tchat pour demander aux étudiants de signaler qu'ils sont effectivement à nouveau là. Par moments, on a vraiment l'impression d'être dans un test de Turing : le correspondant distant nous répond, mais nous ne sommes pas sûr de savoir si c'est un être humain ou un tchat-bot (une intelligence artificielle programmée pour répondre à des messages de tchat)!

Scénariser pour dompter le temps et l'incertitude

Il y a une nécessité de scénarisation beaucoup plus poussée dans le cas d'un cours en ligne. En effet, dans une salle de cours, et forts de notre compétence d'enseignant dans notre domaine, nous pouvons nous autoriser des digressions et des improvisations : même si cela n'était pas inscrit sur la partition, nous maîtrisons suffisamment l'instrument pour pouvoir inventer à la volée un exercice, une mise en situation ou une explication qui permette de coller à ce qui est en train de se passer dans la salle à ce moment. Comparativement, et pour toutes les raisons évoquées ci-dessus, le cours en ligne va nous faire courir beaucoup plus de risques dans ces situations d'improvisation. Enseigner en ligne devient alors une stratégie de gestion – et dans le cas présent, de minimisation – des risques.

À titre illustratif, voici quelques métriques que nous avons pu observer. Une séance de 3 heures en salle est généralement décomposée en 3 à 5 parties, avec un timing élastique : rien n'est vraiment écrit, cela dépend des interactions avec les étudiants, l'objectif central étant de terminer à l'heure en ayant traité correctement toutes les parties. Comparativement, une séance de 3 heures de cours en ligne est généralement scénarisée avec au minimum une quinzaine de séquences différentes : des consignes de début de cours sur les outils en ligne, un tour de table pour se saluer, un premier sondage pour tester le niveau de connaissance d'une notion, la présentation d'un concept sur 3-4 diapositives partagées, du travail en petits groupes pendant 10 minutes puis un débriefing collectif, etc. En fait, si un observateur avait été présent lors des 3 heures de cours en salle, il aurait probablement identifié bien plus que les 3 à 5 parties mentionnées : il est probable qu'un cours de 3 heures en salle se décompose aussi en 15 à 30 séquences distinctes. Mais la différence majeure réside dans la scénarisation : les séquences en salle arrivent quand elles arrivent, certaines étant improvisées à la volée, tandis que les séquences du cours en ligne ont été planifiées, préparées, avec les outils associés (application de sondage, documents partagés, liens vers des vidéos...) selon un script beaucoup plus détaillé.

Concluons enfin cette partie sur une note positive : certes, les cours en ligne vont exacerber les caractéristiques des cours en salle, mais cette exacerbation ne va pas toujours dans un sens négatif. Un exemple d'amplification positive porte sur la co animation : autant une double animation dans une salle de cours représente un moment très agréable de partage entre collègues, autant en ligne, le fait de faire le cours à deux va changer énormément de choses en positif : on peut littéralement s'appuyer sur son collègue pour certaines parties du cours, cela permet de travailler en parallèle sur les éléments de communication annexes (répondre au tchat, préparer un sondage), et les étudiants bénéficient d'une diffusion en live de la discussion entre 2 experts, un peu comme ils assisteraient à une émission de télévision. C'est non seulement une expérience enrichie, mais c'est aussi une occasion de consommer beaucoup moins d'énergie que lors d'un cours en ligne tout seul face à l'écran.

Après le cours

Une fois que le cours est terminé, il reste toujours des choses à faire. Dans le cas des cours en présentiel, cela consiste à répondre à des questions par e-mail, à poster des documents annexes ou à rédiger des précisions par rapport à certaines questions évoquées en cours. Dans le cas de cours en ligne, il y a au moins 2 éléments supplémentaires qui rajoutent du temps de service après-vente. D'une part, il faut très souvent récupérer et mettre en forme le fruit du travail des étudiants en ligne : que ce soient des résultats de sondages, des contributions réalisées dans des documents collaboratifs ou encore de la structuration d'idées réalisées par le professeur sous forme de cartes mentales, tous ces éléments doivent être récupérés après le cours et transmis par voie électronique aux étudiants – tandis que dans une salle de classe, chaque étudiant est responsable des notes qu'il décide de prendre ou de ne pas prendre. On pourrait simplifier en disant que dans une salle de cours classique, le professeur a besoin de rédiger une présentation PowerPoint avant le cours, tandis que dans un cours en ligne, le professeur doit rédiger 2 présentations PowerPoint : une avant le cours, et une après le cours. L'autre élément de service après-vente spécifique au cours en ligne tient au décalage dans le temps (asynchronicité). En effet, alors que certains étudiants peuvent assister en direct au cours en ligne (synchronicité), d'autres étudiants choisissent de bénéficier de la lecture de la vidéo enregistrée du cours. Certains vont regarder / écouter le lendemain de la séance live, d'autres pourront prendre une semaine ou plus avant de se connecter et de regarder le cours. Cela signifie que les demandes de service après-vente (question, précisions...) vont s'étendre sur une période de temps plus longue, qui sera notamment fonction de la date à laquelle l'étudiant a effectivement regardé la vidéo du cours.

Conclusion

Nous avons démarré cet article sur une question en forme de tension : faut-il s'évertuer à ce qu'un cours en ligne soit la copie conforme de son équivalent de salle de classe, ou convient-il au contraire de décaler le cadre de référence, en considérant que le cours en ligne est une entité distincte avec des codes et des attendus différents ? En bref, vrais jumeaux ou frères et sœurs ? Notre angle d'analyse a été de montrer que par expérience, les cours en ligne tendent à augmenter / exagérer / amplifier les problématiques des cours en salle. À notre avis, il s'agit vraiment de 2 médiums différents qui demandent à ne plus être comparés point par point, mais plutôt appréciés dans leurs différences. Le cours en salle est analogue à une pièce de théâtre (pour sa partie magistrale) ou à un jeu de société (pour sa partie animation / discussion / expérience). Le cours en ligne trouve plutôt ses analogies dans une émission de radio (pour sa partie magistrale) ou dans un festival de musique façon Woodstock : le

planning précis est décidé à l'avance, le timing est rigoureux... et même si l'on ne sait pas exactement quels problèmes techniques vont surgir ou quels morceaux les différents musiciens vont jouer, la performance sera enregistrée et conservée. Après le théâtre (3^{ème} art), la rhétorique (5^{ème} art) ou le cinéma (7^{ème} art), le cours en ligne deviendra-t-il lui aussi un art à part entière ?

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Quand une expérimentation pédagogique propose des solutions face au Covid 19

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Résumé

Nous avons proposé entre fin janvier et début mars 2020 à 410 élèves de Pré-master 4 modalités pédagogiques pour un cours fondamental de comptabilité de gestion : 3 synchrones (sur site, hybride, et en ligne) et 1 asynchrone. Ce dispositif totalement flexible offrait aux étudiant.e.s des arbitrages inédits pour gérer les lieux et temps d'apprentissage en requérant un degré plus ou moins grand d'autorégulation. Il réduisait par ailleurs le besoin de grandes salles de cours qui constituent une ressource contrainte. Cette offre a été étendue 15 jours avant le confinement au programme international de *Bachelor* dont certain.e.s élèves ont été confronté.e.s au virus dès la fin du mois de février. Cette pédagogie que nous dénommons P4L (Personalized fo(u)r Learning) constitue une option envisageable pour la rentrée 2020.

Mots clés : Autorégulation, Ecrêtement de la demande, Massification, Modèle économique

Quand une expérimentation pédagogique propose des solutions face au Covid 19

Cet article présente dans une première partie une expérimentation testant 4 modalités pédagogiques simultanément offertes sur site et en ligne à toute la promotion d'étudiant.e.s du Pré-master¹⁶⁹ entre janvier et mars 2020. La seconde partie rapporte l'extension quasi instantanée de cette offre pédagogique au programme Bachelor, dès le 2 mars 2020, pour faire face aux premières conséquences du COVID 19. La troisième partie explore les enjeux de la généralisation d'une offre pédagogique multimodale pour la rentrée 2020 qui devra être organisée en l'absence de vaccin et peut-être de traitement.

Les objectifs de cette expérimentation en Pré-master

Cette expérimentation répond à un double objectif : pédagogique puis économique.

Offrir des modalités pédagogiques inédites arbitrant entre flexibilité spatio-temporelle et autorégulation

Cosnefroy (2011, p. 18) définit l'autorégulation et ses enjeux comme suit : « Tout apprenant est ainsi confronté à un double problème, se mettre au travail et y rester ». 5 facteurs contraignants favorisent lors d'un cours conventionnel l'autorégulation : la présence obligatoire, l'unité de lieu et de temps, le rapport hiérarchique et la pression des pairs.

La modalité 1, offre conventionnelle sur site, imposait toutes ces contraintes sauf l'appel, celui-ci n'ayant plus lieu d'être au regard des 3 autres modalités offertes.

Nous avons proposé 3 offres pédagogiques supplémentaires impliquant différents degrés d'autorégulation de l'apprenant.e. Décrivons en premier lieu les 2 modalités synchrones.

La deuxième modalité permettait aux étudiant.e.s de se regrouper dans une deuxième salle où le cours était diffusé en streaming sur 3 écrans installés sur 3 des 4 murs, chaque écran étant destiné à un îlot de table et de chaises.

La troisième modalité consistait à suivre le cours diffusé en ligne dans un lieu au choix de l'étudiant.e. Pour ces 2 modalités synchrones en ligne, un.e autre enseignant.e assurait une modération en ligne via un chat en suscitant des questions, en répondant aux questions posées et en retransmettant parfois celles-ci à l'enseignant.e sur site. Une co-animation pouvait se produire.

Pour la quatrième modalité asynchrone, les étudiantes disposaient d'un enregistrement du cours. Cette modalité permettait à l'apprenante de gérer son temps d'apprentissage, en choisissant le moment de l'étude, et au besoin en le fractionnant. A cette éventuelle discontinuité temporelle s'ajoutait la possibilité de recourir à une hypernavigation dans la vidéo grâce à une indexation automatique des séquences et à un moteur de recherche incorporé dans la visionneuse de la plateforme utilisée. Ces deux fonctionnalités permettent donc de dissocier le lot traditionnel séquentiel et chronophage que constitue une vidéo.

¹⁶⁹ Première année de préparation précédant les 2 années de master In Management. Il regroupe des étudiant.e.s issue.s des classes préparatoires

Les 4 modalités couvrent donc un continuum d'autorégulation croissante : ensemble avec l'enseignante (ensemble sur site sans l'enseignante (ensemble/seules) , ensemble en ligne (seul.e.s/ensemble) et seul.e.s avec l'enregistrement en asynchrone.

Pour l'école, le gain portait sur l'optimisation des espaces de cours.

Faire face à une massification des effectifs avec des ressources immobiliers et humaines contraintes

La massification de l'enseignement supérieur (Lebrun & Deschryver, 2014) concerne également ESCP dont les campus, situés au cœur des grandes métropoles européennes, peuvent difficilement être étendus. Par ailleurs, ces campus sont caractérisés par une prédominance de petites salles, de sorte que la croissance du nombre d'élèves implique d'utiliser plus de salles et plus d'enseignantes, deux ressources contraintes.

Le dispositif P4L (*Personalized Fo(u)r Learning*) écriète la demande de grandes salles.

La modalité 2, salle annexe dans laquelle le cours est diffusé sans enseignant.e, permet de dissocier le besoin de grande salle en deux salles de capacité moindre. Cela revient donc à augmenter la capacité d'accueil d'un grand groupe sans accroître le nombre d'enseignant.e.s¹⁷⁰ même si l'on ajoutait plusieurs petites salles annexes. On peut donc considérer que l'on augmente la rotation des actifs de taille restreinte en les utilisant pour de grands groupes, et que l'on pratique des économies d'échelle par rapport au coût de l'enseignement en ne mobilisant que deux enseignant.e.s : un.e sur site et un.e en ligne.

Les modalités en ligne 3 et 4, synchrone et asynchrone reviennent à sous-traiter sur les apprenant.e.s, si tel est leur souhait, le besoin d'actif immobilier en échange d'une flexibilité par rapport au lieu (modalités 3 et 4) et au temps (modalité 4). On peut considérer ces modalités comme une forme d'ubérisation si celle-ci consiste à utiliser des actifs qui ne sont pas détenus par une entreprise mais par ses fournisseurs et/ou ses client.e.s.

Ce papier ne permet pas de commenter les résultats de cette expérimentation dont l'analyse est par ailleurs encore en cours, mais le fait dominant sur les 5 semaines où elle a eu lieu a été la diminution constante du nombre d'étudiant.e.s optant pour le cours conventionnel dans la salle avec l'enseignant.e. au profit des modalités 3 et 4, intégralement en ligne.

Cette offre a permis dès le 2 mars, 15 jours avant le confinement généralisé, de répondre aux besoins du programme *Bachelor* face à l'explosion de la pandémie, notamment en Italie.

Une réponse agile face à l'explosion de la pandémie avant le confinement

Le 23 février 2020, le lendemain de la fermeture sans préavis de notre campus de Turin pour cause de COVID 19, nous avons reçu un mail d'une étudiante italienne du programme *Bachelor*, rentrée à Turin pendant les vacances. En voici des extraits : "... *I decided not to return to Paris... conscious of the fact that I will be missing my exams next week*¹⁷¹... *I took my decision on the following grounds... I preferred not to put the health of staff, professors and classmates at risk with my return to Paris from an area of high coronavirus infection...The train that I should have taken originated from Milan - the main outbreak area in my country. That would have potentially put me at risk of contagion, and you all as a consequence.... - I have health issues related to the malfunctioning of my immune system. I thus contacted*

¹⁷⁰ Nous avons utilisé une salle de 70 personnes munie d'une caméra et d'un système audio permettant de capter la voix de l'enseignant.e et des élèves. La salle annexe pouvait accueillir 20 élèves. La vague la plus grande comptait 105 élèves. 2 enseignant.e.s étaient mobilisé.es pour chaque cours : un.e en salle, l'autre en ligne.

¹⁷¹ Nous avons proposé dès le 25 février à cette étudiante de passer ses examens en ligne

my doctor today, who confirmed that preventing any risks of contagion is extremely important for me, and he discouraged me from travelling in crowded environments - such e.g. trains."

À la suite de ce mail, le programme *Bachelor* a recensé les étudiant.e.s ayant séjourné pendant leurs vacances dans des zones infectées et leur a demandé, après les examens, de rester confiné.e.s, tout en mettant sur pied, en 4 jours un dispositif comprenant les modalités 1, 3 et 4 qui ont été proposées, dès le 2 mars, à Londres et Paris. Des étudiant.e.s sur la base du volontariat ont assuré une modération en transmettant à l'enseignant.e les questions du chat.

Dans les 2 semaines qui ont suivi, avant la fermeture des campus, la présence sur site a diminué pour devenir minoritaire, les étudiant.e.s optant pour les modalités en ligne. La modalité 4, asynchrone, est devenue indispensable pour permettre à certain.e.s étudiant.e.s rentrée.es dans leur pays d'avoir accès aux cours qu'ils et elles ne pouvaient plus suivre de façon synchrone du fait des différences de fuseaux horaires.

Après le confinement, Les modalités 3 et 4 ont permis d'assurer une continuité de l'apprentissage. Mais un tel dispositif peut-il constituer l'offre de l'école à la rentrée 2020 ?

Une offre hybride envisageable pour la rentrée 2020 ?

Cette offre comme nous l'avons expliqué dans la première partie avait été conçue pour proposer de nouvelles opportunités pédagogiques aux étudiant.e.s en leur offrant des arbitrages inédits entre vie scolaire et vie extra-scolaire. Elle relâchait par ailleurs les tensions entre la capacité d'accueil et la demande de salle pour de grands groupes. Le COVID 19 renforce les avantages liés aux modalités en ligne synchrones et asynchrones tant pour l'école que pour les apprenant.e.s.

Pour l'école, la capacité d'accueil sur site des étudiant.e.s va être diminuée pour cause de distanciation sociale par un facteur de n qui est à déterminer pour chaque classe mais dont on peut penser qu'il sera supérieur à 2. L'offre sur site va donc se réduire en se répercutant sur le chiffre d'affaires qu'elle générerait, alors que le coût salarial d'un cours sur site est fixe, rendant impossible l'équilibre économique si une offre en ligne n'est pas proposée. L'intérêt de l'école est donc d'offrir simultanément, voire d'encourager une demande en ligne, une proposition qui apporte des bénéfices objectifs aux apprenant.e.s.

Pour les apprenant.e.s, l'offre en ligne accentue les avantages de la flexibilité temporelle et spatiale, la seconde renforçant la première en évitant des déplacements qui vont être plus complexes à organiser. D'une façon générale, la réduction des capacités d'accueil qui touche toutes les activités sociales va impliquer un ralentissement dû au contingentement de l'accès, valorisant les activités en ligne qui peuvent être pratiquées à toute heure, de façon discontinue et en tout lieu.

Une variable primordiale s'ajoute aux termes positifs de l'équation de l'offre en ligne. Il s'agit du risque sanitaire perçu qui est une appréciation individuelle des étudiant.e.s et de leurs parents. De ce point de vue, l'enseignement en ligne, télétravail de l'étudiant.e, offre une sécurité incomparable, notamment pour les étudiant.e.s qui n'auraient pas besoin de quitter le foyer familial pour aller vivre près de nos campus. Pour ces étudiant.e.s-là, l'avantage de cette offre en ligne est également pécuniaire puisque les frais de scolarité ne sont plus majorés par les charges significatives induites par le fait de vivre hors du domicile familial.

L'offre sur site va créer comme pour tous les lieux physiques une complexité de gestion sécurisée des flux humains. Il ne serait donc pas possible de laisser aux étudiant.e.s la possibilité de passer à chaque séance d'une modalité à l'autre. On peut imaginer un engagement pris par les étudiant.e.s sur un semestre pour l'offre sur site ou pour l'offre en ligne. Pour la première, selon le rapport entre la demande des étudiant.e.s et la capacité d'accueil disponible, il faudrait pratiquer des rotations entre élèves, ce qui veut dire que même l'offre sur site aurait un caractère mixte en imposant des moments en ligne.

Quelle offre aurait le plus de valeur ? L'offre sur site parce qu'elle serait raréfiée, parce qu'elle serait plus coûteuse à mettre en œuvre qu'auparavant ? L'offre en ligne qui protégerait l'apprenant.e en impliquant un coût total moindre pour les élèves dont la famille ne réside pas à proximité de nos campus, et qui offrirait de nouveaux arbitrages entre temps d'apprentissage et temps extra-scolaire ?

Pour l'école mais aussi pour les étudiant.e.s, ces offres seraient complémentaires, si ce n'est indissociables. L'offre sur site, à la merci de nouveaux confinements, ne pourrait être viable économiquement sans l'offre en ligne et réciproquement, puisque la base des contenus proposés en ligne serait fondée sur la diffusion et l'enregistrement de l'offre sur site. Mais surtout, il s'agirait d'offrir aux étudiant.e.s en ligne la possibilité de rejoindre l'offre sur site à des moments prédéterminés et de garantir aux étudiant.e.s sur site une continuité d'apprentissage, en toutes circonstances, parce que l'offre en ligne serait déjà disponible.

Conclusion

Le plus grand défi n'est peut-être pas celui de la pédagogie mais notre capacité à offrir le lot traditionnel de l'enseignement supérieur commercial : des formations de qualité professionnalisantes et une vie extra-scolaire qui étaient indissolubles. La présence sur site, les cours, les travaux collaboratifs fournissaient les moellons et les étudiant.e.s inventaient le mortier de la vie extrascolaire, qui leur permettait de se construire à la fois comme professionnel.le.s mais aussi en tant qu'individus.

On peut désigner par *réseautage/networking* ces liens sociaux mais ce terme est probablement réducteur. Dans un article paru dans *Le Monde* daté du 12 mai 2020, David Le Breton écrit que "le masque défigure le lien social... En termes d'interaction, nous entrons dans une phase ... où les codes manquent, et il faudra les réinventer". Nous devons faciliter de nouvelles interactions tant sur site avec la distance sociale, qu'en ligne, et nous efforcer de brasser nos différentes populations pour créer une culture commune.

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La transformación del mercado de oficinas e implicaciones sobre el modelo urbano

“Structural transformation of the real estate office market and implications on urban development”

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Abstract

The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the digital transformation of companies. In this article, I argue that those “digitizable” jobs that can be done remotely three days per week may reduce the demand for office space by 60% and decrease commuting costs by 15%. As a result, the demand for housing will move away from downtown and new residential developments will include coworking space. I also argue that the office real estate market desperately needs a new health certification and that existing major certifications are not transparent enough in this respect. Finally, I discuss the difficulties to implement a flexible contract that allows tenants to stop their monthly rental payments in case of emergency. The underlying problem is the rigidity of debt that enters in the capital structure of the acquisition or development of an office building.

Keywords: Office real estate, Urban development, Covid-19, Digitizable jobs, Contracts

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La transformación del mercado de oficinas e implicaciones sobre el modelo urbano

Transformación digital de empresas y edificios: un fenómeno imparable

La transformación digital de las empresas viene jugando un papel indiscutible en la transformación del lugar de trabajo y este cambio está implementándose si cabe aún más rápido en los últimos años. El crecimiento de valores bursátiles como Microsoft y SAP con revaloraciones del 300% y 64% respectivamente en tan solo los últimos cuatro años así lo demuestra.

Las propiedades inmobiliarias también están viendo cómo las nuevas tecnologías, conocidas como PropTech, están transformando los lugares donde trabajamos, mejorando aspectos como la eficiencia energética, el tratamiento de residuos y agua, la pureza del aire, o incluso contribuyendo a reducir el efecto invernadero que los propios edificios generan. Estas empresas han logrado desarrollar, implementar y operar aplicaciones de inteligencia artificial, análisis predictivo y del “Internet of Things” (IoT) especializadas en la gestión de instalaciones que son entre 10 y 100 veces más rápidas y eficientes que los enfoques tradicionales. Las innovaciones tecnológicas van aún más allá, permitiendo a las personas caminar, modificar y compartir entornos digitales en dispositivos, sin necesidad de estar presente en el edificio.

La crisis Covid-19 no ha hecho más que acelerar la transformación digital y el mercado así lo reconoce. Durante esta crisis, empresas como Microsoft y SAP se han convertido en valores refugio junto al oro, experimentando recuperaciones en V con subidas superiores al 25% desde el estallido bursátil de la crisis el 21 de febrero del 2020. El papel de la conectividad digital en la economía es indiscutible.

El éxito de la conectividad digital no solo depende del software tecnológico que la empresa adquiera, pero también en la inversión en formación de capital humano. La escuela de negocios ESCP lleva ofreciendo muchos años desde una posición de liderazgo programas de transformación digital enfocados a ejecutivos y empresas. Contamos con más de 23 grandes clientes entre los que se encuentran grandes empresas como Repsol, Indra, Banco Santander y Aatos. Todas ellas, ya venían invirtiendo de manera constante en temas digitales, y por supuesto en conectividad, lo cual ha permitido incorporar muchos programas de formación y desarrollo apoyados en tecnología y redes. Prácticamente, el 80% de nuestros contratos en la actualidad incorporan en su desarrollo contenidos en línea, comunidades de aprendizaje y actividades colaborativas. Es cierto que a partir del Covid-19 se ha generalizado esta forma de trabajar, especialmente en formación corporativa. Ahora mismo, todos ellos nos piden hacer una aproximación completamente digital a los programas que les vendemos, es decir que nadie está pensando en parar y recuperar modelos anteriores cuando esto pase, sino que están abrazando otra posibilidad de trabajar en la formación de sus equipos, donde la digitalización es un fenómeno imparable.

Modelo de trabajo y desarrollo urbano tras el Covid-19

La transformación digital lleva consigo un cambio estructural revolucionario en el modelo de trabajo y desarrollo urbano. Esta transformación estructural de la economía nos llevará inevitablemente a rediseñar los lugares de trabajo tanto en oficinas como la propia vivienda.

Así, por ejemplo, el hecho que un trabajador desempeñe sus funciones en remoto tres días a la semana conlleva una reducción de presencia física en oficina de un 60% al mes. El efecto final en la demanda de espacio de oficinas de las empresas dependerá del porcentaje de trabajadores “digitalizables” de la empresa en cuestión.

Así mismo, en las grandes ciudades el trabajador podría ahorrar dos horas al día en tiempo y costes asociados al desplazamiento, lo que implicaría un ahorro de hasta seis horas por semana. Esto supone una disminución en tiempo y costes equivalente al 15% respecto a una jornada laboral de 40 horas semanales. Esta disminución aumentaría claramente la productividad del trabajo y podría jugar un papel fundamental a la hora de implementar políticas de conciliación familiar y aumento de natalidad.

El sector residencial también experimentará un drástico cambio. Por un lado, la disminución de los costes de transporte asociados a la actividad laboral implicará una reorientación de la demanda de residencial hacia el extrarradio, donde los individuos y sus familias puedan disfrutar de espacios verdes y una vida más sana en general. Por otro lado, los conceptos de “coliving” y “coworking” podrían llegar fusionarse, reservando espacios de trabajo en edificios residenciales para que los inquilinos puedan desempeñar sus actividades laborales.

La transformación digital de la economía del trabajo ha venido para quedarse. Incluso en el caso favorable de ausencia de nuevas oleadas del virus y la eliminación de medidas de distanciamiento social, aún habrá empresas con gran endeudamiento que tendrán que recortar costes para no entrar en situación de impago. La experiencia vivida reciente puede llevar a estas empresas a rediseñar sus estrategias laborales, sobre todo en puestos de trabajo “digitalizables”, favoreciendo el trabajo en remoto y economizando en espacio.

Certificación Sanitaria

En 2018 una encuesta de “Dodge Data and Analytics” mostraba que un 77% de los encuestados pensaba que la salud y el bienestar de los individuos es la razón principal por la que se deben construir edificios “verdes” y sostenibles. Probablemente hoy en día, tras la crisis sanitaria del Covid-19, este porcentaje se haya afianzado o incluso aumentado en los diferentes estratos de la sociedad.

Las certificaciones de edificios pueden jugar un papel fundamental en la implementación de medidas de salud y bienestar que perduren en el tiempo. Actualmente las empresas de certificación de edificios líderes en el sector, como LEEDS y BREAM, ponderan un 23.5% el bienestar del usuario en el interior del edificio y es posible ver un aumento de este porcentaje en el futuro tras la crisis sanitaria vivida.

Sin embargo, el problema de la mayoría de las empresas certificadoras de edificios es que éstas no ofrecen un acceso transparente a sus evaluaciones por categoría. Es decir, las certificaciones señalan que un edificio ha superado una mínima puntuación de media, incluyendo en esta media categorías tan dispares como salud, bienestar, ahorro de energía, tratamiento de residuos y agua, materiales e innovación, pero no se hacen públicas las evaluaciones por categoría, siendo por lo tanto imposible entender si un edificio desempeña un buen papel en higiene y calidad del aire. A mi entender, existe espacio para una nueva certificación transparente que se enfoque exclusivamente en estos aspectos.

Valoración de inmuebles y abordaje contractual

La crisis Covid-19 está perjudicando a todos los estratos de la sociedad, desde trabajadores asalariados y por cuenta propia hasta grandes empresarios. Los ahorradores y personas dependientes de subsidios estatales, como desempleados, jubilados y personas con discapacidades físicas y mentales, se pueden ver afectados por un colapso del Estado ante la ingente deuda acumulada hasta el momento. En el mercado inmobiliario, algunos propietarios están viendo cómo sus rentas de alquiler se han reducido o incluso suspendido temporalmente. Esto tiene un efecto negativo sobre aquellos pequeños inversores que depositaron sus ahorros en fondos de inversión y SOCIMIs.

A la hora de evaluar el impacto de las quitas a la renta sobre el valor del edificio, el escenario que observamos parece divergir de un abordaje racional de valoración. Un edificio se valora descontando los flujos de renta que genera en el largo plazo. Para una inversión de 30 años, la pérdida de 3 meses de renta no llega a representar el 1% de su valor. Actualmente estamos observando un duro castigo a SOCIMIs como Merlin Properties, cuya capitalización llegó a caer un 49% desde el comienzo del crash bursátil el 21 de Febrero del 2020. Actualmente la caída es alrededor de un 36%, aún lejos de su valor fundamental pre-crisis.

Actualmente se está debatiendo en diferentes medios la posibilidad de que las nuevas exigencias contractuales sean soluciones flexibles en cuanto a un obligado cumplimiento se refiere. Los casos extremos son contratos de alquiler a largo plazo versus soluciones intermedias como el "coworking", donde se permite al usuario flexibilidad a la hora de decidir espacio y tiempo de utilización. La dificultad de flexibilizar los contratos radica en primer lugar en la financiación de la adquisición o construcción. La deuda es un componente importante de la estructura de capital de una operación inmobiliaria y su amortización tiene prioridad sobre el retorno del capital a la hora de distribuir las rentas generadas por el edificio. Esto lleva a que los contratos tengan que asegurar una facturación mínima para no incurrir en impago de deuda. De ahí la dificultad de flexibilización de las rentas en función de variables como la facturación, el espacio y el periodo del alquiler. El diseño de los contratos variables debería consistir pues en una renta mínima significativamente elevada para cubrir la deuda y una renta variable sobre la facturación que se ajuste al retorno esperado de los inversores de capital. La prima que se paga por dicha flexibilidad se establece para remunerar el riesgo adicional incurrido por el capital. Actualmente estamos viendo cómo modelos de coworking están consiguiendo cierto espacio en el mercado de oficinas, incluso llegando a desplazar a fondos patrimonialistas. Cuál será el modelo predominante de contratos de alquiler de oficinas es una cuestión que solo sabremos en un futuro.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are so grateful to the authors for all the contributions they have done in this first edition of the ESCP Impact Papers. We would like to acknowledge the skilled and tireless assistance of Chantal Gueudar Delahaye, Anne Marie, and Liliane Cabrini Carmagnac. Special thanks to Helena Magis and Dimitri Champollion for their immense support. We are grateful to Charles Du Breuil, Vincent Blanc, and Lionel Laverdure for their technical support. Warm thanks go to Emmanuel Surun, Sandrine Kiefer, and Pascale Pernet for coordination and dissemination with Chairs. We are also deeply grateful to Frank Bournois and Valérie Moatti for their strong support. Finally, we want to express our gratitude to our families for all of the love, support, and encouragement they have given along this journey.

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