

MINIMAX

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION AT STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

QUARANTINE



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The time has come for the final Minimax issue for this semester. This last period has in ways felt like an eternity, but at the same time left us wanting more. At times it has felt like the monster of impending deadlines never will stop knocking on your door and the lack of inspiration eats away on you. But the moments of euphoria when you get ~in the zone~ and just create make it all worth it. It's bittersweet to say goodbye.

To have a source of comfort and a distraction from everything else is almost crucial to get by, especially during these strange times. The creative process has become more important than ever.

We hope this issue can bring you the same feeling of contentment and the peace we all need. You might be running out of things to do, or have been neglecting your well-being during self isolation and need a pick-me-up? Or maybe you're just curious on how Sweden is perceived through the eyes of a foreigner. Don't worry- this issue's got you my friend. The Quarantine Issue is inspired by the tragic times we are in, but also inspired by the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you for this year!

Linn & Fadak



AROUND THE WORLD

Regardless of what you think, Sweden's approach to tackling the Coronavirus has been, by European standards, an anomaly. Around the world, as of 3rd April 2020, more than half of humanity are in some form of lockdown. Minimax contacted people around the world to ask how has COVID-19 changed their life.

IN 19 COVIDS

OTTAWA, CANADA

There has been a huge spike in racism towards Asians. Recently an Asian man was stabbed in Montreal and Asian stores in Toronto have been vandalised. Being pretty much born and raised in North America, I have never been more aware of my ethnicity. Many provinces in Canada have instituted fines for gatherings of three or more. A silver lining is we are updated continuously with the truth of what is happening and what measures need to be taken.

PARIS, FRANCE

For most people in France, life started changing with the announcement of bars, restaurants and schools closing. For me, life has started changing as early as the beginning of the outbreak in China. Being ethnically Chinese in Europe, I have felt especially oppressed and threatened the first weeks of the global outbreak. People are now starting to realise that the virus does not discriminate and I am not any more likely to be infected than them.

NAMUR, BELGIUM

We have been in lockdown for three weeks now and the university courses will be held online until the end of the year. The campus is a ghost town as everyone has gone back home. The only upside to this whole situation is that I will maybe finish my thesis on time, now that I have no excuse not to work on it.

JAMBUR, THE GAMBIA

Whilst the containment and preventative restrictions here are expected to cause considerable pain to region's economics, the economic turmoil in developed countries also threatens the vital remittance inflows from expatriates abroad. However, the private sector and multilateral agencies have shown an enormous amount of goodwill during this period. Here, private individuals and businesses have donated over GMD 15 million to complement the government's efforts who face significant budget constraints.

KORINTH, GREECE

People are adapting to the new lifestyle by moving all operational capabilities to the digital environment. Should people want to go outside, they will have to send a message to the number 130003 and state the reason for vacating their premises by choosing one of the default options. Anyone in violation of this procedure will be subjected to a 150 euro fine. The COVID-19 outbreak is sure to disrupt Greece's path towards financial stability. However in coordination with the IMF and European commission a support program of 2 billion euros has been approved.

TOKYO, JAPAN


Up until recently, things have been fairly normal, except that all foreign tourists are gone, especially those from Asia, who make up the vast majority of visitors here. While they closed schools early on, everything else proceeded like usual. The number of cases was very low at first, but once the Olympics were postponed, the number of reported cases started to pick up. So now, with the weather getting warmer and the cherry blossoms peaking, the Tokyo governor has asked everyone to stay home on weekends and evenings. Most stores have closed voluntarily over the weekend, and the streets are very empty.

QOM, IRAN


Everything feels surreal, all of a sudden I was laid off work and am sat at home along with my wife and children. But I still felt lucky compared to other Iranians. Being a civil servant means having certain financial security that many self-employed or otherwise don't have. After fearing that my brother-in-law, who had just come into contact with the disease, had just visited my house prior to knowing of his contact, my fear turned to reality when my wife's test results came back positive for COVID-19 and had to quarantine herself away from the family. The hardest thing was accepting the fact that the situation is out of my control and coming to terms with the feeling of helplessness. Thankfully both my brother in law and my wife recovered and returned back to their families.

IRIGA CITY, PHILIPPINES


The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the lives of every Filipino. Schools were suspended, so teachers have had to conduct their lessons online. The Mother or elder in a household, who used to go to the market as a part of their early morning routine to buy fresh produce, now have to wait in a long queue in the supermarket to buy and stock their groceries for a week or month consumption.

 **NEW YORK CITY, USA**

I am forced to work from home, and I hate it. I'm on a forced lockdown, so I have very minimal interaction with others apart from some conference calls with my colleagues. The streets are deserted; the only people you meet are dog owners, and I've never seen anything quite like it. Frankly, it's a little bit spooky. Supposedly, a lot of people are hanging around in Central Park, though I stay far away. They say we are about to hit the peak in a week or two, but I'm worried that things won't go back to normal for at least another month or so.

 **SHEFFIELD, UK**


People didn't take the government's advice seriously to begin with; some not believing that COVID-19 existed. Now, with daily press conferences from the government and a new sense of community, people are coming together for the first time. Once a week, millions of people have come together to applaud our healthcare workers on their doorsteps for their work including the Queen and the Prime Minister. The situation is horrific but the feeling of community is inspiring.

 **HONG KONG SAR, CHINA**


Given the proximity to China, it is astonishing that Hong Kong has not seen similar figures to that of Europe. There are probably 2 reasons for this: firstly the memory of the SARS outbreak is still fresh on everyone's minds so everyone reacted quickly without conviction. Second, mask wearing culture and hygiene awareness is part of everyday life in Hong Kong. Day to day life has almost continued from the shutdown caused by the riots of 2019; shops are remaining closed, people are continuing to work from home and transport restrictions are still in place. Perhaps this shook economy has been rattled enough to become more resilient than others.

 **AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS**


Some don't want a full-scale lockdown. The government's strategy is to equally spread the virus and making people gradually immune to the disease in an attempt to not overload hospitals. I'm just happy that I can still go out a bit without having to explain why I'm going out.

 **CAIRO, EGYPT**


My university has been cancelled for 2 weeks and it has caused a lot of inconvenience with distance learning since not everyone has good access to wifi. The educational system was a little bit disrupted since online meetings are not smooth and the chat keeps getting interrupted due to bad internet quality.

 **HO CHI MINH, VIETNAM**


Compared to most other Asian countries, Vietnam's precautionary measures to fight the virus spread has seemed less noticeable. Although many stores and restaurants are closed, almost all marketplaces on the streets are still open (and there are heaps of them). There are still crowds of people wandering the streets, and despite the government imposing a rule that everyone needs to wear face masks, not that many actually do. All in all the liveliness on the streets of Vietnam haven't changed that much.

 **MILAN, ITALY**


I lost my job because of this pandemic. In this kind of situation, it is difficult for me to look for another job because I am scared to leave the house and contract the virus. More so, I am scared of what tomorrow holds, how will I take care of my family now?

 **KOLKATA, INDIA**


I am a Mexican living in India; the spread of COVID-19 here has sparked ignorance. People who are foreign or European in appearance are avoided out of fear. I was planning on volunteering for a charity project which cooks food for people suffering from the virus, but because of this irrationality, I chose not to participate. This irrational fear is hindering

 **BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA**

Our geographical isolation and luck have contributed to our relative low number of cases especially as our reaction wasn't as quick as other countries. Our travel bans, healthcare standards, government policy responses both economically and in public health and collective values have helped enormously. The collective action even before it was mandated is something we should be incredibly proud of.

 **RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL**

People are really anxious about their jobs and the future, especially in Rio where it is so expensive to live. People can't go into the streets or to the beach with police officers all over trying to control it. For such a social nation, being stuck inside is very difficult. However, we are also really witty in making the best out of the worst. That's how we've always dealt with every bad situation and it's the same with this one right now.

 **WERDER, ETHIOPIA**

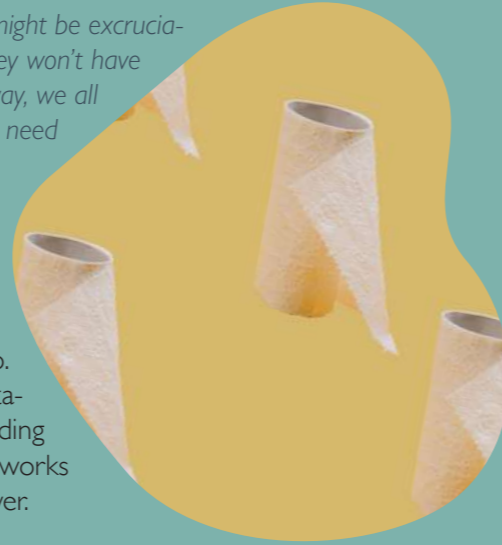
Schools are closed but food markets are open and life in general hasn't changed that much. We don't feel the presence of virus but are aware of it and talk about it a lot.

NEW ROUTINES FOR QUARANTINE

As we are all taking our societal responsibility by voluntarily self-isolating, some of us might be excruciatingly bored from having “nothing” to do, while others might be relieved since now they won’t have to make up excuses for not going to the gym or cancelling plans with friends. Either way, we all spend more time at home (or wherever we are self-isolating) and for those of you who need a little inspiration on what to do with that time; here you go!

Treat yourself with some self-love

You never actually prioritise taking care of yourself, do you? There’s always something “more important” that comes in the way, such as going out partying or watching netflix. But hey, you need to realize your worth and start showing yourself some self-love by taking care of not only your body, but your mind too. And now is the perfect time to do it! Try working out at home or meditating, taking your vitamins and drinking a lot of water, doing face masks and massages, finding a good skincare-routine and letting your hair rest from heating-tools. Find what works for you- and you will come out of this quarantine happier and healthier than ever.



Clean out the closet

Ahhh, is there a better feeling than getting rid of stuff you don’t need and donating it to those who do? Cleaning out your wardrobe and drawers takes time, yes, and that’s probably why we avoid doing it. But there’s no need to push on it further, since now we’ve got all the time for it! And it’s totally worth it, you always find something you thought you had lost, or something that you put away years ago cause it wasn’t your style, but now that you see it again, it could actually work? And who would say no to getting some order in there to save you a lot of time later in return? No one, that’s right. And the best part - donating what you don’t need anymore to those who do, or selling it second-hand to give your things a second life and help save the planet! Win, win, win.

Develop your mind

Finally take time to catch up on all the reading you’ve been missing out on all these years, trust me - you’ll learn a whole lot and grow your mind with new perspectives. It can be any kind of book, for example on self-development, AI or anything you take interest in, but a few recommendations of mine are The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck by Mark Manson, The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho and Our Final Invention by James Barrat.

Do something creative

Write a song, paint a painting, write a novel, produce a movie or stimulate your creativity in some other way. Not only is it fun and exciting at the same time as it’s calming (crazy how that works), it actually improves your brain function and overall health too! According to Forbes magazine, doing something creative develops our focus, reduces our anxiety and when we’ve finished the creation our brain floods with dopamine!

Learn something new

Make the most of the time you’ve got and make yourself better equipped for your amazing future. Take an online language-class, programming-class, negotiating-class or anything you’ve always wanted to learn. Just do whatever makes you happy - but it doesn’t hurt if it benefits you somehow in the future, right? Happy learning!

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Pandemic

*Indiscriminately,
The virus spreads.*

*From person to person,
From country to country,
Rampantly, rapidly, ravagingly,
It races through towns and cities,
Homes and households, friends and families.*

*It is ruthless. It bows to no master, yields to no cure,
Causing catastrophe and crisis, hardship and heartbreak.
Numbers continue to grow and grow, but the statistics don’t show
The despair and fear of lost livelihoods, the frightened wonders of where to go
Let alone the countless names, faces, hearts, minds, “hi”s and “goodbye”s – lives
Cut short forever.*

*Fathers, sisters, uncles, grandparents, mothers, sons, and brothers; gone.
The pain, the struggle, the grief, the loss, the tumult, the turmoil, the stress: All of it is universal
But every cloud has a silver lining, no matter how thunderous, dark, and scary it may seem.*

*An unprecedented emergency, the situation has also brought an unprecedented response
Feats of incredible courage and stories of immense strength are springing to light
Along with the immeasurable bravery shown by those on the front lines,
Working tirelessly to combat the complete collapse of society.*

*“The great equalizer;” the virus has transcended borders,
Cultures, and races; ages, lifestyles, and wages;
We are all weathering this storm together.*

*The consequences from corona
Will be felt for a while to come.
But of all things to remember,
The Solidarity and sacrifice
Shown should be one.*

WHAT THE ~~FUCK~~ SWEDEN ?

I've been living here in Sweden now for almost eight months, and whilst Swedish lifestyle has been a pleasant surprise to me, (particular thanks go to saunas and fika), I have been compiling an ever-growing list all the while. I call it the What the **** Sweden list and as this is the last issue of the year, I think it's time to share.

Systembolaget

Of course I have to start with systemet. Whilst I'm somewhat bemused at the efficacy of the system, I can't seem to shake off my frustration. Nevertheless, waiting in line on a Friday evening just for a lukewarm tall boy is suboptimal.



Banana Pizza

Living in the world of pineapple pizza memes, I cannot get my head around this whole banana curry pizza concoction that Swedes seem to rave about. Disclaimer: I'm yet to try one, but I just can't seem to fathom how this is a delicacy I should crave?! What is going on?

Dill

On the topic of food, I've been really surprised at the amount of dill I've found just lying around places. Maybe because you Swedes just love a good fish dish, I don't know. What I can say with full certainty is that it is definitely not a herb that I've been in frequent contact with in the past, but have seen and used my fair share since crossing the North Sea.



Julmust and Påskmust

Continuing this food saga, I've got to ask what this obsession with holiday soft drinks is all about? It's just a jazzy cola. What a great marketing ploy for these companies though, bravo.

Cash my outside (the country)

Back home and in so many other places, it is not uncommon to be stuck with minimum card spends or cash only gaffs, yet Sweden as always likes to be a little bit different. I came here with a crisp 500 kronor note that is still lying around waiting to be used.



One word is not enough
I remember the first time I came to Sweden in 2017, I found it a bit endearing to hear hej hej instead of just hej. Now I realise that this doubling of words is not limited to hej. We have tack tack, tjena tjena, puss puss, oj oj ... the list goes on....

Unisex toilets

It's not really a bemusement but more of a pleasant surprise that this is just accepted as normal here. The first time I visited the facilities at SSE, I walked through the door to see two ladies at the sink and I gave myself a massive shock and walked straight out apologising. Little did I know this is just everybody's facility and it is common in most venues.



Snus

What a strange Swedish concoction this is. At first, I thought this was fancy chewing gum and people had itchy teeth, but I now realise it's the new fad for breakaway teens. This is just a strange observation to me, yet it's surprisingly common and normal here.

Trust in society

Working in a restaurant, I was so shocked at the lack of cameras and stock checks, and a flatter, more trusting hierarchy. This trust that Swedes bestow upon society in all shapes and forms is probably one of the reasons I love this country so much.



K

I can't finish my unfinished list without mentioning the one thing that I really really REALLY can't get my head around: the Swedish language. There's so much to discuss but let's just discuss some of those impossibly indistinguishable sounds: the k, the rs, the stj, tj and sj. Please Sweden sort this out, I don't know which words we're talking about.

icons : Pixabay

TEXT // EATHAN O'LEARY
DESIGN // ALIX DEBOUX

DENNA SIDAN SKA ÄNDRAS!!!!



TRAVEL LIKE A SWEDE

Your trip to Greece got cancelled, and that summer party you were looking forward to will most likely not happen. The coronavirus has made us cancel most of our plans. But does this mean you can't do anything fun this summer? Of course not.

It so happens that we live in a country full of places to explore, even if we might forget it sometimes. From the beautiful Norrland, to the West coast, to the adventures right here in Stockholm- Sweden has a lot more to offer than you might know. So this summer, let us support Swedish businesses, discover something new, and tourist in our own country. Whether you're a Swedish native or here on exchange, this summer, enjoy a plate of meatballs, listen to Ted Gärdestad, and take this opportunity to explore Sweden. (and as always, take at-risk groups in consideration while travelling. If you have symptoms, it might be better to vacay at home)

Sandhamn, Stockholm Archipelago

A day trip to Sandhamn, or any of the islands in the Stockholm Archipelago is the perfect thing to do on a Summer's day. Have a picnic, and seek out just the spot to relax all day with your friends and family.

Sigtuna

Sweden's oldest city. Discover where and how Sweden began through medieval churches, ruins, castles and rune stones from the Viking ages.

Treehouse Hotel, Islanna

If you're not afraid of heights, Islanna Treehouse Hotel offers a very unique and exciting stay. Climb up into a lodge hovering in the air, and listen to the breeze blowing through the treetops. Kind of like Bridge to Terabithia, but without the sad part.

Kungsleden, Norrland

A long hike in Kungsleden is another great Summer activity, for both mind, body and soul. This is a great opportunity to bring your most stressed-out friend or family member on a Hobbit-like adventure.

Norrqvarn Hotell & Konferens, Göta Kanal

Perhaps this is what Electric Banana band referred to when they sang "Jag vill bo i en svamp (I want to live in a mushroom)". Choose between staying in a fly agaric or a Tree Stump. Need I say more?

Cold Bath House, Varberg

One of the most picturesque visits in Sweden, and

probably one of the most relaxing spots in this list, as long as you can handle the (probably) cold water.

Trolleholm Castle, Svalöv

Live out your Once upon a time and visit one of Sweden's magnificent castles built in 1760. Unfortunately the castle isn't open for the public, but a peek from outside is just as breathtaking. Gotska Sandön, "Pirate island", Östersjön One of the most remote islands in Sweden, with breathtaking beaches, pine tree forests and diverse animal life. Take the boat from Nynäshamn or Fårösund, Gotland. There are different sleeping arrangements, from renting a cabin to hostels, camping or even renting a tent.

The Troll Forest, Borgholm

If you still haven't had enough of that fairytale-like feeling, the Troll Forest might just be what you need. These creepy crooked pine trees, windswept and grazed, are sure to give a shivering sense of evil down your spine.

Kyrkö Car Cemetery, Tingsryd

Our last spot is the Car Graveyard in the woods of Kyrkö, with tons of old cars from the post-war era, having let nature take its toll on them. Creepy, cool, or a bit of both, this sure isn't something you see everyday.

So whether you're looking for a quick drive-by or a longer stay, maybe a few of these places can contribute to your Summer plans. All you need is a good road trip playlist, and you're good to go.



NAMES: MICHELLE & RASMUS
INSTAGRAM: @CAR.AGAINST.HUMANITY
FROM: ESKILSTUNA, SWEDEN
LAST TRIP: SWEDEN TO SPAIN AND PORTUGAL (DECEMBER 2019-MARCH 2020)
DREAM TRIP: SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA

'It wasn't that long ago that giving up your home to live in a van would have been considered desperate or crazy. But today people all over the world are embracing the vanlife movement'
- Matt D'Avella

The Canadian winter had started to clear in late April 2018 and as my exchange year was coming to an end, I was taking the opportunity to go around some of Montreal's most aesthetic neighbourhoods for some photography. A friend and I had parked ourselves on a bench in front of some colourful townhouses when a voice approaches from behind us. Shouting 'hey what's up' in a thick German accent, a tall, twenty-something guy shuffled over to our bench with an overflowing turtle shell rucksack, winter beard, and professionally sized camera.

Max Schneider introduced himself as a new arrival in Canada on a working holiday visa. He had a way with his words that told me he was well educated, but had a care-free attitude towards life right now. As he explained his situation, I saw why. He told us that he came to Canada from Austria, where he had been working on a ski resort following the completion of his engineering degree. He had just bought a van and was planning on converting it into a mobile home, before travelling the width of Canada in it alone. To my naive student self, this seemed like a fictional adventure tale more than reality.

After coming back home in May, I continued to follow Max's story online, fascinated by his innovation and courage. The nomadic energy he held was inspiring,

yet the volatility of his passion didn't seem of any concern to him. As the weeks went on, he continued to update his followers on his van's progress, from the conversion frustrations to the successes of each installation, until finally, he had built his home on wheels and took off.

Two years later, Max still lives in a van, (although not the original), and hasn't driven outside of Canada: still exploring, still living the nomadic life. Since then, I've expanded on my consumption of vanlife and other nomadic lifestyle stories, ranging from tales of backpackers in Australia lapping the continent to couples journeying down the American landmass.

Christian and Audrey Matney started their journey in Austin, Texas, where they decided to minimise their belongings and move into the smallest, most versatile space they could think of: a van. With no shower, permanent bed, or bathroom, they began travelling around the United States. Sitting down to talk to Matt D'Avella in his podcast, The Ground Up Show, they talked about the surprising ease of their unconventional lifestyle. Showering in gyms, adapting their home into a social workspace, and exploring their country, they conveyed a sense of genuine gratitude for the present, the same that Max gave off back in Montreal.

In Europe, the appeal of living in a van is arguably more attractive. With so many cultures, gastronomies, and historical sights in such close proximity, open borders, and less empty spaces, it's a van lifer's paradise.

Speaking to Rasmus and Michelle from @car.against. humanity, I learned how easy it is to realise this dream in today's day and age.

The couple have been living together in their Eskilstuna apartment for six years where Rasmus has been working as an electrician and Michelle as a manager for a store. She described her work life to me as an overload. "I would go to work at 7 in the morning with Rasmus and I would be there until we closed at 8 in the evening. I felt like I had to do everything, it couldn't wait until tomorrow" she told me.

After returning from a trip to New Zealand, they met a number of "vanlifers" and an idea had been planted. Rasmus explained how, upon returning, they found a Swedish vanlifer who they started to follow on Instagram — but the idea of living in a van for the couple was really put on hold whilst they were at home. Just as I had dismissed Max's life as a fantasy in Montreal, to them, it too seemed like a crazy dream. "I started to look for cars and the idea came back up again. We had a lot of things at work; it was really exhausting" Rasmus said.



In this description, it's difficult to understand why we've grown as humans to prefer a stable home over a nomadic lifestyle? Perhaps we have grown close to comforts, perhaps we've learned to love insurance or value stability in our surroundings. Another explanation links to many of my previous articles for Minimax: we fear the reaction of society. "When we said we were going to live in a van and travel around, all of our friends were like you're crazy" Michelle told me. "Most of our friends are in a couple and are having kids and we wanted to have a van and a dog". This reaction however, didn't stop them from achieving their dreams and they now plan on taking this vanlife and turning it into a full-time lifestyle. They explained that as soon as they converted the van, it felt like home, and they wanted to move in right away. Now they're selling their possessions, minimising their clutter, and moving into their home on wheels in the summer.

Any way that I look at my experiences with the vanlife, it seems to come back to the theme of escape. When I first met Max back on that spring day in Montreal, I truly believed he was escaping reality and living in a land filled with fiction. Yet the more I've watched him, studied anthropology, and listened to Michelle and Rasmus describe their adventures with enormous smiles on their faces, it has become obvious that we, as civilised folk, are escaping. Escaping from social freedom. escaping from our natural urges to be at one with our surroundings. Escaping from the possibilities of living in the moment.

spoke about wanting to try different careers and even start something off on herself. Their definition of living appeared to extend far beyond how their next paycheck comes in and this reminded me of Max in Montreal. As an educated engineer, he had chosen to disregard that and instead step out of the bubble of expectation into the real world. Perhaps living is much more than just earning one.

When I asked how it was to socialise living nomadically, Michelle couldn't have described a more easygoing life. "We mostly hung out with van people. We met Sandra [another Vanlifer] at a meet-up in Sweden and clicked right there. We messaged on Instagram and suddenly decided we would go from Sweden to Spain and travel and hang out." Even Max travelling solo in his van for two years never seems to be alone. What strikes me is that these people who have truly pointed their fingers at civilisation for forcing us into this box of expectation have had an easier time meeting fellow rebels of society and forming truly lasting friendships than most of us choosing to stay in the herd. Anthropologically speaking, the journey to Spain that Michelle and Rasmus described to me seemed parallel to that of our forager ancestors: they travelled in a group of vanlifers, were more social than ever, and truly prospered.

"I had to have something else to do besides work otherwise I would be there all day". Hearing Michelle say this really resonated with me. The search for a release is a daily struggle and especially for a release which contributes to our future. In January 2019, Michelle and Rasmus bought their release and started the year long conversion of their new home.

Listening to how these brave adventurers took the leap of faith and lived in a van was nostalgic to me. It represented crossing a barrier of fear. One which constantly holds me back in most of my decisions: the what if question. The element to which we're brought up risk averse is no more present when we make the largest life decisions: career, partner, home.

Looking into the career component: the world is now waking up to a career on the road. Remote working is becoming increasingly prosperous in all compatible professions. Even going to SSE, the expected career path is malleable at worst and false at best. Rasmus and Michelle appeared to be more focused on other aspects of life very early on in our chat. Michelle





QUARANTINE ISN'T “NICE”

Isn't it just so nice not having to go to school, not having to go to work, just chilling at home watching netflix all day? Well, if that's how you think about quarantine, maybe you should call the economy and order a reality check.

If you didn't know, quarantine has among other things led to lost work, supply chain failures, unemployment and businesses slowing or even closing down. Not only is the economy heavily impacted by the current situation, but many social aspects of quarantine are also concerning. Women's rights organizations around the world are sounding alarms as the number of reports on domestic violence has skyrocketed, and some side effects of self-isolation and social distancing include loneliness, depressive symptoms and other mental health issues. Of course you are allowed to enjoy your present state, rather you do than you don't, but please understand that it is enormously privileged to say that it's all just so chill and wonderful, when so many lives and factors are crumbling down because of it.

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THE UNEXPECTED WINNERS

In 2002, the Chinese tech giant Alibaba existed solely as an online B2B marketplace helping Chinese firms sell their products around the world. When one of the company's employees contracted SARS in 2003, founder Jack Ma made the quick decision to quarantine all of his staff at their homes in desperation for the firm to survive. Ma hosted a hack-a-thon executive lockdown in his Hangzhou apartment to finish building the consumer-focused Taobao which was due to launch at the same time. The site was launched on May 10 2003 just at the time when millions of Chinese workers were stuck at home demanding online purchases to be delivered to them. The rest is history.

In times of darkness now, it is easy to get lost in the many companies struggling to survive following the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. Yet some businesses are thriving in this quarantine normality millions are finding themselves in. Most of these lucky firms are in fact prospering from helping the hardest hit companies and those trapped at home.

No stranger of the Stockholm metro would have undoubtedly noticed the many advertisements for the mobile doctor Kry. The company is thriving from the many patients and doctors who are seeing infirmaries as unsafe during this time and allows people to video call healthcare specialists for consultation. Digital healthcare is not just present in Sweden. Online pharmacies in China are booming as many workers are still choosing to work from home and seeking to get their pharmaceutical purchases delivered to their doors.

Digitalisation is the key, it seems, to the safety of the firm. With millions bound at home, time voids are ubiquitous. Many are reporting back on their quarantine pass times with stories of bingeing online content. Looking at Netflix stock prices, it is hard to see a non-transitory shock. The launch of Disney plus has no doubt also cushioned the blow to the tourist downturn the

company is suffering. Whilst Netflix and HBO have paused production in many countries, they may still be able to rely on their huge catalog to push through.

Meanwhile, Amazon has enjoyed the rise in bingers flocking to its streaming service on top of their demand for home deliveries. In the UK, warehouses are struggling to cope with the increased demand and have gone into a hiring spree. Meanwhile other food delivery services are prospering from the increase in empty restaurants seeking to bring their food to the doorsteps of their usual customers. UberEats and Deliveroo have adopted a contact-free delivery service, while Karma has shifted their business plan to connect hungry users to restaurants serving fresh food at counter prices.

Nonetheless, we can't ignore the elephant in the room. The force that has kept schools, companies and even governments running: Zoom. Whilst not new, the digital video communication software firm has expanded to accommodate the new demand in remote working. Working and studying from home has come with challenges for projects requiring certain degrees of collaboration, however the now well-known company has been a true winner of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Looking beyond the companies prospering now, other socioeconomic impacts are likely to have future knock on impacts. Experts are already predicting a baby boom beginning in December 2020. This could have a stark impact on countries that are seeing declining populations such as in the Baltics and especially in Southern European states where the dependency ratio is continuing to fall resulting in a high degree of pressure on European welfare states. Perhaps a big relief for countries such as Italy who appears to be spiralling into a debt abyss right now.

Whilst many political leaders have been windswept with criticism for their hesitation, some have prospered. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has for the first time achieved a net-positive popularity poll indicating his supporters outweigh his detractors. Chancellor Rishi Sunak has prospered even more after revealing the most generous stimulus package in the right-wing Conservative Party's history. Sunak is now the favourite to be the next Prime Minister.

As many find themselves unexpectedly jobless or bound to the same four walls for the majority of the day, there has been a surge in online learning. Both Harvard and MIT have responded generously by releasing an array of free online courses in topics ranging from anthropology to computer science. Other sites teaching more specific skills such as coding, digital marketing and writing have begun massive marketing campaigns in response to an increased demand in an ever-competitive market. There never seems to be a loser in the field of self-development.

Perhaps we have seen the new Alibaba emerge in this mist of triumphs, although the clouds will have to clear before we can truly inspect the aftermath.

TEXT // ETHAN O'LEARY
DESIGN // EDDIE HAGBERG

“Perhaps we have seen the new Alibaba emerge in this mist of triumphs, although the clouds will have to clear before we can truly inspect the aftermath.”

REFLECT UPON YOUR CHANGED CONSUMPTION DURING CORONA

The Corona crisis has spread rapidly through Sweden. Something else which has simultaneously spread through our country is the depleting of the shelves in supermarkets and pharmacies. While some things are consumed in larger quantities (toilet paper, pasta, medicines), others are consumed in smaller quantities (flights to Thailand, cinema, events). This is a perfect opportunity for individuals to reflect on the drastic change of their consumption pattern. Are you happier by consuming the things that you have bought more of? Does buying more things really make you happier? Are you unhappier because you miss the things that you no longer buy?

Consumption is essential for how our high living standards have been achieved and have been maintained. It is how we eat, live, travel, socialize and dress ourselves. Common to all sorts of consumption is that it should enhance your life, reduce obstacles, and contribute to an increasing well-being — this is the purpose of consumption. Could it be that you sometimes consume without having this purpose in mind? In that case, it is a good idea to identify when it happens and why, since it could have an overall negative impact - both on yourself and on society as a whole.

Perhaps you are one of many who have bought more wine, had digital hangouts with your friends or has been forced to cancel a trip abroad. Many feelings arise from the drastic changes of plans that affect us

all, but a positive consequence is that we get a break and get more time to reflect. We want to encourage you to seize this opportunity to evaluate your new way of consuming. This can lead to discoveries that increase your well-being even after the pandemic.

The notion that more consumption doesn't necessarily lead to increased happiness has support in economic research. The relative income hypothesis, first developed by James Duesenberry, is highly relevant today. It states that the utility or satisfaction of an individual from a certain consumption level does not depend on the absolute level of consumption, but instead on how it compares to the average consumption of society. In other words, how much you enjoy your consumption depends on how much you consume in relation to others. Furthermore, you also care about your past consumption levels, and compare your current consumption with your old one. A phenomenon not completely unlike drug addiction, where lack of the consumption level that you are used to gives you negative effects, but only higher levels of consumption can give you the same degree of satisfaction as before. This is in line with the Easterlin paradox, which states that the average happiness is constant in the long run, despite great increases in GDP per capita. Data from many countries still support this notion today. So while increases of income and consumption may increase your well-being in the short

run, it seems that they might not matter in the long run.

The time and money you could save from less consumption could instead be invested in relations, developing new capabilities and work towards long term goals. Happiness Economics analyzes how economic factors such as income and unemployment relate to personal wellbeing. While happiness increases with income to a certain level, other factors rise in importance as income rises. After a certain level of income, the quality of one's work, working hours, health and spare time activities play a significantly larger role. Economist Richard Laynard has also suggested that the single most important factor for long term happiness is the quality of one's personal relations.

Many people live with the view that sustainable consumption is a matter of sacrifice, that you must compromise with your personal wellbeing in exchange for that of the planet. While this is enough motivation for some to reconsider their current consumption, research shows that this tradeoff is not always accurate, that there are benefits for individual wellbeing as well. These benefits of reflecting on and adapting consumption behavior need to be brought to light. Climate change consequences like hurricanes and floods are seldom palpable enough for Swedish consumers to connect those consequences to their consumption. Instead of externally forcing people to adapt a new approach to consumption, we are arguing

for focusing on the internal motivation; that consumers could actually benefit from a different approach to consumption in terms of an increased wellbeing.

The abrupt pause of our daily habits due to the Corona crisis brings an opportunity to reflect about which consumption that originates from yourself and which originates from the influence of others. This reflection does not necessarily have to result in less consumption, but rather more purposeful consumption. Thinking about how your consumption has been forced to change now, you have an opportunity to identify whether you feel better or worse with yourself, and what consumption habits you can attribute to that change. Is it the coffee with your colleagues that you can't have anymore that makes you happy, or the fact that you have a closet full of toilet paper and pasta? Reflect upon your consumption – not because Greta Thunberg says so, but for your own wellbeing.

TEXT // LOISE HEDBERG & JONATHAN OLSSON
DESIGN // ANGELICA HUYNH



#IAmNotAVirus

"Wherever a pandemic goes, xenophobia is never far behind."

- The Atlantic

• xenophobia

[zen-uh-foh-bee-uh]

noun

Fear or hatred of foreigners, people from different cultures, or strangers

• racism

[rey-siz-uh m]

noun

Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalised.

On the night of March 14 this year, an Asian-American family including a 2-year old and a 6-year old, was stabbed in Midland, Texas. This was an attempt of murder, with the explanation from the suspect that *"he stabbed the family because he thought the family was Chinese, and therefore infecting people with the coronavirus."*

2020 will always be remembered as the year of the terrible Covid-19 pandemic. But for the Asian community, which I am part of, it will unfortunately also be remembered as the year of amplified fear for life due to the massive wave of xenophobia against specifically Asians. With the emergence of the virus starting in China, Asians around the world have become the open target for racist verbal and physical attacks, ranging from racial microaggressions to aggravated assaults. In just one week's time during the end of March, Asians in the US reported over 650 racist acts, compared to just a few racist acts in the same week last year.² In addition, Asian businesses such as grocery stores and restaurants across the world have been suffering financially with vandalism and substantial declines in sales due to people harassing (and avoiding) just about everything that is connected to Asia. People generalise and blame all Asians, believing that poor hygiene and disgusting eating behaviors is a common trait for us all.

The racist atmosphere is further fuelled by the media and powerful people. When media channels make satires

¹ Wray, M. *Stabbing attack on Asian family deemed coronavirus hate crime, FBI says*, [02.04.20], Global News. Retrieved on 10.04.20.

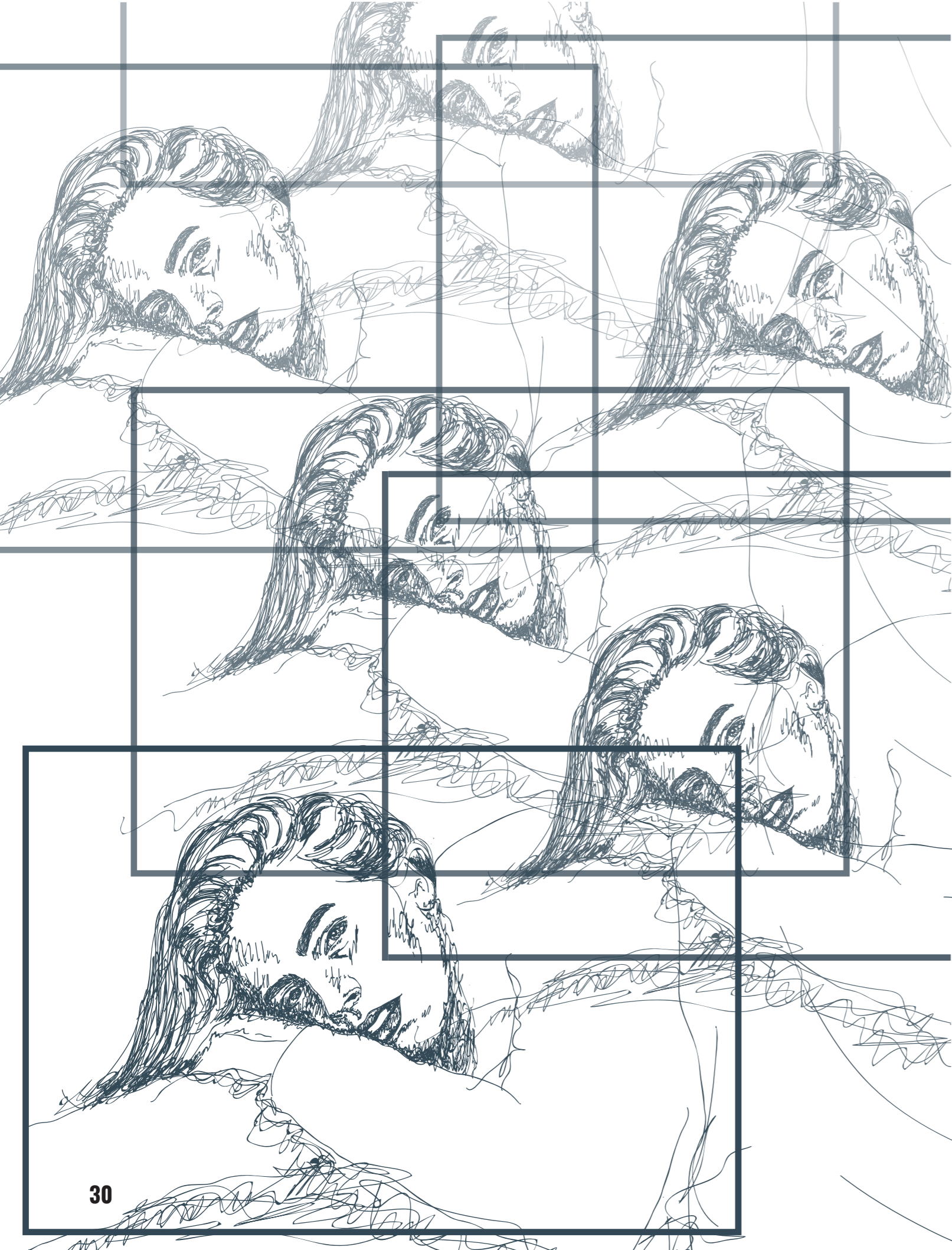
² Yoshiko Kandil, C. *Asian Americans report over 650 racist acts over last week, new data says*, [26.03.20], NBC News. Retrieved on 10.04.20.

and funny jokes about all Asians carrying the virus, or people in power like Trump insisting on labelling the virus as the "Chinese Virus", it creates and consolidates an acceptance for Anti-Asian xenophobia and racism.

Xenophobia and racism towards Asians goes way back in history. At the end of the 19th century, a theory by the name "Yellow Peril" emerged in Europe. The theory was a racial construct which claimed that people of Asian descent were of lower intelligence and dangerous for the more civilised Western nations. Unfortunately, racism towards Asians has always been downplayed and normalised, resulting in vague actions being taken to prevent and stop it. Many Asians have learnt to live with people mocking their culture; their languages, their cuisines and even their appearances, and driven to believe it is okay.

"Racism against Asians has historically always been more readily accepted, and this time was no exception. This pandemic was just another opportunity for people to express their anti-Asian racism."

For years to come, this new wave of xenophobia and racism towards Asians will likely remain. The fear of walking outside will always haunt us, and once again, we are let down by the world normalising and accepting this racism. We are not asking for people's sympathy, nor are we asking for their acknowledgement. What we are asking for is simply respect.



TO DO LIST:

Pro tip:
Combine with
Laundry for cost
savings.

Includes
everything from
food waste to
people.

Days without injury:
80

You haven't ironed
for real if you don't
have permanent
burn scarring.

- Gym
- Laundry
- Wash dishes
- Cook
- Take out the trash
- Make the bed
- Vacuum
- Iron clothes
- Water plants
- Change bedsheets

Today's menu
Breakfast: Scrambled Fried eggs
Lunch: Lunchbox*
Dinner: Homemade lasagna
Pizza delivery
*eaten as a 10am snack

It's 2020 and I still
don't know how to do
this efficiently.

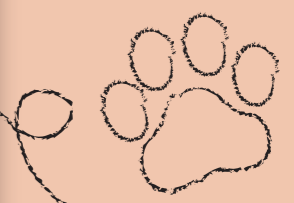
Taking care of a plant is easier
than taking care of myself.

Horrible experience.
Still got no cake.
0/5 stars.
Will go again.

To avoid doing
laundry, buy new
clothes.

This has been an
advert from the fast
fashion industry.

Exception:
Can't make the
bed if I never
leave the bed.



The actual master
of the household
according to my dog.



DEALING WITH A CRISIS

COVID-19 is testing every nation on Earth's response to emergencies, and some countries are faring better than others. Could authoritarian states be better equipped for not only this crisis, but future ones as well?

The coronavirus pandemic has changed life on an unprecedented, global scale. Never, in recent history at least, has such a singular thing affected the entire world in such drastic magnitude. Pandemics are not new, of course, but they have never forced entire countries into lockdown, cancelled events like the olympics, nor burdened healthcare systems everywhere to the point of collapse.

At the time of writing, there is no reliable end in sight to this situation; it could take anywhere from a month to year before things return to normality, if even possible. But some countries seem to be handling the situation better than others, and some measures seem to work better than others. Nationwide lockdowns, for example, are drastic, but they do appear effective. When China locked down Hubei province in late January — the epicenter of the outbreak — it was considered an extremely dramatic step. But by strictly enforcing this shutdown, researchers believe that China may have prevented a further 700,000 cases. Italy soon followed with a lockdown of their own, and now billions of people sit in quarantine all around the world.

Now, I am by no means condemning these lockdowns; I fully understand that they are a necessary tool for combating the virus; but, at their heart, they are somewhat tyrannical. Governments are forsaking civil liberties and ordering most of their citizens to stay at home, sometimes punishing those who break the rules. It is a distinctly authoritarian approach towards this crisis, but nevertheless an approach that seems to be working. Taking a totalitarian stance towards the virus has allowed for swift and sweeping action, and it led me to wonder: Is authoritarianism better suited for not only dealing with urgent, unexpected crises — such as the one we find ourselves in — but perhaps preventing them as well?

“Governments are forsaking civil liberties and ordering most of their citizens to stay at home, sometimes punishing those who break the rules.”

Consider, for example, the UN's ever-present sustainable development goals. These goals largely outline the steps humanity needs to make by 2030 in order to survive as a species, and explicitly pinpoint the challenges our society needs to tackle in the coming decade. At this moment, however, we are far from achieving them, and drastic changes need to come fast. And yet, these changes don't seem like they are coming any time soon, nor does it feel like any real action is being taken. But people do want change. More than ever, there has been an overwhelming desire for reform, but it often comes to little fruition, as apathy and political deadlock tend to stall most efforts at progress.

But authoritarian states shouldn't suffer from this. The consequences from not reaching these goals will affect everyone, but a singular autocracy faces no legal or political opposition, and could hypothetically enact any number of measures to achieve change. Carbon taxes and green new deals, which stall for eternity in most democracies, could become implemented in a moment, and these governments could be some of the first to take serious steps forward.

But suppose gradual change never comes, and the earth reaches a critical point, where extreme action must be taken if humanity is to stand a chance. Such an impending climate crisis would pale in comparison to this coronavirus, and measures far more radical than lockdowns would be necessary. In such a case, it feels reasonable to believe a centralized nation with a powerful government would be far more capable than a disorganized bureaucracy of imposing and enforcing such strict measures. A totalitarian state has, seemingly, the most potential for bringing about real change.

But, of course, things are not so simple. Again, such a potential climate crisis would affect the whole world, and in a sense, the chain would only be as

strong as its weakest link. Even if authoritarian states could make every effort to steer the earth away from disaster, there is no telling that they would. And even if they did, it likely wouldn't be enough. Every country on Earth would have to do its utmost to induce meaningful changes, especially those that may seem least capable of it. Unless there is collective action across the globe, between authoritative and democratic nations alike, it would likely be in vain.

Furthermore, if we return to the present, and consider the quarantines and lockdowns in place today, they perhaps aren't exactly the answer for how we get through this. While they may seem like the solution to this pandemic, in reality it is self-isolation that will be our way out. As much as a country can order its citizens to stay inside, and

threaten them with fines or jail time, it can never physically force all of its citizens to stay home — it is ultimately up to every individual to take it upon themselves to stay home. This, alone, is the only way to slow the virus. It takes just a single person — a single dissident, perhaps — for it to keep spreading. A lockdown on its own does nothing; it is the communal acceptance of the lockdown that has the actual power for change — the people embracing the directives they know are right.

And though nobody can know for certain, this same lesson — that power lies in the will of the people — will likely hold true for the problems of the future as well. To address humanity's biggest issues, governments can issue all kinds of mandates and requirements on their people, but if the people refuse, then absolutely nothing is accomplished. An authoritarian state can order their people to do anything, but they can never order their people to agree. So while authoritarianism may still achieve the same ends, it will never create true change, as true change cannot come from the top down, but must swell from the ground up.

“While lockdowns may seem like the solution to this pandemic, in reality it is self-isolation that will be our way out.”



INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INSTITUTIONS: THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE'S 2019 TRIP TO NAIROBI

As a part of the Business Committee's work in the career-related interests of SSE students, its Board makes an annual trip abroad. In previous years, the Board has gone to places like the entrepreneurial and high tech-dominated region of Silicon Valley, and the international trade hub of Singapore, investigating career opportunities and expanding SSE's network among employers abroad. The 2018 trip to Silicon Valley, for example, generated a report describing advice in order to adapt to the work climate at said location, and the necessary steps for being allowed to work and reside in the United States.

The Business Committee Board of 2019-2020 wanted to explore new areas and was inspired by the career interest report Imagebarometern published by the school. An increased number of students had reported being interested in social entrepreneurship, institutions, and other organisations, such as NGO:s, and as a result, the Board wanted to look into this field. Countries like Switzerland were considered, not in the least because of the presence of a number of high-profile international organisations in the country, but the choice ultimately fell on Nairobi, Kenya. Elin Ashrafi, the Committee's President last year, explains why.

“Berättar om social entrepreneurship, internationa institutions with headquarters there. Research innan, hur snabbt kom ni fram till Kenya. Var alla med på valet från början?”

Elin TBA

Nairobi was chosen for a number of reasons. Not only does it serve as East Africa's foremost trading hub, but also ranks highly in innovation and economic growth, with a strong presence of global businesses and a favorable climate for start-ups. Its importance is also highlighted by the presence of international organisations such as the United Nations Headquarters in Africa and the World Bank's second largest office in the world.

The goal of the trip, set by the Board and described in their report, was “lower[ing] the barriers for those who wish to work within the sustainable or institutional sector internationally.” SSE Students and SASSE as a Student organisation is, for natural reasons, often focused on Financial- and Consulting-oriented employers, which meant that



learning more about the development economics side of things would provide a focus often left forgotten outside of, for example, BSc BE's Global Challenges course.

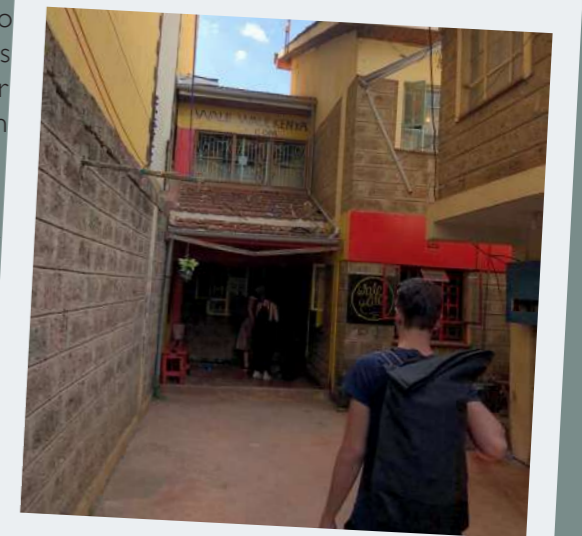
The trip, taking place in November 2019, took months to plan. Among organisations and institutions present in Nairobi, contacts were made with the UN, World Bank, Business Sweden, SIDA, the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Swedish Embassy, all of which were visited by the Business Committee Board. The representatives they met from the public and institutional sectors work with everything from promoting business sustainability, to work for Swedish diplomatic and economic interests as well as mitigating climate change. The aforementioned offer a number of different internship opportunities, most of which are unpaid and generally offered to Master's students and graduates.

From the private sector, visits included EY, Safaricom and Trine. The latter is a prime example of social entrepreneurship and tech, as the Swedish start-up Trine facilitates investments in

Solar Energy in Kenya. Safaricom is Kenya's largest telecommunications provider

offering everything from digital devices like cell phones, to customer services like music streaming and cloud computing. Trine offers two internships here in Sweden, while Safaricom takes in around 40 interns in Kenya. EY Kenya generously has 2-3 internship positions reserved for SSE students who are 3rd year BSc or MSc students. Elin lists the main takeaways from the company and organisation visits.

The Board's main insights from the Nairobi trip include an overlook of the myriad of career opportunities in Kenya in the fields of social entrepreneurship and institutions. Moreover, the city itself seems to have made an impression on the Board, as not only the business environment but also its culture has shown itself to be welcoming; a sign that Nairobi is a cosmopolitan city much like Singapore or London, common wishlist-destination for SSE students.



Finally, a remaining issue is that many of the internships that were explored are unpaid, which can be a significant obstacle for students with a limited income as working for free in Nairobi could be very expensive. One new initiative to tackle this is the Jacob & Marcus Wallenberg Scholarship for Social Innovation, given to students engaging in social entrepreneurship or institutions as previously mentioned. Additionally, the Business Committee offers plenty of information about the internships and other opportunities for students interested, which can help lower the barrier as well.

TEXT // RASMUS SALÉN
DESIGN // ALIX DEBROUX



IS COVID-19 WHAT IT TAKES TO SAVE OUR PLANET?

As horrific and devastating as Covid-19 has been to our world, it has brought something positive to it as well. It has come at the price of a crashing world economy, but closed down industries, cancelled flights and the changes in the way we live has drastically improved our environment. As entire cities in Europe have been put on lockdown, the nitrogen dioxide emissions have faded. And in China, the coal use in their largest power plants has fallen by 40% compared to the last quarter of 2019. All this in just a matter of weeks.

You may be wondering, is a pandemic like Covid-19 and a crashing economy what it takes for us humans to take action regarding our environment? According to Marie-Louise Kristola, Sweden's radio's climate correspondent - it doesn't have to be. She states that making structural and lasting adjustments in society to lessen environmental impact nationwide requires a strong economy and a lot of time. But most importantly it requires governments who actually focus their resources on finding and implementing solutions for the environmental issues. Professor Johan Rockström recently tweeted "We are

shutting down entire countries, democratically, within our conventional economies, to diffuse big risk. Why can't we do a fraction of this mobilisation on a much bigger risk - the climate crisis?". This tweet depicts one aspect of the climate debate, and Marie-Louise Kristola responds to this outlook saying that the Covid-19 crisis is a short-term issue, while the environment as a whole is a long-term issue; and both of them need to be tackled.

Considering why and how fast these changes in our behaviour took place, some questions may arise; what will the world look like when Covid-19 has gone down? Will we go back to "normal" and start travelling like never before to make up for the times we couldn't? Or will we have gotten used to, maybe even started enjoying, learning to work and study from home, not taking flights to every conference and not taking each other and our health for granted? If this time of change results in lasting habits, the emissions might keep going down or at least remain at the same, lower level as of right now. Thereby future health issues might be prevented since pollution and a damaged environment is connected to just that. Another interesting yet unexpected consequence of Covid-19 is according to the BBC

that the shortages we experience due to stockpiling could result in us cutting down on food waste, which is also depleting our planet. Furthermore we might get spurred and inspired to keep acting more sustainably when we see the drastic environmental results of our changed behavior.

Even though no one would have wished for environmental impact to be lowered this way, it has shown the power of what we can accomplish when we come together and when everyone plays their part. If our new habits and perspectives last, we could improve our health and environment, and through that future environmental crises and all the consequences that come with them might be emitted.

Will we remember Covid-19 as something horrible, but also as something that triggered positive global changes? Let's certainly hope so, and do what we can so that the outbreak brings us at least one positive thing - a new mindset and lasting changes in our way of living that sustains our environment; and thereby our long-term safety and health.

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TEXT // ANASTASIA HJELM

DESIGN // LARIN TAOFIK



