



# COVID-19 as a test of leadership: Emerging and fading world leaders

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# The big picture: Us and the planet

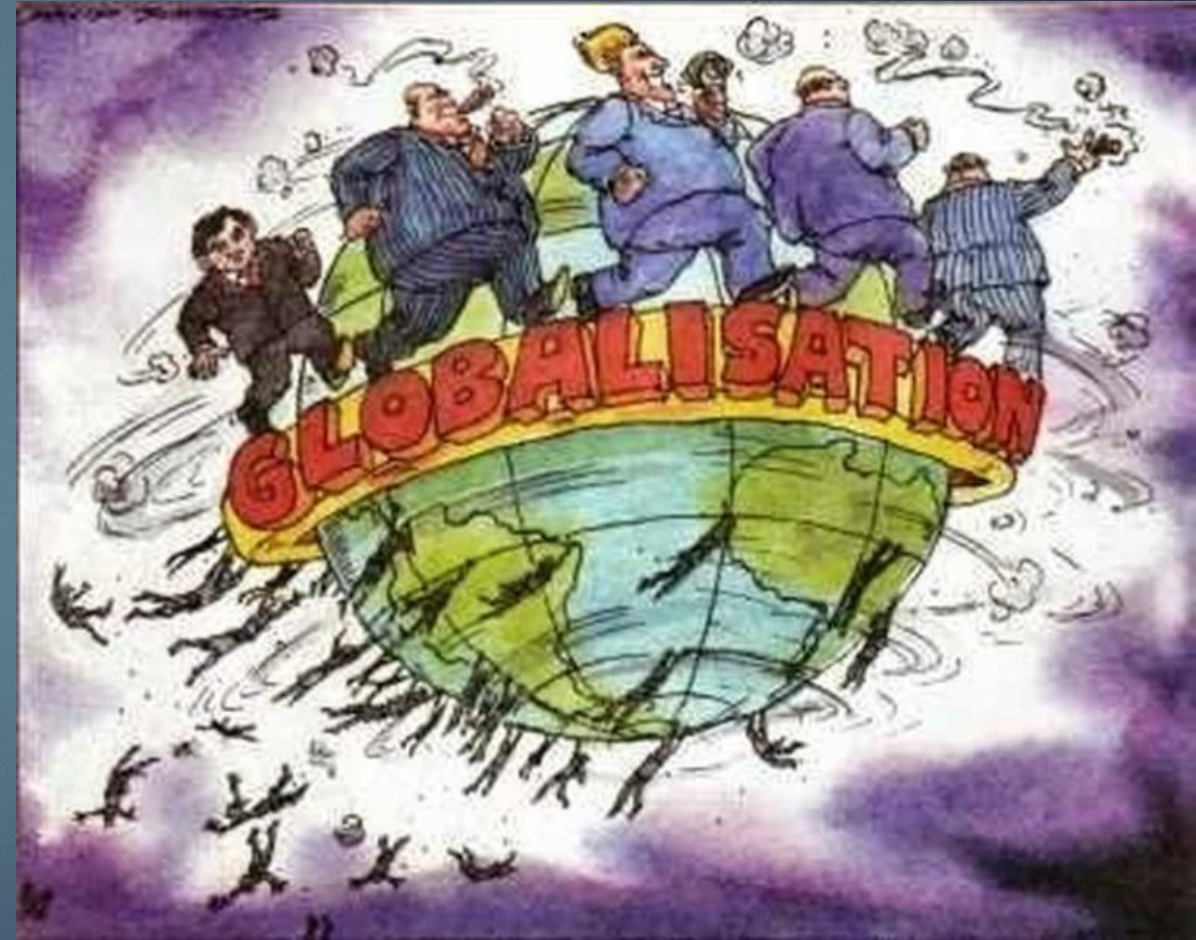
- ▶ Lots of dispute about the exact origins of C19, but clearly part of our overall collective impact on the biosphere?
- ▶ No surprise about latest pandemic – just scale and *impact on the rich world* is new.
- ▶ Highlights tensions/different goals in 'North' and 'South'
- ▶ It's difficult for *any* leader to represent 'global' collective interests under such circumstances





# The end of globalization?

- ▶ Pandemics are spread more easily because of 'globalization'
- ▶ Heightened sense of insecurity because dependence of foreign supplies of vital of equipment/drugs
- ▶ The prospects for collective action/ effective international leadership in such circumstances are reduced
- ▶ 'Rules based international order' being undermined by absence of international leadership – especially from the US





# Comparative politics 101

- ▶ Responses of different countries are revealing and may have long-term consequences
- ▶ China's was initially bad, but subsequently good and/or effective
- ▶ US response reveals existing problems with its public policy/politics/leadership
- ▶ Trump's a symptom as much as a cause?
- ▶ Uniquely American failings or a more general problem of democracy?





# The populist paradox...

- ▶ Populist upsurge driven in part by apparent failures of existing politics.
- ▶ Simple answers to complex problems were always implausible...
- ▶ Now they are revealed as inadequate
- ▶ Major doubts about the intellectual capacities of Trump, Johnson, Has Bolsonaro, Duterte...
- ▶ Contempt for expertise one of the major contributing factors that's made outcomes worse.





# International leadership

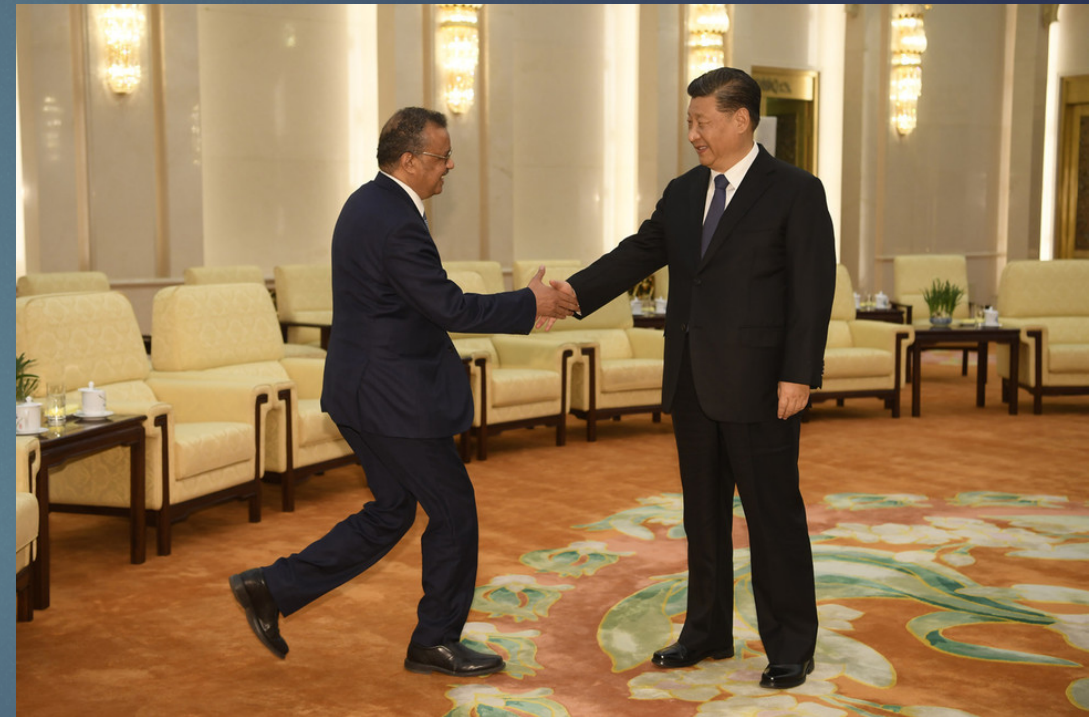
- ▶ The competition between China and the US is likely to intensify
- ▶ 'Blame game' / externalization of responsibility dangerous
- ▶ Relations were already bad – may entrench animosity, contributing to rethink about (pacifying) interdependence?
- ▶ Growth of nationalism/populism /intolerance one likely consequence?
- ▶ 'Weaponization' of vaccines? Competition, not cooperation...





# The decline of multilateralism?

- ▶ The WHO's reputation has taken a battering:
- ▶ Too slow, compromised, ineffective and too close to China?
- ▶ The European Union's already damaged credibility further undermined/reveals tensions between /north-south; democrats and populists
- ▶ Not a good time to be a cosmopolitan?
- ▶ The end of the myth of the 'international community'?





# Great depressions and great conflicts?

- ▶ No one knows how bad or long economic impact will be.
- ▶ Major debate about saving lives or economies
- ▶ Interdependence and trust-based international relations could be casualties if it drags on/intensifies
- ▶ Policy 'mistakes' of a sort that happened in '30s possible.
- ▶ Absence of leadership/hegemony between WW1 & 2 major cause of Great Depression





# Crisis and/or opportunity?

- ▶ Crisis presents an opportunity to rethink our collective approach to economic/environmental problems.
- ▶ Glimpse of what more sustainable planet might look like?
- ▶ Xi Jinping pledged to make China carbon neutral, but can the PRC provide global leadership?
- ▶ All states still privilege high growth/consumption/exploitation models?
- ▶ But they may be increasingly 'decoupled'/nationalistic
- ▶ History tells us what that can lead to...