

Personal photographic encounters of/with the pandemic's pathological politics

Laura Mills

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Personal photographic encounters of/with the pandemic's pathological politics

Laura Mills 

School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK



| HANDS |



| FACE |



| SPACE |

CONTACT Laura Mills  ljm33@st-andrews.ac.uk

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Socially distanced



Masking

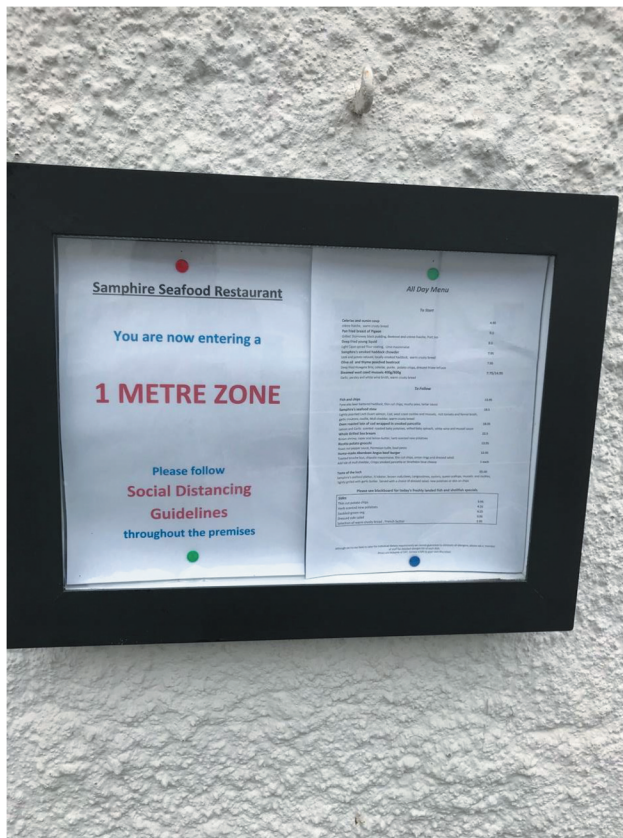
For months doctors at the BMA have called on the Government to stop equivocating and to ask people to wear face coverings over their mouths and noses in public places where they cannot safely socially distance. Up until now the Westminster Government has refused to put in place this logical policy to prevent spread of the virus, and which has been the norm in around 120 countries globally including most of Europe – so this step is long overdue. However, why is it waiting another 11 days to implement this policy, when the risk from COVID-19 remains present right now? This needs to happen immediately given that each day that goes by adds to the risk of spread and endangers lives. – British Medical Association (BMA) council chair Chaand Nagpaul, 2020¹





Stay alert | Control the virus | Save lives

Our health emergency is not yet over and our economic emergency has only just begun. – Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak, 2020²



Eat out to help out

Speaking purely as a scientist, I think [the Eat Out to Help Out scheme] was bordering on experimental. I don't think it was particularly helpful as far as virus control goes. – Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) adviser Professor Calum Semple 2020³



Prevent the spread



Track and trace

The Protect Scotland app from NHS Scotland's Test and Protect . . . does not hold personal information, know who you are, or know where you have been. It cannot identify you or track your movements. – NHS Scotland Test and Protect n.d.⁴

Questions have been raised over the privacy of Scotland's contact tracing app as official documents show Amazon has access to "personal information" including phone numbers, infection details and IP addresses . . . human rights groups and technologists have warned that aggressive data collection and security flaws in apps across the world put hundreds of millions of people at risk for stalking, scams, identity theft or oppressive government tracking. – The Herald, 2020⁵



(Self-)isolation

University security: 'subject to rigorous risk assessments'

these new restrictions are not because our classrooms or the University more generally are unsafe. Far from it. We know from last semester that our classrooms are a safe, fully risk-assessed environment. Living, working, and studying at our universities is not dangerous. – University of St Andrews Urgent Covid Update, 2021

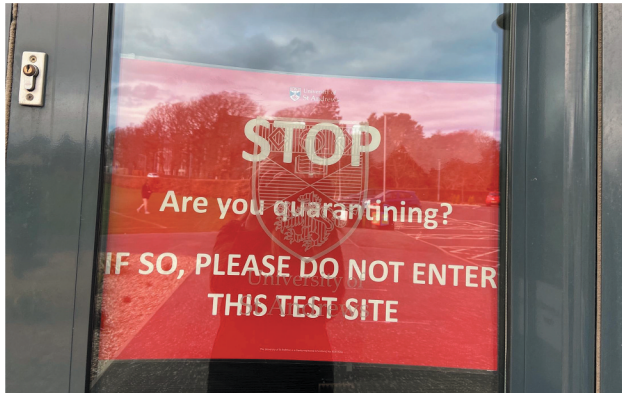
School safety

'There is no doubt in my mind that schools are safe, and that education is a priority.' – Boris Johnson, 3 January 2021

I completely understand the inconvenience and distress this change will cause millions of people and parents up and down the country. The problem isn't that schools are unsafe for children . . . the problem is that schools may act as vectors of transmission, causing the virus to spread between households. – Boris Johnson, 4 January 2021



Shielding



COVID support force⁶

Thousands of our armed forces personnel, regular, reservists plus supporting civilians, stepped up to serve on the front line in the fight against coronavirus. – UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, 2020⁷

Fighting an invisible enemy at home and overseas. – Ministry of Defence (MOD), 2020⁸

the emotive language of warfare is being laid on heavy, with politicians, commentators and advisers all describing our current situation as a war on COVID-19 . . . We call it a 'fight', with individual battles and skirmishes and sacrifices to be made, and when lives are lost, we make death an honourable and heroic



martyrdom. That last sentence was difficult to write . . . We all feel heartbroken at the loss of our colleagues but we must not accept that their deaths were necessary or inevitable – this is not a war and it is not what nurses joined the profession for. We should not be expected to give our lives for our work. – Nursing Standard, 2020⁹

Testing site

NHS staff's stress levels rose last year as covid pandemic took its toll – BMJ, 2021¹⁰



Stay home | Protect the NHS | Save lives

The safety of those working on the front line in health and social care is our number one priority. The UK guidance, written with NHS leaders and agreed by all four chief medical officers, in consultation with royal and medical colleges, recommends the safest level of personal protective equipment. WHO has confirmed that UK guidance is consistent with what it recommends for the highest risk procedures. – Public Health England spokesperson's response to doctors' challenge to legality of government's PPE guidance, 2020¹¹

'On PPE it's a disaster.' Boris Johnson, 2020



#ClapForOurCarers

As an NHS nurse, I do not want to be clapped for. All I want is for people to stick to the guidelines and for the government to raise the wages for nurses. . . .

I have seen too much Covid denial, general abuse and harshness towards the medical profession since then to fully believe the sentiment is real. Nursing Times, 2021¹²

Why don't we tweet, email and write to our MPs en masse at 8pm every Thursday to ask them to do their bit to ensure frontline key and essential workers are paid a decent liveable wage instead. Sort of a #ThunderclapForCarers instead. And from indoors, where we're meant to be.

– jack monroe @BootstrapCook Jan 7 2021



'Every vaccination gives us hope'

'The reason we have the vaccine success is because of capitalism, because of greed, my friends.' – Boris Johnson, 2021¹³

COVAX 'was a beautiful idea, born out of solidarity. Unfortunately, it didn't happen . . . Rich countries behaved worse than anyone's worst nightmares – Professor Gavin Yamey, Director of the Center for Policy Impact in Global Health at Duke University and member of a working group convened by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, 2021¹⁴



Covid 1984

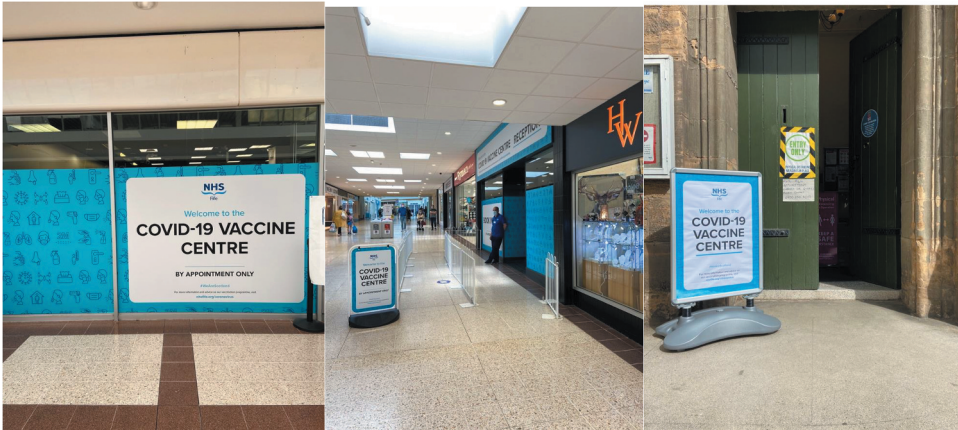
Despite what you may have heard, COVID-19 vaccines will not change your personality, make you grow a third eye, or alter your DNA. They are definitely microchip free. @VaccinateyourFamily

– Rhode Island Department of Health @RIHEALTH 7 May 2021



Mass vaccination centres: 'becoming covid-secure'

Ultimately, becoming COVID-secure benefits the health of our nation; the health of our communities, of businesses and the health of the UK economy. As a nation, we can't afford not to become COVID-secure. – Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Director of Regulation Philip White, 2020



Notes

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Laura Mills is a lecturer in International Relations at the University of St Andrews. Her research critically explores how everyday life and culture are co-constitutive of global politics through examinations of cultural diplomacy, (the afterlives of) war, militarism, and security, aesthetics and creative methods. Her first monograph – Post-9/11 US Cultural Diplomacy: The Impossibility of Cosmopolitanism – is forthcoming with Routledge New International Relations Series. She is the founding co-editor of Openings, a creative interventions section in the journal Contemporary Voices: The St Andrews Journal of International Relations.

ORCID

Laura Mills  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8137-5303>