

From the individual to the social

Building back fairer

PROFESSOR BRID FEATHERSTONE – UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

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Outline of talk

Lessons from the pandemic

Protecting children
-going forward,
challenges and
opportunities

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Loss and gain

- In his book the historian Frank Snowden, examines the ways in which disease outbreaks have shaped politics, crushed revolutions, and entrenched **racial and economic discrimination**.
- His work, and that of other historians, provides a necessary corrective to optimistic assumptions that the exposure of so many of society's inequalities and frailties will lead to building back fairer or indeed even better.
- Indeed, it seems while every disaster is different, they always do bring both loss and gain.

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Who has died in this pandemic?

Then comes COVID-19. Far from the great leveller, mortality from COVID-19 follows the social gradient. COVID-19, of course, is caused by a virus. But the 'causes of the causes' are the same social conditions that give rise to the social gradient in health, more generally (Michael Marmot)...

[Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review | The Health Foundation](#)

A public health approach ... do not focus on individualised risk factors

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Everything is
connected

- Many issues come together in the story about what has happened to Black and Minority Ethnic families in the UK

'Put differently, we estimate over 58,000 and 35,000 additional deaths from Covid-19 would have occurred if the white population had experienced the same risk of death from Covid-19 as the black and south Asian populations respectively' (IPPR, 2020)

- <https://www.ippr.org/blog/ethnic-inequalities-in-covid-19-are-playing-out-again-how-can-we-stop-them>

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How have we been living?

We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar

Damian Barr (@Damian_Barr) [April 21, 2020](#)

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Everything is connected

The first lesson a disaster teaches is that everything is connected

(Rebecca Solnit)

['The impossible has already happened': what coronavirus can teach us about hope | Coronavirus | The Guardian](#)

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Other key messages...

Power of government (local and national) for good or ill

Strengths and vulnerabilities within communities

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'Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew...It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through it lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it' (Roy, 2020, p, 214)

Roy, A. (2020) *Azadi*, Penguin

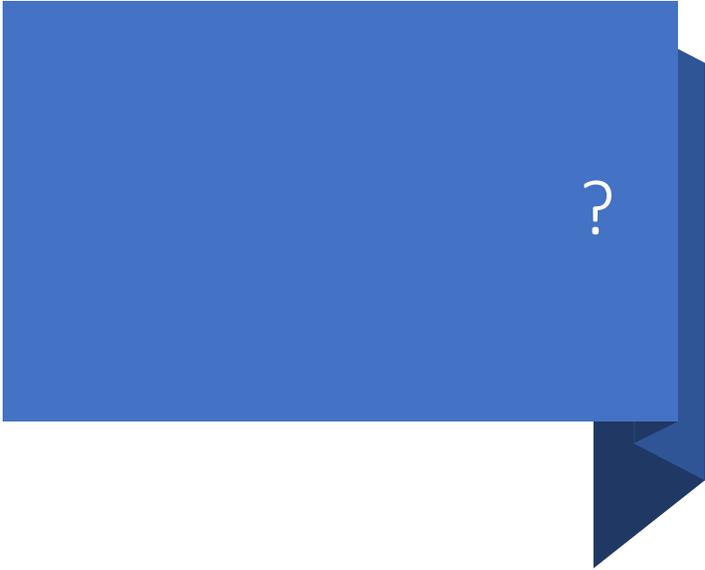
Going forward

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Those advocating change...

- 'Build back fairer'
- Attend to the 'causes of the causes'
- Develop a new social settlement – a new framework recognizing our interdependence, our need to care and be cared-for, participate in decisions affecting us, develop services together

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What might this mean
for Protecting Children?

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The current story

- *The harms children and young people need protecting from are normally located within individual families and are due to acts of omission or commission by parents and/or other adult caretaker with the assessment of intra familial risk as well as strengths key*
- *Developing expert practice methodologies to change behaviours and choices is a key policy objective particularly since 2010*
- *Developing procedures, multi-agency work and professional expertise are all key to protecting children from their families*

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Challenges to this story

- Evidence on poverty and inequality
- Evidence on the transmission of inequality inter-generationally (eg, recurrent removals)
- Evidence from children, young people and families of disconnection from families, networks and communities thus reducing sources of support and hope

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Telling a new story -asking different questions

- What do children, young people and families need from each other, their communities, and the local and national state to flourish?
- How do we rebalance our approaches so that the harms children suffer are understood and responded to in ways that right wrongs, honour voice and promote healing?

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Some Sources of Hope ...

- Within local authorities- links within local authorities ... eg, with public health, housing...
- Making links with third sector and local communities – eg, through Poverty Truth Commissions
- Parent Advocacy and care experienced networks
- Lessons from Restorative approaches and Transformative Justice- international allies

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Implications for Review into Children's Social Care

- “If you quit on the process, you are quitting on the result.”
— **Idowu Koyenikan**

Children will not thrive in a society riven by poverty and inequality, no matter how skilled the social workers are

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