

# Seeking the centre

a Gupta Strategists initiative

SOCIAL COHESION  
LOCKDOWNS  
ECONOMIC IMPACT  
VACCINATIONS



# about Gupta

Gupta Strategists is an independent consulting firm for organizations in the healthcare sector. We distill complex issues into practical solutions and innovative ideas.

Our goal is to demonstrably improve healthcare. We advise on strategic issues, provide innovative ideas and implement new strategies. Our way of working is characterized by creatively combining in-depth knowledge with a practical approach. And to ensure our expertise remains in the organization, we share the knowledge gained during projects with our clients' teams.

We work with hospitals, elderly care centers, mental health facilities, pharmacies, nursing homes, emergency rooms, governments, regulators, advocacy groups, health insurance companies, medical device companies, pharmaceutical companies, investors, suppliers and patient groups.

We regularly publish research that provides socially relevant insights and highlights important trends, this photo magazine is one of them.

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For inquiries please contact us at: [info@gupta-strategists.nl](mailto:info@gupta-strategists.nl)



**front cover: Avishag Shaar-Yashuv**

During COVID and lockdowns, violence in Israel and in Arab society in particular proliferated. Swathes of Israelis including Muslims, Christians, and Jews, gathered in Central Tel Aviv in protest of this worrying trend and called on the country's leaders to properly tackle the escalating situation.



**back cover: Esmee van Zeeventer**

During the curfew I noticed there were still a lot of parties and get togethers. I thought everybody just risked going home late at night and hoped for the best. Instead I found out that sleepovers had become a thing again! To avoid the risk of getting a fine, friends decided to stay over. All these people in sleeping bags, scattered around the student flats.

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#### Concept and Project Design

Anshu Gupta  
Luca Rocco

#### Photographers

Arko Datto  
Avishag Shaar-Yashuv  
Claudio Majorana  
Esmee van Zeeventer  
Mulugeta Ayene  
Yuki Iwamura

#### Visual Consultant

David Furst

#### Analytics Team

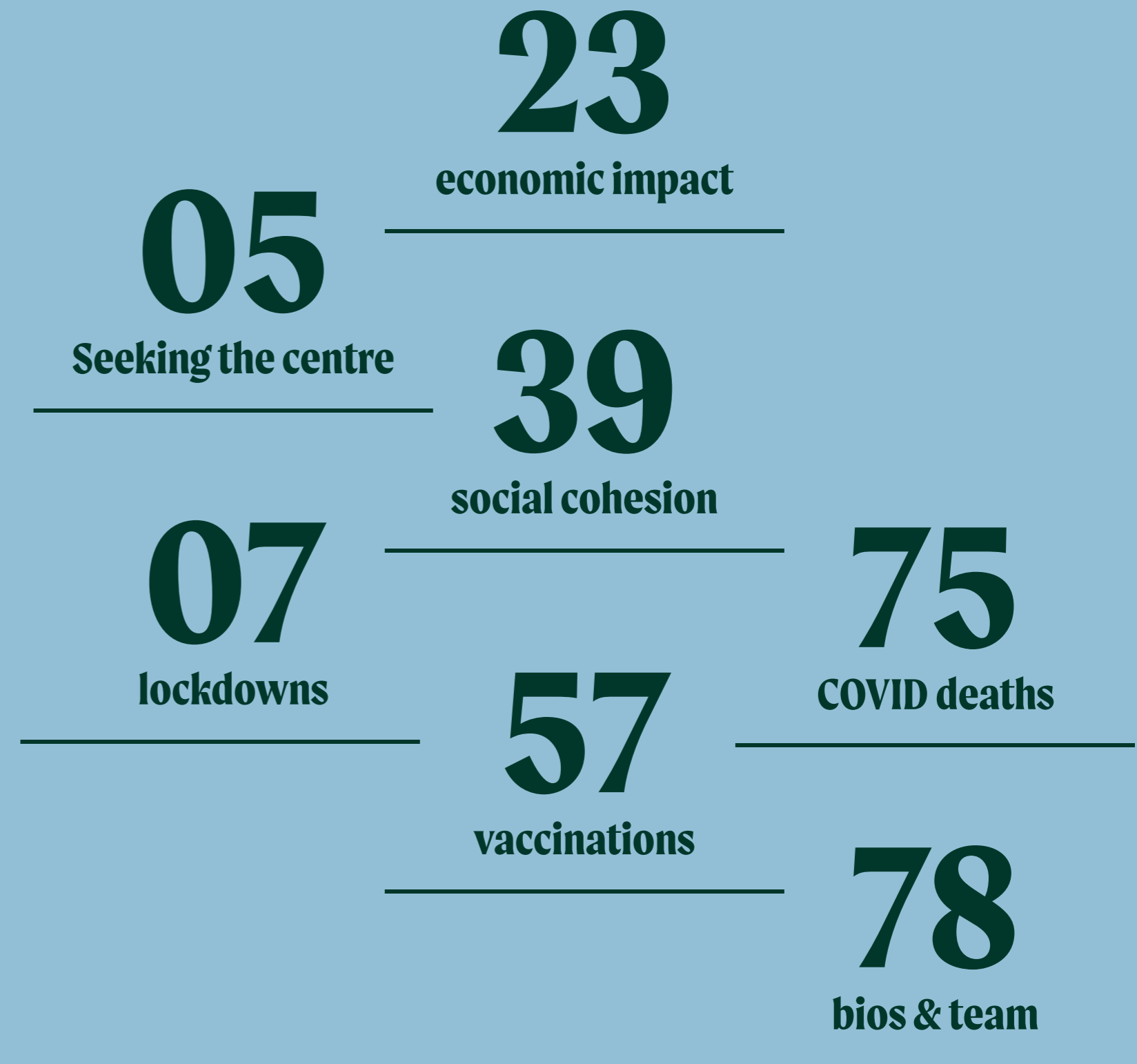
Ankie Kerstens  
Annemarije Oosterwaal  
Barteld Nanninga  
Paulien Stegehuis  
Roderick van Grinsven  
Tom Kapteijn

#### Graphic Designer

Andrea Filippin

[www.gupta-strategists.nl](http://www.gupta-strategists.nl)  
[www.seekingthecentre.org](http://www.seekingthecentre.org)

# index



For detailed information on the analyses, including sources, visit the website of Seeking the centre.

# Seeking the centre

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
 Are full of passionate intensity.

*WB Yeats in 'The Second Coming'*

COVID has taken center stage globally. Previous crises like climate change, immigration, terrorism, and global inequality seem to have receded both in print and the minds. This begs the question: Can we really make crises appear and disappear at will?

The second interesting aspect of COVID is its global reach. Since the Second World War, the world that was coming together was already rifting apart at the start of this century. In some ways, COVID is a tremendous global equalizer: it has created a common enemy. Yet, at the same time, COVID highlights that our ability and willingness to work together is feeble at best, despite shared risks and interests.

Consider the European Union with its sacrosanct ideals of free movement of people and goods. However, the first reflex in response to COVID was to return to national borders, as seen with immigration and terrorism. COVID simply took that instinct to a different level. Understandably, movement of people is essential to the transmission of the virus.

This poses an interesting question: should movement be based on infection rates geographically rather than national borders? The virus is effective because it knows no borders, yet we base our response on borders.

Totally new concerns and language emerged in the wake of COVID. We became a planet in the grip of numbers: mortality rates, infection rates, testing rates, ICU beds occupancy rates, and vaccination uptake became part of the common language. Websites aggregating numbers from global and national reporting organizations became the most visited websites. Numbers got picked, dropped, twisted, and tweaked to fit the temperament and need.

Science proliferated and had a new obsession. Virologists, mathematicians, physicists, sociologists, economists, and historians changed tracks and rushed to produce COVID research. Articles not subjected to peer-reviewed started appearing in the hundreds and thousands in the months following the first COVID cases. It became practically impossible to read even a fraction of them. Most of us got our news from the media, i.e., google news became our source. We became drowned in screaming headlines. Even quality journalism reported a biased picture, playing to one side while irritating others. As science itself was the culprit and the victim, the media was bound to follow.

There were other issues to argue about for those of us who are not number freaks: social distancing norms, the logic of masks, lockdowns, should we send our children to school, should I get self-

tested, should I get vaccinated, which vaccine? Why are my neighbors so insensitive and irresponsible? Will there be a hospital bed or ICU bed if I get sick? Will they release my body for the final rites should I die? All these and many other issues became center-stage. We were, and we still are, obsessed with COVID.

It sometimes feels that we live on a planet of 8 billion scientists. Everybody has their pet or series of pet hypotheses. These hypotheses have long been gelled into convictions. With so much uncertainty, nobody can say for sure who is right or wrong. We have made a tunnel around ourselves, and the tunnel is the truth. To use Osterholm's example of the sign he put in his backyard in Minnesota years ago, warning elephants not to trespass in his garden since it was poisoned for elephants. Remarkably, no elephants have since been sighted in his garden. One can, therefore, conclude that the sign works. Or one could conclude that there were no elephants in Minnesota to start with.

We have no convincing route to assess the impact of all the different measures undertaken worldwide. It will take decades before the effects on the well-being of people, economics, and their future will become clear.

Gupta Strategists is a healthcare focused consulting firm. With this project, we want to focus on the aspects of the COVID pandemic beyond healthcare (the 'Virus' knows that there is more than enough focus on healthcare already!). We take a global perspective because COVID is both a globally converging and diverging agent. We chose six countries (Japan, India, Ethiopia, Israel, Italy, and the Netherlands) because of their diversity of response to the virus and the varying impact on society. We intend to showcase both what is common and uncommon between these countries.

In this project, we explore through pictures and numbers the measures and their impact. Four themes are common to all six countries: social cohesion, lockdowns, economic impact, and vaccination. Each photographer chose two individual themes they were most passionate about.

We undertook a fact-based analysis for all six countries for the four common themes. This analysis is likely to be partially complete at this stage as relevant and reliable data is not available yet. Nevertheless, we explore evaluate what is available.

We encourage everyone to maintain passionate intensity, seek the centre, and engage with the worst. In uncertain times, it is most critical to engage, understand, and respect each other's perspectives.

# lockdowns



The COVID years are a generational milestone for many reasons. Imagine explaining to your grandchild what a lockdown felt like. Or imagine warning them that there could be lockdowns if they don't wash their hands!

Suddenly everything was closed: work, schools, and shops. In some countries, even walking the dog required a permit. In other countries and for some people nothing much changed.

The photos in this chapter reflect these very varied responses. In The Netherlands, Esmee photographed an empty playground and self hair

cutting. In contrast, Avishag found children still playing and religious groups still praying, albeit with glass partitions. Claudio documented his father's joy in going on walks again after the government eased restrictions in Italy. Yuki's photos in Japan and Mulugeta's photos in Ethiopia show that nothing much changed in terms of internal mobility.

We analyzed lockdowns by evaluating two measures: the decrease in internal mobility and the decrease in external mobility (international travel). India had the strictest measures and the most significant decline in mobility.

International passenger traffic dropped by over 80% for all six focus countries. Japan had the most restrictive external measures.

But did lockdowns actually work?

The countries with the strictest lockdowns are India, Israel, and Italy. However, these countries also suffered relatively much. In Japan, where internal lockdowns were limited but external lockdowns were strict, mortality was relatively low. Lockdowns, therefore, cannot alone explain the mortality rates. At the same time, lockdowns do impact society beyond COVID (see the economic impact of COVID).

As you browse through this chapter, we encourage you to contemplate on the following:

1. Which of these six countries had the best lockdown policy: perhaps India, with its strict lockdowns, or Japan and Ethiopia, which had the least stringent lockdowns?
2. In the Netherlands, we spoke of an "Intelligent lockdown". If you were to design the next lockdown in The Netherlands, what measures would you take? Consider elements such as:
  - Banning international traffic (external lockdowns)
  - Region-specific policies
  - Sector-specific policies

In designing your 'ideal' lockdown, we ask you to consider your personal experiences during the lockdowns: what affected you the most, and how can you limit that impact?



The image here is from the holy month of Ramadan culminating in the Eid ul-Fitr celebrations. While the memories of the brutal first lockdown still remain fresh in public memory, a new total lockdown was enforced in the eastern state of West Bengal right after the Eid festivities, owing

to the catastrophic second wave situation here. It is widely held that the governmental decision to hold the Hindu mega-festival Kumbh Mela in Haridwar in north India has contributed significantly to this current pandemic situation in

India. Allowing that months-long event to take place has also possibly in turn necessitated a political decision to allow Eid festivities before this lockdown was announced, illustrating the manifold political and social dynamics at play in what is at its core a decision on public health.

For nearly a year, the only places in Israel that were consistently at full capacity were the hospitals' COVID wards. Not anymore.

When those closed down, everything else promptly reopened and for a moment, it did seem as though

normal life had actually returned, but then came the latest round of fighting and violence, reminding everyone what 'normal life' really means here in Israel. And with the return to normality, the Arab-Israeli conflict (which never went away) too made its grand return.



Children staying close to a public air raid shelter in Ashkelon just hours before a ceasefire is announced. For children living in the south of Israel, a return to 'normal life' meant over ten days of living in bomb shelters under the nonstop threat of over 4,000 rockets and missiles fired from the Gaza Strip.



Young people on a night out in Jaffa's bars. Like everywhere else in the world, Israeli restaurants and bars were also brought to their knees by lockdowns, and from the moment they were greenlit to reopen, nearly all of them in every town and city centre have been at full capacity.



Female worshippers at Jerusalem's Western Wall. During COVID times, partitions were set up so that worshippers could still come and pray at Israel's most hallowed site.



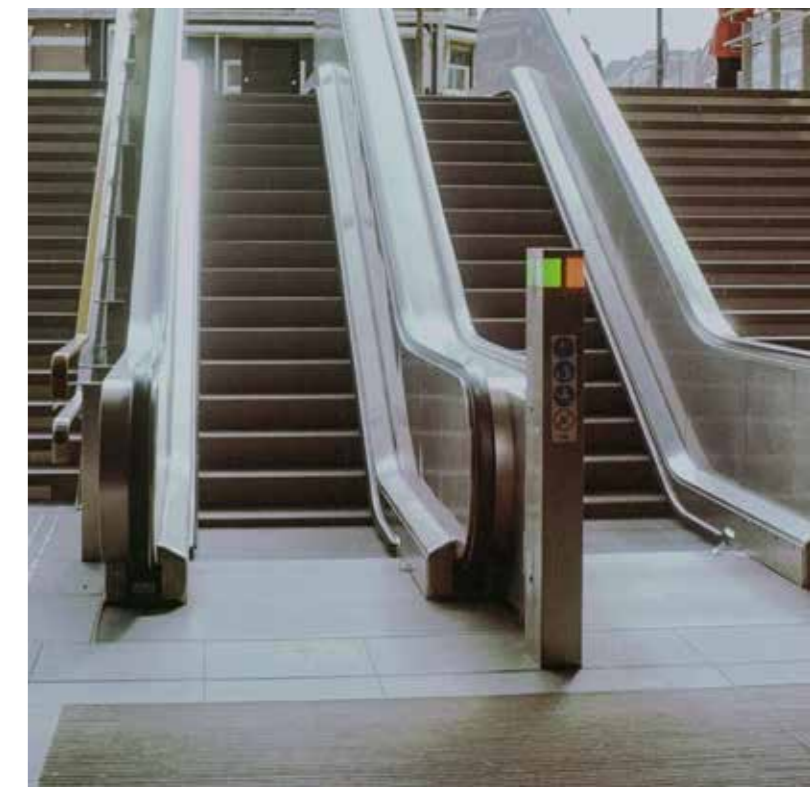
When I was little my father used to read me the book King Solomon's Ring by Konrad Lorenz and others about animals and ethology. These stories fed my soul and unveiled an unexplored universe at my fingertips. Part of the education I received concerns the environment and its

animals. The need to reconnect with nature when I get too far away from it is now part of the person I am.

The end of the lockdown brought us back to the places of our walks and to the contemplation of the skies and the lava rocks.



The only get-away is the supermarket. Children started building playgrounds between the fences of their gardens, hair is being cut with kitchen scissors at home because hairdressers are closed too. The emptiness of the lockdown.

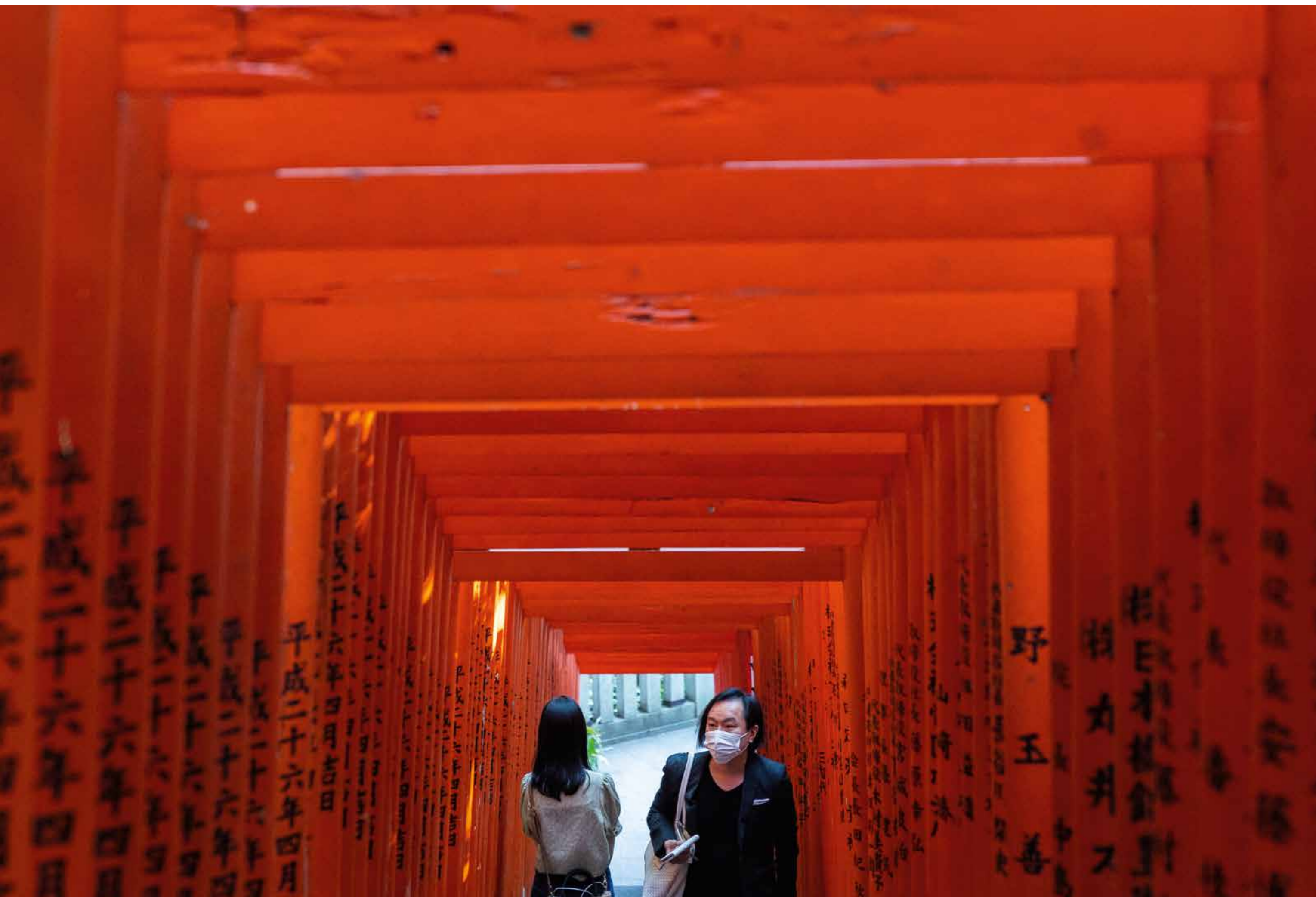






The majority of Ethiopian people don't take COVID as a threat. The majority of COVID cases are located in densely populated areas, such as Addis Ababa, where the risk of

transmission is also higher due to a higher population density. Ethiopia is the second-most populous country in Africa, with an estimated population size of more than 115 million.



People wearing face masks walk along a row of Torii gates at Hie Shrine in Chiyoda district of Tokyo on May 23, 2021, during the coronavirus state of emergency covering many metropolitan cities like Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto and government plans to expand it to other region as the case numbers surpasses new record every day.

A screen shows Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga speaking during a press conference to announce the extension of a coronavirus state of emergency, in Shinjuku district of Tokyo on June 17, 2021



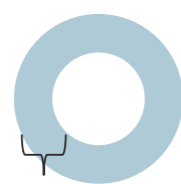
Crowd during a rush hour in Shinjuku district of Tokyo on May 19, 2021, during the coronavirus state of emergency covering many metropolitan cities like Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto and government plans to expand it to other region as the case numbers surpasses new record every day.

# lockdowns: analyses

Preventive impact of national lockdowns. The impact of national lockdowns on COVID is complex to define. Lockdowns cannot alone explain the mortality rates. At the same time lockdowns have impact beyond COVID. The countries with the highest drop in national mobility, as an indication of the effectiveness of lockdowns, are India, Israel and Italy. However, these countries have suffered higher mortality. In Japan, where mortality is relatively low, the effect of internal lockdowns is smallest with the largest decrease in international passengers.

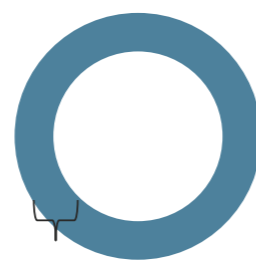
## Two ways to determine the impact of lockdowns

Impact of internal lockdown



Impact of the internal lockdown is based on the decrease in national mobility (within the national borders). The thicker the ring, the larger the decrease in national mobility over the period studied (March 2020 – June 2021).

Impact of external lockdown

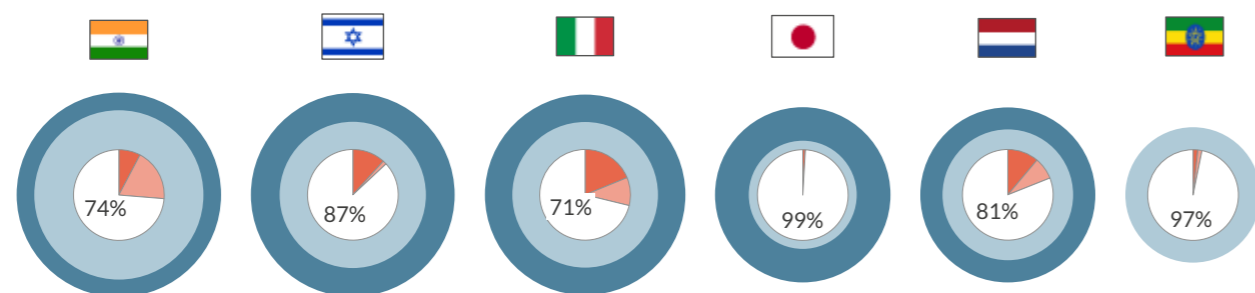


Impact of the external lockdown is based on the decrease in international flight passengers. The thicker the ring, the larger the decrease in international mobility over the period studied (March 2020 – May 2021).

## The impact of internal and external lockdowns differ per country

COVID mortality (as of 11 July 2021) and lockdowns per country [● thickness reflects strength of lockdowns]

Lower range based on reported mortality | Upper range based on excess mortality | % prevented theoretical deaths  
 Internal lockdown | External lockdown

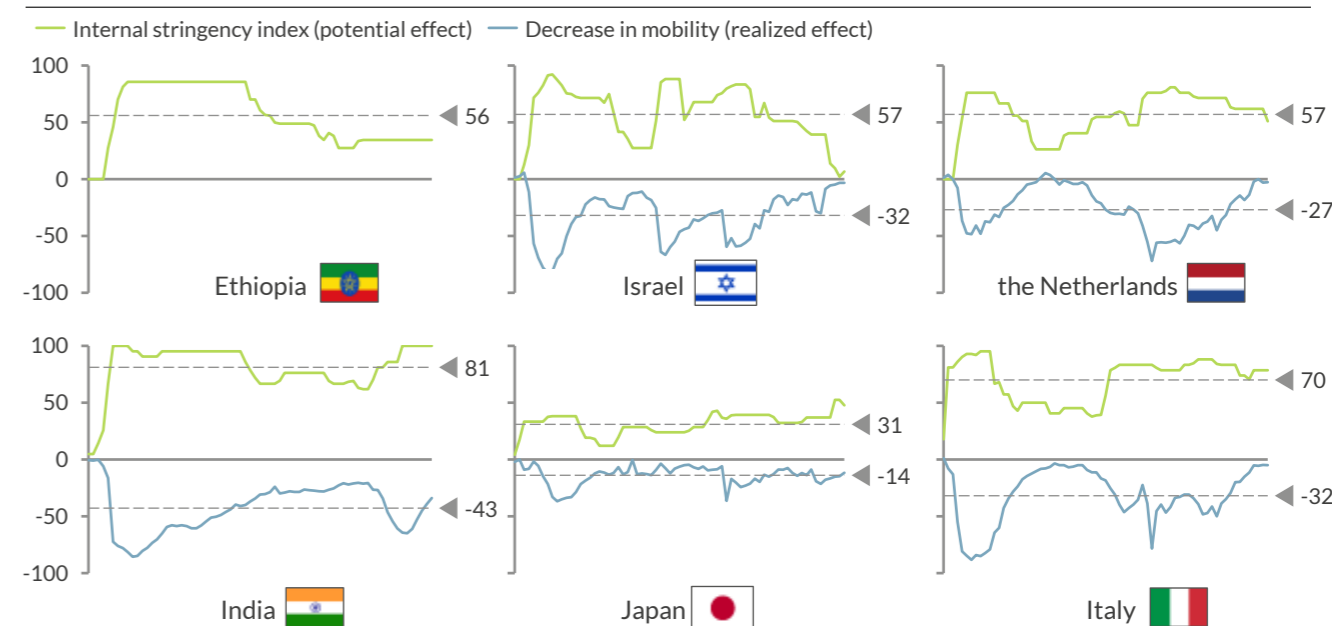


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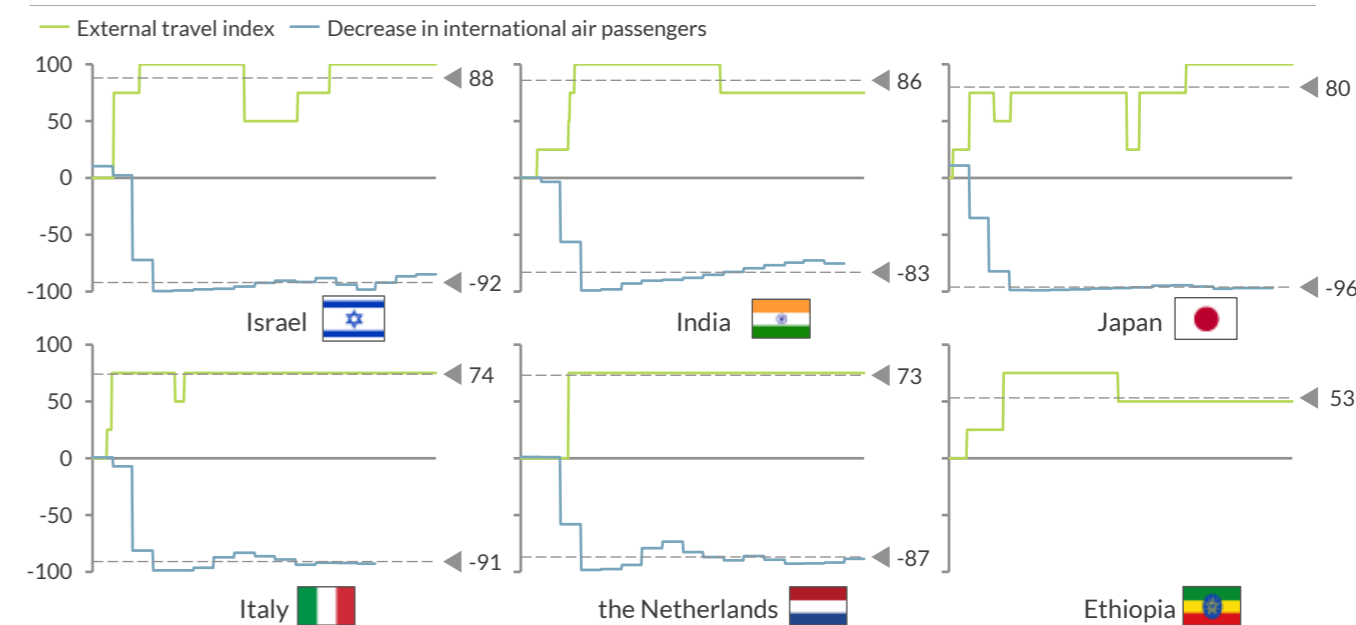
## Effect of internal lockdowns varies over time and per country

Potential and realized effect per country [Internal stringency index (%) vs. decrease in mobility (%), March 2020 – June 2021]



## All countries except Ethiopia closed borders rigorously and effectively

Travel ban and number of air traffic passengers [External travel index (%), higher means a stricter ban] vs. decrease in international air passengers compared with 2019 (%), March 2020 – May 2021]



# economic impact

From the beginning, it was clear that COVID would have a considerable impact on the economy. The magnitude of the effect was unknown at the beginning and remains uncertain today. The impact is still becoming more apparent, well over 2 years after the first COVID infection. It nevertheless remains a challenge to understand the true impact of COVID on our economies.

The photos from the six focus countries give us new perspectives on how they were affected by COVID. There are apparent differences because of varying degrees of development between these countries. There are also similarities because of the comparable causes and reactions.

Here, we estimate the economic impact on the macro level in each country.

We also delve into country-specific sectors to understand the impact on the micro-level; for example, the impact on tourism in Italy and construction in Ethiopia.

COVID is still with us, and our response is still unpredictable. Recovery could be better or worse than expected, and it is nearly impossible to isolate the effect of COVID. Even with these uncertainties, we believe these three conclusions are likely to last:

**1. The impact of COVID is unprecedented:** COVID has had the most impact on GDP development across the world when compared to all other impactful events since 1900 (e.g., World War II, the Great Recession)

**2. The impact of COVID is disparate:** For some countries, COVID has had nearly no economic impact at all. For other countries, the economic impact exceeds 200% of the current GDP (cumulative till 2030)

**3. The impact of COVID is highly specific:** Certain sectors (e.g., tourism) were hit hard by COVID and are still recovering, while others continued as usual.

The coming years will bring a better understanding of these turbulent times. This will help to mitigate the impact of crises on societies in the future. But for now, we can conclude that the effects of COVID on our economies are unprecedented, disparate, and specific.

As you read this chapter, we encourage you to seek the answer to the following questions:

1. To what extent was the economic impact avoidable?
2. Is an economic downturn inevitable if we are to save lives?

To help you answer consider the following observations:  
*Why did Japan have negligible mortality and low economic impact while being the most aged of the evaluated nations? On the other hand, why did India suffer many COVID-related deaths and economic recession, despite its young population? Why is it that Ethiopia had nearly no mortalities and saw economy grow more than expected?*

No sooner had the Delta region of south Bengal recovered from the devastating impact of Cyclone Amphan in 2020 during the first wave of the Pandemic in India than a potent tidal wave during Cyclone Yaas in 2021 during the second wave of the Pandemic destroyed what remained. Unable to counter the force of the tidal wave, embankments crumbled in

hundreds of coastal villages, thereby inundating agricultural fields, wiping away homes and lives. The ongoing Pandemic had already made life difficult for most families due to loss of livelihood from the recurrent lockdowns. This cyclone gravely exacerbated the situation. With food reserves at home destroyed and debts accumulating, the young men

from the families are already leaving in search of work elsewhere in the country. Being forced to seek shelter in dense cramped cyclone shelters has also directly led to an increase in COVID-19 cases. In this land where cyclonic events of great magnitude are getting increasingly frequent, the present and the future indeed looks bleak.





Throughout the COVID period, transportation in Israel stopped and continued intermittently. This was troublesome for the ultra-orthodox community as most members of this community don't own a car. However, they travel from one city to another (and even from one country to another) for educational institutions, holidays and other

customs and traditions. Some even travel as far as Ukraine to get to the tomb of their Rabbi. Others have to travel to receive the best education in order to continue studying the Torah. This is more important to them than anything else, even if it poses health risks or breaks the law by traveling during closure periods.

Tourism is the activity of people travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment. Holidays in 2021 showed a different trend and there is a clear preference by Italians for domestic destinations.

Confirmation that the pandemic influenced the choice of location is shown by the fact that for holidays as many as 33% of Italians stay within

their own region and only 6% plan to go abroad. The desire to travel is inhibited by economic difficulties, fear of contagion and uncertainty about the future.

Local attractions, such as places in the nature, often attract many young people who enjoy spending time outdoor without the expense of a more expensive holiday.



After 25 years Beatrix closed her shop last year, in the middle of the pandemic. She was the owner of the 'condom shop.' Not a sex shop, but a store for buying all kinds of different condoms. It was a small shop hidden away, in a not-so-known-city:

Enschede. Beatrix was working there herself every day, until she had to close the store due to the pandemic and ended up at home. Together with a pile of condoms, chocolate penises on the kitchen table, and the cash register in the attic.





The construction sector has been among the key drivers of economic growth in Ethiopia for the past decade, contributing 20% to national GDP (2018/19) and providing an important source of employment. The sector owes much of its success to the government's ambitious infrastructure development plans with millions of dollars pumped in social housing, roads, higher learning institutions and dams. Total employment in the sector is estimated to be 2.2 million mainly comprising temporary and unskilled workers.

Amid the growth though, stakeholders have for long been observing various challenges facing the construction industry – ranging from mounting debt to difficulty in sourcing the right materials, mainly

cement. The COVID pandemic has exacerbated the situation, which created a challenge for its main actors, especially daily laborers. The Government's Job Creation Commission initial estimates at least 60% of the projects in construction would cease due to lack of financial liquidity, with all temporary workers in these projects, such as daily laborers, to be laid-off.

The commission also estimated that due to the pandemic 741,000 employees, or representing 34% of total employment in the sector, could be laid off from this sector during April - June 2020. The expectation was based on the pandemic's direct impact of the global demand shock, as well as the supply shock due to social distancing measures.





# economic impact: analyses

COVID is still with us, and our response is still unpredictable. Recovery could be better or worse than expected, and it is nearly impossible to isolate the effect of COVID. Even with these uncertainties, we believe three conclusions are likely to last: the economic impact of COVID is unprecedented, disparate and highly specific.

1. **The impact of COVID is unprecedented:** COVID has had the most impact on GDP development across the world when compared

to all other impactful events since 1900 (e.g., World War II, the Great Recession)

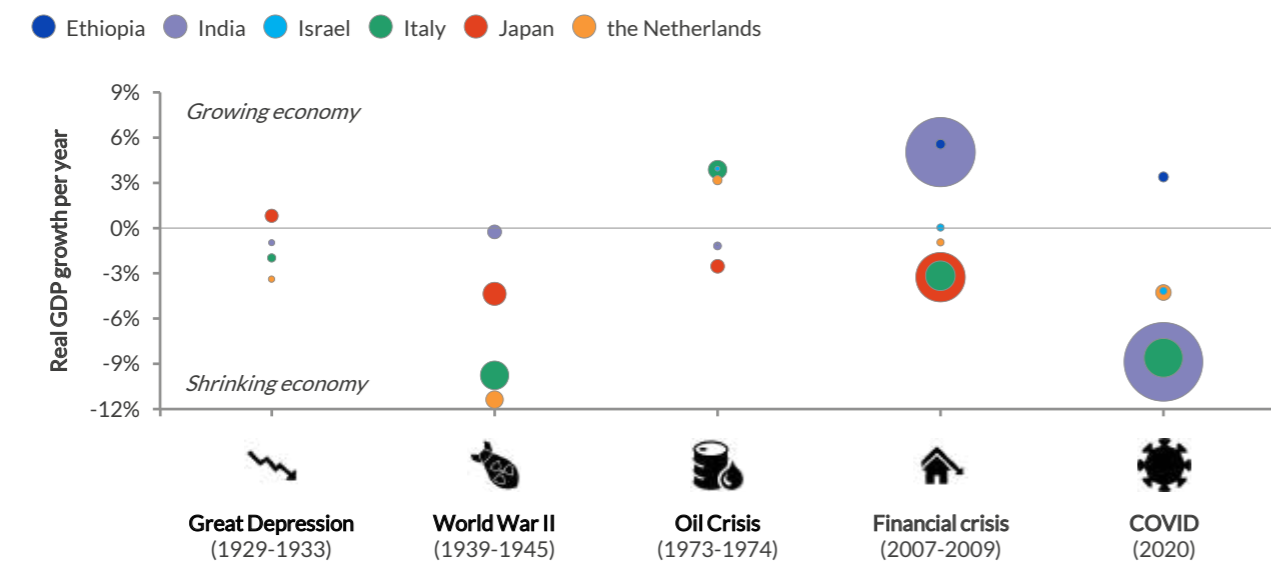
2. **The impact of COVID is disparate:** For some countries, COVID has had nearly no economic impact at all. For other countries, the economic impact exceeds 200% of the current GDP (cumulative till 2030)

3. **The impact of COVID is highly specific:** Certain sectors (e.g., tourism) were hit hard by COVID and are still recovering, while others continued as usual.

## The impact of COVID on GDP development is unprecedented

### Comparison of impactful events on GDP development

[Average yearly real GDP growth per capita in %; boll size reflects total GDP impact in billions of 2011\$]

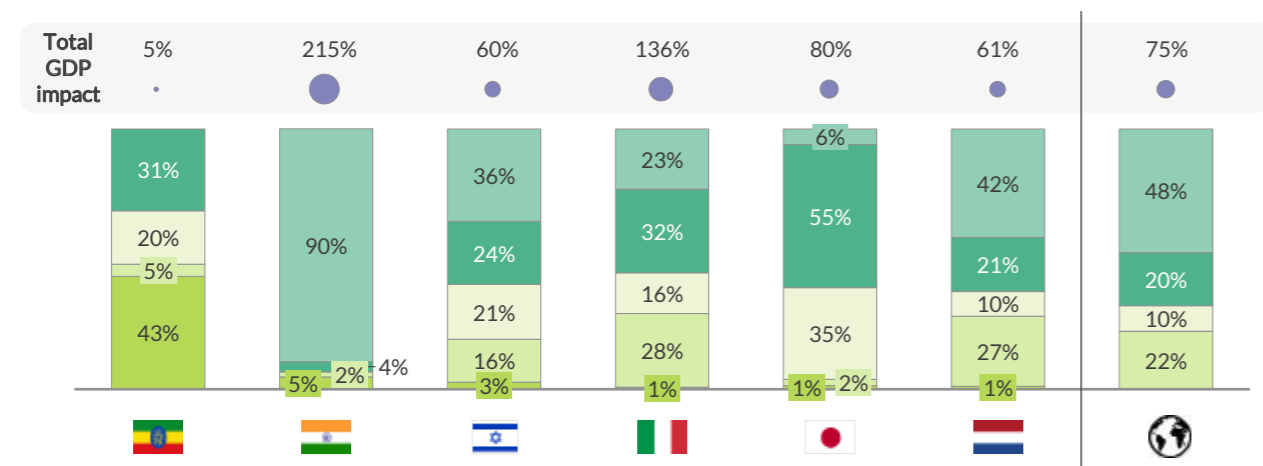


## The economic cost of COVID is disparate over the six countries

### Estimation of the economic cost of COVID

[% as a part of GDP in 2020]

Legend: Total GDP loss 2020-30 (dark green), Change in Gross Government Debt (light green), Lifetime loss in labour earnings (medium green), Total fiscal impulse (darker green), Total value of deaths related to the pandemic (lightest green)

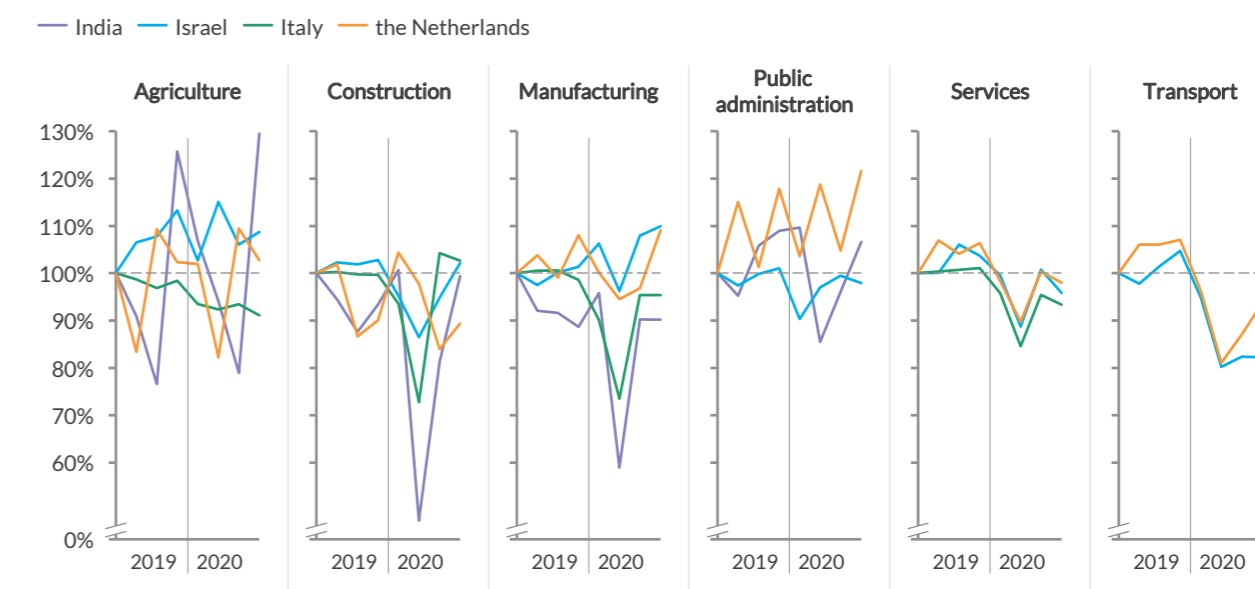


**We believe three conclusions are likely to last: the economic impact of COVID is unprecedented, disparate and highly specific.**

## The impact of COVID is highly specific

### Development of GDP per category

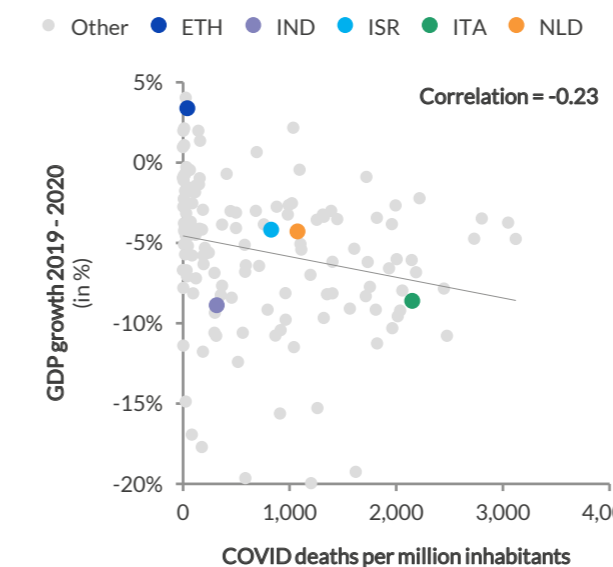
[Index, 2019Q1 = 100%]



## GDP growth is poorly related to COVID deaths or the stringency of the lockdown, so was it avoidable?

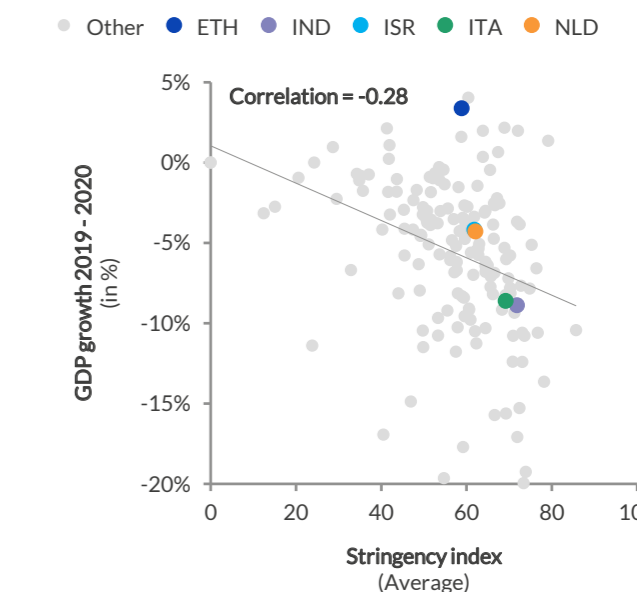
### Correlation between GDP growth and COVID deaths

[GDP growth in % from 2019 to 2020; deaths per million]



### Correlation between GDP growth and stringency index

[GDP growth in % from 2019 to 2020; average index]



## social cohesion



Yuka, from Hyogo, Japan  
living in the Netherlands

Thank you for trying to communicate with me  
but "ni hao" is not my language.

*Only together we can fight COVID* – the billboards in different languages around the world emphasize the value of social cohesion in preventing COVID related harm.

But what is social cohesion? And why is it important?

In this chapter you shall see social cohesion through the eyes of the six photographers in their communities and countries. Arko in India has photographed different religious festivals that were celebrated across India just before the second wave crushed the social fabric in India. For him the religious bonding of faiths, be these Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Sikhs represent the social cohesion in India. India has at an institutional

level however lowest social cohesion among these six countries.

Yuki Iwamura choose to highlight the plight of elderly in Japan. Elderly were already increasingly isolated, with COVID further exacerbating their loneliness. Mulugeta focused on domestic service workers that were suddenly workless: where is social cohesion in Ethiopia when the entrenched inequality grows even further through COVID?

Social cohesion is a complex and rich concept, with multiple dimensions. We analyse three dimensions in this project: peace, equality and social support. In a relative ranking the Netherlands scores highest followed by Japan, Italy, Israel, India and Ethiopia.

We had expected that countries with higher social cohesion perhaps would be most successful in limiting the impact of COVID in their countries. We hypothesized that this works through better primary prevention, as greater social cohesion allows for better adherence to the required prevention measures, like social distancing, masks, lockdowns etc.

We found no clear connection between social cohesion and the impact of COVID in these six countries. Countries like Ethiopia despite low social cohesion have little COVID impact so far, while others like the Netherlands and Italy with strong social cohesion have had debilitating impact.

As you read this chapter, we encourage you to make a personal journey and consider three questions:

1. What is social cohesion for you? Make it personal be it at the level of family, friends, or community. Think of specific examples from COVID months that reflect social cohesion or lack thereof?
2. As a follow-up we encourage you to explore how these examples may have impacted COVID burden in your community?
3. If you think more social cohesion is needed, please take the next step and explore what you can do this weekend to enhance social cohesion in your networks.



The images here explore the theme of Social Cohesion by looking at how citizens belonging to different faiths came out to celebrate their festivals while the second wave of the Pandemic started making its presence felt in full force.

The images here look at the ancient Hindu festival of Holi as celebrated by Hindus and also by the Sikh community and end with the rituals and celebrations during Easter.

After a year of the pandemic and related lockdowns, it has been particularly difficult to make people follow appropriate COVID sanitary protocols in most circumstances while there have hardly been any guidelines and restrictions from the government this time round. In West Bengal, given the ongoing elections, the various political powers-that-be have been hesitant to enforce stricter unpopular measures.



26/4/2021 Israel  
 For the past 29 years, he has been volunteering at a hospital. Itzik the Clown comes three times a week and does his rounds on the various children's wards. COVID and lockdowns put a stop to Itzik's regular volunteering routine. He spent nine whole months unable to visit his hospital. That is until the hospital invited him to get his COVID vaccine jab along with all other health workers so that he could finally return to the ward and be reunited with the children to whom he brings so much joy.

Fashion designer, Shai Shalom, doing final fittings with Miss Israel 2020, Tehila Levi, ahead of her trip to the Miss Universe 2020 beauty pageant where Levi wore a dress made out of 300 facemasks.



There is something special, thus not obvious, about people who choose to do something for another person or for a particular idea. This is even more self-evident when the engagement involves a health hazard.

The society in Israel during the COVID pandemic was on the one hand divided – facing an unending

political struggle, and parts of society refusing to follow and obey the new health guidelines, even though it was for the benefit of the entire population. But on the other hand, there were also quite a few other people who overcame division and fear created by the virus to do something good for someone else or for an idea they believe in.



Since the pandemic hit, Sara and her little brother Saverio started spending more time at home together. The new situation strengthened the bond between them without sacrificing relationships with friends they can't easily meet.

Online game platforms offered a space where they can still meet, talk and interact in a new way. "I don't really miss them. You know it's those people, as if they really were here" says Sara.

Saverio also loves spending time on his tablet but never misses a chance to imagine new adventures in his Spider-Man suit.





Tessa, born and raised in the Netherlands

*I have never even been there*



Jana, Filipina/Dutch living in the Netherlands

*I am where I came from  
"go back to where you came from"*

Social cohesion in Dutch society has grown as well as declined. Since COVID racism towards Asian people has been growing. "Go back to Tokyo, you fucking Chinaman!" "cough, cough, cough, corona, corona!" is what Tessa hears, who is less in touch with her Indonesian roots than I am with my 25%.

Yuka is starting to feel more uncomfortable every day. She received a warning by the Japanese embassy that a Japanese person was stalked by someone who was

screaming "take COVID home with you, to China!" Jana was being told to show her ID to prove she's Dutch, when she refused, she got spat on.

But the social cohesion is also improving somewhat. People come together to show that this must stop. At the start of the pandemic, a platform was set up to raise awareness and eradicate racism and discrimination. More and more people are joining together to make their voices heard.





**The daily life of Ayelech Asado**  
A single mother Ayelech Asado, a domestic worker who lost work because of the coronavirus, selling collard greens on the street of Addis Ababa. “The past months has been hard for me and my daughter. We live off no income, no government

aid and there is not much I can do for the past few months”.

The better-off neighbors who once welcomed her into their homes to cook and clean now turn her away, fearing the virus. “They told me we should avoid contact,” she said.



These photographs explore the real impact on social cohesion among the elderly during the COVID pandemic in Japan. As a photographer who grew up in suburban Japan, which has one of the longest life expectancies in the world, I was always surrounded and helped by my grandparents and other elderly in the neighborhood community. Japan has not been hit by the worst cases or mortality, but COVID has taken its toll in terms of people's isolation and undesired

solitude which is not detectable by numbers.

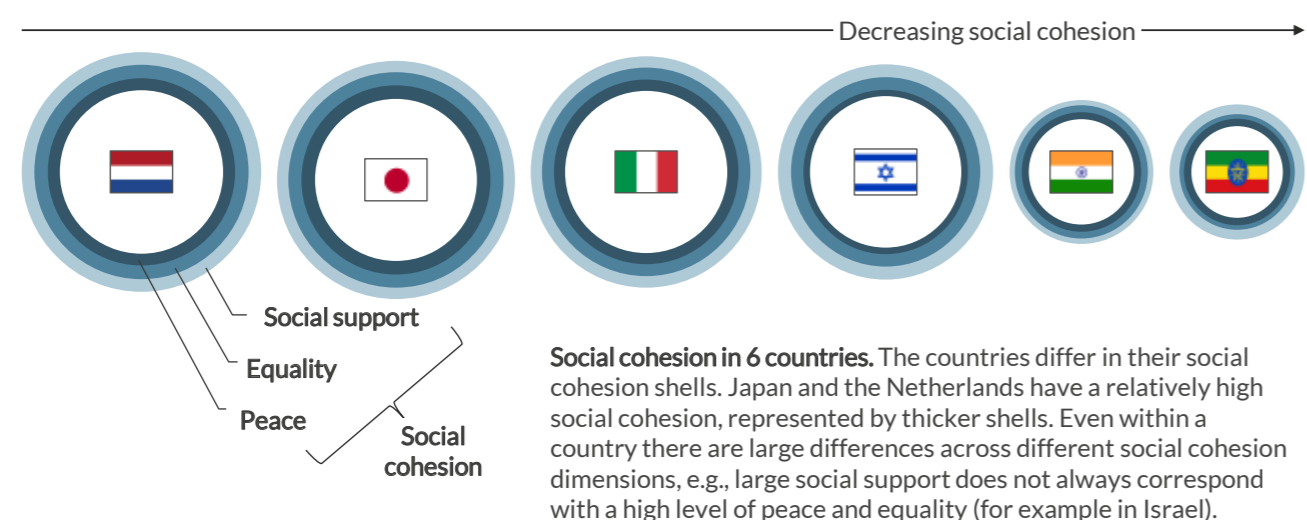
This coverage shows the change in people's relationship to society and emotional struggles. These struggles are particularly worrying because they have deepened pre-COVID isolation and depression challenges faced by a frontline aging population. These challenges are further accentuated by the disparities between suburb and metropolitan cities.

# social cohesion: analyses

Preventive impact of social cohesion. We see no clear connection between social cohesion and the (pace of) impact of COVID in the countries studied. For example, Japan and the Netherlands both score high on social cohesion. But while Japan has, as of now (May 2021), limited COVID mortality, in the Netherlands it is a factor 10 higher. With the many dimensions of social cohesion and the many factors influencing social cohesion, and with COVID trajectory itself being in early stages and highly uncertain, being impacted by many known and unknown determinants, it is clearly too early to draw definite conclusions.

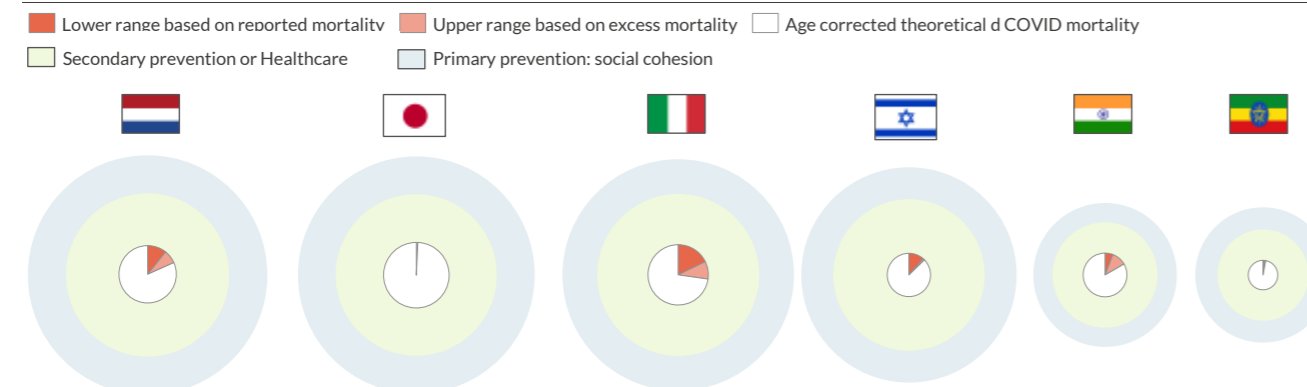
## India and Ethiopia have lowest overall social cohesion

**Social cohesion dimensions**  
 [Three shells: peace, equality and social support] The thicker the shells, the larger is the social cohesion



## No clear connection between COVID mortality and social cohesion

**COVID mortality and primary prevention (social cohesion) in a country**  
 [size indicates expected COVID mortality rate thickness indicates strength of prevention]

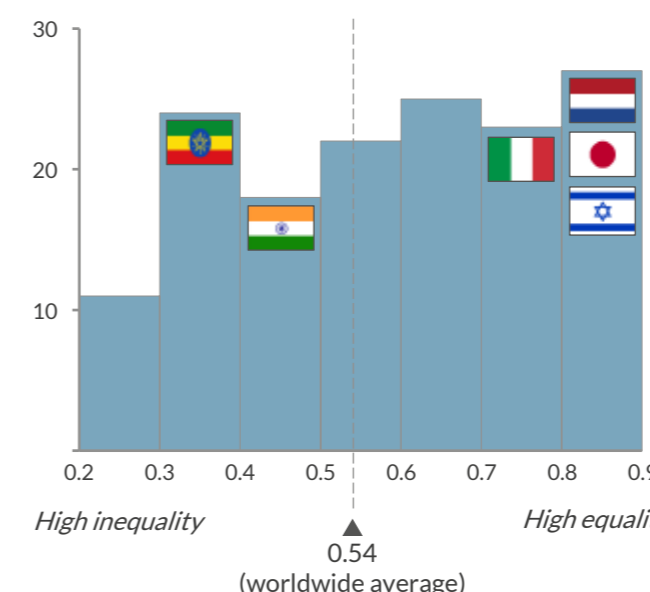


**Preventive impact of social cohesion.** We see no clear connection between social cohesion and the (pace of) impact of COVID in the countries studied.

**We see no clear connection between social cohesion and the (pace of) impact of COVID in the countries studied.**

## Inequality is high in Ethiopia and India

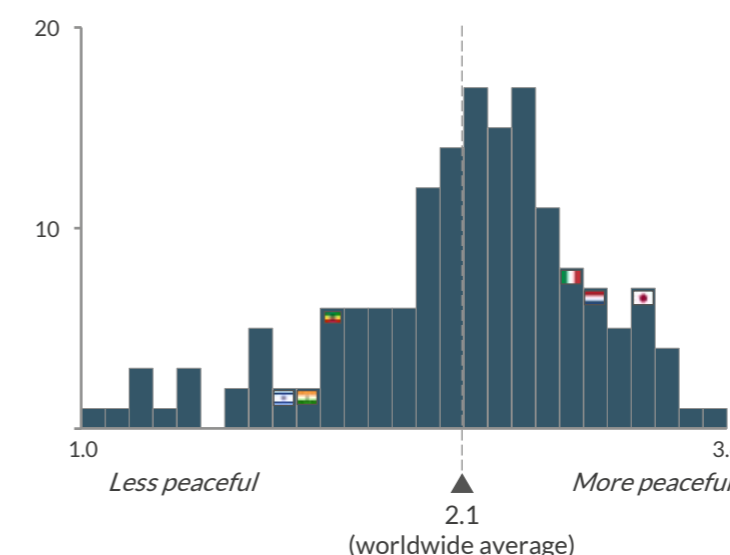
**Social cohesion: inequality in a country**  
 [y-axis: number of countries per score, x-axis: score (higher means less inequality), 2017]



- Social cohesion is reflected in inequality: the higher inequality within a country, the lower the social cohesion.
- Inequality is defined as the distribution of a nation's health, education and income across society.
- Countries with larger inequalities are likely to have lower success in implementing primary prevention measures against COVID, since groups tend to be alienated.

## Japan, the Netherlands and Italy have the highest level of peace

**Social cohesion: peacefulness of a country**  
 [y-axis: number of countries per score, x-axis: score 1-5, 2020]

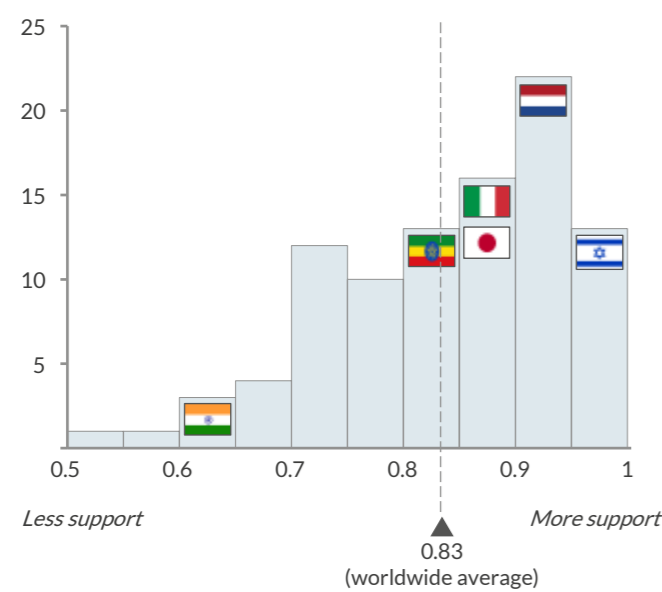


- An important dimension of social cohesion is the absence of violence.
- Countries that are more peaceful are likely to be more cooperative, and better positioned to implement primary prevention measures against COVID.
- Countries with the highest peace index are Japan, the Netherlands and Italy.

### Social support is the highest in Israel and relatively low in India

#### Social cohesion: social support in a country

[y-axis: number of countries per score, x-axis: score (higher means more contribution through social support), 2020]



- Social support at a personal level is an indicator of the social cohesion a person encounters within the community.
- Strong social support leads to more community-minded actions, and higher solidarity within society. Furthermore, higher social support may mitigate negative COVID impact, for example on mental health.
- The data shows no clear connection between social support and the impact of COVID yet. For instance, the Netherlands has higher social support than the Japan and Ethiopia, yet the COVID deaths in the Netherlands are ten times higher than in Japan and Ethiopia.
- A more integrated view, including other primary and secondary prevention measures may be required.

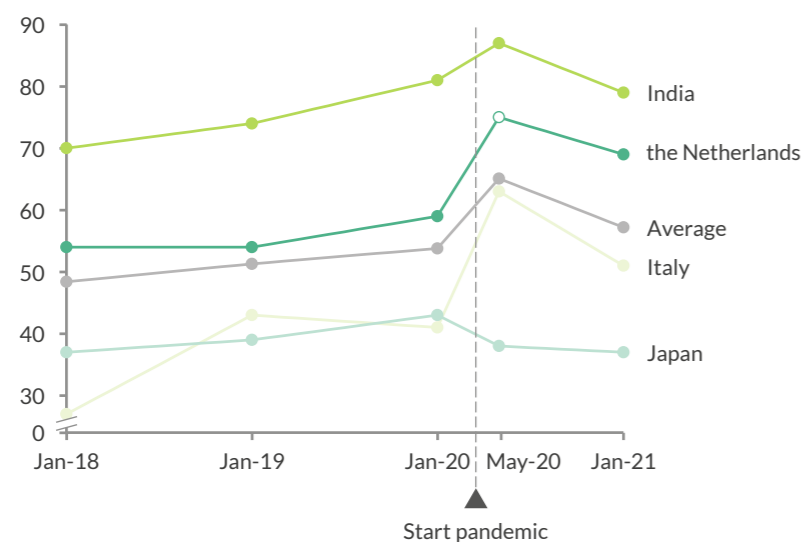


Yuka

### Trust in government increased in the early stages but declined since

#### Trust of citizens in their governments

[scale of 0 - 100 (100 is totally trustworthy)]



- Trust in government is one of the dimensions of social cohesion. It is difficult to compare trust across countries but within a country over time it can be a useful measure of cohesion.
- A crisis can put social cohesion under pressure or also enhance it. COVID has put the governments in the spotlight, for example if they impose interventions like lockdowns or not.



# vaccinations



Perhaps we have the COVID vaccines to thank for being able to read this magazine. Within a year, various countries successfully developed a COVID vaccine by using different technology platforms. This speed of development was unheard of until 2020. Furthermore, it was unthinkable that a third of the world's population would be fully vaccinated by September 2021!

Vaccinations are our beacon of hope, as is well justified by past experiences with many diseases. However, countries with the highest vaccination rate (e.g., Israel, within the EU and the US) have experienced a rise in hospitalizations caused by both vaccinated and unvaccinated patients.

This chapter presents the background to vaccine

development: the design, testing, manufacturing, and roll-out. We evaluate the real-life efficacy of the vaccine in three countries: Italy, the Netherlands, and Israel. Furthermore, we developed a scenario in which the current situation in Israel is applied to the Netherlands. A scenario that had become reality when this magazine was printed.

Finally, we seek the answer to the efficacy of COVID vaccinations in the future by evaluating vaccinations for other diseases.

The photographers show two sides of the story. The pictures of Yuki from Japan and Esmee from The Netherlands captured the operational side of vaccination, from the large halls and the yellow

vests to the endless paper-works. These are all symbolic of the anonymous vaccination machine. On a more personal level, Claudio poignantly captured the anxiety and bravura of the young: to be or not to be vaccinated. As the young are less vulnerable to COVID and less concerned about unknown side effects in the future. Yet, society makes it nearly impossible to deny vaccination, even for those who are young and carefree. These emotions are the playing field in Claudio's portraits.

Avishag and Mulugeta both capture the precise moment of vaccination: showcasing the personal feelings of the vaccinated and the vast operations required to make vaccination happen.

As you browse through this chapter, we ask you to consider the following question:

1. Are COVID vaccinations the 'get out of COVID jail card' we desperately want them to be?

As often, there may be no clear answer. For some, booster shots may form a remedy to declining vaccine efficacy. Others may not be inclined to take a booster shot as they are not required. Furthermore, effectiveness of booster shots are unknown. We encourage you to consider your take on what this means for you personally.



The Assembly Elections for West Bengal were carried out during the months of March and April, in an unprecedented 8-phase polling schedule. The protracted nature of this election meant more campaigns and rallies across the length and breadth of the eastern

state. All pandemic protocol was laid to waste during this time and eventually turned out to be one of the principal contributors to the deadly second wave in the state. This photo essay looks at how the election months panned out in the city of Kolkata.

Israel was one of the world's first countries to launch a nationwide COVID vaccination program, delivering millions of jabs. The first group to have been offered the vaccine included the elderly and clinically vulnerable who – throughout the pandemic – lived in a state of fear and total isolation. On getting their first jab, many felt as though they'd been spared and could now have their lives back, and their family and friends – all of whom

they had so desperately needed. A sense of euphoria was in the air, even when it was known to all that they would still need to have their second dose to be considered fully vaccinated and protected from serious illness and hospitalisation caused by COVID.

And when the time came for the top priority group's second jabs, the vaccination program was gradually extended to younger cohorts. Bit by

bit, Israel was making its way back to normality. Initially, Israelis were positively euphoric. It felt as if the vaccine had successfully banished coronavirus from our lives. Mask mandates were lifted, venues were allowed to reopen and hold events, and families could reunite – hugs, kisses, and all. But then – the data started to shift. And before long, hospitals' all but shut COVID wards were once more fully operational. Fear and panic

were back and with them, as were mask mandates, social distancing measures, and school bubbles. As it stands, COVID is still very much in our midst. And as they now go in for their (third) booster jab, people are beginning to wonder whether the vaccine is actually going to see them out of the pandemic. Are a fourth and tenth jab a question of 'if' or 'when'?

Only time will tell...



Israel tried to ramp up the vaccination pace during the summer holidays to allow for a safe return to school, but was met with anxious parents and children who, by now have seen how being fully vaccinated does not necessarily offer full protection from the virus. To appeal

to them, many city councils came out with a range of enticing special offers for every vaccinated child. A young girl having her jab at an emergency service mobile vaccination unit, where everyone who has had their jab is given a free ticket to the Tel Aviv Funfair.



Israel celebrating the Jewish New Year in a month packed to the brim with High Holy Days. According to tradition, worshippers must pray together, feast at the same table, and rejoice together. All of that was stopped in its tracks by the pandemic, and in fact became such a rare practice that even rabbis and religious leaders gave worshippers permission to alter their traditions. This year, in 2021, Israel is reconvening at the family dinner table for the holidays, thanks to the vaccination programme's success. However, even this milestone reunion is happening under some COVID restrictions when all the while, the fear of a rise in cases and fatalities continues to loom large.



Between March and August 2021 I photographed young people who have chosen to be vaccinated. It was very interesting to talk to them to understand what their fears were and what convinced them to overcome them.





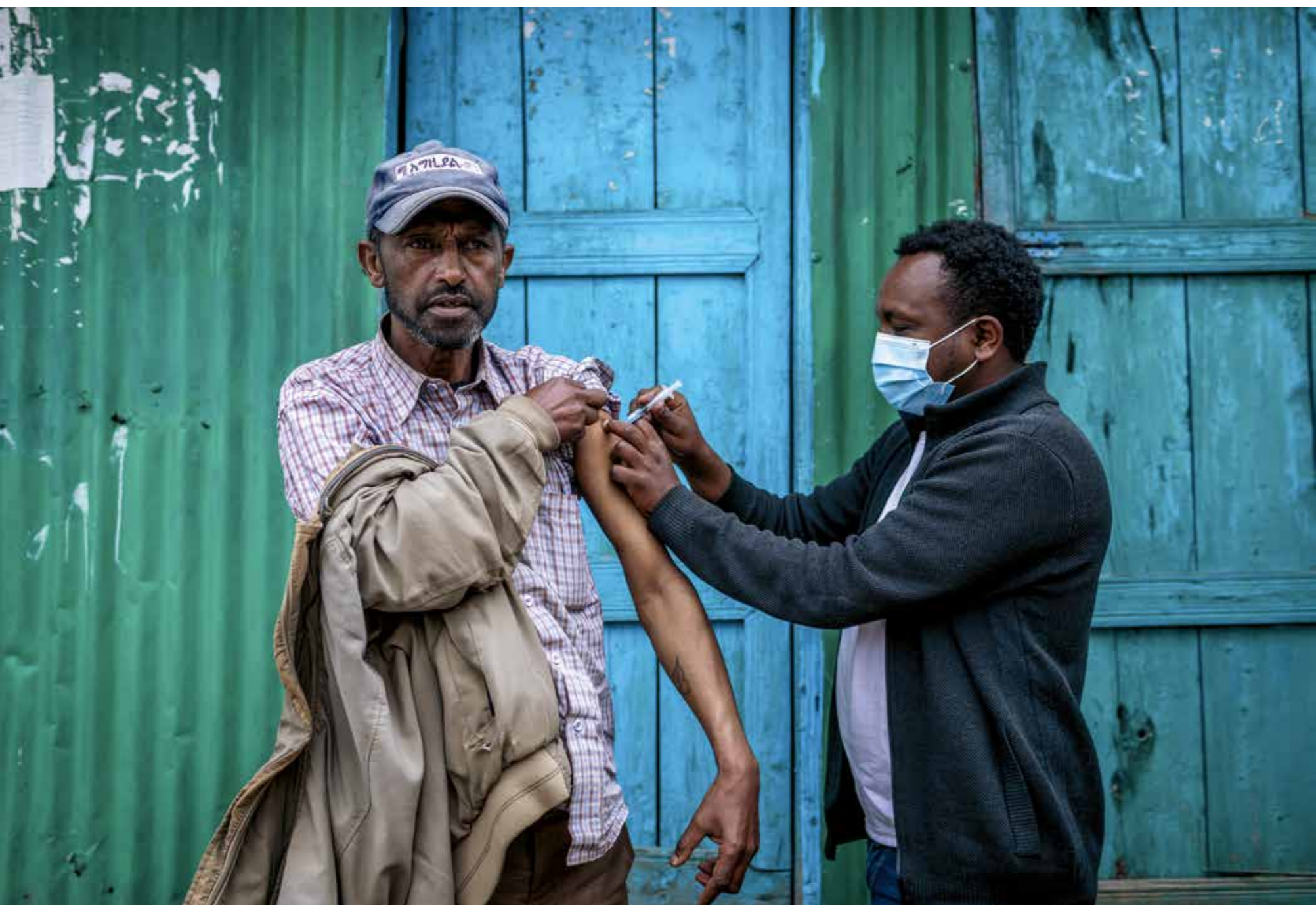
One by one Dutch residents received a letter that says they can go get their COVID-vaccine. All over the country vaccination locations started to pop up. In event halls, old factories and sport venues. It's a very large operation.

The number of vaccinated people is rising, but in some areas the percentage stays low. Rotterdam-Delfshaven is an example. A lot

of foreign people live in this area of the city which causes some communication problems. Information about vaccination is not available in their own language, but they do receive disinformation from their children's online findings.

To stop this problem from happening, two general practitioners started informing people on the weekly market.

Between the vegetables, fabrics and household items, they started a stand where you could get information about the vaccine, and even get vaccinated. It was a big succes and a lot of people got vaccinated at the market. Because of this the Dutch health authority (GGD) started helping them out and the location grew. People can now get their vaccine directly in the sports hall.



Exactly a year after the first COVID case was confirmed in Ethiopia, its Ministry of Health launched a national vaccination campaign, bringing hope to frontline workers and people in high risk groups.

The vaccination push began in the wake of a positive assessment by the African Union CDC whose survey shows more than 93 percent of Ethiopians were willing to receive a COVID vaccine. Midway through

the actual intervention, however, health officials had to do a lot of convincing, especially those living far from the capital city.

“We had to take the vaccine in public places to build trust over the vaccine and help them protect themselves from the disease,” said Ahmed Seid, deputy head of a health bureau at Ankober, a town located more than 170 kilometers north of the capital. The move was

relatively successful and encouraged the public to take the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The same enthusiasm, however, was not shown when health officials rolled out the second round of the vaccine targeting people who took the first AstraZeneca dose. Many, including administrative officials and health workers, are not as interested as it was a year ago after only four registered cases.





Volunteers watch people as they wait to receive the Moderna vaccine on September 12, 2021 at Big Hat Sports Arena in Nagano, Japan.

# vaccinations: analyses

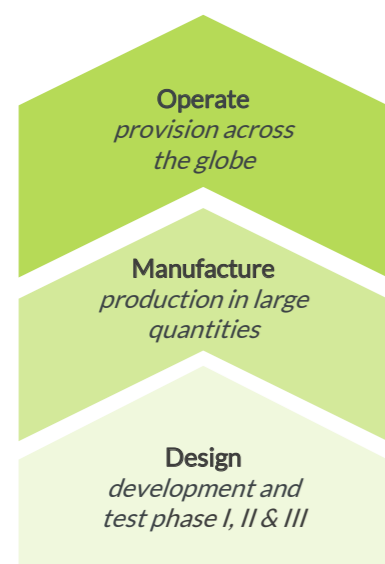
We perhaps have the COVID vaccine to thank for most countries being able to go back to normal life. By using different technology platforms, different countries around the world, have successfully developed a COVID vaccine within a year. That was unheard of, till 2020. And certainly, undreamt of that a third of the world population would be fully vaccinated as of September 2021!

Vaccinations are our beacon of hope, as is well justified by past experiences for many diseases. However, countries like Israel with the highest vaccination levels have shown concerning rise in

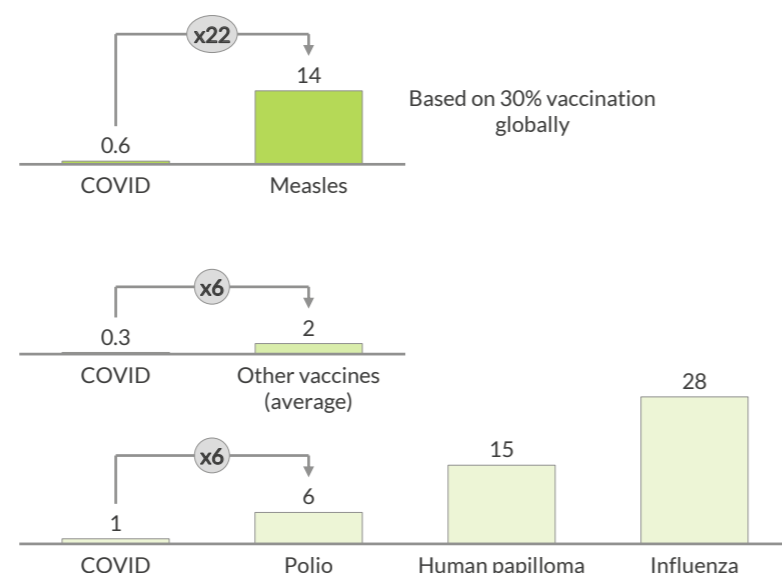
hospitalization levels and severely ill COVID patients, also those who are fully vaccinated (twice at that time).

We go beyond to consider how the real-life efficacy of the vaccine is playing out in three countries: Italy, The Netherlands and Israel. And we present a scenario, that should the Israel reality be applicable to the Netherlands, shows how Dutch hospitalization would increase again despite vaccinations. Finally, we explore what we can expect from COVID vaccinations in the future by comparing it to other diseases and vaccinations.

## COVID vaccine is inspiring, with ultra fast development in all phases

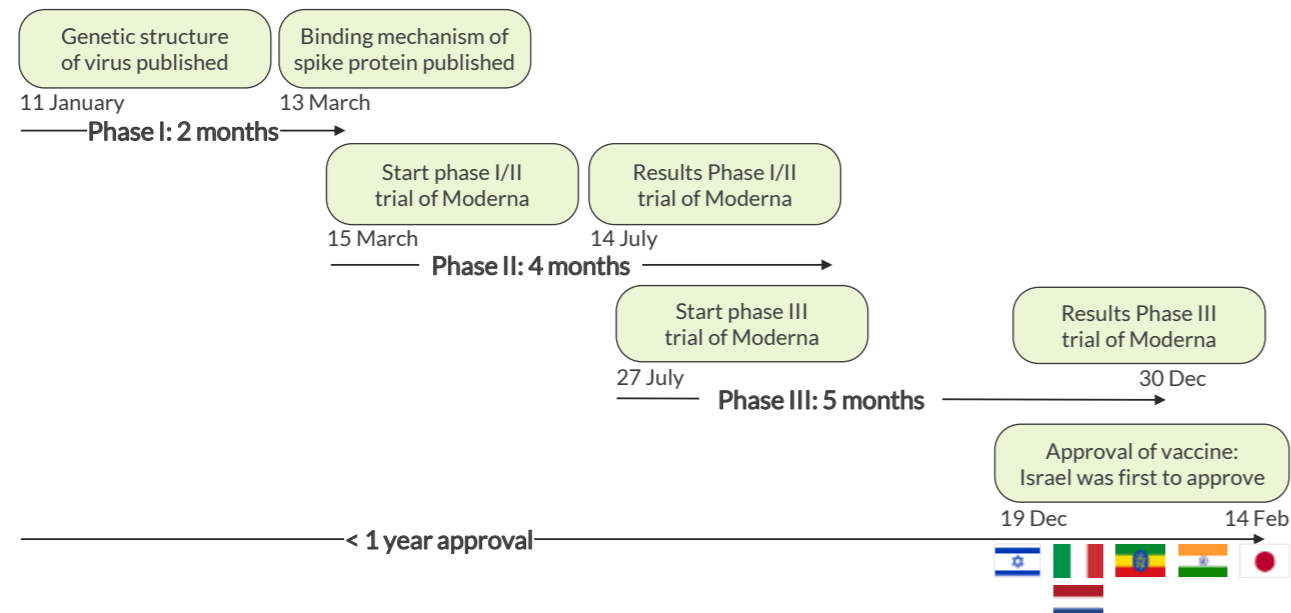


Phases of vaccine development [years]



## Testing of the candidate COVID vaccines took less than a year

Design of COVID vaccine: example mRNA vaccines, other candidate vaccines had nearly similar timelines

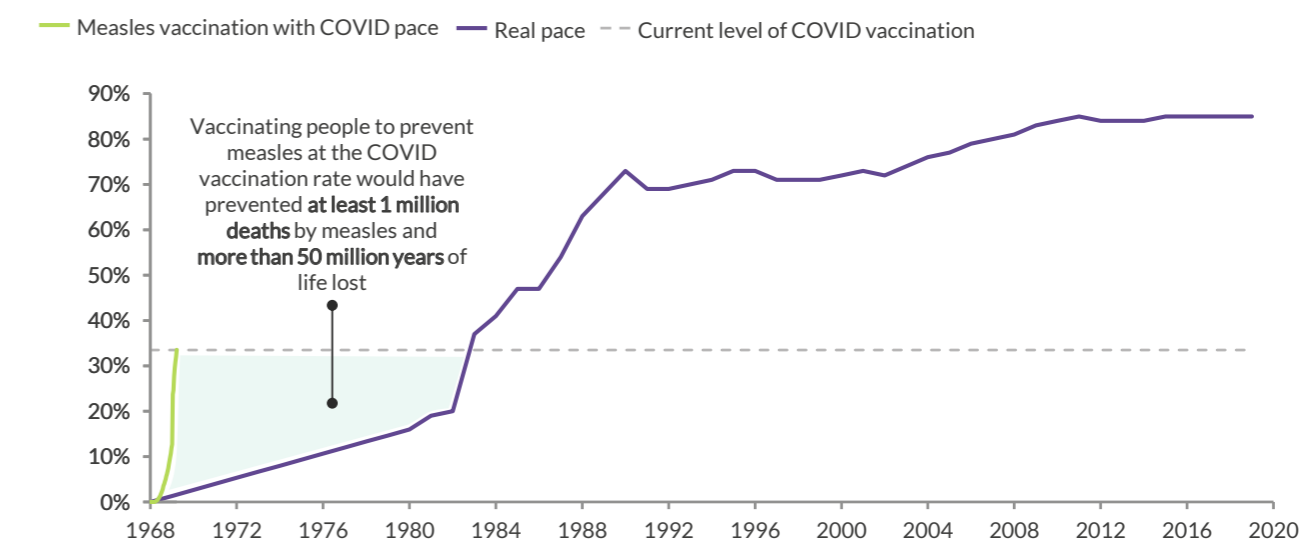


# What will the vaccination bring: eradication, limitation or no impact?

## A COVID paced vaccination improves outcomes drastically

Vaccination coverage of COVID in comparison to measles

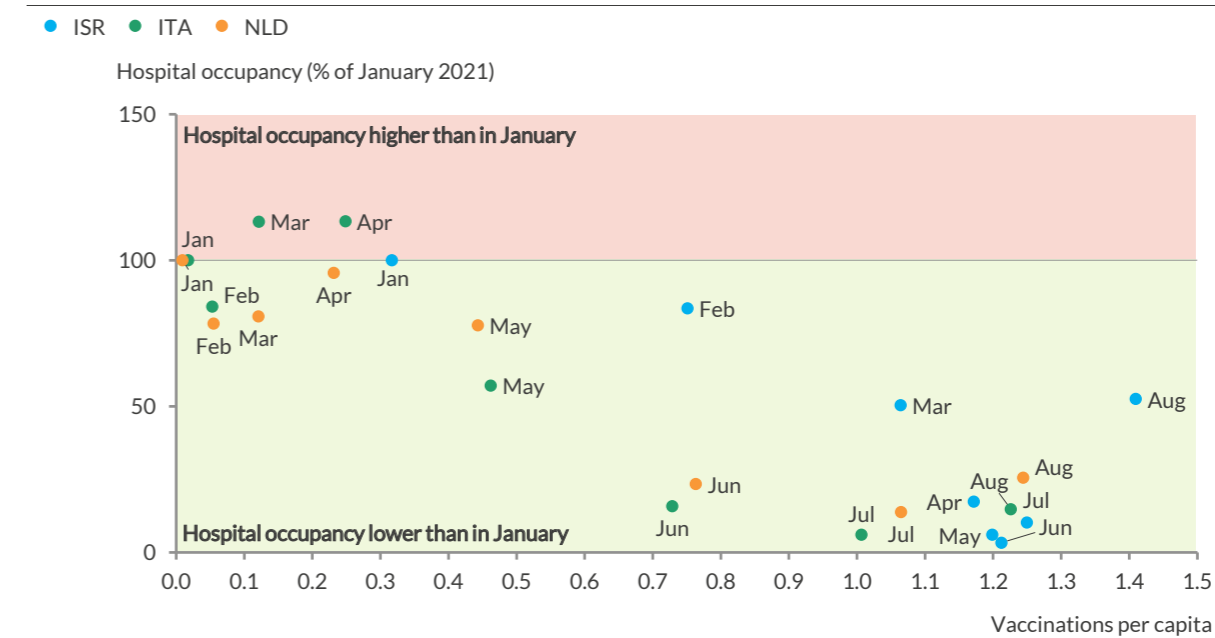
[x-axis: time (Dec '20 - Oct '21 for COVID, 1968-2020 for measles), y-axis: vaccination coverage]



## Impact of vaccination is yet unknown, with increase in hospitalization

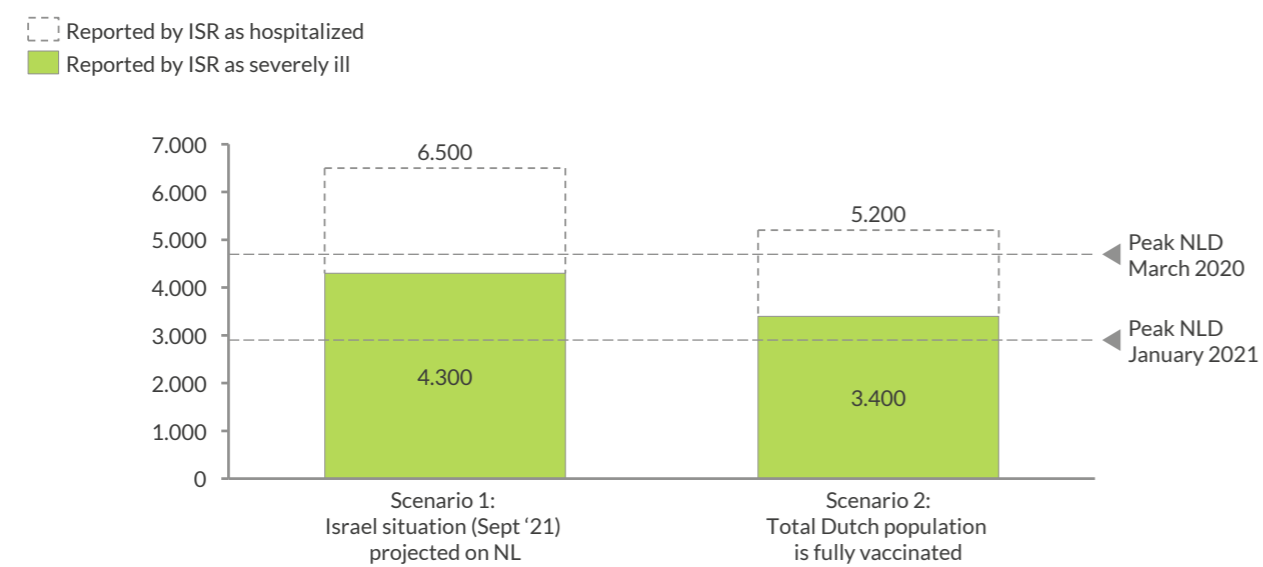
Change in hospital admissions and vaccination rate

[January 2021 - July 2021, per country, normalized to 100 at start date in January]



## Situation in Israel projected on the Netherlands provides a sobering picture

Projected hospital occupancy (incl. ICU) for two scenarios in the Netherlands based on situation in Israel of Sept '21  
 [Total hospital occupancy, # patients, corrected for population size, age and vaccination rate]

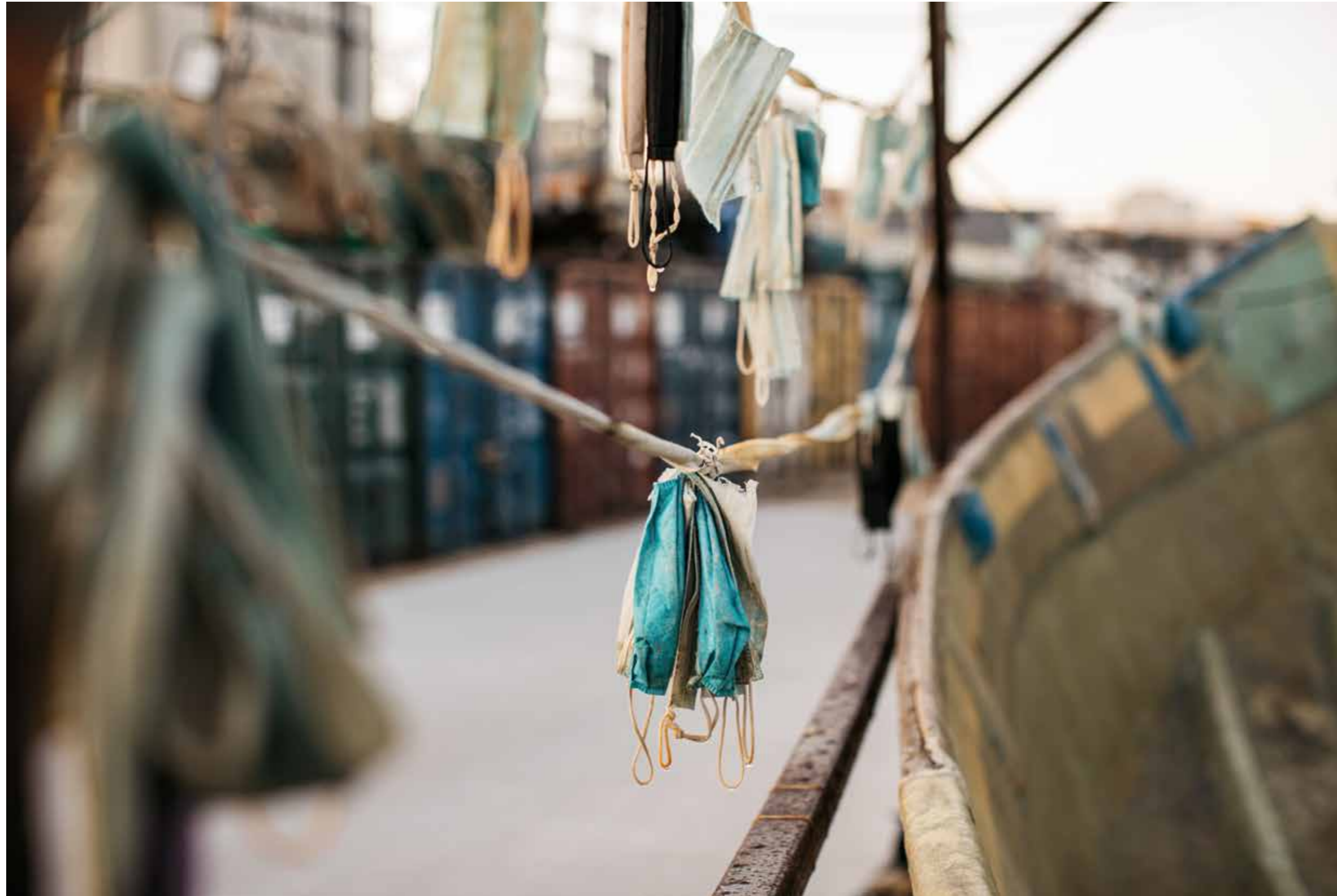


## What will the vaccination bring: eradication, limitation or no impact?

Eradicated	Limited	None
<p>Several vaccinations have been highly successful. Vaccines have (nearly) eradicated child diseases like measles and pox.</p> <p><b>COVID has limited similarity to these diseases, which have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low mutation rate</li> <li>imitable immune response</li> </ul> <p><b>Diseases eradicated</b>                      [Measles cases US, x1000, 1950-2015]</p>	<p>Some vaccines have shown to decrease the disease burden, yet not enough to erase the disease. An example is the influenza vaccine.</p> <p><b>COVID has many shared characteristics with influenza:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high mutation rate</li> <li>hard to imitate immune response</li> </ul> <p><b>Diminishing diseases</b>                      [Influenza incidence NL, 1970-2020]</p>	<p>A well-known example of the lack of effective vaccines, despite decades of research, is the battle against HIV.</p> <p><b>COVID differs largely from HIV, which has:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extremely high mutation rate</li> <li>lack of natural immune system response</li> </ul> <p><b>No impact on diseases</b>                      [HIV cases UK x1000, 1990-2015]</p>



# COVID deaths



Images of the dead and the sick from Bergamo and New York showing caskets lined up outside hospitals manned by white and blue plastic-wrapped living mummies initially fanned the worldwide anxiety and fear of COVID. Several months later, the burning pyres from India reminded us that these risks were very much still with us.

Photography has played a defining role in COVID. In many ways, this pandemic is as much driven by photography as numbers. Here, we combine the two.

If death is the ultimate 'cost' of COVID, it is relevant to ask if countries succeeded in limiting deaths.

To evaluate this, we obtained the number of deaths reported by each country. However, the absolute number of deaths means little when comparing countries.

Israel has less than 10 million inhabitants, whereas India has over 1,3 billion. We needed a denominator to this numerator. What is the expected number of deaths per country? Only a relative measure can help compare countries.

Based on early reported evidence on COVID, we assumed the worldwide COVID mortality to be 0.5%, with a known age-specific probability. For a population of 7,8 billion people, that means approximately 39 million deaths! Interestingly, the reported death toll is "only" 5,2 million people (as of November 2021).

We can compare countries using the 0.5% COVID mortality as a worldwide 'theoretical' average with an age-specific probability. Age-correction provides the 'theoretical' percentage per country: 0.2% for Ethiopia, because of its young population, and 1.3% for Japan, which has

the oldest population of the evaluated countries.

We can determine the success of limiting COVID mortality across countries by comparing the total 'theoretical' deaths per country and the number of reported deaths. The success of limiting COVID deaths varies substantially by country. Japan had a limited number of casualties, while India saw many people succumb to COVID.

Of note, the reported COVID deaths per country are not entirely reliable or comparable. The number of COVID deaths may be over or underreported. Lack of infrastructure and prevailing political and social norms may result in unreported COVID deaths in some countries. In other countries, there may be a financial incentive to report a death as COVID related. We tried to circumvent this by evaluating excess mortality where possible.

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As you browse through this magazine, we encourage you to ask the overall question:

Why did some countries do so much better than others?

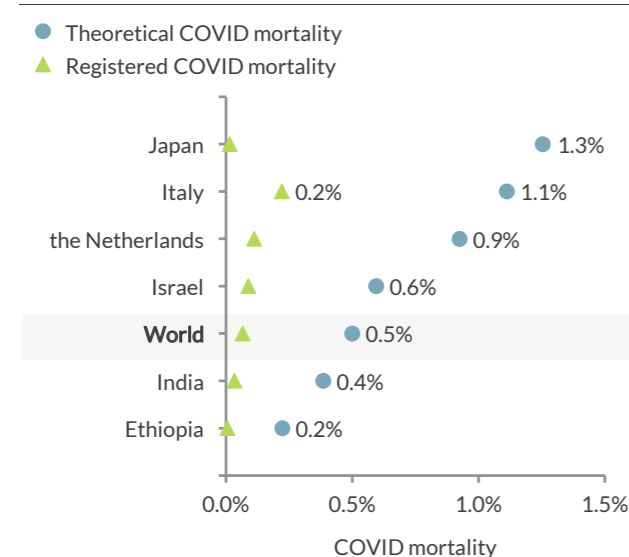
Ask yourself why Japan has been much more successful in limiting mortality despite its aged and thus most vulnerable population when compared to similarly developed countries such as Italy and The Netherlands.

Or consider why India and Ethiopia, both young and developing countries, were impacted very differently by COVID.

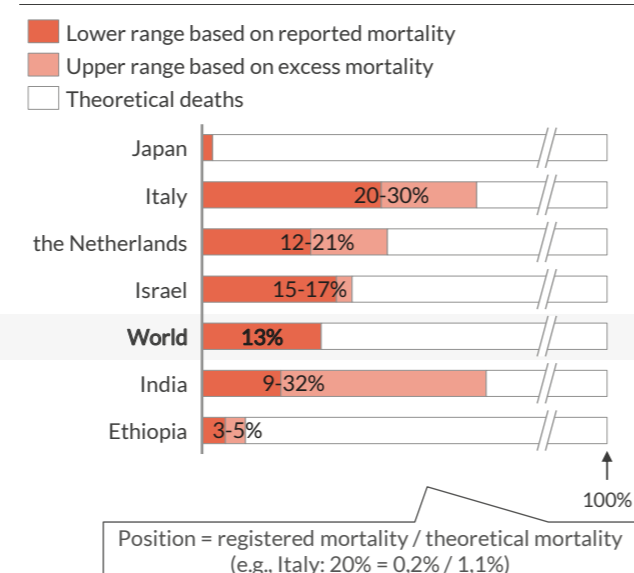
# COVID deaths: analyses

## Success in limiting COVID risk varies widely per country

Registered (21 November 2021) and theoretical COVID mortality [% of population]



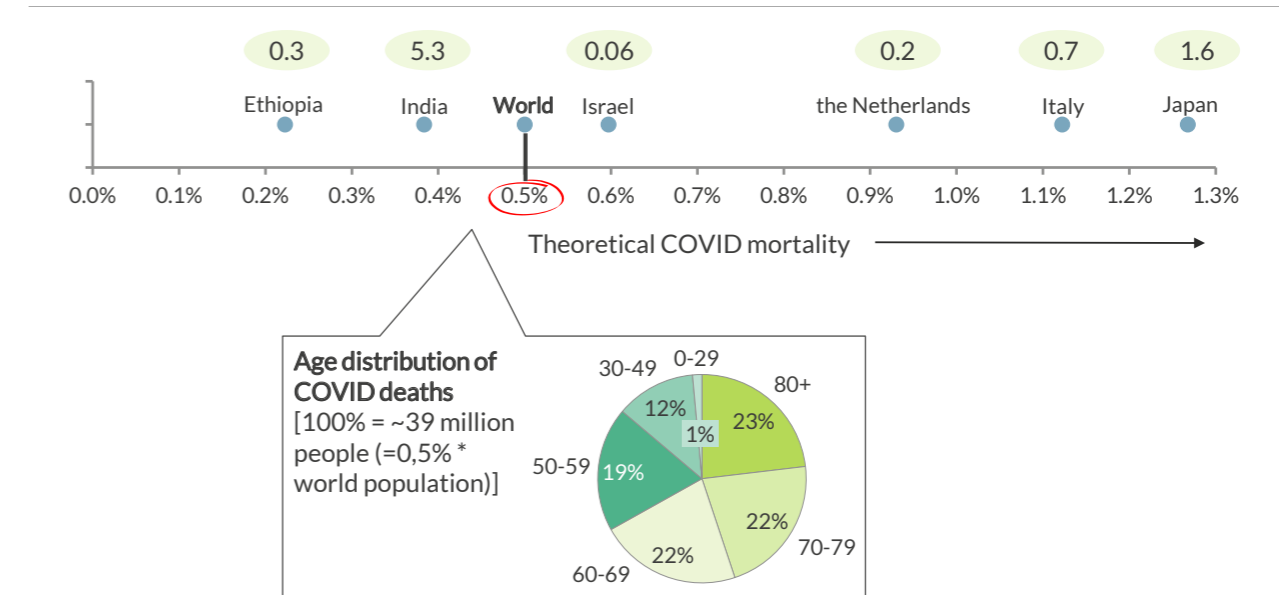
Position on 21 November 2021 per country on mortality [registered deaths / theoretical deaths]



## If death is the ultimate 'cost' of COVID then it is relevant to ask how well are we doing in limiting deaths?

## Demography has a huge impact: older population means higher risk

Theoretical COVID mortality [% of the population, ● = number of theoretical deaths x 1 mln]



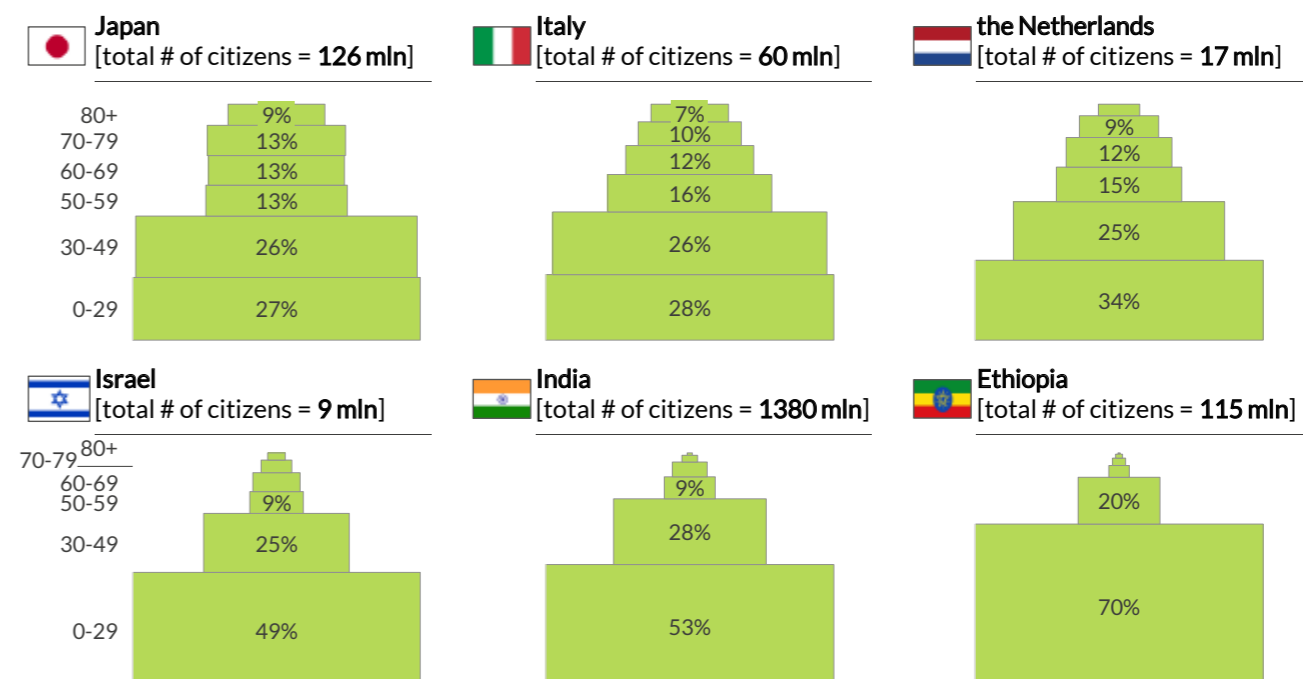
## 'Registered deaths' are a limited measure of COVID impact



Registered deaths reflect 1) the quality of the tests that are used, 2) the testing policy, 3) the registering policy. Actual number of deaths can therefore be much higher (iceberg underneath the water) than registered number of deaths (tip of the iceberg that we can observe).

- Tests that are not tested**
  - Sensitivity of the tests that are used. E.g., sensitivity of PCR is estimated to be 67-98%, meaning that 2-33% of the persons infected with COVID are tested negative (**false negatives**) and are not registered as COVID-cases (and thus also perhaps not as COVID deaths).
- Case of the missing cases**
  - Testing policy; the more a country tests, the larger the proportion of actual COVID cases will be found (and cause of deaths registered). Studies show that actual cases might be factor 4-40 higher.
- Deaths by another name**
  - Registering policy; how deaths are registered can cause an under-registration of COVID deaths. Lack of infrastructure in developing countries mean that many deaths are not reported yet. Guidelines in assigning cause of mortality in developed countries vary per country and therefore even when deaths are reported the cause is not comparable. Where mortality is known excess mortality provides one approach to estimate COVID mortality. Lack of transparency also certainly plays a role here.

## Demography determines differences in theoretical COVID mortality



# photographers



## Arko Datto

My aim with photography is to question what it means to be a photographer in the digital age while simultaneously playing the role of observer and commentator on critical issues. I pursue narratives on seemingly disparate topics: forced migration, techno-fascism, surveillance in the digital panopticon, disappearing islands, nocturnal realms, and psychosomatic stress of captive animals, to name a few. Although every narrative I explore is separate and different from the next, together, they form threads of inquiry into the existential dilemmas of our times.

By incorporating and developing diverse visual languages, narratives, and styles, I want to push the boundaries of both still and moving images. I was on my way to a doctorate in theoretical sciences before I decided to change course. Apart from working on my visual projects, I also enjoy curating the works of others and have been associated with Kochi Biennale, Obscura Photography Festival, and Chennai Photo Biennale in this regard.

@arkodatto



## Avishag Shaar-Yashuv

Avishag (1990) is a photojournalist and documentary photographer based in Israel. She has been active in photography for the past decade. For the past seven years, she has been documenting various ecological communities and associations operating throughout Israel. Through this experience, a new world has revealed itself to her, full of color, peace, and calm. What she has seen has expanded her curiosity and encouraged her to focus on what is unique for her.

@avishag\_sy

www.avishag-sy.com



## Claudio Majorana

Claudio was born in Catania, Italy, in 1986. His childhood influences arrived from art and science as he grew up spending time in his father's radiology darkroom and his mother's painting atelier. His early works document the Sicilian skateboard scene to which he actively participated for 15 years. After that he started photographing youth more specifically with a focus on life in the suburbs and outsider communities. In 2018, he published *Head of the Lion* (Cesura Publish), a book about the coming of age of a group of kids he photographed during their adolescence. The project was selected by the British Journal of Photography for the 2018 Ones to Watch talent issue. During the same year he graduated from medical school with a thesis about social cognition and the development of the brain during adolescence.

He is currently working with photographer Arianna Arcara on a personal project called *Ciao Vita Mia*. Besides his personal works, Claudio takes care of his grandfather's (Claudio Majorana Senior) photographic archive. Since 2020 he is a member of CESURA.

@claudiomajorana

www.claudiomajorana.com



## Esmee van Zeeventer

Esmee (1997) is a Dutch lens-based artist who recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the AKI in Enschede. While moving around, she gets stimulated by something that lets her get lost in a scene that might have happened or that might be about to happen. Esmee seems to operate as an investigator of her own universe, reflecting on her personal history, investigating and showing contemporary possibilities on everyday motives and matters while contemplating the world's questions. She extracts images from the world around her to visualize life's eternal subjects as memories, love, fear, and loneliness.

@eamy.nl

www.eamy.nl



## Mulugeta Ayene

Mulugeta is an Ethiopian photojournalist and fine art photographer living in Addis Ababa. While his work covers many subjects, recurrent themes in Mulugeta Ayene's work are social transformations and their effects on identity and social relations. Mulugeta is a photographer for the Associated Press (AP) and works on regular assignments for prominent international organizations such as UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to mention a few. His 2018 photography series *Ethiopian Spring* was exhibited at the 2019-2020 Nobel Peace Prize Exhibition in Oslo, Norway. Mulugeta was awarded the first prize in the Spot News, stories category of the 2020 World Press Photo Contest and was one of the nominees for World Press Photo of the Year and Story of the Year in 2020. His photos have also won him first prize in the 'Excellence in Journalism' competition organized by the Foreign Correspondents Association of Ethiopia (FCAE) in 2011 and 2012, and the first prize in the India-Africa Photo Contest in 2012.

@mulugetaayene

www.mulugetayene.com



## Yuki Iwamura

Yuki (1997) is a freelance photographer based between New York and Tokyo and was born and raised in Nagano, Japan. After he moved to Los Angeles at the age of 18 to study sociology, he began his career as a photojournalist for Japanese and college newspapers. After graduating from the Documentary Practice and Visual Journalism program at the International Center of Photography in New York in 2019, he professionally started his career in New York City. In 2020, he photographed the effect of the COVID pandemic, the frontline of Black Lives Matter protests, and the US presidential election. At the beginning of 2021, he moved back to Japan to continue working as a photojournalist and rediscover his origin after living abroad for six years. While he works as a freelance photographer, he also travels around the world producing stories that cover topics like the collapse of the nation-states, issues at borders, and immigration. He is currently working on a story about aging and death from his hometown, Nagano, Japan. He was awarded The Sunday Times Award for Achievement from the Ian Parry Scholarship in 2020 and interned as a photographer at the Agence France-Presse Tokyo bureau in April 2021.

@yukiwamura

www.yukiwamura.com



# project team



## Ankie Kerstens

Ankie is a strategy consultant working at Gupta Strategists. With a background as an occupational therapist and a master's in health economics. She is eager to improve health care by analyzing strategic issues through different lenses. She believes in the power of combining numbers with individual stories and assessing the impact on both a macro and a micro-level. This belief perfectly fits the Seeking the Centre project.



## Annemarije Oosterwaal

Annemarije has over ten years of experience in healthcare. She has a background in sociology, and she is fascinated by change processes in society and organizations. During her Ph.D., she studied various forms of change processes, including polarization processes in society and implementation processes of new policies. She finds the COVID pandemic fascinating from both a sociological and health strategist perspective. For instance, COVID forms a threat to solidarity within societies and makes the health ministry and hospitals face difficult strategic choices. The many faces of the pandemic make her curious to further explore and show the impact of COVID around the world.



## Anshu Gupta

Anshu likes thinking about problems. Alexander Pope's warning: 'A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep or taste not the Pierian Spring' is more relevant today than ever, as strong opinions are formed based on little effort and superficial and unreliable sources. He wanted to study languages, and his one current wish is to learn a 'dead' language: Sanskrit. Instead, he did engineering and physics and ended up being a consultant. He hopes to live long enough to learn how the sanity and insanity of the COVID-era are sorted out.



## Paulien Stegehuis

Paulien works as a strategy consultant at Gupta Strategists. She studied technical medicine at the University of Twente and completed her Ph.D. in image-guided oncological surgery at Leiden University. She hopes that the images and stories of the photographers, augmented with our broader insights, will strengthen each other. Hopefully, these images and insights also provide a nuanced picture of the differences and similarities between the approach and effects of the COVID crisis in the six countries showcased in this project.



## Roderick van Grinsven

Roderick is a strategy consultant at Gupta Strategists with close to 10 years of experience in health care. His background in Finance and in Innovation Management enables him to combine quantitative and qualitative insights into comprehensible results for all. He likes to look at things from a different perspective: it improves the quality of conclusions and can make our actions more meaningful. In 'Seeking the centre', these qualities come into play perfectly as pictures and numbers are combined to create new perspectives and insights.



## Tom Kapteijn

Tom works as a strategy consultant at Gupta Strategists. At Gupta, he aims to create impact by solving challenging problems in healthcare. Previously, he obtained a master's degree in econometrics and completed an internship in the financial sector. This experience provides him with strong quantitative skills and a unique perspective on healthcare. During the 'Seeking the centre' project, he tried to combine the quantitative insights from data analyses with the personal perspectives portrayed by the photographers. This combination leads to a unique view of the total impact of the pandemic.



## Barteld Nanninga

Barteld studied medicine and law at the University of Amsterdam. He lived in Paris for half a year, where he studied 'French as a foreign language' and 'French civilization' at Sorbonne University. Barteld has always been interested in other cultures and opinions. The arts play an essential role in understanding others: they often show what words cannot say. As a strategy consultant at Gupta Strategists, on the other hand, data analysis and analytical thinking are essential parts of his work. Barteld greatly values this combination. The 'Seeking the centre' project is exactly on the cutting edge of data and the arts: the pictures show what the data cannot and vice versa.



## David Furst

David is a father and visual curator based in Paris. He started his career in 2001 as a photojournalist and spent nearly a decade documenting social and political conflicts in the Middle East. In 2010, he became International Picture Editor of The New York Times. During his 11 year tenure, he led the newspaper's enhanced international emphasis on photography that won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for photography four years in a row, The World Press Photo of the Year, Pictures of the Year International, and the Visa d'Or, among others. As a visual curator, Furst believes in the importance of weaving together multidisciplinary approaches that allow people to connect and empathize with every story.



## Luca Rocco

Luca has operated since 2017 as a management and strategy consultant. The 30+ years before were a nomadic life as an executive in fast-growing technological industries. During this time, the passion for photography represented a constant cultural reference. This passion began to bloom when he joined Canon in 2015 and enhanced the corporate mission via the synergic capacity of established professionals and young talents. For Luca, photography represents an element of simplification: it amplifies emotions and offers a deeper debrief to situations. The reader becomes a witness as photography promotes a universal language. Besides 'Seeking the centre', Luca collaborated with Gupta Strategists on the 2015 project 'Patient's Journey'. Working with Gupta's team of professionals and the photographers involved expanded our understanding of what we see and what (we think) we know.



