



COVID-19 Spells Turning Point For China's Technocracy

As a Technocracy, China's bumbling incompetence is being exposed. However, when people don't recognize that China IS a Technocracy, then it's all for nothing and Technocrats will sail on undisturbed. This is why it is critical to understand Technocracy in the first place. □ TN Editor

While the world fights the coronavirus pandemic, China is fighting a propaganda war. Beijing's war aim is simple: shift away from China all blame for the outbreak, the botched initial response, and its early spread into the broader world. At stake is China's global reputation, as well as the potential of a fundamental shift away from China for trade and manufacturing. Also at risk is the personal legacy of General Secretary Xi Jinping, who has staked his legitimacy on his technocratic competence. After dealing with the first great global crisis of the 21st century, the world must fundamentally rethink its dependence on China.

After months of staying holed up in the Forbidden City, Mr. Xi finally

ventured to Wuhan, the epicenter of the virus, to declare victory over the virus as all the makeshift hospitals have been closed. Yet no one knows if Beijing's claims that new indigenous cases are slowing down are true or not, given long-standing doubt about the veracity of any official Chinese statistics, and the party's failure to act in the early days of the coronavirus.

The communist government instead is claiming that it has largely controlled the epidemic, even as it suspiciously now blames "foreign arrivals" for new cases of virus. [Leaked](#) video from China shows huge lines at a hospital in Chongqing, for example, raising questions about just what is happening around the country.

What Beijing cares about is clear from its sustained war on global public opinion. Chinese propaganda mouthpieces have launched a broad array of attacks against the facts, attempting to create a new narrative about China's historic victory over the Wuhan virus. Chinese state media is [praising](#) the government's "effective, responsible governance," but the truth is that Beijing is culpable for the spread of the pathogen around China and the world. Chinese officials knew about the new virus back in December, and did nothing to warn their citizens or impose measures to curb it early on.

Instead of acting with necessary speed and transparency, the party-state looked to its own reputation and legitimacy. It [threatened](#) whistleblowers like the late Dr. Li Wenliang, and clamped down on social media to prevent both information about the virus and criticism of the Communist Party and government from spreading.

Unsurprisingly, China also has enablers abroad helping to whitewash Beijing's culpability. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus refused for months to declare a pandemic, and instead thanked China for "making us safer," a comment straight out of an Orwell novel. This is the same WHO that has refused to allow Taiwan membership, due undoubtedly to Beijing's influence over the WHO's purse strings.

Most egregiously, some Chinese government officials have gone so far as

to [claim](#) that the Wuhan virus was not indigenous to China at all, while others, like Mr. Tedros, suggest that China's response somehow [bought](#) the world "time" to deal with the crisis. That such lines are being [repeated](#) by global officials and talking heads shows how effectively China's propaganda machine is shaping the global narrative. The world is quickly coming to praise the Communist Party's governance model, instead of condemn it.

The reality is that China did not tell its own people about the risk for weeks and refused to let in major foreign epidemiological teams, including from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Thus, the world could not get accurate information and laboratory samples early on. By then, it was too late to stop the virus from spreading, and other world capitals were as lax in imposing meaningful travel bans and quarantines as was Beijing.

Because of China's initial failures, governments around the world, including democratic ones, now are being forced to take extraordinary actions that mimic to one degree or another Beijing's authoritarian tendencies, thus remaking the world more in China's image. Not least of the changes will be in more [intrusive](#) digital surveillance of citizens, so as to be able to better track and stop the spread of future epidemics, a step that might not have been necessary if Beijing was more open about the virus back in December and if the WHO had fulfilled its responsibilities earlier.

The Stakes for China and Globalization

Regardless of how much some governments and global voices praise China, Xi and the Communist Party care about dominating the propaganda war because the Wuhan virus has stood their nation on a razor's edge. Xi's own legitimacy is not merely at stake. His government is ferociously fighting to divert blame and attention, fearing that the world rightfully may utterly reassess modern China, from its technocratic prowess to its safety. Decades of a carefully curated global image may crumble if nations around the globe start paying attention to China's lax public health care, incompetent and intrusive government, and generally less developed domestic conditions.

Xi's fears are well founded, as a global reconsideration of China is long overdue. Legitimate criticisms and doubts about China's governance and growth model were long suppressed by Chinese pressure and the willingness of many to buy into the Communist Party's public line. Public [shaming](#) of foreign corporations, global [influence](#) operations, and "[elite capture](#)" — all are policies Beijing has deployed to maintain China's public image.

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‘Streetscooter’: First Large Bankruptcy In Electric Mobility

When the Green Economy meets Capitalism, one or the other will die; in this case, the eco-socialists in Germany bit the dust and the first large electric mobility bankruptcy should send a strong message to the rest of the world. □ TN Editor

Manufacturer “Streetscooter”, purchased by Deutsche Post (German Post) in 2014, will be scrapped. The German media of course blame it on “bad management” by the large company.

Which city dweller doesn’t know the small, yellow electric scooters of the German post office that the postmen and women deliver letters and small packages to citizens comfortably and efficiently? Not long ago I received news via Facebook on how the e-delivery-vehicles just barely made it back to the post office, especially in winter, and only when the heating is off.

Now the management of the Swiss Post is also following suit and ending the experiment with delivery street scooters.

The company used to be a small startup, a young dynamic private company in a “sexy” field – just like artificial intelligence or climate protection technology. Deutsche Post bought the company with the benevolent support of the eco-loving press and used it to polish up its otherwise staid image a bit.

However, any PR coup based on electro-chemistry ultimately has to prove itself in everyday life over years. The post office scooters obviously couldn’t. Pushing an electric vehicle still loaded with letters back to the local depot when the battery is empty is not possible: the scooter is too big and heavy for that. Or you have to plan shorter routes (in winter), which reduces efficiency. Since letters are only delivered during the day, the scooters can be conveniently charged at night. But if you have to reload during working hours, it takes hours, and you don’t have the time for that.

Take, for example, the Berlin E-bus experiment: the lithium buses run from 8 to 12 a.m., then the diesel vehicles take over. [Our speaker Prof. Alt talks](#) in this context about a double infrastructure, which is of course also roughly twice as expensive. Presumably Deutsche Post had to manage a similarly inefficient double fleet of about 13,000 street scooters. The scooters broke down more often and then soon had to be repaired, and replaced by diesel-powered delivery vans.

A commentator from [ntv television](#), however, blames it on the slow

management of Deutsche Post: A project like an electric fleet of electric cars has to be run by flexible start-up managers with heart and attitude, then it would work.

The Streetscooter deserved a dynamic, creative and risk-taking management - and the opportunity to obtain the necessary funds independently on the capital market.

This claim is not convincing. Whether it's a startup or the Deutsche Post, both must adhere to the main laws of physics and economics. One thing must never be forgotten: Deutsche Post is a business group that has to make money.

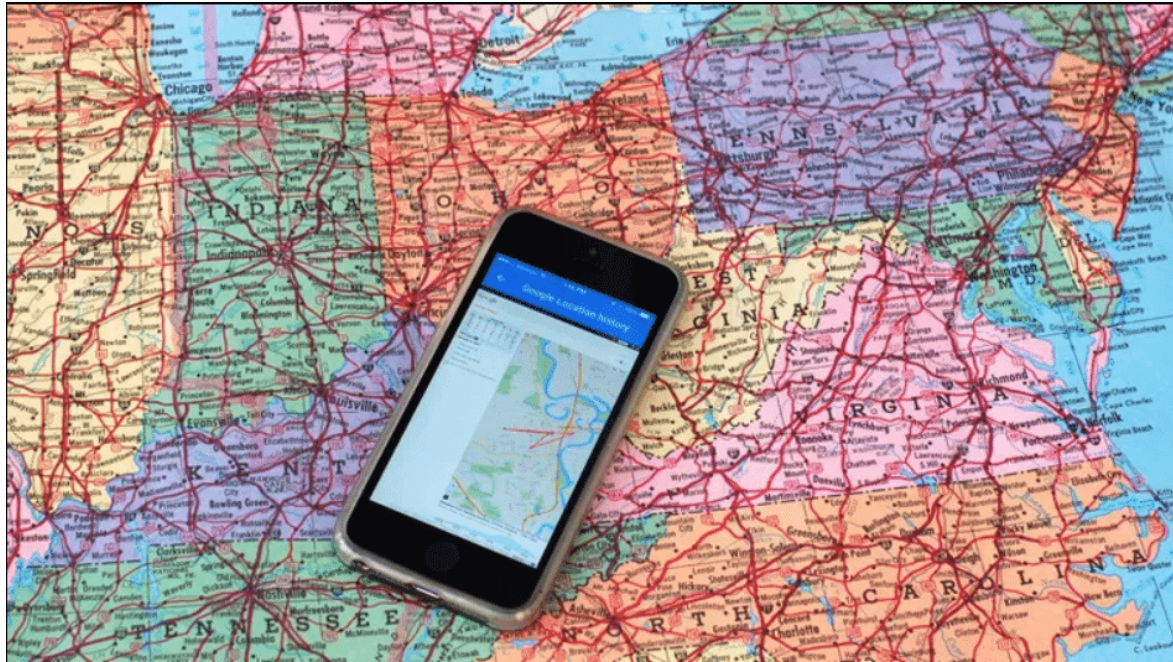
The city administration of Berlin, on the other hand, can waste money at will with misguided planning. They work with funds from taxes levied by force. And Berlin's eco-socialist politicians, who are poor in arithmetic, are elected and are not held accountable for their failures with their own private assets.

Of course some will claim that Tesla has achieved what the N-TV quote above calls for. But this is not true: Elon Musk is an eco-media darling who has already received billions of dollars in US subsidies. Without these billions he would have long since gone bankrupt or become a mini-manufacturer for a niche.

We Germans are now experiencing the same thing in Brandenburg: because Merkel's "grand coalition" wants to have a share in the media sexiness of Tesla, the "Gigafactory" is being heavily subsidized there.

The fact that an entire forest is being cut down and cheaper Polish workers have to be hired is of no consequence to someone like Federal Economics Minister Peter Altmaier. The press as well.

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Feds Look To Phone Location Data To Track Coronavirus

Silicon Valley Technocrats are negotiating with the government to give up location tracking data in smart phones to track coronavirus infections. Once this door is opened, the government will never voluntarily close it. □ TN Editor

The U.S. government is in active talks with Facebook, Google and a wide array of tech companies and health experts about how they can use data gleaned from Americans' phones to combat the novel coronavirus, including tracking whether people are keeping one another at safe distances to stem the outbreak.

Public-health experts are interested in the possibility that private-sector companies could compile the data in anonymous, aggregated form, which they could then use to map the spread of the infection, according to three people familiar with the effort, who requested anonymity because the project is in its early stages.

Analyzing trends in smartphone owners' whereabouts could prove to be a powerful tool for health authorities looking to track coronavirus, which has infected more than 180,000 people globally. But it's also an

approach that could leave some Americans uncomfortable, depending on how it's implemented, given the sensitivity when it comes to details about their daily whereabouts.

In recent interviews, Facebook executives said the U.S. government is particularly interested in understanding patterns of people's movements, which can be derived through data the company collects from users who allow it. The tech giant in the past has provided this information to researchers in the form of statistics, which in the case of coronavirus, could help officials predict the next hotspot or decide where to allocate overstretched health resources.

"We're encouraged by American technology companies looking to leverage aggregate, anonymized data to glean key insights for covid-19 modeling efforts," said an official with the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The official said those insights might "help public health officials, researchers, and scientists improve their understanding of the spread of COVID19 and transmission of the disease." Multiple sources stressed that — if they proceed — they are not building a government database.

A task force created by tech executives, entrepreneurs and investors presented a range of ideas around disease mapping and telehealth to the White House during a private meeting Sunday. The discussions included representatives from tech giants; investors led by the New York-based firm Hangar and well-known Silicon Valley venture capitalist Ron Conway; public-health leaders from Harvard University; and smaller telehealth startups like Ro, two sources said.

"We are still in the process of collecting ideas, recommendations, and proposed actions from task-force members, which we intend to present to the White House in the coming days," said Josh Mendelsohn, the managing partner at Hangar, who helped organize the effort.

Many of those involved either did not respond or declined comment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did not respond to a request for comment.

The early, unprecedented collaboration between Washington and Silicon Valley reflects the urgent, nationwide scramble to stop a deadly malady that has shuttered businesses, skewered the stock market, sent students home from school and now threatens to overwhelm the U.S. medical system with patients in need of critical care.

Over the past week, White House officials led by Michael Kratsios, the country's chief technology officer, have convened a series of meetings to leverage the tech expertise of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, IBM and other technology leaders. The government has encouraged social-media sites to take a more aggressive approach to thwart coronavirus misinformation, The Post has reported, responding to concerns that foreign misinformation might be stoking panic about the outbreak. And the Trump administration has explored partnering with the tech industry to improve telework and telehealth offerings for millions of Americans.

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