Twitter Thread by Tony Yates



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The fuel injected Brexiter comments on the EU's vaccine problems miss many points.

1) no-one wanted to get out of the EU or the single market to protect ourselves better against a pandemic. See Brexit Tory controlled government policy 2016-2020 regarding the NHS and pandemic preparedness.

2) we could have, and, perhaps thanks to the need to genuflect to nationalists, or out of pragmatic needs, chosen to go our own way on procurement even within the EU.

3) none of this explains why it's good to be outside the single market, restricting our trade and making us poorer.

4) the implicit celebration of the vaccine nationalist cause, seemingly [but not actually] permitted by Brexit, ignores how this game plays out, namely:

a) the EU retalliates with sanctions now or in the future.

b) we expose ourselves to mishaps in our domestic supply chains of the vaccine production we delightedly hold onto as 'ours'.

c) this is not a one-shot game. We are into a perpetual period of mutation, vaccine tweaking, vaccine delivery. We may be unlucky in not devising and manufacturing good tweaks and need to spread the innovation risk globally.

If anyone wants me to write 'Vaccination nationalism: not a one shot game' for their paper/magazine, obvs I am nearly there as I have the pun headline sorted.

It's actually a really nice econ teaching topic, as it brings together specialization, risk management under uncertainty, game theory, time consistency, political economy, international relations. Normal trade policy but on acid.

The interesting bit of political economy is how the electoral horizon relates to the horizon at which we are fighting covid. A quick vaccine war concluded before 2024 could be great to get another term. But the payback and extra deaths would come later.