

What's next: your opinion is sought

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Today is technically my last day in paid employment. At some point during its course, I hope that the University of Sheffield will be sending me my P45. Tomorrow morning I will become Emeritus Professor of Accounting. I have to say, that feels good and is the right thing for me to do at this moment.

Given that my employment at Sheffield has been primarily research focused, in some senses it may be a little difficult to work out what the change will be. The same will also be true of my relationship with Copenhagen Business School, which has also now come to an end on a formal basis.

The answer is that, except for the end of regular part-time salary payments, to be replaced by much lower pension payments in due course, the change to my mindset is what will matter. For example, over the last decade I accepted that I had people to whom I was directly responsible, and who required that I underwent annual appraisal to set targets for assessment, and now I don't have to do that. I am free from what I found to be the pettiness that went with university life.

That implication is only now beginning to dawn on me. For example, I was in discussion with my wife during the last few days and she pointed out to me that I no longer have to worry about what my academic CV looks like. It could, if I wanted, now be considered to be complete, and that would be just fine. As someone who has lived with the pressure to deliver for a while now, that really does feel very strange, especially as I (with colleagues) received provisional acceptance for an academic paper only yesterday.

So, what now? I know that I have talked about this before, and I suspect that I will do so again, because, as my old friend and Tax Justice Network colleague and co-founder John Christensen has put it, this is really the moment when I will begin my third career. It is only in the last week that I have really appreciated the freedom that this might provide.

For example, over the last few days I have, for the first time, had the opportunity to actually sit back and develop ideas for videos rather than rush in to sit in front of the

camera and produce content with almost no time to do preparation, as has been commonplace in the past year.

In contrast, one day earlier this week I took the time to sit down and admire the view where I was, have a coffee, have some mind-map software open in front of me, and within a couple of hours sketch out a list of videos, the reasons why they were relevant, what the argument are, and most importantly, what the impact of considering the question I was addressing might be. This is a luxury that until literally the last week or so I did not have available to me, because there were so many other things to do.

In practical terms, what might this mean? One obvious answer is that I still do not know as yet, and one of the things that I'm going to do over the next week or so is spend time with friends with experience in the fields in which I am interested. When doing so, I hope that we will, between long walks and (in my case) moments of bird watching, also have the chance to discuss the best use for my energy, which I think to be as strong now as it was when I began campaigning more than 20 years ago.

I do, of course, have some ideas or I would not have gone down this route. The idea of doing nothing is completely alien to me. Let me, in that case, bounce a couple of these ideas off you as well, and seek your opinion on them.

When doing so, I stress that nothing that I am proposing will have any impact on the regular daily blog impact here (which is now so much part of my life that I do it even when I'm holiday, so that most people never notice when I am away) or our regular YouTube video production.

The first idea is to produce a long-running series on solutions to the current political crisis that we are in. I have been promising to do this, and I think it is time that I got on with it.

A current sketch plan for this suggests that it could be made as a video series that might be up to 60 episode long, involving about 10 hours of video as a result. These might come out at the rate of about two a week and replace commentary videos on the days when they are published. They would, of course, be transcribed and reproduced here.

The overarching aim of the series will be to explain why we are in crisis and how a people and solution focused approach to political problem-solving could create the alternative political narrative and actions that will address the crisis created by neoliberalism.

Inevitably, any such series would develop during the course of its production, so I am not sharing an outline at present but comments on the idea are welcome.

The other idea that I am working on, and they are most definitely not mutually

exclusive, is to create a second YouTube channel that will have a strong education focus. This would mean that it would not produce explicitly political content, although I do, of course, look at the world through a particular lens, and it would be very very hard to entirely eliminate that from whatever is produced.

As with the previous idea, the intention would be to create the opportunity to focus in on particular issues and long-term thinking around them so that subjects can be explored in depth to explain:

- * Why the subject is important
- * What impact it has
- * What the key ideas implicit in the current approach to the subject are and why they might be wrong
- * The technical underpinning of current arguments, when that is relevant
- * How the subject might develop if it is to meet the needs of society
- * What technical developments might be necessary to achieve that goal

I am, as ever, full of ambition and as a result series on the following four themes are being considered:

- * Economics from a macro economic perspective with a particular focus on modern monetary theory, but not to the exclusion of all other issues
- * Political economy
- * Taxation, with an emphasis upon its role in society and economic management rather than as a “how to do it” manual
- * Accounting, with an emphasis on its role as the ultimate source of data for decisions impacting the allocation of resources within society.

As with the previous idea, I have done some sketching out of ideas to include in the series. That on accounting might be the longest, and that on political economy the shortest, with the series on economics likely to be longer than that on taxation.

The overall approach will be to explore each of these topics in a way that explains to a layperson what its significance might be, before explaining the key philosophical, political and technical aspects that they might need to consider. The presentation style will combine my talking head, graphics and animations. There will be a lot more technical work involved than is required by existing videos.

In practical terms, the intention will be to focus on no more than one or two series at a time. Economics and accounting are the most likely starting points, but I am open to

suggestions.

I am taking care to consider how this material can be accessed, and quite a lot of thinking will still need to go into this, but the intention is to make the materials free to anyone. There will always be transcripts as well as videos. There will be a separate website: the intention is to provide a long-term resource.

So, some quick questions:

[poll id="136"]

And:

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Might you then consider this?

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And finally this:

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Thanks for answering. Comments are welcome, but let's ignore the retirement issue. That one's already been done, thank you.