Harmful Home: an overview of the post-pandemic home and directions for further research in Wales.

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Photo: Author's own, Argoed, Caerphily

Overview

#GeographyofHarm

#HarmFromHome

Context

- Develop ideas in recent CaCHE Working Paper and article in this week's WHQ
- Conceptualise home as a place of harm in policy analysis
- Reflect upon recent research findings
- Suggest an agenda for further research in Wales

UK COLLABORATIVE CENTRE FOR HOUSING EVIDENCE

Out of harm's way?

Critical remarks on harm and the meaning of home during the 2020 Covid-19 social distancing measures

Working paper

By Dr Craig Gurney (University of Glasgow)

8 April 2020

WHQ
@WHQMag

'Stay home, stay safe'? @CraigTweeted analyses what could prove to be the long-lasting harms of th Covid-19 lockdown in Wales

Home is where the harms were - WHQ
Craig Gurney analyses what could prove to be the long-lasting harms of the Covid-19 lockdown in Wale..
🔗 whq.org.uk

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Home

Banality of the ordinary – a complacence

Relentlessly positive narratives

In the shadows lurks a darker home of harm, negative experiences, counterfactual arguments and obverse properties which are less well reported and understood.

Social harm

Social harm perspective or "zemiology" in critical criminology (Hillyard et al 2004):

"the deleterious activities of local and national states and of corporations upon peoples' lives, whether in respect of lack of wholesome food, inadequate housing or heating, low income, exposure to various forms of danger, violations of basic human rights, and victimisation to various forms of crime" (Hillyard and Tombs 2007, p 16)

Harm: 'events or instances where human flourishing is demonstrably compromised', 'non-fulfilment of specified needs leads to identifiable harms' (Pemberton 2016, p 9, p 19)

Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

A geography of harm

- "The relations between and within the spaces where physical, mental, social, moral and material injuries or detriments occur" (Gurney 2020, p 11).

- Home is an important locus in a geography of harm and housing has been largely overlooked in the social harm literature (cf Tombs 2020 on the "social murder" of Grenfell Tower fire).

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Harm from home

Domestic violence, coercion, control, child abuse, rape and murder.

Unintentional injury, hazards and physical risks: damp, disrepair, air quality and fire.

Where those health harming behaviours which cause non-communicable diseases most often occur.

Where the symptoms of poor mental health are most acutely and most frequently experienced and where suicides most often occur.
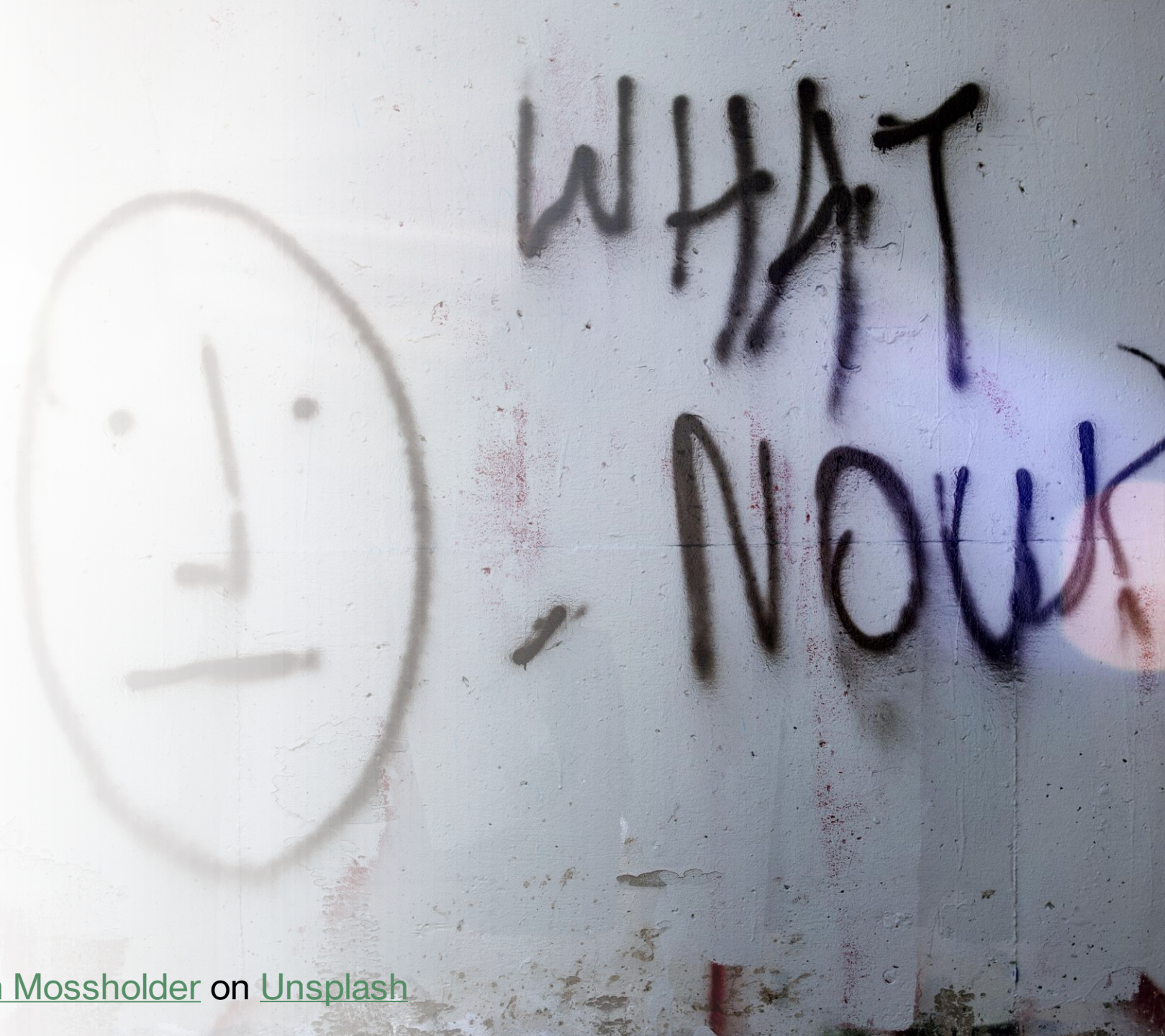
Applying this framework to the Covid 19 pandemic

So what?

- Social Harm as a policy analysis lens

- Home as a place of harm

- Covid19 has exacerbated pre-existing social inequalities including inequalities of housing and health

- Rethink what home means … and what it should offer

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Types of harm

Out of Harm's Way (Gurney 2020a) suggested <u>eleven harms</u>. Here I focus on just four:

1. Loneliness, well-being and mental health
2. IPV, DV and coercive control
3. Unintentional injury, density and exposure to hazards
4. Health-harming behaviours

Image Credit: Martin Logan Fisher, Unsplash.com

The evidence base – the epidemic within the epidemic

"Never before in the history of academic publishing has such a great volume of research focused on a single topic"

More than 12,000 scientific papers about Covid-19 were published between 31/12/19 and 07/05/20.

(Odone et al. 2020, p 34)

Loneliness, well-being and mental health

- Preece and Bimpson (2019) study of housing insecurity and mental health in Wales.

- Recently published research (Brooks et al 2020, Li et al 2020. Ebrahim et al 2020) reports feelings of grief, confusion and anxiety-induced insomnia, emotional exhaustion and suicidal ideation associated with the recent experiences of lockdown.

- Loneliness strongly associated with decline in mental health and cardiovascular outcomes (Leigh-Hunt et al 2017; Kearns et al 2015.)

- 'heightened risk for mortality from a lack of social relationships is greater than that from obesity' (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2015 p 236).

IPV, DV and coercive control

- Confinement/exposure stress, lockdown mimics coercive control, loss of support.

- Risk of all forms of violence against women and girls increased under conditions of isolation at home (Fraser 2020, Ertan et al 2020, Piquerro et al 2020)

- 61% of abuse victims reported that violence/abuse got worse during the lockdown; 55% felt more afraid during lockdown and 68% felt they had no-one to turn to for help during lockdown 68% (Women's Aid 2020, p 10).

Unintentional injury, hazards and household type

- Prolonged length of exposure to harm

- Hazards linked to tenure in Wales

- Poor housing associated with increased risk of depressive symptoms during lockdown (Amerio et al 2020)

- Multi-generational households – households where pensioners and working-age live together, especially in areas of high deprivation predict Covid19 incidence (Kenway and Holden 2020)
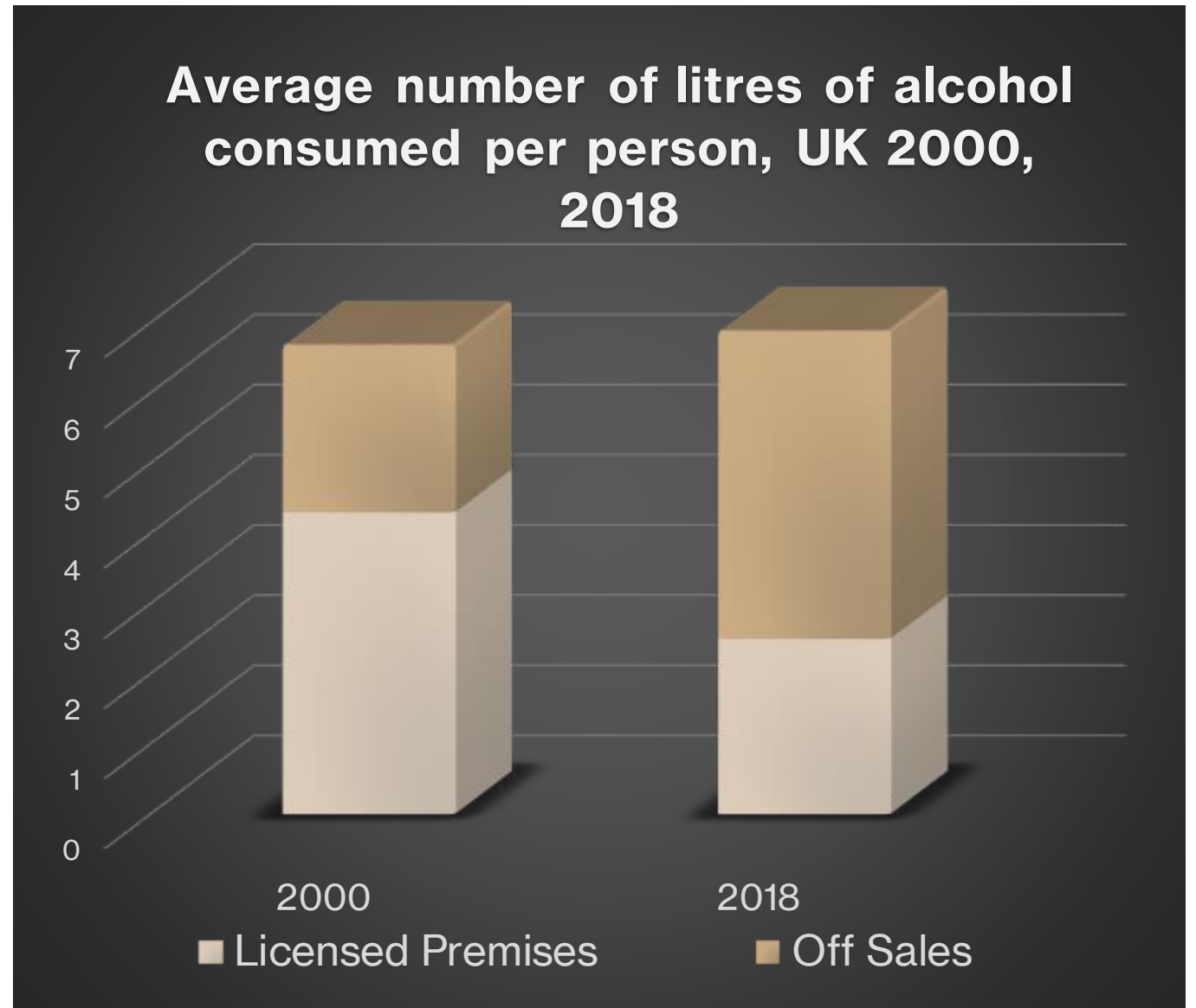
Health-harming behaviours

Ideas of home as comfort allow little room for physical activity. They are the antithesis of physical exertion.

Evidence suggests a growth in inactivity, increased drinking at home and of a rise in obesity during lockdown.

Callinan and MacLean 2020
Todisco and Donini 2020

Average number of litres of alcohol consumed per person, UK 2000, 2018

7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

2000   2018

■ Licensed Premises   ■ Off Sales

Source: Institute for Alcohol Studies

An agenda for research

Do not forget pre-existing agendas

- Let's not forget the pre-existing agendas to which housing plays a part, connected communities mental health, housing insecurity, domestic violence, (and also continue with what we've done with respect to homelessness during the pandemic)

- Avoid the end of history narrative

- Evaluate the extent to which these pre-existing priorities remain relevant post-pandemic

Covid-19 is a housing disease

- Joined up health and housing policy research

- Density + multi-generational households predict incidence

- Mental health - Suicides at home (Gurney 2020c)

Properties of home

- Changing experiences and expectations of home – effect upon housing markets, changing space requirements for those working from home – changing physical form?

- Digital connectivity

- De-urbanization – threats to vibrant town centres?

- Changing meaning of work

Housing and Health inequalities

Housing's role in perpetuating the social gradient in health - where is the causation?

Housing and health policy-making remains separate – why?

The history of state intervention in housing is the history of public health.

Social Harm

Think about the harms caused by housing in all tenures to advance ideas of risk and inequality.

Think about home as a place where harms occur – a safe and secure home is still far from many people's grasp.

Critical thinking: broaden understanding of housing policy (cf embracing ideas about housing as a right, of housing pathways, housing precarity and financialization etc.) to include a social harm lens. Home is a place where harm is often experienced and is, of itself sometimes a source of harm.

Conclusion

Returning home.

Reflection on work in progress and remarks upon unusual times.

Ideas for further research and approaches to policy development.

Thank you for your time.

Further Reading

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