

Living with Pandemics: People, Place and Policy

Edited by

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**For the
COVID-19 Generation**

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Megan Blake is a recognised expert in food security and food justice. She has an established international reputation for her research focusing on 3 intersecting strands: 1) Surplus food chains and practices of redistribution 2) Community organisations, social innovation and self-organisation, and practices of resilience 3) Social inequalities. Her work is underpinned by a practice-based theoretical approach. She works closely with local and national scale organisations and local authorities to achieve research impacts that make real change. She is actively involved in public dissemination and has

organised and facilitated a number of community engagement events and conferences, has been an invited commentator on national and international TV and radio programmes, and has published in and been quoted by national and international press.

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John Bryson has held research and teaching posts at the Universities of St Andrews, Cambridge, Wales and most recently at the University of Birmingham where he is Professor of Enterprise and Economic Geography. His research focusses on understanding people and organizations in place and space and the ways in which place-based adaptation occurs including understanding barriers and enablers to adaptation. Much of his research has focused on developing an integrated approach to understanding city-regions. One of his cross-cutting research interests includes understanding rapid adaptation during times of disruptive and radical change. This includes citizen-led end-user innovation, the development of alternative solutions in response to private and public sector failure and research on responsible citizenship. His books include *Service Business Theory and Practice* (Palgrave, 2020) and *Ordinary Cities, Extraordinary Geographies: People, Place and Space* (Edward Elgar, 2021).

Paul Cairney is Professor of Politics and Public Policy in the Division of History, Heritage, and Politics at the University of Stirling. He is a specialist in British politics and public policy, often focusing on the ways in which policy studies can explain the use of evidence in politics and policy, and how policymakers translate broad long term aims into evidence-informed objectives (for example, *The Politics of Evidence-Based Policymaking*, 2016). As part of the ESRC Centre on Constitutional Change, Cairney was funded (2013-15) to examine the policy capacity of Scottish institutions in the lead up to the referendum on Scottish independence. The CCC was at the heart of academic-driven discussions to provide relatively impartial evidence to voters in Scotland. As part of the Horizon2020 funded IMAJINE centre on spatial justice and territorial inequalities across Europe, Cairney is funded (2016-21) to examine the ways in which governments can, and should, use evidence to learn from the success and failure of other government strategies. Paul is also a Fellow of the Academy of Social Science.

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Stuart Paul Denoon-Stevens is a lecturer at the University of the Free State and a professional planner. His work spans three fields. Firstly, a key element of his research focuses on land management, covering issues such as inclusionary retail and proactive upzoning. Secondly, he has written on issues such as spatial planning, housing and public health in mining towns. Thirdly, he has started to write on planning education and practise, and the linkages between them.

Iain Docherty is Dean for the Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Stirling. His research interests focus on the interconnecting issues of public policy, institutional change and city and regional competitiveness, especially the role of transport in promoting economic development and environmental sustainability. Iain has worked with and advised a range of private sector, governmental and other organisations including governments and public agencies in the UK, US, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands and Sweden, and the OECD. In 2015 he was appointed by the ESRC and Innovate UK

as one of five Thought Leaders working to integrate scientific innovation and social science research across the UK, and he is currently one of the Co-Investigators managing the £1.2m ESRC Productivity Insights Network, which aims to bring together leading social science academics to help address the UK economy's resilient productivity gap. Iain holds Fellowships of the Academy of Social Sciences, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Geographical Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers, and is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

Aksel Ersøy is an Assistant Professor in Urban Development Management at Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Management in the Built Environment. He is interested in understanding the complex relationship between social and economic transformations taking place in developing economies, metropolitan cities and the built environment. His research experience has benefitted from a combination of theories and approaches in the discipline of planning, geography and beyond. His PhD thesis explored two sets of theories on local economic growth, i.e. the endogenous growth theory of the economists and the institutional theories of economic geographers and sociology. Later on he became interested in STS literature, in particular, coproduction of knowledge in cities and the role of communities. Recently, his interest has shifted towards the governance of 'the smart city', urban resilience, urban infrastructure and the circular economy.

Tom Forth is Head of Data at The Open Data Institute Leeds and CTO of The Data City. He works on open data, innovation and transport policy, and the application of machine-learning to real-world problems including industrial strategy.

Arianna Giovannini is Associate Professor/Reader in Local Politics and Public Policy and Deputy Director of the Local Governance Research Centre (LGRC) at the Department of Politics, People and Place, DMU. Between July 2019 and February 2020 she was Director of IPPR North, the leading think-tank for the North of England, on a secondment basis. Arianna's research focuses on territorial and local politics, governance rescaling, devolution and democracy – both in the UK and in comparative European perspective. Most recently, her work in these areas has concentrated on devolution deals in England, and in particular in the North; the politics, governance and political economy of the Northern Powerhouse; the changing landscape of local government, especially in the context of austerity and Brexit; the new municipalism; and asymmetric regionalism.

Charles Goode is finishing his ESRC-funded PhD at the University of Birmingham on the relationship between the Green Belt and the housing crisis during which he interviewed 73 planners, campaigners and planning stakeholders, conducted focus groups/a questionnaire of planners and analysed secondary data. He has published on the governance of the Green Belt and is in the process of publishing a series of papers whilst he enjoys disseminating his research beyond the academy. He has also published/is publishing on the impacts of Coronavirus upon housing, the economy and housing.

Vincent Gruis is professor of Housing Management at Delft University of Technology. His research addresses the question of how landlords, developers, investors, governments and tenants can adapt their housing to societal challenges. He currently focusses on how to implement principles of a circular economy in the management and redevelopment of the housing stock. After a (necessary) emphasis on increasing the energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions, creating a circular built environment is the next sustainability challenge. To help achieve this, Vincent works together with industry partners, including housing associations from the Amsterdam region, to create circular building strategies and components.

Steve Gulati is Senior Fellow at the University of Birmingham and Programme Director for the NHS Leadership Academy's Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Programme. With a background in workforce, organisational development and user involvement, his main areas of interest are in organisational behaviour and especially how this links to patient and service user experience. He also has a special interest in the development of the BAME workforce, both inside health and social care and in wider

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Mina Di Marino's research focuses on 1) Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services in planning research and practices. GI and ES are really endangered due to the urban growth, and thus, urban regions and cities should address landscape and planning strategies and practices having in mind the relevance and need for both concepts and related ecological approaches. In the last years, she has conducted several analyses including comparative studies amongst Italy, Canada, Finland, and more recently, Norway. Her second line of research focuses on 2) Multi-locality of Working (working in multiple places, such as co-working spaces, libraries, home, office, coffee shops and public transportation) and Multi-locality of Living (second home for job-related reasons) and related implications for regional and urban planning and built environment. This research includes studies on the new urban functions in the post-fordist cities (and within the digital era), multifunctional districts and buildings, as well as flexible private and public spaces. These studies have been conducted in Finland, and more recently, in Norway. In addition, she is also interested in 3) Planning education: skills and knowledge in planning education (including transdisciplinary and inter-professional context of planning).

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Preface: *What's next? COVID-19 as a planetary inflection point for people, places, policy, and research*

Academic books have many origins and often result from research and funding arising from scholars gathering, sharing, and debating thoughts in dedicated intellectual arenas, from conferences, seminars, or research projects. Such debates used to materialise in physical environments and develop from slowly cultivated seeds of ideas. This book is unique in having none of the luxuries of the above. The genesis of this work arose from the sudden (and then thought to be short and sharp) shock of the UK entering its first phase of lockdown back in March 2020 and the world starting to fight a global pandemic. Our collaborative space was Zoom; the development and compilation of this book was completed completely virtually symbolising the shift towards the socially distant environment into which we have found ourselves living in and still are as of early 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic generated very distinct reactions from the academic community; while medicine and public health experts had no choice but to immediately be at the forefront of developing new insights and expertise about the new coronavirus, social scientists had more options. Some quite firmly refused to engage with what they considered to be a fleeting event not directly linked to their research (and to do so, would be opportunistic). Others, including the team who drove this edited collection, saw it as a turning point, due to its unprecedent nature, for research, for economies, societies and for all of us as individuals experiencing for the first time in our lives a global pandemic. While writing this preface in January 2021, all continents across the world are still affected by various forms of lockdowns, with new variants emerging and cases still rising. The pandemic is far from being over and the months and years to come will be characterized by significant unknowns, uncertainties, and challenges to which few responses are available as yet. No matter our individual trajectories, or our global context, what citizens and researchers have experienced in 2020-21 will significantly impact and change them. This is unprecedented and as such constitutes an inflection point.

Such an inflection point is related to two major transformations. First, COVID-19 triggered unparalleled upheavals. Societies, economies, policy were to date mostly constructed on planned and fixed decisions based on what we thought we knew about the long-term picture. Such certainties were deeply uprooted, at micro, meso, and macro levels. The pandemic made us face the unknown on an everyday basis and required constant adaptation and improvisation. Decisions were thus shaped based on weaker and more fluid rationales resulting from recent and constantly adjusted data, with little scope for longer-term planning and anticipation. Planning became an exercise in rapid improvisation. Second, COVID-19 transformed the relationship between policy and knowledge and expertise. New knowledge and expertise were needed immediately, and had to be developed, validated, and communicated at high speed. New ways of reaching individuals had to be found, particularly towards precautionary measures that had to be implemented. New landscapes of knowledge emerged and new boundary spanning networks were constructed to support the spread of this knowledge. Pandemic relevant knowledge was, still is, and will remain critical. Lessons will need to be learnt from the pandemic and this involves recording and analyzing what has been experienced by people, places, and policy, in various contexts, during the first year of the pandemic. The need to document and explore the impacts and responses of living with a pandemic are core to the genesis of this book.

This book constitutes a key contribution, amongst many others which will follow, to capturing the fast-moving landscape of knowledge that has been constructed during, and because of, the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, just weeks into the pandemic hitting Europe the contract for this book was signed with Edward Elgar Publishing and contributors were approached. This as such is exceptional and denotes the unprecedented nature of what we have been experiencing to date. All contributors, were asked to 1) explore the diversity of impacts and responses to COVID-19 in exceptional short timeframes, including exploring immediate impacts on people, households, communities, businesses, and nations and 2), to identify and evaluate mitigation and adaptation strategies of individuals, households, communities, businesses, and nations over a longer period. We were very aware that current responses to the pandemic made original research difficult. The expectation was that each chapter was going to highlight some aspects of the pandemic and different responses based on an analysis, or reading, of an on-going event that contributors were all experiencing.

This book was produced within less than a year and we are extremely grateful to our colleagues, friends, and acquaintances for responding positively and proactively to our requests and embarking with us on this adventure. This book is probably the first step into this interdisciplinary, intersectoral, multi-level interrogation of the pandemic; it will certainly be useful to reflect in a couple of years on these preliminary interpretations and re-visit what was said about the impacts of the COVID-19 on people, place, and policy and whether they have come to pass.

We would like to end with a reflection from the French philosopher Bruno Latour that comes from his latest book

‘Où suis-je’ which can be translated as Where am I? (Latour, 2021). While pointing out that States and individuals are all seeking to relax lockdown restrictions and turn themselves to recovery strategies, he notes that wider lessons should be drawn for those that he calls the *‘terrestres’* (i.e. those who live on Earth and recognize what this planet offers). The *‘terrestres’* should see the pandemic as a way to finally recognize and acknowledge what our planet is offering in the context of the climate emergency. This is a very important point which highlights the fragility of our life on earth.

As we move beyond the pandemic it is important to connect the current global pandemic with the crisis that is global climate change. The pandemic has revealed that people, organizations, places, and governments are able to engage in rapid improvisation in response to an immediate crisis. Now is the time to mitigate and adapt to climate change and for all to recognize that climate change is a much more serious threat to life on earth as we know it than COVID-19. The key is to place people first and to focus in particular on younger and future generations.

Lauren Andres, John R. Bryson, Aksel Ersoy, and Louise Reardon
31 January 2021

Acknowledgements

The origins of this book can be traced back to an e-mail sent to Matthew Pitman on Friday 20 March 2020 at 12.40pm. This e-mail suggested that it would be timely to develop an edited book that would explore “the impacts of Covid-19 on business, economic activity, and employment”. The ambition was to develop a collection with a “relatively rapid turnaround”. This e-mail noted that UK academics would be working from home until at least 1 June 2020 and Matt responded by noting that he was mostly working from home, but it was business as usual as most processes were online. A book proposal for this collection was submitted to Edward Elgar and a contract offered on 31 March 2020. We must thank Matthew Pittman and all working at Edward Elgar for their rapid response to the book proposal and for all their support in developing this book and working with us to see this project through to completion.

A book project has many influences and origins. The origins of this book can be traced back to the COVID-19 virus that emerged in late 2019. Another origin are the friendship networks that the editors and authors are embedded within. The editors have worked together on several different projects. This includes the *Institute of Advanced Studies* (IAS), University of Birmingham, funded regeneration economies project that led to two edited books: *Handbook of Manufacturing Industries in the World Economy* (Bryson, Clark and Vanchan, Edward Elgar, 2015) and *A Research Agenda for Regeneration Economies: Reading City-Regions* (Bryson, Andres and Mulhall, Edward Elgar, 2018). It also includes the *Institute of Global Innovation*, University of Birmingham, funded Challenge Theme that is currently focussing on exploring Resilient Cities.

Most academics who we contacted in early April 2020 agreed to participate in this collection. We must thank all chapter authors for accepting our invitation to participate in this project. For many this included balancing online teaching, home educating children and continuing to research and write. To all of you, we are grateful that you engaged with this project, met our deadlines, and responded to the chapter review process.

There have been many influences that have shaped this collection and our thinking about pandemics. We need to thank all our students, colleagues and friends who have challenged us and influenced our thinking. Nevertheless, our primary concern is for those who have had their lives turned upside down by the pandemic. This includes families who have experienced COVID-19 related deaths and those whose education has been disrupted by lockdowns and social distancing and all those made unemployed or placed on furlough. It is important to appreciate that COVID-19 has shattered existing routines and expectations. It is important to acknowledge that while we were all hit by the pandemic, some individuals and communities have been more significantly impacted. Those are in our thoughts.

COVID-19 has created the COVID-19 generation whose future lives have been negatively and positively transformed by COVID-19. All futures are uncertain, but one certainty is that during the post-pandemic period everyday living will be very different compared to pre-COVID-19 times. It is to the COVID-19 generation that we dedicate this collection.

John R. Bryson, Lauren Andres, Aksel Ersoy, and Louise Reardon
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