INTRODUCTION

The Development Impacts of COVID-19 at Home and Abroad: Politics and Implications of Government Action

The COVID-19 shock has implications for how we understand and analyse development impacts at all levels: global, national and local community. The crisis shows the consequences of globalization, whereby actions in one part of the world can have consequences for all of humanity, and actions by national governments may be of limited effect if they are taken outside of global agreement. The roles of national and local governments, however, have been of central importance to our understanding of prevention of viral spread, mitigation of impacts through policies and containment strategies, and strategies aimed at addressing the diverse needs within the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the essential role of governments when the market-based economic system is jeopardised by circumstances that cannot be controlled by voluntary personal actions alone. The scale and scope of government interventions in response to the pandemic are unprecedented, both in terms of the actions taken to curtail liberties and the scale of public investment. There are likely to be long-term consequences for the lives of everyone as we look to the future. Here, as *European Journal of Development Research* (EJDR) editors, we map out a strategically set approach to the issues that have been raised by the pandemic for development studies.

It is the role of academic research, and in particular, those whose work focuses on marginalised people across the world, to draw attention to the impacts of events like COVID-19 and how governments respond. To that end, the EJDR has created a special issue on the development impacts of COVID-19, with particular focus on government actions, responses, and their effects locally, nationally, and globally. The breadth of papers the journal has received has been immense, covering the gamut from the individual to the collective, and across social, economic, and political considerations, with implications for health, wealth, work, trade, security, climate, equity, and energy, to name but a few of the effects. Across these issues and arenas, government actions have been justified by the mantra “we are all in this together”. Yet, decisions over what actions are taken, where and how resources are expended, and how the impacts of these engagements will be ultimately assessed are political. Whilst governments worldwide are claiming that their responses are ‘responsive and equitable’, it is reasonable to expect that the impacts of COVID-19 will turn out to be highly inequitable. Those who we might expect to be disproportionately impacted will be those whose voices are muted in policy processes; in past crises, these were the poor, women, racialized minorities, and other disadvantaged groups, both at home and abroad. Looking to the world post-COVID-19, we need to consider and give voice to marginalised groups, especially in an era of unprecedented public sector deficits, likely paralleled with dramatic increases in both within- and between-country inequality. Further, recognising how the responses of governments are political, we underline how policy alternatives, choices, and outcomes must avoid exacerbating prevailing marginalisation and inequalities.

The collection of papers here represents responses to the call that were vetted initially by the Editorial Team at the EJDR, subsequently progressed to full submissions reviewed externally, and which, following favourable reviews, we are pleased to curate for this Special Issue. We take this opportunity to thank, once again, all respondents to the call. We owe a particular debt to the reviewers who responded positively to our accelerated review process and supported this initiative. In this introduction, we in the Editorial Team discuss the considerations regarding general features and specific contributions that we assess as important to the study and evaluation of development policymaking and policies in a pandemic. We focus first on theory-building in development policymaking, and secondly on issues of the validity and quality of knowledge. We then provide an overview of contributions in this Special Issue before offering concluding remarks.

1. Development policymaking: taking account of the theories

The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), the society of which the EJDR is the flagship journal, recently reiterated a renewed vision of development studies that defines it as “a multi- and inter-disciplinary field. . . of academic field of study . . . characterized by normative and policy concerns about inclusive and sustainable development” (Mönks et al 2017). Development studies span a number of social science disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, political science, geography, economics, but are not limited to them: also included are “technological, ecological, cultural, and gendered aspects of societal change”, so that the field covers an “increasing interplay between social and ‘hard’ sciences. . .” (Mönks et al 2017).

Policymaking in development studies, then, comprises two aspects: substantive concerns, such as issues of poverty, inequality, health, education, welfare, environment, and labour; and process concerns, which comprise the who, how, what, and when of policymaking. Substantive concerns comprise the fabric of development policies and agenda, as we will enumerate later in this essay when summarising the contributions to this Special Issue. Here, we focus on the state of the research in policymaking and how this Issue’s contributions advance this research.

Weimer (2008) reinvigorates a useful heuristic on research of policymaking: *theories of* the policy process, and *theories in* the policy process; these approximate Lasswell’s *knowledge of* the policy process and *knowledge in* the policy process (Weimer 2008: 489). *Theories of* the policy process considers that various actors interact in the national and international arena to bring a policy onto the agenda and through to implementation; this complex process may afford opportunities to systematically evaluate and identify generalizable features or patterns as the bases for understanding or for future applications or modifications (Weimer 2008). Example of *theories of* the policy process include Institutional Analysis and Development Framework, Multiple Streams, Punctuated Equilibrium model, Advocacy coalition framework, and Social Construction and Policy Design (Nowlin 2011; Sabatier 1991; Weimer 2008). Application of theories of the policy process is not merely an academic exercise: for instance, Almog-Bar *et al* (2014) point out how policy-making theories may underpin social work practice to provide insights for social workers on their influence of policy formulation. Also, policy evaluation, which comprises a large bulk of the analytical work of the policy process, falls under *theories of* the policy process. Policy evaluation measures impact and performance of policies against stated objectives; this may be achieved through quantitative methods such as general equilibrium models or qualitative methods such as ethnography. Importantly, application of policy evaluation methods is not mechanistic. Instead, they tie to the philosophy of knowledge accumulation: the models or methods used are motivated by assumptions and these, in turn, influence what the results demonstrate or how they contribute to theory-building.

Theories in the policy process refers to the "theories and frameworks" that are much narrower and likely directed at understanding how to realize desired policies (Weimer 2008: 492). Weimer (2008: 492) clarifies the distinction of *theories in* the policy process from *theories of* the policy process as follows:

> . . . to inform real decisions, [a] model of legislative process may be less valuable than a model of a particular legislature, which in turn may be less valuable than a model of how that particular legislature makes decisions in the policy area of concern."

Thus, *theories in* the policy process may bring insights regarding how decisions are made from various disciplines, towards clarifying how specific outcomes are achieved. As Weimer (2008: 492) explains, the policymaking process is enriched by:

> . . . ideas drawn from a variety of intellectual sources, such as organizational behaviour (Miles' Law – where you stand depends on where you sit), path dependence (programs create constituencies), heresthetics (making a latent policy dimension salient may disrupt an equilibrium), rhetoric (framing issues to resonate with cultural values may change public perceptions of the issues), rational choice theory of institutions (repeated interaction can support cooperation not obtainable in one-off interaction), cognitive psychology (people fear loss more powerfully than they anticipate comparable gain), and political economy (rectangles tend to be larger than triangles – rent transfers are more policy relevant than deadweight losses)."

We are instructed, thus, that development policymaking is enriched theoretically with considerations of the substantive aspects of policy that may be discipline-specific, and through considerations of the policy process. In turn, the state of the discipline regarding policy process illuminates at least two paths for theory-building: the policy-making process that is rooted in the field of public policy; and insights regarding decision-making which may be drawn from a number of disciplines, including political science, economics, psychology, sociology, and gender-studies.

The compendium of articles in this collection encapsulate these efforts at theory-building and, indeed, tie up theories on the substantive aspects with policymaking theories. Such efforts are not trivial: studies report a long tradition in development studies to focus either only on the empirics of development for policy action, or on the theoretical considerations of development as an academic exercise, but not generally actively bridging both (Edwards 1989; Lund 2010; Buch-Hansen and Lauridsen 2012). In this previous tradition, pandemics such as COVID-19 may foment study of the specific episodes in particular countries, but may hold little bearing on larger policy or substantive issues.

Yet, in the framework of theory-building, the epidemic of COVID-19 offers illumination of patterns of long-standing or ongoing practices that hold relevance for policy-making, society, politics, the economy, gender, welfare, and so on, to influence theoretical development as well as actionable policy. To illustrate with examples in this EJDR special issue, **Rao et al's** (2020; in this issue) contribution on social policy and migrant workers in India has a substantive concern of labour migration, while the findings span beyond labour migration to hold broad implications for future social policies regarding stakeholders and participation in the policy process, in form of citizenship and rights. In the same vein, **Onditi et al's** (2020; in this issue) model of the containment strategy in Kenya through a social geometry framework, and **Cuesta and Pico's** (2020; in this issue) study of gendered poverty effects in Columbia, underline the need for different permutations of policy evaluation for full understanding of the ramifications of social policy and interventions, i.e., *theories of* policymaking. Meanwhile, **Yap's** (2020; in this issue) study of social protection in East and Southeast Asia places COVID-19 in the broad context of ruptures, such as the financial blowouts of the Asian and Global Financial Crises, to highlight evidence of inequitable impact that deepens medium- and long-term vulnerabilities when recovery policies focus monotonically on economic growth recovery. **Roelen et al**'**s** (2020; in this issue) contribution also draws attention to inequities, from a social-anthropological perspective: through a "biosocial" lens of stigma, the authors show how the epidemic may foster injustices and stack disadvantages along the "fault lines" of poverty, ethnicity and origin, age, gender and sexualities that magnifies the human, social, and economic costs of COVID-19. These examples make clear that purposeful articulation and clarification of how their respective studies of COVID-19 advance theory-building and empirical study to vault beyond the pandemic onto the development field.

2. Issues of the validity and quality of knowledge when local voices matter

Theorising the situation is also critical to how knowledge will be constructed. We consider knowledge to be a practical acquisition: having knowledge involves an agent in being capable of concerted, habitual or other practical action in relation to specific objects. For human society, knowledge enables rational action, but it also informs all actions. Our concept of knowledge as a capacity to act well has two key implications: it influences our notions of which knowledge is valued; and it influences our sense of who is empowered to act, based on their knowledge-baskets. Discussing each, we can expand on the idea of 'valuing' someone's knowledge.

Human knowledge is not just personal, nor merely cognitive, because it exists in its social and global context. Human knowledge includes personal abilities to understand and act on the world but also refers to the capacity of non-human, corporate agents to act well. In brief there are 'persons' and 'supra-personal agents' in the social world, and both can hold knowledge and act upon it (Alkire and Black, 1997). In the case of persons, the issues about knowing-how are partly emotional, visceral, habitual and rooted in memory and embodied learning (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In the case of larger corporate agents, such as organisations, knowledge is also dialogical (i.e. involves dialogue) and can be embedded in institutionalised processes (Fay, 1996). For the COVID-19 pandemic, our two-level concept of knowledge has implications.

First, there is a multiplicity of types of development agents (Thomas, 2000a). Since knowledge is practical, and development knowledge helps us carry out ‘development in practice’, there is an agent for each knowledge fragment. There cannot be knowledge in mere information. The human element, the agency element, and corporate agency are intrinsically part of systems that contain valuable knowledge. One example is that the ability to ‘test’ for COVID-19 disease can be carried out either through a socially-run testing system with swabs, reagents and computerised results; or it can be a single person diagnosing their own situation via their personally-felt symptoms. The knowledge of whether one has COVID-19, which enables the start of a course of treatment, can be achieved by a variety of kinds of agent. In EJDR we do not deny the potential value of personal and lay knowledge about the pandemic.

Second, positive value is attached in society to the better forms of knowledge. The people, or organisations, may value their knowledge, and will also value information that contributes to changing knowledge-baskets (O’Neill, 1998). The “valuers” of knowledge are agents. All agents are situated. The agents may agree or disagree on certain terms, facts, points, claims and arguments. One key result is that development studies has a track record of expert debates about the dialogues on knowledge. These are not just about what is useful, or what is technically possible – these are also about who gets a voice in valuing or using the knowledge. A good example is the treatment of Universal Basic Income (UBI) policies during the COVID-19 epidemic. On the one hand experts like **Cuesta and Pico** (2020; in this issue) approach this from an outsider point of view, making calculations about the sub-groups within Colombia’s population, not including references to local voices. On the other hand, in the widespread testing of UBI policies worldwide, the voices of the poor are often heard and listened to carefully (Banerjee, Niehaus, and Suri, 2019). Similarly, there are two levels of knowledge of ‘cases’ of COVID-19: the official reports from positive test-kits, and personal experience, which can be compared with the standard symptom list in a tick-list exercise. Whilst there is often scope for these expert and lay knowledge layers to interact, reporting of COVID-19 cases and impacts has - so far during 2020 - tended to be mainly top-down expert views. There are exceptions, however, where social-media based groups organise self-help groups to increase the level of care and attention to local, personal, and social-group detail in the handling of the COVID-19 symptoms. **Minten et al.** (2020; in this issue) use interviews with small and medium vegetable farmers to gain knowledge of how contractual arrangements have been changing during the COVID-19 epidemic. Phone interviews were also central to the analysis of 2020 data by **Banati et al.** (2020; in this issue), covering youths in three countries. Overall, lay voices do matter very much.

Thus we, as an editorial team, have considered how we construe valued knowledge. We took two early decisions, which we explain briefly here.

We firstly assert that the grassroots management of sanitation and quarantine, along with many other public health measures, can be seen from various theoretical perspectives. In some local situations, the diverse local voices tend to be silenced, and thus a suppression of the voices that can express people's needs and capacities occurs. We have observed unemployment, shortages, bottlenecks, creative solutions and innovations in organisational structure during the pandemic. At larger levels such as national and global levels, there are similar issues about 'who gets to be heard' and how communication takes place. As a result, we are not only interested in events of the pandemic but also in debates about the pandemic and the responses to it.

We noticed that the situation involves both the two-level approach to agency (human and institutional) and this two-dimensional approach to the voices that carry knowledge claims – the voices about the actual disease or the real class situation underlying unemployment; and the voices about human experience from the margins. The situation gets complex, and a large epistemological field ensues. The EJDR editorial team is convinced that there is a need for both lay analyses to be heard using qualitative methods, discourse analysis and textual analysis of many kinds; and a need for expert analysis that uses a variety of sources to gain analytical purchase on complex new trends. Our view is that the presentation of field data, even based on small forays into methods such as ‘phone interviews’, is highly valuable during the pandemic.

A second knowledge-related decision was that, at EJDR, we made explicit statements about what constitutes quality in the articles. Our editorial statements were spread across the EJDR main site and the call for papers[i]. EJDR stressed that contributions must draw on existing literature as a backdrop for – and critical assessment resulting in - new insights; and that submissions were to draw on the analyses of original empirical information, where possible, as well as having an open, critical approach that underscores the limitations in data collection and future avenues for research. All papers were vetted for their theoretical contributions and/or conceptual framing in order to advance scholarship and broader understandings in international development. As a result of these values, and this sense of ‘high quality’, we encouraged authors to use cutting-edge methods, to provide evidence to back up key points, and to consider alternative arguments.

3. Summary and overview of the special issue articles

Considering the previous exposition, this special issue includes twelve original articles that analyse the impacts of the pandemic from different angles, and considering different methodological approaches.

COVID-19 impacts depend on the size and exposition to the shock, but also to the vulnerability and the capacity of the considered society to adopt appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Taking this into account, a first group of articles considers the macroeconomic and sectoral impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in least developing countries taking into account the joint effect of different transmission channels of the crisis, inter-sectoral linkages, social norms and adopted policies to fight against the pandemics and return to normality. In particular, the article by **Amewu et al.** (2020; in this issue) quantifies the economic costs of COVID-19 policies using a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) multiplier model in Ghana. As in most countries, adopted policies in Ghana involved social distancing measures, travel restrictions, border closures and a three-week partial lockdown. As the authors highlight, SAM multiplier models are well suited to measuring short-term direct and indirect impacts of demand and/or supply shocks as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. One interesting feature of their modelling approach is that they distinguish between domestic policy-induced impact channels and external impact channels. The obtained results show that Ghana's partial lockdown, despite being implemented for a relatively short period and only in major urban areas, implied significant economic losses. Compared to the baseline scenario, annual GDP would fall between 8.6% and 12.3% during 2020 depending on the speed of the recovery. This implies that most households would experience economic difficulties that would require government intervention and support, particularly in relation to food supply across all markets. **Zidouemba et al** (2020; in this issue) analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households' food security in Burkina Faso. With this aim, the authors use a computable general equilibrium model and formulate different scenarios that combine the direct impact of measures adopted to fight against the pandemics and that would result in a reduction of economic activities, but also the indirect effects derived from a reduction in exports and remittances received from abroad. Their results are clear that, due to the combination of both effects, the COVID-19 pandemic contributes to a worsening of food security in Burkina Faso with heterogeneous effects between urban and rural households, being more intense in the latter. However, their most worrying result is that the effects could be long-lasting and require a well-designed policy intervention to support household income but also to avoid excessive food price increases. The article by **Minten et al.** (2020; in this issue) describes how the COVID-19 crisis has affected the agricultural sector in Ethiopia and, more specifically, the cluster of commercial vegetable sellers. The authors first provide an extensive description of the transformation of the Ethiopian agricultural sector in the last ten years thanks to technology adoption and the emerging rural-gig economy. Next, by analysing survey data, they analyse how the COVID-19 disruption has affected production but also farmer's income and profits and agricultural prices. The article by **Tröster and Küblböck** (2020; in this issue) focuses on the evolution of commodity prices during the crisis and how it has affected commodity-dependent developing countries which have been confronted with an unprecedent combination of shocks. First, the authors identify and review the main drivers of commodity prices in the COVID-19 crisis differentiating between those associated with the aggregate demand shock and disruptions in global value chains and restricted mobility and those related to commodity financial markets and speculative trading. Second, they discuss relevant policy areas for coping with price volatility and the resource curse. While policies addressing commodity price stabilisation could help to minimize the short and medium run negative effects of the shock, the authors argue that only strategies addressing economic diversification could improve their situation in the long run. However, restructuring the participation in global value chains is not an easy task and it is clearly interrelated with other political, economic and social factors. The article by **Onditi et al.** (2020; in this issue) puts the emphasis on the role of social factors to contain pandemics and, within our special issue, the focus is now changed from a pure macroeconomic view to an approach that combines different scenarios (as in the previous articles) with a qualitative assessment of the agents' response to policy measures. In particular, the authors challenge a universalist approach to containment and quarantine as a realistic model to apply in diverse communities. They study Kenya's containment strategy (curfew -dusk to dawn-, workplace closure, isolation, cancellation of mass gatherings, workplace distancing and school closure) and how it has affected the people living in high-density informal settlements. Drawing on a social geometry approach (the social structure of behaviour among individuals or a collective), the authors claim that families in slum areas rely on their social networks to survive and to seek social protection through collective actions. Restrictive measures adopted during the pandemics have suddenly disrupted life in these settlements and the authors simulate what would have been the effects under alternative Public Health Interventions (PHI). The results of their simulation exercise show that a framework (labelled by the author as a social pendulum) that would have taken into account socio-economic vulnerabilities and physical space restrictions to define government policies would have been much more effective to alleviate the negative effects of the containment strategy. The research question by **Olsen et al** (2020; in this issue) also focuses on the role of social factors, although they focus on the COVID-19 death rates in Indian states. After reviewing different modelling options for the analysis of contagion and severity of COVID-19 cases, they use Bayesian methods to construct a vulnerability index that combines individual information and district level factors from different data sources. Their analysis of the results clearly shows the added value of considering disaggregated and spatially-specific data to better design evidence-based policies to fight against the pandemic (as opposed to "general advice"). The main conclusion is not just the Indian findings, but that this data-combining method has many other applications in both socio-economic and bio-social contexts where models are multidisciplinary. The last article of this first group introduces an interesting policy question: should recovery focus on economic growth or a new normal? **Yap** (2020; in this issue) argues that "recovery to a business-as-usual economic normalcy generally means focusing on an economic rebound that carries with it the burdens of unaddressed fissures, while recovery to a new normal entails reprioritizing society, politics, and economy, usually through the committed development of medium- and long-term social policies that address weaknesses that were brought to light." By looking at recovery efforts and experiences of South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines through two crises (the Asian Financial Crisis and the Global

Financial Crisis), the author illustrates the limited capacity of growth-centric recovery to fight against economic fragilities, social inequalities, and political instability. This conclusion reveals a clear lesson for COVID-19 recovery: it needs to target a new normal that reprioritizes society, politics, and an economy with more inclusive social policies.

The second group of articles in this special issue deals with COVID-19 impacts on poverty, stigma and emotional well-being of individuals. **Valensisi** (2020; in this issue) provides a preliminary assessment of COVID-19's impact on global poverty using the approach known as "augmented poverty line". In brief, this methodology consists of three steps; the first step consists of the comparison of GDP per capita forecasts from two successive vintages of the IMF's World Economic Outlook, namely the October 2019 and April 2020; next, pre- and post-COVID-19 growth rates are used to compute poverty lines and, last, poverty measures obtained by applying the pre- and post-COVID-19 growth estimates are compared. The obtained results shows that the pandemic will erode many of the gains recorded over the last decade in terms of poverty reduction. In particular, the number of people living below US$1.90 per day would increase by 68 million in 2020 alone; and this rise could approach 100 million if the recession turns out to be more severe than initially expected, especially in the Least Developing Countries. **Cuesta and Pico** (2020; in this issue) focus on the specific situation of Colombia adopting a gender perspective and focusing on the employment channel. Using microsimulation methods, the authors explore the extent to which COVID-19 will exacerbate gendered employment disparities, income generation gaps, and, ultimately, poverty gaps. This approach allows them to test the impact on poverty reduction of different mitigation measures finding that a fiscally neutral Universal Basic Income program would be the most effective intervention. Surprisingly, they do not find large differences by gender when it comes to the impact of the pandemic and mitigation interventions on poverty headcounts in Colombia. However, the authors advise that these results should not be taken as lessening the importance of a gendered perspective when designing COVID-19 responses in Colombia or elsewhere as other dimensions such as caregiving demands or gender-based violence should also be taken into account. Along the lines of drawing attention to the inequitable impacts of COVID-19, **Roelen et al** (2020; in this issue) describe the considerable damage from stigma and stigmatization that magnifies the human, social, and economic costs of COVID-19. The authors argue that stigma is a central element to such inequalities (as with other infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola), but it remains largely overlooked in the debate on the response to COVID-19. Stigma refers to the devaluation, disapproval or deeming as “less human”; it may be evident in overt actions such as avoidance or humiliation, or subtle ones such as avoiding eye contact (Roelen et al 2020). Notwithstanding how stigma may be exhibited, its unmistakable effect is a disproportionate impact on those with less power, with their voices further muted in policy processes that are prone to “maintaining hierarchies and social order” through misinformation, fear of contagion, and policies that single out, separate and label (Roelen et al 2020). This is a very important point as the authors provide evidence suggesting that the stigma associated with COVID-19 is already taking place due to the rapid spread of misinformation and false beliefs together with strong fears of contagion. Some characteristics seem to reinforce this stigma creating a vicious circle: poverty, precarious and unstable living conditions, ethnicity and origin, age and gender. For this reason, a more inclusive approach is required in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in order to avoid these new types of vulnerabilities. **Banati et al.** (2020; in this issue) analyse how the intersection of these different vulnerabilities are affecting the psycho-emotional lives of young people in LMICS using qualitative data from interviews with over 500 adolescents and 55 key informants in Ethiopia, Côte d’Ivoire and Lebanon. The obtained results have shown that pre-existing vulnerabilities for adolescents are being exacerbated, especially in terms of anxiety and stress, but also due to the limited access to health and education services and a loosening of links within peer networks. Targeted measures would be required in order to reinforce young people's social ties and to avoid the long-term mental health impacts of the pandemic. Last, but not least, the contribution by **Rao et al.** (2020; in this issue) provides insight into the experiences of migrant labourers in four states in India who were left stranded in their locations of work but without employment when restrictions were put in place. Using a longitudinal approach with (phone) interviews before, during and after lockdown, the research provides insight into substantive concerns about migrant workers' living and working conditions, including lack of access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity, and how these are compounded when employer-employee relationships break down abruptly and entirely. It also draws out issues in relation to process, and how policy responses served to aggravate existing inequalities. Differences across states in terms of migrant workers' rights have led to differential experience regarding the speed and adequacy with which social policies have been able to respond to workers' needs. The research highlights how weak social and legal rights and lack of voice become compounded in and of themselves and exacerbate marginalisation and deprivation in the case of a large covariate shock like COVID-19.

4. Conclusions

The COVID-19 global pandemic has many common implications for communities around the world, from economic shocks to deepening social inequalities to heightened psychological concerns. As the papers in this collection show, however, a global lens is insufficient for understanding the diversity of experiences at the regional, country, and community levels. Context-specific data collection and analysis sheds light on the different ways that COVID-19 is affecting communities, the diverse responses and need for further diversity in responses, the nature of the policies formulated, and the strategies used to mitigate the impacts of this disaster around the world.

The findings presented in the papers for this Special Issue present early considerations for development programming and policy-making based on experiences taking place in the first year of the pandemic. Many of the papers offer guidance for how to pursue new and additional strategies moving forward and additional research will be needed to examine the ongoing and long-term impacts of COVID-19 within and across diverse communities. Future studies must consider and give voice to marginalised groups who are disproportionately impacted by the social, political, psychological, and economic effects of the pandemic. Additional avenues of research must focus on the responses of governments and the nature of policy formulation and implementation.

This collection of paper offers an important foundation for the advancement of future research with a rich contribution to theory-building in development policymaking and through empirical data collection offering insights into the validity and quality of knowledge. While each of the papers in this collection advances our understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic in new, theoretically informed and empirically sound ways, together, the collection offers an important overview of the broader underlying tensions and systemic inequalities that contribute to the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic.

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