

CALL FOR CHAPTER ABSTRACTS:

EDITED VOLUME BY PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

The impact of Covid19 on the institutional fabric of higher education: Accelerating old patterns, imposing new dynamics, and changing rules?

Editorial:

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Backdrop for the volume

As an external shock, the ongoing Covid19 public health crisis has caught higher education (HE) systems and institutions throughout the world by surprise. This has led, inter alia, to a rush to adopt digital solutions within teaching, in the form of distance and/or remote education as well as blended learning. As a result, the crisis pushed universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) to improve their information technology infrastructure, in addition to pressurizing academics to become digitally literate in a short period of time. Among those HEIs deeply committed to the goal of social inclusion, the crisis highlighted the urgency of assuring equitable internet/broadband access to their students, as many retreated back to their homes. Beyond teaching, the crisis imposed intense pressure on research and outreach activities. As it unfolded and hit different areas of society and the economy, the pandemic forced many academics to adjust their research agendas (e.g., to focus on inter and transdisciplinary approaches) as a means of addressing issues of importance to society and to provide the necessary information to those responsible for managing the crisis.

To respond to critical issues facing governments and local communities, new research teams (virtual networks) encompassing specialists from different fields across the globe were quickly assembled. The ongoing crisis also poses new challenges and dilemmas regarding the

sustainability of operations, as many governments reduce financial allocations to the sector as a result of economic stringencies. Everywhere, HEIs, public and private alike, are being forced to adapt their structures, practices and business models. In some cases, the problems arise from overdependence of HEIs on the public purse, whilst in others they are due to a drastic reduction in the influx of fee-paying international students. Hence, this changing scenario is forcing many HEIs to re-assess their core functions and societal roles, as well as tapping into alternative sources of income; in short, HEIs are being forced to “think outside the box”.

Scope and Aim

The aim of this edited volume first, is to map out the types of responses by HEIs to the challenges brought by the covid19 pandemic, and second, to unpack the effects such responses are likely to have on the institutional fabric (regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars) of HE systems and HEIs globally. In so doing, a multi-level analysis will be undertaken, investigating dynamics at three levels:

- *the macro level*, focusing on the actors involved with the meta-governance of the system; state and its agencies, unions, professional associations, and funders, ;
- *the meso level* of different types of HEIs, shedding light on the role of key actors, such as formal and informal leaders, in the processes of sensemaking (environment), enactment (agenda setting) and resource mobilisation (people and funding);
- *the micro level* of individual agents, illuminating the importance associated with key individuals or groups of academics, both formal and informal networks, in either creating a sense of urgency, mobilisation and in helping with the adoption and diffusion of innovative solutions or in processes of internal contestation and resistance towards change.

Possible explanatory (independent) variables accounting for variations across national systems and types of HEIs include, but are not limited to modes of governance; size; geography; degree of HEIs’ local embeddedness; historical trajectories; resource dependencies; and norms and values, amongst others. A major assumption in this regard pertains to the fact that system level responses are likely to differ considerably from those at the level of the individual HEIs or sub-units, as anecdotally observed across some contexts. Moreover, the volume aims to be both comparative and global in nature, bringing together scholars and case studies from many world

regions: Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. As a comparative starting point, the authors will be asked to address the following research questions regarding responses to Covid19:

- a) responses to *what?* (key drivers or triggers)
- b) *how* have these responses played out in practice (underlying processes and mechanisms); responses by *whom*, *when* and *why* (*motivations*)?
- c) What types of intended and unintended *effects* can/are likely to be observed in the short to mid-terms?

Abstract submission and roadmap

Interested authors, either working within a specific disciplinary field or across knowledge domains, are requested to send a *500 word abstract* clearly stating: a) research problem(s) being addressed; b) the design and method adopted; and c) the theoretical/conceptual approach. In addition, authors are to clearly specify d) which level(s) of analysis are covered in their contributions (see above); and e) provide some contextual information on the chosen case(s). We are particularly keen to receive comparative accounts encompassing multiple cases, embedded either within a single country or across multiple national HE systems, to allow for country and institutional variations in the light of the explanatory variables sketched out above, as well as others. We also ask the authors to submit a short biography (Max. 200 words) outlining role, affiliation, research interests and major scientific achievements; alongside a link to their respective personal web pages (e.g. research gate) with information on recent publications, as well as contact (e-mail) details for the corresponding author.

The above details should be sent to the corresponding editor romulo.m.pinheiro@uia.no no later than **15 March 2021**. Authors receive feedback on their proposals by 10 April 2021. Selected authors will be invited to present their extended abstracts (3,000 words) at an online workshop to be hosted during the summer (June-July) of 2021. A first, full draft version of the texts (8,000 words) is to be submitted to the editors by 1 October 2021. Following 1-2 rounds of editorial reviews, the edited volume is to be submitted to the publisher by 1 June 2022, with expected publication before the end of 2022.

On the editorial team:

Elizabeth Balbachevsky is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of São Paulo (USP), São Paulo, Brazil; and Director of the Research Center on

Public Policy at the University's Institute of Advanced Studies (Núcleo de Pesquisa de Políticas Públicas – NUPPs/IEA-USP). Between 2017 and 2018, she held the position of general coordinator of internationalization policies for higher education at the Ministry of Education. She was Fulbright New Century Scholar for 2005-2006 and Erasmus Mundus Scholar at the European Master's in Higher Education Programme (2009) at the University of Tampere, Finland, where she still teaches on the recent developments in HE in Latin America. She is the regional editor for Latin America in the new Springer's Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions (2020) and has co-edited the book "Building higher education cooperation with the EU: challenges and opportunities from four continents (in print at Brill).

Pundy Pillay is Professor of Economics and Public Finance at the School of Governance at Wits University in Johannesburg, South Africa. His research has focused mainly on the Economics of Higher Education in Africa and other developing regions. More recently, he was part of a research team involving Wits University and four European universities looking at the contribution of EU policy to global justice (GLOBUS) leading the research on Trade, Development and Global Justice. He was co-editor of the book on 'Higher Education in the BRICS', by Springer.

Rómulo Pinheiro is Professor of Public Policy and Administration, Deputy Head of Department and Co-head for the Research Group on Public Governance and Leadership (GOLEP) at the University of Agder (UiA), Norway. He is also academic coordinator for the NORDIG joint master's program, and member of the Center for Digital Transformation (CeDiT), Advanced Studies in Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) and the Jean Monet Center of Excellence, all based at UiA. Rómulo's research interests are located at the intersection of public policy and administration, organisational studies, economic geography, innovation and higher education studies. He has co-edited several books for Palgrave, Springer, and Emerald, and has published more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific publications.