

Call for Papers

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We invite chapter submissions by October 29 2021 for a book to be published by a university press in Johannesburg, with global distribution. Please indicate if you are interested by emailing: federicad@pari.org.za; sarahmg@pari.org.za

Covid-19, States and Societies

More than a year into the pandemic, we are far from seeing its end. In March last year, when the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a global pandemic, we were interested in understanding the responses of individual states to the pandemic and how these were welcomed, accepted or contested by the citizens. At that stage some countries had been exemplary in their handling of the pandemic while others had elicited concern for the shambolic manner in which governments had reacted or not responded at all. In the context of prolonged lockdowns in some places, some governments had successfully persuaded citizens and residents that they were coordinating the best response the country could undertake – from getting the best available scientific advice to deploying state resources optimally to respond to the public health crisis and the economic disaster that lockdowns had occasioned. But in other countries, a combination of factors including political wrangling, top-down approaches by governments and the ineptitudes of public institutions, resulted in populations being unpersuaded by their governments and hence exhibiting some measure of resistance.

Some commentators and scholars declared it a moment of the return of the state following decades of globalisation that had seen markets and global trade take centre stage in geopolitics. The Covid-19 pandemic appears to have dramatically shifted perceptions about the need for the state in many places, as populations looked to governments for direct crisis responses. At the same time, the extended lockdowns and states of emergencies raised concerns about the nature of our democracies. In many countries, there had already been growing or continued disconnects between governments and citizens, as demonstrated by widespread discontent with electoral processes, or in the rise of populist movements. Some governments implemented strict lockdowns, at times adopting measures that have been contested as undemocratic. On the hand, in other contexts, countries have been labelled negligent for their denialism and lack of action.

Without a doubt, the pandemic brought to the fore harsh socioeconomic inequalities, both at national and global levels, and the very uneven capacities of states across the world.

In June last year, we were interested in unpacking how the relationship between states and societies unfolded around government responses to the pandemic. As a result, the essays published in the series so far also addressed the pressing issues of the relationship between the

economy and the need to stop spread of the virus. They problematised herd immunity and discussed the disproportionate repercussions for women, the poor and marginalised groups; they explored the use of political rhetoric and denialism in the initial period of the pandemic by some governments; they raised questions of healthcare systems' preparedness and more general questions of state capacity; they explored how existing systems of state patronage enabled intensified looting, redirecting or reserving Covid relief funds; they observed various civil society responses and actions to lockdown strategies; and how the pandemic exacerbated political crises. This included analyses of how the contested legitimacy of some governments shaped populations' reactions to state regulations around Covid (<https://pari.org.za/covid-19-states-and-societies-social-contracts-around-the-world/>)

We gathered preliminary insights into how states have interacted with populations in their responses to the Covid-19 pandemic: while the pandemic represents an 'extraordinary' period, we aim to begin to understand its structural and systematic impacts in different countries, and what countries' experiences of the pandemic can tell us about the nature of state-society relations.

In light of the contributions received and in line with the new developments of the pandemic, we want to ask the following questions:

- How has the form of the state prior to the Covid-19 outbreak and how it related to society informed/affected the state's response and people's responsiveness to the state's interventions?
- In particular, have governments managed to persuade populations that the actions they are taking (lockdowns, curfews, etc.) or not taking, are the right thing to do? Have they complied? What has shaped compliance/resistance?
- How have governments managed the vaccine rollout, and how have populations reacted to the rollout?
- What do populations' reactions to government interventions (including vaccination strategies) suggest about the legitimacy of the state and other institutions of official authority (scientific councils, public health bodies, for example)? About trust in these institutions?
- What implicit conceptions of society or social order underlies the particular nature of government response to the pandemic in particular countries/ regions? Are their *significant* contrasting conceptions evident in citizen/resident's reactions to state responses?
- Has Covid-19 initiated potential long-term changes in state-society relations as some critics are suggesting, and if so, what are the directions of these changes?

This book will be aimed at stimulating discussion about the spectrum of pandemic responses by states and the respective populations' reactions to those responses. It is an attempt to lift our gaze beyond the nation-state, even as some leaders retreat into nationalism and scapegoating other countries and global bodies.

So far, we have published short online articles from 14 countries representing examples from every continent. We now seek submissions of academic papers (7000 words) to be published as book chapters.

If you are interested in publishing a chapter (a revised version of last year's paper or a new one), please send us a brief abstract (1000 words). If you have already submitted a paper in the last call, we invite you to submit a revised version of the paper, more in line with academic writing style and

with any updates that you might find relevant, especially in relation to the second and third waves, vaccine rollout and any major political changes.

Deadline for abstracts: July 9 2021

Feedback accepted abstract: August 9 2021

Deadline for papers: October 29 2021

Peer Review process and final acceptance: January 31 2022

About PARI

The Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) does research into the constraints to effective governance, underlining the importance of institutions and institution-building. PARI is a Johannesburg-based organisation founded in May 2010 and affiliated to the University of the Witwatersrand. The organisation has generated a decade of high-quality academic research to better understand the drivers of institutional performance. We study the state and the relation between the state and society in order to advocate for improved institutional design and performance for better policy implementation to benefit impoverished and marginalised people.

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