Civil Society’s Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019: Patterns from Two Hundred Case Studies of Emergent Agency

Niranjan J. Nampoothiri and Filippo Artuso

Abstract
Covid-19 has exposed the limitations of current social protection systems and elicited a variety of responses from civil society. This article attempts to characterise emergent agency during Covid-19 by drawing on a dataset of 200 case studies and texts on how human agency has shifted during Covid-19. The overarching finding is that while the pandemic has disrupted civil society, this disruption has also spawned the emergence of new actors, issues, coalitions, and repertoires. Larger patterns in emergent agency include civil society’s accelerated adoption of digital platforms, the critical role of communities and informal networks in Covid-19 response, the increased reliance on coalition-building, new opportunities for civic action around structural inequalities exposed by the pandemic, and the reshaping of citizen–state relations.

Keywords
Civic action, grassroots mobilisations, digital adoption, digital divide, coalition-building, citizen–state relations, Covid-19

Introduction
The Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic has greatly affected civil society; operations were disrupted; new issues emerged; and civic space continued to close (Brechenmacher et al., 2020; CIVICUS, 2020; EpicAfrica, 2020; Roberts, 2021). Government response was often inadequate and raised new challenges. The economic repercussions of lockdowns and lack of social protection threatened livelihoods and poverty reduction and increased vulnerabilities and inequalities (Berkhout et al., 2021; ILO, 2020; World Bank, 2020). Despite these challenges, many individuals, communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), and grassroots organisations responded to the pandemic with innovative strategies,

1 Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, Sussex, United Kingdom.
2 Oxfam GB, United Kingdom.

Corresponding author:
Niranjan J. Nampoothiri, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH, United Kingdom.
E-mail: niranjan.nampoothiri@gmail.com
initiatives, repertoires, and approaches to crisis management. These novel changes in human agency and civic action, be it individual or collective, are what we understand as emergent agency.

The ‘Emergent Agency in a Time of Covid-19’ (EA) research project aims to examine how civil society responded to the pandemic in order to identify new forms of agency. The focus of the project is primarily on agency emerging among low-income households and communities which witness the intersectionality of inequalities. We believe that understanding emergent agency can support policymaking, donor practices, and development initiatives in addressing structural issues in the aid sector and make civil society more resilient to future shocks. Additionally, we study how these examples can inform how CSOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) can amplify their impact by scaling efforts and influencing policy.

The project brought together a community of practitioners and researchers who have been exploring the research questions in different thematic clusters. In this phase, because of the contribution of many colleagues and partners, we collected 200 case studies of ‘emergent agency’ that we sorted and annotated in a database. This article draws some initial findings from this dataset of case studies and literature as part of the EA research project.

Methodology

This study used an exploratory design with the findings consisting of possible patterns in emergent agency rather than universal, generalisable findings. EA project has nine clusters working on the thematic areas of women’s organisations, children and youth, education, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) informality and the state, peacebuilding, livelihoods, faith-based organisations, and social movements. The nine clusters were not selected but spontaneously emerged from the commitment and voluntary involvement of coordinators to investigate emergent agency in their specific areas of expertise. Half of the 200 cases in the database were submitted by cluster coordinators and members, while the other half was compiled by scanning literature around the nine themes. The cases include journal articles, grey literature, newspaper reports, blogs, books, magazine articles, and webpages which serve as examples or analysis of civil society’s agency during Covid-19 pandemic. The cases were categorised based on type of actor, type of civic action, aim of civic action, cluster themes, geographic location, and scale of action. Patterns in the distribution of cases were identified using descriptive statistics of the categories. Qualitative annotations and extensive reading complemented the analysis identifying other commonalities.

Limitations

There are three main limitations to the database. The limitations are predominance of cases from limited sources, the language of case studies (English), the possible confirmation bias introduced by our methodology for categorisation, and the cut-off date of inclusion of cases to the database. Firstly, since half the case studies came through the clusters, large membership of some clusters, such as social movements, led to a significant representation of cases relevant to that theme. Secondly, the language of the team limited the cases to English and might have caused the exclusion of some geographical areas and populations. Thirdly, the methodology for categorisation might have acted as a confirmation bias in our findings, since the tags used in the categorisation process were predetermined. Fourth, the cases in the database were added between December 2020 and March 2021. The third limitation was partly addressed by incorporating new patterns beyond the restrictions of our tagging system. Despite these limitations,
we believe that the findings presented below retain relevance and can enrich the debate on the role of civil society during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Findings**

**Harnessing Digital Technology but with the Risks of Leaving Some Behind**

The analysis revealed the emergence of a central, cross-cutting theme: the rising importance of digital technology. In a world hit by travel restrictions, supply chain disruptions, and the lack of access to basic services and income, digital technology was a valuable tool for civil society. Although digital tools reshaped global communications decades ago, lockdown measures strengthened the digital adoption among movements, organisations, and communities, with many using social media to mobilise people and resources, organise, engage in advocacy, protest, and provide services.

We found a great variety of examples of civil society harnessing the flexibility of digital technology during the pandemic, with actors using it to organise themselves and share critical information. Acciari (2020) found that domestic workers in Brazil used WhatsApp to reach out to Union members, organise acts of solidarity, and share information (Acciari, 2020). Similarly, the Xinka people of Guatemala used WhatsApp to organise themselves, share information, fight for their rights as indigenous people and maintain their ancient customs (Croft, 2020). In a case from the USA, tenants leveraged the opportunity to organise a collective rent strike after a proprietor sent a mass email demanding rent with the contact information visible to everyone (Scher, 2020).

While digital activism has been around for decades, innovative forms of digital activism have been witnessed. Bülow (2020) found that civic actors in Brazil diversified online repertoires of collective action and integrated online and offline activism. The Europe Must Act movement, for example, used a form of people-less protest wherein people took individual photos of objects, placards, or symbols in a public area which was later combined to represent a wide-scale protest, thereby not breaking Covid-19 guidelines (Berndt, 2020). Solo protests took place in Zimbabwe where novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga, Booker prize nominee, posted photos on social media of herself protesting in public against the lack of food and water in Zimbabwean cities, with the hashtags #ZanuPGMustGo and #ZimbabweLivesMatter (Toyana, 2020). In a similar form of action, Iih, a Nepalese activist, used Facebook to broadcast his 167-km protest walk from Kathmandu to Sauraha, where he distributed supplies to over 75 local families whose tourist-dependent livelihoods were disrupted by Covid-19 (Chaudhary, 2020). Due to their advanced digital literacy, young people could play an important role in using the digital medium (Honwana & Honwana, 2020).

The pandemic also forced activists to change their methods of communication, sometimes offering an opportunity to reach new people and expand their reach. Alfaro (2020) reported this occurring in Mexico where an already strong feminist movement resorted to online spaces to make their voice heard (Alfaro, 2020). Because of the creation of solidarity networks across the country, many independent feminist collectives were able to reach at the local level many others who were suffering from the socio-economic consequences of the virus and the rise in domestic and family violence, effectively expanding their community.

The acceleration in digital adoption, while creating new forms of communication and connectivity, increased the need for digital literacy and access to the Internet and technology. It exacerbated the pre-existent digital divide and risked the exclusion of people, exposing the need for greater civic action around this issue (Bülow, 2020; UN, 2020). Bahia and Delaporte (2020) report that, in 2019, rural–urban and gender gaps in digital usage were particularly felt in low- and middle-income countries where rural
populations and women were, respectively, 37% and 20% less likely to use mobile Internet than urban populations and men (Bahia & Delaporte, 2020). However, the pandemic has exposed how digital divide remains a global issue, with poorer communities and minorities struggling to catch up with digital demands during the pandemic (Kira, 2020; Rioba, 2020).

Some activists and organisations responded to the digital divide innovatively. In the Spanish province of Zaragoza, an informal neighbourhood association realised that the lack of Wi-Fi in some houses impacted the ability of children to study and people to work. They then started the #ShareTheWifi campaign to encourage everyone in the neighbourhood to share their Wi-Fi (Ciria, 2020). In the Brazilian favelas, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) distributed thousands of chips and installed Wi-Fi with support of private donors and the United Nations (Bülow, 2020). Similarly, in Kenya, some businesses distributed free solar radios to students whose education was interrupted by Covid-19 restrictions and the lack of Internet access (Rioba, 2020).

Digital communications played a part in reshaping the social contract. With the pandemic stirring the relations between the state and civil society, and more activism going online, restrictions on digital space were used to silence dissent and exercise authoritarian control (Shahbaz & Funk, 2020). Roberts (2021) found that in 10 African countries, the pandemic was used as an excuse to increase state surveillance, weaponise Covid-19-related disinformation and fake news, implement Internet shutdowns, introduce legislation that reduced digital online privacy, rights and freedoms, and silence dissent from opponents and critics.

**Local Networks Were Able to Provide a Faster and More Agile Response**

The pandemic is estimated to have pushed 100 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, significantly affecting the already poor, while creating ‘new poor’ among the more urban and educated communities (World Bank, 2020). Early evidence also suggests that income inequality is widening due to the pandemic (Berkhout et al., 2021; World Bank, 2020). Civil society was critical in filling the gaps left by the state. Brechenmacher et al. (2020) report that many CSOs repurposed their strategies and operations to provide emergency relief including food and shelter. However, several CSOs reported operational disruptions due to limited physical mobility, poor contact with constituencies due to the digital divide, poor agility due to lack of flexible funding, and limited funding support for advocacy groups (EpicAfrica, 2020; Nixon, 2020).

Informal networks and communities, including CBOs, filled the gaps left by some of the larger and more formal CSOs with more rigid bureaucracies. Thanks to their agility and flexible structures, informal local communities and networks, grassroots organisations, mutual aid, neighbourhood associations, and CBOs were critical to COVID-19 response, helping reduce the impact of the adverse consequences of lockdowns and other disruptions on those living in vulnerability. Examples include solidarity kitchens that emerged in the urban areas of Chile and the UK, where communities quickly responded to rising hunger (Cayuela, 2020; Sandra Cuffe, 2020); or the National Network of People Living with HIV (NCPI+) in India who provided antiretroviral therapy to over 45,000 individuals (Shukla & Ramakant, 2020).

Because of their inherent physical proximity, locally based communities overcame challenges faced by larger organisations, such as physical distance and dependence on the Internet. These networks and organisations developed new strategies for service delivery, because of their knowledge of local communities, setting up multiple forms of mutual aid. This was exemplified by Indian communities and self-help groups—particularly involving women producers—connecting local farmers and consumers to achieve self-sufficiency, mapping vulnerability in their villages to use government budgets to provide medicines and food to those in need (Kothari, 2020). In the Brazilian favelas, where many inhabitants
lack digital access and online media, grassroots media organisations helped raise awareness of Covid-19’s hygiene and social distancing guidelines by using banners in busy spaces and other personal messaging (Cavalcante, 2020).

While our database suggests that the larger CSOs with cumbersome structures and bureaucracies faced severe limitations, it does not imply that CSOs failed in helping communities. The cases paint a picture of how most CSOs repurposed themselves, formed coalitions to cater to the vulnerable and, despite their struggle, contributed significantly to the Covid-19 response. Nonetheless, the disruption to funding, operations and advocacy groups caused by Covid-19 raises serious questions concerning the nature of funding and the top-down approach, the pitfalls of which became more apparent during this pandemic.

The Pandemic Acted as ‘Social Glue’ for Coalition-Building

The pandemic witnessed networks of activists and organisations working collaboratively, building coalitions within civil society and with businesses to ensure coordinated responses to the crises. Coalitions allowed activists and organisations from different backgrounds to use their comparative advantage and respond strategically. Such new coalitions were visible in initiatives such as ‘Cape Town Together’ in South Africa and ‘Frena la curva’ (Brake the Curve) in Spain (Cape Town Together, 2021; Frena La Curva, 2021). These examples demonstrate how individuals, organisations, communities came together to organise community-led response, raise awareness, build solidarity, and provide essential services. Another example was C-19 in South Africa where 400 CSOs came together to monitor the government’s Covid-19 response (C-19, 2021). These examples of coalition-building are blurring the lines between formal and informal civil society.

Many examples of coalition-building involved new organising forms between the state and civil society, with the latter intervening in the pandemic response. Such new interactions took mainly two forms: the state using civil society networks to organise the pandemic response, or organisations from civil society filling the void left by a state unable to provide the necessary support. An example of the first form is the collaboration between the Taiwanese government, digital activists, and programmers wherein an open-source platform was used to provide cell phone apps where people could find information on location and availability of masks in distribution centres around them (Ho, 2020). Examples of CSOs stepping up to cover government’s limitations have been witnessed in Malaysia where the provision of food and essentials by the military led to the exclusion of some vulnerable communities such as undocumented migrants and refugees. Nixon (2020) noted that CSOs with established trust with migrant and refugee communities took charge of the food distribution, mitigating a health crisis compounded by a lack of social services.

In some instances, the state’s failures in responding to the pandemic created opportunities for civil society to reclaim its legitimacy in relatively closed civic spaces, where freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association are suppressed. Saki (2020) finds that in Zimbabwe, a poor and unequal response to the pandemic from the government opened a window of opportunity for many CSOs to develop new identities and focus on supporting the basic needs of the population (Saki, 2020).

Stirring Change in the Citizen–State Relations

The pandemic is stirring citizen–state relations. Several reports confirm that we are witnessing rising authoritarianism, surveillance, and restrictions on freedoms (Alizada et al., 2021; CIVICUS, 2020;
Danescu, 2020; IDS, 2020). Simultaneously, the pandemic prompted civic action in the form of protests, coalitions, strikes, etc., which saw citizens claiming their rights and freedoms (Latif, 2020; Morrissey, 2020; Pradeep, 2020; Youngs, 2020). We could be witnessing a reconfiguration of the social contract, with changes in the relationship between citizens and the state. Activists and social movements have demanded that the state provide and protect rights, freedoms, livelihoods, and social security. However, some states have failed in providing equally for everyone and actively repressed the voices of those demanding change. The vacuum left by the state in providing emergency services has caused a competition between actors to claim new spaces. There are instances of disaster capitalism at work, activists pushing for radical change such as the Green New Deal, and the state clamping down on civil society (CIVICUS, 2020; Paulson, 2020; Stanley & Alexander, 2020). Overall, there has been a noticeable reduction in online and offline spaces for civil society in many areas, particularly where civic space was shrinking before Covid-19, which suggests that state–society relations have changed with the continued shrinking of civic space during the pandemic4.

Civic Action Highlighted Structural Shortcomings

Social protection systems were insufficient to protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of Covid-19, particularly in poorer countries. Additionally, loss of labour and income during this period dispropor- tionately affected low-paid workers and women (ILO, 2020). The exposure of systemic and structural issues, such as the lack of social security and growing inequality, and shortcomings in state’s response to the pandemic, opened a window of opportunity for civic action and sparked a wide range of protests, initiatives, and riots. We have seen examples of activism on healthcare management, gender rights, labour rights, and food security. Sharkawi and Ali (2020) studied healthcare workers in Egypt who took to social media with acts of whistleblowing to expose mismanagement and malpractice within the healthcare sector. Similarly, the USA saw several mobilisations, such as workers striking to demand better health and working conditions and the Black Lives Matter protests which, among other themes, exposed and contested the social disparities that cause ethnic minorities to be at increased risk of both contracting and suffering the economic consequences of Covid-19 (Wong, 2020). In South Africa, the early lockdown in April 2020 caused blockages in food supply which increased food insecurity and sparked food riots (AFP, 2020).

Conclusions

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed entrenched structural inequalities and gaps in social protection, leaving those in need to fend for themselves. Many civic actors filled the gaps left by the state, playing a critical role in direct service provision and raising awareness. Additionally, some civic actors used this window of opportunity to advocate for larger change. With lockdowns and social distancing stress-testing the pre-existent structures and repertoires, civil society’s actors increased their reliance on digital communication in order to continue their activities. While accelerating digital adoption, the pandemic also exacerbated the risks of excluding groups affected by the digital divide.

The pandemic increased tensions between state and civil society, possibly reshaping the social contract. On the one side, the state of emergency and increasing restrictions were used in restricted civic spaces to limit activism and stifle dissent, with state control increasing its reach in online spaces with Covid-19 disinformation, Internet shutdowns, and a reduction of privacy, rights, and freedoms. On the other side, it provided an opportunity for civil society to advocate for radical change and, in some cases, reclaim their role in civic space through direct service provision.
CSOs with larger geographical structures and cumbersome bureaucracies were hit harder by funding disruption and limited mobility. Community networks and organisations with more flexible and local structures were able to repurpose faster to meet the needs of the populations, with different forms of self-help groups emerging as relevant actors in the pandemic response. The pandemic stimulated coalition-building, with new and old and formal and informal actors coming together to organise community-led responses. Existing CSOs relied on different alliances to face the pandemic, including with informal networks, businesses, and the state. These examples of coalition-building are blurring the lines between formal and informal civil societies.

Looking forward, the opportunity for civil society actors is to learn from the pandemic experience and shift the power from international donors and NGOs to the local communities they serve, become more resilient, and leverage this critical juncture to demand change in the direction of more egalitarian societies.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The ‘Emergent Agency in a Time of Covid-19’ is an active research project funded by the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity (AFSEE) based at the London School of Economics (LSE), in partnership with Oxfam Great Britain.

ORCID iDs
Niranjan J. Nampoothiri https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2813-1814
Filippo Artuso https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6983-2492

Notes
1. Here, ‘Human agency’ refers to the sociological models of understanding human agency which recognises that people act based on previous experiences, their interpretations of the present, and their future aspirations. It is an outcome of the interplay between the individuals and their environment.
2. While CBOs are a particular form of CSOs, in this article, we refer to CSOs as larger organisations working at the state, national, and international levels and to CBOs as organisations based and working with communities at the local level in order to facilitate pattern recognition and discussion of findings.
3. Here, we understand formal civil society as established organisations with durable structures, systematic sources of funding, and some forms of legal recognition.
4. ‘Navigating Civic Space in a Time of Covid-19’ at the Institute of Development Studies and ‘Civic Space Under Attack’ project at University of Utrecht studied shrinking civic space during Covid-19. The former particularly studied how citizen–state relations changed during Covid-19.

References
Acciari, L. (2020). Care for those who care for you! Domestic workers’ struggles in times of pandemic crisis. Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements, 6.
AFP. (2020, April 28). Nigerian workers riot over Covid-19 lockdown. NST Online. https://www.nst.com.my/world/world/2020/04/588042/nigerian-workers-riot-over-covid-19-lockdown.
AFSEE. (2021). COVID-19 rapid response fund. Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity. https://afsee.atlanticfellows.org/covid19-rapid-response-fund.
Alfaro, M. J. V. (2020). Feminist solidarity networks have multiplied since the COVID-19 outbreak in Mexico. *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements, 12*, 6.

Alizada, N., Cole, R., Gastaldi, L., Grahn, S., Hellmeier, S., Kolvani, P., Lachapelle, J., Lührmann, A., Maerz, S. F., Pilai, S., & Lindberg, S. I. (2021). *Autocratization turns viral*. University of Gothenburg: V-Dem Institute. https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/c9/3f/c93f8e74-a3fd-4bac-adfd-ee2cfeb0a375/dr_2021.pdf.

Bahia, K., & Delaporte, A. (2020). *GSMA state of mobile internet connectivity report 2020*. GSMA. https://www.gsma.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GSMA-State-of-Mobile-Internet-Connectivity-Report-2020.pdf.

Berkhout, E., Galasso, N., Lawson, M., Morales, P. A. R., Taneja, A., & Pimentel, d. A. V. (2021). *The inequality virus—Global report*. Oxfam. https://d1ns4ht6ytuzzo.cloudfront.net/oxfamdata/oxfamdatapublic/2021-01/The%20Inequality%20Virus%20-%20Global%20Report%20%20282021%20-3.pdf?N03OMRi1S_PWAiXig7D34AidD6ibPSOP.

Berndt, Y. (2020, August 26). Peopleless protest: Bridging the online-offline divide for greater movement impact in the Covid-19 period. *ICNC*. https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/blog_post/peopleless-protest-bridging-the-online-offline-divide-for-greater-movement-impact-in-the-covid-19-period/.

Brechenmacher, S., Youngs, R., & Carothers, T. (2020). *Civil society and the Coronavirus: Dynamism despite disruption*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/21/civil-society-and-coronavirus-dynamism-despite-disruption-pub-81592.

Bülow, M. von. (2020). *The impacts of the pandemic on digital activism*. Repository of Civil Society Initiatives Against the Pandemic. https://resocie.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ResearchReport02_resocie-von-Bulow.pdf.

C-19. (2021). *More about the C19 peoples coalition – C19 People’s Coalition*. https://c19peoplescoalition.org.za/more-about/.

Cape Town Together. (2021). *Cape town together*. https://capetowntogether.net.

Cavalcante, T. (2020, April 20). How Brazilian favela journalists are raising awareness about COVID-19. *OpenDemocracy*. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/how-brazilian-favela-journalists-are-raising-awareness-about-covid-19/.

Cayuela, S. R. (2020). Organising a solidarity kitchen: Reflections from Cooperation Birmingham. *Interface: A Journal for and About Social Movements, 12*, 6.

Chaudhary, S. (2020, November 3). One young man’s protest against Nepal’s COVID-19 response. *Global Voices*. https://globalvoices.org/2020/11/03/one-young-mans-protest-against-nepals-covid-19-response/.

Ciria, I. A. (2020, April 14). Lack of digital literacy and internet access, the other deficiencies discovered by COVID-19. *ElDiario.Es*. https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/falta-alfabetizacion-internet-carencias-covid-19_1_2257858.html.

CIVICUS. (2020). *People power under attack 2020*. CIVICUS. https://civicus.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/GlobalReport2020.pdf.

Croft, V. (2020, August 3). Indigenous peoples are using ancestral organizing practices to fight mining corporations and Covid-19. *Inequality.Org*. https://inequality.org/research/indigenous-peoples-mining-pandemic/.

Danescu, E. (2020). *Autocratization surges-resistance grows—Democracy report 2020* (p. 40). V-Dem Institute, the Department of Political Science at the University of …. https://www.v-dem.net/en/publications/democracy-reports/.

EpicAfrica. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on African civil society organizations challenges, responses and opportunities*. EpicAfrica. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5638d8de4b087140cc9098d/t/5efabc7884a29a20185fcbaf/1593490570417/The+Impact+of+Covid-19+on+African+Civil+Society+Organizations.pdf.

Frena La Curva. (2021). *Brake the curve—Together we are stronger*. https://frenalacurva.net/.

Ho, M. (2020). Watchdogs and partners: Taiwan’s civil society organizations—Coronavirus as a catalyst for global civil society. *Carnegie Europe*. https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/12/07/watchdogs-and-partners-taiwans-civil-society-organizations-pub-83140.

Honwana, A., & Honwana, N. (2020, June 11). *Covid-19 in Africa: Youth at the Fore*. Kujenga Amani. https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2020/06/11/covid-19-in-africa-youth-at-the-fore/
IDS. (n.d.). *Navigating civic space in a time of Covid-19*. Institute of Development Studies. https://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/navigating-civic-space/.

ILO. (2020). *Plug social protection gaps in developing countries to prevent future crises, ILO says* [Press release]. ILO. http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_744708/lang--en/index.htm.

Kademaunga, M., & Saki, O. (2020). Reclaiming civil society legitimacy in Zimbabwe—Coronavirus as a catalyst for global civil society. *Carnegie Europe*. https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/12/07/reclaiming-civil-society-legitimacy-in-zimbabwe-pub-83148.

Kira, A. (2020, April 13). Covid-19 is increasing digital inequality: We need human connectivity to close the digital divide. *Oxford Law Faculty*. https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-and-subject-groups/oxfordshire-digital-inclusion-project/blog/2020/04/covid-19-increasing.

Kothari, A. (2020, October 18). [*COVID-19 Pandemic: Worlds stories from the margins*] *What does self-reliance really mean? Amazing stories from India’s margins* [Convivial Thinking]. https://www.convivialthinking.org/index.php/2020/10/18/what-does-self-reliance-really-mean/.

Latif, A. (2020). *Millions of Pakistani laborers struggle amid COVID-19 lockdown*. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/millions-of-pakistani-laborers-struggle-amid-covid-19-lockdown/1824231.

Morrissey, K. (2020, April 18). COVID-19 concerns prompt hunger strikes and protests inside Otay Mesa Detention Center. *Los Angeles Times*. https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-04-17/coronavirus-hunger-strikes-protests-otay-mesa-detention-center-immigration.

Nixon, N. (2020). *Civil society in Southeast Asia during COVID-19: Responding and evolving under pressure*. Asia Foundation. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GovAsia-1.1-Civil-society-in-Southeast-Asia-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf.

Paulson, S. (2020). Degrowth and feminisms ally to forge care-full paths beyond pandemic. *A Journal For and About Social Movements*, 12, 15.

Pradeep, R. (2020, April). 19,000 ambulance workers strike in Northern India to demand protective gear. *World Socialist Web Site*. https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/04/02/ambu-a02.html.

Rioba, B. (2020, December 23). With schools shut by pandemic, solar radios keep Kenyan children learning. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/kenya-solar-education-coronavirus-idUKK222603.

Roberts, T. (2021). *Digital rights in closing civic space: Lessons from ten African countries*. Institute of Development Studies (IDS). https://doi.org/10.19088/IDS.2021.003.

Shahbaz, A., & Funk, A. (2020). *Freedom on the net 2020: The Pandemic’s digital shadow*. Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/10122020_FOTN2020_Complete_Report_FINAL.pdf.

Shukla, S., & Ramakant, B. (2020). Community networks playing a central role in ensuring access to HIV treatment during India’s COVID-19 lockdown. *Aidsmap.Com*. https://www.aidsmap.com/news/apr-2020/community-networks-playing-central-role-ensuring-access-hiv-treatment-during-indias.

Stanley, A., & Alexander, C. (2020). Disaster capitalism: Coronavirus crisis brings bailouts, tax breaks and lax environmental rules to oilsands. *The Conversation*. http://theconversation.com/disaster-capitalism-coronavirus-crisis-brings-bailouts-tax-breaks-and-lax-environmental-rules-to-oilsands-135996.

Toyana, M. (2020). *Hashtags and spectacles: Zimbabwe’s feminist activists find online avenues to tackle government’s COVID-19 clampdown* (p. 13). African Centre for the Study of the United States.

UN, 2020-UN. (2020, June 11). Digital Divide ‘a Matter of Life and Death’ amid COVID-19 Crisis, Secretary-General Warns Virtual Meeting, Stressing Universal Connectivity Key for Health, Development. Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20118.doc.htm
Wong, D. (2020). An increased role for civil society in the United States—Coronavirus as a catalyst for global civil society. *Carnegie Europe*. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/07/increased-role-for-civil-society-in-united-states-pub-83149.

World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2020: Reversals of fortune*. The World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1602-4.

Youngs, R. (2020). *Coronavirus as a catalyst for global civil society*. Carnegie Europe. https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/12/07/coronavirus-as-catalyst-for-global-civil-society-pub-83138.

**Authors’ Bio-sketch**

**Niranjan J. Nampoothiri** is at Institute of Development Studies of University of Sussex, Brighton, in Sussex, United Kingdom.

**Filippo Artuso** is from Oxfam GB, United Kingdom.