

Editorial

Regrowth and Reimagination: Seeking Solutions Through Research

Note from Incoming Editor

Yit Wong, University of Warwick

It is with great excitement that I present to you *Reinvention's* second 2023 issue 'Regrowth and Reimagination: Seeking Solutions Through Research'. Having been part of the team for the past two years, and witnessing the journal's continuous expansion and development, I am honoured to take up the role of the editor this coming November. *Reinvention* has always been a platform for undergraduates to learn and improve. To submit a manuscript longer than anything they have ever written and to be challenged by detailed feedback from academics at the forefront of their research focus is a sometimes-daunting process that I applaud our authors for taking on. For the next year ahead, I hope not just to protect this opportunity, but to make it even more accessible for future authors to come. With the new *Reinvention* team, I am looking forward to working alongside undergraduates all over the globe who would muster the courage to help reimagine the world we live in.

Introduction to the issue

Molly Gardiner, University of Warwick

The diversity of disciplines from which *Reinvention* publishes is always one of the journal's most exciting aspects; but it is one that challenges us as an editorial team to find a singular theme that runs through such an expansive range of topics. One commonality we noticed within the papers of this issue is a determined focus on growth and development expressed through creative and imaginative research-based solutions. Within their distinct fields of research – from mental health to land degradation – these papers do not leave the future solutions of the challenges they investigate at the doorsteps of others but approach them, instead, focused resolutely and optimistically on sustainable progress. It is the analysis, scrutiny, and proposal of innovative solutions within these papers which help to pave a road to a future of regrowth. These future-focused studies span a range of contexts which illuminate the importance of understanding both the global and the individual; and, more importantly, the connections between the two.

We begin with perspectives on the physical and social costs of the current climate emergency, a subject inherently entangled with the unique challenges presented by an increasingly globalised and interconnected world. Reimagining a world beyond capitalism and arguing for the importance of standardising research in sustainable development are some of the ways in which our authors present steps towards social and environmental growth in the shadow of global crisis.

Other authors in this issue recognise that growth and regrowth – and building and rebuilding – are registered in experiences of the everyday. The often-daunting topic of mental health is one that impacts the everyday lives of innumerable people. Here, authors do not only investigate the impact of physical activity on mental health or when individuals may be at a higher risk of disordered eating but offer direction for how their findings may underline or be crafted into crucial interventions in the future. Similarly, research exploring

childhood language development (and the everyday ways in which teaching can be improved to benefit younger generations) presents significant implications for the future of education.

An exciting aspect of this issue is its inclusion of a special section written as a collaborative project between student authors from the University of Warwick and Monash University. Overseen by an inter-institutional team of academics, this section investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the model of International Political Economy (IPE) as applied to objects and elements of everyday life. Its approach focuses on the practices and objects which comprise the 'everyday', and the political and economic processes which operate behind them: and, crucially, it encourages authors to reflect on their own experiences in order to inform and shape critical discussion. This reimagining of research makes space for new understandings that can only be found in the everyday and can only be heard when the experiences and creativity of the researchers themselves are repositioned to the forefront of discussion. Parallel to *Reinvention's* goal of uplifting the research contributions of undergraduates, this approach amplifies the researcher's voice in academic conversations which often forget that solutions - and the research that precedes them - begin with individuals.

We begin with 'Beyond Capitalism: Imagining Life After Ruin', which reimagines a future beyond the capitalist present through the conceptual lens of wastelands and modern-day ruins. Molly Young's eloquent paper draws on the ideas of post-capitalist and precapitalist thought to navigate innovative, localised approaches to climate change.

'How Do We Know When We Achieve Land Degradation Neutrality in Forests? A Systematic Review' by Chelsea Rabl and colleagues reviews the evolving research of how land degradation is being measured. This vital and thorough investigation guides future research to a more standardised approach to quantifying indicators of land degradation and the expansion of research beyond Eurasia and to North America, Oceania and South America.

Ieva Karvelyte's paper investigates the question 'Are Physical Activity Levels in Childhood Associated with Future Mental Health Outcomes? Longitudinal Analysis Using Millennium Cohort Study Data'. In the face of the ongoing mental health crisis, this paper seeks to understand the impact of physical movement patterns of children on mental distress and wellbeing outcomes in late adolescence. Such important research illuminates vital considerations for mental health interventions which aim to help the young people most in need.

Naomi Law considers 'The Impact of Exam Stress on the Relationship Between Autistic Traits and Disordered-Eating Attitudes in a Non-Clinical Population' in this original and needed paper. This study investigates whether the relationship between autistic traits and disordered-eating attitudes is impacted by a psychological state of stress, providing a crucial understanding of the state vs trait nature of this relationship. Such research offers significant implications for the treatment of anorexia and informs essential preventative measures by helping recognise when these individuals are at their most vulnerable.

Chwee Yun Hui and Yue Yu contribute to the pedagogical debate between the teaching methods of direct instruction and discovery learning in their paper 'Effects of Pedagogical Questioning on Singaporean Young Children's Learning of Novel Categories'. This study explores how teachers may best facilitate the learning of novel categories by examining the effects of different teaching strategies. Not only does this paper present interesting implications on the pedagogical methods chosen by teachers, but also offers new questions on

the topic regarding the impact of culture, specifically by expanding such research beyond Europe and the US to Singapore.

I-PEEL Special Section

This special section opens with 'COVID-19 and the International Political Economy of Everyday Life: An Introduction to the Special Section' by James Brassett and colleagues. This expansive introduction outlines not only the new critical approach of the International Political Economy of Everyday Life (or I-PEEL) originated by four of the piece's co-authors, but also the ways in which this model was used by the group as a global groupwork project. Students of Monash University and the University of Warwick undertook this international and interdisciplinary opportunity as a collaborative research task, resulting in the 'tiles' – short writings designed as entry-point pieces – which have been gathered here as our Special Section. In sum, the approach aims to 'peel back' the layers of inequality and hierarchy through the lens of everyday objects and practices. The continuing social, political, and economic impacts of the historic COVID-19 pandemic serves as the basis of these critical interventions.

In 'Vaccine Diplomacy: How China and the U.S. Sought to Expand their Influence in East and Southeast Asia', Guanqing Chen and Reece Peter Jerome outline how the US and China have used vaccines to engage in tactics of power politics. This discussion of 'vaccine diplomacy' highlights the global inequality between the Global North and Global South and presents the question of how such geopolitical hierarchies may impact the future of public health.

'Mask Wearing: How Can Comparative Political and Economic Factors Account For Differing Rates of COVID-19 Compliance Between Countries?' engages with a multi-faceted exploration of the factors influencing individuals' compliance with COVID-19 policies. In this paper, Sam Gibson and Catalina Bastianelli evaluate the impact of the difference between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, alongside a discussion of the role of economic factors in influence people's ability to comply.

In 'Lockdown: COVID-19, State Capacity, and Neo-Liberalism', Jacques Urquhard and Eve Williams qualitatively compare the pandemic management strategies of the UK and China. This analysis dissects the different approaches of these countries in navigating the balance between human rights and public health safety with the goal of illuminating more effective and humane public health practices for the future.

In 'Digital Exclusion: Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 Policies on Elderly Mobility Via a Comparative Study of Australia and China', Miriam Hoskin and Yiran Huang discuss the social impact of government politics during the pandemic on marginalised groups, in particular the elderly. Through a comparative analysis of Australia and China, this paper highlights the dangers of digital exclusion to older people and the increased role of women as unpaid care workers in response to older people's reduced mobility in a time of technological reliance.

'Military Language: How Was the Language Used by Leaders During the COVID-19 Pandemic Manifested in Their Crisis Management Strategies?' interrogates the role of language in understanding how governments and political leaders manage times of crisis. Ella Bindley and Joseph Earnshaw analyse the use of militaristic language by different global leaders during the pandemic using political, linguistic and feminist perspectives to understand the long-term political implications of such violent rhetoric.

In 'Identity: Narratives of Heroes, Villains and Victims', Kleopatra Efstathiou and Griffin Rohleder deconstruct how the pandemic saw the emergence of meaningful and morally-loaded identities and narratives such as 'dutiful citizen', 'supermum', and the 'unvaccinated'. Through the Narrative Policy Framework, they explore how people are affected by the impact of these constructed normative hierarchies.

'Mobile Phones: Sick of Your Phone Yet? The Infectiousness of Mobile Phone Usage during the Pandemic and the Generational Divide' provides a commentary on the encroachment of tech companies into the space of public health policymaking, increasing not only mobile phone use in general, but also the generational inequalities of this rapid digitalisation of daily life. Pei Yi Chin and Tijana Kovac examine the growing exclusion of marginalised communities such as older adults due to a lack of digital access or literacy, as well as online learning's damaging effect on the mental health of young people.

Building on this discussion of growing digitalisation during the pandemic, 'TikTok: Platform Capitalism and Prosumer Culture' uses a Political Economy approach to investigate the rapid growth of TikTok over the course of the pandemic. Through this analysis, Nadège Studeny and Jazir Mohammed exhibit TikTok as an example of prosumer culture, with the role of the consumer playing an active part in the growth of the company, as well as the impact of algorithm-based ad-targeting.

Temiloluwa Taiwo Oloajo and Isabelle Zhu-Maguire break through taboos surrounding death in order to expose the exploitative practices of the coffin supply chain in 'Coffins: What Contributes to the Unethical Nature of the Global Coffin Supply Chain?'. This paper unmask the unsustainable use of historic rainforest wood and the unethical conditions coffin manufacturer workers endure.

'Mental Health: Is Pandemic Stress Exclusive to the Rich?' addresses the impact of the pandemic on the mental health crisis and the growing discourses of mental wellbeing that surrounded it. Within this paper, Ayu Larasati and Tom Zundel articulate the ways in which mental health is interwoven within capitalism and neo-liberalism. Ultimately, those with insecure jobs and housing suffer greater anxiety and depression; yet mental health services are often out of reach for low-income people due to the commercialisation of care.

'Precarity: How Did the Pandemic Reshape the Employment Landscape?' explores the impact of the pandemic on employment stability, drawing focus on the increasing precarity and vulnerability of workers from all corners of the workforce. Basing this discussion on a historical backdrop of recent changes in job precarity, Oliver Hosking and Marina Yáñez Luque unpack the ongoing impact of such changes in the employment landscape, from lowering prospects of finding work to the serious implications for mental health.

William Dickins and Xinwen Zhang analyse the fiscal responses to the worldwide lockdowns made by the UK and Australia in their paper 'Job (In)Security: Why Did More People Feel Insecure About Their Jobs During the COVID-19 Pandemic?'. They interrogate whether the business and finance-centric approaches of these deeply financialised economies are well-suited to support the lives of everyday people.

Acknowledgments

This issue sees the graduation of our editor Elle Pearson and with it the end of her time at *Reinvention*. Elle's dedication and endless hard work have been constant sources of innovation at *Reinvention*, and greatly appreciated by the full team. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new editor Yit Wong, and to wish him the best as he takes on this new role. Special thanks go to the I-PEEL team, James Brassett, Tom

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