Politics, Perils and Privileges: Immobilities in the Time of Global Pandemics

When the COVID-19 global pandemic struck in early 2020, governments around the world reacted by closing international and national state borders, banning or restricting international and interstate travel, and resorting to enforced lockdowns and curfews. The economic and social impacts of these sudden restrictions in movements have been devastating with the lived experiences of everyone impacted. The employed became unemployed, industries whose entire business models are dependent on human interactions such as tourism, hospitality and entertainment collapsed, supply chains were disrupted, remote working and studying became the norm, families were separated from each other and professional and education opportunities were lost.

People around the world frustrated by the impact the pandemic has had on them, and by the systemic and new inequalities that emerged, voiced their anger through street protests and in the online space with the pandemic fuelling both extreme right wing and left wing fervour. The rapid move to the online space to conduct almost every kind of human activity meant a complete reliance on the digital resulting in new kinds of inequalities and challenges. The rise of the digital in the time of forced immobilities has also created completely new opportunities born out of necessity. While mobility was once the life blood for human and individual necessity, progress and advancement, immobility has shown itself to create perils and privileges never really realised. For example, workers not required to be ‘on site’ are able to set up home offices to work from home.

This special issue thus asks the questions:

- How has immobility affected the once mobile?
- What old and new inequalities have resulted as consequences of restricted or banned human movements?
- What political movements are being created because of forced immobility?
- How have communities responded to forced immobility and to the once mobile?
- What are the impacts of immobility on migrants and migration?
- What are the relationships between the digital and immobility?

Timeline
Abstracts due: March 2021
Full papers due: August 2021

Please get in touch with the Transitions editors if you have any questions in the meantime.