Received: 12 August 2022 | Revised: 11 July 2023 | Accepted: 12 July 2023

DOI: 10.1111/area.12894

AREA Royal Geographical Society with IBG

WILEY

SPECIAL SECTION

Qualitative Longitudinal Methods

Fast, slow, ongoing: Female academics' experiences of time and change during COVID-19

Kate Carruthers Thomas

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK

Correspondence
Kate Carruthers Thomas, Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK.
Email: kate.thomas@bcu.ac.uk

Funding information
Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)

Abstract

This paper reports on an investigation into female academics' experiences of living and working through the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom (UK). A diary, diary-interview method (DDIM) was used to gather qualitative data from 25 participants about their lives during the period March 2020–September 2021 and diary and interview data have since been curated and published in an open access digital archive. The paper argues firstly that in recording and interpreting change over time in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the methodology constitutes a qualitative longitudinal research (QLLR) approach. Secondly, that the method has the capacity to convey temporal disruption and complexity, aligned with notions of crisis as fast, slow and ongoing. Thirdly, that Nixon's theorising of 'slow violence' can be used to frame the impacts of the pandemic as gradual, unseen and banal despite potentially negative implications for female academics' career progression. Finally, the paper argues that gathering this data through DDIM and publishing it in a publicly accessible digital archive represents a necessary form of witness with the potential to be utilised for future interventions.

KEYWORDS

academia, COVID-19, DDIM, female, temporality, UK

1 | INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I report on the use of a diary, diary-interview method (DDIM) (Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977) to investigate female academics' experiences of living and working through the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom (UK). In this context, DDIM constitutes a qualitative longitudinal research (QLLR) approach, both facilitating the gathering of rich, qualitative data in the moment and in context, and recording and interpreting change over time. I highlight DDIM's capacity to convey spatio-temporal complexities of participants' lived experiences and draw on notions of crisis as 'fast', 'slow' and ongoing, to consider the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gendered social and spatial relations. In doing so, I draw on the literature of crisis temporalities which critiques notions of crisis as *only* fast and sensational. I borrow from Nixon's theorising of 'slow violence' originating in a context of environmental crisis, to frame a consideration of longer-term, negative implications for female academics' career progression as 'gradual, out of sight … banal, everyday, intimate, routinised' (2011, p. 2). Finally, I argue that gathering and publishing these data represents a necessary form of witness with the potential to be utilised for future interventions.

Section 2 of this paper introduces Nixon's theorising of slow violence in the wider context of crisis temporalities. It goes on to briefly outline the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift to working from home and specific impacts on UK higher education. The focus of Section 3 discusses the research participants and methodology of the project 'Dear Diary: equality implications for female academics from changes to working practices in lockdown and beyond' (Carruthers Thomas, 2022b). This section discusses the use of DDIM, considering the method's longitudinal credentials in the light of the QLLR literature. In Section 4, I use selected diary and interview data to explore spatio-temporal disruptions and complexities in participants' diary entries and interviews. I draw on ideas of crisis temporalities to highlight the characterisation of the COVID-19 pandemic not only as 'fast' and 'slow' but as ongoing, with negative implications for female academics' career progression. The paper concludes that this research and the publication of its findings represents a form of witness, in which the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are noticed and represented.

2 | CONTEXTS

2.1 | Crisis temporalities and 'slow violence'

The literature of crisis temporalities critiques and expands on the dominant narrative of crisis as fast and sensational, calling for an attunement to 'sluggish temporalities of suffering' (Ahmann, 2018, p. 144) and gendered and raced epistemologies that privilege the public, the rapid, the hot and the spectacular (Christian & Dowler, 2019, p. 1066). As Nixon argues 'Falling bodies, burning towers, exploding heads, avalanches, volcanoes, and tsunamis have a visceral, eye-catching and page-turning power' (2011, p. 3), whereas environmental crises, chronic illness, poverty and post-traumatic stress are 'neither spectacular nor instantaneous but rather incremental and accretive' (p. 4). In the context of environmental crisis, Nixon theorises 'slow violence' as a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all (p. 2). Ahmann argues that because it often proceeds 'at a speed that decouples suffering from its original causes, slow violence can be difficult to represent, even to perceive' (2018, p. 144). This paper aims to show that participants' individual experiences of the pandemic reflect both 'fast' and 'slow' aspects of crisis temporality, 'a non-binary single complex of violence' (Christian & Dowler, 2019, p. 1067) with multiple potential longer-term implications.

2.2 | The COVID-19 pandemic

A health emergency on a global scale, the COVID-19 pandemic has had wide-reaching impacts on everyday lives. Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) a pandemic in March 2020, there have been nearly seven million deaths worldwide (WHO, 2023). Mutations and outbreaks of the virus rippled around the world and extensive socio-economic impacts remain (Das et al., 2022; WHO, 2022, inter alia). The UK first went into lockdown on 23 March 2020 with the public instructed to 'stay at home' except for certain very limited purposes (GOV.UK, 2020).

Viewing COVID-19 through the lens of crisis temporality, the start of the pandemic can be seen as a sudden and shocking 'moment of rupture' (Ahmann, 2018, p. 144), a series of events 'erupting into instant sensational visibility' (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). Newsfeeds were filled with images of health professionals gowned and masked, deserted town and city centres, locked down and isolated elderly care home residents staring through their windows. Changes to social and working practices were immediate and unprecedented, not least the shift of paid labour into the home for those not designated as key workers. Pre-pandemic, working from home had been practised by a minority of employees, largely in white-collar occupations and at more senior levels of organisational hierarchies, but by April 2020, 46.6% of people in employment were doing at least some work from home (Office for National Statistics, 2020). For those with school age children, the household also became a site of schooling.

Following the immediate shock of lockdown, the daily permitted hour of exercise, daily televised government press briefings and death counts became features of everyday life. A vaccination programme began in December 2020 and at the time of writing, COVID-19 restrictions no longer apply. However, as of March 2023, an estimated 1.9 million people (2.9% of the UK population) were experiencing long-COVID (symptoms continuing for more than 4 weeks after the first suspected COVID-19 infection) (Office for National Statistics, 2023a, 2023b). Over the winter 2022–2023, the UK experienced a 'twindemic', simultaneous big waves of COVID-19 and flu, causing increases in hospitalisation (Triggle, 2023).

2.3 | Female academics working from home: An unequal burden of care

As the first lockdown was enforced in March 2020, UK universities' provision pivoted online, utilising digital technologies to facilitate teaching and learning, research, student support and administration from home. In the UK higher education (HE) sector, informal and flexible arrangements for occasional working from home had been common pre-pandemic, on the understanding that this provided a conducive environment for academic work. However, many female academics had used working from home as 'an effective strategy to manage the demands of … multifaceted roles as academics, partners, mothers and "family managers"' (Couch et al., 2020, p. 268). From March 2020 this flexibility benefit was diminished, as established routines and rhythms were disrupted. Those working the 'second shift' (Hochschild & Machung, 1989), that is, carrying the burden of unpaid and unrecognised labour within the home in addition to performing paid labour outside it, were particularly disadvantaged (Ascher, 2020; Connolly et al., 2020; Ferguson, 2020).

Online survey research conducted towards the end of the first lockdown (Carruthers Thomas, 2020) found that female academic and professional services staff employed by a large modern university had been less likely to have access to dedicated working space at home; more likely to take primary or sole responsibility for homeschooling, household tasks and others' care needs. Female academic respondents, particularly those with school age children and/or with care responsibilities for the over-70s, were more likely to report that working from home in lockdown had impacted upon their capacity to conduct research and write for publication. Boncori (2020), Fazackerly (2020), Kitchener (2020) and Pebdani et al. (2022) report similar findings. Any reduction in research productivity presents a potential risk of longer-term damage to an academic career, given the value placed on research income generation and peer-reviewed publications for career progression. This is, or should be, of concern in a sector already structured by female under-representation (Advance HE, 2023).

3 | THE 'DEAR DIARY' PROJECT: PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Participants

As a female academic whose research focuses on gendered issues within the UK higher education sector, I was keen to investigate gendered impacts and implications of living and working through the pandemic. The research project *Dear Diary: Equality implications for female academics from changes to working practices in lockdown and beyond* (Carruthers Thomas, 2022b) was funded by the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) and conducted by a small research team: myself as Principal Investigator and a part-time Research Assistant, over 1 year (March 2021–2022). The funding proposal included a plan to curate, illustrate and publish a large volume of data in an open access digital archive.

I initially recruited 30 female academic participants employed at UK universities and research institutes via purposive and snowball sampling. Two withdrew early from the study citing workload pressures; three did not submit a first diary entry and were subsequently assumed to have withdrawn. The remaining 25 participants were aged between 25 and 59; from a range of disciplinary backgrounds (Education, Social Science and Social Policy, Geography, Creative and Visual Arts, Business and Management, Physiology, Neuroscience and Psychology) and occupied roles across the academic career spectrum from PhD student to Professor. The relatively small sample also represented a range of personal and domestic circumstances. Nineteen were living in formal and informal partnerships (heterosexual and lesbian); two were separated single parents. Four lived alone. Eleven had children of school age, three had children below and above school age living in the household, and four had direct responsibility for elderly dependents. This diversity offers some challenge to the assumption of women's status as mothers and the spouses of men, which shaped dominant narratives of female researchers' experiences of the COVID-19 lockdowns (Utoft, 2020).

3.2 | Diary, diary-interview method (DDIM)

A standalone solicited diary method is widely used across disciplines to explore a range of human phenomena. The diary method enables participants to record 'an ever-changing present' (Elliott, 1997, para. 2.4). In DDIM (Kenten, 2010;

Latham, 2003; Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977, inter alia), the addition of an interview clarifies and establishes context for the diary and corroborates what the diarist has written, thus reducing potential for analytical misinterpretation (Latham, 2003; Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977). As importantly, DDIM has the capacity to convey temporal complexity, 'the parallel narratives of the diary and the diary-interview … produce an interrelated mosaic of interpretive snapshots and vignettes of a particular social space and social practices in the making' (Latham, 2003, p. 2005). This seemed pertinent and powerful in a period of significant social disruption. DDIM was also a pragmatic choice, given that participants were geographically dispersed, some COVID-19 restrictions still applied and electronic/digital technologies could be used for both diary submission and interview.

Participants were asked to submit two diary entries in any format. The majority of submissions were written, two participants submitted audio diaries, one a video diary. The first (May 2021) was retrospective, taking a long view of experiences of living and working since the start of the UK pandemic in March 2020. The second (July/August 2021) was contemporaneous, primarily focusing on current working practices. Participants were invited to write in detail about one element or experience, or widely about many, allowing 'leeway to write about what was important to them and to structure as they felt appropriate' (Elliott, 1997, para. 4.2). Between one and six weeks after receipt of the second diary entry, the author interviewed participants via Zoom or Microsoft Teams for between 45 and 60 min. The semi-structured individual interview revisited diary entries for clarification and amplification and covered emerging and generic themes relating to career progression and the HE sector. Interview topics were outlined in advance and participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the interview at any point. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and transcripts returned to participants for verification.

The opportunity to redact interview content was an important element of maintaining participant confidence in the research process, especially given the personal and professional sensitivities of the material. It was part of a complex interplay of ethical responsibility on my part, as researcher, and of power dynamics within the research relationship. There is an inherent tension in the solicited diary method in which diarists are knowingly writing for the eyes of a researcher-reader. This may affect their selection of information to share (Cao & Henderson, 2021). However, in framing the research process itself as performative, Latham argues that both the diary and interview elements of DDIM reflect 'the incompleteness and event-ness with which the whole research process is shot through … The diary becomes a kind of performance or reportage … and the interview a reaccounting or reperformance' (Latham, 2003, p. 2003).

In receiving and reading participants' diary entries, I became party to multiple personal narratives. I was immediately struck by the candid nature of the entries, covering workload, institutional politics, family and workplace relationships, physical and emotional heaIth. I attributed this candour in part to my own insider status (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019) as a female academic also living and working through the pandemic; in part to the pandemic's unique circumstances and challenges, which participants were willing to share and reflect on. These interactions involved both researcher and participant in preparation for the interview, in which both actors can be seen as 'collaborators in the construction of the account' (Elliott, 1997, para. 4.18).

3.3 | Time and change

Using DDIM to investigate female academics' experiences of living and working through the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the three principles of QLLR as outlined by Saldana (2003): duration, time and change. Saldana (2003) emphasises the importance of the context in which the research is located, in this case unprecedented social disruption occurring within a relatively short period. Early definitions of QLLR echo the prescriptive and statistical character of its longer-established quantitative predecessor in specifying minimum durations and frequency of repeat studies (Heinz & Kruger, 2001; Kelly & McGrath, 1988; Young et al., 1991), in relation to which, three data collection points within a 6-month period may not satisfy some as genuinely longitudinal. I would argue, however, that this research design is longitudinal in the sense of an approach to 'attending to temporality' (Thomson & McLeod, 2015, p. 245), rather than 'a bundle of research strategies that in a known-in-advance way mark out time' (ibid. p. 247). In the following section I explore how DDIM facilitates an understanding of change over time in participants' experiences of living and working through the pandemic. Selected excerpts of diary and interview data illustrate temporally complex experiences of the pandemic crisis as immediate, disrupted and ongoing – and with implications for the future.

4 | RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 | The start: Fast, sensational

> As one certainty after another vanished, I felt like a hunted character in a horror film helplessly watching every possible escape route disappear – front door, locked; phone lines, cut, house lights, out. Bang! Bang! Bang! Students left campus, lectures went online, we left campus. Schools shut, shops shut, the country shut. Power. Cut.
>
> (#3, Diary 1)

This writer uses dramatic language and dark humour to express her sense of dread as the constraints of lockdown become realised and familiar spatialities contract. Dread is paralysing for another participant as they recall the rolling newsfeeds: 'The day that they said, "We're shutting now," I just lay on the sofa, I couldn't move. I just watched it all unfolding, this high number of people catching the virus and dying – young old, healthy, unhealthy' (#5, Interview). For a third participant, the stakes were particularly high:

> I'd already received the dreaded 'letter of doom' ... I was deemed 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and advised not to leave my home for up to twelve weeks ... The letter made me increasingly anxious.
>
> (#28, Diary 1)

Individuals' anxieties are reflected in their accounts of their own and others' instinctive reactions to the crisis: 'I was so anxious, I took my daughter out of school 10 days before the Government decision that schools had to shift to remote teaching' (#11, Diary 1); 'People were actively stockpiling and grabbing all sorts of things in the supermarket' (#27, Diary 1); 'I seemed to go into "get on and fix it" mode extreme: for my team, for the university' (#21, Diary 1).

4.2 | Ongoing: Temporal disruption

While physical working spaces contracted, temporality became stretched. All participants reported the extension of working hours as teaching pivoted online, pastoral care demands increased and administrative and managerial duties expanded to cope with the crisis. Teaching staff were required to adapt their materials immediately and acquire new skills to do so: 'There were hours of failed attempts' (#14, Diary 1). Efforts spilled into weekends: 'Ironically, Mothering Sunday 2020 was spent with my team of teachers trying to test live lessons, how to display PowerPoint during a live lesson' (#8, Diary 1). Pastoral care, a role already disproportionately performed by female staff (Ashencaen Crabtree et al., 2019; Hanasono et al., 2019; Ramsay & Letherby, 2006, inter alia) expanded and intensified: 'The focus of 1-1 tutorials shifted from academic achievement to checking the mental health and current concerns. This was time intensive and draining' (#11, Diary 1); 'Students were isolated, scared and angry. When they reached out, I wasn't going to ignore them' (#1, Diary 1).

Reflecting earlier research findings (Carruthers Thomas, 2020), most participants indicated that, despite extended working hours, tasks critical for research productivity and future career progression had suffered. 'Writing for publication? No chance!' (#20, Diary 2); 'You can't write anything if you're just burnt out and exhausted' (#14, Diary 2). The diary method is effective at making visible not only the incremental and accretive physical and mental effects of the pandemic, but the time and energy spent on hidden labour: 'There were a lot of pastoral meetings and conversations – hidden work that doesn't appear on any calendar or workload plan. Eighteen-hour days became the norm' (#21, Diary 1).

> Creating an online community of teaching staff meant frequent, informal updates to module co-ordinators. Every week I sent them a video recorded on my phone. I ended up recording it first thing in the morning (4am while the kids were still asleep).
>
> (#14, Diary 1)

4.3 | Change over time: Boundaries, relationships of power

Participant data reveal a growing recognition of the ways established rhythms and routines had previously maintained fragile spatio-temporal boundaries between tasks, time and identities associated with 'work' and 'home'. 'I hadn't

realised before how much my commute had functioned as me-time, as time to adjust and recalibrate from academic to mother' (#1, Diary 2); 'You're wearing multiple hats all day long' (#14, Interview). A common topic of first diary entries was the disruption of and adaptation to working from home. Several participants acknowledged their privilege in having space to create dedicated work domains within the home; others were less fortunate and the fusing of professional and private spaces reflected increasingly blurred boundaries between 'work' and 'home': 'I'm in a tiny flat, my bedroom is a metre away from my desk. Personal life is entwined around work and work is similarly creeping further and further into my personal space' (#9, Diary 1). This encroachment was intensified by the technologies which made remote working possible, blurring physical, digital, personal and professional spaces: 'I like coming home and trying to shut the door on work, but now my students were in my front room!' (#8, Diary 1); 'I started off working in the bedroom and felt like my line manager was in the room. I didn't want him there. I felt a bit violated' (#4, Interview).

DDIM's combination of diary entry and individual interview offered participants the opportunity both to express the affective impacts of this porosity and to reflect on the insidious impact on gendered social and spatial relations. Media reports during this period (Ascher, 2020; Connolly et al., 2020; Donegan, 2020) had suggested a retrenchment of traditional gendered roles within the household, and participants living in heterosexual relationships where both partners were working from home wrote and spoke frankly about their experiences of the way spatial disruption and repurposing exposed previously tacit and/or accepted gendered dynamics of power:

> I started lockdown 1 with a laptop on the dining table. My husband was working in the lounge, he brought home a chair and big screen and a desk, so it stayed there all the time whereas I was clearing stuff away to eat dinner.
>
> (#7, Diary 1)

> He took my study as he had more meetings. The boys went into their bedrooms. I ended up in the kitchen with my laptop. It was my hand at the side of his screen, putting a coffee down in front of him and that, kind of, argh, got me a bit. I tried not to read too much into it – but there was a massive shift in power.
>
> (#15, Interview)

One participant felt that lockdown had catalysed the re-emergence of a long-running debate with her partner as to the value (monetary and otherwise) of each other's work: 'I felt we were often "fighting our corners" to justify our work needs and to protect our work time' (#22, Diary 1). Imbalances of power were also experienced in the form of hidden and emotional labour within the household, as encapsulated in the following quote from a participant who wrote their diary entries in the third person:

> One night, frantically trying to cook tea while listening to Matt Hancock spouting obvious lies, she realised that equality in their home was as shaky as the politicians' claims of truth. The issue wasn't that jobs weren't evenly distributed; it was that she was the one who carried the relentless worry about whether she was doing them right.
>
> (#2, Diary 1)

4.4 | Damage done? Future implications?

Throughout diary entries and interview transcripts, participants record embodied harms: weight gain, muscular-skeletal issues, eye strain and fatigue which they attribute to the cumulative effects of 'living' online using unsuitable equipment and restricted limited physical exercise. 'I've experienced a lot more pain partly think because of being more sedentary. I've also put weight on which hasn't helped' (#28, Diary 1);

> I'm seated at my desk by 6am. By the time the first meeting starts at 9am I might already have a headache which intensifies during the day and I really need a break from the screen, but it's not to be.
>
> (#5, Diary 1)

Physical symptoms and discomfort are perhaps the most tangible elements of a 'violence of delayed destruction … dispersed across time and space' (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). In addition, participants record feelings of anxiety and uncertainty:

about the trajectory of the pandemic, the welfare of loved ones, their increased workloads: 'I wasn't sleeping well and would wake up during the night alarmed and having heart palpitations. I noticed that tears before breakfast were becoming a routine feature' (#15, Diary 1); 'The overwhelming feeling of being asked to do more than I can manage continues. I am having counselling … but the isolation and struggle remain at the edges of my everyday life, just below the surface' (#3, Diary 1).

During lockdowns and as hybrid work arrangements developed, evolving physical and emotional harms were largely experienced out of sight, literally behind front doors. In the context of an entire population undergoing a major health and social crisis, these were unremarkable and have largely 'come to be understood as personal and private matters, in which victims are left responsible for managing the harm inflicted on their bodies' (Christian & Dowler, 2019, p. 1069). Slow violence 'can be difficult to represent, even to perceive' (Ahmann, 2018, p. 144) yet will impact both individuals and female representation in the sector as a whole if, as Morrish (2021) argues, 'the post-pandemic academy will be staffed and managed by people [who] are exhausted and emotionally drained'. In the words of one participant:

> I am tired. I am so very tired. At the same time, I am aware that pausing isn't good for a research career. Two periods of maternity leave made me realise that! I know that having 'nowt in the pipeline' will mean that the COVID impact will show in my professional track record for the next couple of years at least … if I can't find the energy and time to start something soon, there won't be publications from 2022 onwards. The pressure of 'publish or perish' lurks in the background always.
>
> (#1, Diary 2)

5 | CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: WITNESSING CHANGE OVER TIME

This paper has discussed a cohort of female academics' experiences of living and working through the first 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK; an investigation conducted through the use of a DDIM. The paper makes the argument that the methodology fulfils longitudinal sensibilities both by collecting data over time in a specific and highly unusual context and in attending to temporality. Diary and interview data give focus both to immediacy and change over time, reflecting experiences of the pandemic as sudden, shocking, but also grinding, ongoing and wreaking a single complex of violence in professional and personal senses. These have facilitated the recording of signs and symptoms of a dimension of Nixon's characterisation of slow violence, 'a delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space' (2011, p. 2).

Time has passed. Vaccination reduced the threat of the pandemic; hospital admissions and deaths fell. In the UK higher education sector, there was a gradual return to campus, although forms of hybrid working have remained. On 5 May 2023, WHO declared COVID-19 no longer represented a global health emergency (Mundasad & Roxby, 2023). The impulse to return to 'normal' is understandable, but that calls to let the past rest (Christian & Dowler, 2019) risk losing the opportunity of crisis as a privileged destination, that 'incites actions and bring contradictions to light' (Ahmann, 2018, p. 144). The 'interrelated mosaic' (Latham, 2003) of personal, descriptive and reflective data gathered through DDIM highlight that the COVID-19 pandemic only intensified existing tensions within the academic workload and between the burden of care female academics carry at work and at home.

The challenge of slow violence is its relative invisibility (Nixon, 2011). Long emergencies of slow violence.

In the context of a sector characterised by stubborn gender inequalities, longer-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for female academics are important. Project data have a key role to play in characterising the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic as fast, slow – and ongoing. In relation to environmental crisis, Nixon asks:

> How can we convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making, disasters that … star nobody … are of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our image-world?
>
> (2011, p. 3)

Nixon argues for witness, for the narrative imaginings of writer-activists to give life and dimension to sights unseen, the lived and living experiences of those impacted by crisis. This academic article is a form of witness, as is the data analysis which moves beyond individual experiences to identify longer-term implications of the pandemic for female academics. A large volume of data has been curated, illustrated and published in an open access digital archive (Carruthers

Thomas, 2022a). This third form of witness not only offers partial social memory of a collective experience of time and change, but an ongoing representation of the COVID-19 pandemic as fast, slow and ongoing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to SRHE for funding and support throughout this project, to Research Assistants Dr Bally Kaur and Hannah Malpass and to all research participants who gave so generously of their time during a stressful period.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

ORCID

Kate Carruthers Thomas https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3419-3229

REFERENCES

Advance HE. (2023) *Equality in higher education: Statistical reports 2022*. Available from: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/equality-higher-education-statistical-reports-2022

Ahmann, C. (2018) 'It's exhausting to create an event out of nothing': Slow violence and the manipulation of time. *Cultural Anthropology*, 33, 142–171. Available from: https://doi.org/10.14506/ca33.1.06

Ascher, D. (2020) Coronavirus: Mums do most childcare and chores in lockdown. *BBC News*, 27 May. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52808930

Ashencaen Crabtree, S. & Shiel, C. (2019) "Playing Mother": Channeled careers and the construction of gender in Academia. *SAGE Open*, 9(3). Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019876285

Boncori, I. (2020) The never-ending shift: A feminist reflection on living and organizing academic lives during the coronavirus pandemic. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 27, 677–682. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12451

Cao, X. & Henderson, E.F. (2021) The interweaving of diaries and lives: Diary-keeping behaviour in a diary-interview study of international students' employability management. *Qualitative Research*, 21(6), 829–845. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120920260

Carruthers Thomas, K. (2020) *Living and working in lockdown. What's gender got to do with it?*. Research report, December. Birmingham City University.

Carruthers Thomas, K. (2022a) *Dear diary illustrated digital archive*. Available from: www.deardiaryresearch.co.uk

Carruthers Thomas, K. (2022b) *Dear diary: Equality implications for female academics of changes to working practices in lockdown and beyond*. Final Report. Available from: https://srhe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/DEAR-DIARY-REVISED-FINAL-REPORT-OCTOBER-2022.pdf

Christian, J.M. & Dowler, L. (2019) Slow and fast violence: A feminist critique of binaries. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 18(5), 1066–1075.

Connolly, K., Kassam, A., Willsher, K. & Carroll, R. (2020) 'We are losers in this crisis': Research finds lockdowns reinforcing gender inequality. Campaign groups warn women across Europe risk being pushed back into traditional roles. *The Guardian*, 29 May. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/29/we-are-losers-in-this-crisis-research-finds-lockdowns-reinforcing-gender-inequality

Couch, D., O'Sullivan, B. & Malatsky, C. (2020) What COVID-19 could mean for the future of 'work from home'. The provocations of three women in the academy. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 28, 266–275. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12548

Das, K., Behera, R.L. & Paital, B. (2022) Socio-economic impact of COVID-19. In: Rawtani, D., Mustansar, C. & Khatri, N. (Eds.) *COVID-19 in the environment*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Elsevier, pp. 153–190.

Donegan, M. (2020) This pandemic threatens to undo what generations of feminists have fought for. *The Guardian*, 21 May. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/21/this-pandemic-threatens-to-undo-what-generations-of-feminists-have-fought-for

Elliott, H. (1997) The use of diaries in sociological research on health experience. *Sociological Research Online*, 2, 38–48.

Fazackerly, A. (2020) Women's research plummets during lockdown but articles from men increase. *The Guardian*, 12 May. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/12/womens-research-plummets-during-lockdown-but-articles-from-men-increase

Ferguson, D. (2020) 'I feel like a 1950s housewife': How lockdown has exposed the gender divide. *The Observer*, 3 May. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/03/i-feel-like-a-1950s-housewife-how-lockdown-has-exposed-the-gender-divide

GOV.UK. (2020) *Staying at home and away from others (social distancing)*. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others

Hanasono, L.K., Broido, E.M., Yacobucci, M.M., Root, K.V., Peña, S. & O'Neil, D.A. (2019) Secret service: Revealing gender biases in the visibility and value of faculty service. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 12(1), 85–98. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000081

Heinz, W.R. & Kruger, H. (2001) Life course: Innovations and challenges for social research. *Current Sociology*, 49(2), 29–45. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392101049002004

Hochschild, A. & Machung, A. (1989) *The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
Jacobson, D. & Mustafa, N. (2019) Social identity map: A reflexivity tool for practicing explicit positionality in critical qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–12. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919870075
Kelly, J.R. & McGrath, J.E. (1988) *On time and method*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
Kenten, C. (2010) Narrating oneself: Reflections on the use of solicited diaries with diary interview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research/ Sozialforschung*, 11(2), Art. 16. Available from: https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.2.1314
Kitchener, C. (2020) Women academics seem to be submitting fewer papers during coronavirus. 'Never seen anything like it,' says one editor. *The Lily*, 24 April. Available from: https://www.thelily.com/women-academics-seem-to-be-submitting-fewer-papers-during-coronavirus-never-seen-anything-like-it-says-one-editor/
Latham, A. (2003) Research, performance and doing human geography: Some reflections on the diary-photograph, diary-interview method. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 35(11), 1993–2017. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1068/a3587
Morrish, L. (2021) Emotional labour in the post-pandemic university. *The Post-Pandemic University*, 31 October. Available from: https://postpandemicuniversity.net/2021/10/31/emotional-labour-in-the-post-pandemic-academy/
Mundasad, S. & Roxby, P. (2023) Covid global health emergency is over, WHO says. *BBC News*, 5 May. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65499929
Nixon, R. (2011) *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Office for National Statistics. (2020) *Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK*. April 2020. Available from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/coronavirusandhomeworkingintheuk/april2020
Office for National Statistics. (2023a) *Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest insights*. February. Available from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19/latestinsights
Office for National Statistics. (2023b) *Prevalence of ongoing symptoms following coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the UK*. 30 March 2023. Available from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19latestinsights/infections
Pebdani, R.N., Zeidan, A., Low, L. & Baillie, A. (2022) Pandemic productivity in academia: Using ecological momentary assessment to explore the impact of COVID-19 on research productivity. *Higher Education Research and Development*, Advance online publication. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2022.2128075
Ramsay, K. & Letherby, G. (2006) The experience of academic non-mothers in the gendered university. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 13(1), 25–44.
Saldana, J. (2003) *Longitudinal qualitative research: Analyzing change through time*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
Thomson, R. & McLeod, J. (2015) New frontiers in qualitative longitudinal research: An agenda for research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(3), 243–250. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2015.1017900
Triggle, N. (2023) Dreaded Covid-flu twindemic cost NHS this winter. *BBC News*, 25 January. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-64388629
Utoft, E.H. (2020) 'All the single ladies' as the ideal academic during times of COVID-19? *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 27, 778–787. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12478
World Health Organisation. (2022) *World health statistics 2022*. Available from: https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2022-world-health-statistics-2022 [Accessed 20th May 2022].
World Health Organisation. (2023) *Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard*. Available from: https://covid19.who.int/
Young, C., Savola, K. & Phelps, E. (eds). (1991) *Inventory of longitudinal studies in the social sciences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
Zimmerman, D. & Wieder, D. (1977) The diary: Diary interview method. *Urban Life*, 5, 479–498. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/089124167700500406

How to cite this article: Carruthers Thomas, K. (2024) Fast, slow, ongoing: Female academics' experiences of time and change during COVID-19. *Area*, 56, e12894. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12894