

Call for Contributions

The Uneven Geographies of the COVID-19 Pandemic Special Issue in ERDKUNDE

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The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has reached every corner of the globe. While only estimates are available of how many people were infected and died due to the new SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is probably safe to say that by now all humankind has been affected by the impact of the pandemic. Different public health measures around the world aim at containing or at least slowing down the spread of the virus. Lockdowns, social distancing, border closures, quarantine and other measures have affected everyday life in many societies, while some countries followed other containment strategies or purposely decided not to apply restrictions. The effects of the worldwide Corona crisis will be likely to be felt for years to come – among others in the economic, health and educational systems.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, geographers have contributed to the analysis of both epidemiological characteristics of the disease as well as the social, economic and ecological dimensions of the pandemic. A number of special issues in geography journals appeared in 2020 (e.g. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, *Tourism Geographies*, *Irish Geography*, *Urban Geography*, *Cities & Health*). Most of those special issues were convened in March or April 2020 with most contributions being written between March and June 2020. As insightful as these articles are, they inevitably only reflect the early stages of the pandemic. Now, after more than a year into the pandemic, the uneven geographies of the pandemic have taken a much clearer shape and the dire consequences of the pandemic crisis are now becoming an empirical reality.

This special issue of ERDKUNDE seeks to gather original research articles that address the uneven geographies of the Covid-19 pandemic. These uneven geographies encompass all aspects from diffusion and spread, spatial differences and patterns of morbidity and mortality, regional and local differences of human-virus-relations to the uneven ways in which people are affected. The crisis triggered by the pandemic has accentuated and brought to light global interdependencies and the “structural pathogenesis” (Sparke & Anguelov 2020, 500) that show that suffering – from the pandemic itself as well as from public health measures – is unequally distributed, for example along the (often intersectional) lines of class, ethnicity, gender, age or place of residence. Still, many issues are momentarily poorly understood. The consequences of the crisis for the majority and growing number of young people in the Global South, for instance, are hardly addressed. Furthermore, the hurried rollout of digitisation in public health and education and its immediate but also transformative effects on health and societies need further investigation. Little is yet known about ecological factors, for example the differences in regional climates, and their effects on the spread and persistency of the pathogen. Looking ahead, many also want to know more about potential reservoirs of viruses for future pandemics. Biogeographical expertise may yield important insights to these issues.

The first round of special issues in geographical journals has favoured views from human geography and – to a lesser degree – GIScience. This special issue in ERDKUNDE – one of the few remaining journals that cover all areas of the discipline of Geography – explicitly invites contributions from various geographical sub-fields as well as cross-sectional work, including perspectives from physical and human geography, medical geography, critical health geographies, GISciences, applied geography, and so on.

The special issue in ERDKUNDE seeks to engage the rich diversity of Geography in analysing the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath and to stimulate conversation within and beyond the discipline. To quote the physical geographer Malanson (2020, 150): „To be effective for promoting human health, further integration with the work of human geographers with similar interests will be sensible. Talk to your colleagues – from a safe distance.“ Such calls for dialogue further animate the special issue proposal.

Timeline:

- March to end of April 2021: Open call for contributions; Decision for invitation of full articles until May 10th
- May to end of August 2021: First drafts to guest editors
- September to October 2021: Submission of articles to journal for peer review
- October to December 2021: Review and revisions
- January to February 2022: Submission revised articles
- March to May 2022: publication of special issue

References:

- Sparke, M. & Anguelov, D. (2020) Contextualising coronavirus geographically. In: Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 45, 498-508.
- Malanson, G.P. (2020) COVID-19, zoonoses, and physical geography. In: Progress in Physical Geography 44 (2), 149-150.

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Further information on the journal ERDKUNDE can be obtained here

<https://www.erdkunde.uni-bonn.de>