

EDITORIAL: THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

INTRODUCTION

Much to the liking of many geographers, *Forbes Magazine's* contributor and professor in meteorology at the University of Georgia, J. Marshall Shepherd, wrote in early March 2020 an op-ed titled 'Why Geography is a key part of fighting the COVID-19 Coronavirus outbreak'. In *Wired*, David Wolman (2020) wrote how the pandemic is redefining our relationship with space in a contribution titled 'Amid a Pandemic, Geography Returns with a Vengeance'. Notwithstanding the many challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic poses, both in our private lives and in our professional activities, it offers a great opportunity for analysis through a geographic lens. Geographical knowledge and geospatial data, perhaps best exemplified by the widely used Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 tracking website, have already proven to be vital for understanding the pandemic's reach. The uneven distribution of the virus across and within countries raises inherently geographic questions regarding the political, economic, financial, socio-cultural and demographic dimensions of the pandemic. The aim of this special issue of *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie (TESG)* is to present the initial investigations of geographers and socio-spatial scientists into the emerging spaces of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following a call, we have received well over 40 papers, thereby exceeding our expectations. After internal and external review of the papers we here present the papers that were selected for publication. We are thankful to the reviewers who provided fast, yet detailed, feedback on the papers. In addition, we would like to thank Grace Ong, Senior Journals Publishing Editor at Wiley, and Noel Valdivia, Production Editor, for their support in the publication of this special issue. The papers in this special issue present an interesting geographical mix (with case studies from Asia, Europe and the North America) as well as a variety of methodological approaches

towards understanding the spatial manifestations and variegated geographic impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, they well represent the different thematic fields in geography.

The editors of *TESG* welcome more papers on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which we will have reviewed as we do with any other paper. We will not be able to fast-track new submissions but we will publish new papers online in 'Early View' soon after they have been accepted for publication. Future papers on COVID-19 will also be added to a *Virtual Special Issue*, which will consist of all papers published in this issue together with new papers on the geography of the pandemic. As much as possible we aim for the open access publication of these papers.

The papers in this special issue are grouped by theme and in the remainder of this editorial we will briefly introduce these different themes.

THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER COVID-19

Thiago Mendes and Luis Carvalho study the evolving geographies of knowledge production before and during the first three months of the 2020 epidemic outbreak. An examination of global networks of scientific co-production highlights the increasing centrality and knowledge intermediation of Chinese organisations in research on COVID-19.

Yunpeng Zhang and Fang Xu challenge the dominant dualistic frame of authoritarian versus democracy to understand China, suggesting such binary thinking is reflective of the conflation of orientalism, sinophobia and statephobia in the West. They argue how, as a result, 'Chinese' knowledge is easily marginalised and dismissed.

Péter Bagoly-Simó, Johanna Hartmann and Verena Reinke explore some of the changes affecting the teaching and learning of geography in German secondary education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their study sheds new light on what it means to be a teacher of geography in times of constructivist and competence-based education.

Florian Opillard, Angélique Palle and Léa Michelis look into the strategic use of martial rhetoric and military power to deal with COVID-19 in Europe and in particular in France. The authors argue that through these uses of the military, the state displays a symbolic message to the population, associating resilience with military values and calling for a transfer of this value to the entire society.

Jussi Jauhiainen uses the notion of 'biogeopolitics' to study asylum-related migration into the European Union in 2020. He argues that the pandemic was used as an additional tool to foster biogeopolitics in Europe.

THE GEOPOLITICAL GOVERNANCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Verena Brinks and Oliver Ibert start by pointing out how the notion of crisis is increasingly deployed as a signifier of relevance rather than as an analytical concept. They combine an engagement with the crisis management literature and the Territory/Place/Space/Network approach to illustrate the spatial and policy dimensions of the 'Corona crisis' in Germany.

Adam Grydehøj, Ilan Kelman and Ping Su explore how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the interactions of the people of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) with the people of Denmark and with one another. Their research sheds light on the relationship between islands, disease and geopolitics more generally.

Yasmine Annina Willi, Gero Nischik, Dominik Braunschweiger and Marco Pütz study how uncertain and experimental forms of governance have emerged in Switzerland as a response to COVID-19. They also explain how regional responses tended to be more restrictive than federal responses.

Luís Mendes looks at how activists and urban social movements in Lisbon, Portugal have responded to the pandemic. He argues

that the existing housing crisis has intensified and that more action is needed to provide an alternative to overpriced, commodified and financialized housing.

THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Annelies van Uden and Henk van Houtum argue that practices of togetherness are enabling social groups to avoid a tragedy of the commons. In their view, the notion of solidarity falls short in dealing with the sociality of the crisis and they suggest the concept of agape as a non-dividing form of togetherness.

Siti Mazidah Mohamad studies the creative production of COVID-19 social distancing narratives on social media among young people in Brunei Darussalam. It is argued that through the use of social media young people may support social distancing measures.

John Bryson, Lauren Andres and Andrew Davies look into the consequences of the lockdown on church services. They demonstrate how emerging virtual church services blur the lines between sacred and secular spaces: homes are temporally transformed into sacred spaces.

In a first 'Window on the Netherlands', Emil van Eck, Rianne van Melik and Joris Schapendonk reflect on the 'temporary death' of public spaces and their changing social dynamics. More specifically, they look at the economic and social uses of the market in the town of Valkenswaard.

THE FINANCIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dariusz Wójcik and Stefanos Ioannou offer an analysis of the actual and potential impacts of the pandemic on financial markets, sector and centres. They expect a slowdown in new financial regulation, continued firm-level consolidation and a continued rise of business services related to finance.

Martin Sokol and Leonardo Pataccini sketch a preliminary map of the economic winners and losers of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They mobilise the concepts of financialisation and financial chains to shed light on the complex web of flows of value and power relations, and the dominant role of debt in shaping new economic geographies.

Franz Flögel and Stefan Gärtner ask if regional banks will cushion an economic decline in Germany. They argue that these banks are better prepared to resist a crisis than in 2008, but remain vulnerable to economic turmoil.

THE URBAN AND REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dallas Rogers and twenty-two colleagues reflect on an international podcast project in which urban scholars from around the world provided audio recordings about their cities while measures limiting the spread of COVID-19 were in effect. They reflect on the potential and limitations of podcasting as a digital research methodology.

Markus Hesse and Michael Rafferty employ the concept of relational cities to study the impact on and responses of Dublin and Luxembourg City to the COVID-19 outbreak. They argue that the pandemic challenges the 'business model' of both cities but is unlikely to provoke a structural rethinking of their 'relational urbanisations'.

Patrick Adler, Richard Florida and Maxwell Hartt argue that mega-regions in the United States are more exposed to diseases earlier in pandemics because they are more connected nationally and internationally. They use the economic geography notions of 'local buzz' and 'global pipelines' to explain these patterns.

Andreas Kuebart and Martin Stabler identify key processes of disease diffusion to explain the spatial patterns of the COVID-19 outbreak in Germany. Their study underlines the value of combining relational thinking with geographic analysis to better understand epidemic outbreaks in contemporary societies.

Huiwen Gong, Robert Hassink, Juntao Tan and Dacang Huang apply the notion of

'regional resilience' to assess short-term recovery in China. They call for place-specific and contextualised analyses that combine quantitative and qualitative data to assess recovery and resilience rates of Chinese regions.

Willem Boterman, studies the early demographic and geographic patterns of the COVID-19 outbreak in the Netherlands. Contrary to studies from some other countries, he does not find evidence that the pandemic is related to population density. Municipalities with high shares of elderly populations are not hit harder by the virus. Boterman formulates two hypotheses to explain these patterns.

THE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

John Bryson, Shihao Zhou and Vida Vanchan critically reflect on how the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to revisit the debate on globalisation and existing conceptualisations of 'risk' and 'value'. They argue that an alternative, more grounded, and integrated debate is required that acknowledges both the benefits and risks associated with deepening globalization.

Peter Dannenberg, Martina Fuchs, Tim Riedler and Cathrin Wiedemann examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online retail grocery in Germany. Although the pandemic and 'stay at home' practices opened up a window of opportunity for 'e-grocery', results so far indicate no structural transition to online shopping.

Fabian Stephany, Michael Dunn, Steven Sawyer and Vili Lehdonvirta study the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic for freelancers working via online labour markets. Initially, the market showed a sharp decline in demand for labour but as the pandemic continued, a rapid rebound in demand could be observed. In some occupational areas demand even surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

Finally, Li Junxiong, Alan G. Hallsworth and J. Andres Coca-Stefaniak adopt the theory of planned behaviour to analyse changes

in consumer behaviour related to food purchases in China during the initial stages of the COVID-19 outbreak. They consider the impact of observed changes in consumer behaviour on society's more vulnerable groups, including the elderly.

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