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Local inequities during the pandemic: Santa Cruz, California

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9c9475zj>

Journal

FENNIA-INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY, 198(1-2)

ISSN

0015-0010

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Publication Date

2020

Peer reviewed

Covid-19 discloses unequal geographies

The collective editorial discusses inequalities that scholars in Europe and the Americas world have paid attention to during 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic has unevenly and unpredictably impacted on societies. The critical reflections reveal that the continuing ramifications of the pandemic can only be understood in place; like other large-scale phenomena, this exceptional global crisis concretizes very differently in distinct national, regional and local contexts. The pandemic intertwines with ongoing challenges in societies, for example those related to poverty, armed conflicts, migration, racism, natural hazards, corruption and precarious labor. Through collective contextual understanding, the editorial invites further attention to the unequal geographies made visible and intensified by the current pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, geographical inequalities, racism, precarious labor, populism

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is, and is not, presently the primary challenge in the world. It deserves the attention of critical scholars who have competence to consider the virus and its political implications from reasoned academic perspectives, with scientific and societal impact in mind. Yet, these concerns should not push aside other issues, those that scholars were working on prior to the pandemic situation. With these concerns in mind, Fennia invited brief observations from scholars who have witnessed the intertwining of the pandemic with other pressing issues in the societies and communities where they work and live. Twelve colleagues accepted the invitation, shedding light on the situation in Brazil, California/US, Finland, Portugal/Italy, the UK, and Greece. In its attempt to draw attention to the unequal geographies made visible and intensified by the ongoing pandemic, the collective editorial includes an invitation to other scholars in different parts of the world to offer further contributions to the journal, in the form of research papers, review articles, essays and reflections.

The seven pieces included in the editorial reveal a common pattern across different geographical locations. The authors have seen that, as the attention of people, states and the media is drawn excessively toward new inequalities created in/by the pandemic situation, previous and lingering problems may be downplayed by these emerging concerns (cf. findings by PhD students during the pandemic, in the Reflections section). Yet, unsurprisingly, the pandemic is hitting hardest the vulnerable and the underprivileged. The poor who did not receive adequate state support before, migrants placed in in-between spaces where they rely on transnational and translocal aid, people living in the midst of armed conflicts, laborers whose rights have been long neglected, and communities facing unexpected natural hazards are among those whose situation has worsened notably due to national restrictions and the hindrance of daily activities. Concurrently, the rise of nationalistic, even patriotic or racist, attitudes is apparent. As states struggle with national health and economy, transnational solidarities weaken. Distinctions between 'us' and 'them' have started to gain ground as

legitimate justifications to bordering policies, economic strategies and health measures, including in countries that manifest themselves as open multicultural societies. This dangerously supports populist race-based agendas by implicitly recognizing their xenophobic core values. Further, the downside of the emerging intimate caring relations among close communities and families – which maintain well-being in them and is highly important in itself – is that people become less attentive toward issues beyond their immediate vicinity. This is another mechanism through which the implications of the pandemic to previous difficulties hide from the view.

Our journey in the Covid-19 diseased world begins from Brazil where the spread of the virus has been quick, broad and particularly imbalanced (and so continues), due to the 'viral state' as Marcelo Lopes de Souza describes the country where the political regime continues its 'irrationalistic' politics regardless of the devastating consequences, in a bizarre relationship with its own past, positioning itself peculiarly in the international comparison (see also PhD student experiences of working in Brazil during the pandemic, in the Reflections section). Continuing to North America, Katharyne Mitchell introduces how the situation has increased existing inequalities in a county that divides into two contrary socio-economic realities, in clear resonance with Souza's description of the divided cities of Brazil. In Northern California, where persistent wildfires, racial unrest and the contested presidential elections are taking place concurrently with the increasing pandemic, the results are catastrophic in the largely Latinx farmworker communities. Questions of labor already raised in the first two interventions are further discussed in the Finnish context by Jouni Häkli who shows how the strict state-authored mobility restrictions at the national borders during the first months of the pandemic made visible the socially unsustainable condition of agriculture in Finland, reliant on foreign cheap labor. As such unsustainable structures are incompatible with the responsible and brisk image of domestic food, a country that profiles as a model nation of sustainability has been caught by surprise: what is to become of the Finnish (Ukrainian-Bulgarian-Rumanian-Russian-Baltic) strawberry? Next, we are offered a personal reflection from a South European 'limbo' where Simone Tulumello has found himself, between and within Lisbon and some Italian cities where current changes in urban life have made him attentive to, on one hand, dangers embedded in the normalization of self- and state-control measures, and secondly, to the unpredictability of social and economic consequences in the cities (see also PhD student experiences of working in Portugal during the pandemic, in the Reflections section). The contemplation sets the question of what will political life be like in the post-Covid city? The third European viewpoint comes from the UK, based on Isabel Meier's remarks regarding the Coronavirus Act and the related increase in racist practices by the state, which have become explicitly evident during the past months in various forms of police activities, how the national health care system is run, and through the alarming situations of homelessness persons in the streets of London. The last two pieces focus on the Eastern border of the European Union, Greece. First, Anna Carastathis, Aila Spathopoulou and Myrto Tsilimpounidi provide a critique of the crisis landscape in Greece, from the economic crisis in 2011 to the so-called refugee crisis since 2015 to the current pandemic. They argue that the continuous state of emergency is used to intensify racist migration policies and practices, in Greece, but also more broadly in the EU, by naturalising and medicalising 'race'. Second, Gemma Bird, Amanda Russell Beattie, Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik and Patrycja Rozbicka take a specific approach, through the eyes of refugee children, on the border islands where large asylum seeker populations are being held on behalf of the European Union under the Greek government. Adding eyewitness evidence to the previous arguments, they show how the pandemic has enabled the state to turn the hardly viable camps into detention centers and refugees into prisoners, including thousands of lone children and youth without families, whose rights are completely overlooked by the EU countries that – under the Convention on the Rights of the Child that they all have ratified – are committed to taking specific care of all persons under the age of 18 within their territorial governance.

This seven-fold glimpse to the unequal geographies of Covid-19 is followed by the introduction of the volume 198 of *Fennia*, including both yearly issues.

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The two viruses: the COVID-19 pandemic and the neo-fascist necropolitics in Brazil

It has become commonplace on the part of the Brazilian left to recognise that Brazil has been plagued not by one, but by two viruses: the coronavirus and the 'virus' of (neo-)fascism. The latter has greatly aggravated the problems arising from the former, in addition to bringing its own challenges in terms of political, behavioural and cultural problems, and increasing economic inequalities. Although the growing weight of the far right has been a worldwide phenomenon since the 1990s, Brazil presents some peculiarities. In comparison with other countries affected by a new type of authoritarian resurgence in recent years, it seems to be a kind of 'vanguard of backwardness'. Also, peculiarities with the country's own past exist, especially the military regime between 1964 and 1985 for which the current Brazilian far right is stridently nostalgic.

The current Brazilian political regime – which formally emerged with the inauguration of Jair Bolsonaro as President of the Republic on January 1, 2019 – is 'irrationalistic' and contradictory, meaning: contempt for universities (seen as thoroughly infested with communists) and to some extent science in general (potentially subversive or not trustful enough, due to values such as universalism and laicism); and a destructive urge, characterised by an anachronistic and paranoid 'communist hunting' without any project other than the centralisation of power in the hands of a small group of rightists bringing together military, businesspeople, neo-Pentecostal religious leaders, a hard core of neo-fascist activists and ideologues, and an increasing number of traditional, centre-right politicians. As for the contradictions, three can be highlighted: first, an exacerbated 'nationalist' discourse in whose context, however, manifestations of unconditional political alignment with Trump's United States, and a quasi-worship for US-American symbols (like the US-American flag) and values (such as the 'sacred right to bear arms'), are frequent; second, ideological attacks and insults on China, a country on which Brazil is increasingly economically dependent; third, an unrelenting persecution of the left in the name of 'democracy' and 'freedom', while – as never before since the military dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s – the press is persecuted, environmental and human rights activists are threatened, and freedoms and rights suffer intense attack.

Compared to its own past, the current regime corresponds to an interesting case, too. While the military sought in the past to build a 'Brasil Grande' based on industrialisation largely supported by state companies and guided by government interventionism, Bolsonaro's neo-liberal government seems to have accommodated itself to a role for Brazil as an exporter of agricultural and mineral commodities. All this has produced a bizarre situation, with two aspects intertwined. On the one hand, a kind of 'back to the past' syndrome, but in a particularly caricatural and not only tragic way (as Marx would say, history repeats itself, now as farce). Yet at the same time, contemporary Brazil is the 'laboratory' of a new form of fascism and, in this sense, a key to the future, perhaps not only of the Global South. An 'incomplete' (neo-)fascism in terms of mass mobilisation, depending mainly on networks of virtual supporters and sympathisers, where the state apparatus does not intend to have a prominent and pro-active economic role. The ultra-centralised control of state power is enough as the constant threat of violence, physical and symbolic, helps to make the structural violence of neo-liberalism politically viable.

Such a regime contributes to the situation we are currently experiencing in Brazil. The COVID-19 tragedy gets out of control more and more, week by week, in the middle of daily tensions between the Executive and the other two powers (Legislature and Judiciary), between the government and the press, between the government and civil society and – last but not least – between the federal government and the state and municipal levels of the Executive. An increasing presence of military personnel in the federal government, occupying technical positions even in the Ministry of Health, has not collaborated to stabilise the political situation, on the contrary. At the time of writing (mid-October 2020), the number of deaths increases steadily, and the curve of deaths and new cases is far from 'flattening'. Due to an irresponsible and premature easing of social isolation measures, Brazil is experiencing a terrible 'second wave' of the epidemic. Occupying the second position in the world in terms of total cases and deaths, behind only the United States, Brazil is probably close to an unprecedented catastrophe: 'inspired' by examples of inconsistency given by the government itself, many people have gradually started to flock to the streets and even to the beaches, without paying attention to the prescriptions regarding physical distancing and the use of protective masks.

As the tragedy progresses, the social asymmetry that it reveals (but which has always existed) is becoming more and more evident. Above all, it is the poor workers who depend on mass transportation and live crowded in favelas that are being and will be increasingly affected. Among them, especially in the Southeast and Northeast regions of the country, most of the poor are Afro-Brazilians, historically victims of racism. The tragedy of the pandemic in Brazil is surely general. But at the same time, in its most characteristically 'genocidal' dimension, it affects mainly the working class and the Afro-descendant population. Favelas and poor peripheries of large cities are already being hit disproportionately, and this trend is likely to become more and more accentuated over time. In addition to aspects valid for the whole world, such as the effects of the pandemic in terms of socio-spatial control and economic crisis, there is a specific spatiality of the COVID-19 pandemic in a country such as Brazil, which points to the mortality rate of enormous magnitude that is gradually taking place in the segregated spaces of large cities, in a country where almost 90% of the population is considered urban. This is the 'geographicity' of today's genuine neo-fascist necropolitics in Brazil, in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

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Local inequities during the pandemic: Santa Cruz, California

The University of California at Santa Cruz is located in a part of the County of Santa Cruz that most people would probably recognize from popular media images, with beautiful sand beaches, world-class surfers, giant redwoods, and hordes of summer tourists. But the county also encompasses Watsonville and the nearby Pajaro Valley, a farming town and community about 29 kilometers to the south. This part of the county supplies nearby cities such as San Jose, Castroville and Santa Cruz – and indeed much of the world – with fresh fruit and vegetables, especially strawberries, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli, raspberries and lettuce. What the pandemic has brought forward and rendered more painfully obvious is the extreme uneven development of these two parts of the same county, and how populations situated by geography and employment in each region have fared quite differently as a result. The labor force in the Watsonville area is comprised of 75% Latino workers, who work predominantly in agriculture. A large percentage of this group are immigrants, many of whom are undocumented. For this particular segment of the labor force, the impact of Covid-19 has been catastrophic for the reasons laid out below.

Employment: Despite the arduous labor involved in farm work, the average salary for farm laborers is \$12.60 per hour (Hansen 2019). Berry picking in California is usually paid as piecework, with workers compensated by the weight of berries picked. To maintain an already inadequate salary, it is impossible to rest or slow down during the day, despite illness or fatigue. Most workers in California receive overtime pay after working 8 hour days or 40 hour weeks, but for farm laborers it is 10 hour days and 60 hour weeks. Many workers never receive overtime at all no matter how many hours are worked. A vast majority of farmworkers are not eligible for unemployment benefits despite working seasonally, nor do they receive any public benefits such as health or disability. While the pandemic has disproportionately impacted this group with respect to both employment and health (see below), federal Covid-19 relief programs are largely unavailable to them (Faber 2020).

Racism and xenophobia: Despite being labeled essential workers, farmworkers in Watsonville – as elsewhere in the country – have experienced considerable racism and xenophobia during the pandemic, exacerbated by the ongoing denigration of Mexicans as criminals and "illegal aliens" by President Trump as well as continued blame by other politicians for the virus itself. In June, for example, Florida governor Rick de Santis attributed the rise of Covid-19 cases to "overwhelmingly Hispanic farmworkers" and day laborers (Sessin 2020), and South Dakota governor Kristi Noem said that the high numbers of Covid-19 cases in meatpacking plants was attributable to immigrant culture

(Philpott 2020). These types of attacks have worked to dehumanize farmworkers, justifying their ill treatment, bad pay, and increasingly hazardous working conditions during the pandemic.

Housing: Housing in all of California is notoriously expensive and this is true for Santa Cruz county. Over the past decade house prices and rents have increased dramatically with the entry of wealthier workers from the nearby Silicon Valley and upper Bay Area. This has forced lower income groups, including farmworkers, into increasingly crowded, substandard accommodations. Many of these lack basic washing and sanitation facilities. Additionally, the housing is some distance from the farms, requiring transportation in crowded trucks, often without adequate personal protective equipment. During the pandemic, these conditions have greatly exacerbated the risks of contracting Covid-19, leading to higher cases of infection and more public opprobrium and racist and xenophobic political attacks in a vicious cycle.

Health: In comparison with northern Santa Cruz the number of Covid-19 cases is higher among South County residents where there are 62% of all cases; half of these cases are in Watsonville, which is 82% Latino. In the state of California as a whole, Latinos comprise 39% of the population but make up 56% of the positive Covid-19 cases. Particularly concerning for farmworkers, who are predominantly Latino immigrants, one quarter of this group are over 50 years of age, and thus at higher levels of risk from the virus. With the added danger of unhealthy air quality stemming from recent and ongoing California wildfires, farmworkers, who have "co-morbidities for Covid-19, such as asthma, diabetes, obesity (and ironically hunger and malnutrition), heart disease and stress" face extremely dire and inequitable health effects from the pandemic (Paramo & Diringer 2020).

In summary, while both the north and the south parts of the County of Santa Cruz have been hit hard by the pandemic and the recent California wildfires, the already existing inequities between the two regions have led to far worse outcomes for the majority of workers living in the Watsonville area. The brutal combination of existing employment and housing disparities, coupled with increasing racism and xenophobia, has meant that the most vulnerable communities have largely borne the brunt of the pandemic's devastation in my county. As Häkli notes similarly for Finland (see next section), the inequitable yet yoked-together geographies of food production and food consumption normally go unseen and unspoken in most regional and national narratives. Covid-19's brutal path of devastation in farmworker communities in Santa Cruz spotlights this chronic uneven development and associated forms of immigrant exploitation that have been rendered largely invisible for decades.

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Covid-19 and migrant laborers in Finland

In fall 2020, Finland boasts as a country that has pursued successful policies and measures to curb the pandemic. Finnish government's decisions to restrict travel through border closure have been among the strictest in Europe, with a system in place that is based on a 'traffic light model' allowing quarantine-free entry to the country only from a few 'green' countries. For those who arrive in Finland from a country classified 'orange' or 'red', a self-quarantine for two weeks is recommended by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Moreover, the health status of those arriving in Finland from these countries may be assessed at the border. Travelers with a verified Covid-19 infection may be subject to an involuntary isolation ordered by a physician according to the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016).

The traffic light model is a governance mechanism that in itself creates inequalities between travelers who need to cross borders for work or family-related reasons. However, at an earlier stage of the pandemic, in April 2020, the border closure banning the entry to Finland for a group of people travelling for work was a veritable eye-opener about inequalities slowly built into the Finnish agricultural labor

market. While Finland is keen to highlight the virtues of domestic food and berries, including safe and sustainable production methods, and clean and healthy products, few Finns would know how dependent many labor-intensive segments of the Finnish agriculture had become of foreign seasonal workers. Suddenly, the pandemic brought into relief this dependency as well as the low wages and poor working conditions that migrant laborers were subject to when working in the Finnish agribusiness.

Troubled farmers, lacking seasonal workers banned from entering the country, were suddenly the target of extensive media attention. Also many migrant laborers, facing the loss of much-needed income, were interviewed in their home countries. In consequence, a highly structured and unequal but hidden and silenced system of exploitation of cheap labor was brought into light in a way that took most Finns by surprise. In a country where trade union membership rate is among the highest in the world, and where the rights of employees are well-guarded by legislation and collective agreements, the fact that seasonal migrant laborers regularly work under poor conditions for meager pay and outside collective labor contracts was embarrassing news to many. All the more so, as the products commonly marketed as 'hundred percent domestic' were thus revealed partly Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Russian and Baltic.

Before the pandemic, construction workers from Estonia and Filipino nurses had dominated the Finnish media coverage on migrant laborers. While some problems related to working conditions and exploitation occurred among both groups, the overall image of Finland as a host for migrant laborers was good and orderly. Only the sudden and surprising break in the seemingly endless supply for cheap and docile work force, caused by the Covid-19 induced 'emergency', laid bare the inconvenient truth about patterns of labor exploitation in Finland.

According to the Natural Resources Institute Finland, in 2016 there were more than 16,000 foreign nationals working in the Finnish agriculture and horticulture, which over the past two decades has grown into more industrial and business-oriented with fewer and bigger farms (Luke 2018). Migrant laborers' contribution is significant as they account for approximately half of the wage laborers in the sector. Yet, according to the Industrial Union many seasonal workers face problems in their work. Among common issues are too low wages and the omission of wage segments due to working extra time or on Sundays, overly long work hours and weeks without any days off, intimidation and threat of being laid off or having work permit discontinued, inappropriate language and yelling by the employer, and lack of appropriate introduction to work practices (Ignatius 2019). Many of these problems persist to date but the increased media coverage prompted by the Covid-19 crisis hopefully leads to further attention to seasonal workers' working conditions and due measures to improve their protection in Finland.

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What is to be of this pandemic: a tale of two limbos, between Lisbon and Italy

Lisbon, Portugal, early September 2020. Just back from a month in Italy (some time spent between my hometown Palermo and Sardinia), being in Lisbon feels like being in a limbo, in two senses: what remains in place of lockdown measures and what is to be of this pandemic socially and economically. It is from the place of this twofold feeling that I would like to share some thoughts. I am aware that, in the face of my co-authors' necropolitical images from the European borders and American metropolises, my reflections on public space, nightlife and youths may sound frivolous; and yet, please, bear with me, for two reasons: first, because I promise I will later on, if briefly, touch on some political economic implications; and, second, because I truly believe that the normalization of measures of self- and state-control, especially when they seem to be adopted with some degree of randomness, is part and parcel of our collective incapacity to resist and fight back.

Italy was the first European country to be hit by the pandemic and one of those that suffered the strongest impacts. From March to May, it has dealt with the virus with some of the strictest lockdown

measures around, including, in many cities, allowing to get out of home only to go to work or buy groceries. The enforcement of the measures has been extremely strict, with police issuing penal orders and fines; contributing to a climate of fear and paranoia, whereas many have witnessed angry people at the balconies shouting 'go home!' to bystanders, while media reportages were showing drones and police in quads arresting lone runners in the beach. Fast forward to August, the state of emergency has been extended to the end of 2020, and yet measures have been loosened to the point that discotheques had reopened; and new moral panics emerged against the youths, now pointed as the responsible for a new growth in cases – and, toward the end of August, discotheques have been closed again and a national order to use masks in public space at night issued.

Back to Lisbon, everything was more or less the same as they were when I left in late July. Here, the lockdown has never been as strict as in Italy – for instance, taking a stroll or running has never been prohibited, and my morning run has been among the things that helped keep my brain (more or less) sane. And yet, despite the abrogation of the state of emergency in late May, several measures have remained in place, like the prohibition of gatherings of more than 10 people and the closure of bars at 8 pm – after that, you can have that last drink(s) over dinner only.

In a month or so, I travelled from the emptiness of Lisbon's public spaces at night to southern Italy's streets vibrant of 'movida' – which felt, especially at first, almost scary! – and back to a less empty, but still quiet, Lisbon; fostering this feeling of limbo that kicks back every time I see videos or photos from Italy at night. A limbo that speaks of my – but, I believe, not only mine – new way of feeling crowds in public spaces, something that was once so natural for a guy that has lived almost all his life in Southern European cities. But there is more, especially a growing feeling that many of the adopted measures stem from a moral economy of fear of youths and public life rather than health considerations. How to explain, otherwise, such different approaches in the two countries that, after the first months of total panic in Italy, have more or less performed the same?

Let us be clear, I am anything but an anti-masker or whatnot. I am feeling increasing uneasiness with the way the spectacle of nightlife and gatherings in public space has covered up for other, more structural, voids in the responses to the pandemic: Where are the necessary investments in overcrowded public transports? Where are more stringent regulations over labour? Where is the rethinking of economic models that made us – Southern European countries – so vulnerable?

This brings me to the second, and maybe more relevant for this collective editorial, dimension of feeling in a limbo. In 2019, tourism accounted for about 15% of Portuguese GDP. Despite a small rebound in September, this will be a devastating year for that 15% – and for the many whose lives are dependent on it. The government's response? Pure denial. In June, when Lisbon was selected to host the finals of the Champions League, the expectation was to have the stadiums and the city full of fans. Later on, when cases had a spike in Lisbon, the Prime Minister went as far as to declare that players and tourists should not be concerned, since the cases were limited to peripheral neighbourhoods. That those neighbourhoods are the metro's poor and racially diverse, he did not say. Everything is as it used to be; except it is not, as many believe that only in autumn or winter will the economic effects hit the societal fabric – after the end of the halt of evictions (scheduled on September 30 as I am writing, but likely to be extended to the end of the year), once financial markets will start to bet again on the debts of peripheral countries that have skyrocketed in the meanwhile.

When she gently invited us to be part of this editorial, Kirsi Pauliina Kallio asked us to reflect on what inequalities had been made visible during, or produced by, the pandemic. I am afraid that, being stuck in this limbo, I could only offer some glimpses of inequalities to be and of how unprepared we seem to be to deal with their real causes and impacts. At this point, you, reader, would expect me to offer you that glimpse of hope every (critical) social scientist concludes their essays, no matter how gloomy, with. And, yes, I do have witnessed many, many bits and pieces of a politics of care and solidarity, in Lisbon and Italy, during these months; but I will let you look around for resistances and struggles where you are, and remain stuck in this limbo, for this time being.

Police power, racial profiling, access to healthcare and homelessness in the UK in times of Covid-19

The UK's response to the Coronavirus was famously one of the worst, leading to a higher excess mortality than in any other European country (Office for National Statistics 2020). In March 2020, emergency powers to respond to the pandemic became law, after the Coronavirus Act 2020 was rushed through the parliament in one day, leading to an extension of the power of questioning and detention, an increase in police presence as well as the power to close borders indefinitely (Department of Health and Social Care 2020). Shortly after its introduction, media attention was drawn to its racialised implementation: Statistics released by the Metropolitan Police in March show that more than 25% of fines for lockdown violations were issued to black people, who make up 12% of London's population. A further 23% were given to Asian people, as the report states, who are 18% of London residents. Additionally, black and Asian people were disproportionately often arrested under both the Health Protection Regulations and separate Coronavirus Act. The first person fined under the Coronavirus Act was a black woman: Marie Dinou was fined £660 for failing to provide her identity or reason to travel to the police. Considering the long history of racial profiling (Delsol 2015), as well as statistics revealing that black people in the UK are 40 times more likely to be stopped and searched (Parmar 2011), the racialised implementation of the Coronavirus Act is no surprise. While lockdown regulations and the Act amplified these racist police practices, most people really struggled to follow what behaviour was criminalised. Boris Johnson's lockdown rules were widely perceived as confusing and vague.

Access to healthcare: The UK's National Healthcare Service (NHS) was founded on the principle of universal healthcare: that everyone could access it for free, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Over successive governments, but escalating within the past decade, changes in legislation have increasingly restricted healthcare access to the NHS for people not born in the UK. In 2012 an announcement called for a "really hostile environment" targeted at anyone living in the UK illegally (Kirkup & Winett 2012). Thereafter followed changes in law, accompanied by policies and practices requiring NHS Trusts to undertake ID checks for all patients accessing non-emergency care. Next to ID checks, most non-EEA nationals applying for temporary leave to remain in the UK must pay an 'Immigration Health Surcharge' of £400 a year. In May 2020, the government decided to waive the fee for a very small group of migrants – NHS and care workers – further risking the health of large groups of other migrants whose lives are rendered disposable. This was due to a lot of pressure from Unions, campaigners and activist groups, who were raising awareness about the barriers to healthcare that many migrants face during these critical times.

Homelessness and No Recourse to Public funds: The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent job losses in the UK further intensified systemic inequalities, leading to an unprecedented number of people applying for benefits. However, not everyone who lost their job was able to apply; this includes EU migrants who have been in Britain for less than five years and those staying in the UK with a temporary immigration status with No Recourse to Public Funds. No Recourse to Public Funds is a condition applied to many migrants, meaning that a person has no entitlement to welfare benefits, to asylum support or public housing, which puts many people and families at high risk of homelessness and destitution. Recent figures reveal the step increase in rough sleeping in London. Despite the claim that more than 90% of all rough sleepers had been placed in hostels, figures reported by different homeless charities in London reveal that the number of people sleeping rough during lockdown rose by more than 30% when compared to the same period last year.

Crisis goes viral: containment in the age of contagion in Greece

We live in the era of crises. In the past decade, Greece has been the epicentre of multiple, overlapping, 'nesting' and intersecting crises. The financial crisis in 2011 through which the country was constructed as the disobedient pariah of Europe, reinforcing the polarity between the European centre and the periphery, was followed in 2015 by the European refugee crisis represented by myriad photographs of people in boats arriving at the island of Lesbos. The latest crisis to arrive on the scene is the global Covid-19 pandemic that has exacerbated the negative effects of the previous declared crises. A chronically underfunded medical system subject to austerity cuts is collapsing. The warehousing of asylum seekers in camps has primed the conditions for the rapid and deadly transmission of the virus. Yet, it has also had – at least discursively – redemptive effects on the construction of Greece as a crisis-ridden country, politically or culturally responsible for the mismanagement of the previous two crises; the coronavirus pandemic is a global crisis and it is naturalised as a medical phenomenon. As Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis proclaimed, "The consolation ... is that today we are no longer a 'special case'. We are not the 'black sheep'" of Europe.

Medical metaphors are among the favourite rhetorical schemas in the construction of crisis narratives: "Europe will keep giving medicine to Greece", "crisis is a disease that needs to be quarantined and contained". Etymologically, 'crisis' suggests the necessary climax to a natural process, like the turning point in a disease. Medical metaphors treat crises as natural processes; as something inevitable that was meant to happen. Such naturalising leaves no room for questioning the structures, decisions, and value systems that brought us to this state of (really) late capitalism, of profits over human lives, corruption, and mismanagement. When the coronavirus appeared in Greece, Mitsotakis referred to the "double crisis" that Greece was facing: the border crisis and the pandemic crisis. In protest over the EU's failure to uphold the terms of the EU-Turkey deal and the lack of support for Turkey's imperialist military campaign in Syria, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan threatened to open the Turkish border to refugees. This racist threat was expedient to Mitsotakis' equally racist, broader political agenda, as well as that of Fortress Europe. The 'state of emergency' declared in March, suspending asylum processes for newly arriving people for one month, invoking article 78.3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, was an attempt by the far-right New Democracy government to find international support for its previously devised, and already partially implemented designs to undermine the right to seek asylum in Greece: to detain asylum seekers and undocumented people in 'closed centres' (i.e. prisons), accelerate deportations, and criminalise solidarians with people on the move. On February 27, exploiting the widespread fear of the coronavirus outbreak in Greece, Mitsotakis justified the containment of refugees, conflating them with carriers of the virus. This is not the first time that a racist regime in Europe has equated a minority group with the fear of spreading a virus or an illness to the 'pure' and 'healthy' social body comprised of citizens of the nation-state.

The intersection between the refugee and the pandemic crises reveals how the global pandemic has been used to intensify racist migration policies in Greece (and globally) by naturalising and medicalising 'race'. Just as the individual body needs to be protected from the invasion of the virus, so too the national body needs to be protected from the 'influx' of migrants and refugees. Borders are fenced and quarantines enforced for the national body to remain 'safe' and 'protected'. As Mitropoulos (2020) points out, "[i]mmigration detention emerged from the intertwined histories and techniques of quarantine confinement and prisons".

We see the protraction of lockdown for asylum seekers in camps on the hotspot islands and the mainland – still ongoing, while, at the time of writing, citizens are (relatively) free to move since May 4 and Greece opened its borders to international tourists on June 15 – as the necropolitical use of quarantine; not to ensure life but to bring about mass death. Asylum seekers are spatially confined in camps and represented visually as a 'crowd'. They are forced to form endless queues to secure food, water, and health care. They are constructed as the antithesis of the physical distancing measures meant to protect 'us' from transmitting the virus. What emerged in the coronavirus crisis was a renewed apartheid system whereby quarantine's intertwined biopolitical and necropolitical logic came into harsh relief. Refugee family reunification flights were cancelled while European citizens

were repatriated. The police intensified its racial profiling stop-and-search operations in Athens and other urban centres during the lockdown. The medicalisation of the crises invested borders with renewed legitimacy, despite warnings from the World Health Organisation that closing borders is not an effective means to stop the transmission of a virus.

The logic of quarantine is already at the heart of the hotspot as a technology of the border: the segregation and containment of so-called 'mixed migration flows' from citizens and tourists; the separation of potential 'refugees' (due protection) from illicit 'migrants' (to be detained and deported), which increasingly relies on the medicalised criteria of 'vulnerability'. Ultimately, the management of the coronavirus crisis – ostensibly the prevention of contagion – has facilitated the naturalisation of containment. Simultaneously, the coronavirus crisis reveals the dichotomy between 'open' and 'closed' camps: how easily the camp's gates from one moment to the other are locked under the pretext of a pandemic.

Spatially confined and administratively suspended in time, people are thus made unable to apply for asylum, renew their documents, attend their asylum interview, or seek legal support. Immediately following the fire at Moria on 9 September, Mitsotakis accused asylum seekers who tested positive for the virus and who allegedly refused to follow the quarantine measures within Moria, as having started the fire. The government's response to this 'new crisis' is the creation of the new, closed, and highly policed hotspot on the former shooting range at Kara Tepe, currently under quarantine. In the age of contagion, crises are being contained through the pandemic of prisons.

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Inequalities faced by unaccompanied minors in Greece during COVID-19

In November 2019 as winter began in Greece, and before the first known cases of COVID-19 were found in Europe, the Greek Minister for Citizen Protection was summoned to the Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament. At the time "the minister admitted that over 4000 unaccompanied minors live in unsuitable conditions in Greece...but suggested that when he had contacted his counterparts in the 27 other member states to ask for support, he had only had a reply from 1, and that solidarity was sorely missing!" (Cicoli & Bird 2019). We hear regularly that COVID-19 is unprecedented, that we are all suffering, and that it has been the great equaliser. Yet we know this not to be the case, that the treatment of some has been far worse than the treatment of others, that some inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic but they are not new. The treatment of unaccompanied minors and lone children in Europe is one such example.

In April, at the height of the pandemic in Europe, the member states of the European Union patted themselves on the back as the first 12 unaccompanied children from the Aegean islands were offered a new home in Luxembourg (Cossé 2020). Margaritis Schinas (Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life) stated that, "This scheme is Europe at its best. In times where coronavirus is taking its toll on everyday life, it is commendable to see Member States honouring their commitments and working together to help vulnerable migrants on the Greek islands" (Schinas 2020, in European Commission 2020). Yet in April 2020 when these first children were relocated from the islands, 12 to Luxembourg and a further 47 to Germany, 1,600 unaccompanied minors resided in Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) on the five Aegean islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos (Cossé 2020) and the daily reality for those remaining children had not improved, in fact, for many, it had gotten worse as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

As Refugee Rights Europe (2020) have pointed out, "the general lack of medical and hygiene facilities available in hotspots, detention centres and police detention cells highlight the difficulties faced by detained and movement restricted refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing is simply not possible in an overcrowded space" and quarantines have often taken place on a camp by camp rather than an individual by individual basis (BBC 2020). Some unaccompanied minors are indeed housed in what are referred to as 'safe-areas' in the RICs, often overcrowded containers with dirty and sometimes broken facilities. The rest, however, are expected to survive in the informal areas of the RIC, relying on makeshift shelters – tents, tarpaulins, pallets – to protect them from the weather, the rats and the snakes. Prior to the pandemic we were told the story of a 16 year old on the island of Samos who spent 10 months sleeping in a tent with no mattress. It was only when he mentioned his back ache to a non-governmental organization (NGO) he was supported by that they were able to find him a mattress (anonymous author interview 2019). There are other stories we have been told about outbreaks of scabies, dehydration, bed bugs, chicken pox. Stories of adults breaking into the containers in which unaccompanied minors sleep, violence faced by them when joining a food queue of 5 hours to receive each meal (anonymous author interview 2019).

Prior to the pandemic unaccompanied minors, like other refugees trapped on the islands, were often supported by NGOs and volunteers who filled the gaps left by the state and the international community. They offer laundry services, access to education, hot tea, a space to charge a mobile phone, support with illness, and someone to listen when things get too much. Yet as the lockdown restrictions came in to place in Greece on the March 22, 2020, many of those organisations were forced to close their doors and strict restrictions were placed on freedom of movement (of both the local and the refugee populations). For those living in camps this meant no opportunities to visit NGOs and social centres offering support, no access to laundry and even lengthier than normal queues for food, water and showers inside RICs. It also meant trying to follow social distancing regulations in spaces where that was nearly impossible, and attempting regular handwashing in a situation where, in Moria RIC on Lesbos, 1,300 people share the use of 1 tap (International Rescue Committee 2020). Whilst Greece relaxed restrictions on freedom of movement for its general population on the May 4, opening cafes and restaurants on the May 25, and the borders for international travel on the June 15, freedom of movement restrictions for those in the RICs on the five islands remain in place in October 2020. These restrictions force people to remain stuck inside overcrowded, unclean spaces, with little protection from the soaring summer temperatures and have led to an increase in protests and now, tragically another fire on the island of Lesbos, this one which has destroyed Moria RIC (Bird 2020).

This is not the solidarity that Europe celebrated in April, this is not an example of 'Europe at its best'. Unaccompanied minors and lone children remain on the islands, the overall population of those seeking asylum stuck in the Aegean remains in the region of 30,000. On the island of Leros, for example, refugees and asylum seekers account for 20% of the population (Refugee Rights Europe 2020) and the Greek Government's solution to reducing overcrowding on the islands in Summer led to increased homelessness on the mainland, particularly in Athens (Smith 2020). Coronavirus has indeed effected all of us, but it is not the great leveller that it has been made out to be. It has exacerbated ongoing inequalities and injustices faced by refugees, and particularly unaccompanied minors and lone children, who find themselves stuck in unsafe conditions with limited access to support and education, still unsure of when the restrictions on their movements will be lifted and they will be able to access the small amount of support available to them again.

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Content of the issues 1-2

As the pandemic started to pose various challenges to academics during the last spring, related to work as well as personal life, *Fennia* decided to slow down all publication processes. On one hand, we felt that scholars should have more time for peer reviewing, revisions and editorial work. Yet concurrently we wanted to ensure that people are not blocked from publishing their work, which seemed particularly important from the perspectives of young scholars in insecure positions, whose career development and publishing record are often closely linked. In result, we are publishing the whole volume at once. The present issues 1-2 contain eight original articles, including the *Fennia Lecture 2019*, four papers in the reviews and essays section, four commentaries on previously published articles in the Reflections section, and a series of Reflections connected directly to the collective editorial theme, taking a PhD research perspective to the pandemic. We hope that the large amount of voluntary work put into this volume, which we particularly appreciate during these exceptional months, will be broadly influential through the open access publications.

The issue begins with a co-authored article by Nicola Ansell, Peggy Froerer, Roy Huijsmans, Claire Dungey and Arshima Dost, based on Ansell's *Fennia Lecture 2019* at the Nordic Geographers Meeting in Trondheim, Norway. In *Educating surplus population: uses and abuses of aspiration in the rural peripheries of a globalising world* they explore schooling in three empirical contexts where the likelihood for young people to successfully enter the formal economy after school are reduced: at the rural areas of Lesotho, India and Laos. Taking the perspectives of the young people themselves, as well as their parents and teachers, the authors make visible the legacy of colonialism in the education that poorly recognizes the everyday life of local communities or the prospects of the youth on a wider scale. They conclude that such schooling fails in two ways: in preparing young generations to the rural livelihoods available to them and in equipping them for attainable salaried jobs. The article will be accompanied by commentaries in the Reflections section later this winter.

The article by Tina Mathisen and Sofia Cele, *"Doing belonging": young former refugees and their active engagement with Norwegian local communities*, explores how young people with refugee background create and maintain a sense of belonging in their everyday lives. Focusing on youths in small Norwegian towns, the paper emphasizes the significance of embodiment in the generation of knowledge and active agency in the place-based 'performative work' of belonging, that is, the negotiations through which young refugees seek comfortable roles and positions in local communities. The authors argue that the 'right to belong' should be further emphasized in policies and practices through which a pluralist society is enforced, in Norway and beyond.

Continuing the integration theme in the Swedish context, Benedict Singleton's article *Seeing the wood and the trees: assessing Swedish Nature-Based Integration utilising the theory of socio-cultural viability* offers a narrative analysis of a nature-based immigrant integration process carried out in Sweden, specifically Örebro County. With particular attention on group dynamics and the related narratives, Singleton has organized the analysis according to socio-cultural viability typologies of social solidarities, namely egalitarianism, hierarchy, individualism and fatalism. Finding that egalitarianism and hierarchy dominated the group dynamics in the studied case, he concludes that, in the further development of nature-based integration methods, especially immigrants' experiential relations with nature require better acknowledgement as they may differ notably from those commonplace in the host society.

Henrik Dorf Nielsen's article *Perception of danger in the southern Arizona borderlands* moves into a bit different direction within the theme of international mobility, with focus on the US-Mexico borderlands where tensioned relations between border guarding, local communities, undocumented migrants and grassroots organizations working with and for them are tangible. Joining in a humanitarian aid group as a volunteer, Nielsen conducted in-depth participatory research where questions of 'danger' started to draw his attention: who, or what, actually are in danger at the borderlands, and what are the dangers emerging in this particular border context? In response, his analysis reveals a plurality of dangers experienced and expressed differently by the people involved, whose perceptions are strongly influenced by the political cultures through which they understand the borderlands.

Focusing on rather different kinds of migrant experiences in the UK, Evi-Carita Riikonen's article *The unexpected place: Brexit referendum and the disruptions to translocal place-making among Finns in the UK* is utmost topical as the Brexit transition period is ending within a couple of months. To the EU citizens living in the UK – including Finns discussed in this paper – the consequences of the withdrawal agreement between Britain and the EU, signed early 2020, have already started to actualize. Riikonen's analysis traces the translocal relations, experiences and practices of Finnish migrants who found their social positions suddenly politicized by the Brexit referendum. She argues that the various disruptions in people's everyday lives have encouraged translocal imaginaries through which the migrants re-position themselves in the changing social and political landscape.

In her article *A wilderness treaty for the Arctic: Svalbard to the Inuit Nunaat, defining a sovereign wilderness*, Alexandra Carleton provides an in-depth exploration of two key treaties regarding the governance of the Arctic, in respect to the protection of the endemic wilderness: Svalbard Treaty of 1920 and Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Arctic Sovereignty of 2009. Based on their analysis, she identifies opportunities in the future treaty-formulation for seeking a balance between, first, respect for the wilderness and resource development, and second, for the sovereignty claimed by indigenous peoples and the entitlements claimed by nation-states. For creating sustainable development in the Arctic, the paper argues that the acceptance of the value of wilderness as its own entity, reaching beyond the provision of quantifiable ecosystem services, is essential.

Virve Repo's paper introduces a conceptual idea of 'carceral riskscape' that working communities in institutional premises may face, with empirical focus on a geropsychiatric ward in Turku, Finland. In *Carceral riskscape and working in the spaces of mental health care* she portrays, through documentary analysis, mechanisms that lead to the creation of such spaces where inequalities between people typically increase, the well-being of the staff is hindered, and the quality of their care work decreases. Her findings include the important notion that, in closed institutional spaces such as psychiatric wards and prisons – but also reform schools, refugee (detention) camps and other places that confine people's agency notably – 'the carceral' and 'the risk' are strongly interrelated: risks easily lead to carceral measures and carceral measures may similarly create risks. To avoid this vicious circle, the openness of such spaces to external assessment, including research on them, is vital.

The final research paper is by Moritz Albrecht, Gleb Yarovoy and Valentina Karginova-Gubinova. Their article *Russia's waste policy and rural waste management in the Karelian Republic: Building up a ruin to come?* presents a critical assessment of Russia's recent waste management reforms that largely ignore local realities where, especially in rural areas, the implementation of national policies and plans would require local interpretation and contextualized practices. With focus on three communities in the Karelian Republic, the paper analyzes rural waste management through the Regional Waste Management Programme of the Karelian Republic, from local perspectives. Taking a policy mobility and translation approach, the analysis reveals a dysfunctional waste management system that generates institutional and individual resistance in the unequally treated rural communities. Based on this the authors argue that, to succeed, the much needed reform ought to employ more local knowledge and seek contextual solutions, backed up by adequate resources and external support that enable gradual change.

In the Reviews and Essays section we have four papers. The first one links with the articles focusing on migration, by introducing a digital humanities database called 'Geo Archive'. It has been built to serve the historical analysis of emerging societal challenges where migration and the environment intertwine, including climate change induced migration. In *Historical tools and current societal challenges: reflections on a collection of environmental migration cases* Roberta Biasillo portrays how such free, openly accessible database allows the creation of long-term understanding on environmental migration, as a collective process that anyone can join in, including scholars, policy-makers and the media.

The second review article *Mining conflicts in the European Union: environmental and political perspectives* also introduces a database – the Environmental Justice Atlas – through which Sonja Kivinen, Juha Kotilainen and Timo Kumpula shed light on the multiple negative impacts of mining to communities in the vicinity of the mines, often generating local conflicts. In the current situation where the EU and many European states are encouraging mining activities through policy changes, the paper portrays policy-relevant knowledge on a topic being increasingly politicized in many parts of the world,

not least in Finland; the country is Europe's leading producer of nickel while cobalt and lithium are gaining increasing interest due to their growing demand in the electric vehicle battery production.

The third review article presents results from empirical research in North-West Romania, the city of Cluj-Napoca that is among the leading nightlife centers in Eastern Europe. The aim of the co-authors Emanuel Cristian Adorean, Jordi Nofre, Oana-Ramona Ilovan and Viorel Gligor in *Exploring nightlife in the student city of Cluj-Napoca (Romania): a quantitative and policy-oriented research* is, on one hand, to expose the change from the fall of socialism to the present, in the city currently developing along the state-led progressive neoliberal political economy. Secondly, they want to bring non-Western perspective to the 'study of the night' that the authors see geographically strongly biased.

The final review article, *Environmental citizenship in geography and beyond*, provides a conceptual review of the environmental citizenship literature with specific focus on geographical and related research. From the mid-1970s until today, Suvi Huttunen, Miikka Salo, Riikka Aro and Anni Turunen go through various strands of the scholarship where the related ideas of green, sustainable and ecological citizenship are contested. The review exposes how the traditional liberal and republican traditions have diversified during the 2000s, influenced on one hand by the multidisciplinary citizenship theorization where conceptions of citizenship have broadened beyond formal status and practices, as well as the state-based territorial reality, and secondly, by the social scientific environmental research that draws attention on different kinds of connections between people, and human and non-human actors, in the relational world where phenomena such as climate change require new forms of environmental citizenship.

The Reflections section engages with three issues, including two Reflections on 'researcher trauma' and 'youth climate activism' before ending with a forum on doing a PhD during a pandemic. Firstly, the Reflections on 'researcher trauma' speak to an article by Stephen Taylor published in the previous issue of *Fennia* called *The long shadows cast by the field: violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher*. The first one, *Mental health, coloniality, and fieldwork in the European university: a reflection in three challenges* by Lioba Hirsch, is made more pertinent due to the reemergence of the Black Lives Matter movement after an unarmed George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis earlier this year. Hirsch challenges colonial whiteness in the university and suggests that the practice of Northern (predominantly white, heterosexual and male) researchers conducting ethnographies in formerly colonized countries and regions has a tendency to imagine and reify those regions as violent and unstable. The second Reflection on 'researcher trauma' by Shenika McFarlane-Morris is called *Combating the shocks of the 'unplayful' field. Alone!*, where McFarlane-Morris similarly writes that the developing world is often represented as places of violence, impoverishment, oppression and in some cases, resentment. The Reflection ends with a proposal that universities and geography departments implement and/or strengthen the support network for their students going overseas to conduct fieldwork.

The second pair of Reflections relate to 'youth climate activism' and a paper published in the previous issue of *Fennia* by Benjamin Bowman called *Imagining future worlds alongside young climate activists: a new framework for research*. The third Reflection in this issue is called *Youth-led climate strikes: fresh opportunities and enduring challenges for youth research* and is by Bronwyn Elisabeth Wood. It takes up Bowman's challenge and uses the climate strikes as a starting point to consider three ongoing challenges for research in this emerging field. Wood identifies the prevailing discourses of youth autonomy, individualism and weak notions of community, social groups and structural forces that were present in the representation of young participants in the climate strikes, which lead to a distorted picture of young activists and perpetuate harmful narratives. The second Reflection on 'youth climate activism' is by Raichael Lock, called *Beyond imagining: enacting intergenerational response-ability as world-building*, explored through the notion of mutual response-ability and drawing on the author's experience working with the Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN). Lock focuses on the importance of our creative imaginings becoming methodologies that can also *enact the building* of the new world as it is being imagined, a process that can unfold through processes of mutual response-ability.

This double issue of *Fennia* ends where it began, as we engage with Covid-19 through Reflections on doing a PhD during a pandemic. We hope this final section provides some useful insights for PhD

candidates working on their thesis, sharing some of the issues faced when working within the constraints of lockdowns and the inability to conduct fieldwork. Simone Tulumello and Kátia Favilla introduce the forum entitled *PhD research in social sciences amid a pandemic: introduction to a situated and reflexive perspective*, which is followed by six Reflections by fifteen PhD candidates based in Portugal and/or Brazil, enrolled in five different subject areas. The contributions are: Kátia Favilla and Tatiana Pita, "When will fieldwork open up again?" *Beginning a project in pandemic times*; Antonio Pedro de Barros, Ana Daniela Guerreiro, Mafalda F. Mascarenhas and Rita Reis, *And now what? Changing fields and methodologies during the Covid-19 pandemic: from international mobilities to education*; Roseli Bregantin Barbosa, *Covid-19 and doctoral research in Brazil and Portugal: who pays the bill for confinement and remote work in research?*; Andreia Nascimento and Hugo Ferrinho Lopes, *How we have been productive when Coronavirus locked us out of University*; Catarina Barata, Luísa Coutinho, Federica Manfredi and Madelon Schamarella, *Doctoral research work and work of care: reflections in times of a pandemic*; Marcos Silva & Raphaella Câmara, *The challenges of anthropological research among sex workers and victims of domestic violence in times of the Covid-19 pandemic*.

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