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Curare Corona Diaries II

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CAROLE AMMANN: Patchwork Life. Balancing Migration, Family, Fieldwork, and an Academic Career during a Global Pandemic   pp. 15–25, written in English

This article is based upon field notes I wrote during the so called first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst I was a postdoctoral mobility fellow at the University of Amsterdam. First, I elaborate on the challenges of moving with one's family to a new place and conducting anthropological fieldwork in a novel site during a global pandemic. I also shed light on the differences between how I had initially planned data collection and how it actually turned out in practice. Second, I reflect on how Covid-19 increased existing inequalities on a local and global level. Third, I disclose how moments of uncertainty, disorientation, and vulnerability were integral parts of our lives as home schooling and working from home made my private and professional lives coincide and blur. Finally, I argue that our lives during this global pandemic were patchworked, through a continuous bricolage of trying and retrying.

Keywords autoethnography – collaboration – COVID -19 – diary – boundary-maintenance/negotiation – masks – hygiene – social contract

ANDREA BRAVO DIAZ: Two Faces of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Ecuador. Waorani Egalitarian Health Responses in the Light of National Public Health Inequalities   pp. 27–36, written in English

This paper reviews notes taken during the first months of the CO VID -19 pandemic. It offers a contrast between early reactions and public health measures in urban areas of Ecuador, as opposed to the Ecuadorian Amazon, in particular the Waorani territory where most notes were written. The Waorani people remained in relative isolation until few decades ago, and still have families that refuse any peaceful contact with outsiders; the process of contact for the Waorani, as for other Amazonian people also meant dealing with several epidemics and territorial pressures. It is in this historical context that CO VID -19 reached the forest; colonial history, and modern-day quasi-colonial relations between the state and indigenous people meaning that most diseases and deaths among indigenous people have not been acknowledged by the government. This silence contributes to inequality in health outcomes.

Keywords aEcuador – COVID-19 – Üandemic – Amazonia – Waorani

YOU-KYUNG BYUN: Face Masks in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Anti-Asian Racism in Germany
pp. 37–48, written in English

This paper discusses anti-Asian racism in Germany before and during the CO VID -19 pandemic. While wearing masks for public health purposes is a widely-accepted practice among residents of many East Asian countries, those of most Western countries, including Germany, have been more hesitant to adopt it, with people

of Asian descent wearing masks becoming subjects of ridicule and discrimination at the beginning of CO VID -19. With the increasing number of cases and the demonstrated effectiveness of wearing masks in preventing the spread of the disease, an increasing number of people have begun to adhere to the practice in Germany. As a member of the South Korean minority in Germany, the author experienced this transition with fear and uncertainty. This paper is a reflection on and comparison of the experiences of people in various Asian communities in Germany, elucidating the everyday racism against the Asian population that is often ignored in society. While anti-Asian discrimination long preceded the pandemic, it has become even more prominent with the spread of the novel coronavirus. This paper argues that more media coverage is necessary to increase the awareness of such racism and decrease the number of fatal crimes resulting from it.

FRANCESCO DIODATI: Corona Diaries of Aging and Family Care in Italy pp. 49–60, written in English

This paper focuses on the experiences of home care for elderly people collected during the first phase of the pandemic in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. The Italian response to the virus has been fragmented so far, due to differences in the way the healthcare system is managed, according to regions and the regulations of individual local healthcare units. Emilia-Romagna is one of the wealthiest areas in terms of its welfare system and is associated with a long-standing tradition of a community-care approach targeted to the prevention of chronic health diseases. The pandemic also posed threats to regions such as Emilia-Romagna causing the interruption of semi-residential care services, community-based health programmes and support services to home care. The text uses daily-life fragments to show how a small, interconnected group dealt with family care for elderly people. By showing how the pandemic met with pre-existent fieldwork relationships, the article discusses the relationship between chronic diseases, forced isolation, and care activities. This text offers a broad understanding of the family care system, which includes also the care provided by home-care workers. The text shows how community acts of care and reciprocity played an important role in filling the gap left by institutions and public care services. The pandemic just worsened the already existing social inequalities in care, which cannot be masked by the rhetoric on active aging and family care. These ideas need a serious engagement with structural reforms and cannot be completely left to individual capacities or informal acts of communitarian values and reciprocity.

EKABALI GHOSH: Beyond the First Wave. Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic from Kolkata, India pp. 61–74, written in English

The paper is based on a diary written by the author during the early months of the pandemic. It explores the various ways in which the pandemic turned various areas of her life upside down including education, political work etc. The paper, written later is a reflection and an attempt to understand these months in retrospect. Excerpts from the diary provide examples while the reflections attempt to make social and political sense of her experiences. Among other things, the author tries to delve into the political situation of her home state, West Bengal, around these months and locate it in the context of the rise of the global right. It is also a document that gives an opening to understand the inner lives of young, urban people in India during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zuzana Hrdličkov: Searching for Sanctuary during a Global Pandemic. Reflections on International Mobility, Multi-sited Presence and Identity-making   pp. 75–85, written in English

I started writing my COVID 19 diary in March 2020 when my family and I were living in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Through the following months, we gradually made our way to my native country – the Czech Republic, where my diary ended (1st July 2020). After living abroad for over 15 years – most of my adult life – spending several months in "my" corner of Europe felt special. In this paper, I reflect on the experience at the time and from hindsight. I first describe our waiting for COVID 19 to arrive in Sierra Leone, touching on anxieties related to expectations of the pandemic development in Africa, and revealing notions of best access to health care amongst the expatriate community in Freetown. I depict our experiences of evacuation, including diplomatic mechanisms interplaying with pandemic control measures across several countries. I discuss the notion of sanctuary as a place of safety. Associating sanctuary with my native country, I experienced an intensive process of interrogating my own identity, a sense of belonging, and realizing conditions necessary for our global mobility to continue. I then reflect on the experience one year later – in hindsight. The situation has changed in surprising ways, making me question my previously held notions of safety and health, whilst comparing epidemiological control measures deployed in an international context. I contemplate my own identity-making process by looking at the individual categories of a stranger, an ethnologist, a migrant, and an expat. I expand on the transnational notion of "imagined community" (hybrid local-distant community), and I suggest that globally mobile people who live permanently transient lifestyles exercise multi-sited presence, by being usually at once present in several diverse countries and bureaucratic systems.

Jop Koopman: Stories of Solidarity and Polarization during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A Diary in Excerpt   pp. 87–93, written in English

In this article I look back at the things written in my Curare Corona Diary. I write in hindsight about the observations made by me about solidarity and polarization in Dutch society in times of COVID-19. The paper touches upon various examples of solidarity that emerged in Amsterdam at the start of the pandemic, how polarization rooted, and what groups are involved in the process of polari-zation. The paper was inspired and written using observations made of the media, protests and demonstrations, and the current Zeitgeist in Dutch society. Although others think that the current polarization will have a lasting effect on Dutch society, I argue that when the crisis is over there is room for reconciliation. The paper's argument states that it might not be easy to overcome certain, often deeply engrained, differences that have developed in the past year. But with a unifying factor such as the sense of citizenship and Dutch identity it is possible to overcome said differences.

Julia LeMonde: Exploring Regimes of "Truth" during COVID-19   pp. 95–106, written in English

In March 2020 the Australian government announced that two cases of community transmission of a novel coronavirus had been detected in the country. In response, the government implemented movement and containment measures which were publicly justified by the warning that the infectious disease COVID-19 was a serious health threat. In the month of March 2020 the Australian way of life was drastically and swiftly transformed as a result of the government's actions. The lived experience of events can be unpacked through diarised entries and media analysis using the perspective of Foucauldian governmentality concepts and social constructionist theory. This illustrates the ways in which the population was incrementally managed and directed with the goal of keeping cases of COVID-19 to a minimum until a vaccine was deployed to keep the population safe from the virus threat. The justifications used by the government to implement controls are questionable because at the time COVID-19 presented as a mild illness in approximately 80% of cases and was found to

predominantly adversely affect the elderly, the majority of whom were in aged care facilities. This article offers a critical analysis of the government directives, and justifications used to coerce the population to comply with measures taken to control them.