

Editorial

# Challenges of Post-COVID-19 for a Sustainably Developed Society

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The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted both preventive and reactive disease control measures, such as lockdown, physical distancing, and mask use, among others [1–11]. These measures have exerted influence in virtually all domains of social life [12,13], acting as a “cultural break point” [14] (p. 1) in the physical but also in the virtual world. According to Echegaray [15] (p. 568), “These measures caused a ‘social recession’ as it brought face-to-face inter-personal interaction to its minimum expression except among other household members, with social connections eventually migrating to the internet-mediated online sphere”.

This Special Issue gathers contributions on the analysis of the “Challenges of post-COVID-19 for a sustainable development society”, which are varied, multiple and interdependent of an interdisciplinary nature in various areas, such as health, social, economic, ecological, political, educational, and moral areas, among others, towards increasing sustainability [16]. The fulfilment of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [17] is, undoubtedly, a complex process involving various actors, powers, and interests, to which the fact that human beings are generally averse to changes in socio-cultural patterns must be added [11,18].

In addition to being unexpected and unplanned, the COVID-19 pandemic was, as a result, a generator of high uncertainty about the present but also about the future [19], demonstrating that unpredictability cannot be disregarded in any social process [1,5,14]. Still, and without over extrapolating or falling into the error of continuity or “new normal vs old normal” dichotomy [15], it is possible to consider the opening of potential futures and sustainable development opportunities to (re)discover if we do not stick to “business as usual” [2,6,7,9,15,20–24]. In the words of Zinn [18] (p. 613), “To what extent the opportunity for global learning is taken up remains to be seen. There is little doubt, however, that pandemics will contribute to long-term changes in human attitudes and behavior towards the environment and the technologically shaped lifeworld”.

We are pleased to acknowledge all the professional collaborations provided by the Editorial Office of *Societies* journal, as well as the trust placed in us by the Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Dr. Gregor Wolbring, and a group of reviewers, which resulted in very rigorous but, at the same time, constructive evaluations, and contributed greatly to maintaining a high level of scientific demand for this Special Issue. This resulted in a very interesting and heuristically pertinent contribution.

To summarize the main characteristics of the manuscripts published in this Special Issue of *Societies* journal, “Challenges of Post-COVID-19 for a Sustainable Development Society”: 18 manuscripts were submitted, nine were accepted and published (five articles—as original empirical research—and four concept papers—contributing with new insights but



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without mobilizing new empirical information). Table 1 summarizes some characteristics of the published manuscripts [25–33].

**Table 1.** Some characteristics of the published manuscripts.

Type of Publication	Title	Purpose	Authors	Country
Article	Accessibility in Inclusive Tourism? Hotels Distributed through Online Channels	Analyze the tourist accommodation sector through the online distribution channel in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities for a more inclusive tourism in the post-COVID-19 crisis	Eva Martin-Fuentes Sara Mostafa-Shaalan Juan Pedro Mellinas	Spain Spain Spain
Article	COVID-ized Ethnography: Challenges and Opportunities for Young Environmental Activists and Researchers	Examine the impact of the enforced 2020/21 COVID-19 lockdown on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with UK-based young environmental activists	Dena Arya Matt Henn	UK UK
Article	The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Working Conditions, Employment, Career Development and Well-Being of Refugee Researchers	Explore how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the working conditions, employment, career development and well-being of refugee researchers	Ourania Tzoraki Svetlana Dimitrova Marin Barzakov Saad Yaseen Vasilis Gavalas Hani Harb Abas Haidari Brian P. Cahill Alexandra Čulibrk Ekaterini Nikolarea Eleni Andrianopulu Miroslav Trajanovic	Greece Bulgaria Bulgaria Germany Greece Germany Greece Germany Greece Greece Germany Serbia
Article	Male Sex Workers Selling Physical Sex during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Portugal: Motives, Safer Sex Practices, and Social Vulnerabilities	Analyze the motives, safer sex practices, and vulnerabilities of male sex workers who sold physical sex during the COVID-19 pandemic	Henrique Pereira	Portugal
Article	Jogging during the Lockdown: Changes in the Regimes of Kinesthetic Morality and Urban Emotional Geography in NW Italy	Study how the urban emotional geography through how lockdown caused by COVID-19 affected practices and meaning of cultural physical practices among joggers in an urban environment	Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco	Italy and UK
Concept Paper	COVID-19 Stigma and Charismatic Social Relationship: A Legitimization Narrative of President Trump's Status as a Charismatic Leader following a SARS-CoV-2 Infection Reported by the Portuguese Media	Understand how stigma in the context of a pandemic threat such as COVID-19 has structured a charismatic social and political relationship	Carlos Miguel Ferreira Sandro Serpa	Portugal Portugal
Concept Paper	Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in Migration and Mobility: Transnational Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic	Examine the implications of intensifying digitalization and Artificial Intelligence for migration and mobility systems in a post-COVID transnational context	Marie McAuliffe Jenna Blower Ana Beduschi	Australia Canada UK
Concept Paper	Filtering Facepiece Respirator Supply Chain Management Framework in a Disaster Such as COVID-19	Suggest a conceptual model to build a supply chain management framework for future emergencies	Kihyung Kim Li Zhao	USA USA
Concept Paper	Learning for the Future beyond COVID-19: A Critical Alternative to the Neoliberal Model of Development	Analyze COVID-19 pandemic, framing in critical political economy perspectives the tension between the model of neoliberal capitalism development and COVID-19 suppression	David Neilson	New Zealand

Source: Table prepared by the authors.

In any case, and whatever the developments in the post-COVID 19 world, it is critical to consider individual and/or collective inequalities of various kinds, and materialized in numerous ways [1,7,34–36]. According to Leach et al. [5] (p. 4), “Epidemics are often said to be mirrors to society and COVID-19 has revealed a highly unequal world. It has highlighted inequalities and structural vulnerabilities, often the result of long histories of marginalization. Although the virus initially spread in richer countries, the trends soon reversed”.

One example of these inequalities reinforced by COVID-19, among many others that we could point out, is closely linked to the digital divide, and it has been demonstrated that, with the closure of schools, socially and economically disadvantaged students have found it more difficult to keep up with school subjects [10,37,38].

We are confident that our readers will appreciate this contribution toward (re)thinking the post-COVID-19 period in a desirably more sustainable world, which will always be necessary in a permanently built balance between society, nature, and technology [18]. In this balance, citizenship exercised in a conscious way, scientific interdisciplinarity, the community–scientists–political decision relationship and communication, and collective co-operation (group, national, and transnational) are crucial elements for success in achieving this goal [3,21].

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