Call for Papers for a Special Section

“Democratic Health in the Corona Pandemic. The Corona Pandemic as a Trigger or Amplifier of Democratic Erosion?”

Guest Editors: Marianne Kneuer and Stefan Wurster

In the wake of the Corona crisis, all governments were/are called upon to take emergency measures, most of which represent far-reaching interventions in public life, including democratic rights, and challenge the interplay between the executive and legislative branches. But to what extent does this unprecedented health emergency provide an opportunity for governments to accelerate and intensify democratic erosion processes that are already underway, or to expand autocratic practices that are already in place? At the same time, in the wake of the pandemic, established democracies face the challenge of not only justifying massive encroachments on the liberties of their citizens, but also preventing a drift into autocratic conditions.

An intensified competition which has existed even before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak between the Western-style, liberal-law democracies on the one hand and emerging autocratically ruled countries (China, Russia, Singapore, etc.) on the other hand increases the pressure on democracies. The race between the political regimes for interpretive sovereignty is now being continued and even reinforced in the context of the pandemic. China, for example, highlighting its (supposed) successes in pandemic containment to great public effect.

Within the course of the now almost two years of global pandemic situation the issue of democratic health has gained research interest. However, there is a need for thorough and differentiated analyses on how the crisis management impacted democratic structures, processes and principles in different countries and regimes. Which areas have been affected by restrictions on democracy or have shown themselves to be particularly vulnerable to the use of emergency measures to undermine democratic standards? Have these restrictions been implemented formally and on the basis on democratic procedures or not? And how have the restrictions been justified? What role did the (lack of) success in fighting the pandemic play? These are only few still open questions.

This Special Section invites studies that a) theorize the relationship between crises (especially the Covid-19 pandemic) and resilience or vulnerability of democratic regimes; b) offer empirical-analytical accounts on the impact of the pandemic. We welcome all methodological approaches and explicitly invite studies that undertake cross-area or cross-regime type comparisons and comparisons beyond European cases.
There are different perspectives that can be considered:

1) democratic countries in which the Corona pandemic triggered a decrease of democratic quality;
2) countries that had already undergone democratic erosion before Corona and used the pandemic to introduce more autocratic elements or reinforce existing ones;
3) authoritarian countries that instrumentalized the pandemic for upgrading repression and control;
4) comparisons between different regime types.

Schedule and Deadlines

The Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft/German Journal of Comparative Politics is an internationally renowned journal that adheres to the highest standards of quality (double-blind peer review). The journal is published quarterly, and it is the first bilingual (German and English) journal that focuses on innovative research results in the area of comparative politics.

The Special Section is planned to appear in the December Issue 2022. It can include papers in German as well as in English. The papers will be subject to a double-blind review process.

Timeline:
Deadline for submission of proposals: 01.03.2022
Decision of acceptance by guest editors: 03.03.2022
Deadline for submission of papers: 30.06.2022
Notification of acceptance or revision: 31.07.2022
Deadline for revision: 15.09.2022
Final notification on the revision: 30.09.2022
Last round of coordination: 15.10.2022

Proposals to this call should not exceed 500 words. Please send the proposal with the subject “Proposal Special Section ZfVP” (English or German) to Marianne.kneuer@tu-dresden.de and stefan.wurster@hfp.tum.de

Likewise, if you have any further question, please feel free to contact us.

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