

**Global Sociology 3:
Covid-19 in Poor Neighbourhoods –
the Global South and Global North Compared**

(Summer Semester 2022)



Course Outline

General Topic “COVID-19 in Poor Neighbourhoods”

The course is embedded into a larger project that will be conducted mainly in Germany, Botswana and Indonesia in 2022/2023 but will involve other project partners from the Global North and the Global South, most of whom will visit Germany in 2022 (**for the aims of this specific course, see section “Aims of the Course” on page 2**). The overall project addresses the following issues (for a detailed outline, see next section):

What are the economic, social and technological/digital consequences of the Corona Crisis on poor neighbourhoods in the Global South as compared to the Global North and how can they be overcome? Using the example of food supply and food retailing, the project will reveal the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic both on (1) inhabitants and (2) businesses in poor neighbourhoods and show, if and how (3) rural and urban communities are entangled, (4) digital infrastructures can be and are used in social and economic life as countermeasures for the crisis and (5) how the Global North can learn from the Global South and vice versa. In doing so, project will not only contribute to decolonizing social science research but also provide road maps for public policy options and formulations relating to disaster and social assistance management.

Objectives and Innovative Aspects of the Overall Project

Although Europeans are starting to hope that the Covid-19 pandemic might be over soon due to effective vaccination and the disease becoming endemic, on a global scale, this is far from true. Regardless, the Covid-19 pandemic can only be overcome in the long term, if two prerequisites are met: Due to the international division of labour and global value chains, the crisis needs to be addressed on a global scale. In addition, societies can only become resilient against pandemics, if not only the pandemic itself but also other major societal challenges are addressed, namely poverty both within societies and on the level of the world system. Based on these premises, we focus on the economic and social consequences of the spread of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in poor neighbourhoods in the Global South as compared to the Global North.

The Covid-19 pandemic seriously endangers people's lives (health risk). Some of the best means of slowing down or even preventing the spread of Corona were introducing travel restrictions, physical distancing, contact reduction and working from home. As the Covid-19 pandemic has been limiting people's movement in physical space, socio-economic interaction has become stagnant. In consequence, there is a strong trade-off between health risks and other socio-economic risks: A lock-down implies shutting down the economy which in turn will rob people of their means for livelihoods. This becomes no more apparent than in food supply and retailing: As people need to eat, a lock-down of food retailers might result in food shortages. Moreover, if people do not earn money, they also cannot buy anything, including food. Economic shut-downs thus have increased the need for food aids and other forms of social assistance which (at least in the Global South) are often accompanied by mismanagement, maladministration and corruption. In addition, while online ordering of food delivery is viewed as part of essential services in some Global South countries, digital “street vendors” face the risk of harassment or racism as hygiene and service quality are questioned. All in all, these food-related consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic might literally result in starvation and thus not only produce a different type health risk but also result in an economic crisis and social conflicts.

This is true especially for poor people because they usually have lesser or no access to adequate health care, often have manual jobs which require close contact and do not have enough savings to buffer even a week of income loss. This project will therefore focus on poor urban neighbourhoods, including their relationship to rural neighbourhoods (rural-urban connections), as in countries in the Global South, economic shut-down additionally results in a crisis of de-urbanization as those having piece and manual jobs in urban centres are forced to go back and depend on the limited resources in their respective villages – and also may further spread the virus.

The crisis and related government regulations affect both local businesses and everyday people (= consumers). As physical spaces become limited by the Corona Crisis, an often suggested idea for reducing the negative impact of Corona is digitalization, e.g. online trading and home office. However, digitalization, too, does not only vary between countries but also strata of the population including increment of digital divide. It is therefore unclear whether or not the Corona Crisis would increase socio-economic digitalization. We will analyse how social interactions, everyday life and the livelihood of both inhabitants and businesses

(especially street vendors) in poor neighbourhoods have changed and if and how digital infrastructures can be and are used in social and economic life as countermeasures for the crisis.

How the Corona Crisis is handled and what effects it has strongly varied between countries and world regions. Currently, most analyses focus on the wealthy countries of the Global North. If one neglects the poor countries of the Global South, one does not only neglect the effects of the pandemic on most parts of the world population but also risks a backlash in countries which have already successfully mastered the crisis. This backlash might be caused by international travel and can go two ways: Many Global South countries strongly depend on tourism from the Global North countries. The Global North countries' economy strongly depends on global value chains. This is especially true for food production, as most countries from the Global North import large parts of their food from the Global South.

Aims of the Course

“Covid-19 in Poor Neighbourhoods – the Global South and Global North Compared”

Against this backdrop, this course aims for the participants **learning about their mutual countries (both in general, and about the poverty, food markets, digitalization and the effects of the pandemic)**. The aim of the workshop is getting an overview of the specifics of the respective countries as well the current situation in order to start a discussion, what type of questions we should ask. In order to do so, the **5-day course** is organized around **daily topics** – namely: Introducing the country, poverty and poor neighbourhoods, the organization of food markets, digitalization and the Covid-19 pandemics. Each day, **lecturers from different countries** will introduce the situation in their respective country by giving a **5-15 minutes talk** in which they answer a set of questions (see section “**daily topics**” on page 3ff.), followed by a short discussion and a summarizing **discussion**. At the end of the day, we will discuss results.

Course Elements

The main course element is block seminar via **Zoom** from **28.03.2022 – 01.04.2022**.

The course link will be distributed to participants via email on 02.09.2022. It will likely be:

<https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/66788815289?pwd=SE1RT3ZwSkhZQ1VDeHNNVXNwV0hpZz09>

LV-Nr.	Title	Host	Form	Time
	Global Sociology 3: Covid-19 in Poor Neighbourhoods – the Global South and Global North Compared	Nina Baur	Zoom	Mon 28.03. – Fri 01.04.22, 11.00 – 16.00 CET

For formal details on the course see the “Modulbeschreibung”: <https://moseskonto.tu-berlin.de/moses/modultransfersystem/bolognamodule/beschreibung/anzeigen.html?nummer=61463&version=1&sprache=2>

Timeline and Time Zones

We are sorry for the inconvenient times for the colleagues in Indonesia, Singapore and Latin America – there is simply no good solution for covering so many time zones. In order to at least get you partly awake, we have organized speaking times from East to West (the colleagues from Indonesia will start first, while they are still awake, the Latin American colleagues will speak last, hoping they are by that time already awake.)

Time Zone	Mon, 28.03.22	Tue, 29.03.22	Wed, 30.03.22	Thu, 31.03.22	Fri, 01.04.22
Timor, Indonesia	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00
Java, Indonesia	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00
Singapore	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00	17.00-22.00
Thailand	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00	16.00-21.00
Chennai, India	14.30-19.30	14.30-19.30	14.30-19.30	14.30-19.30	14.30-19.30
Botswana	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00
Namibia	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00
Germany	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00	11.00-16.00
Brazil	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00
Chile	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00	06.00-11.00

Course Language

English

Daily Topics

Each day, a specific topic will be addressed – speakers will try to address the “questions of the day”. Of course, they might skip some questions or add some new aspects or insights which are important for their countries.

Day 1 Monday, 28.03.22 Country Profiles

Today, each talk should address the following questions:

- Where is the country located and how does it fit into the world system?
- How is the country organized spatially (e.g. regions, big cities, rural-urban connections)?
- How poor/rich is the country on a global scale? How high are average incomes?
- Concerning the economy, how well is the economy doing, and what are the key industries (e.g. agriculture, tourism, manufacturing)? How important are the formal and informal labour markets?
- How unequal is the country internally? What are the most dimensions of social inequality (e.g. class, gender, race, region, caste ...)?
- What constitutes a typical household (e.g. singles, small family consisting of a couple and maybe 1 or 2 children, or larger family network)?
- Who in the household is typically working, who does the house- and carework (especially shop for food and cook)?

Day 2 Tuesday, 29.03.22 Poverty and Poor Neighbourhoods

Today, each talk should address the following questions:

- Who counts as “poor” in which country, and what types of people are typically poor?
- What are the most important markers of poverty (e.g. low income, lack of food, poor housing, poor education, poor health care, poor clothing etc.)?
- What constitutes a poor neighbourhood? What are the markers of a poor neighbourhood (e.g. where it is located, the type of housing, the type of food retailers or other infrastructure, the access to public transport etc.)? Where are poor neighbourhoods typically located?
- How are poor people and poor neighbourhoods related, that is: do people automatically live in poor neighbourhoods?
- How are rural areas connected to other areas in town or to rural neighbourhoods, e.g. by family or work relationships?

Day 3 Wednesday, 30.03.22 Country Profiles

This topic is going to take two perspectives – that of the consumers and that of the vendors. If possible, today, each talk should address both of the following questions:

Concerning the Consumers:

- What do people typically eat? Is the local cuisine more vegetable-, meat- or fish-based? What are the typical staples eaten (e.g. rice, bread, corn, potatoes)? What are typical everyday vegetables and fruit (e.g. onions, cabbage, carrots)? What foods are typically considered delicacies (e.g. berries, certain spices, certain meats)?
- Where do people eat? Do people usually buy groceries and cook at home, or do they go out eating prepared food, e.g. at food stalls?
- Who goes shopping for food? Who buys the food for whom (class, gender, race), for example, do middle class families do their shopping themselves, or does a domestic servant do this for them? In working class families, which household member (e.g. wife) does usually do the shopping for food?
- Where do people buy food? Do consumers always go shopping for food in the neighbourhood they live in? Are neighbourhoods food is sold at poor neighbourhoods?

Concerning the Vendors/Retailers:

- How is the food market organized? Which retail formats do exist? Please distinguish between
 - a) stationary food retailers for grocery shopping (e.g. supermarkets, discounters, organic food shops),
 - b) semi-stationary retailers (e.g. market stalls) and
 - c) retailers for prepared food (e.g. food stalls, cookshops, snack bars, food courts, cafés, restaurants, canteens).
- Is food retailing part of the formal or informal economy?
- How do street vendors for food fit into this, that is: are they an important part of the food market or constitute a minor market niche? Who are street vendors (class, gender, race), and in what types of businesses do they work? Do the street vendors live in the neighbourhood they work at? How are the vendors related to the rural areas and farming communities?

Day 4 Thursday, 31.03.22 Digitalization

Today, each talk should address the following questions:

- To what extent is the country digitalized? How is the country digitalized?
- How are and were digital technologies used for food production?
- To what extent and how are non-stationary online retailers (e.g. online platforms, delivery services) part of the food market? How is this typically organized?
- How has digitalization changed interaction of consumers and producers?

Day 5 Friday, 01.04.22 Covid-19 Pandemic

Today, each talk should address the following questions:

- How is the country's health care and social security system organized?
- What were past experiences with pandemics?
- When and how has the country reacted to the Corona crisis (e.g. lock-downs)? Who introduced the measures (e.g. national government, local government, businesses)?
- What specific regulations address food production and retailing (e.g. exemptions from lock-down, special regulations for food logistics and seasonal worker regulations, business aids)?
- What specific regulations address buying food and food consumption (e.g. food aids, social security pensions)? What specific regulations are there concerning poor neighbourhoods?
- How does crisis reaction relate to the country's history?
- What information is available on the effects of the crisis concerning the economy, poverty and the spread of the disease? How do these effects vary regionally?
- What challenges has the food retail industry faced since the outbreak of the Corona crisis? How did the food industry react to the restrictions?

Requirements for Participating in the Course

Dear TU Students: Please note that for legal reasons, due to lack of staff and the additional work due to the Corona crisis, we cannot make any exceptions to the below rules!

Anyone can join in and just listen. In order for TU Berlin students to participate and get credits for the course, they additionally need to comply with the following rules:

1. You need to **participate in the first session** (dates and times see above).
2. You need to **register for the course** by sending an email to Iwona Wieczorek (sekretariat@mes.tu-berlin.de) with the following data **by Monday 28.03.2022, 18.00 CET** – note that registration counts as incomplete, if any data are missing:
 - Course name
 - full name (as stated on your student ID)
 - Matrikel-Nr.
 - subject you are enrolled for (e.g. sociology, urban planning)
 - study phase (Bachelor or Master)
 - TU (!) email address (note that we will only communicate with you via your official TU university email address)
3. The course is in English, so your English needs to be good enough to follow the course.
4. Please also note that due to lack of staff and time, we are not going to answer to any organizational questions via email – they will be discussed in the first session.

Examination

Portfolio, 3 Credit Points, unmarked (passed/not passed)

The examination consists of the following elements:

- oral element (50%): active participation in breakout sessions, team work, discussions and presentations in at least 75% of all sessions.
- Written element (50%): lecture notes on the at least 75% of all sessions.

Please note that in order to pass both courses element, you need to attend sessions because for logistical reasons, we cannot offer alternative forms of examinations. As there are 5 days, this means that you need to be present and actively participate all day for at least 4 days, otherwise you fail the course.

Preliminary Course Plan (SoSe 2022)

***** Note that some countries might be skipped and that presenters might change because not all speakers have confirmed yet – in this case, we will have more time for discussion *****

At each day, each presenter will give a short presentation (**10-15 minutes**) presenting the situation in their country, followed by a short discussion and a summarizing discussion. **For a list of questions to be addressed during discussion, see section “daily topics” on page 2.**

Day (times CET) Topic	Mon, 28.03.22	Tue, 29.03.22	Wed, 30.03.22	Thu, 31.03.22	Fri, 01.04.22
	Country (see page 3)	Poverty (see page 3)	Food Markets (see page 3)	Digitalization (see page 4)	Covid-19 (see page 4)
11.00 <i>Breakout Sessions</i>	Getting to know each other	Reflection yesterday's topic	Reflection yesterday's topic	Reflection yesterday's topic	Reflection yesterday's topic
11.15 <i>Nina Baur Gabriel Faimau Elcid Li</i>	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
11.25 – 11.40 <i>Elcid Li</i>	Indonesia (Timor)	Indonesia (Timor)	Indonesia (Timor)	Indonesia (Timor)	Indonesia (Timor)
11.45 – 12.00 <i>Iwan Rudiarto</i>	Indonesia (Java)	Indonesia (Java)	Indonesia (Java)	Indonesia (Java)	Indonesia (Java)
12.05 – 12.20 <i>Anju Mary Paul</i>	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore
12.25 – 12.40 <i>Jakkrit Sangkhamanee</i>	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand
12.45 – 13.00 <i>Binitha V Thampi</i>	India	India	India	India	India
13.00 – 13.15 <i>Everyone</i>	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion
13.15 – 14.00	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
14.00 – 14.15 <i>Gabriel Faimau</i>	Botswana	Botswana	Botswana	Botswana	Botswana
14.25 – 14.40 <i>Eric Yankson</i>	Namibia	Namibia	Namibia	Namibia	Namibia
14.45 – 15.00 <i>Berlin team</i>	<i>Maria Norkus: Germany</i>	<i>Nina Baur: Germany</i>	<i>Linda Hering: Germany</i>	<i>Linda Hering: Germany</i>	<i>Nina Baur Germany</i>
15.05 – 15.20 <i>Fraya Frehse</i>	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil
15.25 – 15.40 <i>Beatriz Bustos & Michael Lukas</i>	Chile	Chile	Chile	Chile	Chile
15.45 <i>Everyone</i>	Final Discussion	Final Discussion	Final Discussion	Final Discussion	Final Discussion
16.00	End	End	End	End	End