

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Decent work or decent income? ‘Corona crisis’ experiences

Editors:

Lygia Sabbag Fares – School of Administration and Management - STRONG ESAGS, Santo André, SP, Brazil.

Pedro Henrique Evangelista Duarte – School of Administration, Accounting and Economics – Goiás Federal University.

PROPOSAL

COVID19 has challenged the world’s production system. Capitalism is being affected by the lockdown needed to contain the spread of the disease. Economic growth has slowed worldwide. In some countries the lockdown is mandatory, in others, people who can afford to stay confined at home are doing so. Health systems are becoming overloaded especially in countries that did not implement quarantine measures soon enough. In order to avoid the same problem, other countries are taking quarantine measures more seriously. However, by doing so there are consequences: disrupting production, mass unemployment, fear of recession, the fear of a rise in the inflation related to basic products and a fear of deflation and bankruptcy of several businesses related to non-basic goods and services.

The pandemic arrives at a time when neoliberal ideas have defined macroeconomic policies around the world. With their initial take-off in the 1970s via the elaboration of severe critiques of the Welfare State model of political economy and the expansion of public spending - which allegedly caused fiscal deficits -, neoliberal policies resurrected liberal ideas in order to defend the primacy of the private sector as the main economic actor. In the case of peripheral countries, those policies were adopted from the mid-1980s, in order to cope with excessive public deficits related to state-oriented industrialization processes that had been prominent up until this time.

Regarding labor relations, the main neoliberal goal is to dismantle labor protection as it is considered as a productive cost only. This policy defends the deregulation and flexibilization of labor law, reduces rights won long ago and expands the scope of capital to intensify labor exploitation. The discourse was that labor deregulation would lead to the modernization of labor rights, bringing about a better adaptation to the current international conditions of capitalist production, while also bringing about more dignified work and decent working conditions. The results, however, were completely the opposite. The intensification of precarious work relationships is evident, well-illustrated via the extension of the workday, flexible work schedules, contracts and remuneration schemes, the precarization of labor rights and the increase in labor informality.

The decent work agenda was specifically designed to discuss alternatives for the working class in contexts of increasing informality and the precariousness of labor relations. Considering that

informality and precariousness are two reflections of neoliberal policies, the debate on decent work and its limitations is important.

At the same time, the idea of a universal basic income is not new. From a more general approach such as Minsky's proposal, defending the State as "the Employer of Last Resort", to very basic focused cash transfers, countries have experimented with safety nets for their residents and thereby legitimize the capitalist production system.

In these very specific times, COVID19 consequences challenge these ideas. Right now, decent work, at its most elemental, is either to work from home or not to work and still maintain one's income. While this is a privilege available for some, it is no option for most workers, especially in the Global South. In any case, the impacts of the new situation imposed by quarantine methods around the world affects labor in two ways: increasing unemployment and reducing work-related income. That is why states have been called to implement new policies to reduce those impacts on the productive sector and workers.

With that in mind, we would like to invite you to contribute to the book "**Corona crisis' experiences**". It will bring together academic chapters on the issues mentioned above, including quantitative and qualitative studies and debates on how countries are dealing with the need of saving workers by preserving their health and income and the capitalist system (as it seems to be the main goal). By gathering these contributions, the book expects to raise debates on the need for income security for all, policies to protect employment and how these policies are implemented in different countries.

Contributions should be addressed to one or more of the following topics:

1. Decent work or Decent Income? The decent work agenda was specifically designed to discuss alternatives for the working class in contexts of increasing informality and the precariousness of labor relations. Considering that decent work now is very limited, to contribute to this topic, papers should discuss decent incomes (universal basic income - <https://basicincome.org/>) as an alternative in COVID19 times, present experiences from around the world and focus on the strengths and limitations of this approach.
2. COVID 19 and the dismantling of the welfare state in the Global North and South: Neoliberal policies were structured, basically, as a critique of the welfare-state oriented development model. Therefore, the main goal of neoliberal policies has been to dismantle social rights. To contribute to this topic, papers should discuss how the changes in the organization of the welfare state occurred with the implementation of neoliberal policies and their consequences in relation to the corona crisis.
3. Labor relations, informality and COVID19: Informality is the normality of labor relations in several regions of the world, especially in the Global South. The flexibilization of labor relations extends informality and the precariousness of labor relations for many more workers. To contribute to this topic, papers should discuss the effects of neoliberal policies on labor flexibility and informality in different regions of the world and how the corona virus has exacerbated their spread across the global economy.
4. Gender and race: Universal basic income, the dismantling of the Welfare State (education, health and care), and informality have had more negative impacts on specific populations, such as women and ethnic minorities, reinforcing gender inequalities in productive and reproductive labor. This would not be a separated topic in the book as gender is not

separated from the society and its challenges. However, we want to highlight it as a theme in order to encourage contributions addressing the matter in any of the previous topics.

5. Public intervention versus neoliberal policies: An important aspect brought back to the public discourse is the need for state intervention to regulate social and economic relations in order to reduce corona virus impacts, especially regarding employment and income. However, this type of government intervention may not be in line with neoliberal ideology. To contribute do this topic, papers should discuss government intervention policies, the possibility of “the end of neoliberalism”, and how these alternatives to neoliberalism look like.

This call is directed specifically to the ICDD and GLU community. However, contributions with co-authorship, when not all authors are from these communities, are welcome as well.

Contributions must be written in English. To apply, please send an extended abstract (about 2-3 pages) presenting the introduction and theme of the paper, the theoretical framework, problems and hypotheses, methodology and bibliography.

Please include in the abstract the name(s), institutional affiliation and contact address of the author(s).

Deadlines:

- Application: May 31st, 2020: Chapter title and abstract to icddbook@gmail.com
- June 15th, 2020: Notification of contribution acceptance
- September 15th, 2020: Full chapter to icddbook@gmail.com
- October 15th, 2020: Peer review process.
- TBD: Anthology to the publisher, Labor & Globalization Series, Hampp Verlag
- TBD: Publisher determines the exact date of publication

Contacts: pheduarte@ufg.br lysabbag@gmail.com