Call for Papers:

Rethinking Governance in the Time of the Pandemic.

Perspectives from the Global South

GAPP International Virtual Conference
12 October 2020

The Covid 19 pandemic has caused tectonic changes in every area of social life. Governments are making a huge effort to try and control the pandemic's spread while managing the economic devastation that comes in its wake. In a very short period of time, the Covid 19 pandemic has grown deadly killing hundreds of thousands of people and making millions sick around the world. The Global response has not been uniform. Many governments, however, have taken forceful measures. A state of emergency was introduced in at least 60 countries of the world.

Governments around the world must encourage and force people to divert from their normal routines in the name of public health, usually by isolating themselves or, at least, keeping their social distance. Health measures typically come at the expense of wellness, as tens of millions are thrown into unemployment, or economic precarity while also dealing with psychological consequences of lockdown.

The virus itself does not discriminate on the basis of economic class, political affiliation, gender or race. Infection rates vary according these sociological criteria, revealing that government responses are most certainly inflected by class, by race, by gender and by political affiliation. It is during a crisis that the capabilities of the state and its institutions get challenged the most. As developed countries with the most advanced healthcare systems struggle to address the Covid 19 catastrophe, alarm is growing as the pandemic spreads in countries with weak public health systems, lower living standards and a lack of services in densely concentrated cities or widely dispersed rural populations where even social distancing is a privilege. The effectiveness of governance is of critical importance in the Global South.

We choose not to define governance in terms of a normative set of practices or institutions that are either present (good governance) or not (bad governance). Such a definition is too ideologically loaded. Instead, the notion of governance is understood as "a more general

analytical concept that refers to the rules (formal and informal) distributing roles, defining practices, setting boundaries and shaping behaviors with the goal of attaining a collective outcome" (Camargo, 2020). Therefore, effective governance is about setting rules and incentives such as enforceable orders, directives and recommendations. How have countries in the global South met the governance challenge?

We define the Global South as those countries and societies that emerged from colonialism or socialism in the twentieth century, where institutions are weak, resources scarce and where the rules of the political game are not settled.

The global reach of the epidemic, its discrete beginning and the common challenges that it presents to all countries provides an opportunity to compare how different countries have responded and to analyse what this tells us about the form and capacities of their government systems. So far, the responses from the Global South demonstrated the huge variety, nationally but also regionally. We are interested in some of the key reactions and policy approaches.

We propose a conference to review and compare government responses to the health epidemic with a view to answering the following question: what do responses say about postcolonial and post-socialist governments today?

Paper proposals (including a paper title, abstract of up to 250 words, author's contact details and short biographies) should be sent to jelenav@gapp-tt.org.

Deadline for paper proposals is 20 August 2020. The selection committee will inform all applicants about the outcome of their application by 1 September 2020.

Papers from the Conference will be published in conference proceedings.