



CALL FOR PAPER

PANDEMIC, POST-PANDEMIC AND WORK: WHAT LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES?

Different points of view are possible concerning the ongoing pandemic in general, but also with reference to work. Some say everything will be like it was before. Others go even further: after the pandemic, everything will get worse than before; labour law in particular will be even more undermined. However, there may be a third point of view, not driven by a simplistically optimistic inclination, but inspired by an idea that involved all events that took place in progressive terms in human history: there may be another way. Something may actually change.

In this perspective, the following pages offer some points for reflection.

The expiration date of the Call has been extended to **30 June 2021**, in order to give more room for reflections on the issues raised by the Call that are now beyond the horizon defined by the first wave of the Covid 19 emergency. The method of submitting the proposal has also changed. Anyone wishing to participate in the Call can send **by 31 March 2021** an **abstract of 500 words** (including name, title, Call track, and organization) to the following address: labourlawcommunity@gmail.com. The decision on the acceptance or rejection of the proposed abstracts by the Scientific Committee will be communicated at the latest on **30 April 2021**.

Contributions - in Italian, English, French or Spanish - must be received by 30 June 2021 and will be collected in an e-book, leaving the participants have the opportunity to publish their article also in scientific journals.

Furthermore, the LLC association will organize one or more webinars to present the results of the Call.

We thank those who have already sent their papers, which will be immediately evaluated by the Scientific Committee and published on the LLC website.

The Scientific Committee is composed of the professors Catherine Barnard, Olivia Bonardi, Jesús Cruz Villalón, Fausta Guarriello, Antoine Lyon Caen, Luigi Mariucci, Magdalena Nogueira Guastavino, Adalberto Perulli, Valerio Speciale, Patrizia Tullini.

1. The emergency measures and their effects on the crisis' aftermath

The various measures adopted during the emergency must be assessed, especially from the point of view of their possible effects in the post-pandemic period: from the "exceptional wages-guarantee fund" to the benefits provided for self-employed workers, from the measures on smart-working to those concerning safety at work, from the temporary blocking of layoffs to the interventions in terms of "emergency income".

2. The value of work

We are clearly faced with a different perception of the value of work. For a long period, such value appeared to be subordinated to two predominant values: business and economic development, understood in a quantitative sense. In the midst of the pandemic, the hierarchy appears as reversed: work and working people take on a central and even "heroic" role. Think of the health sector and, more in general, all essential services where an obligation to work prevailed, often at the expense of the right to safe working conditions. One wonders how much of this, and in what form, will remain in the post-pandemic.

3. Poor work, precarious work and non-work. The protection of income

The pandemic, as has always happened in all catastrophes, affected especially weaker social classes: temporary and precarious work, the working poor, dependent and self-employed workers, not to mention the sectors where informal work spread. During the emergency, these sectors have been granted economic support measures, from "ad hoc" benefits, to the planned measures concerning an "emergency income", which conceptually reset the previous reservations and criticisms regarding the so-called "citizenship income". What can be expected for the post-pandemic? And what about the

issue of non-work and of unemployment, which was already structural before the emergency and certainly increased during the pandemic? Will structural support measures for employment be introduced, and of which kind? What protection should be given to self-employed workers - in conditions of marked economic and organizational dependence - whose professional paths are characterized by job insecurity and income discontinuity?

4. The immigration issue

During the pandemic, immigration was reduced, and territorial and maritime borders were closed. In general, it seems that Africa should protect itself from the West, rather than seek shelter there. In the meantime, especially in the agricultural sector, workforce is lacking to a great extent. When such workforce is employed, working conditions are indecent: workers live in unhealthy camps without any health guarantee. Can the pandemic therefore represent an opportunity to intervene on the working and living conditions of migrants, especially irregular ones, in the sectors where they are most present? Is the regularization of migrants provided by the Italian "Decreto Rilancio" (d.l. 19/5/2020, n. 34), as well as by correspondent foreign legislative reforms, a satisfactory result, or is it just a timid starting point? Could the temporary closure of borders represent an advantageous moment to start rethinking migration policies in a radical and consistent way, and in particular those related to economic migration (provided that it still makes sense to distinguish between economic and humanitarian migrations)?

5. Safety-at-work, monitoring and right to personal freedom

During the pandemic and above all in view of the recovery of economic activities, the issue of the relationship between safety and work was obviously emphasized. What will remain of this after the emergency? And what will happen of the different forms of monitoring inside and outside working time, starting from the use of apps in order to monitor the movement of individuals, and of the purpose of protecting the right to personal privacy?

6. The issue of representation and the dimension of sovereignty

One of the most demanding issues in all democratic systems is that of the relationship between representation and decision. It is clear that the emergency reinforces the profile of politics understood as decision-making capacity at the expense of representation needs. In some Countries, including those belonging to the European Union, the emergency is openly used in a neo-authoritarian key. However, in Countries with a more robust democratic structure new elements of cooperation and co-responsibility seem to emerge. This is the case for the relations between trade unions and the government, in the name of an unprecedented form of neo-corporativism, and for company-level and territorial industrial relations. One should wonder whether all this will determine the definitive decline of ideologies of dis-intermediation, theorized and practiced by all sorts of populisms, and whether this will favour

a lasting change of industrial relations systems. In this context, we are facing the problem of the redefinition of the terms and perimeter of democratic sovereignty, within individual Countries, in the relationship between national States and local powers, and at European level. Whether the dimension of the European Union will be strengthened or weakened remains a fundamental question.

7. Inequality / inequalities

The pandemic has revealed the structural inequalities of our societies with crystal clear clarity. The virus didn't make us all the same. Already vulnerable people and social groups have faced the pandemic, social isolation, the suspension of work with fewer resources, less income, less protection, even less knowledge of risks. The poorest and most vulnerable - the homeless, asylum seekers, informal workers - died or risked dying not because of the virus, but because they could not survive without an active society. The digital divide brought thousands of children and young people not to have the opportunity to take online lessons. The disabled have lost an essential part of the assistance and social benefits that allow them to participate in collective life and their care-needs have fallen back exclusively on families. Even in the post-pandemic, the risk that, once the vaccine is found, it may not be considered as a public good, but will be reserved to the richest nations and people, is a very tangible risk.

The pandemic has also exacerbated gender inequalities. Women have been at the forefront of the pandemic and in the care of children with closed schools, but now they are the ones most at risk of losing their jobs and having their professional career shattered. While the work done by women in hospitals, in the care of children, in supermarkets has been the subject of general appreciation, it must be said that it is still dramatically underpaid. After the first phase of the emergency, women are now losing their jobs at a much faster rate than men: almost five times more. During the lockdown, parents spent many hours a day educating their children. In Germany, a research showed that in 82% of cases "parents" meant mothers. This meant that women had less time to participate in the public debate and to do their own job. Some early studies have shown that during the crisis, female academics sent only half of the research papers to scientific journals, compared to 2019. In Italy, women were forced to take action also to obtain female representation within the technical-scientific committee that assisted the Government in the management of the emergency, initially made up of men only. All this will make their permanence on the labour market and their advancement at the highest levels of decision-making even more difficult than before, despite the fact that the political leaders who showed to be better in managing the Corona crisis were women.

We don't need policies of good will but concrete policies to contrast inequalities. What are the current proposals and which new instruments can be imagined to combat poverty and social vulnerability? What lasting measures can tackle gender inequality?