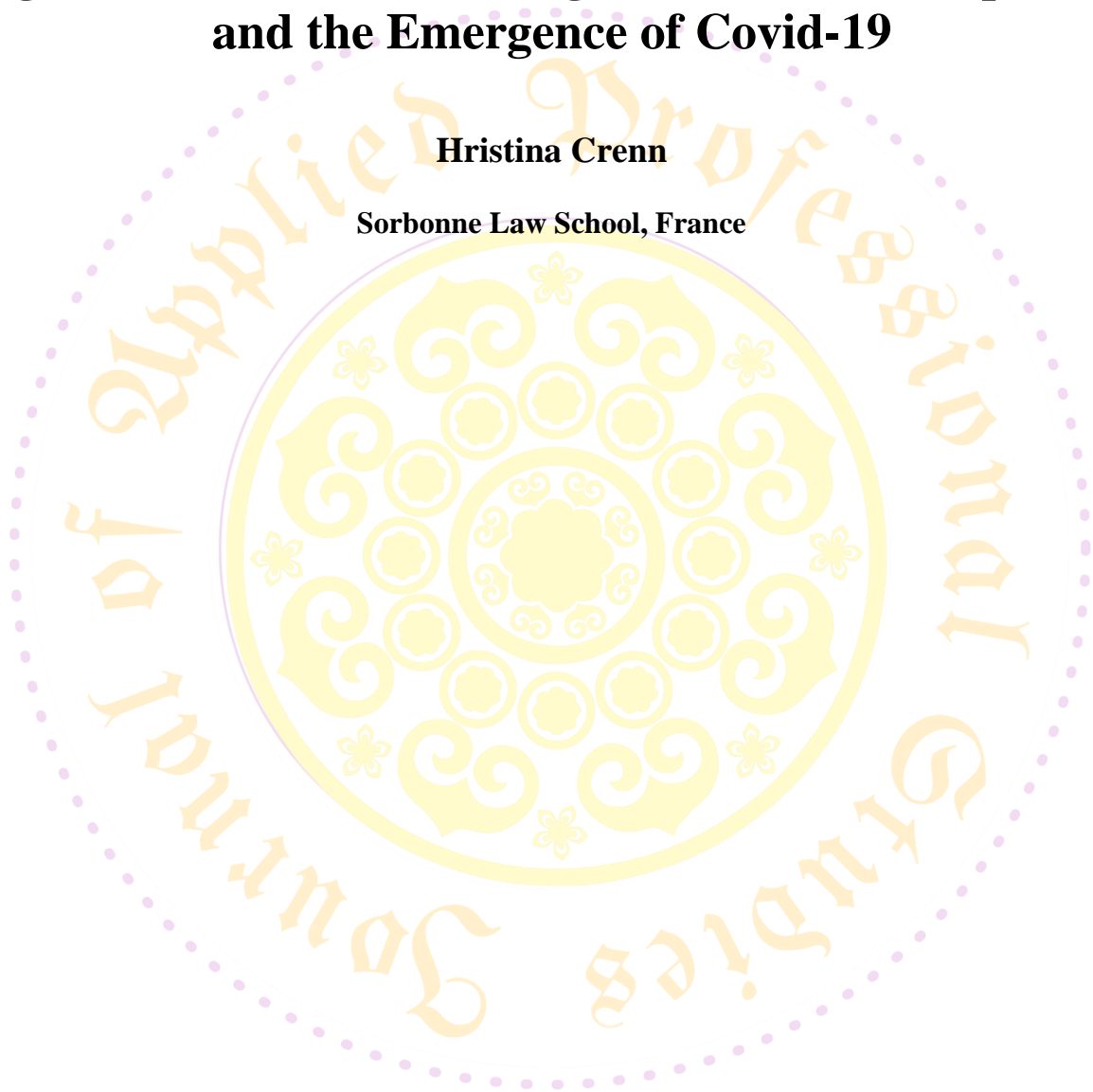


Migrants between the Resurgence of Labor Inequalities and the Emergence of Covid-19

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic restructured the social order of the world. This paper analyzes the zoonotic origin of Covid-19 and the negative impact of the resurgence of labour inequalities for migrants and workers. Scientists always should search for the source of the virus. Thus, the new approach of One Health reflects the fundamental link or interdependence between human, animal and environmental health. The dark world scenario was characterised with the introduction of online work and education i.e., digital life. Over night people lost their jobs, schools closed, children and university students started to study online and hospitals were saturated. There is a dire need to change the scope of this unexpected event. Some countries are adopting adequate policies to curb the rapid mutation of the virus. The inefficiency of some policies paralysed the proper functioning of the entire world. The importance of reducing social inequalities, providing decent work and economic growth, eradicating the phenomenon of slow justice and ameliorating the performance of the main international and internal institutions is a post-Covid-19 mission. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century gave birth to the notion of Labour Rights. Shortly after, International Humanitarian Law was added as a separate branch of legal philosophy. Hence, the primacy or imprescriptibility of peculiar international principles such as the notion of gender parity, the prohibition of labour inequalities, the prohibition of child labour (exploitation), the principle of non-refoulement (collective expulsion) was extensively promoted.

Keywords: Covid-19, Labour Inequalities, Migrants, Human Rights, Health

Introduction: Where it all Started?

Antonio Guterres in December 2020, stated that migrants are a very important aspect of the society despite their legal status: *“Just as migrants are integral to our societies, they should remain central to our recovery”*¹. The Covid-19 outbreak is a pandemic that suddenly started to emerge in Wuhan (China). Thus, 5052 cases were detected on January 24, 2020. However, on January 30, 2020, the total number of cases was 7734. The virus appeared suddenly, but the mutation process was silent. The first theory was that bats transmitted the virus to human beings. This reflects the zoonotic origin of Covid-19. Thus, zoonotic diseases or zoonoses are infectious diseases. The infectious agent is the host who attacks the vulnerable immune systems of the animals. However, when the humans are in contact with these animals, they get infected as well. The trajectory of the whole process of virus transmission is inevitable, if it is not previously detected. Migrations are the core pillar of international law. Thus, migrations are like mutations. They can occur unexpectedly. Nevertheless, history is a perpetual commencement. Viruses and migrations are repetitive, nothing can stop them, even the most repressive legal policies cannot make a difference. Throughout history, migrations are perceived as a negative phenomenon. However in the modern times, if there is a brain drain in a peculiar country, then foreigners are welcome. In this case, migration is a very positive feature indispensable for the development of that peculiar country.

¹ A phrase coined by Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Lessons and Responses for Covid-19

The main lessons and responses of Covid-19 are relatively simple to understand. The promotion of the new approach of One Health is indispensable. We cannot always talk about the importance of human health only. Namely, we need to include animal and environmental health. Briefly, we cannot divide the rules of nature, nor categorise them.

Literature Review

Various articles that were published in 2020 were used as a source for explaining the goal of this research paper. Obviously, some books and articles that were published in the recent decades were also extensively analysed.

The Zoonotic Origin of Covid-19

The Spanish Flu of 1918 was a dramatic health event. Jeffery K. Taubenberger qualifies the Spanish Flu of 1918 as the “*Mother of All Pandemics*”². Hence, the Spanish Flu was characterised as a ‘*Novel*’ virus. The Coronavirus is also a ‘*novel*’ virus. Moreover, in Latin language, the word ‘*novel*’ means *new*. This word signifies that nor the Spanish Flu nor the Coronavirus existed before 1918 (it is a debatable point, of course, it is just a matter of historical evidence, it might be correct or incorrect, however scientists categorise such phenomena in this way). Furthermore, Covid-19 is identified under the code *SARS-CoV-2* and the Spanish Flu as *Influenza A Subtype H1N1*. Both viruses are influenza viruses because the primary issue is always the mode of transmission. Hence, respiratory problems are the main distinctive features of the health consequences. There are two types of disorders provoked by the virus: systematic and respiratory disorders. The systematic disorders are acute cardiac injury, hypoxemia, fever, cough, fatigue and diarrhoea. The respiratory disorders such as pneumonia, ground - glass opacities, rhinorrhoea, sneezing, sore throat and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The main symptoms such as fever, sore throat, headache, loss of taste or smell and tiredness determine the structural features of the virus. Sometimes, there is no manifestation of these symptoms, and a person can still be infected with the coronavirus. When a mutation of the virus occurs, the situation can be very dangerous. With the emergence of Covid-19, started actually the resurgence of labor inequalities. That actually worsened the situation. The high rate of unemployment before the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be neglected either.

The approach of One Health is a relatively recent phenomenon. This theory depicts the primordial connection between human health, animal health and environmental health. There is an indispensable interdependence. It is a trio that defines the global aspect of One Health. We often speak about Global and Public Health, but not about One Health. Even though, we as human beings, we try to promote human health, too often we forget about the importance of preserving the health of the animals and the environment. The question of sustainability is very crucial. The 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are: zero hunger, no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals. A plethora of goals, that must be strictly followed up because the primary mission is to establish a secure preservation of the planet and the wildlife. We live in an era where the number of human beings is rapidly increasing, while the number of wild animals is drastically decreasing. Some species do not exist anymore. Less than 2000 pandas

² Taubenberger, K.Jeffery., Morens, M.David. (2006). 1918 Influenza: the Mother of All Pandemics. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol.12, No.1, p.1

and 400 000 elephants live in the world. In the last decades, the human beings started to occupy the living habitat of the animals by constructing new buildings and populating the specific area. Obviously, in this case, the animals face huge challenges, because the scope of their natural habitat is reduced. There is an environmental misbalance. People often consume the meat of wild animals. If any of these animals is contaminated with the virus, the process of contagion will occur and then people will be contaminated as well.

The first theory was that the virus in Wuhan emerged because of contaminated bats. However, the international community asked China to be transparent about the origin of Covid-19, whether it was made in laboratory or not. China later stated that the virus didn't emerge in Wuhan, but somewhere in Europe. Apparently, this was another conspiracy theory.

The phenomenon of total lockdown is perhaps the most preventive instrument for reducing the direct transmission of the virus. It gives some sense of preparedness. Nevertheless, the most dangerous aspect of a virus is the process of mutation. The recent mutation that occurred in the UK, is a variant of the coronavirus known under the code B.1.1.7 and D614G (two mutations that transmit more rapidly).

The Covid-19 vaccines such as the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine are authorised by many countries. Russia was the first country in the world to register the vaccine Sputnik V. It looks like there is a political race between many countries, but mainly between the Great Powers: the USA, Russia, China, France and the UK. Two other vaccines are being prepared, the AstraZeneca's Covid-19 Vaccine and Janssen's Covid-19 Vaccine. However, what is really problematic is that there are two types of opinions. There is a divergence of multiple theories that provoke skepticism. From one side, one of the conspiracy theories is that Covid-19 as a virus was invented in a laboratory, while the main goal of such a process is to reduce the world population. Even though these theories seem unfounded, there are historical examples, that viruses occur very frequently. The origin of many viruses is mainly zoonotic. Viruses transfer from animals to humans, because people generally interact with wild animals. Therefore, this shows that there is a genetic bond between animals and humans that is very similar. In another words, animals suffer from the same viruses as humans do.

With the enforced lockdowns and confinement measures, many people lost their jobs. Some companies could initiate a remote work process. People could work from the comfort of their own home. However, also the percentage of people who lost completely their jobs is also very high. For instance, many restaurants, museums, parks, libraries, public shops, schools and kindergartens had to close for a longer period of time. With the emergence of the virus, Western countries stopped the flights towards China. Pilots, stewards, stewardesses and the personnel working on the airports no longer could perform their daily job activities. The scholar Sjaastad invented the notion of *human capital* that comprehends the ensemble of knowledge, experience and skills acquired over time. Basically, all the 'human capital' was frozen in time during this Covid-19 pandemic.

Research Methodology

By using the principal method of comparative research in social sciences, peculiar concepts and notions were explained by providing relevant data and examples.

Migration Theories: The Philosophy of Human Territorial Movement

The scholar Saskia Sassen states that migration is an urban feature. Over time, people moved from the villages to the cities because there were better life opportunities: schools for children, universities for students, factories for the people seeking new job opportunities etc. The 1960s and 1970s are

considered to be the Golden Ages of Migration. Migration in these ages was selective, people were recruited by other countries to come to work and live there for a longer period of time. This type of migration was known as *'Labour recruitment'*³. In the 1960s, plenty of Turkish people went to work on the fertile lands in the Netherlands and Germany. Nowadays in Germany live more than 3 000 000 Turkish people. The Netherlands and Germany needed people to work, so they concluded bilateral treaties with Turkey. That is a powerful indicator for the supply of low-wage jobs. According to Hein de Haas, 53% of the people were immediately recruited in 1960s, while in the 1970s only 17%. Moreover, 7% of wealthy migrants worked in the private sector, while the ordinary people worked in the industry and the lands of private individuals. The first aspect of labour inequality could be observed. The more educated you are, the more you get a better job position. Wealthy migrants received generally a higher salary than the people who work in the agricultural fields. 22% were students, 28% worked in the field of real estate, while 24% worked in the hotels, restaurants, schools and institutions. Douglas Massey established the theory of cumulative causation. According to Piché, for Massey, migration must occur soon or later, because it is not static: *"After a certain time, via a process of circular and cumulative causation, migration becomes self-perpetuating"*⁴. V.Piché also, pointed out in his article, that Krissman mentioned that stakeholders are not always employers, but also they can be traffickers. Human trafficking is forbidden by law. Human trafficking or trafficking in person is divided into three categories: the first category defines the act, the second category the means, and the third one the purpose. What is very interesting is that many theories propose different types of reasons and solutions and that makes legal scholarship to be very diverse and rich with information. For Godula Kosack and Stephen Castles, migrations occur frequently because of the presence of Western capitalism. Subsequently, transnationalism as a phenomenon represents the positive structure of recurrent migrations. This is an idea that was also promoted by many other International Organisations. The scholar Victor Piché argued that there is an interaction between immigration and development. Basically, immigration occurs because in some regions there are better life conditions. He points out that there is a micro-individual and macro-structural approaches of migration.

The macro-structural approach encompasses multiple flows of migration. According to Akin Mabogunje staying in contact with the family members living in the country of origin reflects the phenomenon of social cohesion. Therefore, Mabogunje defines this type of migration as a *circular migration*, a notion originally coined by Burawoy.

Burawoy stated that migration is not always caused by the lack of economic prosperity. Sometimes the structural and political features are playing a huge role as well. V.Piché explains that: *"The central notion of his theory is based on the principle of geographical separation of the processes of labour force renewal (reproduction) from those of maintenance"*⁵.

Burawoy also mentions the notion of *"twin dependency"*⁶ that literally includes the social ensemble of economic, political and legal aspects necessary for the proper development of the labour market. According to him, in every type of society there was some form of dependency. In the Preindustrial Era, the mode of societal survival (tribal organisation) was the equivalent of the notion of modern dependency. In the tribal societies, the political institution was the leader while the representatives of

³ Haas, de Hein. (2008). The Complex Role of Migration in Shifting Rural Livelihoods: A Moroccan Case Study. In Naerssen, van Ton., Spaan, Ernst., Zoomers, Annelies edition. (2008). Global Migration and Development. Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group). p.26

⁴ Piché, Victor. (2013). Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts. In *Population (Volume 68, Issue 1)*, p.149

⁵ Piché, Victor. (2013). Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts. In *Population (Volume 68, Issue 1)*, p.145

⁶ Piché, Victor. (2013). Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts. In *Population (Volume 68, Issue 1)*, p.147

the economic one were the slaves or the members of the tribes. The leader had a status and a membership (in modern times equivalent to the notion of citizenship), while the slaves had to work on the land, because that was the only way that they could receive food and a protection. That was the survival mode. Thus, in the industrial societies, mainly in capitalism, the economic branch is led by seasonal workers who are employed by *the labour givers* (factories as social institutions). During the Industrial Era in England, the '*institutions*' were the owners of the mines, while the working class constituted of many children (young boys and young girls). Child labour was permitted in that period. However, in the aftermath of the Industrial revolution, there was an important step undertaken, the notion of Human Rights and Prohibition of Child Labour was legally established.

Data Analysis

In this part, official reports were used. Mainly, reports that were published by some international organisations such as the IOM and IMF.

Labour Inequalities During the Era of Covid-19: Few Crises into One

Vincent Chetail defines the Covid-19 Pandemic as: "*A crisis within the crisis*"⁷. As a matter of fact, Covid-19 is an unprecedented crisis. In another words, it is crucial to highlight that few crises occurred during the same crisis: health crisis, economic crisis, educational and political crisis. Under these circumstances, people started to work from home. Therefore, work activities were conducted completely at home during total lockdowns, however during partial lockdowns people were working two days in the office, three days at home (in average). Anil Duman states that: "*In order to measure the possibility of work during the lockdown, we first divide the economic activities into three categories; essential, closed, non-essential and not closed, in other words teleworkable. In order to distinguish the essential and closed economic activities, we use the official decrees beginning on the 11th of March, which correspond to the date of coronavirus being declared as a pandemic by World Health Organisation (WHO)*"⁸. The Turkish case: 62% - non essential economic activities, 31% essential jobs, 6% non essential or closed job sectors. Unfortunately, 8% of the people affiliated with non essential or closed job sectors lost their jobs or received a minimal wage. To understand in greater detail, essential economic activities are actually related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services and most importantly the maintenance of resources from a macroeconomic point of view. Closed economic activities basically comprehend the absence of exports outside of the country and imports inside the country. Non essential, non closed or teleworkable activities are: family-commitment activities, religious activities, free time and cultural activities.

Women's Rights During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Frequent Discrimination?

Societal segregation is substantially causing problems and divergence of opinions in the society. The category men-women (women perceived as caretakers or homemakers and men acknowledged as breadwinners) is the primary societal and discriminatory segregation. In 1791, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Feminism movement initiated by Olympe de Gouges, promoted the Rights of Women. She is the author of the female French Declaration of Human Rights entitled as "*Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen*". She firmly launched a universal call for raising awareness about the Rights of Women: "*Man, are you capable of being just? It is a woman who poses you the question; you will not deprive her of that right at least*"⁹. As this follow, we can deduce that

⁷ Chetail, Vincent. (2020). Covid-19 and human rights of migrants: More protection for the benefit of all (Covid-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility globally). *IOM UN Migration*, p.2

⁸ Duman, Anil. (). Wage Losses and Inequality in Developing Countries: labor market and distributional consequences of Covid-19 in Turkey. *Central European University*, pp.3-4.

⁹ De Gouges, Olympe-Marie. (1791). Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. p.1

the notion of Gender Equality Strategy is not a new concept, it is a historical fact established for the first time in 1789 during the French Revolution. Olympe de Gouges asked the women to get aware about their own rights and freedoms: *“Woman, wake up! The tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe; discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the clouds of folly and usurpation”*¹⁰. Men deprived Women of their own rights in the course of history, not nature.

Female migration shapes the balance of the world and testifies about the autonomy of women, their societal and individual emancipation and independence. Women migrate to other countries because too often labour inequalities are insurmountable obstacles in the process of personal and career development. Undoubtedly, during a job interview women are asked some questions in a recurrent fashion: do they plan to get pregnant soon, what is their religion and ethnic background etc. Instead of women to be evaluated on the basis of their scientific expertise, too often they are discriminated. Why would an employer ask such personal questions? What will benefit him/her? Absolutely nothing. The scholar V.Piché reiterated that there were numerous historical cases about women’s labour exploitation, a topic that is more abundantly analysed by Mirjana Morokvasic: *“Morokvasic paper examines the diverse trajectories of female migrants across the world and illustrates the many cases of female labour exploitation. For this author, female migration can be positive (emancipation, financial independence), but can also reinforce gender inequalities”*¹¹. The notion of gender inequalities that V.Piché emphasised reflects explicitly the patriarchal version of the role of the women in the society. Women needed or were forced to take care of the children and the household. Unfortunately, women were perceived as ‘breeding machines’. Therefore, the marginalisation of the social status of women is still nowadays one of the primary factors of gender inequalities. That is also basically the most common social dilemma. Too often, women get lower salaries than men, because apparently women didn’t negotiate the amount of the salary they are supposed to get. During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a surge of domestic violence and increased percentage of legal demands for divorce. Such compounding practices, reflect the societal failure in terms of common values. In France, mainly in the region of Paris, regarding the percentage of domestic violence, there was a sharp increase of 32%. In Germany, there was 10% (a slight increase), whilst in Italy a drastic decrease of 50%. The situation in Italy is very positive, while in France and Germany very negative.

Discussion

Why human beings always prefer to promote the importance of human health and do not include in the same process the health of the animals and the environment? Why after the introduction and promulgation of many legal and international documents, labour inequalities still exist, even in the era of Covid-19? Why migrants are always discriminated and the nationals of a peculiar country enjoy more privileges in the world of work?

The Istanbul Convention, known as *the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence* was adopted on May 11, 2011, but entered into force on August 1, 2014. The European Women’s Lobby in their official report, published in April 2020, ask the governments to implement the various mechanisms of protection for Women during the Covid-19 era: *“Governments must ensure that protection services and mechanisms are in place and running to support all women and girls who are victims of male violence and exploitation. Now is the*

¹⁰ De Gouges, Olympe-Marie. (1791). Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. p.3

¹¹ Piché, Victor. (2013). Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts. *In Population (Volume 68, Issue 1)*, p.148

same to implement more fully than ever the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the Istanbul Convention"¹².

Reshaping the cultural mode of perception will internalise the essence of human values. Migrations are like mutations. Cultural mutations are the primary modifiers of the patriarchal chaos. Therefore, according to the first paragraph of the article 12 of the Istanbul Convention, introducing the equality of opportunities will definitely breach the societal gender segregation: *"Parties shall take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men"*¹³.

Announcing frequent reforms in the field of education will strengthen the position of many Women and will move away the social boundaries in the equal path of success. The affirmation of this principle is highlighted in the lines of the Istanbul Convention, more precisely at the first paragraph of the article 14: *"Parties shall take, where appropriate, the necessary steps to include teaching material on issues such as equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, in formal curricula and at all levels of education"*¹⁴.

Even the perpetrators of domestic violence should follow educational guidelines according to the first paragraph of the article 16 of the Istanbul Convention: *"Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns"*¹⁵.

Covid-19 and the Rise of Poverty: Economic Recessions

It is important to present the definition of an economic recession, before proceeding with the explanation of the question of Covid-19 and the rise of poverty. A recession occurs when a constant economic decline is noticed in the annual GDP of a peculiar state. Thus, with the emergence of Covid-19 and with the closure of many factories, people lost their jobs. That resulted with a new phenomenon: rise of poverty. In some countries there is an extreme poverty: India, Africa, the Middle East. Basically, when there is a recession, the level of unemployment is very high. Therefore, taking into account the social aspect of education, there should not be only political allegations that will tarnish the reputation or the image of the institutional collapse, but also legal reforms that will restructure from scratch the dysfunctional mechanisms of procedural law: *"Building social protection systems on the basis of human rights can significantly contribute to their effectiveness in eradicating poverty and in reducing inequalities, this improving resilience of societies in the face of stocks. This means defining social protection neither as an emergency response to a situation of crisis, nor as charity - but rather as a set of permanent entitlements prescribed by domestic legislation, defining individuals as rights-holders, and guaranteeing them access to independent claims mechanisms if they are denied the benefits for which they qualify. Both the mobilization of domestic resources and international*

¹² (2020, April). *Women must not pay the price for Covid-19. Putting Equality between Women and Men at the heart of the response to Covid-19 across Europe*. European Women's Lobby Policy Brief. p.5

¹³ First paragraph of the article 12 of the Istanbul Convention (April 12, 2011) - Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

¹⁴ First paragraph of the article 14 of the Istanbul Convention (April 12, 2011) - Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

¹⁵ First paragraph of the article 16 of the Istanbul Convention (April 12, 2011) - Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

solidarity should be placed in the service of this objective"¹⁶. No one is ready to receive the gift of an institutional earthquake. There are numerous textual documents that legal specialists adopted. However, is the theoretical legal provision really normative? In some countries yes, in others no. The absence of legal implementation of the legislative rules in some countries will create too often a backdrop of ideologies and conspiracy theories. Pandemics might last for a long time, but the process of recovering is even longer: *"In this report, submitted in response to resolution 44/13 of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur argues that the world was ill-equipped to deal with the socio-economic impacts of this pandemic because it never recovered from the austerity measures imposed in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008-2011. The legacy of austerity measures is severely underfunded public healthcare systems, undervalued and precarious care work, sustained declines in global labour income shares, and high inequality rates coupled with average decreases in statutory corporate tax rates. With public services in dire straits, one-off cash transfers are a drop in the bucket for people living in poverty, whether in developed, developing, or least developed countries"*¹⁷.

The Prohibition of Labour Inequalities: The Notion of Human Dignity

There is no legal definition for migration. People just move from one to another place for economic or family reasons. However, during the pandemic, people were obliged to remain in the cities where they live because many airlines canceled numerous flights all over the globe. Asylum seekers are the ones who experience a difficult transition. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is the most important legal document projecting the goals of work safety and individual protection. This convention was adopted on December 18, 1990 by the General Assembly of the office of the United Nations (resolution 45/158) and entered into force on July 1, 2003. Notwithstanding, the article 10 of the Convention mentions the basic principles of the notion of human dignity: *"No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"*¹⁸. It is very important for the states to respect the principle of non-refoulement. Migrants or refugees cannot be expelled and deported in conflict regions or in their country of origin if there is a war. The principle of the prohibition of collective expulsion is mentioned in the first paragraph of the article 22, of the Convention: *"Migrants workers and members of their families shall not be subject to measures of collective expulsion. Each case of expulsion shall be examined and decided individually"*¹⁹. No country has the right to refuse medical care to migrants. Diseases or viruses have nothing to do with culture, religion and ethnic background. States are obliged to offer medical help and insurance to every category of migrants according to the legal provisions stated in the article 28 of the Convention: *"Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Such emergency medical care shall not be refused them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment"*²⁰. There are few categories of migrants: political migrants, climate migrants, economic migrants and family reunion.

¹⁶ (2020, September 11). *Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post Covid-19 economic recovery*. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (United Nations Human Rights Special Procedures, Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts & Working Groups).

¹⁷ (2020, September 11). *Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post Covid-19 economic recovery*. Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (United Nations Human Rights Special Procedures, Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts & Working Groups).

¹⁸ Article 10 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

¹⁹ Article 22 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

²⁰ Article 28 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

Guido Matias Cortes and Eliza C. Forsythe mention that the people with low salaries are the ones who are actually the primary victims in the aftermath of the emergence of Covid-19: *“Turning to the heterogeneous impact of the pandemic across demographic groups, we find that young, less educated, non-white workers, and women experienced the largest employment losses”*²¹. Italy, by promulgating the Law Decree No.18 of 17 March 2020, adopted extraordinary measures destined to curb the financial losses of the small and medium-sized enterprises. There were some measures for large families. Additional measures were adopted for mothers and children. Germany faces a high death rate, and a low birth rate. Therefore, Germany even before and during the pandemic welcomed many citizens from the Western Balkans. Germany regularly grants them new job opportunities. It is very crucial to mention that the Balkan region is facing the phenomenon of ‘brain drain’. Young people get new job opportunities in Germany and they leave the Balkan region. Therefore, now, the Balkan region has a low birth rate and high rate of death. This demographic transition is dangerous for the well-being of the state. But, in Germany there are coming also many people from India, Myanmar and the countries from the Middle East. During the pandemic, Italy was the second ‘Wuhan’ (China), but this time in Europe. The pandemic lasts more than 10 months. It is a never-ending journey for some people. Deploying a shroud of certainty will modify the spectrum of societal existence.

Labour Inequalities and Pandemics: Covid-19 - a Vicious Cycle?

What is a vicious cycle? Is the pandemic Covid-19 a vicious cycle?

A vicious cycle is a phenomenon marked by a significant dose of negative features. Even though you might have a long-working experience, you still may face labour inequalities and vice versa, if you don’t have any job experience, you still may face labour inequalities. As a result, Covid-19 as a virus forced the authorities to shut down the factories for a specific period of time. Notwithstanding, pandemics can change completely the peaceful pathway of the economic prosperity and provoke unmanageable labour inequalities: *“Lessons from past pandemics also suggest that the resulting higher levels of inequality could undermine social cohesion and jeopardise future growth, increasing the risks of a vicious cycle”*²².

Louis Pasteur, a French Public Health Scientist, expressed firmly: *“Gentlemen, it is the microbes who will have the last word”*²³. Louis Pasteur, is famous for inventing the ‘Germ Theory of Disease’. According to this theory, germs are the primary agents of infection. Pasteur is also famous for discovering the germs or microbes that can destroy or spoil the quality of food. He discovered that under heat microbes die. For instance, he suggested, the milk to be heated on 71 degree Celsius. The milk if it is not heated might contain microbes or bacterias that can cause tuberculosis. This process is called pasteurisation. The bacterias that can be found in the milk are: listeria, salmonella, E.coli and many others. However, Covid-19 is a virus, not a bacteria. Antimicrobial resistance is the most crucial problem of the 21st century.

Covid-19 Special Legal Policies (Extraordinary Measures): A Resurgence of Labour Inequalities?

Setting up a legal policy endowed with extraordinary measures will definitely close the dilemma regarding the emergency health situations, like the Covid-19 one. In another words, the primary question was to set up not only some sense of preparedness, but also a window of safety (economic and

²¹ Cortes Matias, Guido., Forsythe C. Eliza. (2020). The Heterogeneous Labor Market Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. *W.E Upjohn Institute for employment research (working paper)*, p.3

²² Jurzyk, Emilia., Nair, Madhu Medha., Pouokam, Nathalie., Sedik, Saadi Tahsin., Tan, Anthony., Yakadina, Irina. (2020). Covid-19 and Inequality in Asia: Breaking the Vicious Cycle. *International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper*, p.5

²³ A phrase coined by the French Scientist Louis Pasteur

health safety), like it was the case in some Asian countries: *“Governments in Asia have immediately responded to Covid-19 crisis with policy packages, some sized in double-digit percentage of GDP. We compile and analyse such policy measures using the IMF Policy Tracker and find that effective crisis responses go hand-in-hand with the following country characteristics: (i) benefiting from a larger fiscal space; (ii) having broader social safety nets; (iii) exhibiting lower levels of informality; and (iv) having a higher degree of digitalization”*²⁴.

A plethora of countries tried to save their economy from collapse. Turkey allowed during the summer 2020 foreign tourists to spend their summer holidays in Antalya, K şadası, Fethiye and Izmir by promoting the policy of ‘healthy tourism’. Even a coronavirus type of insurance was promoted. Many measures were adopted. Tourists had to wear masks permanently, keep social distance of minimum 2 metres, wash hands for at least 20 seconds, arrive three hours in advance at the airports, wear gloves, measure the temperature of each traveler etc. The healthy tourism program was entitled as *“Assessment form on Covid-19 and hygiene practices applied during pandemic for accommodation and food & beverage facilities”*. With this program, many migrants who worked in various hotels all around Turkey could preserve their jobs. Their residents permits were extended as well. The main goal of this program was to protect the well-being of the economy and prevent the recurrent contagion of Covid-19 (to avoid a second or third wave of coronavirus and implementation of confinement measures): *“The purpose of this Certification Document, as a preparation for the end of period of negative effects of Covid-19 pandemic and at the action resume stage of tourism is to determine necessary workouts that should be fulfilled for consumers who have Covid-19 contagion anxiety and for maximum hygiene and security expectations, designate training programs for staff and personnel and identify procedures and principles regarding the preventions of contagion of Covid-19 virus”*²⁵. The notion of coercive structures comprehends forced labour activity.

It was very important to establish synchronous and asynchronous communication with migrants and workers. Teleworkable activities, educational programs and regular work meetings were the primary indicators of the effectivity of the measures undertaken to combat the Covid-19 virus.

Lessons for the Future

The primary responsibility is to protect the health of the citizens. Covid-19 is not going to be the last virus that will emerge. There are going to be other impediments in the future as well. People should respect the curfew regulations imposed by the governments. Legislators should adopt immediate extraordinary laws or legal provisions to preserve the proper functioning of the status apparatus. If the structure of the state mechanism is organised adequately, the pandemics or epidemics won’t ruin the economy. Hence, the best lesson for the future is to understand the crucial meaning of the notion of ‘vigilance’. Thus, there should be always some extra alternatives for increasing the rate of production. For instance, the governments can finance the medium-sized and small firms. The holdings and other strong companies can make donations and organise fundraising projects. Sometimes, fiscal policy is not enough strong to fight against a sudden recession that may endure for few consecutive months, even years: *“Macroeconomic tools to combat the crisis are limited. Fiscal policy alone cannot increase production when cash-strapped firms are closing down and supply chains are disrupted so severely. While increasing spending on health, purchasing medical equipment, and hiring more peo-*

²⁴ Jurzyk, Emilia., Nair, Madhu Medha., Pouokam, Nathalie., Sedik, Saadi Tahsin., Tan, Anthony., Yakadina, Irina. (2020). Covid-19 and Inequality in Asia: Breaking the Vicious Cycle. *International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper*, p.15

²⁵ Certification document: *“Assessment form on Covid-19 and hygiene practices applied during pandemic for accommodation and food & beverage facilities”*, p.2

ple in the health sector can have positive impacts on the economy, it takes time for factories to redesign production processes or train new workers from those laid off in other sectors to manufacture what the market needs”²⁶.

Conclusion

The most valuable lesson regarding Covid-19 is the necessity to have some sense of preparedness. Expecting the unexpected sometimes is beneficial. However, such experiences are not always positive. There can be a social confrontation that might exacerbate the harmony of the families, the freedom of the individuals, the eagerness to change the status quo and ameliorate the scope of future events. The zoonotic origin of Covid-19 and other types of coronaviruses reflects the importance of human health as well, because germs and bacteria rapidly propagate. Thus, prevention is the best instrument for diminishing the high level of infection. In the Balkan region, the phrase “*prevention is better than cure*”²⁷ is very famous. This phrase was originally coined by Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch philosopher and scientist. Nevertheless, having a healthy mode of life is indispensable, because like this we are not only protecting ourselves, but also the animals and the environment. Humans cannot survive without nature. However, nature can survive without human beings. Nature is definitely more powerful. However, labour inequalities existed since many centuries ago. The necessity to reduce the social pressure of migrants and diminishing the vestige of labour inequalities will definitely change the scope of many work policies. Most importantly, this will no longer create disparities among many affected regions in the world. What is the forthcoming situation of the world? No one knows, but we will discover in the future.

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²⁶ (2020, April). *Respecting Human Rights in the time of Covid-19 Pandemic: Examining Companies' Responsibilities for Workers and Affected Communities*. Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB), p.6

²⁷ A phrase coined by the Dutch Philosopher Desideirus Erasmus

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