



Pádraig CARMODY, Gerard McCANN, Clodagh COLLERAN & Ciara O'HALLORAN (Eds.), COVID- 19 in the Global South. Impacts and Responses

Dianine Censon



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/irpp/3580>

DOI: 10.4000/irpp.3580

ISSN: 2706-6274

Publisher

International Public Policy Association

Printed version

Number of pages: 236-238

ISSN: 2679-3873

Electronic reference

Dianine Censon, "Pádraig CARMODY, Gerard McCANN, Clodagh COLLERAN & Ciara O'HALLORAN (Eds.), COVID- 19 in the Global South. Impacts and Responses", *International Review of Public Policy* [Online], 5:2 | 2023, Online since 01 September 2023, connection on 26 March 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/irpp/3580> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/irpp.3580>



The text only may be used under licence CC BY 4.0. All other elements (illustrations, imported files) are "All rights reserved", unless otherwise stated.

Book Review

Pádraig CARMODY, Gerard McCANN, Clodagh COLLERAN & Ciara O'HALLORAN (Eds.), *COVID- 19 in the Global South. Impacts and Responses*

Dianine Censon

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Tocantins, Brazil

COVID- 19 in the Global South. Impacts and Responses

Pádraig Carmody

Gerard McCann

Clodagh Colleran

Ciara O'Halloran

Carmody, Pádraig; McCann, Gerard; Colleran, Clodagh, & O'Halloran, Ciara, Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2021, 195 p., ISBN 9781529215885.
2021

At the time of writing this review, 662 million cases of Covid-19 have been recorded worldwide, with more than seven million deaths reported. These data are publicly available on the World Health Organization Health Emergency Dashboard, which also provides an interactive world map showing the Covid-19 situation by country, territory, or area. In analyzing this map, a question arises: how have different countries and regions been dealing with the pandemic? Moreover, how have developing countries, with similar socioeconomic and political characteristics, dealt with one of the most challenging of worldwide crises?

The edited collection, 'COVID-19 in the Global South – Impacts and Responses', part of a series of "Rapid Response" publications on the coronavirus pandemic, reflects on these questions. Edited by Pádraig Carmody, Gerard McCann, Clodagh Colleran, and Ciara O'Halloran, it examines the effects of the crisis on countries in the Global South, including issues such as the economy, development, climate change, human rights, labor, migration, inequality, and gender. Other relevant titles in this series include 'Social Problems in the Age of COVID-19', 'Researching in the Age of COVID-19', 'Socially Distanced Activism', and 'Social Work and the COVID-19 Pandemic', and may be of interest to public policy researchers and practitioners worldwide. This book is part of a growing tendency, observed since the 1990s, of drawing attention to the Global South where 75% of the world's population lives.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part, 'Perspectives on the Pandemic', consists of four chapters offering various perspectives on the pandemic and serving as a foundation for subsequent discussions. While these four chapters are not directly connected, they explore the theme of development, its relationship with liberalism and neoliberalism, the intersection of multiple crises and cross-sectorial policies, and the international human rights debate and its limitations. It is worth noting that the second part uses specific contexts to reflect on globalized discussions, making the first part a necessary foundation for understanding the discussions in the subsequent sections.

This second part, 'Social and Economic Impacts', presents six chapters covering topics such as conditions in prisons and human rights, the population of informal urban settlements, economic sustainability, gig-economy jobs and workers, and the unequal political responses resulting from previous economic weakness and macroeconomic vulnerability in certain regions.

This part is noteworthy for the timeliness of its content. Researchers and practitioners interested in specific themes (such as Malawi's prison system in Chapter 5, or the economies of African countries in Chapter 8), or in broader conceptual and structural discussions (such as political action in Chapter 7, or the precarization of work and employment in Chapter 9) will find the analyses in this section valuable for future studies on the post-pandemic era.

The third and largest part, 'Responses', comprises seven chapters offering a mix which includes: responses already implemented (Chapter 11 addresses gender-based violence during the pandemic, while Chapters 12 and 14 discuss the psychosocial implications of Covid-19 restrictions); global inequality (Chapter 13 examines lessons learned from Europe and how African countries can leverage their cultural and economic similarities and differences for public and political planning, while Chapter 15 does the same in a broader way); and suggestions for solutions along with predictions of potential future scenarios (Chapters 16 and 17).

This book offers a diverse range of perspectives on the impacts of, and responses to, the pandemic. It also facilitates a deeper understanding of the main aspects of globalization that shape political action and development. As Guidorzi (Chapter 11) points out, when an epidemic arrives, there is a tendency for governments to shift their focus and resources to the primary

health-oriented response to this virus or disease (p. 121). Although the author is referring to the impact of this shift of focus on the availability of, or access to, routine healthcare services for women and girls, this is a reality that may also be observed in other areas, such as labor flexibilization and deregulation – themes that in many countries were left in the shadow of emergency measures to contain the spread of the virus. A significant decrease in accountability has also been justified by the emergence of actions and public spending to contain the virus.

Some other key themes include: the acknowledgment, as stated by McCann and Matenga, that Covid-19 has disproportionately affected marginalized groups (p. 162) (as may be seen in chapters 5, 6, 9, and 11); the implications of this for concepts such as biopolitics, biopower, and necropolitics; and questions of who is responsible for policymaking, which populations are more vulnerable, and whether economic concerns take precedence over healthcare or whether they are mutually reinforcing. While the book does not provide definitive answers to these questions, the editors recognize the need to rethink and reinvigorate institutions of global governance (p. 193). Furthermore, the book could also encourage new research into the representativeness (or lack of representativeness) of the population in the very highest offices of state.

Representativeness is one of the less-than-positive points of the book. Although the authors also raise important issues about spatial dynamics, liberalization, developing economies, globalization, protectionism, interdependence, and other concepts related to the functioning of the world and the representation of the Global South in the international system, there is a lack of representativeness in the countries and regions discussed in the book. There are seven chapters dedicated to African countries and contexts, one to Latin America, but not a single chapter about the Asian context. There could be several reasons for this imbalance, such as the growth in interest in economic development that some African countries seem to have been going through, for example, based on the reflections made by Stein in Chapter 8. The result is that large chunks of the Global South remain underrepresented in the collection, and have not been reflected in any part of the edited volume.

Finally, the political context of the rise of right-wing populism in the 2010s plays a significant role in shaping national and international politics and behaviors during the pandemic, as addressed in several chapters (such as 1, 3, and 13). As Tumwesigye, Biribawa, Nyaberi, Namanda, Atukunda, and Aye bale highlight (chapter 14), Malawi had presidential elections in the middle of the pandemic (p. 150), while in 2020 and 2021 other countries of the Global South, such as Chile, Bolivia, and Peru, also held presidential elections. This is an important topic not only in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also in terms of understanding the economy, development, culture, and social aspects of the Global South, and the book sets the stage for further discussion on this topic.