NR35 / Financialization of Social Policy in the Global South

Topic : Research

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Financialization and its associated mechanisms have permeated all aspects of our daily lives. Financialization can be understood as a common denominator term when the literature mentions 'financialization of social policy', 'financialization of the economy', 'financialization of food', 'financialization of the global economy', 'bio-financialization', 'financialization of everyday life', and many more similar references. Krippner (2005, p. 174), based on the work of Arrighi (1994), defines financialization as "a pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production". Aalbers (2018) builds on Epstein's (2005) work on the financialization of the global economy to provide an elaborate definition of financialization. He defines it as "the increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements, and narratives, at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms (including financial institutions), states, and households" (Aalbers, 2018, p. 4).

Financialization is a complex economic process having deep interlinkages with other phenomena like globalization, marketization, commodification, and neoliberalism (Pereira, 2017). It is a transformational process that changes the contours of economic systems along with the processes of marketization and commodification. The above conceptualizations of financialization may present a picture that it is a new and recent phenomenon, but Harvey (2005) contends that it was present earlier as an expression of broader processes towards the neoliberalization of society. On the surface, it looks like financialization is a force to which the state apparatus can only react by moulding itself to financialized processes. It tends to mask the role of the state in promoting financialization. Rather, the state generally becomes a proactive agent for taking the goals of financialization further by designing policies conducive to it. The paradigm of enabling markets in the economy serves this purpose of development of financial markets by creating a conducive regulatory and governance structure that supports further marketization. Lavinas et al. (2022) term it the financialization of social policy where finance captures the ways of social production (p. 15). It hints at the "shift of social policy from a mechanism for equalizing opportunities and preventing risks to an instrument for private companies' – especially financial firms – expansion, accumulation, and profit, in addition to inequalities" (Lavinas et al., 2022, p. 15).

This panel aims to foster a dialogue across diverse urban contexts in the Global South, characterised by unique policy regimes, to examine the pervasiveness of financialization in social policies. The panel is open to the papers discussiing empirical cases of sectoral policies, policy histories of various social policies, policy case study analysis, innovative and contextual methodological tools, and context-sensitive theoretical approaches. The session aims to develop knowledge base on the larger processes of financialization, commodification, and marketization embedded in social policy design and implementation.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel session welcomes papers addressing the following key themes:

• Sectoral: Tracing the mechanisms of financialization across sectors like housing, food, water, educations, health, and other welfare policies addressing the social and economic inequality in their local contexts.

• Policy history: How mechanisms of financialization, commodification, and marketization have historically penetrated into the social policy discourses and framings. Research addressing any of the social policy sectors with appropriate historicization in the financial context can be a part of this panel.

• Social and Economic Inequality Outcomes: How the outcomes of these larger process of financialization are manifested in the society across social and economic dimensions?

• Policy exclusion: How the processes of financialization create exclusionary policy designs and

implementation?