

**Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Conditions of Precarity:  
Rethinking Strategies for Socio-Economic Development  
and Labour Union Solidarity**

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**ABSTRACT.**

At the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century, crises-ridden global capitalism has been breeding certain varieties of the regime of authoritarian neoliberalism from country to country. In the global North against the background of the enduring post-9/11 war on terror and the protracted aftermath of the 2008 global economic recession, this regime has taken the form of a violent state-capital class response to the maintenance of the capitalist order. And in the Global South, particularly in East and Southeast Asia with the re-emergence of China as an economic superpower, this regime embodies an ideological project of a faction of the political-business elites to justify the embedding of a neoliberal economy in an authoritarian political framework.

The rise of authoritarian neoliberalism as manifested in the surge of right-wing populism across the world today is revealing to be a symptom of the crises of the ideology, politics and policies of liberal democracy, social democracy, and neoliberalism that have brought about the current state of massive precariousness between and within societies. Instead of heightened class conflicts in the context of neoliberal capitalism's widening inter-class inequalities, what we are witnessing are intra-class sections of the labouring precariats pitted against one another.

But while the liberal-democratic and neoliberal-capitalist elite order is now being challenged from both the right and the left of the political-economic spectrum, it is the right-wing personalities and groups such as the populists Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines and Donald Trump in the US and the neo-nationalist parties in Europe that are capturing this crisis moment to their advantage by effectively mobilizing the legitimate fear, anger, hopes and aspirations of the insecure multitude. The intensifying precarity of human psychological and societal conditions is proving to be mutually reinforcing with the increasing popularity of strongmen's authoritarian neoliberalism.

Progressive strategies to address the psychology, politics, and economics of these insecurities are therefore most urgently needed. To this end, using relevant economic indicators and concrete development experiences from both developed and developing countries, the paper will examine the plausibility and scope for the time being of a paradigm shift of socio-economic policies from growth obsession to industrialization, full employment, and basic incomes. The paper will also propose the organisation of socio-political movements that shall rediscover the great unconsummated collective endeavour to simultaneously attain and struggle for the synergistic virtues of political-civil freedoms, socio-economic egalitarianism, and the sense of communitarianism and human solidarity.