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Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi

Araştırma Makaleleri
Research Articles

Strategic Importance of The Ganja Gap in The New Security Scenario

Yeni Güvenlik Senaryosunda
Gence Koridoru'nun Stratejik Önemi

*Miguel Borja BERNABÉ-
CRESPO
Alejandro VALLINA
RODRÍGUEZ*

Euroscepticism at The National and European Levels and its Reflection in the European Parliament Roll Call Votes

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Duygu Özlük
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Promosyonu: Hindistan Örneği

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KİTAP İNCELEMESİ / BOOK REVIEW

**CONSUMPTION CORRIDORS: LIVING A
GOOD LIFE WITHIN SUSTAINABLE LIMITS**
**Doris Fuchs, Marlyne Sahakian, Tobias
Gumbert, Antonietta Di Giulio, Michael
Maniates, Sylvia Lorek, Antonia Graf**
(London: Routledge, 2021)

Özlem TÜRKOĞLU*

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As a part of The Routledge Focus on Environment and Sustainability series, *Consumption Corridors: Living Good Life within Sustainable Limits* (2021) introduces the concept of consumption corridors and provides an overview of living a good life within a world of ecological and social limits. The book draws an overall picture of the core aspects; consumption corridors as a pathway for fostering and envisioning sustainable transformation of the necessary social change in pursuit of living a good life. The book comprises of five chapters: *Living well within limits*, *Our vision: The good life*, *Consumption corridors as a vehicle to pursue the good life*, *What's stopping us?* and *Visionary change: Corridors as a pathway to the good life*. The book also includes annexes that contain useful

* Lisans Öğrencisi, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi Üniversitesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, ORCID: 0000-0002-6779-4365, turkogluozzlem@gmail.com

information helping its readers by providing essential background on the research topic of consumption corridors in relation to the pursuit of the good life within limits.

Chapter I offers an overview of the concept of living well for everyone within the limits by focusing on the vision of the good life. It starts with the emphasis that “the most essential condition for living a good life is the ability to satisfy needs” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 1). This statement argues that a needs-based approach is utilized to reach out the good life within necessary conditions, but there is a need to think about the consumption corridors for plenty of people who are not living a good life under diverse and unfair conditions. Yet, the chapter elaborates that the consumption patterns of some people are likely to constrain others as some consumption corridors are unequally enjoyed to reach a good life.

In this regard, for future generations, negative outputs of consumption patterns might be seen inevitable within. The chapter concludes by referring to the fact that environmental and social dimensions of consumption are not experienced in the same way. Rather, these dimensions are mostly separated from wellbeing and security, so they are detrimental for the achievement of the good life for all.

Chapter II is concerned with the conditions for living the good life. As the book offers that everybody can live well within the limits, this chapter concentrates on the features of living the good life. First, it takes a distinct approach by focusing on the concept of the good life. It indicates that the positivity of this good life perspective relates humanity to search for freedom. In this sense, the chapter correlates the good life for everyone with “[the] vision that all people can adhere to” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 7). Significantly, Chapter II articulates that “talking about a good life is not the same as talking about life being good in terms of morals, ethical rules of conduct, norms, or societal obligations” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 7). It simply deals with the interpretation of the concept of the good life while focusing on what the good life is.

On the one hand, the chapter sought to attain a definition of the good life that depends on perceptions and perspectives which are distinctive factors beyond people. On the other hand, it is specified by correlating the good life with philosophical thought, based on different approaches demonstrating the possibility for societies to ensure that all people have an opportunity to live a good life. It further places attention on the conditions of satisfaction as well as necessary factors for living the good life humans value. Moreover, the needs-based approach helps to comprehend what the good life is not.

However, the needs-based approach requires to be distinguished from desires and satisfiers.

At this point, the book explains what these distinctions are with the use of figures. It is crucial for backing the good life within the limits as the book mentions “the good life from a needs-based perspective then, is life in which individuals are able to satisfy their needs and have access to the ecological and social resources necessary for doing so” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 17). Furthermore, another concept to reach a good life is discussed. Thus, it would be possible to mention that “the good life is under siege”, confronting with enormous obstacles such as deeper inequalities, deprivation and so on (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 19).

Then, the chapter continues by providing example of the recent developments to reinforce the idea of wellbeing as represented by governments, societies, nation-states through social security, education, and health policies within the depiction of quantitative indicators of the quality of life. It underlines the significant impact of the participation of all people in shaping society on the basis of the good life as it is illustrated with accelerated urbanization. Yet, the book sequentially discusses that this urbanization process has its cons, whilst it also provides opportunities “to shape patterns of production and consumption within minimum environmental impact and maximum social harmony and justice” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 20).

Chapter III fundamentally remarks the importance of consumption corridors as powerful instruments in terms of pursuing the good life within the limits. It stresses that “consumption corridors allow us to envision and implement the social change needed to make living well within limits as reality” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 33). The chapter focuses on making a correlation between minimum and maximum standards. Minimum standards enable every person to live a good life while maximum standards guarantee the chance of others for living a good life. In a sense, minimum consumption standards are analyzed as necessary elements to ensure people to satisfy their needs and enable access to the required resources. Indeed, the gap between minimum and maximum consumption standards is also viewed as producing sustainable corridors that allow individuals to make their consumption in a free, democratic, and sustainable way.

However, I contend that this correlation mostly lacks the discussion of negative impacts of those standards as the book only covers the standards of great importance for all to live a good life and it often focuses on the concept of consumption

corridors combining notions of human needs, choices, and freedom for the base of the good life for all. For instance,

the very function of corridors, of minimum and maximum consumption standards, is that all individuals now and in the future can fulfill their needs. In consequence, the definition of minimum and maximum consumption standards relates directly to the question of opportunities for needs satisfaction, which is to satisfiers. Minimum consumption standards directly follow from human needs and societal agreement on opportunities for their satisfaction. Maximum consumption standards must then be defined in ways that guarantee the ability of all individuals to meet minimum consumption standards (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 35).

As this example illustrates, these standards mainly contribute to what all people pursue as of the good life regarding the fulfillment as well as satisfaction of the needs of the fundamental aim for living the good life. Although it refers to living the good life within the limits, the definition precisely requires a broad focus on the adverse impacts of those efforts influencing the way we pursue the good life. Therefore, the concept of consumption corridors bolsters structural conditions for prosperous consumption and wellbeing. However, there is a need to consider that “consumption corridors changing over time” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 37), and this changing process mostly creates the need for a dynamic nature of such corridors.

It further shows the limits to consumption. Those limits are highlighted with the maxima of consumption corridors meaning that this concept enables an ability for others to live a good within limits and also concerns with ecological efficiency standards, welfare, housing size, transport systems, democracy, and food consumption. Thus, it is perceived by authors that those limits to consumption are not visionary ideas serving to the good life and are often seen in a coercive environment. Still, those limits are necessary as they offer freedom to live a good life while preserving the chances of others to do so and to provide an efficient consumption within lower and upper limits. Here, the chapter points out the role of participatory processes of people as an essential factor of corridor development through social change for the pursuit of good life. Thus, chapter III simply indicates that consumption corridors are not solely about limitations on consumption, rather, these are about understanding and making a proper use of consumption limits through living the good life.

Chapter IV elaborates the obstacles of pursuing the good life by analyzing specific limits such as the limits to the salvation potential of technological innovation. At this point, the Chapter implies that the reliability on technology as the only option for human prosperity. Yet, this optimism mostly results in dangers to the good life. The chapter points out that technology is necessary in terms of innovations for the good life. It is also underscored that there is a need to consider the world of challenges we live that would often bring about setbacks. All these correlations encourage to think about how to live within limits which of them mostly undermine the good life. At this point, I assert that these limits are also required for the pursuit of the good life as the book offers “all of which points the challenging requirements of good life visioning: seeing clearly the limits of everyday stories about the wizardry of technology, the power of efficiency, the centrality of the economies, and the role of freedom in democracy” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 55).

Then, the chapter analyzes the limits of efficiency and markets by claiming that gaining efficiency is costly in terms of our environment of production and consumption patterns. In many instances, it is indicated that higher efficiency leads to the active consumption, however, it is necessary to know that efficiency should be provided within economic and social arrangements. Otherwise, it would be possible to see negative outcomes of focusing excessively on efficiency through consumption corridors without limits. Briefly, there should be combined focus on efficiency and sufficiency by considering what is really needed for the aim of the good life for all.

The Chapter further tackles with the limits to consumer sovereignty and responsibility by viewing consumers as dangerous. Also, the Chapter concentrates on the limits against consumers, which are necessarily applied by promoting collective action through sustainable consumption. Therefore, the idea of putting the limits on consumption choices is not problematic for the good life. These are, rather, viewed as necessary to emancipate people through sustainable conditions of social change for living the good life. In short, all these limits are for paving the way in pursuit of social change, and these frames of reliability on such myths endanger the good life for all. This explains us the need of social change without reliability on any myths in the pursuit of the good life, as the book mentions “we need social change that facilitates rewarding, affirming, and meaningful citizen participation instead of consumer choice. Consumption corridors offer just that opportunity” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 70).

The book concludes with the Chapter V. This chapter highlights the key elements that the book has been covering. The conclusive part of this book mentions that “corridors as a pathway to the good life” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 71) and simply argues what humans need to construct the good life they pursue and what kind of changes they need. Then, it gives specific examples centering on the topic “what’s stopping us?” through the pursuit of the good life by considering that “the good life is under siege” (Fuchs et al., 2021, p. 19). In this regard, the book urges to consider about the social change just as consumption corridors offer. It briefly expresses the need of the social change that succeed people within limits and enable them a good life they pursue. It is worth to mention that the book examined the changes that humanity needs for the good life. This examination focuses on both positive perspectives that humanity benefit from and negative perspectives that would lead to negative results for all.

Then it provides retention that outlines the consumption corridors as key instruments for the pursuit of the good life and to predict sustainability for all. However, this scholarly book particularly indicates prevalent truths of the topic of consumption corridors through the attainment of the good life so that it is quite difficult to criticize all the chapters in detail which offer us generally acceptable information of what we need to fulfill and be adhered to achieve our vision of living the good life.

In sum, this weighty tome provides a vivacious explanation and a guide for understanding the concept of consumption corridors together with the needed social change that is observed within diverse perspectives through the desired pursuit of living the good life. Yet, this observation of diverse perspectives is enriched by figures and examples in the book which offers far more reasonable analysis of what has been tackled within chapters. The conclusions, drawn from the analyses in the chapters, are fascinating and well-referred. While repetitive patterns of chapters create an impression of going through the motions, this tome adds rich and relative insights into considerable instruments for the pursuit of living a good life within sustainable limits whose remedy lies with the consumption corridors. Overall, this book is contingent on the desire for a good life to exist within limits through social change. The systematic, luminous, and up-to-date content covered in each chapter can be of considerable use for anyone else who is interested in sustainability studies, and it is thus worth reading and understanding.

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