

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in the Context of Pandemic Vulnerability: Analysis of the Film, 'Armutszeugnis Corona'*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse a documentary film about the relationship between the coronavirus pandemic and poverty and discuss whether it has a multidimensional basis in relation to these problems. The documentary film *Armutszeugnis Corona* ('Corona, Sign of Poverty') was included in the sample as it deals with the vulnerable groups most affected by the coronavirus pandemic in Germany. In the article, the problems in the documentary were analysed by a mixed method based on the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) and (post-)migrant sociocultural claims, and therefore it has also been associated with some related formal elements. The work, in which solutions were also discussed, revealed how people struggling with poverty or with low income in a socio-economically developed country - especially those with a migration background - were affected by the pandemic. The documentary also highlighted statistical gaps in the coverage of the pandemic due to certain taboos associated with the law on the protection of personal data. According to the findings, *Armutszeugnis Corona* criticised the populist cultural claims made by some media outlets about people with migrant backgrounds being the most affected by the pandemic and highlighted barriers to access to education, the labour market and health care, housing and working conditions, the enforceability of data protection law—it is taboo to ask questions about ethnicity in a post-migrant country—and language (German) deficiencies as vital problems. In conclusion, it was evaluated that the segments of society hit by the pandemic also experienced the multidimensional poverty index adversely.

Keywords: Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Inequality, Pandemic Vulnerability, Coronavirus Outbreak, Post-Migrant Paradigm, Documentary Film Analysis.

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Salgın Kırılmalı Bağlamında Çok Boyutlu Yoksulluk Endeksi: 'Armutszeugnis Corona' Filminin Çözümlemesi

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, koronavirüs pandemisi ve yoksulluk arasındaki ilişkiyi konu alan bir belgeseli analiz etmeyi ve bu sorunlarla ilgili olarak çok boyutlu bir temele sahip olup olmadığını tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Örnekleme Almanya'da koronavirüs salgınından en çok etkilenen kırılmalı grupları ele alması bakımından *Armutszeugnis*

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Corona ('Corona, Yoksulluk İşareti') belgesel filmi dahil edilmiştir. Makalede, belgeseldeki sorunlar çok boyutlu yoksulluk indeksi (MPI) model alınarak ve göçmen sonrası sosyokültürel iddialara dayanarak karma bir yöntemle çözümlenmiştir; bu nedenle ilgili biçimsel bazı öğelerle ilişki kurulmuştur. Çözüm önerilerinin de tartışıldığı çalışma, sosyo-ekonomik açıdan gelişmiş bir ülkede yoksullukla mücadele eden ya da düşük gelirli insanların—özellikle göçmenlik geçmişine sahip olanların—pandemiden nasıl etkilendiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca belgeselde, kişisel verilerin korunmasına ilişkin kanunla ilişkili belirli tabular nedeniyle, salgına dair istatistiki boşluklar ele alınmıştır. Bulgulara göre, *Armutszeugnis Corona*, bazı medya kuruluşlarının, pandemiden en çok etkilenen göçmen kökenli insanlar hakkındaki popülist kültürel iddialarını eleştirmiştir ve eğitime, işgücü piyasasına ve sağlık hizmetlerine erişimdeki engelleri, barınma ve çalışma koşullarını, veri koruma yasasının uygulanabilirliğini—bir göçmen sonrası ülkede etnisiteyle ilgili sorular sormanın tabu olmasını—ve dil (Almanca) yetersizliğini önemli sorunlar olarak vurgulamıştır. Sonuç olarak yapılan değerlendirmede salgının vurduğu toplum kesimlerinin çok boyutlu yoksulluk endeksini olumsuz yönde deneyimlediği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çok Boyutlu Yoksulluk Endeksi, Eşitsizlik, Salgın Kırılabilirliği, Koronavirüs Salgını, Göçmen-sonrası Paradigma, Belgesel Film Çözümlemesi.

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INTRODUCTION

Vulnerable groups are the most likely to be affected by disasters, epidemics, pandemics, wars, economic and climate crises, and various forms of discrimination, exploitation, violence, and hate speech. The vulnerability of the groups can increase according to intersections such as age, class, gender, and race and affect the number and severity of social, individual, cultural, and medical problems (see Daoust 2020; Michna Joanna & Six-Şaşmaz 2021; Rashedi et al. 2020; Whitehead et al. 2021). Low-income groups such as migrants, refugees, and people of migration origin are also often among these disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Some findings suggest that the coronavirus mostly hits vulnerable groups, such as low-income people, in socioeconomic, medical, and psychological multidimensional ways (Aigner et al. 2022; Bettge et al. 2022; Cramer 2022; Culen 2023).

This study aims to analyze a documentary on the relationship between the coronavirus pandemic, poverty and post-migrant paradigms and whether it has multidimensional or one-dimensional cultural features. Because documentary cinema is a critical and transformative tool for analyzing and critiquing public policies and is employed to address various dimensions of the coronavirus pandemic. The documentary film *Armutszeugnis Corona*, produced by Joanna Michna and Candan Six-Şaşmaz (2021) and broadcast by the German public television channel ZDF, was selected as the sample. In order to analyze the selected film, the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) as a method was preferred with a socio-cultural approach (see Alkire & Foster 2011: 301; Townsend et al. 1997; UNDP & OPHI 2023: 4 for MPI).

Various documentaries and film studies on public health policies exist. Moreover, before producing fictional films, documentaries convey the 'here and now' or the very recent

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past to present and future generations as emergency services. According to Marc Kosciejew, collective remembrance of the coronavirus pandemic is an obligation; by documenting it, possible future health crises can be better anticipated. “Put differently, how can or should remembering the coronavirus pandemic be ‘done’ and, by extension, how is it currently ‘being’ remembered? (2022: 20). *Armutszeugnis Corona* (2021) should be considered in the context of individual, collective and public reminder of the glocal pandemic struggle. Georgios Pappas, who analyzed certain documentaries and fictional films about the pandemic, stated in his article that these could become historical documents for the viewers and also potential health literacy materials, and listed the themes emerging in the films as follows:

Major narratives include: the inadequate early response of governments and international organizations, the heroic actions of healthcare practitioners, the social effect of lockdown (both as a spirit-raising inducer of togetherness and as a disproportionately harsh burden on minorities and underprivileged), the individual effect of lockdown on families, and the historical significance of certain major pandemic events (Pappas 2022: 1).

According to *Armutszeugnis Corona*, during the pandemic in Germany, groups with a migration background (*Migrationshintergrund*) and experiencing poverty accounted for a significant proportion of infected patients in intensive care units. Starting with such (post-)migrant condition in the documentary, this article asks the following research questions: (1) What is the documentary’s coverage of the groups with a migration background most affected by the coronavirus pandemic according to the multidimensional poverty index? (2) Considering a holistic evaluation of the documentary, does it have a one-dimensional cultural reductionist coverage, which is a glocal problem in the migration context, and what kind of aesthetics is used in this regard? Analyzing the documentary *Armutszeugnis Corona* and answering these questions and interpretations is important for making predictions about health literacy, public practices, everyday and structural changes.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, this study models the categorization of the multidimensional poverty index (MDI), which covers ten indicators, into pandemic-relevant categories by relating them to the coverage of education, health, and living standards in the documentary. These ten indicators are (1) nutrition; (2) child mortality; (3) years of schooling; (4) school attendance); (5) cooking fuel; (6) sanitation; (7) drinking water; (8) electricity; (9) housing; and (10) assets (Alkire & Foster 2011: 301; Townsend et al. 1997; UNDP & OPHI 2023: 4). The

categorizations in this paper are subtitled as ‘access to education and labor’, ‘access to health services and data protection law,’ ‘language competencies,’ and ‘housing and working conditions.’ Only these indicators from MDI were found in the documentary film according to the framework. Although sociological problems are emphasized, the cultural elements of the documentary should also be addressed to a certain extent, paying attention to aesthetic elements.

It is impossible to distinguish the social from the cultural (see Rein 2017), as this documentary also points to sociocultural issues together. Therefore, cultural claims are also included in the categorization. Because the documentary criticizes various essentialist cultural discourses in the media, it is necessary to understand whether this documentary differs from some previous discourses and representational tendencies in the context of migration (see Akasoy 2021; Landry 2022; Langhans 2023). Representational tendencies are dominated by a visual culture of migration that lacked the socio-economic and political dimension of migrants as rule-breakers, offenders, unwilling and resistant to integration in Germany, and perpetrators of their own archaic traditions. These culturally reduced patterns of reproduction are not unique to Germany, they are glocal (see Cengiz & Eklund Karlsson 2021; Kehya 2023; Wetzstein et al. 2024). Therefore, cultural portraits should not be neglected. Accordingly, the problems in the documentary were categorized, and subheadings were created according to the multidimensional poverty index (MPI). In approaching the content of *Armutszeugnis Corona*, which deals with the intersection of health, poverty/immigration, and culture, it is essential to examine the problems it addresses and its potential to innovate with its solutions, considering its aesthetic qualities. According to Ömer Alkın, when, as in the case of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and migration, the connection between necropolitical dynamics and the otherness of migration can be inferred and empirically investigated, film can serve as an epistemological and aesthetic resource in this sensory field, making things visible and talkable (2023: 37).

The documentary’s use of off-screen music and sound adds a unique layer of meaning at the cognitive and emotional levels. These aesthetic details are not just embellishments but essential for understanding the documentary’s cultural, social, and health discourse alongside its content. Because ‘how’ a film is told is as important as ‘what’ it tells. It is, therefore, important to mark off-screen music, effects and sounds in the documentary.

Vulnerability, Poverty and (Post-)migrant Conditions

Poverty is a significant problem worldwide and has vicious circular sociocultural dimensions in many aspects, such as health, education, and law. Poverty, especially access to food, health

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services, and security, which are the most basic vital needs, is also related to being a migrant or having a migration background. Otherness and vulnerability in the context of migration often concern newcomers or those with long-established migrant origins.

News reports, programs and social media content published various perspectives on the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups and vice versa globally. More specifically, in some populist media discourses in Germany, certain news was produced that individuals with a migration background were the driving force in the pandemic on the grounds of some cultural rituals (see Schuler & Geisler 2020; Tiede 2020 for the news article). On the other hand, some anti-discriminatory critical content has also been produced. For example, the documentary *Armutszeugnis Corona* (2021), produced in the German language, deals with which groups in Germany were most affected by the coronavirus, why the pandemic hit them, and which solutions were developed. The focus is on their multidimensional socioeconomic layers against culturally reductionist prejudiced news productions. As conceptualized by Bauman and May, otherness corresponds to the groups one cannot access. Those outside the groups one belongs to and understand that make up us are others, and this can make distinctions and draw boundaries in the world (2019: 54-55). Therefore, the negative impact of people outside a class and ethnic group during the coronavirus pandemic points to a situation with socioeconomic faces and cultural stigmatization. Poverty, with its cultural aspects, is also a factor in marginalization and often leads to the vulnerability of individuals and groups.

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) captures acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards faced simultaneously, in addition to traditional monetary poverty measures. Other challenges, such as conflict, environmental threats, governance, and economic uncertainty, mutually exacerbate multidimensional poverty. Local institutions and international organizations must be involved (UNDP & OPHI 2023: 16). Therefore, the multidimensional character of the poverty experienced in the transnational and (post)migration era calls for multinational, international, and local interventions.

A multidimensional approach to poverty requires a multidimensional approach to inclusion. According to Foroutan, all parties should be involved in the negotiation process in a post-migrant society. The established cultural, ethnic, religious, and national elites must also integrate into the negotiating society and recognize that positions, access, resources, and norms must be renegotiated (Foroutan 2015: 3). *Armutszeugnis Corona*, a product of public broadcasting, reveals the need to revise (post-)migrant discourses and pursue and ensure rights

in extraordinary circumstances. According to Ayşe Çağlar post migrant critique has created opportunities for power and resistance against the exclusionary structures of cultural institutions and policies:

Very much like subaltern studies, the adopted multi-perspectivity of migrant strategies is expected to reveal new histories, memories, narratives and biographical resources that remained obscured within the current integrationist and multicultural frameworks. It aims to go beyond the dominant tropes of (cultural) community of multicultural perspectives, which confine the sources of migrant action and biographies to cultural/ethnic communitarian origins (Çağlar 2016: 956).

In Germany, which recognized itself as a country of immigration as it entered the millennium, the population with a migration background made up the most vulnerable segment in the coronavirus pandemic despite having one of the largest economies in the world by 2021. It is similar to that in (post-)migrant countries such as the USA, Hong Kong, Canada (Hearst et al. 2021; Spitzer 2024). The situation reminds us of Rosanvallon's findings at the turn of the millennium; taking the French welfare state as an example, he recognizes that welfare states are in a financial predicament. When attributing an economic and social meaning to the value of equality, skepticism about equality is an obstacle to the concept of the welfare state (Rosanvallon 2004: 17-33). When one approaches the problems in the documentary from the perspective of poverty theory, the pandemic reveals an important fact, especially regarding social and health indicators in Germany, which has been experiencing migration for over 60 years. Answers to the discussions on critical and sensitive problems, which are seen as taboo, such as asking about ethnic or religious origin, are sought from social-cultural perspectives. At the same time, the protection of personal data (Eur-Lex 2018) and the fact that research on ethnic origin is a kind of taboo, precisely having migration origin or not, and the effects of a taboo on data collection for vulnerable demographic groups is one problem in the documentary. It is possible to evaluate the law on the protection of personal data that considers it taboo to ask questions about people's origins and ethnicity in a post-migrant framework. Issues such as employment, housing, language skills and access to health care must be addressed to break the cultural and political taboo surrounding migration. Is Germany a post-migrant country in connection with the health crisis shown in the documentary? Fatima El-Tayeb addressed this question in 2016. Despite some progress, Europe's failure to confront whiteness is taking its toll on migrants who have become part of Europe but are often ignored, marginalized and seen as a threat. Their presence is often recognized as a crisis and ignored in the formation of a new European identity (2016: 6).

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Plot of Armutszeugnis Corona

Armutszeugnis Corona is a documentary broadcasted on ZDF, a German public television, following the second year of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. By interviewing various experts, politicians, and members of the public and collecting some data, the documentary in the German language explores the reasons for being most affected by the pandemic at the intersection of migration background, poverty, and culture. This documentary explores various solutions to better protect vulnerable groups against future pandemics by addressing a problem that existed when it was shown. The starting point of the documentary consists of the following two questions:

In the second year of the pandemic, a sensitive debate is becoming more explosive: Are specific population segments, such as those with a migration background, the drivers of infection? Or is poverty responsible because some people are more affected by corona than others? (Michna Joanna & Six-Şaşmaz 2021, ll. 3-6)

Various stakeholders are being heard to answer these questions: a multicultural outreach team, a family of Lebanese origin, Thomas Voshaar, head of the Moers Lung Clinic, Ute Teichert, President of the Federal Association of Physicians in Public Health Care, Prof. Ulrich Kelber, Prof. Ulrich Wolfgang Kelber, Federal Data Protection Officer, Martin Hikel, Mayor of Neukölln, and Hirjeb Ajeti and a former elderly care worker who lost her job.

Categorizations in terms of Multidimensional Poverty in the Migration Context

In *Armutszeugnis Corona*, certain media organizations that show groups with a migration background as virus spreaders through various events, such as tribal weddings in populist discourses in the cultural context, are given as examples. However, against the reductionist approaches of culture, groups that do not follow the rules and are not careful, the documentary also makes people with a migration background speak. By shifting the microphone to different actors such as doctors, sociologists, migration experts, and mayors during the pandemic, the multi-layered socioeconomic infrastructure of the issue is revealed by moving away from the essentialist “cultural” context. Thus, disadvantaged groups, whether they have a migration background or not, appear to have more vulnerable conditions during the pandemic.

It is possible to reach categorizations by examining poverty from a multidimensional perspective in this paper, evaluating social and health indicators and cultural and structural perspectives on poverty (see Rein 2017, for poverty and culture relation). Using descriptions such as “people with a migration background” or “groups with migration background” in

Armutszeugnis Corona has an inclusive approach. When one evaluates the fact that “immigrant” descriptions are still used in other scientific studies, media interactions, and daily discourses, even if the description of migrant origin (*migrationshintergrund* or *migrationsgeschichte*) in the language of the documentary is still seen as a label that indicates that migration and belonging discussions are still ongoing, it is a more inclusive approach than labels such as immigrant, foreigner or “kanack.” (see Bick 2021; Muysken & Rott 2013 for the derogatory and insulting use of the term “Kanack”.)

After the data that more than one out of every three people live below the poverty line in the Neukölln district of Berlin, where the population with a migration origin is densely populated, the prevalence values in this district are higher than the Berlin average has a representation in terms of both class-ethnic based social and health indicators. Whitehead’s findings on the relationship between the coronavirus pandemic and poverty are meaningful:

Covid-19 does not strike at random—mortality is much higher in elderly people, poorer groups, and ethnic minorities, and its economic effect is also unevenly distributed across the population. The economic fallout is likely to be felt for years. Without concerted preventive action, worse-off families and communities will be disproportionately affected, increasing health inequalities in the UK and globally. (Whitehead, Taylor-Robinson & Barr 2021: 1)

In addition, homeless people were the most vulnerable group in terms of poverty during the pandemic (Schneider & Böhmer 2020: 2). Therefore, the stay-at-home measures could not have included the homeless group. Homelessness was at the bottom of the scale of a household’s standards for health during the coronavirus pandemic.

Access to Education and Labor Markets

Unemployment, occupations requiring contact, income levels, lack of education, and access to labor markets affect poverty. Regarding the problems in *Armutszeugnis Corona*, the coronavirus and unemployment rates and the distribution of employment and income levels by occupation and industry are included. Therefore, it is possible to evaluate the low-income level, the lack of home-office working opportunities, and the necessity of working in jobs requiring contact with people in this context. Accessing higher education should be considered here in relation to home-office work conditions in terms of equal opportunities. Because people who work with their computers in their home offices are white-collar workers or people with a certain level of education, it is not possible for those who require manual labor, occupational groups such as health workers and security guards who are engaged in jobs that require physical presence, or those who work in blue-collar jobs to work in their home offices.

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In addition, it is possible to evaluate social interaction within and outside the group in this direction. When one considers in-group interaction to work in jobs that require contact with people, the fact that they are engaged in jobs such as courier, security guard, construction worker, and elderly care service in the documentary provides in-group social interaction not only in having migration origin but also in class sections.

The coronavirus pandemic, which occurred years after the 1961 Turkish-German labor migration agreement, is an important sign of the long-term consequences of mass migration. The pandemic highlighted the challenges faced by those who have migrated in significant numbers, first in thousands and then in millions, from their home countries in search of better living conditions in 2021. As the mayor of Neukölln pointed out in the documentary, the lack of home-office working opportunities for those who had to work outside was a significant risk factor. Such a risk underscores the gravity of the situation and the need for long-term solutions.

Access to Health Services and the Data Protection Act

When one considers the problems in the documentary according to categories such as access to medical services, work accidents, and occupational diseases, the coronavirus pandemic is a vital problem, especially in the context of access to medical services due to the language barrier. In addition, even if it is not directly related to accident rates, it is possible to consider that a woman working as an elderly carer was infected at work despite wearing a mask as a kind of accident or occupational disease (see Alici et al. 2020: 90; Nowak et al. 2021: 203 for more discussion). Therefore, an unexpected pandemic has changed the dimension of occupational health and occupational diseases. In addition, the psycho-economic dimensions of losing one's job after being infected should also be discussed in the context of long-term occupational illness. *Armutszeugnis Corona* has included such symptoms.

Is the personal data protection law an obstacle to discovering who got infected, why, and under which conditions? Is this law an obstacle to protecting personal data on the one hand, but to be innovative in identifying problems? Although the documentary could not obtain precise and reliable data for these questions, it tried to reach a synthesis through observations and interviews with experts. Well-intentioned initiatives in data protection law have been an obstacle to identifying problems related to who was affected by the pandemic and under what conditions. Here, questioning and recording ethnic and religious origin during health care

services was taboo, which posed a problem for vulnerable groups on the way to protecting individuals.

Although anti-discrimination efforts promote inclusion and cultural diversity, collecting specific sociological data to avoid discrimination against certain population groups is impossible. According to the Federal Ministry of Health, nationality, origin, religion, or place of birth were not recorded or reported in COVID reports; therefore, no statistical data were generated based on the Data Protection Act (*Datenschutz*), which required confidentiality. The documentary production team received information from most German states that they had no data for data protection and anti-discrimination reasons. Only Berlin and Bremen provided data on the social and economic conditions of those affected. Using his resources, medical sociologist Nico Dragano found that mortality rates increased in areas where many low-income people live. Thomas Voshaar, Chief Physician at the Bethanien-Klinik, noted that people with a migration background occupied a significant proportion of the intensive care units (90 percent) and that language deficits were critical barriers and provided insights into whether patients had a migrant background.

Language Competences

Language barriers in German pose a significant challenge in the context of the *Armutszeugnis Corona*. Certain individuals of migrant origin have been relying on information about pandemic rules and precautions from their home countries. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, have also played a role in facilitating in-group interactions. However, this reliance on information in their mother tongue and from their home country has led to misunderstandings about the protective measures in Germany.

Efforts were made locally to inform vulnerable populations about the risk of infection during the pandemic in Berlin. In an initiative of the municipality of Neukölln/Berlin, certain teams distributed brochures in twelve native languages to provide information on protecting themselves from the coronavirus and better understand the measures taken. With a multicultural information team, the Ministry of Health's staff provided information in twelve languages. That is because the rate of misunderstanding about infectiousness was higher among people with German language deficiencies, and they often received information about corona virus from their country of origin. Although it still needs to be fully covered in the documentary, one can see that countries of origin play a role in health-related matters in a (post-)migrant country.

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When different sources in *Armutszeugnis Corona* were given the right to speak, it was expressed that individuals with a migration background complied with the rules on the one hand, and some did not. Although the risk of coronavirus infection increased due to economic and working conditions, language barriers were also identified as an essential problem in the documentary. Regarding the solutions proposed by the documentary, the most feasible solution was to carry out information activities at least in various mother tongues. Although providing services in the language of people with a migrant background was temporary, moment-saving work, it was a sign of inclusion and integration. At the same time, obtaining information from the country of origin through the pandemic crises reminds us that integration still includes the countries of origin (see Ceylan 2006: 245; Kaya 2016; Kehya 2023).

Language skills that still need to be developed may be associated with poverty, heavy physical working conditions, and a lack of time. It may also indicate a lack of motivation even if these conditions are provided. The biggest reason for such a lack of motivation for linguistic skills was that migration to Germany was considered a guest project. Therefore, especially in the first generation, the status of transience has led to great discouragement in learning German.

Housing and Working Conditions

Armutszeugnis Corona assesses the quality of the assistance programs because the information provided in German is inadequate in areas predominantly inhabited by people with a migration background. The documentary includes personal assessments of experts and affected people, the opinions of the mayor and the information teams, and the solutions developed.

The fact that black and Latino groups in the United Kingdom and the United States of America also had more frequent infection and death rates is proof that the deficiencies are not specific to Germany. However, the documentary also mentions that these data are more concretely identified in these countries. Referring to international studies (Aryal, S. D et al. 2023; Hearst et al. 2021; Spitzer 2024; Tavares & Betti 2021) and indexing poverty, unemployment, poor housing conditions, and language deficiencies as risk factors for being infected with the coronavirus brings the problems in the documentary to the glocal level.

The cultural, social, and health situations of families living in crowded households should be considered. Although the rate of crowded families decreased with migration from villages to cities, it may also be related to the need to improve contraceptive methods, especially among refugee and displaced families (Salisbury et al. 2016: 11). Therefore, in addition to

looking at the situation from the vicious circle of poverty, it is also necessary to deal with cultural codes to intervene in the problems.

One can compare the impact of this documentary with Günter Wallraff's and Jörg Gfrörer's documentary *Ganz Unten* (Gfrörer & Wallraff 1986) and his book for the problems to gain visibility. *Ganz Unten* (Wallraff 2015) made a significant impact at the time of its publication by revealing that individuals with a migration background lived and worked in unhealthy and inhumane conditions. In particular, it led to improvements in social security conditions by various public institutions and organizations, which was an example of the fourth power of the media—twenty-five years had passed since the first Turkish-German mass labor migration (1961) when *Ganz Unten* was published and broadcasted in 1986. The poverty of that period, labor exploitation, exposure to unhealthy experiments, and occupational diseases, thirty-five years after the improvement of social-health conditions at the bottom, individuals with a migration background have lost their lives because of reasons such as unemployment and poverty in pandemic (post-)migrant conditions now question the success of health-based inclusion and integration.

Cultural Claims and Employing Aesthetics

The use of sound, music and effects in documentaries, especially off-screen sound, is important in terms of the psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural messages and meaning that the director intends to transmit, even though they are documents, not fictional products. In *Armutszeugnis Corona*, since the use of sound together with actual images is a prominent formal element, this category focuses on sound as an aesthetic element. The sound elements can be divided into minority music, which is used by groups with migrant backgrounds from various countries in imagery related to their own culture, such as weddings and funerals, and music used to make them feel the reality of 'death'.

In the documentary, in the face of certain culturally based claims, individuals with migration background declared that they followed the rules. They objected to mediatic reports that they were stigmatized as the driving force behind the outbreak due to so-called "tribal weddings." However, in the following minutes of the documentary, the organization of weddings without masks was also discussed because the measures taken were still not fully understood due to the lack of the German language. Misinformation from social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram was given as an example in *Armutszeugnis Corona*.

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The Lebanese family of migration origin has a crowded structure and under normal circumstances till the pandemic, it was usual for them to socialize during Ramadan. However, they avoided meeting each other by following the rules during the pandemic. Extending microphones to them enabled them to become the subjects of the documentary and to speak at least, moving away from the role of silent victims. The fact that they were being interviewed in the kitchen while a woman in the family was cooking, showing the narrowness of the kitchen, brings to mind the tendency of the female motif shown in the cramped kitchen in previous German-Turkish films (see Schaffer 2008: 61–63). However, the housing details here should be considered economic rather than cultural representations.

Armutszeugnis Corona comprises a significant proportion of off-screen music that appeals to cognitive information production and emotions. The music usually signals danger and threat; from time to time, “oriental” non-diegetic music is used to portray the cultural dimension of the issue (See for the geopolitics of instrumental music, Kirby 2019). One can evaluate this kind of approach in the documentary in two ways: being of migrant origin cannot be considered independent from cultural characteristics. It also requires the audience to ask what if because it may have been thought to establish an orientalist perception of music while responding to populist-cultural discourses such as the Bild newspaper. The headlines “Minority endangers us all with its behavior” and “Exploding corona numbers-Lauterbach speaks openly about clan weddings” exemplify the newspaper’s headlines in the cultural context. The headline refers to a public health expert who clearly states that clan weddings are partly to blame for the rapidly spreading corona. With the statement that the federal government is now also addressing migrants in order to slow down the rapid increase in coronavirus cases, the use of “even the” and the expression “migrant” can be considered discriminatory (see Schuler & Geisler 2020 for the article). As in the documentary language, the definition of “individuals or groups with a migration background” is more inclusive and accurate.

It is also necessary to quote Ahmed Mansour, a German expert on Islamism, “Crowded tribal weddings in corona times are also expressions of parallel societies” (Tiede 2020). Thus, the coronavirus marked by poverty shows that perspectives of exclusion based on the distinction between them and us emerged again during the pandemic. The approaches of these media organizations are generalized accusations for individuals with a migration background, creating the impression that they do not want to follow the rules, which recalls a study (RND/dpa 2019) showing that media and police statistics differ in this context. In other words, the sensationalist,

speculative and stigmatizing language in the media creates an image of certain groups as committing more crimes than is actually the case.

Employing oriental music can strengthen the cultural context by manipulating reality to produce emotions. Indeed, Solbach distinguishes between reinforcing and interpretative for non-diegetic music. The reinforcing features have affective functions, positive support, atmospheric background, and tension generation. The interpretative features have the functions of structural references, irony, and content (Solbach 2004: 15). This documentary has affective functions because the sense of danger and threat often emphasizes death from the coronavirus and hospitalization in intensive care units. In *Armutszeugnis Corona*, the ear is given the function of the organ of fear when talking about people affected by a significant health problem. The documentary rarely shows the sick and dying, but it creates a third-dimensional sense of danger and threat when places or people are shown. However, it is helpful to consider the risk of such emotions being directed towards people with a migration background and the possibility of raising awareness of the intersection of poverty, pandemic, and migration origin.

The presentation of data and information on the number of deaths and the patients in intensive care with off-screen music that creates a sense of threat and danger can provide a representation in proportion to reality. However, it can also contribute to the strengthening of populist discourses from time to time in terms of the culture of migration origin. This comparison is vital because, although the documentary advocates poverty, using sound as an aesthetic element is essential. However, oriental music constitutes a tiny proportion of the off-screen music used in the documentary, which does not constitute weight. A significant part of the off-screen sound and music used in the documentary creates a sense of danger of death related to coronavirus. This signals a pandemic vulnerability, not of one-dimensional culture, but of being human in relation to the multidimensional poverty index (MPI).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed different dynamics of vulnerability at the intersection of multidimensional poverty (MPI) and post-migrant paradigm, sampling the documentary *Armutszeugnis Corona*, which aired on a German public channel. In this way, research answers were found to determine whether the documentary portrayed a one-dimensional cultural discourse or socioeconomic and cultural layers that incorporate a multidimensional poverty index. In the documentary, it was pointed out that people with immigrant backgrounds and those who experience poverty had a high rate of being affected by coronavirus; the problems

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shown and the solutions developed for them were included. Employment opportunities, lack of home-office working opportunities, insufficient isolation, jobs requiring contact, unemployment, language competencies, personal data protection practices, and crowded families were significant risk factors for contracting the coronavirus. In addition, when one considers it a chain effect, such disadvantages and inadequacies have caused groups with migration origin to be among the most vulnerable during the pandemic. Contrary to various media claims that they were the spreading agents of the pandemic, the first-hand discourse that they did not participate in cultural rituals such as weddings and funerals has been included in the documentary. In summary, with the contribution of content and aesthetic elements, the documentary film's problems related to pandemic vulnerability were handled within the multidimensional poverty index.

Approaching the background of the current state of poverty shown in the documentary, one can see a different version of the extreme socioeconomic marginalization shown by the 1986 documentary *Ganz Unten*, filmed using hidden cameras. Both have a negative representation in terms of health. The fact that the most vulnerable group continued to be people with a migration background in a pandemic in the intervening decades and that this situation was similar in immigration countries such as the USA and the UK made it necessary to address the issue in a broad historical-geographical context. Unlike the parallel society discourses in previous documentaries (for example, Knobel-Ulrich 2015) on groups with a migration background, *Armutszeugnis Corona* focused on problems based on a class distinction rather than a disintegrative attitude. In documentary, certain media content, such as *Bild* (see Schuler & Geisler 2020; Tiede 2020 for the news article), one of the best-selling newspapers in Germany, was criticized. At the cultural level, responding to the anti-migrant critical perspectives in some newspapers, especially about crowded weddings, from the mouths of people with a migration background and explaining the class and economic aspects of the issue by authorized persons such as the mayor can raise awareness. In terms of aesthetic aspects, especially the use of off-screen music and the knowledge production at the emotional level, the sense of danger and threat reminded the audience of “death.”

Poverty and language deficiency in the migration context are important risk factors for coronavirus. In Germany, certain individual socioeconomic data, such as ethnicity and religion are considered taboo for complete statistical data. However, this was an obstacle to providing statistical information on who was infected, hospitalized in intensive care units, or died under

what conditions in extraordinary conditions such as pandemics. The documentary showed that sometimes, the laws and rules developed to protect individuals covering society could hinder inclusion, innovation, and solutions to protect disadvantaged groups. For example, the brochures created mainly in the mother tongue were innovative in the film, allowing us to conclude that coronavirus was a disease of the people experiencing poverty- most of them have migration backgrounds. However, the need to create brochures in the mother tongue of individuals with a migration background caused German language deficiencies to come to the agenda again.

In conclusion, unlike past trends in representation and discourse, *Armutszeugnis Corona* did not contain discriminatory, stereotypical, and culturally reductive content and aesthetic language in the context of migration (see Akasoy 2021; Landry 2022; Langhans 2023). It revealed that people experiencing poverty in Germany, primarily groups with a migration background, were most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, which made them visible in the public arena because for the socio-economically more privileged and isolated groups, infected people with poverty were invisible. The documentary served as a collective reminder and a medium for pandemic literacy about the relationship between pandemic vulnerability and the multidimensional poverty index, with information, experiences and insights from affected people, experts and authorities.

To develop a suggestion for future work, by screening this documentary in countries of origin (emigrant countries), clues can be obtained about people with emigration backgrounds experiencing poverty and refugees during the pandemic, such as in Turkey and Lebanon in the documentary. In addition, the transnational corona experiences of the people of the country of origin are an epistemological necessity regarding external emigration because the speculative and popular discourses targeting expatriates, especially in the years of the recent economic crisis in Turkey, about the wealth of the euro income level of expatriates contradict the facts in the documentary. Therefore, it is recommended that future research be conducted in Turkey to observe the audience's reaction to presenting such a movie.

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