The term of information society and its concealment of hierarchies and differences in our societies

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Abstract

Today we are living in what is called an 'information age' where we are able to work anywhere that a computer can be plugged into a phone line, to send information to lots of people, and letters all around the world, and to watch any film or programme at any time in an instant by internet.

Mostly these functions consist of being able to access additional information. Indeed, we say we are living in 'information age' however, does everyone get its benefit democratically in our societies? Regarding to this question, the main argument in this study revolves around the term of 'information society' and its concealment of hierarchies and differences in our societies.

The study begins with a brief introduction of information society. The main part of study then tries to show dimensions of 'information society' and ways of using information through individuals and in the changing patterns of employment, and global market. In order to understand these dimensions of information society, I have posed some examples. The object is to find answers with some detailed theoretical and conceptual analysis employed.

Keywords: *Information society, Information technology and Information capitalism.*

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Bilgi Toplumunu Tanımı ve Bilgi Toplumunun Barındırdığı Hiyerarşi ve Farklılıklar

Özet
Bilgi çağını yaşadığımız günümüzde, bir telefon hattına bağlı olan bir bilgisayarın bulunduğu her yerde çalışabilmemiz, dünyanın dörtbir yanındaki birçok kişiye biranda bilgi ve mesaj gönderebilmemiz ve herhangi bir zamanda herhangi bir film veya programı internet aracılığıyla izleyebilmemiz mümkün.

Çoğunlukla tüm bu işlevler, birbirbirlerini bütünleyen bilgiye ulaşılabilme ile oluşur. Kuşkusuz, şu anda bilgi çağını yaşadığımızı söylesek de ancak toplumlarımızda bundan herkesin demokratik bir biçimde faydalandığını söyleyebilir miyiz? Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın temel argümanı bilgi toplumu kavramı ve bu kavram içerisinde varolan toplumlarımızdaki hiyerarşi ve farklılıklar üzerine olacaktır.

Çalışmanın başında bilgi toplumuna kısa bir giriş yapılmaktadır. Çalışmanın ana bölümünde bireyler arasında ve değişen çalışma hayatında ve küresel piyasalarda bilgiyi kullanma yollarına kısaca değinilerek bilgi toplumunun farklı boyutları gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bilgi toplumunun bu farklı boyutlarının anlaşılabilmesi bağlamında bu bölümde bazı örneklere yer verilmiştir. Buradaki amaç, bazı teorik ve kavramsal analizlere değinerek soruna cevap bulabilmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bilgi toplumu, iletişim teknolojileri ve bilgi kapitalizmi.*

Introduction
There are many historians who argue that an information society has been with us since the drawn of history and that no society can exist without information which is necessary in all kind of daily life (Dordick and Wang, 1993).

Access to information in our daily lives this century generally refers inclusively to both access to the telecommunications network and to information services carried by the network. The indices of access include measures of household penetration of specific building blocks of the information superhighway, such as telephones, computers, modems, satellites and the internet and so on.

According to Schiller, in the case of information, two different ways of using it can be imagined. One is to regard information as a social good and a central element in the development and creation of democratic society. In this sense, the information is a key resource of democratic systems. (Schiller, 1996). However, in contrast, to information being regarded as a social good, he defines that; "-a different approach can treat information as privately produced commodity for sale" (Schiller, 1996). To be more specific, for instance, the information superhighway does not carry a public right of way because even though any one can plug into the internet many of its services, however, are barred to them unless they can afford to pay the access and usage charges.

Thus, the people who can afford to access the internet have more chance to see a range of cheap flight tickets for their holiday and even to pay through the internet. However, those that cannot afford to access the internet have to spend effort and time to go to Holiday Agencies or wait on the phone line queue to get the information they need. So the more money you have, the more you can do. Additionally, information may be freely available, but it is not free in our democratic societies therefore, some are more equal than others.

The explosion of information technology has created a whole new industry. In his 'information society' essay Bell argues that, "the growth of a new social framework based on telecommunications which the character of work and occupations in which workers are engaged" (Heap, 1995). Accordingly, as Mallet announced "the new working class" focused on the capacity to manage and operate advanced information technology (Castells, 2010). More intellectual

skills are being needed in the workplace and the job market because of new technology. Primarily, computer plays a central role in this revolution. For example, if we look in today's newspapers, it is obvious from job advertisements that the chances of obtaining employment are determined by the occupation of qualifications in computing, telecommunications, and systems analysis and so on. Hence, it has become easily clear that there has been an increase in the number of workers at computers and other information machines rapidly engaging in the task that require skill in the use of information.

In addition, to be at ease with a computer or other information machines requires a whole range of skills, from keyboard skills, computer literacy and so on. Perhaps, also the wave of information technology is ignoring some people who did not have the opportunity to education and to therefore learn the necessary skills for using this technology, for reasons of social and financial disadvantages. This may even be the case for some people who attended colleges a number of years ago. In general, however, not only the uneducated benefit less than the well-educated but also the old generation benefit less than the young generation who have more opportunities to learn these new information technologies. It is the older generations who, having gone to colleges with no computer literacy education, find it the hardest to make use of the many options becoming available.

According to Dordick and Wang, "the size and the nature of the information sector is the key measure in defining an information society" (Dordick and Wang, 1993). Yet, there are still many countries in the world, where reliable telephone communications are rarely available, where technology stands outside the society. Because of their limited resources for purchasing information systems, and equipment, and qualified workers, it is therefore not surprising that, there is a big gap between the underdeveloped nations and those advanced information societies.

Moreover, Dordick and Wang claim that, the information technologies have replaced the communications technologies as the great hope for

economic growth of nations. Particularly, the mass media, where the world-wide broadcasting has become the most important agent of this economic growth for nations (Dordick and Wang, 1993). The Sky Sport Channel is the purest examples of this development. For instance, to be able to watch some of the world wide sport events in other countries (e.g. Rugby or Football matches), you need to pay for access to the Sky Sport Channel. In addition, the tension between haves and the have-nots is not only among individuals in societies but nations as well.

Conclusion

This study shows how the term 'information society' conceals hierarchies and differences between individuals in a society and also between nations. The study suggest that, information society is better understood as an 'information capitalism' where information technology is developed to further the economic interest of states rather than to promote a more positive social environment.

Because the key to the effective use of information is through access to that information technologies is therefore important for societies. Moreover, society must have equality in education and access to these information technologies, which is in itself an essential component of democratisation and development. Therefore, free communications and information would change the balance of power between individuals and countries in information societies to create societies where everyone has equal opportunity to succeed.

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