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Araştırma Makalesi

NORTH-SOUTH INEQUALITY AND SEEKING SOLUTION TO GLOBALIZING POVERTY VIA MEANS OF MASS COMMUNICATION: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE MODEL

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This article, titled North-South Inequality and Seeking Solution to Globalizing Poverty via Means of Mass Communication: Global Governance Model, discusses the concept of poverty, which is thought to have first socialized during the modern era, and then have begun to become a macro problem as a result of globalization and communication technologies. Afterwards, the article evaluates the proposal of "global governance", which can be interpreted as a third way between pro-globalization and antiglobalization, which spread as a reaction against the tangible inequality between northern and southern hemispheres, although it, in its essence, is close to pro-globalization. The article points out that the fact that the means of mass communication and social media, associated with modernization and technological development, have contributed to both spreading poverty and strengthening the solution proposals for it is a paradoxical situation which also offers opportunities. In the conclusion part, the article explores whether the "global governance" model can provide a solution in combatting poverty and certain approaches regarding the positive and negative effects of means of communication in this regard.

Keywords: Globalizing Poverty, Means of Communication, North-South Inequality, Global Governance Model.

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KUZEY-GÜNEY EŞİTSİZLİĞİ VE KİTLE İLETİŞİM ARAÇLARIYLA KÜRESELLEŞEN YOKSULLUĞA ÇÖZÜM ARAYIŞI: KÜRESEL YÖNETİSİM MODELİ

Öz.

Kuzey-Güney Eşitsizliği ve Kitle İletişim Araçlarıyla Küreselleşen Yoksulluğa Çözüm Arayışı: Küresel Yönetişim Modeli başlıklı bu makalede, ilk olarak modern dönemde önce toplumsallaştığı, ardından küreselleşme ve iletişim teknolojilerinin de etkisiyle birlikte makro ölçekli bir sorun niteliği kazanmaya başladığı düşünülen yoksulluk kavramı üzerinde durulmaktadır. Sonrasında, küreselleşme taraftarlığı ile kuzey-güney yarımkürelerde somutlaşan eşitsizliğe tepki olarak yayılan küreselleşme karşıtlığı arasında, özünde taraftarlığa yakın olmakla birlikte, bir üçüncü yol şeklinde yorumlanabilecek olan "küresel yönetişim" önerisi değerlendirilmektedir. Modernleşme ve teknolojik gelişme ile birlikte anılan kitle iletişim araçları ve sosyal medyanın hem yoksulluğun yayılmasına, hem de yoksulluğa dair çözüm önerilerinin güçlenmesine katkı sağlaması paradoksal ama içinde imkânlar barındıran bir durum olarak tespit edilmektedir. Sonuç kısmında ise, "küresel yönetişim" modelinin yoksullukla mücadelede bir çözüm olup olamayacağı ve bu bağlamda iletişim araçlarının olumlu-olumsuz etkileri konusundaki bazı yaklaşımlar tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yoksulluğun Küreselleşmesi, İletişim Araçları, Kuzey-Güney Eşitsizliği, Küresel Yönetişim Modeli.

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING POVERTY

Despite having numerous definitions, poverty is yet to have a comprehensive, well-established and accepted definition, which may be because of the fact that poverty is a dynamic phenomenon, which varies according to time, place, persons and societies, that it is, depending on various conditions, assessed according to different criteria, and also that the differences and contradictions between various types of poverty, revealed across the world by the means of communication, play a role in setting standards. Poverty, first defined in 1901 by Seebohm Rowentree, means "the state in which total income is not enough to meet the minimum physical needs such as food and clothing which are necessary to sustain the biological existence" (Es & Güloğlu, 2011: 3). In addition to that, numerous definitions can be found, varying according to a number of factors such as social contradictions, property relations, individual and social psychology, ideological positions, cultural differences in approaches, behavioral patterns, time, place and the measurable criteria used in the explaining the concept. The question "Who is poor?" can never be answered in a certain manner. If one considers how analogical is the definition, used to determine the minimum line to answer this question which is "the poverty line is a relative line used to separate the poor and the non-poor in a society", the difficulty of the task becomes clearer (Dumanli, 1996: 9).

It is not easy to define poverty, which is no longer an individual and narrow phenomenon as a result of the globalization process. Since poverty is a relative concept, the way it is perceived is important. There are two often-referred definitions in this regard, one of which is absolute poverty and the other one is relative poverty.

Those, who cannot afford sufficient food which would provide the necessary calories and nutrients for a person to biologically regenerate, are considered absolutely poor. The fact that this definition is made on the basis of a person's biological features gives it the quality of absoluteness. According to a 1990 study by the World Bank, persons, whose daily income cannot afford food with minimum 2400 calories, are defined as absolutely poor. In the least developed countries, the absolute poverty line is set at \$1 per day per person while this figure rises to \$2 per day per person in Latin America and the Caribbean, to \$4 per day per person in Eastern European countries, in which Turkey is included, and to \$14.4 in developed countries (DPT, 2001: 104).

When a person can afford less than 80% of the amount set in the absolute poverty criteria although he/she spends all his/her income for a period of over five years, it is presumed that he/she cannot better their situation and he/she is defined as chronically poor.

DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

Despite the different approaches and criteria used defining poverty, today's common definitions of poverty are as follows:

Absolute poverty - Relative poverty: Absolute poverty is based on the minimum consumption level in terms of sufficient (not less than 2400 calories per day according to World Bank data) and balanced (including nutrients such as protein and carbohydrate) diet and on income (not less than \$1 according to World Bank). Relative poverty, on the other hand, points to an individual's or a household's poverty when compared to others in their social group or residential area. It is about comparing a social group or a residential unit with other groups or units (Özsoy, 2003: 2).

Rural Poverty – **Urban Poverty:** Rural poverty focuses on qualitative expectations and rights such as liberty, security, self-esteem, social identity, the density and strength of social relations, freedom to make decisions, legal and political rights (Özsoy, 2003: 3); Urban poverty means that groups which did not previously have a poverty problem become poor as a result of the changes in the global economic arena and that situation becomes relatively permanent and that the said groups gradually get excluded from social and spatial processes (Bıçkı, 2005: 105). Urban poverty mostly deals with quantitative expectations and deprivations regarding income and consumption.

Objective Poverty – Subjective Poverty: Objective poverty means determining the minimum level of need as a poverty/welfare criteria with a normative approach. Subjective poverty, on the other hand, is based on the combination of needs formed by individuals according to their own choices, and diverges from approaches which isolates subjective reality (Bıçkı, 2005: 105).

Income Poverty – Human Poverty: Income poverty accepts a minimum income and consumption level as the poverty line while human poverty deals with short life span, deprivation of educational and medical services and job opportunities (Bıçkı, 2005: 130).

Socio-Economic Weakness: Under this concept, such evaluations as psychological and economic insecurity, social exclusion, limited freedom of choice and initiative, lack of opportunity, resources and confidence which lead to the vicious cycle of poverty, the sense of being and organizational skills in terms of productivity are made (Bıçkı, 2005: 128).

Vulnerability: Such shortcomings as insufficient educational means, lack of a stable income and job security, insufficient savings and wealth, shortage of credit opportunities, weak solidarity between families, insufficient participation in the workforce due to gender and/or lack of education raise the issue of decision-making units for the vulnerable. (Bicki, 2005: 110).

SOCIALIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION OF POVERTY VIA MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The emergence of poverty as a phenomenon prior to the modern era may probably date back to the times when men developed a sense of property. Throughout the history, there has been a correlation between power and wealth as well as weakness and poverty. While the ruling class mostly consists of wealthy people, the ruled ones occupy a place in social hierarchy in accordance with the level of their poverty. It does not necessarily mean that the richest person also has the highest place within the power relations. However, it can be said that wealthy individuals are usually positioned close to power and the poor are at the downer levels of the line between the rulers and the ruled. However, it should be noted that all these evaluations are made in retrospect. Because the emergence of poverty as a social consciousness is characteristic of the modern era, which is related to the construction of collective consciousness on poverty via rapidly-spreading means of communication. Especially the newspapers, radio and televisions have played a significant role in building the consciousness about poverty as a common sense of belonging just as they did in constructing national or class identities.

The Classical Period

The phenomenon of poverty existed and was a reality in the classical period. However, it was conceptualized and philosophized, like many other phenomena, in the modern period, when the relations of production accelerated, the number and influence of the means of mass communication increased and clear lines, which separated social classes, emerged. The rich was aware that he/she was rich before the modern era. However, the poor became aware that he/she was poor when the traditional social structures were shaken during the transition from community (gemeinschaft) to society (gesellschaft) (Weber vd., 2000: 203) as is defined by Tönnies. As Bauman says, the meaning of being poor depends on the kind of "us" the poor will constitute together. Being poor in a society which has to include all its grown members in productive labor is different from being poor in a society which can easily produce all that is needed without the participation a large portion of its members thanks to the power accumulated over centuries (Bauman, 1999: 10). Society is the public sphere, the world. One is bound to gemeinschaft with one's ilk from birth, with all the benefits and drawbacks. One goes into gesellschaft as though one is going abroad' (Weber vd., 2000: 21). "A voung person can be warned against a bad society. However, the expression 'bad community' pushes the limits of the word's meaning.'

Therefore, poverty remains a micro problem within communities where family bonds are tight, relations between people are more sincere and protecting each other is almost seen as a sacred duty. Similarly, most of the solutions, which traditional teachings, especially religions propose to fight poverty, include micro precautions. These precautions such as clothes, food and financial aid or property allocation, can be said to have served a function which prevented social inequalities from becoming a problem in periods when poverty was not socialized, in other words was not perceived as a social phenomenon. Even today, poverty tends to be regarded as a relative concept in social structures where communal and tribal relations are powerful. And the micro relations in these narrow areas serve as safety valves against social explosions on a macro level.

Modern Period: The Globalization Process and the Collectivization of Poverty Consciousness

However, the emergence of poverty as a consciousness and its elevation to a more influential position in the ruler-ruled relations occurred following the dissolution of traditional communal structures of which an individual lived as an organic part. In the beginning of the modern period, characterized by urbanization, industrialization, the development of communication technologies, the transition into a society where mechanical relations gained importance, the division of labor and fundamental changes in the relations of production, the unemployed would become poor. However, after the division between the bourgeoisie and the working class grew deeper, being employed was no longer sufficient to avoid poverty.

Today, being poor essentially derives its meaning from the state of not consuming enough (Bauman, 1999: 10). Therefore, for people who have left traditional communities and endeavor to exist in modern societies, poverty is no longer an individual problem but a shared characteristic (problem) of large masses. For example, individuals, suffering from poverty in distant regions unaware of each other, build some sort of "shared space" by communicating via the same newspaper, television, radio and social media, and construct some sort of "shared time" by gaining a sense of "instantaneity" after dealing with the same information at the same time. The collectivization of poverty consciousness via means of communication causes so significant outcomes that it necessitates not only the reasons of poverty but also solution offers for poverty to be reviewed. Therefore, both the definition of poverty and the religious, traditional and empirical solutions, previously produced and successfully tried against it, have gone through a radical transformation. Today, simple micro measures, implemented within traditional communities, may only yield temporary and minor achievements in the fight against poverty, which has become a huge global problem. They only make the state of poverty "sustainable" without resulting in death.

Paradoxically, in order to eliminate poverty, which now has a social character, in the long run and in a lasting and comprehensive manner, public measures are now required to be implemented by the government, with which poverty did not have any close relations throughout the history. However, globalization and its primary ideology, neo-liberalism, come into play here at this point, meaning to remove all economic and cultural boundaries, and thus aiming to deal with the neo-Marxist intellectuals' criticism about the distinct inequality in northern and southern hemispheres. If you carefully examine the concept of globalization, which advocate (promise) that when capital, goods, people and ideas spread freely and limitlessly, the globe will become a single unit and in this fundamental and macro change, poverty and injustice will go away, you can easily notice that it also foresees a little chaotic solution process. When you take into consideration liberalism and limitlessness with the imbalances between north and south and even east and west, the worsening social inequalities and rapidly-rising urban poverty caused by globalization, you see that it caused poverty to spread in all its meanings and triggered the meltdown process of the middle class. For example, in Latin American countries which represent the general characteristics of the south, the rate of urban poverty has risen from 29% to 39% between 1970 and 1990. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1.1% of the city's population used to live in the favelas back in 1973, which has now climbed up to 19.4% in 1993 (Eş & Güloğlu, 2011: 4).

Let along bringing prosperity and wealth, globalization has caused poverty among the underclass as a result of the income inequality in the metropolitans of the north with high income rates such as New York, London and Paris. Moreover, the concept of welfare state, developed following the Second World War with its practices such as healthcare, social security, unemployment and housing benefit,

has begun to be replaced by privatized companies and institutions following the policies of Reagan and Thatcher in 1980s. After the decline of nation-states against the financial power of the global companies which transcend their borders, and the resources allocated to social assistance and security policies could no longer be provided through domestic dynamics, the concept of welfare state began to be questioned. Finally, poverty, which had an individual nature in the classical period's communal understanding, tended to socialize in the modern period which had a distinct mechanical social structure, and developed a global dimension in the post-modern period, led by the neo-liberal ideology. Consequently, the concept of poverty, which was already difficult to define, and whose criteria was already hard to identify, has taken on the appearance of the chaotic unequal atmosphere and developed qualities which require much more sophisticated methods to combat them.

GLOBALIZING POVERTY VIA MEANS OF MASS COMMUNICATION AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Today, poverty has become a more common, complicated and difficult phenomenon with socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-psychological aspects in the competitive climate of globalization which is called a transformed version of capitalism and claims to close the gap between the north and the south. In this period when goods, capital and workforce cross boundaries, poverty is also rapidly globalizing. One of the most important reasons behind that is income inequality. And the way to sustain this state of inequality is through making it legitimate. Groups, who are excluded from society as they get poorer and also form a new society on the basis of their shared ground, poverty, cannot be expected to accept this situation forever. Inequality constantly generates tension within the system and poses a threat to the system's operation. The neo-liberal ideology, the main ideology of globalization, comes into play here and try to turn the poor into a mass which can be manipulated via means of mass communication and propaganda activities.

It was relatively easy to legitimize inequality during periods before the age of enlightenment and modernity when the legitimacy of a political order was based on divine will. Poverty was accepted as *the will of god* while inequality was based on divine arguments. Those, who lost in this world would win in the afterlife. And if the rich took care of the poor's problems and help them, they would also be treated accordingly in the afterlife. After the enlightenment, however, it was no longer so easy to legitimize inequalities. The way humans were perceived changed and it began to be believed that human mind could comprehend how the nature and the society worked and use this knowledge to build a better society which would enhance people's happiness. Also, there was a rise in the confidence in a person's ability to choose what is best for him/her and his/her capacity to save himself/herself from poverty (TMMOB, 2002: 39).

"The first and most fundamental problem wealthy people try to solve in the face of the poor is to make themselves believe in the rightness of their position and to develop a discourse which would prevent them from feeling guilty about others' poverty. This discourse discusses deserved poverty. If poverty is deserved, then it is normal, which leaves no reason for remorse. If a rich person can explain his/her wealth within the existing institutional structure, he/she no longer needs to question whether there is a relation between the poverty in the society and his/her actions."

In this context, where the legitimacy of globalization is fiercely discussed, global governance models are put into play which give the impression that there is a third way between pro-globalization and anti-globalization. In response to the question as to how the global governance will work and gain legitimacy, Kemal Derviş and Ceren Özer propose a global legitimacy system, led by the US while also including other powerful global actors (Derviş & Özer, 2005: 371). According to that, the new permanent members of the UN Security Council will be the EU, the US, Japan, China, India and Russia. The veto right of the permanent members will be abolished and a system, in which population, national income, contributions to global production and military capacity to protect peace will gain importance, will be adopted (Bayramoğlu, 2005: 93).

Despite accomplishments such as the development and free movement of information, foods, capital and production technologies and exceptional examples like Lula da Silva's Brazil in the south which is said to have "cheated death", a satisfying progress has not been made in the fight against poverty. On the contrary, the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest has grown even larger during globalization. Representatives of three fundamental approaches stand out at this point: (1) Those who directly hold globalization responsible for increasing poverty and inequality and consider it harmful and illegitimate; (2) Those who advocate that globalization is inevitable, poverty cannot be fully eliminated and confining it within acceptable limits should be considered a success; (3) Those who acknowledge that globalization is irrevocable process but is badly managed, and if managed better, the fight against poverty might succeed.

Can the third approach, which has the potential of being a positive and constructive proposal, offer a way out? Actually, the fact that majority of those, who adopt this approach, are economists from within the US system such as Joseph Stiglitz, Dani Rodrik and Kemal Derviş can be viewed as a sign that there are no essential differences between the second and third approach. However, given the momentum of the process and the gravity of global poverty, the proposal of global governance must be assessed as an option.

However, the World Bank, which has a similar definition of division of labor with the IMF, pursues social and structural policies to ensure the IMF's macroeconomic policies continue and works to make sure poverty and inequality remain within a limit which would not choke the capitalist system (Bayramoğlu, 2005: 88). The World Bank, which "dreams of a world without poverty",

determines three basic functions in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) (Bayramoğlu, 2005: 89):

- "(1) Ensuring an accord between a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and the goals of poverty reduction and social development;
- (2) Providing lending organizations, like the World Bank and the IMF, assurances;
- (3) Determining aims, shaping policies, ensuring a transparent and inclusive monitoring process."

Given these basic functions, it would be difficult to say that the World Bank, which is supposed to be one of the most influential actors of global governance along with the IMF, aims to definitively eliminate global poverty and north-south and west-east inequality. Because poverty is not a problem or the outcome of a problem that can be addressed on its own. As Bauman says (Bauman, 1999: 135):

"Obviously, the 'classic' poverty, inherited from the past, transmitted from one generation to another, persisted in spite of the powerful economic growth in the industrialized country... But to that a new phenomenon is added, peculiar to our time of rapid change and unprecedented in its volume. This is the accumulation, the linking of reverses of fortune, which hurl individuals and entire families into destitution and often into the street: loss of employment, loss of income, bereavement, divorce, separation, loss of lodgings. From that chain exclusion results – isolation from the network of social interactions and exchanges, absence of reference points, inability to project one's lot into the future.

CONCLUSION: POVERTY AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

According to Bayramoğlu, the World Bank and the IMF's initiatives to develop global governance mechanisms can be evaluated in two dimensions; establishing a sectoral information network and legitimizing their programme. Bayramoğlu says the actual aim here is not to close the gap between the north and the south but to increase the poor southern countries' dependence and to use the global governance model as an instrument of power by the north, led by the US and the EU (Bayramoğlu, 2005:90):

"Regularly gathering sectoral data from debtor countries in a dependent relationship based on debt mechanism has given the twins considerable power; debtor countries which were deprived of the instruments of economy policy as a result of its integration into the competitive global market became dependent in terms of the management of its resources, as well. When the authority to determine the discourse shifted into a transnational area, it raised the question of assuming the political consequences of the said policies, which is an issue of legitimacy. Although it seems frivolous to address this issue, which is, in its essence, a problem of legitimacy, as a matter of forming public opinion, it can be though that this approach is related to the role, attributed to the media, which gives us an idea about the foundations on which the global governance mechanism is being built; it is clear that what is formulated as internalizing and embracing is an ideological process in terms of distorting, suppressing and reversing the facts."

Richard Falk, who seems more optimistic in comparison with this pessimistic and critical approach, mentions tendencies which think the new world order that will lead to a globally integrated way of government has been formed in a way "that will to a great extent destroy many vital world order values" and see it as a form of "inhumane governance" (Falk, 2003: 20). However, Falk does not completely condemn the said model of governance and notes that some aspects of the model can normatively improve the previous conditions. Among them, he points to the decrease in the danger of a large-scale nuclear war and international war in general, and the alleviation of the state of poverty and economic depravity of hundreds of millions of people – especially of those living in the overpopulated Pacific countries, some of which previously suffered from severe and desperate poverty. That being said, Falk claims the most comprehensive effect of the global governance model will be seen in the division of the peoples in the world, the disregard for the problems of the most vulnerable and deprived, the increase in developments which will have a negative effect on the environment and future generations, the deepening of the inequalities between the wealthy and the poor, and in the emergence of a consumptive structure which hinder the most qualifying forms of individual and social self-actualization (Falk, 2003: 20).

In conclusion, it can be said that the fact that the World Bank has chosen "poverty reduction" as its primary goal in the face of poverty, which is a comprehensive. multi-dimensional, complicated and even philosophical phenomenon, shows that the leading institutions of global governance focus on establishing a secure ground for lending and collecting, which raises suspicions as to whether combatting poverty, seen in north-south inequality, is a priority for the supporters of the global governance model. When look closely, it can be noticed that the global governance model began to be underscored as an option when the chaotic aspects of globalization started to become visible and the US position as a leading global actor started to be questioned following its international interventions, which reveals that the real motive here, rather than fighting poverty, is to prevent the US power from having a legitimacy crisis by restructuring international and supranational institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, the IMF in line with the needs and aims of the global era, and to ensure the chaotic atmosphere and global governance mechanisms have a favorable image. In order to prevent the perception of inequality between hemispheres from causing a global opposition and uprising, poverty must be confined to a manageable area, which is also essential for the global system to continue under the leadership of the US.

If one takes into account the social media, Marshall McLuhan's prophecy of "Global Village" seems to have come true via today's huge integrated electronic web of communication (McLuhan, 1964: 300). However, the web of mass communication, which has grown larger with social media and whose anarchic nature and democratic features have become a matter of debate, paradoxically serve both the spread of poverty and the creation of a collective consciousness about poverty which seeks solutions to poverty. The means of communication, which are instruments after all, cannot harm or contribute to something on their own. The primary force to direct it is the motives and quality of the social consciousness of its users. The means of communication, which contribute to building the senses of consciousness and instantaneity as well as shared space and time, can turn into a weapon which may eliminate poverty if it takes on a function that triggers a conscious awakening among the poor about their own states. The idea that social media, which offers relatively equal opportunities to its users, who both produce and consume the content, deserves to be evaluated and analyzed as a means to combat poverty, is worthy of consideration.

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