

A Discussion on Effects of Neo Liberal Globalization on Turkish Higher Education

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Abstract: The main purpose of the study is to discuss effects of neo liberal policy applications on higher education system in Turkey from the point of functions of education in accordance with Functionalist and Marxist theories. For this purpose, basic assumptions, key questions and function of education of the mentioned theories are stated. Later on, neo liberal globalization from the perspectives of both economics and politics are discussed. Last of all, effects of neo liberal globalization on Turkish higher education are discussed. The discussed subject can be summarized as follows: privatization in education, decline of union membership in education, hindering social mobility, anti-democratic social structure in some cases, international curriculum rather than national and local one, commercial perceptiveness in higher education, increase in graduate education demand, proliferation of knowledge, utilization of instructional technology and use of communication and information technology in education.

Key words: Function of education • Functionalist and conflict theories • Neo liberal globalization

INTRODUCTION

It can be easily seen that capitalist ideals are tried to be carried out during the last twenty years of Turkish not only political and economic system but also education system. The basic properties of capitalist ideals are summarized as private ownership of property, the profit motive, free competition, and market dominance [1] In this context, one of the main questions is what differences between globalization and classical capitalist system are. The second question is how global neo liberal applications have affected higher education system in Turkey. On the other hand, another question necessary to be answered is which functions of education have been carried out by depending on new developments and applications of neo liberal globalization process from the view of sociological approaches.

There are mainly three important approaches related to functions of education; structural-functional, Marxist and symbolic interactionists. Both structural-functional and Marxist approaches can be said to have more socio-economic and politic view and those are also a bit more related to neo- liberal globalization process. Due to these facts, main effects of educational functions are discussed from the two different approaches that is, structural-functional, Marxist view or perspective.

The main purpose of the study is to discuss effects of neo liberal policy applications on higher education system in Turkey from the point of functions of education in accordance with Functionalist and Marxist theories. By depending on the main purpose above the related questions below are answered.

1. What are the functions of education from the point of both Functionalist and Marxist perspectives?
2. What are the general properties of neo liberal globalization from the perspective of socio-economics and politics?
3. How has neo liberal globalization affected Turkish higher education, in other words what are the effects of neo liberal globalization on Turkish higher education?

In this study by depending on discussion and the answers to the questions given above are also drawn.

It is quite difficult to give a proper and unique definition of education since education has many different functions. Education is also a complicated process. On the other hand, the reality is that education mainly involves both teaching and learning. Education in this sense may be defined as a process of teaching and learning [2]. Briefly, education can be defined as a social

process aiming at changing behavior of person deliberately and in a desired way [3]. However, education like the family and religion is a cultural and universal value. As such it is important aspect of socialization the lifelong process of learning attitudes, values, and behavior considered appropriate to members of particular culture [4]. In order to realize main objectives of any educational system, it is necessary to build any institutional organizations such as schools, boarding houses and universities. It can be said here that nowadays education is a major industry all over the world. Owing to these facts, it is simply possible to say that education is not only behavior changing process but also a social institution. Organization or institution -in a larger scale- can be defined as an orderly functional social structure, characterized by identifiable people who are members of the system [5]. It is also generally noted that education is a social institution working in harmony with open system approach. To sum up, education is considered a social institution having many social, psychological, political and economic functions and objectives of today's society [6]

Functions of Education in Accordance with Functionalist and Marxist Theory:

There are many ways or approaches to discuss functions of education. Mainly classification concerning with searching functions of education can be divided into three titles as functionalist, conflict, and interactionist views [4]. In this study, functions of education are studied in functionalist and conflict views because of these approaches' basic properties.

It is generally stressed that central position of functionalism is that when the parts of society are working properly, each contributes to the well being or stability of that society [7]. According to functionalists, societies are integrated systems, composed of specialized, interdependent parts [8]. Like other social institutions, education has both *manifest* (open stated) and *latent* functions (hidden). Specific stated goals of the education system are its manifest functions. While latent functions refer to unspecified outcomes such as gatekeeping and hidden curriculum [9]. The most basic manifest function of education is the transmission of knowledge and skills. In this sense, it is seen that schools teach students how to read, speak native or foreign languages. Transmitting culture, promoting social and political integration, maintaining social control, serving as an agent change, completing socialization, screening and selecting can be stated as latent functions of education [10].

Unlike functionalists, who consider education as a social institution performing functions for the benefit of society, conflict or Marxist theorists see the educational system as a tool used by the ruling class to maintain their dominance. Rather than stressing the formal and informal purposes of education in society, Marxian conflict theorists consider education as a tool used by ruling classes to perpetuate social inequality [11]. Marxist theorists on education have argued that they should not refer to society as a whole owing to the fact that there is a fundamental conflict of interest between capital and labor. According to this approach, education does not meet the needs of society but serves the interest of the owner of capital [12]. The Marxist perspective emphasizes the hidden curriculum, which refers to the unwritten rules of behavior and attitudes, such as obedience to the authority and conformity to cultural norms, perpetuates existing social inequalities [7]. The theory originally defends out that credentialism –a term used to describe the increase in the lowest level of education needed to enter a field- may reinforce social inequality [13]. Both functionalist and conflict theorists agree that education performs the important function of bestowing status [4]. Both basic properties and educational views of the mentioned theories are summarized as seen Table 1.

Neo Liberal Globalization from the Perspective of Socio-Economics and Politics:

It is possible to give many different definitions or descriptions of globalization. The possibility stems from the reason that globalization is discussed very extensively -capitalist to the socialist or the other political, sociological and economic views- all over the world. However, from the point of socio-politics, globalization can be described the extensive interdependence among the nations of the world ushered in by the expansion of capitalism [7]. Moreover, globalization is considered sociological perspective. Neo liberal globalization is a process unleashing tremendous potential for economic growth driven by rapid technological progress, notably in the areas of communications and information technology [14]. By uttering globalization many stress that global awareness, a logical extension of the sociological perspective. In this context there are many reasons to think globally: The first one is that societies the world over are increasingly interconnected. Secondly, a global perspective enables us to see that many human problems we are confronted in a restricted area more serious globally. Thirdly, thinking in a global way is an excellent way to learn more about ourselves [6]

Table 1: Simplified outline of functionalist and marxist theory

Functionalist	Marxist Theory
Basic Assumptions	
* Societies are integrated systems composed of specialized interdepented parts. of scarce resource.	* Societies are competitive arenas where different groups vie for control
* Social life depends on consensus and cooperation. Conflict is usually destructive. and conflict. Conflict may be beneficial	* Social life inevitably generates divided interests, opposing goals,
* Sudden change tends to disrupt social life, setting things off balance.	* Change is inevitable, even desirable.
Key Questions	
* What function does a social pattern perform for the social system, how it is related to other parts of the system? (What are the consequences of that social pattern?) benefits from them?	* Who had the power to create existing social arrangements and who
Functions of Education	
* Transmission of knowledge, skills and culture.	* Having hidden curriculum
* Promoting social and political integration.	* Credentialism
* Maintaining social control.	* Maintain ruling class dominance
* Serving as an agent change.	* Obedience to the authority
* Completing socialization.	* Conformity to cultural norms
* Screening and selecting.	* Perpetuating existing social inequalities

Mainly, it can be noted that there are three main groups or views about neo liberal globalization in Turkey. One of them can be named as the first group totally against view, which is centered socialist idea or left wing political view. The second group is that the group supports neo liberal globalization totally. The group members can be said to be for functionalists having capitalist ideals or right wing political idea. The last ones remain in the middle of discussion, that is to say they are neutral on globalization reasons and results. If the first group is accepted 'thesis', the second group is considered 'anti-thesis', and the last one can be named as 'synthesis'.

The first group totally oppositions of neo liberal globalization generally insists that neo liberal globalization is new colonialism as seen examples all over the world. Neo liberal globalization promotes protection of the interests of the powerful, and market discipline for everyone else [15] (Choudry, 2003, p.4). One in a hand neo liberal applications cause new class struggle and international stratification. In general, the group's view can be considered pessimistic. The group has been trying to announce objectives with the slogan 'another world is possible' against new world regulation [16].

The second group is for in the main sense of globalization. The supporters of this group insist that for more modern and democratic society, free market economy is a necessity. In this context, all countries need economic development. Economic development refers to having the qualifications self-sustaining growth; structural change in patterns of production and consumption; technological upgrading; social, political, and institutional modernization; widespread improvement in the human conditions [17]. However the ideas expressed here had strong oppositions not only in Turkey

but also all over the world. As generally speaking, it can be expressed that the group's view about globalization is optimistic. In the group's opinion, freedom, welfare, justice, peace, reconciliation, tolerance, stability, knowledge, ethics, and quality are global values in modern age [18].

The third group defends out that globalization has many different 'faces'. The first 'face' has positive results called 'full part of the glass' in Turkish culture. In other words, the first dimension can be stated as having desired and acceptable reasons and results. The second 'face' has negative results which is called 'empty part of the glass' in Turkish culture. Briefly, second dimension can be summarized as the group who has seen globalization with undesired and unacceptable results. According to the group, the best way to evaluate globalization is not satisfactory to look at only one side of the glass, it is a necessity to look at and see both of these two sides. It is meant that it is obligatory to evaluate the globalization process from the point of different views. For instance, while imperialist approaches are accepted negative properties, in contrast international communication and interaction are accepted positive.

Effects of Neo-liberal Globalization on Higher Education in Turkey and Discussion:

The effects of neo-liberal globalization on Turkish higher education can be examined in many different subtitles as negative and positive effects. It is also possible to explain the effects in political, social and economic dimensions. The subject matters considered here is discussed in the following paragraphs.

One the most popular effects of neo liberal globalization on Turkish higher education is privatization in education and effects of privatization policy on public

and educational administration. The link between dominant values, the economy and the educational system is illustrated in the history of public education. However, it is claimed by capitalist idealism that private schools help reproduce the class structure in successive generations [9]. As been usually noted, through the neo liberal policies private ownership of property, pursuit of personal profit, free competition, consumer sovereignty and markets have been supported. The reflection of this policy has been seen as privatization in education in Turkey as seen in the other capitalist societies. As generally mentioned, the beginning of privatization can be stated announcing the stabilization programme, known as the January 24th Regulations. This was qualitatively different from the previous ones as it aimed at far reaching structural changes in the Turkish economy with the view to establishing the basis of an outward oriented growth model [19]. Privatization in Turkey, not only aims to minimize state involvement in economic activities and to relieve the financial burden of State Economic Enterprises (SEE) on the national budget, but also contemplates the development of capital markets and re-channeling of resources towards new investments [20]. Private higher education has been allowed after 1982 but has not become an important new channel for additional capacity in higher education until much later. Although private institutions constitute a heterogeneous group, they still represent an opening in the system for innovation and experimentation [21]. However, privatization in education causes inequality in education. Especially left wing unions in education sector defend out that privatization in education has worked against family and students from socio-economically lower class. Quality in private schools can be generally considered to be better than public schools. As a result upper class member students can be said to be educated in better conditions. The result has caused new social and political problems in society. It can be said as critics privatization in education can be uttered abandon in governments from social 'welfare' society or state.

Globalization has been changing Turkish Higher educational system in ownership of institutions. From the point of view development of Turkish Higher educational system, the context can be summarized as follow. Prioritising secularism and nationalism in a modernising society, the Turkish University has become a secular institution along the lines of French and American models. Today's higher education system is state-monopoly and subordinate to Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK) in matters of governance, planning, organization, teaching, and research. The public higher

education sector was dominant until the 1980, when non-profit organizations were legally allowed to set up higher education institutions [22]. There are currently 96 higher education institutions in Turkey, of which 22 are private. The results show an increase in number of universities in the period of privatization in Turkish higher education sector.

Another effect of privatization and globalization is decline in union membership in not only education but other sectors as well. Strong employer challenges to unions, plant closures, international competition, privatization and weakness of public employee's unions, political struggle have all contributed to the decline in union membership [23]. Declining in union causes the results explained in following in work-affairs as well as in socio-economic and educational field: employee fee and ratio of the income which employees get portion has decreased. Conditions for being retired have been getting more difficult and social power of working has weakened. Besides, being educated chance of the children of the classes working in the field of education has decreased. It is obvious that middle or upper class family members generally have the chance of keeping going their education in higher education.

Another important negative effect of privatization or globalization in education is that privatization has hindered social mobility function of education. In other words privatization in education has affected social mobility, which is described mobility of a person from a lower class to the upper one, negatively adverse in lower class member. Number of students who benefits from boarding schools was decreased. It began to become difficult for the students from lower class to have the opportunity to attend universities. Namely, neo liberal globalization application affected educational rights of lower class family students negatively [24].

Another effect of new world regulation or globalization in education is anti-democratic social structure that is; privatization in education has created new undesired social structure. Although it is usually defended out as Smith maintained before the free market system is dominated by consumers by providing the highest quality goods and services at the lowest possible price [6]. Nevertheless, especially during disorganized post Fordist capitalism, the defined pure, ideal capitalism is non-existent. In the context, economic performance reveals that capitalist economies generate greater income disparity. The new anti-democratic social structure has caused great quality differences between public and private schools. The results in the context have shown that conflict or Marxian theories can be accepted

predictive. The claim, which belongs to functionalist theory, that education is a tool for social mobility can not work in every situation or economic regulation.

Another educational result of globalization is relevant to curriculum. Curriculum has had alteration from the aspects of objective, content and methodology, and the tendency to get benefit from new technologies and constructive approach has obtained strengths. In this sense, political result of neo liberal globalization movement is that curriculum can be considered to be international rather than national and local. The results, as a reflection of the result uttered in this sense can be counted as follows: The language of English is a worldwide language now. English is also much more taught as a foreign language in higher institutions in Turkey. Moreover, English is used as the language of instruction in some universities in Turkey. Most of the family members and students have tried to attend or have the right for attendance universities the language of instruction of which is English in Turkey. Briefly, many universities in Turkey, as a result of competition and globalization, have taken 'internationalism' as a mission in their agenda [25].

The functions of university in Turkey can be said to be changing. The trends have shown that the purposes of higher education have been changed since 1980s. One of the most clearly description on purposes of higher education in Turkey as seen all over the world is that purposes of higher education are research, instruction and service that is the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge [26]. Although general purposes of higher education have been kept intact on surface, some differences and new trends can be seen in practice. Trends have shown that universities and main purpose of higher education in Turkey have been shaped in accordance with new world regulation by governing them as a commercial perceptiveness [27]. In the old days, that is, before invasion of new world regulation perceptions, universities used to be perceived as a community having social responsibility to train needed human resources for country. Universities nowadays are accepted as social commercial institutions especially with the construction of new private universities and high schools. The results have shown that Marxian theories can be said to be considered right if it is glanced from the point of view class struggle. On the other hand, the results can be said to stem from university's new function from the point of view Functionalist Theory.

Demand for graduate education in Turkey has been increasing gradually. Thusly, the number of students applying to attend graduate courses and enrolled the

graduate system has been shown in higher education statistics of Turkey [28] (OSYM, 2006, p. 3). As a reflection of neo liberal globalization the result can be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, the quality of education in undergraduate level is not satisfactory. Secondly, since the ratio of unemployment has increased, students graduated from undergraduate level may desire to attend graduate education in order to find job in better conditions. The situation indicated here can be stated that education as a social institution can not solve economic problems as seen here 'unemployment' alone. The example given here confirms Karl Marx's model of society. In connection with the same subject matter, it can be noted that Marx rejected capitalist common sense, therefore, as *false consciousness* explanation of social problems grounded in the shortcomings of individuals rather than the flaws of society that is, the process of economic production underlies and shapes the entire society [6]

Positive effects of neo-liberal globalization on Turkish higher education can be gathered As a production factor the importance of education and knowledge have been increased through globalization. Throughout history, knowledge, both as technical know-how and as information, of any kind has been important to mankind for improving the quality of life. What have changed over centuries, however, are the characteristics and the quality of knowledge [29](Gürüz, 2003, p.1). The producers and users of knowledge are educated and trained easily because of international communication tool development.

The utilization of instructional technology in Turkey can be said to have been increasing. The Republic of Turkey has become one of the world's most successful newly industrialized nations, due primarily to its imaginative utilization of information and communication technologies in business, industry, governmental issues as seen in the other countries. The many ongoing educational projects among Eastern and Western European countries potentially bring various learning effects, the most common being cultural cross-fertilization. Nowadays the more student-oriented learning programmes are exchanging.

Nature and importance of learning is changing. Lifelong learning, then, is of crucial importance in today's world. It is essential for people's ability to cope with and participate constructively in the change processes around them [30]. The convergence of technologies in recent years has made a great contribution to people's daily lives. Interactive distance teaching provides an example.

Due to the increased integration of telephones, electronic storage and the other communication opportunities, web based learning; long distance education system and interactive distance-teaching situation in higher education have been developed as a result of technological globalization [31]. The same development began to show itself in higher education system in Turkey at the beginning of 1980s. Open faculty of Anadolu University was opened for the first institutional applications of long distance education in higher education of Turkey. Today, the mentioned faculty and faculty of management, and faculty of economics are on duty for higher education of Turkey having used different educational technologies for long distance education area. Distance Education System has an inevitable role to overcome educational problems in Turkey and also, with associate degree, bachelor's degree and degree completion programs provides equal educational opportunities for many people thus helping raise the educational levels of Turkish citizens [32]. The reflection can be understood that each component of any system has own functions and if there is a problem in anywhere in any system, the problem will be probably solved by any appropriate, sufficient or not tool in functionalist view. The context can be interpreted that long distances education has had the students to attend and have higher education opportunity and contribute to educational area as a social policy. The application can also be considered a tool against inequality in higher education in social perspective. Likewise the result is accepted by university presentation as seen in the following:

Anadolu University has been providing higher education opportunities through distance education since 1982 (with the establishment of Distance Education System) to those who could not otherwise continue their education [32]

The mobility of students and academic staff has been increasing because of international relationship like Socrates, Leonardo and Comenius applications. The development of exchanges has been caused young people and teaching staff to undergo professional, vocational and technical education opportunity to develop and promote knowledge of foreign language used in work relations and in economic life, improving access to the labor market [33] The development can be interpreted cheap and new labor force in accordance conflict theory. At the same time the process can be seen a path for peace from the point of both functionalist and Marxian theories.

Another important aspect of education today is the proliferation of knowledge. It is generally said that new knowledge has been revealed within our lifetime than existed at the time of our birth. The volume of knowledge in a high-tech society doubles every eight years. It is small wonder that ours has become known as the 'learning society.' Not only is new knowledge increasing at an incredible rate, but old knowledge becomes increasingly perishable; the person who depends upon it is not only obsolete but not eager to improvement as well. The extension and modernization of our knowledge are central aims of life long learning [26]. The development or phenomenon indicated here has shown that lifelong learning is a necessity of today's society. Therefore it can be easily seen new curriculum development studies at universities related to daily life needs of people in Turkey. It can be easily noticed that the relationship university and industrial and social organizations has increased day by day. Teaching English, Russian as foreign languages, computer programming, and physical exercise courses can be counted as examples in this sense.

Administration of university can be uttered one of most crucial problem of higher education in Turkey. The appointment of the chair of higher education council and rectors of universities by the president of state that is considered active political power has been discussed. Such a designation or appointment has negative impact upon university autonomy. Such a sample of university administration can be said to be reflection of neo liberal globalization in public administration sense.

To sum up, the effects of neo-liberal on higher education in Turkey has been discussed for years. The discussion, in fact, has many different social, political and educational aspects. It is expected that the solution of the problem is too difficult but democracy probably should be considered the start point of new regulation.

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