

OPINIONS OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS FROM TURKEY ON POVERTY AND WEALTH

Associate Professor Sema Buz

Hacettepe University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences
Department of Social Work
Ankara/Turkey

Associate Professor Ozlem Cankurtaran Ontas,

Hacettepe University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences
Department of Social Work
Ankara/Turkey

Research Assistant Burcu Hatiboğlu

Hacettepe University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences
Department of Social Work
Ankara/Turkey

Abstract

Council on Social Work Education draws attention to the necessity that curriculum of social work education should include groups at risk as well as focusing on development of social and economic equality. This need to focus puts the explanations about the reasons of poverty and the need to discuss it with wealth forward. For this reason, this study reveals the opinions of social work students about poverty and wealth with the formulation built by using Feagin's poverty scale. The results show that, students preferred to provide structural explanations to interpret poverty and wealth but they did not mention economic and social inequality in their interpretations.

Key words: Poverty, wealth, social and economic inequality, social work

1. INTRODUCTION

Social work profession defines its mission on the basis of advocacy for disadvantaged/poor/excluded groups. According to the universal definition of social work by International Federation of Social Workers, the social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance their well-being while emphasizing social justice and human rights (IFSW, 2000). Council of Social Work Education (1994) which accredits social work education finds the inclusion of the development of social and economic justice and groups at risk into the curriculum necessary. This emphasis necessitates awareness of social workers about the structural reasons of poverty. For this reason, this study aims revealing the opinions of social work students about poverty and wealth.

For social work, which prioritizes principles of social justice and human rights, definitions related to poverty are of great importance. Social sciences have focused on the reasons of poverty and individualistic (Lewis, 1969; Mead, 1992) and structural (Merton, 1968; Wilson, 1987) explanations were followed by fatalistic ones (Feather, 1974, 1985; Feagin, 1975; Thom, 1977; Morcöl, 1997; Saunders, 2002).

Individualistic approach focuses on behavioral and cultural factors. In this respect, poverty is seen as a result of undesired behaviors, mental deficiency and inappropriate life style of the poor. Such a life style creates a culture of poverty and this culture reveals some social, economic and psychological features. It has properties such as lack of education, economic deficiency, doubt, deviant values and social absenteeism (Lewis, 1965, 1969). The basic property of this approach is the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Strong nuclear family creates strong bonds and dependency of family members to each other leads to the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Thus, the young generation inherits customs and values from their parents (Lewis, 1969). Welfare also becomes a trap of poverty for families since utilizing welfare state opportunities does not change parents' and children's behavior towards breaking the circle of poverty (Mead, 1992).

While individualistic approach focuses on the individualistic reasons to explain poverty, structural approach dwells on external factors (Merton, 1968; Wilson, 1987, 1996).

Structural approach proposes that poverty is because of external factors like lack of education or low income and adds that the poor, positioned in an undesired place in structural hierarchy, is the victim of social structure. Some social scientists criticize both approaches because of the insufficiency of explanations as to why the poor has a specific culture or positioned in an undesired place in structural hierarchy. They add that poverty includes some uncontrollable and inevitable factors emphasizing the element of fate (Waxman, 1983; Feather, 1974, 1985; Feagin, 1975; Thom, 1977; Morcöl, 1997; Saunders, 2002). Therefore, fatalist approach took its place as a third approach explaining poverty, pointing out the lacking aspects of individualistic and structural approaches.

Another concept defined with poverty is wealth about which scientific literature is quite lacking. The definition of wealth is considerably controversial while Marxist approach expresses it by taking the concept of class to the center and defines the capitalist society as classed society which is basically composed of two classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat; bourgeoisie being wealthy by the possession of the means of production and proletariat being poor who have to trade their labor to get a certain amount of income. It is argued that wealth requires capital accumulation which can be created with labor. In this respect, wealth should be discussed with the process of capital accumulation and the concept of labor.

The critical theorists who try to develop Marxism, which is criticized for discussing wealth on the basis of economic determinism; added dimensions of culture, social and historical context and communication to the aspect of economy. With this development in the golden age of capitalism in the 20th century; a new, educated, managerial and professional middle class which had not been mentioned by the Orthodox Marxism became the point of discussion. According to Wallerstein (2000), new middle classes share “ambiguity” and “contradiction” that defined the old middle class because of practical advantages and privileges separating them from other wage earners besides their bourgeois-like life style, values and general ways of thinking. Bourdieu (1986) argues that this group of people is the pioneer of ethical restructuring that the new economy needs which desires a world defining people by not only their production capacities but also their consumption capacities, life standards and styles. In this restructuring, in terms of production and accumulation; sparing, contending, saving and calculative morality leaves its place to a morality on the bases of credit, expenditure, pleasure and hedonism.

The import-substitution development period of pre-1980's Turkey depending on a broad-based inter-class consensus left its place to a narrow-based balance depending on an exclusionist and aggressive strategies of gaining wealth leading to inter-class tension and separation after 1980's. The changing economic policy of Turkey appears in a way that poverty deepens including middle classes and gaining economic capital becomes the sole purpose of life in itself. According to the poverty ratings of Turkish Statistical Institution in 2007, the rate of individuals under the poverty line, defined by per diem income of 2.15 dollars, is 0.63 % while the rate of individuals at the poverty line, defined by per diem income of 4.3 dollars, is 9.3 %. 0.54% of Turkish population lives under the line of hunger threshold, which includes solely nourishment expenditure while 18.56 % lives under poverty line, including nourishment and non-nourishment expenditure. Hunger threshold of a family with four members is presumed to be 237 YTL (New Turkish Liras) while the poverty line is 619 YTL (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2009). Above numbers being official, the rates are higher (25%) according to the data provided by unions (TÜRK İŞ Haber Bülteni, 2009)

Globalization and neo-liberal policies from 1980's in Turkey are experienced as a process during which poverty deepened, the poor excluded and otherised due to the implementations of politicians like Turgut Özal who openly expressed his sympathy to the rich and do everything for free market economy to reign. Social work students have been raised during a process in which such ideas were widely accepted. Since universal standards of social work education emphasizes structural reasons rather than individualistic ones in explaining poverty and anticipates non-exclusion of the poor because of the principle of social and economic justice, the way social work students define poverty and wealth as well as explain the reasons of both come into prominence.

2. WEALTH AND POVERTY IN TURKEY

Today poverty has become a problem and an issue of social policy that needs to be fought against not only on the national, but also on the international level besides the fact that it is taken as the main factor behind the emergence of many social problems (World Bank, 2000). On the other hand, it is observed that poverty is discussed varyingly in underdeveloped, developing and developed countries according to the focus of the concept of development.

Historically speaking, poverty in Turkey has been used after the World War II in line with the concepts such as underdevelopment, backwardness, rapid industrialization, structural change, and development, etc. With the 1970s, a new phase emerged following the internationalization of goods, services and money; transition from mass production to piecework production and technology intense production; globalization of knowledge; increase in the global activities of international or multi-national companies; and “attenuation of the nation-state”. From the early 1980s until the end of 1990s, on the other hand, social relations were re-organized according to the market principles in line with neo-liberal stability and harmony policies; and re-structuring, privatization and elimination of the public services came to the fore. Especially the decision dated 1989 (item 32) caused this process reach the top level state expenditures in basic public services such as health and education being restricted and private sector being motivated in these fields. As another component of the neo-liberal program, privatizations gained impetus especially after 1995 and made peak in the 2000s. Seemingly, rooted changes in the field of social security appeared on the agenda again in this period (Güzelsarı, 2008: 25-99). This was a period in which especially the understanding of social state was criticized harshly and it was assumed to tame a nation “that had been used to wait everything from the state” via the market (Buğra, 2008).

This transformation in the economy-politics of Turkey also influenced the perceptions of rich and poor in everyday life. Apparently, Turkish people 75% of whom were rural and poor in the 1950s lost its own forms of survival via the import substitution policies, and had to immigrate from village to city. Nevertheless, this trend of migration was also triggered by the fact that the difference between the east and the west of Turkey in terms of the socio-economical development and the violent acts in the east increased following the 1980s. Therefore, the individuals and families who were linked with the city as “second class members” in the 1950s (Es ve Ateş, 2004: 229) started to be defined as “dangerous other” with the 1980s (Erman, 2004: 3). In this period, people as the poor of the city who solved the problem of housing as building *gecekondu*, of survival as making their children work, and of unemployment as taking place in the informal sector were accused and excluded by the liberalist understanding which claims that basically everybody is responsible for their own life, future and destiny (Gökçeoğlu Balcı, 2007: 41). As taking notice at a similar exclusion between the east and the west of Turkey, Sapancı (2005: 109) emphasized that urban poverty should be discussed as the “replacement of social exclusion” because the individuals and families whose economic opportunities were restricted and which were exposed to violent acts in the rural areas after 1980 migrated to the places whose living and housing conditions are harsh and social texture is damaged in the cities which could not respond to the population density.

Furthermore, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2005) state that urban poverty is no more in rotation, but permanent. Having formerly held the opportunities to raise their social status materially and psychologically by taking place relatively easily in the informal economy, the poor becomes gradually marginalized by the destruction of the informal support systems. Buğra and Keyder (2003: 23-25) state that the poor started to live in the new conditions where informality in the employment and housing markets becomes rare; the welfare regime formed by the networks of relatives and hemşeris cannot cure the real poverty; and thus vertical social mobility is limited. This phenomenon which is discussed as the new poverty in literature is taken by Buğra and Keyder (2003: 23) as the disappearance of the social cohesion of the poor in the absence of the state support as the conditions of being linked with the urban economy decrease.

With the discussions on new poverty, poverty has been evaluated in line with rights, relations, powerlessness, exclusion, loss of honor and respect, and faithlessness (Archbishop of Centerbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas, 1985; cited in Wainwright, 1999: 477). According to Jones (1998: 7; cited in Garrett, 2002: 195-196) such a perspective would provide an important contribution for it requires taking notice of the risk factors in line with the different characteristics of each group. But it was also stated that such categorizations and conceptualizations of the post-modernist discourse may make the poor exposed to the moral assessments in the form of good and evil as in the 19th century due to its emphasis on the individual qualities without the principle of equality. According to this approach which had continued its dominance until the 19th century and developed over the moral value assessments, there are two types of poor who either “deserve” or “do not deserve” social aids and services. As the handicapped, the women who have to take care of their children on their own (moral value judgments also determine the selection of these women), the elderly, and orphans etc. constitute the “deserving” poor; the ones who do not work although they are in a position to work due to their being lazy, immoral and vagabond, but instead prefer theft constitute the “non-deserving”.

While it was legitimate to give every kind of help to the first group since they were the resource of compassion among the society; the second group pulled the feeling of fear and disgust against the morality and health of the society, and made it legitimate to cleanse these groups from the society (Yılmaz, 2008: 130). The basic problem here is the assumption that help may be delivered by reference to only altruist and moral concerns, not as a citizen right in the context of social justice (Özkazanç, 2000: 22). Many social scientists (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001: 70; Buğra and Keyder, 2003: 14-20; Bauman, 1999) explain the poor's loss of function in capitalism as the "army of substitute labor power" in the post-industrial period in line with the lack of necessity for the poor in the functioning of the system. Özkazanç (2000: 11) states that today's perception of poverty easily moves from the liberal statuses to the conservative statuses, and strengthens the relationship between the two by putting emphasis on diversity and differences. Thus Buğra and Keyder (2003: 14-20) state that in underdeveloped countries like Turkey where the social welfare system is inadequate, the understanding of social state which has been disempowered by neo-liberal policies cause permanency of poverty, misuse of the poor as a means of politics, and informalization of the relationship between the poor and the state. Yılmaz (2008) on the other hand, takes attention to the fact that this is also seen in the developed countries and as causing exclusion among the poor it prepares grounds for the constitution of an under-class group that is exposed to both structural unemployment and discrimination.

While on the one hand poverty experiences both qualitative and quantitative changes under the effect of neo-liberal policies, on the other hand, the rapid economic transformation in the 1980s caused a serious transformation in the top income group of the society (Keyder and Öncü, 1993). A group on one side that is mostly based on Anatolia and has become enriched in the economic enlargement period which is export based including mainly textile; and another group that is an urban based and educated type of the rich who work in Istanbul as the top managers in the service sectors as finance, media, and insurance, etc. have emerged. For these new rich people it has become one of the indicators of the new life style to own the products that are new and expensive, thus unreachable for others, presented by the companies of advertisement and marketing on the endeavor to differentiate themselves from the rest. This new consumption culture has taken various shapes under the leadership of the highly educated group whose links with the west have been strengthened thanks to the communication and transportation facilities of globalization, and thus who may follow the new global consumption trends easily, and another station of the ones who seek for new life styles fed by the images of the global consumption culture has become the luxuries houses in the periphery of the city (Perouse and Daniş 2005:103).

This change caused an important transformation after 1980 in the poor-rich relationship with state's distancing from its protective role, and the two groups have been fallen apart sharply. Change in the perception and perspective of poverty is also similar with the rich. It is seen that illegitimate ways are resorted for getting wealth and thus an emphasis on unjust enrichment has increased. Therefore, it is needed to take poverty and richness together and look at the effect of each other in for formation of the processes of poverty and enrichment. It seems so important for the students of social work in Turkey to look at the issue from two angles in the framework of the unequal income distribution and processes of becoming rich and poor, and thus it is important to determine the ideas of the students on the issue. The necessity of richness taking place in social work literature is in congruence with the holistic approach since it includes the analysis of society as a whole. Increase in the students' knowledge and awareness on how richness and poverty have been structured politically, economically and culturally, and what kind of changes they have been exposed to would create a new opportunity in terms of increasing the effectiveness of social work in the fight against poverty. Such a perspective is also in accordance with the CSWE's measures on the accreditation of social work education.

3. METHODOLOGY

It is obvious in the social work literature research with social work students about causes of poverty focused explanations of the causes of poverty (Cryns, 1977; Roff, Adams, and Klemmack, 1984; Rosenthal, 1993; Schwartz and Robinson, 1991). An approach poverty with wealth is important to social work because the profession have a mission about promotion of social and economic justice. The aim of this research to learn the opinions of social work students about the causes of poverty and wealth. The research questions are:

1. How social work students define poverty and wealth?
2. How social work students define the causes of poverty and wealth ? (structural, fatalistic or individualistic)

3. Are there any differences between some socio-demographic characteristics of social work students (sex and income) and the explanations on poverty and wealth?

This study had been carried out with 127 students of 2nd and 3rd grade from Hacettepe University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Department of Social Work. There are not any elective courses about poverty in the curriculum of this school. The participant students had tried to be elected from the 4th and 6th semester students who had taken the courses of ‘Social Problems’, ‘Social Work Theory’, ‘Ethics, Values and Responsibilities in Social Work’ focusing especially on poverty.

In the questionnaire; besides their income and the class they feel belonging to, students’ own definitions of poverty and wealth had also been asked. After, some sentences had been placed to determine how much they agree to the individualistic, structural and fatalist explanations of poverty. A similar formulation had been built about the reasons of wealth and put to the questionnaire by our part as follows.

Figure 1: People are poor because...

They lack necessary talent and skills	Individualistic
They are unlucky	Fatalistic
Their moral values are degenerated	Individualistic
Their effort is not enough	Individualistic
They use alcohol	Individualistic
They are the victims of prejudice and exclusion	Structural
They do not have equal opportunities	Structural
The economic system is ineffective	Structural

Figure 2: People are wealthy because...

They have necessary talent and skills	Individualistic
They are lucky	Fatalistic
They are not honest	Individualistic
They work hard	Individualistic
They have the right connections (knowing individuals in decision-making mechanisms)	Individualistic
They have more opportunities at the beginning	Individualistic
They utilize gains of the unjust economic system	Structural

Questions of Feagin’s (1975) Poverty Scale and two wide based studies carried out by the International Social Justice Project group in 1991 across 13 European countries and in 1996 across six European countries to determine beliefs and attitudes about social, economic and political justice, had been utilized to design the reasons of poverty and wealth that had been asked (The International Social Justice Project Core Codebook, 1997).

Analysis of the data had been carried out with SPSS 11.5. The definitions and explanations of poverty and wealth from students had been presented by using frequency tables. Whether gender and income level have an effect on students’ opinions of poverty and wealth had been revealed via chi-square test.

4. FINDINGS

There is a quota application for attendance examination of Hacettepe University Department of Social Work and male-female student rate is 50%. So gender distribution of students is equal. Student placement examination in Turkey is carried out right after the end of high school and students succeeding the test can start university in an early age like 18-19 which is the reason for low average of students’ age. Most of the participants had finished the 4th semester. It is seen that most of the students are from urban origin and live with their friends in Ankara.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Students

		S	%
Gender			
	Female	66	52,0
	Male	61	48,0
	Total	127	100,0
Age			
	19-22	90	70,9
	23+	37	29,1
	Total	127	100,0
Semester			
	4. semester	78	61,4
	6. semester	49	38,6
	Total	127	100,0
Place of birth			
	Province	105	82,7
	District	17	13,4
	Village	5	3,9
	Total	127	100,0
The place of longest residence			
	Province	73	57,5
	District	41	32,3
	Village	13	10,2
	Total	127	100,0
People the person lives with in Ankara			
	Family	25	19,7
	Friends	90	70,9
	Alone	12	9,4
	Total	127	100,0

Students' income rate had been grounded on the minimum wage of 527 YTL (250 Euros) effective in July 2009 in Turkey. Accordingly, more than the half of the participants have an income below the minimum wage. But this condition does not keep student from considering themselves in the middle class. One of the reasons for students' seeing themselves in the middle class despite their low income is that being a university student itself is a source of cultural capital. But students' inability to afford the costs of reaching the sources for building this capital creates a contradiction. Another reason is the fact that 20% of the students are living with their families which means most of the needs of those students are met by their families leading to a perception as seeing their own families in the middle class. The students who opposed the classification were against the definition of classes according to income and support the idea that cultural and other kinds of accumulations should be considered and classification is against equality besides being unethical.

4.1. Opinions about Poverty

Table 2 The Reasons of Poverty

<i>Explanations about the reasons of poverty</i>	Mostly		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%
	<i>Lack of skills and talent</i>	14	11,0	22	17,3	56	44,1	25	19,7	10	7,9	127
<i>Unluckiness</i>	7	5,5	18	14,2	44	34,6	39	30,7	19	15,0	127	100
<i>Corruption of moral values</i>	5	3,9	29	22,8	29	22,8	29	22,8	35	27,6	127	100
<i>The poor's lack of effort</i>	7	5,5	33	26,0	44	34,6	30	23,6	13	10,2	127	100
<i>Alcohol abuse</i>	15	11,8	35	27,6	39	30,7	25	19,7	13	10,2	127	100
<i>Discrimination and prejudice against specific groups (women, handicapped, elder, immigrant etc.)</i>	38	29,9	44	34,6	31	24,4	10	7,9	4	3,1	127	100
<i>Inequality of opportunity</i>	90	70,9	23	18,1	9	7,1	2	1,6	3	2,4	127	100
<i>Failure of the economic system</i>	96	75,6	22	17,3	7	5,5	---	---	2	1,6	127	100

After 1990, poverty became an important subject of discussion at both national and international levels. At the international level, institutions like United Nations and the World Bank carried out studies and tried to determine criteria of poverty. The discussions of absolute poverty before 1990 began to be evaluated on the bases subjective factors of human development, self-actualization, exclusion and the like with these developments. These developments drew attention to the improvement of social and economic justice, exclusion of the poor as one of the groups at risk and prevention of the poor from being disadvantaged in terms of social work's agenda. In this context, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) changed the definition of social work on the bases of empowerment, human rights and social justice in 2000. Accordingly, it is seen that social work education in Turkey increased the emphasis on poverty as well as the number of scientific studies on the subject which leads to the expectation that social work students will gain awareness about it in the future. Participant students mentioned two basic criteria of the poor. One of them is the inability to satisfy basic needs and the other is the minimum standard of living. Both of these definitions are based on state's formal explanations of poverty. Definitions do not have social class characteristics besides being away from individualistic and fatalistic approaches. Thus the definition of the poor becomes a cliché and gets ambiguous. On the other side, the fact that students' definitions do not contain individualistic and fatalistic elements can be evaluated a positive indicator.

Most of the students showed insufficiency of the economic system (75.6%) as the reason of poverty, followed by inequality of opportunity (70.9%) and prejudice and discrimination against certain groups (29.9%). Structural explanations coming forward as the prime reason of poverty is also seen in Finland and Australia (Kuivalainen and others 2006; Saunders, 2002: 153-155; Niemela, 2008). Unemployment, low wages and inequality of opportunity are the prime reasons of poverty in Finland and Australia. Besides, according to the European Values Survey carried out in 1990 in Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and France, poverty in these countries were also not explained on the bases of individualistic reasons (van Oorschot ve Halman, 2000). The fact that structural reasons like failure of the economic system and inequality of opportunity are the prime explanations of poverty supports the data from the study in Turkey. Morcöl (1997) also found that unemployment and structural explanations about the reasons of poverty are more frequent than individualistic and fatalist ones. Although structural explanations take the first place, individualistic explanations are at considerable levels. For instance, 13,5 % of Australians used individualistic explanations. The results of this study shows that individualistic explanations like lack of skills and talent (28,3%), lack of effort (31,5%) and alcohol abuse (34,9%) are at high rates. The results of studies about perceptions of social work students on the reasons of poverty (Schwartz and Robinson, 1991; Rosenthal, 1993; Roff, Adams and Klemmack, 1984; Cryns 1977; Sun, 2001; Clark, 2007) show that students are more prone to provide structural explanations which support the current findings.

When it comes to the reasons of poverty according to students' gender and level of income, there is only one statistically significant relation which is between the corruption of moral values and gender. Accordingly, male students relate the reason of poverty to corruption of moral values more than female students do. Some studies on the subject show that females support structural explanations more than males (Kluegel ve Smith, 1986; Hunt, 1996; Sun, 2001) while some others propose that males provide structural explanations more then females (Morcöl, 1997). There are also some studies putting that gender has nothing to do with evaluations about the reasons of poverty (Cozzarelli and others, 2001). Concordantly, when the results of this study are evaluated, it can be proposed that gender and income level are not identifiers of an assessment about the reasons of poverty.

4.1.Opinions about Wealth

Table 3 The Reasons of Wealth

<i>Explanations about wealth</i>												
	Mostly		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%
<i>Skills and talent</i>	25	19,7	41	32,3	37	29,1	17	13,4	7	5,5	127	100
<i>Luck</i>	23	18,1	38	29,9	44	34,6	17	13,4	5	3,9	127	100
<i>Dishonesty</i>	30	23,6	49	38,6	32	25,2	11	8,7	5	3,9	127	100
<i>Working hard</i>	24	18,9	33	26,0	44	34,6	18	14,2	8	6,3	127	100
<i>Having the right connections (knowing individuals in decision-making mechanisms)</i>	62	48,8	40	31,5	19	15,0	3	2,4	3	2,4	127	100
<i>Having more opportunities at the beginning</i>	73	57,5	38	29,9	10	7,9	4	3,1	2	1,6	127	100
<i>Systems' inclination towards allowing unfair gains</i>	86	67,7	29	22,8	8	6,3	2	1,6	2	1,6	127	100

While explaining wealth, students used concepts of basic needs and minimum standard of living that they used in defining poverty. Thus, they made the definition of wealth on the basis of the definition of poverty. Thus, there were some students who had difficulties in defining wealth or predicting the rate of the wealthy in Turkey. Besides, most of the students (85%) said about the next 5 years that the rate of poverty would rise while having difficulty in predicting the rate of the wealthy. Thus, the rates of students who predicted a rise (38,6%) or a fall (23,6%) and who predicted no change (37%) in the rate of the wealthy are very close to each other. Generally, a perception that 25% or less of the society is wealthy emerged.

Another emphasis related to the definition is luxury and pleasure. Nevertheless, as in the definition of poverty, there is no class emphasis in students' definition of wealth.

About this subject, Simmel's evaluation that possession of things is perceived as being related with joy and pain is a mistake (in: Ritzer, 1992: 7) and theorists (Bauman 1999, Bourdieu 1986) thinking that consumer culture led to the ignorance of class emphasis show parallelism with each other. Thus, students' emphasis on consumption and pleasure in defining wealth shows that they do not take factors affecting the formation of wealth and class structure into consideration.

Besides, Bourdieu (1986) mentions economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. But students define wealth only on the basis of economic capital. The reason of this comes from the perception that wealth was equal to economic capital after 1980, during which other forms of capital were not seen important and "cutting corners to get rich" (by fictitious export, fraud, unfair interest yield etc.) was the only thing that matters.

Classifications of poverty had been taken in relation to the reasons of wealth. Accordingly, skills and talent, dishonesty, working hard, having more opportunities and right connections at the beginning had been evaluated as individualistic, luck had been evaluated as fatalistic and systems' inclination towards allowing unfair gains had been evaluated as structural explanations. Among the reasons of wealth, structural explanations are in leading position but individualistic explanations also came forward. Besides, positive individualistic explanations like working hard had been emphasized less than the negative ones supports the perception of "cutting edges to gain wealth" after 1980. Thus, the answers given to the open-ended questions mostly evaluated the reasons of wealth in the frame of negative individualistic characters.

According to the chi-square test related to the students' opinions about the reasons of wealth, their gender and level of income, there were no statistically significant relation among them. In this sense, the results of this study show that gender and level of income have no effect on evaluations about the reasons of wealth.

In fact, poverty and wealth are concepts that should be discussed together regarding social work's missions of human rights and social justice. These concepts being discussed separately leads to the labeling of the poor, and hindering the fact that poverty is basically a human rights violation. It is seen that poverty and wealth are not evaluated on the bases of concepts like capitalism, class analysis, distribution of capital in the market economy by the students. Especially, economic accumulation being the sole base related to the discussions about wealth attracts attention. In order to realize the struggle against economic and social injustice as one of the functions of social work, social workers and social work students need such a perspective of rights and a theoretical base.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Poverty is a subject coming to the fore frequently with globalization which took its place in the millennium development goals. But discussing poverty separately from wealth hinders the full realization of social justice and human rights perspectives. Thus, the ground of social policy is not working for the benefit of the poor.

When it is considered that structural and individualistic explanations can generally determine applications, the density of structural explanations in this study might be important in terms of showing that macro policies towards poverty and wealth can be developed. Yet, strengthening of political nature of the structural explanations can also strengthen the struggle of social work against social injustice. Wealth taking part in social work literature is compatible with holistic perspective in terms of including the analysis of society as a whole. Such an approach is also compatible with the CSWE's criterion of accrediting social work education.

It is important to evaluate the degree of cohesiveness with CSWE's commitments which emphasize the place of the development of economic and social justice and the groups at risk during the process of education.

Thus, students' evaluations related to poverty and wealth should be followed at the beginning, during and the end of their education. A holistic evaluation necessitates applications at all levels without exception. This is why what kind of a study social workers carry out with the poor should also be examined. In this sense, such a study should be carried out taking political views into consideration, including students from different disciplines and levels of education with a wider sample in Turkey.

References

- Bauman, Z. (1999), *Çalışma, Tüketim ve Yeni Yoksullar*, İstanbul, Sarmal.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Buğra, A. (2008), *Yoksullukla mücadeleden ne anlıyoruz?*, http://www.obarsiv.com/pdf/ayse_bugra.pdf, online: December 2008.
- Buğra, A. ve Keyder, Ç. (2003), *New Poverty and the Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey*, http://www.undp.org.tr/publicationsDocuments/new_poverty.pdf, online: April 20 2008.
- Clark, S. (2007), "Social Work Students' Perceptions of Poverty", *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, Vol. 16, no. 1, s.149-166
- Council on Social Work Education (1994), *Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures* (fourth edition). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. V. ve Tagler, M.J. (2001), "Attitudes Toward the Poor and Attributions for Poverty", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, s. 207-227.
- Cryns, A. G. (1977), "Social Work Education and Student Ideology: A Multivariate Study of Professional Socialization", *Journal of Education for Social Work*, Vol. 13, No. 1, s. 44-51.
- Erman, T. (2004), "Gecekondu Çalışmalarında 'Öteki' Olarak Gecekondu Kurguları", *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, <http://www.ejts.org/document85.html>, online: March 2008.
- Es M. ve Ateş H. (2004), "Kent yönetimi, kentleşme ve göç: sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri", *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları Dergisi*, Vol. 48, s. 205-248.
- Feagin, J.R. (1975), *Subordinating the Poor. Welfare and American Beliefs*, Upper Sandle River, NJ, Prentice Hall.
- Feather, N. T. (1974), "Explanations of Poverty in Australian and American Samples", *Australian Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 26, s. 199-216.
- Feather, N. T. (1985), "Attitudes, Values and Attributions: Explanations of Unemployment", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48, s. 876-89.
- Garrett, P. M. (2002), "Social Work and the Just Society: Diversity, Difference and the Sequestration of Poverty", *Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 2, No. 2, s. 187-210.
- Gökçeoğlu Balcı Ş. (2007), *Tutunamayanlar ve Hukuk*, Ankara, Dost Kitabevi
- Güzelsarı, S. (2008), *Küresel Kapitalizm ve Devletin Dönüşümü: Türkiye'de Mali İdarede Yeniden Yapılanma*, İstanbul, Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı.
- Hunt, M.O. (1996), "The Individual, Society or Both? A Comparison of Black, Latino, and White Beliefs about the Causes of Poverty", *Social Forces*, Vol. 75, s. 293-322.
- IFSW (International Federation of Social Work, 2000), *Definition of Social Work*, <http://www.ifsw.org/p38000208.html>, online: June 2009.
- Işık, O. ve M. Pınarcıoğlu (2001), *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk Gecekondulaşma ve Kent Yoksulları: Sultanbeyli Örneği*, İstanbul, İletişim.
- Keyder, Ç., and Oncu A. (1993), *Istanbul and The Concept of World Cities*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, İstanbul, Window publications.
- Kluegel, J.R. ve E.R. Smith (1986), *Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be*, New York, Adline De Gruyter.
- Kuivalainen, S., Niemela, M. ve Airio, I. (2006), "Institutional Framework and Empirical Findings on Working Poor Phenomenon in Finland from 1995 to 2005", paper presented on 13 October 2006 at *The 2nd Workshop on Working Poor in Western Europe*, Centre for Empirical Research in the Economic and Social Sciences (CERESS), Cologne, University of Cologne.
- Lewis, O. (1965), *La Vida, a Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty: San Juan and New York*, New York: Random House.

- Lewis, O. (1969) "The Culture of Poverty", in *On Understanding Poverty*, D.P. Moynihan (ed.), New York, Basic Boks, s. 187-200.
- Mead, L.M. (1992), *The New Politics of Poverty: The Non-Working Poor in America*, New York: Basic Boks
- Merton, R. (1968), *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York: Free Press.
- Morcöl, G. (1997), "Lay Explanations for Poverty in Turkey and Their Determinants", *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 137, s. 728-738.
- Niemela, M. (2008), "Perceptions of the Causes of Poverty in Finland", *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 51, No. 23, s. 24-40.
- Oorschot, W.J.H. van and Halman, L.C.J.M. (2000), "Blame or Fate, Individual or Social? An International Comparison of Popular Explanations of Poverty", *European Societies*, Vol. 2, O. 1, 1-28.
- Özkazanç, A.(2000), *Yeni Sağdan Sonra: Yeni Sol, Siyasi İktidar ve Meşrutiyet*, Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Gelişme ve Toplum Araştırmaları Merkezi Tartışma Metinleri, http://www.politics.ankara.edu.tr/dosyalar/tm/SBF_WP_24.pdf, online: March 2009.
- D. Daniş, J. F. Perouse, (2005), "Zenginliğin Mekânda Yeni Yansımaları: İstanbul'da Güvenlikli Siteler", *Toplum ve Bilim*, Vol. 104, s:92-103.
- Ritzer, G. (1992), *Sociological Theory*, Third Edition, (Çev. Ümit Tatlıcan), Nw York, McGraw-Hill.
- Roff, L.L., Adams, J, P., ve Klemmack, D.L. (1984), "Social Work Students' Willingness to Have Government Help the Poor", *Arete*, Vol. 9, No. 1, s. 9-20.
- Rosenthal, B.S. (1993), "Graduate Social Work Students' Beliefs About Poverty and Attitudes Toward the Poor", *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, Vol. 7, No. 1, s. 107-121.
- Sapancalı F. (2005), *Sosyal dışlanma*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Saunders, P. (2002), *The Ends and Means of Welfare. Coping with Economic and Social Change in Australia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartz, S. ve M. M. Robinson (1991). "Attitudes Toward Poverty During Unergraduate Education", *Journal of Social Work Education*, Vol. 27, s. 290-296.
- Sun, An-Pyng (2001). "Perceptions Among Social Work and Non-Social Work Students Concerning Causes of Poverty", *Journal of Social Work Education*, Vol. 37, No. 1, s. 161-173.
- The International Social Justice Project (1997), Core Codebook, USA, <http://www.butler.edu/ISJP/index.html>, online: May 2009.
- Thom, E. (1977), "Strategies against Poverty-A Policy Analysis", in *Anti-Poverty Measures in European Countries*, Eurosocial reports no.14., Wien, European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research, s. 3-14.
- TÜRK-İŞ Haber Bülteni (2009), "Açlık ve Yoksulluk Sınırı" in *Newsletter*, Ankara.
- Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (2009), *Yoksulluk Analizleri*, <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBul tenleri.do?id=2080>, online: June 2009.
- Wainwright, S. (1999), "Anti-Poverty Strategies: Work with Children and Families", *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 29,s. 477-483.
- Wallerstein, I. (2000) "11. yüzyıldan 21. yüzyıla Kavram ve Gerçeklik Olarak Burjuva(zi)", in *İrk, Ulus, Sınıf*, Balibar, E. ve I. Wallerstein (eds), İstanbul, Metis.
- Waxman, C.I. (1983), *The Stigma of Poverty: A Critique of Poverty Theories and Policies*, New York, Pergamon Press.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987), *The Truly Disadvantaged: the Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, W. J. (1996) "The Poorest of the Urban Poor: Race, Class and Social Isolation in America's Inner-City Ghettos", in *Citizenship Today. The Contemporary Relevance of T. H. Marshall*, M. Blumer and A. M. Rees (eds), London, UCL Pres, s. 223-248.
- World Bank (2000), *World Development Report 2000/01*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Yılmaz, B. (2008), "Türkiye'de Sınıf-Altı: Nöbetleşe Yoksulluktan Müebbet Yoksulluğa", *Toplum ve Bilim Dergisi*, Vol. 113, s. 146-173.