

Chapter 2

Social Exclusion and Poverty: EU 2020 Objectives and Turkey

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter The EU's 2020 Objectives concerning social exclusion and poverty and Turkey's vision on social exclusion and poverty based on tenth development plan and Justice and Development Party's 2023 vision is dealt. The EU has developed a growth strategy named "EU 2020" in 2010. The objective concerning social exclusion and poverty of this strategy is to rescue as much EU citizens as possible from social exclusion and poverty and decreasing the number of EU citizens who live under poverty line by 20%. Although Turkey is not officially obliged to follow goals stated in EU 2020 objectives, it is integral for Turkey to pursue those principles in order to be harmony with the EU and reach her final aim of being a member of the EU.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty, which can be summarized as an individual's struggle with meeting the basic needs resulting from being a human, is a notion as old as the history of humanity. On the other hand, poverty, as a social phenomenon, is evaluated as a product of the industrial revolution. Oppressive wage policies brought by the industrialization process pushed the laborers, who have no income but their labor, and their families into poverty. Individuals became dependent on the "affection" granted by the capitalist system in this period where the social solidarity weakened and alienation process got faster. This also brought about a new type of poverty, social exclusion, which causes class conflicts and causes the social order to be disturbed as it has never been before.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7311-1.ch002

Issues of poverty and social exclusion in European Union are matters evaluated within the framework of European Social Charter. All the citizens have the right to be protected against social exclusion and poverty. This right is not only evaluated on the basis of employment but also on the basis of citizenship. Within this framework, many decisions have been made towards prevention of social exclusion and poverty in European Union since the beginning of 1990s. In 2000, major advancements were aimed within ten years in the issues of poverty and social exclusion in the Lisbon Council. However the evaluation made in 2010 showed that the objectives were not met as a result of the economic crises. In light of these developments, EU decided to bring the EU 2020 Strategy into action to solve negativities to be seen within the next ten years with sensible, sustainable and inclusive growth strategies. This strategy, bringing new developments in the issues of poverty and social exclusion, tacitly imposes responsibilities to candidate countries like Turkey.

Turkey has worse indicators in the issues of poverty and social exclusion than EU member countries. It is inextricable that Turkey which is on course of full membership to EU primarily catches on similar objectives with member countries to go through a smooth integration process. The opposite would cause Turkey's membership to either be delayed or problematical. Justice and Development Party's 2023 vision and particularly 10th Five-Year Development Plan come to the forefront as the most concrete objectives put forward in the issues of poverty and social exclusion in Turkey where the anticipation that economic growth will eliminate poverty is dominant.

POVERTY AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

It is possible to mention about poverty in every period of the history. Poverty which is caused by individual or social circumstances can be evaluated as the inadequacies or difficulties faced in meeting the needs of an individual stemming from being a human. But poverty, as a social phenomenon, can be accepted as a product of the industrial revolution. It characterizes the struggles of masses in factories flooding to cities from rural areas with the thought of a better life and more freedom. Individuals earning their keep as agricultural laborers have become unsuccessful in meeting their basic needs against the competitive wage systems of the factories. This situation not only causes absolute poverty for individuals but also makes social life change as it has never changed before. Loss of the culture of solidarity and support of traditional society created the need to take institutional precautions and caused poverty to become more structural.

In modern world, however, the causes of poverty are based on many economic and social reasons. Even if the short income is always a leading reason among these, the poverty of the modern world together with the weakness sensation against the state and the society has become a social issue containing the insufficiency in dealing with these and the vulnerability for negative situations.

The first studies towards understanding the poverty are seen in the sixteenth century. Vives's "The Relief of the Poor" published in 1526, Paine's "Agrarian Justice" published in 1796 and Mill's studies in which he foresaw relief to the poor draw attention as the first studies to try to explain the notion of poverty (Bugra, 2007, p. 77). Many studies were made in the following days towards evaluating the poverty. Poverty was attempted to be evaluated within the frame of different definitions in these studies. However in present day, it is generally researched in three groups as relative and human poverty, approximation poverty and absolute poverty.

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