

## DIGITAL CAPITALISM AND NEW COMMUNICATION POLICIES OF TURKEY

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### Abstract

New communication technologies and policies, especially since 1980s, has become a major discussion point in social science studies with communication axis. When compared to US and Europe communication policies to Turkey- It is high lightened that Turkey's new communication technologies are dependent on outside sources and Turkey does not have a stable and long-term determined approach towards these technologies.

In addition to 1980s means changing of paradigm of the development of a liberal economy, free market economy, market orientation communication policies points out an outstanding axis shift.

The source of the changes in this period are articulation of a new accumulation scheme of capitalism in Turkey and the loss of power of the nation-state and nation-state policies in the process. Another important point is that Turkey is one of the worst ranked countries when country's population compared to the number of internet users. Lack of access equity and Turkey's not producing but exporting position and being dependent in terms of communication technologies are main points to be considered when examining the policy.

Considered Turkey in new communication technologies and policies axis, Marshall and When (transferred succeeded, 2004, p. 15).; They address that that country necessarily has information infrastructure and accordingly develop the applications to meet the local needs and at last have the power of creating and controlling capacity In order to take advantage of the advantages of information and communication technologies in a country.

When Turkey is evaluated from this perspective, it falls behind his European parties in terms of creating innovation capacity and administering the contents of this innovation.

This study, in order to create a sensitive framework for the political economy of communication, aims to examine the information technologies in the scope of access equity and content orientation and it also aims to come up with possible answers concerning how to manage and organize this new media.

**Keywords:** New Media, Politics, New Media Technology

*"The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness"*

Marks

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As from Daniel Bell's theory of Information Society following the 1970s, social facts have been explained on the basis of information and thus, communication theories. Communication and communication policies are both the determinant and the consequence of social processes, which has caused an important change of paradigm. Their role as a determinant in society has brought along the necessity for conducting them via certain policies in order to understand and orient the technology. "Communication policy is the way of conducting the communication relationships that are brought along by the determination of certain objectives

and instruments, realization of plans, allocation of resources, applications, supervision and investigations/observations of effect/outcome” (Erdoğan, 1997, p.119).

In Turkey, the fact that communication policies are not determined on the basis of a certain written text and these policies are foreign-dependent comprises significant criticism points. Being identified with certain events and attitudes that are developed towards these events, the communication policies have revealed the necessity for unique communication policies as the new communication technologies have become complex. In addition to all this, “there are laws, regulations and other regulatory documents that determine the communication policy, as well as institutions and committees that are established in this area” (Öngören, 1995, p.17). They all are constituted with a west-centric perspective and the most important reason of this condition is that communication technologies are imported. However, this condition brings along a number of problems especially in practice.

## 2. COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Evaluating Turkey on the basis of communication policies, even though it is possible to mention the communication policies determined by possession until the 1980s, there has been an important change of paradigm accompanied by liberal economic policies that have started to develop especially as from the 1980s. The new communication technologies that experienced an important leap during the 1970s had a great change both qualitatively and quantitatively during the 80s. The concept of press that was dominantly used until the 1980s has been replaced by the concept of media. An important change has occurred in the Western Europe Communication Strategies that we take as a model, which is primarily caused by the acceleration of liberal policies together with the end of the two-pole cold war, as well as the formation of both public broadcasting and private enterprises.

This polyphony in the area of communication has not only brought along the question about how to inspect it, but also the generation of certain policies by the EU and America in this area. In Turkey, on the other hand, there has been an increase in private televisions and radios in parallel with the world, the communication sector has become an important area of investment and some legal regulations have been made to regulate this issue.

In legal regulations, the process of integration that is experienced with the EU and is frequently interrupted has played a distinct role and Turkey has aimed to comply with the EU in the area of communication policies with various legal regulations. However, these regulations have been too rapid for the harmonization process and there are some reluctances and troubles in practice, which all comprise important problems in the area of communication policies.

Liberal policies are carried out on the basis of an array of global power centre, which determines the communication policies. The fact that especially the developing countries remain defenceless against the global capital causes them to be foreign-dependent in these policies. “Aside from creating and managing an innovation in the information sector, Turkey has even lost its power of developing policies in the aforementioned area. Inasmuch that Turkey, which privatized the Turkish Telecommunication Corporation within the frame of European Union harmonization policies in 2005, should be asserted to have lost even its infrastructure of national information.” (Kaymas, 2012, p.2)

The Liberal Political perspective, which is a highly dominant perspective; explains the new communication technologies and the rules that are not supposed to regulate the use of these technologies on the basis of free market economics and market. Richard Collins explains the common relevant mistakes as follows: “The first mistake dominates the area of public policies and asserts that information and communication technologies could only be managed by “free market decisions under the best conditions”. The second mistake dominates the academic studies and asserts that new media and communication technologies could only be managed by “network management” and “self-regulation”. The third mistake, on the other hand, asserts that the internet should be in a different management from the traditional media (especially the areas of broadcasting and telecommunication)” (Cited from Collins by Kaymas, 3).

However, capitalism either acquires a different market or extends its existing market with new media technologies, which makes the inspection even more compulsory. These regulations are required more greatly especially in developing countries like Turkey, which is seriously threatened by global capitalism and its extensions. This process, where the nation state policies have weakened and the capital has made the borders transitional, progresses with the terrifying expansionist logic of digital capitalism.

Countries that remain defenceless against the logic of Digital Capitalism have not only had to support these policies, but also been driven into the inactivist policy. Even though the new communication technologies, in other words the new media with today’s popular saying, have become a fact of our everyday life in such an

environment, it remains a total problem how to use and how to understand it. In other words, our instruments of understanding the new media have been taken from us.

In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that Schiller's concept of Digital Capitalism relates not only the technological and economic progress, but also the processes of global capital and information, in other words the information-based capitalism. In this process, where the process of nation state is lost, the media is required to nationally regulate the policies, which is an important point of dilemma.

While the communication policies in the United States of America are perceived as an internal matter and determined that way, they are oriented by a transnational ideology like the European Union rather than a nation state strategy in Europe, which is actually a method of opposing the international pressures. Being generated in 1994, the Bengeman Report is a reflection of the perspective of European Information Society.

It is observed that the European Union has updated their policies concerning the communication technologies in general together with the development of web-based new media technologies. It is required to examine the European Union policies under two different titles on the basis of the new media: content and access policies. It is required to approach the content in terms of two different perspectives as "self-regulation" and "transnational intervention". Being different from the policies developed in the United States of America, the European Union develops policies in the transnational context in the entire union rather than before the nation state.

Evaluating on the basis of access policies; a great inequality is observed. There are serious gaps between the former and new members in terms of the freedom of internet access. Among the countries like Turkey, Croatia and Macedonia whose membership negotiations still continue, the one with the lowest potential of internet access compared to the population is Turkey.

Even though the European Union Information Policies are criticized on the basis of numerical inequality and cultural rapine, it is possible to say that they have a positive structure as they regard the national identity and culture. "In this context, the fact that the European Union puts the public law and the principle of universal service access ahead of the private ownership and law, and approaches the concept of information society only as an agenda among the instruments of a supra-national integration (Başaran, 2004, p.15) makes it handle the competition rules and regulations more seriously than the United States of America".

Considering Turkey in the context of new communication policies; it is observed that it keeps pace with liberal communication policies on one hand and has lost its feature as a nation state on the other, which is a highly interesting picture. Following the 1980 coup d'etat, the liberal policies and the global capital has changed the government structure, which is very important. Displaying a crossbred and mainly a contradictory structure, the capitalism has brought along very interesting pictures especially together with political powers that have rapidly changed as from the 80s.

The reason for the contradictory picture in Turkey concerning communication policies is that Turkey is affected by the communication policies of both the European Union and the United States of America.

Being a country that winks at Liberal Policies, but avoids certifying even the basic agreements concerning the human rights like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Turkey is a country where prohibitive, non-lasting and event-based decisions are made regarding the supervision of the media content and thus, there are no long-term and sustainable communication policies.

The discussions about communication policies that have been brought to agenda again together with the prohibition of some media tools in recent years have been stuck between the necessity for using the information technologies and the concepts of public interest and public benefit. Then maybe, it is necessary to ask that question: What are the conditions for a country to use the information technologies. Mansell and When (cited by Başaran, 2004:15) indicate two preconditions for a country to use the yields of information and communication technologies; firstly, to have an information infrastructure and secondly, to develop applications that would use this infrastrucutre in meeting the local needs and have a creation and management capacity that would enable this. However, considering particularly in terms of Turkey; there is a more apparent erosion dominance that has been experienced in the skill of creating and managing a national innovation since the beginning of the 1990s."

### 3. CONCLUSION

Considering the fact that Turkey is influenced by digital capitalism and the development in new media technologies, and it even remains defenseless against the outcomes of this development, is unable to avoid economic relationships and that the new media has an uncontrollable content, it is apparent that the country needs a sustainable communication policy. Turkey "remains between" the external dependence in communication technologies, EU laws and the policies being developed in the United States of America. Since it is unable to develop policies that consider its own reality, it imports policies in parallel with the political conjuncture in the face of certain events. At this point, Turkey is required to dwell upon a

communication policy that would avoid excluding the necessities of liberal economy, but enable different cultures to express themselves.

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