



YENİ TOPLUMSAL HAREKETLER VE SOSYAL DEĞİŞİMİN ORTA DOĞU'DAKİ GENÇLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Susran Erkan Erođlu* - Mehmet Fatih Cesur**

ÖZET

Bireyin doğumuyla başlayan sosyalleşme süreci çocukluk, ergenlik, gençlik, yetişkinlik ve yaşlılık dönemleriyle bu dönemlerin etkilerini içermektedir. Her bir dönemin özelliđi bir sonraki döneme eklenmeyi içerirken bireyin kişiliđini ve sosyal gelişimini şekillendirir. Bu bağlamda bireyin dönemsel geçişliliđi sadece fiziksel deđişimi içermez aynı zamanda hayat zincirinin bir parçası olarak sosyal, psikolojik ve kültürel faktörleri de içinde barındırmaktadır. Bu dönemlerden biri olan gençlik, bireyin içinde bulunduğu toplumu analiz etmesi, sosyo-kültürel yapıyı anlaması ve geleceđe dönük kestirimlerde bulunması açısından önemlidir. Bu sebeple gençlik, tarih, etnografi, sosyoloji ve psikoloji gibi bilimlerin çalışma konusu olmuştur. Gençliđi çalışmanın diđer bir nedeni de gençlerin nüfusun dinamik bir parçası olma özelliđidir. Bütün bu özellikler gençliđi bireyin yaşamındaki en önemli dönemlerden biri olarak algılanmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, gençliđin durumunu özellikle Orta Dođu gibi geçişlilik toplumlarını, sosyal deđişim ve geçişlilik açısından ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELELER: Gençlik, sosyal deđişim, Orta Dođu

* Yrd. Doç. Dr., Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyoloji Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi

** Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Bölümü Öğrencisi



EFFECTS OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL CHANGES AMONG YOUTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Susran Erkan Erođlu * - Mehmet Fatih Cesur **

ABSTRACT

The socialization process which starts with the birth of the individual includes the periods of childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age and effects of these periods. The features of one period and the experiences that have been gained in the particular period articulate to the following one and they shape the personality and social development of the individual. In this context, the individual's periodic transitions do not constitute only a physical change process but also a life chain which transforms/changes according to social, psychological and cultural factors. Youth, which is the one of these periods, is an important social category that should be studied because of its being a process in which individual gains the skills of analysing communities socio-cultural structure and projection skills about future. For that reason youth is the research subject of lots of sciences such as; history, ethnography, sociology and psychology. Another reason for studying youth is its feature of being dynamic part of the population. All these features make youth to be one of the most important periods in individual's life. This study tried to figure out the situation of youth especially in transition societies such as Middle East in the context of social change and transition.

KEYWORDS: Youth, social change, Middle East.

* Asst. Prof. Dr. Susran Erkan Erođlu, Selçuk University Faculty of Letters, Department of Sociology

** Selcuk University, Student of Department of Sociology

INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 witnessed events which are rarely coincided in the Middle East and a relatively brand new middle east started to be formed. There are lots of situations emerged to be discussed with these particular events. Most people and academicians called these events arab spring. The civilizations who produced and managed the knowledge dominated the authority during the history. However everything related to power and knowledge is out of control with developing, liberal and individualized social media nowadays. The media are beyond of being communication tools now the year platform for socialization for individuals. In the particular events mentioned above social media is believed to be a very important determinant. Briefly social media is no longer inteverning to social and political movements in today's world. Arab Spring is one of the fresh and brand new social movement and an example for this situation.

In a recent elaborative and comprehensive research about the usage of internet, Caroline Haythornthwaite and Barry Wellman present a general overview regarding the social impact (Haythornthwaite and Wellman, 1998):

“Even before the emergence of the internet, there is a transition from socially controlling communities to individualized and fragmented communities. Many friends and relatives, with whom we have close social relationships, are not physically close. These bonds generally cross countries or the oceans. Post, telephone, cars, air planes, and today electronic mail and the internet keep these bonds going. Many people do not live lives that are limited to a single community. Instead, they move in a specialized fractional society and are attached to each limitedly. Their lives' are “globalized” by bringing ongoing relations in the house, neighborhoods, and work places together through long distance bonds.”

These observations show how much new means of communication are adopted in new social movements. The most effective way to explain the meaning of new social movements is to reveal the features exactly distinguishing them from the old social movements. In addition, it is also possible to mention different paradigms (set of values) suggested for new social movements.

It is of vital importance to splendidly analyze change and transformation in social movements that were previously referred between the lines. The reason is that globalization and globalized civil society are very important in new social movements. "The dominant movements during the first period of modernity focused on economic benefits, and were generally organized centrally by the members, whom were composed from a single social class, so as to get the political power." Labor movement, which was associated with the idea of revolution and almost shaped in the shade of a political party or political movement, is one of the best examples of such movements. Workers in that movement are figures, rather than actors, trying to fulfill a historical obligation (Touraine, 1992). These types of movements are called, "old social movements", in the meaning of being belonged to the old (industrial) society type. Like the old ones, "new social movements as well are not independent from the society, from which they emerge (Çayır, 1999)".

For C. Tilly, there are some distinctive characteristics of social movements (Tilly, 2008):

First of all, continuous campaigns for collective demands; second, demonstrations, walks, public statements, and establishment of goal oriented association, networks and coordination. Third one is the inclusion of the exhibit of activists, voters and/or mass Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment (WUNC, in which all are united).

Considering all these, it is hard to conceptualize new social movements as past's ideological movements or rationally organized pressure groups (Johnstone, Larana and Gusfield, 1999). According to the joint study by Hank Johnston, Enrique Larana, and Joseph R. Gusfield, the features of new social movements can be listed as follows,

- ✓ These movements do not have an open relationship with the social roles of participants. Regarding the social base, new social movements tend to exceed the class structure.
- ✓ Second, ideological framework of new social movements is contrary to the Marxist ideology, which is an integrating and homogenizing element for labor movements and collective movement.
- ✓ Third, new social movements reflect the process of the emergence of an identity dimension, which is either new or weak in previous periods.

- ✓ Fourth, the relationship between individual and collective became blurred. Most of the modern movements express themselves through individual movements, rather than group movements. Hippie movement is the most striking example.
- ✓ Fifth, new social movements reflect personal aspects of the human being. All movements like rights of gay and movements focusing on abortion; health movements like alternative medicine and anti smoking movements; New Age and movements of self-transformation; and women movements, aim to change sexual and physical behavior.
- ✓ Sixth, new social movements use radical tactics different from labor movements. New social movements, which oppose to dominant behavior norms based on strategies influenced by Gandhi, Thoreau, and Kropotkin through dramatic positioning, use new mobilization models characterized by anti-violence and civil disorder.
- ✓ Seventh, the organization and reproduction of new social movements are related to reliability crisis of participation channels in Western democracies. This is the case in terms of traditional mass parties.
- ✓ Having these in mind, new social movements tend to “exist as they are” (Johstone, et.al, 1999).

The above mentioned differences of new social movements are enough to distinguish them from previous social movements. Also it is very important to state that the third feature is integral feature among all eight features. Taking these information as a starting point a forum was organized in Istanbul on 4th of June 2012. This forum was called NextGen Speaks Forum. In the following paragraphs the report of this forum was analyzed and summarized.

THE REPORT OF NEXTGEN SPEAKS FORUM

The Next Generation Speaks Forum tried to figure out the situation of youth especially in transition societies in the Middle East, North Africa and South and Central Asia. In this framework there are participants to this event from different fields of science and from different communities. The honorable Ahmet Misbah Demircan, Mayor of Beyođlu was one of these participants. He made his speech as host to welcome all participant of the forum. In his speech he made a general introduction what youth is, how youth behave and he gave some examples. That is; how youth gather immediately, what

they use to gather immediately. He gave the example of the role of virtual communities in social media like facebook, twitter. These examples gave a clue of how youth construct their identity actually. In today's world everything should be rapid. The mentioned virtual communities let youth be rapid besides these communities help youth to belong a societal entity. In Arab Spring this situation can/could easily be seen. For example all the protestors in Egypt could easily and rapidly gather in Tahrir Square by the help of these communities. Another important issues in his speech were civilization of the society with its institutions (universities, daily life, government etc.), civil society emergence, social movements, individuals' demands on equality, security, education, justice and democracy. He also mentioned about the change and transition in the Middle East, the importance of youth in the region and during the Arab Spring. Globalization is an important issue according to him, because the borders are extinct with this process especially in a virtual way. What is important in his speech was the role of the youth in transformation of the society as a dynamic entity in the transition times in particular geography. After Mr. Demircan finished his speech, Adam Weinberg President and CEO of World Learning made his speech. General theme of Mr. Weinberg's speech was empowerment of the youth and how this can be possible. He described Arab Spring as "Global Youth Awakening". In this description youth plays an important role because they share ideas related to the resources and they understand each other to achieve goals. In order to empower youth new solutions should be made and this lets constitution of new paradigms. His main emphasize here was on civil society entities. Social change can be better with civil society and concerning societal phenomena. According to him education is one of the most important challenge for youth. Indeed this challenge was going to be mentioned by most of the participants of the forum. Mr. Weinberg made a general profile what the challenges and opportunities for the youth in the transition societies today.

After these two speeches, there was a panel session in order to identify the challenges and opportunities in transition societies in the Middle East, North Africa and South and Central Asia. For this panel the panelists came from different countries. Namely; Bangladesh, Libya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria. All the panelists mentioned that

education and unemployment were the main challenges in their countries. The country's characteristic gives different shape to these challenges. In order to determine the challenges, the details of the panel can be listed as follows: The panelist from Bangladesh noticed that the one of the main challenges for youth was fear of participating a protest or riot. Also mentioned before, there is a problem of accessing to education and having a job. In Bangladesh the number of cell phone users increased and this situation made the technology a part of daily life. In Libya education and unemployment are great challenges but there is lack of capacity building for women besides the government in Libya is still in mess after uprising. Problem of not knowing how to direct the capacity of the country comes as a followup of the government mess in Libya. In Pakistan there is a gap between private and public sector education. As a result of this situation there is lack of private universities, thus the quality of the education decreases. An assumption can be made with these data, which is; there is lack of facilities for public sector in every part of the community. Additionally health is another issue of challenge in Pakistan. Health services are not sufficient. In Pakistan there is an obvious phenomena between urban and rural areas. Both places have different opportunities. Urban areas are more advantageous than rural areas. There is also energy crisis in Pakistan. All these variables created a huge gap between supply and demand. The reason for this picture can be lack of leadership and coherence. After civil war in Sri Lanka there is suppression over media. Corruption in politics is another challenge in Sri Lanka and this made unfairness in resource allocation in economical framework. The following panelist was from Iraq. Iraq has her own experience nowadays. After the war Iraq is trying to reconstruct herself again according to a democratic way, but as the panelist said this is a hard issue to overcome. The recovery period after war is too hard for Iraqi citizens. In this framework youth have lots of difficulties. Although they are trying to constitute articles of laws for serving youth, there is still not right to gather or speak what they think. In Jordan situation is different when a comparison is made with Iraq. Population is growing, Jordan people are trying to construct healthy life styles, they need community based projects in order to make it real. There are also problems related to education and related to find job after education. Corruption is another main challenge because meritocracy

is ignored while recruiting young people. There is a political challenge during election times about tribes. Yemeni panelist mentioned that there was challenge in election system and justice. There is a lack of citizen engagement and this leads youth to remain unemployed. As a result poverty comes to stage. Youth does not have a sufficient vocational education and they cannot be experts in their careers. Egypt is another complicated country because there is still a political and social uncertainty in the country. Education and unemployment are main challenges for youth and illiteracy rates are high. The presence of high rates of illiteracy proliferates the unemployment and professional training. Educational system has to change in Egypt. And the last panelist was from Algeria. She mentioned that it was a real issue to raise next generation for Algeria because the social structure in Algeria and political sphere are still traditional.

It can easily be seen that the countries that panelist are from have similar problems about education and unemployment. However it is really important to notice that they are countries in transition. We cannot separate social change and transition for that reason they will experience this process with many difficulties. The geography they are in (some are from different regions like Sri Lanka, Pakistan) is still experiencing Arab Spring which is a result of modernization. To become a modern country, democracy should be set, the societal issues should be shaped with modernity. Social life and other issues inevitably are affected by these instabilities. West experienced these hundreds of years ago. And it is still hard to say democracy was established in an ideal way. Of course the most affected part of the population is youth in this context because youth are trying to be a part of society and the only way for this is to have a quality education and to have a job.

The following session was a presentation and interactive dialogue with Dorin Tudoran, Director, World Learning Democracy Fellows Program. The session was about lessons learned from transitions in Eastern Europe. Mr. Tudoran made a general statement about what changed in Eastern Europe after the Cold War. He said that after Cold War distinctions became equal and technology especially internet helped youth in transition societies in the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Central Asia to learn the developments in other areas in the world. Eastern Europe is one of the areas in this issue after the Cold War. They could have the opportunity to learn the

situation after the Cold War in the area. After the Cold War the liberty/freedom climate let the citizens to tell others the situation and the experience they had. He also mentioned about importance of leadership in order to control crowds for achieving goals. With the light of the experiences of Eastern Europe he made a distinction about Arab Spring countries. Rural areas in Tunisia played an important role during uprising while urban areas were playing an important role in Egypt during uprising. However the situation was different in Libya. The main role was from eastern provinces in Libya experience according to Mr. Tudoran. In Arab Spring issue the crowds were looking for the same thing (democracy, liberty, get rid of dictators, etc.) but difference is overwhelmed. What does this mean? Every country has her own culture and history for that reason they might search for the same thing but their experiences and strategies are different. Social lives, understandings, social ties, economy, history, motivation, politics and urban/rural differences are not same in these countries however social change and depending on social change the transition is inevitable for them. As a result it is all about being "Citizen" for these countries.

In the next session Steven Pearson Jr., Manager Corporate IBM Citizenship & Corporate Affairs made a presentation about IBM's social responsibility programs. The main goal of IBM is reaching the global standards in order to fulfill their social responsibilities towards global community. Mr. Pearson Jr. mentioned that economy depends on development and innovation in this so-called information community. The things that IBM deals with start with training the trainers. While doing this, company has partnerships with the governments of several countries (Jordan, Turkey, UAE, Egypt, Malaysia, Phillipines, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc.). In these countries IBM sets project management in order to fulfill the needs of the volunteer efforts. For that reason IBM has a philanthropy network in their social responsibility efforts for the countries mentioned above. Social responsibility and volunteerism in their efforts articulate with a key concept: Sustainability. Sustainability lets IBM create stable projects. Another feature of IBM is employee centered working climate as a global strategy. Of course these features face with problems. Two of these problems are difficulties within public and private sphere and pulling the right partners respectively.

In the next session Mr. Weinberg was moderator and the session's theme was helping youth to handle societal change in transitional societies. Not only especially in social sciences field but also in other fields the concept of social change and transition gained much importance. Human beings who try to control the nature now want to establish dominance over society by analysing it with scientific way. Especially the countries face with underdevelopment are trying to focus on social change and transition intensively because of the fact that economic development depends on social change and transition. However this situation is not for only the underdeveloped countries. And while countries are experiencing a particular social change, transition process comes right after this process. Besides every unique part of the society is influenced by social change. Youth is one the most important part of the society because of its dynamic nature. In this session we discussed how youth can be helped in the social change in transitional countries. Mr. Weinberg stated that change is messy, confrontational, inevitable and sustainable. We can make this description clear with saying of Heracleitos: "You cannot wash yourself in the same river twice". This shows change has a dynamic nature so that the thing that never changes change itself. Social change lets youth face with some problems for that reason youth find ways to express themselves: intercultural dialogue is one of the ways that they use. In this session participants mentioned another way of youth express themselves. It was technology and related to technology, internet. However in this way there could be some problems it was mentioned. Youth can be be alienated by internet. Young people want to feel social belonging emotion and trust to others in internet. Understanding has changed because of virtual communities in social media. All individuals want to set an identity in order to belong a social community. Internet and technology help especially youth to construct this identity. However construction of this identity is not an easy issue. These issues are common for transitional societies as well as others. In order to come over these problems the participants offer some solutions: entrepreneurship, knowing well what you want, being coherent, etc.

In this session Mr. Weinberg also asked what the main three problems of young participants' countries. Some of the problems of different countries can be classified as follows:

- Education

- Social structure
- Unemployment
- Old nation state model
- Western media's prejudice
- Economic reforms
- Budget
- Demographic problems
- Insurance issue
- Rule of law
- Using weapons
- Women issues
- Auditing the institutions

All the problems mentioned above can be seen in all transitional countries experiencing societal change. In this context social change theories can be categorized into three according to content. First group is comprehensive theories within which classical sociological and cultural theories take place. These theories try to explain whole human history, they offer not only the path that social change followed in the past but also they offer the future situation of the social change. Second group is medium size theories. These theories are the pioneers of structural-functional approach in Contemporary American Sociology. These type of theories provide assumptions for daily researches and they reshape according to these researches. The third category theories accept the individuals or small group as the unit of social change. All these three social change theory categories help us to understand the situation in transitional societies. According to these categories social change occurs after emergence of specific kind of personalities, new social differentiations related to social structure-cultural structure.

CONCLUSION

In the world of 21st century it is seen that transcendent state is disappeared from people's mind; and, the understanding of nation-state has weakened. The destruction of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet Socialist Russia are strongest examples of this fact. On the other hand, the concept of globalization emerged at international level. In today's world it is seen that the fates of countries and communities are interconnected. Any development

emerges in the United States or Europe has repercussions in Africa or remote parts on Asia.

Along with the global world, the awareness of being civil, for which people have fought for centuries, has rapidly accelerated. Civil societies create big changes at global level. These movements, which focus on new topics and have a heterogenic structure in terms of individuality, can be called as new social movements. These new social movements, different from previous social movements in terms of content and participation, have already been up for taking the place of strong powers of the past with the help of civil societies. New social movements include all the benefits of science and technology; they rapidly spread the awareness of civil culture and slowly come to the fore within the new world order.

The most important two concepts that today's individual will fight for, should be democracy and civil culture. In this sense, in order to be successful they should act in harmony with the character of the new social movements. Each individual, who knows that his ultimate goal should be to elude from humanity and be a human being, should include the characteristics of civil society to his personality.

In the Middle East, North Africa and South and Central Asia, one unique component of the social structure changed and this change influence whole structure. Youth takes place in this structure and they are inevitably influenced by this change. As a result local changes make the way to the social change when they are parallel to each other. Thus, whole world is subject to a particular social change.

REFERENCES

- Çayır, K. (1999). Toplumsal Sahnenin Yeni Aktörleri: Yeni Sosyal Hareketler, *Yeni Sosyal Hareketler*, (Editör: Kenan Çayır), Kaknüs Y., İstanbul: s. 14-15-24.
- Haythornthwaite, C., and Wellman, B. (1998) Work, Friendship and Media Use for Information Exchange in a Networked Organization, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 49, 12: 1101-1114
- Johnston, H., Larana E. and Gusfield J.R. (1999), *Kimlikler, Şikayetler ve Yeni Sosyal Hareketler*, Kaknüs Yayınları: İstanbul.
- Tilly, C. (2008). *Toplumsal Hareketler*, Babil Yayınları: İstanbul.
- Touraine, A. (1992). Beyond Social Movements, *Theory, Culture and Society* vol. 52, 142- 3.