

Once Water becomes a Commodity: The Relation between Water Privatization and In-house Reproduction in Turkey

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Abstract:

The studies about the water privatization affects on women are getting very popular since the last debates. Since water is one of the most important material/ input of in-house reproduction activities, regarding the feminist politics, it's very important to analyze the affect of water privatization on women status within society. According to their conclusion about water privatization process, those studies can be classified within 2 major groups: *Supporters* and *Antagonists*.

The most influencer studies that support water privatization is named as "*Gendered Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)*" and it is defended and distributed by the chief actors of the privatization process such as United Nations, governments and capitalists. According to gendered IWRM approach, women are defined as the most disadvantaged group within the society interms of income, access to resources and health etc. Therefore the relation between women and water is defined "*different and much more sensitive*" than men. This approach claims that the privatization of water process would increase women participation into labor force by productivity increase and it would support women in rural area to reach clean water. As a result, they state that water privatization supports women to reach equal rights with men by commodifying one of the most difficult and time consuming tasks belong to women that is searching for clean water and carrying it into home.

Second approach defines a strong connection between women and water/nature and state that women should be heavily included within the decision-making process of water privatization. This romantic point of view does not opposite the water privatization process but it highlights the importance of women's role as decision makers.

Within the second group that are against the water privatization process, the most influential studies are developed by Shiva, Werlhof, Roberts and some other feminists. The “*primitive accumulation*” theory has been applied into this field without highlighting the special condition of women within society. So the affect of water privatization on women has been analyzed based on the assumption that women are the poorest segment of the society. We may say that this approach is against the water privatization mainly from Marxist perspective but there is a lack of feminist point of view.

The main purpose of this study is to develop an alternative approach about water privatization from an in-house reproduction point of view. When we analyze the relation between water and women’s domestic labor, the social reality would appear different than other studies. As a result of this study, we realize that water privatization process pushes women to be stuck between paid and unpaid labor and it empowers patriarchal capitalist structure as a dialectical aggregate. The study starts with the examination of women’s situation in Turkey in terms of accessing clean water in both rural area and cities. With the help of such analyze the main dynamics of the relation between women and water is clarified different than the other approaches. Then it continues with the examples of water privatization and its affect on the role of women within house. As a result, the critic of Gendered IWRM approach is placed from feminist point of view.