CHANGING FACE OF NEOLIBERALISM, TERRORISM AND CINEMATIC APPROACHES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF FOUCALUT: THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO

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ABSTRACT

Neoliberalism which ambiguities some main categories like state, ethnicity, cultural or political issues, is encouraged by idiosyncratic pressure, threat and violence acts. Discourses like war against terrorism, war against poverty or war against crime are among those explicit violence practices which serve for the legalization of the foreseen order. The main object of this study is to analyse the reflections of terrorism, which justifies the neoliberal state mechanism, in the film called The Road to Guantanamo directed by Winterbottom and Whitecross in 2006. According to Foucault, security, the main anchor point of neoliberalism, was activated against the factors which may affect the market relations (2010: 66). The psychology of danger which activates control and discipline mechanisms legalizes this security discourse. In this sense, it is necessary to analyse the film in terms of State's upholding its descending authority through "terrorism" and "security" discourses.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, Terrorism, Michel Foucault, Cinema, the Road to Guantanamo

INTRODUCTION

Since the very beginning of the 19th century our public life has always been kept under control through some disciplining, normalizing or punishing production mechanisms and the way we face with reality has been unsettled. Even worse, through nuthouses, jails, schools or factories and their tortures to their bodies and acts, individuals are blocked from questioning what they actually do. In other words, governments force people to be what the government want them to be in order to legalize their own existence and ensure the social control. To Althusser, they need ideological state apparatus (1978: 46-47). The minor group which controls the power station may appeal to various violence uses to make the society obey its orders without questioning. It is easy to notice various violence practices in governmental level, which is called as "administrative intelligence" by Foucault and turns out to be a

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new managing kind with the removal of bipolar structure. Neoliberalism which accepts pressure and violence as a control practice does not imagine a society free from any kind of crime (Gambetti, 2009:146). Social or political violence types like terrorism, suicide, kidnapping, destruction, devastation and ethnic-sect struggles are among the patterns which underline the control practice of neoliberal governing discourses.

To this end, I am going to explain the relation between violence and neoliberalism within the context of security paradigm offered by Foucault. Then, I am going to analyse how security is ensured through terrorism discourses as a governmental strategy in the film called The Road to Guantanamo which seems as an activist movie in front of the main stream cinema.

REPRODUCTION OF NEOLIBERALISM THROUGH VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

Neoliberal thinking as a political economy theory, defends the idea that direct international investments and financial mobility are the best ways in terms of social welfare if they are carried out by nation states. According to Harvey (2006: 145-158) neoliberalism is the reorganization of capitalism in an international level, putting decision centers across the national borders and reproduction of class power. Capitalism which has been reshaped by globalization and its ideological change shows itself through neoliberalism. In this new political project, capitalism, to give the power to international companies and elite groups, can tip the crisis in its own favor and regulate the capital distribution. The crisis that may respond the needs of global capitalism are financial, natural or social crisis and wars. According to Harvey the function of crisis or crisis projects is to transfer the capital and property to credit suppliers.

In this class dominion project which inevitably encourages violence itself, what is discussed is the state's turning out to be an important ally for multinational companies and the use of war in order to enlarge the market. It should be noticed that there is not only a neoliberal model or project but different strategies are developed by different actors under different circumstances.

Neoliberal policies which have been conducted since 1980s under the control of IMF and the World Bank have turned foreign trade, raw material stocks, weapons and sovereignty into devices of money and credit mechanisms (Polanyi, 2007: 54). Some states and capital holders acting together to ensure their imperial relationship based on self-interest use some discourses like military precautions, war or security as tools. In order to illustrate the logic of neoliberal projects which foresee the reconstitution of both state and economy with Washington Agreement, instability and global terrorism are used. States which do not have administrative procedures suitable to this change are considered as the source of this instability and global terror. These "Terrorism centers" or "evil lines" most of which are underdeveloped countries are turned out to be the laboratories of this so called democracy construction to ensure the stability and welfare, justice or protection of human rights (Birdişli: 5). For instance, September, 11th attacks are of great significance in terms of a chance which enables the USA to control oil and capital stream from some underdeveloped countries by using military power (Harvey, 2003: 1-22). These global security policies which are contextualized
through this capital savings are among the methods to relegalize this "organized capitalism" in many regions notably in the Middle East (Foster, 2005:10).

FOUCAULT'S SECURITY PARADIGM IN NEOLIBERAL SETTLEMENT PROCESS

Security paradigm in Neoliberal era focuses on the security of capital in the international level. Foucault who considers the government within the context of violence, possession and sovereignty (2007: 20) suggests that this security mechanism is compulsory for the government to take numerous events under its control by taking the obscurity of the future into account. In other words, there is a risk which may reverse the power relations of some central countries in the future.

Political economy operationalized by neoliberalism, restricts every kind of danger that threatens the government for certain aims and discourses and even neutralizes them to make the market permanent. The psychology of not knowing when and where the danger will come out justifies all acts and discourses of neoliberalism under the name of security to protect the market relations. According to Foucault (2010: 139) these restrictions are plausible as market relations would be under attack. The main measure of being enrichment is based on competition anthropology in Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism which annihilates governmental interventions, suggests continuous interventions of competition to the market. As different threat perceptions have different potentials to destruct relations based on self-interest, danger and security turn out to be an instrumental discourse (Çalkık, 2011: 25). Similarly, to make the bodies submissive by controlling individuals' ideas, new jails, bughouses, headquarters and schools, with Foucault's own words Heteropias, are built to integrate the individuals into the system. These heteropic spaces are, according to Foucault, bordered places and compulsory to enter like eventide homes, jails, headquarters where the individual is forced to obey some strict rules. Security based neoliberal policies organize a mechanism to vanish those who do not comply with the norms of the market either by imprisoning them into these heteropic lines, engaging in physical violence, lynching or conveying military force. As Kaygusuz (2007: 150) cites from Stephan Gill, central countries that are opposed to anti-neoliberal policies, notably the USA, aim to convert those countries by some radical measures through conveying military power against them who are described as the real enemies (axis of evil).

When it is considered from Foucault’s framework, neoliberal logic, which is in fact a security paradigm, includes using some mechanisms like weapons, torture or military intervention against outcomes like information, terrorism, war, suicide and migration which, in the meantime, threat those who are in safe. Opposing actors and identities are also discussed within the category of terrorism and they also include a threat perception which should be overcome as they take part in some acts that may rule out these central countries or neutralize them. The rising number of unqualified immigrants, asylum seekers or workers is considered as a terrorist threat especially in the USA and some European countries. Those States with this mod, link themselves with the fact which we may call as "preventive police" which is going to interfere with those terror centers (Berksoy, 2007).
INTERVENTION TO THE THREAT CREATED BY NEOLIBERALISM: THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO

Film, by being launched in cinemas, television channels, on the net and as DVDs at the same time, neutralized the unauthorized broadcasting in one hand and on the other hand presented its partial and contentious characteristic by addressing different social communities (Davies and Withers; 2006: 61). In other words, the film has made a room for itself by media tools within the system which is criticized severely in the film. The road to Guantanamo is a political film which objects to the process in Afghanistan and right after Iraq's occupation and its legalization.

The film focuses on three Pakistani origin English citizen’s experiences named Ruhel, Shafiq and Munir who accidentally find themselves in the beginning levels of "counter terrorism" by the USA and its allies after 9/11 attacks which is known as one of the problems created by neoliberal policies. In this documentarily film, political and textual strategies shed light upon the fact that the events cannot be dealt in an objective questioning zone. In the film, people taken to Guantanamo by CIA are those who are arrested as a result of a wrong intelligence. These people live in the Middle East, wanders around in Kabil streets, nonwhite Islamists or considered as terrorists just because their being Muslims. It can be seen in the film that although Asif Iqbal, Ruhel Ahmed and Shafiq Rasul set off their journey from England, they are considered as El Qaidah relevant terrorists just because they have Asian roots. This point of view reminds the fact that ethnic or religious discrimination has turned out to be more explicit as a result of neoliberal policies. As they are not Al Qaidah members, it is not certain why those who are taken to the naval base in Guantanamo gulf in Cuba are arrested and kept under surveillance.

The road to Guantanamo is a good example of Docu-drama where fiction and documentary intertwine (Rosenthal, 1995: 15). It narrates the true story of four Asia origin English Iqbal, Ahmed, Rasul and Monir Ali. It begins when four friends leave their house in England to take part in Asif's wedding ceremony. There in a mosque where they perform their salaat, they hear the call for help of the imam for the poor in Afghanistan and decide to go there in order for a humanitarian aid. Just after they arrive in Kandahar, the USA occupation starts. Four friends who find themselves in the middle of a war get on a minibus to Qundus by mistake. This place is a frontline between Taliban forces and anti-Taliban north alliance. Monir ALi leaves his friends while Qundus is quitted and most probably killed, the rest of four are caught by the north alliance after their car is bombed by the USA air forces. Three young men are believed to be Al Qaidah militants are delivered to the US navy and then, brought to Guantanamo. They are imprisoned there and questioned by the inspectors from the USA. They are harassed, get kicked, suffer from torture and kept in jail for months. After more than two years, they turn to England in March, 2004 and are released without any accusation.

Scenes where the young men narrate their experiences by looking towards the camera and the authenticity of the shooting and non-fictionalized scenes underline the idea that it’s high time to learn the unexplained facts and they present the real face of reality to the spectator who is replete with melodrama. With the direct and objective narration of the film, with the speech between president George Bush and England PM Tony Blair where Bush says "the only thing that I am sure is that these are evil men
and I wish to cooperate with Mr. Blair's government to deal with this issue", the racist mentality who tolerates overriding civil rights and makes up new conspiracy theories to create new places for the capital flow in terms of neoliberalism is depicted brilliantly through the imprisonment, questioning and tortures of three young men. The destruction physiology created in Guantanamo is depicted through the captivity and tortures of the characters. The Guantanamo jail which is far from the USA, illegal and informal is a counter space, a heteropia- it is obvious but secret, has strict rules but is uncontrolled. The size of horror created by the system and the sequences where prisoners are humiliated with pornographic magazines, they are kept squatty by hanging chains from their hands and feet for hours, they are forced to listen ear-splitting metal music and Holy Qoran is kicked by the authorities, indicate the existence of these heteropic spaces (Bennet, 2006: 118).

The Road to Guantanamo which describes the reality in its dramatic tension, depicts the fake discourse put forward by "counter terrorism" and torture house in Guantanamo to get protected against the threats of outcomes as an illegal show of strength of America. This fake discourse in the film, namely the question whether these young people are guilty or not, is questioned by the audience from the moment that they are arrested. The open ended narration in the film is far from being a weakness or deficiency; on the contrary it can be said that this technique is intentionally preferred by the director. The film enables us to form new perspectives about reality by creating different methods to depict the unique and local things unlike close ended narrations offered by Hollywood.

CONCLUSION

Neoliberalism can abolish some risk factors to give the power and potential to international companies and re-organize the flow of capital. In this sense, a decision like "to cooperate with the world states against terrorism" has been made to vanish terrorist groups and radical organizations in the Central Asia. This decision, in fact, has turned out to be the effort of central countries to announce this so-called terrorism which is only suitable for their own benefits. The conspiracy theory of the USA about Guantanamo is that; to satisfy people with a lie that "we caught the villains" and sustain their power centered policies.

The film contacts with the reality through Iqbal, Ahmed and Rasul's experiences that they narrate. On the other hand, its low cost, improvisation, amateur actors, reality reflected with handy cams and its launch to the market synchronously as different media forms, indicate a political activism as it underlines the unique and different one unlike the media forms which have become similar as a result of neoliberal policies.

The road to Guantanamo, unlike the main stream cinema which fictionalises and legalizes violence and illegal approaches in order to protect the State, honor, basic living conditions and human rights, narrates the size of violence and occupation created by the system which looks for an enemy for himself through the experiences of Iqbal, Ahmed and Rasul; and is an activist film which puts the events in an objective questioning zone and lets us question our own existence.
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