

Understanding Minimum Income Support through Minimum Wage

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Abstract

Recently, one of the most important forms of social assistance is the minimum income support (MIS). MIS as a part of citizenship income is a regular cash transfer program. One of the corner critiques made against MIS is whether or not it is a program that promotes employment, and this criticism is closely connected to the "amount" of MIS provided. If the amount provided is close to workers in any job, then a loss of interest in working may be observed in both those of benefiting from MIS and in workers. One of the criteria helping to determine the amount of MIS to be provided is minimum wage (MW). The amount of MIS provided is usually one-third of MW; an amount that should provide a decent standard of living to the recipients of MIS. One of the ways to realize this is by raising raising MW. However, any attempt to raise MW will be faced with a "cost" barrier. Nevertheless, there are two "intellectual grounds" for overcoming the cost barrier: (1) the principle of the "social (welfare) state" and (2) the "social responsibility" applications of business. Respecting these two intellectual grounds, this article argues that MIS can satisfy a decent standard of living by rising MW. In order to fulfill the requirements of a true social (welfare) state, cost accounting should be replaced with accounting for a reasonable standard of live. Moreover, social responsibility for the business is to take risk expenditures (costs) that increase the amount of MW to a decent level rather than simply spending for the society in a general sense and for the needy in specific.

Key Words

Minimum Income Support, Minimum Wage, Citizenship Income, Social Assistance, Ethics.

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Being human carries with it the potential of being rich or poor. Throughout human history, however, poverty has always been more discussed than wealth due probably to its being more prevalent in society or because it attracts attention as a result of perceptual selectivity. In any case, the truth is that poverty holds a high place on the agenda of policy makers in the modern era as well. One of the most important social policy tools used in the attempt to minimize or eradicate poverty is social assistance. It could be described as assistance provided to those in need (poor) in the form of cash and the like.

Minimum income support (MIS) being one of the most significant social assistance schemes attracts a great deal of attention. The applications of a welfare state have developed substantially in European countries during the post-World War II period. By the end of the 1970s, a number of factors such as global competition, changes in the technological structure, and family and demographic transformations led the way to new institutions and policies were implemented in the field of social policy. Thus, poverty had become an even more problematic issue when coupled with the difficulty of achieving objective of full employment as well with the increase in irregular and part-time jobs whose workers do not earn enough income to raise themselves above the poverty line. In such a reality, MIS has started to gain importance as being one of the “last resort” programs in welfare states (Erdem, 2006, p. 1)

In Saraceno’s words, the MIS programs observed in the “European Social Model” are mentioned as a requirement for “human dignity” in both EU policy documents and European Commission reports. MIS in the EU and other countries may have different names; in the UK it is called “Job Seekers Allowance”, in France “revenue minimum d’insertation”, and in Belgium “minimex”. However, all of these programs are subject to similar legal regulations (Hacımahmutoglu, 2009, p. 44). MIS, in its various forms, is in practice in every EU country with the exception of Italy, Greece, and Hungary (Casas, 2012, p. 19), and this widespread practice may be attributed to the basic benefits connected with MIS.

For one, MIS is an essential instrument in the quest to alleviate poverty. If MIS comes into being while taking into account a strategically integrated framework

of health care, education, housing, social services and employment, then its importance in the alleviating poverty greatly increase (Crepaldi, Gambino, Baldi, Da Roit, & Ortigosap, 2007, p. iii). Moreover, if poverty is understood as not only being the deprivation of income, but also as the deprivation of certain other opportunities such as education, health, transformation (Semerci, 2010), then the value of MIS within the place of combating against poverty may be better understood. Secondly, MIS not only consists of contributes made to its beneficiaries by providing assistance financially, but is also, likely to reduce the risks of social exclusion by recognizing “citizenship rights” (Crepaldi et al., 2007, p. iii). Therefore, MIS is the right to a guaranteed minimum income for all members of the community as “a member” of the community (Değirmenci, 2005, p. 26). Thirdly, MIS supports the formation of a social capital and accelerates the use of public and private resources such as information, personnel, finance, etc. In this context, MIS enables the establishment of the very networks, needed to strengthen the poor (Crepaldi et al., 2007, p. iii). These networks include increasing employment opportunities provided by MIS through the “active participation of beneficiaries”. Therefore, although MIS does not directly create employment, it does establish a meaningful network with employment policies (Buğra, Keyder, & Erdem, 2012, p. 8).

On the other hand, in spite of the importance of MIS, assessing its adequacy and measuring its efficiency is a complex issue due to a lack of necessary data and analyses in countries implementing a form of it. Despite this complexity, the efficiency of MIS (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 19) and its poverty eradication capabilities have been studied both across Europe and other countries (Obinger, 1999; Yakut-Çakar, Erus, & Adaman, 2012).

However, the purpose of this article is not to measure the efficiency of MIS since MIS and its amounts are shaped and determined generally with respect to per capita income, unemployment benefits and the minimum wage (MW) (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 14). This article aims to comprehend “MIS associated with respect to MW”, thus providing an intellectual/mental ground for MIS through MW rather than to offer a technical framework. To this end, first of all MIS will first be conceptually separated from similar schemes, after which,

both pro and counter arguments of MIS will be presented, and finally a mental ground for MIS through MW will be proposed.

Minimum Income Support: Conceptual Separation

The right of receiving a minimum income is a right that comes from being a member of society regardless of the fact whether the member participates in an economic activity or not (Değirmenci, 2005, p. 26). However, the “umbrella concept” of *citizenship income* harbours various applications, such as basic income, negative income tax, progressive income support, citizenship profit share and MIS.

It should be noted here that this umbrella concept is further branched into unconditional and conditional citizenship income. In the unconditional model, all citizens, regardless of their financial status, receive benefits from the state in order to meet their basic/minimum social needs. In the conditional model, only the needy/the poor are the beneficiaries of such support (Seyyar, 2010, p. 53).

The most important element in *the unconditional model* is called “*basic income*”. In this model, neither the status of poverty nor another condition, such as employment or any others, is sought (Seyyar, 2010, p. 53). Although no country in the world is currently implementing this system (Yakut-Çakar & Yilmaz, 2010, p. 65), the most defining characteristics of basic income is that the state allocates a certain amount of income to every citizen regardless of his/her level of income and wealth (Seyyar, n.d., p. 2). Thus on the one hand, there is an unconditional regular cash transfer without running a means test (Van Parijs, 2000, p. 4); while on the other hand, this practice draws attention to the importance given to human rights (Buğra & Keyder, 2007, p. 8). In this sense, the idea of receiving a basic income is regarded as a small tool for a new understanding of civilization (İnsel, 2007, p. 50). The amount of basic income should be per person and sufficient to meet personal basic needs (Zararsız, 2010, p. 41). Due to these aspects, basic income, also referred to “*citizenship income*” (Metin, 2012, p. 125), is not considered as an element of the social security

system (Casas, 2012, p. 18) although it represents an important framework to meet socio-economic needs (Liebig & Mau, 2002, p. 2), and enables a fair distribution of the national income and is underlined by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Standing, 2007, p. 34). Contrary, basic income is thought to be a radical reform of the social security system (Metin, 2012, p. 129).

Another component of the unconditional model is the “*negative income tax*”. A number of pilot applications of negative income in the United States have failed, but similar programs have over time been implemented in the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Japan and France. It is known to be a model of annual or monthly cash transfer calculated on the number of people in a given family. Accordingly, a guaranteed income for each family in the society is provided (Taşçı, 2009, pp. 494-495). In the negative income tax approach proposed by Milton Friedman, if the income of the family is below the income tax to be paid, the family is entitled to a cash transfer (Buğra & Sılmazdenir, 2007, p. 88). For example, if the guaranteed income were 500 Turkish Liras (TL), according to the negative income tax, the state would pay 500 TL per month to families with no income. If the family head were to earn 200 TL a month, this amount would be deducted from the family allowance (500-200=300 TL) with remaining 300 TL being to the family. In the end, despite having a paid job the income level of this family would not change and would remain at 500 TL (Taşçı, 2009, p. 495). Negative income tax is difficult to understand as well as to manage, and creates the risk of over payment which constitutes a problematic area for social welfare systems (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 6).

Another application in the unconditional model is “*progressive support*”. Progressive support provides a support for everyone; however it concentrates on supporting “those most in need” when they “need it most”. Accordingly, unlike the basic income scheme that supports all citizens, MIS or a negative income tax that supports a limited number of people on a weekly basis, progressive support provides funds for everyone except for the wealthiest segment of society, but with low-income earning citizens receiving a little more than citizens earning higher amounts of income (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 7).

Another factor of the unconditional model is “*citizenship profit share*” which in its most general sense is when a state distributes a certain amount of money to its citizens from its own revenues. Alaska, for example, has enacted such a program by allocated a certain portion of its profits, acquired from oil and other natural resources, and then distributing that amount through an institutional structure (Zararsız, 2010, p. 41).

The most important element of the *conditional model* is the “*minimum income support (MIS)*”, a kind of social assistance carried out by the state for the purpose of providing minimum living opportunities for those socially excluded individuals (Sapancalı, 2003, p. 211). MIS distribution methods may vary from country to country and each country’s understandings and practices are different. Thus, MIS may take different names in different countries, such as guaranteed minimum income, integration / inclusion income, public assistance, income support, supplementary welfare benefits, living cost aid, etc. (Casas , 2012, p. 17).

Apart from these differences, a number of common features of various MIS can be observed. For one, MIS is guaranteed by the state and is not based on contributions like social security systems (Casas, 2012, p. 18). In other words, it guarantees a minimal standard of living to beneficiaries without having to work in any job (Hacımahmutoğlu, 2009, p. 44). Here “minimum” does not only refer to basic physical necessities of life, but also to social and cultural needs and should therefore be accepted as a “social minimum” (Gökçeoğlu-Balcı, 2010, p. 35). Secondly, MIS is distributed in the form of cash rather than in forms of kind, and it is subject to a means-test. Thus, since financial support is provided in cash, it aims to avoid consumption restraints placed on beneficiaries in the form of deciding what can and cannot be bought with it (Van Parijs, 2000, p. 4). In order for cash to be transferred to beneficiaries in MIS applications, a means-test is necessary, which separates MIS from basic income (Buğa & Keyder, 2007, p. 11). For this reason, beneficiaries of MIS are those citizens whose income is below “a specified level” who then qualify for regular/perpetual cash to be transferred to them (Buğa et al., 2012, p. 26). Therefore, MIS is categorized as “income”, not because it is earned by performing work,

but because it is “regular” (Hacımahmutoğlu, 2009, p. 44). Nevertheless, the term “income” is important as it creates a sense of trust and safety similar to that of paid employment (Sapançalı, 2003, p. 212).

In order to introduce the above mentioned features of MIS, the issue of “scope” in MIS programs must be brought to fore in which the question “What are the conditions to deserve MIS?” must be asked. The most common criterion seems to be “nationality”. And although nationality is not considered to be a condition in most EU countries, Malta and a few other countries include it in their criteria. In Malta, beneficiaries of MIS must be either citizens or legal permanent residents while in Austria the conditions for nationality vary from state to state (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 9). However, in other countries, such as Germany, refugees and asylum seekers are subject to special criteria (Crepaldi et al., 2007, p. 35).

Another condition linked to nationality is “residence” which is almost a universal requirement across EU countries. However, different types of residency exist. For example, the UK makes distinctions between the following types of residency: “natural and habitual residence”, “right of residency”, “indefinite leave to remain”, and “long term temporary residence”. In Sweden however, the right of residency is sufficient, and permanent residence is not required. In some countries such as the Czech Republic, MIS also covers undocumented immigrants as well (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 9). Countries such as Denmark stipulate that foreigners to be a resident in the country for 7 years in order to be entitled to MIS (Casas, 2012, p. 31). In Italy, non-EU citizens who have been in the country for at least three years as well as stateless persons are entitled to MIS (Metin, 2012, p. 134). Foreigners with residence permits may be eligible for MIS in France under the condition that they have resided in the country for more than three years (Gökçeoğlu-Balcı, 2010, p. 44).

A further condition of MIS is “age” which is different age conditions applied to receive entitlement. Although many countries in the EU have no age limit, Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia have set the minimum age for entitlement to be 18. In France, Spain and Luxembourg, the age limit is 25 (Casas, 2012, p. 32), whereas being independent of one’s family is sufficient in the UK, thus

the age limit could be as low as 16 (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 9). Moreover the “upper limit” in Malta is 60 and 65 in Spain (Crepaldi et al., 2007, p. 35).

Minimum Income Support: Problems and Solutions

There are a number of problems and various questions that have arisen regarding MIS. A technical problem about the MIS is *accessibility* since MIS does not allow universal access due to the scope of the scheme and lack of recognition. As for the scope, poverty calculations take into account only the homeless, whereas the marginal population residing in shelters, prisons, hospitals, and retirement homes is not considered (Crepaldi et al., 2007, p. 106). Secondly, potential beneficiaries are unfamiliar with the system, which causes them to believe that they do not meet the requirements or are simply not aware of their rights because of the system’s complexity (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 20). There seems to be a management problem preventing certain individuals from being included in the system (Veit-Wilson, 2007, p. 3).

Another of MIS’s problem is related to *nepotism* and *social capital* since beneficiary applications may be subject to other criteria other than “deserving”. One of these “other” criterion is “clientelism”, as expressed by Ferrera (2006, p. 209) which means the vulnerability of public institutions to hold partisan attitudes thereby creating a situation ripe for manipulations to take place. Therefore, individuals with a greater social capital have a higher chance of receiving support (Hyggen, 2006, p. 494) because social capital usually entails with it a higher likelihood of abusing the support.

Two other problem areas are *family responsibility* and *social solidarity*. An increase in amount of MIS provided to a family may act to weaken family ties and social solidarity thereby constructing a more individualistic society (Veit-Wilson, 2007, p. 5). For this reason, beneficiaries of MIS maybe considered to be parasites by the productive/working groups as they are perceived to undermine the spirit of solidarity in were true, all industrialized western countries would have collapsed long ago (Veit-Wilson, 2007, p. 5). It may be true to a certain extent that family ties have weakened causing family responsibility and social

solidarity to experience to a lapse. However, this reality does not prove that MIS has helped to exasperate the situation.

One last problematic area within concerning MIS is *cost*. It is asserted that for MIS to be successfully implemented, the economic well-being or tax revenues of the state should increase proportionately; otherwise financial problems will be inevitable. In other words, under the aim of sustainability and affectivity MIS means a new cost item to deal with in the budget which may cause a collapse of those welfare regimes that are already in shortage (İnsel, 2007, p. 42). This situation presents budgetary pressure which may cause the governments to implement employment-centered support schemes at a higher frequency, such as workfare etc. (Immervoll, 2009, p. 28).

Here two concrete areas are observed: the fear of inflation and of the lose of foreign investors. As for inflation, there is no good reason to assume that MIS will lead to inflation. When people are provided with income as the natural result of goods and service consumption, the direction of social and consumer spending will change, and thus domestic goods will be given priority over imported goods. Therefore, this will have a Keynesian effect on job creation and production (Standing, 2007, p. 31). Even if the circumstances aggravate, the problem can be overcome by adjusting the amounts of MIS according to annual inflation indices like the current practice is in many European countries such as Belgium, France, UK, Spain, Norway, and Sweden (Casas, 2012, p. 41).

In terms of foreign investors, it is not reasonable to assume that foreign investors will lose confidence and flee the country in the case of implementation of MIS. In most countries, there are millions of individuals living under the poverty line, and social violence and unrest may be witnessed almost every day, yet there is no data linking these apparent reasons for the exit of foreign capital. Therefore, MIS programs should be considered an issue of “priority” rather than of cost (Standing, 2007, p. 31).

Transcending all of these problems, perhaps the most vital problem is related to (*non*)*working* context. To some, MIS may be perceived as encouraging people to not to work. “Non-working” has two aspects; in one aspect, the beneficiary

of the MIS may lose his/her desire to work and become dependent on supports (Taşcı, 2012, p. 79). The other aspect concerns workers who earn only a little bit above MIS and who are therefore not entitled to any support. Such workers may lose the incentive to continue working such a job (İnsel, 2007 p. 42). This problem, according to liberals, results from those in need (the poor) and a perception of it being “their own fault” (Taşcı, 2012, p. 167) because “they don’t even know how to spend money properly” (Veit-Wilson, 2007, p. 7). For socialists, MIS may undermine employees’ demands from the state toward the improvement of working life conditions (Alper & Yüksel-Arabacı, 2010, p. 46). Therefore, according to socialists, MIS is dangerous for the working class, the main figure of the working life, and is an effective tool of capitalism to secure its future (Yeldan, 2010, p. 51).

However, it is not difficult to find answers to the question of whether MIS has made people lazy, dependent on support and has discouraged work. For one, an individual receiving MIS is often trying to find a job to remove himself and his family from the vortex of poverty. Specifically, a research project has shown that eight out of ten recipients of MIS eventually transfer to a MW job (Gökçeoğlu-Balcı, 2010, p. 49) indicating that is to say recipients of MIS do, in fact, join the working life. In this sense, the inability to join the working life is not simply an issue of laziness. The problem lies in the fact that individuals living in poverty face challenges to find a job because of various debilitating effects of and obstacles presented by poverty (Veit-Wilson, 2007, p. 3). In this regard, no research has yet to produce evidence that an individual living below the poverty line will suffice with MIS and not try his/her best to find a job when the external influences of poverty are removed from him/her (Standing, 2007, p. 33).

Another point to mention is that MIS may contain a “conditionality” which may stipulate “work” or “service”. Conditionality requires beneficiaries either to work or to join a training program that involves vocational assistance in order to be eligible for support programs (Sapancalı, 2003, p. 218). Particularly in recent implementations and applications, the minimum requirements to qualify for MIS are readiness for and fulfillment of job search conditions

(Hacımahmutoğlu, 2009, p. 45). However, “being able to work” is different from working for a fee; as it involves searching for a job, participating in a training-skills program and performing offered social services. Especially as a social service offering, beneficiaries of MIS are expected to contribute to the improvement of life conditions in the surrounding area. This includes care of the elderly and those with health problems, being involved in services such as helping them with household chores, going shopping or reading books and newspapers for them. Similarly, collecting garbage, cleaning, landscaping, planting flowers and trees, painting and repairing houses are considered as social service jobs (Buğra et al., 2012, p. 33). Another aspect of being able to work suggests “being active” in the search for job and participating in training and skills programs. In Scandinavian countries and France, Germany and the Netherlands, benefiting from MIS stipulates that applicants participate in vocational courses (Buğra et al., 2012, p. 29).

In addition to these, as in the case of France, a MIS contract including the requirement of “engaging in a useful activity” has been formed in order to ensure social integration and prevent inactivity (Değirmenci, 2005, p. 46). This contract may also include arrangements like receiving consultancy for job search and employment (Hacımahmutoğlu, 2009, p. 45). This agreement in France asks the beneficiary to make a commitment to participate in a social activity in compliance with the “social inclusion” principle (Buğra et al., 2012, p. 33). Thus beneficiaries will be able to restore their dignity and be oriented toward employment with the perspective of social inclusion. This situation establishes a link between the activities necessary for social inclusion of those who are subjected to social exclusion and financial assistance (Sapançalı, 2003, p. 216).

A striking common aspect of the above mentioned problems is “management”. The inaccessibility of MIS suggests the inability of the administration to make the scheme more accessible. Favoritism emerges when administration prepares the ground for both it and nepotism by not taking precautions or by turning a blind eye to the practice. Furthermore, if family ties and social solidarity suffer from MIS applications, this indicates that administrative bodies have not

adopted social policies to strengthen family ties and social solidarity. Moreover, the cost issue of MIS may imply that administrative bodies do not spend public wealth carefully and appropriately. In addition to these, asserting that MIS encourages laziness and unemployment may indicate that the administration has not discussed the issue, precautions, methods and solutions thoroughly. Therefore, almost every question and problem related to MIS can be a reflection of the mentality of the administration. This scheme is a matter of “priority” and depending on the priority of the administration, it is possible to find solutions (as set forth above) to these problems.

Making Sense of Minimum Income Support through Minimum Wage

Trying to understand MIS with the help of “priority” is tantamount to asking MIS to be more “meaningful”. In other words, MIS should not lead to laziness or discourage employment, and the “amount” should be sufficient for a reasonable standard of life (Standing, 2007, p. 20). In short, beneficiaries should receive an “adequate” amount of income from MIS applications.

In MIS in Europe, the amount is determined through per capita income, unemployment allowances, or *MW* (EuropeAid, 2012, p. 14). Therefore, one of the criteria for the determination of the amount of MIS is “minimum wage”. In general, one third of the *MW* is given as MIS (Buğra et al., 2012, p. 32). As far as relations among MIS and *MW* in Europe are concerned, the amount of *MW* exceeds MIS within the socio-economically underdeveloped Eastern European countries, with the exception of Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic. An analysis of the ratio between MIS and *MW* in Europe (2007) reveals the lowest to be 23% (Latvia) and the biggest to be 75% (Luxemburg). In France the rate is 35.2%, while in the Netherlands it is 45.2%, in Belgium 51.2% and the UK 54.5%. In France, the monthly MIS is 441 €, while the *MW* is 1,254 € (Crepaldi et al., 2007, pp. 37-38). Apart from Luxemburg, the ratio of these two amounts in economically developed countries is reasonable, i.e. these ratios neither constitute an incentive to abandon paid work nor do they below being adequate.

For this reason, the logic is based on keeping MIS below MW as much as possible in order to encourage citizens to retain their desire to work (Metin, 2012, p. 136). In other words, the amount of MIS should not be the one that causes discouragement in beneficiaries to perform any work in paid MW (Buğra & Silmazdenir, 2007, p. 97).

However; this understanding seems to depend on reducing MIS “as much as possible” in order to orient recipients to work. Given that MIS is hardly enough to maintain a dignified life, the understanding should be changed to do, “*MW should be increased, which will then provide an opportunity to raise MIS*”. This kind of logic has sufficient mental grounds as stated below.

The mental ground of for such a scheme is the “*social state*” which allows for a great manoeuvring area. One of the basic building blocks of the social state is MW, a regulatory tool of the state in the social and economic spheres (Korkmaz, 2003, p. 1). MW is a “social” fee determined according to needs, serving as an essential source of income for the survival of society (Zaim, 1997, pp. 218-220) and sustainability of a socially appropriate life for citizens (Kutal, 1969, p. 5). In general sense, the social state is visibility of “state” in all socio-economic areas in favour of individuals and society, and MW is one of its visibilities.

However, the social state is pressured by global realities in which globalization results in the reductions and in social state expenditures coupled with the dominance of capitalism (Sykes, 2008, pp. 432-433). For this reason, the national structure of the world economy is transformed into an internationalized world economy (Rationoff, 1999, p. 43). Due to globalization, the basic functions of the state have moved away from national development and social progress toward compliance with an international economy. As a result, nation-states no longer have a say in international policies because international politics are shaped by international trusts and organizations such as IMF, WB, OECD, NAFTA, and the EU (Şenkal, 2005, p. 106). The Keynesian attitude over state matters has almost entirely disappeared (Ferguson, Lavalette, & Mooney, 2002, p. 141), i.e, the state interest in social problems and money spent on social matters has diminished, and social policies have dramatically changed (Koray, 2000, p. 13). For this reason, the social state has almost been replaced by vacuum state

(Wilding, 1997, pp. 413-414). To sum up, global capitalism has spurred the world, which has led to further deterioration of the problems, particularly of unemployment and inequality in welfare states (Sykes, 2008, p. 433). In addition to these, global(ized) capitalism has upset the balance of power between labor and capital in favor of capital (Wilding, 1997, pp. 415-416).

However, not everybody agrees with opinion that globalization exerts repressive power on the social state. There are two main opinions against this view. According to the first one, globalization exerts a lesser impact on the welfare state and by dent on social policies than was initially thought. Changes in the world economy are taking place much more slowly and on a smaller scale. For this reason, the notion of “the threat/pressure of globalization” is an ideological bubble for nation states aiming to reshape their welfare state. The change in welfare states in this respect is true, but the reason for the change is not the pressure of globalization, but an aging population, technology, the transformation of the family structure and other risks (Sykes, 2008, pp. 432-434). The second view claims that the effect of globalization on the welfare state and social policies are adjusted and balanced by national policies. Every social welfare state undergoes different changes to adjust and adapt to the effects of globalization according to their own characteristics (Sykes, 2008, pp. 432-433). In this regard, the impact of globalization varies in each country and is shaped by national institutions (Cousins, 2005, pp. 51-52). Thus, social policies may be affected by the pressure of globalization, but this effect is basically determined and controlled by the internal dynamics of the countries (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, as far as “globalization pressure” is concerned, it is difficult to say that globalization produces a negative effect on the on the opinion that MW is an inevitable necessity and reality of the social state.

A similar situation applies to views on MIS. If the social state means the “involvement” of the state in social matters, then in order to demonstrate its “reality” not only nominally “a rights-based” approach must be adopted. MIS is one of the most visible rights-based applications available, and therefore should be considered as a “task” for the state and as a “right” for concerned citizens. In the implementation of MIS, concerns over receiving the support and approval

of the rich should be put aside and necessary arrangements need to be made in favor of MIS. The infrastructure needed for a successful implementation, such as the procurement of necessary financial resources, should be obtained through certain channels, one of them being “tax”. Tax in “a true social state” logic should not be taken from every citizen, but only from those who are wealthy. In Sweden, for example, whose welfare state is the most comprehensive of all EU countries (Steinmo, 2003, p. 32), social welfare schemes operate with the help of “taxes”. The wealthier an individual is, the higher taxes he or she must pay (Kaya, 2009, p. 54). Thus, Scandinavian countries, and in particular Sweden, convert the collected taxes into social welfare benefits (Özdemir, 2004, p. 170).

However, the mentality of taxing wealthy citizens comes with “opposition,” particularly by the supporters of the liberal-capitalist approach. According to the liberal-capitalist approach, the state should be neutral (Galston, 1991, p. 80) in the redistribution of revenues. The liberal-capitalist mentality is against redistributive policies and does not accept “the Robin Hood figure” that takes from the rich and then distributes it to the poor (Eincik, 2008, p. 11). As such, the desire to redistribute social wealth can never be realized and is perceived as an intervention of individuals, particularly wealthy individuals’ rights (Yayla, 1992, p. 191). For example, *Adam Smith* sees poverty as a personal problem of the poor stemming from themselves (Smith, 1976, p. 138), and states they can afford to enjoy life despite poverty (Smith, 2004, p. 333). According to Smith, even in the most extreme cases of poverty, the poor cannot make any claims on the rich (Vivenza, 2001, p. 199), therefore the rich financing the poor is wrong, and immoral (Vaughan, 2009, p. 89). For this reason, the state’s responsibility is not to help the poor, but rather to protect the rich from the poor (Walton & Gamble, 1976, p. 153). *Friedrich A. Hayek* follows the same train of thought when he expresses that no-one should overtake the function of income distribution in a market economy (Yayla, 1993, p. 62). For Hayek however, although there is no *income distribution*, there is to be *income dispersion* (Hayek, 1999, p. 180) basing his reasoning on what matters in society is not the “redistribution” of wealth but equality (Aktan, 1994, p. 31). If rules are fair, the wealth will “spontaneously” be redistributed equally, so external interventions

are in vain (Küçükkalay, 2010, p. 441). *Robert Nozick* is one of the opponents of income distribution and the welfare state (Buchalan & Mathieu, 1986, p. 35). According to Nozick, this is the “forced” use of people for social objectives to which they show no commitment or contribution (Berkday, 2010, p. 323). Therefore, collecting the assets of the wealthy (e.g. through taxation) and then re-distributing them is considered to be “forced labor” of the rich (Erdoğan, 1999, p. 354).

Keynes indicates that one of the defects of the liberal-capitalist understanding is a “lack of concern for social justice” (Yay, 1993, p. 67). Looking at the issue with respect to the social state instead of this defect means to perceive of MIS as a kind of “income right” (Yakut-Çakar & Yılmaz, 2010, p. 63). In this sense, MIS is a “social right” (Liebig & Mau, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, MIS is a right and it fortifies the philosophy of “a rights-based” social state. When this support is accepted as a right, politicians may not be able to abuse it by offering it to potential voters to get electoral support. Such a rights-based approach will may impede political patronage and will may also create a mental ground and increase self-confidence levels of beneficiaries.

The second main justification to support MIS is related to “*social responsibility*.” Since businesses exist in a community, the two concepts of “community” and “neediness” necessitate the mutual support of businesses and their host community. As such, businesses themselves have a responsibility toward the community in which they work and trade.

There are two main views on businesses’ (corporate) social responsibility projects. The first one sees business as technical and economic-based entities, whereas the second one perceives businesses as social institutions. The first view, advocated by the classical perspective, is losing popularity to the second view in recent times. According to the first view, social responsibility is not toward the community but to the enterprise as a whole. In this view, social responsibility is nothing more than the maximization of the market value of the business holding that by promoting the market value of the business, employees will benefit at the micro level. At the macro level however, competitiveness will progress which will facilitate the increase of wealth in society thus serving its social responsibility obligations toward its host

community. The pioneer of the approach, Friedman, argues that if businesses were to use company revenues for social projects rather than to maximize their profits, job-creating projects would be reduced and consumer prices would increase. For this reason, businesses would lose revenue which would negatively affect the economy by which the community at large would also suffer (Torlak, 2003, p. 34). Therefore, businesses should have only one social responsibility: to use all of their resources toward the maximization of profit in a free market environment (Demir & Songür, 1999, p. 153). This approach also accepts the assumption that businesses are not equipped to solve the problems of the communities (Kağnıcıoğlu, 2007, pp. 6-7) as businesses would have both to compete in the global market and to worry about fulfilling their social responsibility obligations in the domestic market.

The pre-assumption here is one of the main features of the liberal-capitalist approach: a free market economy and competition (Yayla, 1992, p. 165). In other words, it is a challenge that the free market economy has become one of the pillars of the liberal-capitalist mentality (Kessler, 1945, p. 155). Nevertheless, this situation is the opposite for *Fernand Braudel* in that the liberal-capitalist mentality is not built on the free market or free competition, but that it is a “monopoly” and an enemy of the market. According to Braudel, competition must be suppressed so that the liberal-capitalist structure may continue to exist, which necessarily entails “monopolies” to form (Özel, 1993, p. 18). However, because manipulative competition is necessary at all times, monopoly should coexist with the free market. For Braudel, a free market economy corresponds to “competition” and capitalism to “monopoly.” Monopoly is a fusion of power, deception, and intelligence (Özel, 1993, p. 19) meaning that wealth and power constitute a “vicious cycle” circulating in the hands of the owners (Nakvi, 1985, p. 95). Braudel blames the state for being a partner in crime in this vicious cycle (Özel, 1995, p. 61), and Pogge argues that the state is at fault by letting the global elite [rich/wealthy] abuse the world’s natural resources (Pogge, 2006, p. 329). Therefore, “competing in the global market” seems to be an illusion given as an excuse by businesses to avoid having to fulfill their social responsibilities

It is at this point that the second view’s importance becomes apparent. This view assumes that businesses should meet the social, economic, and political

needs of the society and thus help to solve social problems. This implies that businesses should go beyond their institutional objectives and consider taking on social objectives as well (Torlak, 2003, p. 26, 36). Therefore, the concept of “society” is of utmost importance in the understanding of social responsibility, as society is one of the stakeholders of businesses and is also the foundation of other stakeholders. For this reason, society must be protected and developed in one way or another (Şahin & Yıldırım, 2008, p. 63-64).

Here the second view comes in. It assumes that businesses should meet the social, economic and political needs of the society and thus help to solve social problems. This means that businesses should go beyond their institutional objectives, but consider social ones as well (Torlak, 2003, p. 26, 36). Therefore, the concept of “society” is of utmost importance in the understanding of social responsibility, as society is one of the stakeholders of businesses and also the foundation of other stakeholders. For this reason, society must be protected and developed in one way or another (Şahin & Yıldırım, 2008, pp. 63-64).

There have been many references made to businesses’ responsibilities particularly in the eradication of poverty and the provision of a minimum standard of living. In developing countries, businesses are generally expected to be a part of the solution of poverty, unemployment, and low living standards (Ersöz, 2009, p. 114). As an extension of the concept of social responsibility, businesses are expected to provide for a minimum quality of life by increasing wages beyond official MW (Torlak, 2003, p. 28). When this kind of social responsibility understanding is appropriately established, an opportunity arises to justify an amount fitting “human dignity” in MIS applications because in this understanding, MW has been increased. Here it is important to discern whether the contribution of business is “obligatory” or not. Indeed, since the rise of MW requires legal arrangement, it can be argued that it is forced upon businesses. However, the expected reaction from businesses is that they should consider this as a “duty” and try to fulfill their social responsibility.

This situation is related to Kant’s differentiation between “behaving with moral” and “behaving suitable to moral.” “Behaving with moral” is to do an

action intrinsically, believingly, and willingly. “Behaving suitable to moral” is to behave and act extrinsically, unbelievably, and unwillingly for the sole purpose of obeying social principles, legalities, and rules (Köknel, 2006, p. 142). In this sense, according to Kant, actions done merely for the sake of complying with the law with no other commitment or willingness should be considered “legal” actions, and not “moral” per se (Özlem, 2004, p. 71). “Morality” is a duty and an intrinsic imperative to take responsibility (Özlem, 2004, p. 73). A duty is different from a “task” in that the latter is assigned by a government or institution outside of one’s own authority (MacIntyre, 2001, p. 222).

A number of businesses may intend to act morally while others simply comply with the law. That is, some feel forced to carry out some acts of social responsibility because they either must do so or because they expect an economic return for such an act. Social responsibility should not be understood as setting aside economic returns, however, and financial gains should not be the “basic purpose” of social responsibility. The “hidden purpose” behind carrying out social responsibility projects might hinder the positive “growth relationship” between MW and MIS because many businesses conduct acts resembling to social responsibility in order to create a positive image of the business. For such individuals, social responsibility may increase the volume of sales, strengthen customer ties, make a positive impact on productivity and quality, and/or attract qualified human resources (Ay, 2003, p. 41). Furthermore, research indicates that investors in the stock market make their choices according to the social responsibility projects of businesses (Ay, 2003, p. 36). Within this perception, instead of increasing MW for a worker, a business can assign the worker to a non-governmental organization and ask an NGO to reward the worker for the contribution he has made. Thus, the company believes that it has fulfilled its social responsibility obligation by helping an NGO and by helping the worker to earn extra income. Instead of a making a direct contribution to the company, the company uses the “social responsibility” mechanism and “help” indirectly.

For this reason, it may be argued that some business’ perceptions of social responsibility include “hypocrisy.” In such a case, a business may want for the idea of “increasing MW in order to increase the amount of MIS” to be placed

on the back burner, which means, at the very least to postpone and refuse any in-deep investigation of *whether is it possible to have both an amount of MW successful in eliminating the working poor and an amount of MIS that provides for needs of the jobless-poor at the same time by raising MW.*

Conclusion

MIS is perhaps the most important of social assistance schemes in which “regular” cash transfers to citizens below a certain level of income and “conditionality” are the most remarkable features.

In general, criticisms made for all forms of social assistance apply to MIS as well. The most prominent criticism is that MIS may discourage people to seek employment for various reasons, arguing that beneficiaries will become too lazy and dependent to find a job, whereas others call attention to the demotivation it may instill in individuals working in a job that pays little above MIS.

This basic criticism is related to the amount of MIS provided to beneficiaries. Depending on the amount of MIS, the level of demotivation and discouragement will vary. The relationship between the amount of MIS and MW is of the utmost importance in this equilibrium, and there is a correlation between MIS and MW in that the latter is generally used as a criterion to determine the amount of the former. Accordingly, if MW is low, MIS will naturally be low. A very low amount of MIS will be a problem for the needy to ensure them a reasonable standard of living. On the other hand, when the amount of MIS, which is usually one-third of MW, is close to MW, laziness and discouragement toward work might be observed.

In such a dilemma, raising the amount of MW should be considered as an option. Increasing the amount of the MW, and thus increasing MIS proportionately is necessary for reaching a “reasonable standard of living.” However, the main resistance point of raising the minimum wage is “cost,” and when there are already cost related challenges in the implementation of the scheme, a rise in MW will be subject to even more criticism. Furthermore, increasing both amounts will double the cost and pressure on the budget.

However, these arguments may be refuted in two ways. The first point is the principle of a welfare state. If governments aim for a real social state, priorities should change and cost accounting should be secondary to looking after the needy. A genuine social state should prove itself by spending on social issues, of which MW is a part. For this reason, no excuse can propose a legitimate mental ground to postpone or cancel MIS as the living up to the definition of a social state is the most principle reason.

The second point is related to businesses and employers because in order to increase the amount of MIS, MW should be increased as well. For employers this means “cost,” and surely employers want to avoid increases in cost as it can upset the budget. However, “social responsibility” is a cost factor and businesses expand their social responsibility projects, establishing special units and making investments in this field, although it may seem quite “contradictory.” Avoiding costs and opposing an increase in MW on one hand and increasing the cost on social responsibility projects on the other are a dilemma to many. For businesses however, there is no contradiction here as social responsibility activities signify a long-term “investment” despite the immediate cost. For this reason, employers should feel quite comfortable sponsoring non-governmental organizations instead of raising employees’ MW. However, if the money spent on social responsibility projects is channeled toward raising MW, it will be an investment on a social scale and will provide help for the needy in their struggle to reach a reasonable standard of living.

It should be noted that the two reasons that we have attempted to clarify above refer to “mental” spheres rather than solid facts and statistics. Social state and social responsibility approaches, along with a change in the mental attitude, should be supported with practical findings (which are missing in this article) for clearer results. Although there is a need for new studies on MIS, these studies should be conducted taking much broader terms into consideration, especially “employment-oriented,” “the emphasis on family,” “citizenship,” and “human dignity.”

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