



IMPACT OF TRANSLATED TEXTS ON HEALTH ECONOMICS: THE CASE OF HEALTH REFORM institution IN TURKEY

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Extended Abstract

Economic ideas have been quite central in health care reforms. This was the case in Turkey where the health care system has been undergoing a serious reform process since 2003 by the Health Transformation Program (HTP). Efficiency of health reforms has been broadly discussed in the light of some notions of normative economics such as fairness, equity and of positive economics such as utility, cost, benefit and optimality in the body of some translated texts from European languages into Turkish language. However, neither the institutions/authors which/who decided to translate these texts nor their characteristics/intentions have never been questioned.

Translations that were chosen and financed by the state authorities (such as the Ministry of Health) were quite pro-reform oriented and they were usually realized in collaboration with the national/regional branches of international organizations (such as the OECD, WB, WHO or WTO). Whereas, those rather critical books have been translated by relatively autonomous institutions/authors which/who have a rather objective and critical attitude towards health reforms in general and the Health Transformation Program in particular.

Indeed, as puts Black (1991), the share of national resources that will be used for health care and the method of creating resources is a political decision: "the major decisions on the global health budget are inescapably political" (Black, 1991, p. 120). It would be unfortunate to perceive this as a solely cost-benefit oriented decision-making process. As the transfer of the national resources to health care budget could be an ideologically driven activity, translation of a text on the subject of health care reform could definitely exhibit similar characteristics.

This paper will focus on two books which have been translated into Turkish in the period when the Turkish health care system has been undergoing serious reforms. These books are "Getting Health Reform Right - A Guide to Improving Performance and Equity" (2008) by Marc J. Roberts, William Hsiao, Peter Berman and Michael R. Reich which was translated into Turkish as "Sağlık Reformunun Doğru Yapılması- Performans ve Hakkaniyetin Geliştirilmesi İçin Bir Klavuz" (2009) and "Health Policy Reform - Driving the Wrong Way? A Critical Guide to the Global 'Health Reform' Industry" (2005) by John Lister which was translated into Turkish as "YanlıŞ Yolda mi gidiyoruz? Küresel 'Sağlık Reformu' Endüstrinin Eleştirel Kılavuzu" (2008).

Comparing the English and Turkish versions of these books, our aim is to show how a translation on health care reform could be ideologically driven: the first book was translated into Turkish by a government authority – namely by the Ministry of Health of Turkey and it reflects the rather mainstream approach to health care reforms whereas the second book has a more critical attitude towards these reforms and was translated by a foundation which works on health and education issues in Turkey – namely İnsan Sağlığı ve Eğitim Vakfı (İNSEV).



This study will cover a reflection on some specific aspects related to the books: to what extent these books have been influential on the recent health care reform (namely on the Health Transformation Program) in Turkey? Which one of the approaches to health care reform – the one elaborated on in the book by Lister or the one elaborated on in the book by Roberts et al – has been more influential on the HTP in Turkey? What reflections of these two books can be seen on the Health Transformation Program of Turkey? What have been the main motivations behind the attempts towards translating these books? Is it possible to figure out any criteria that had been applied in the choice of these books for translation? What can be said about the organizations which initiated and undertook the translation activity – Lister's book was translated by a foundation (a non-governmental organization) and the book by Roberts et al was translated by the Ministry of Health of Turkey? What can be said about the quality of these translated materials when they are compared with the original prints? How were these translations valued and referred to in the literature on health reform?

In its efforts towards answering the aforementioned questions the study will make use of several theories and approaches of economics and political science literature. Due to its close relation with health care reforms neoliberal transformation of the state and its critics is one of the major frameworks that will be emphasized throughout the study. Idea of Policy Transfer will be referred to while discussing the role of these translated books as to their effects on the health care reform in Turkey. Convergence-Divergence Dichotomy will be another theory that will be utilized in answering the question whether these books have made any contributions to the emergence of any form of convergence between the Turkish health care reform and the mainstream health care reforms in the world. In addition to these, the paper will make use of the idea of Epistemic Communities to check if the translators/authors of the selected books associate with any groups of intellectuals aiming to influence health care reform in Turkey.

References

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