

Political Economy and Mental Health: A Reconsideration in Modern Era

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Abstract

Political economy can be considered as the shared field between economics, politics and sociology, and the mandatory mindset of politicians. Alternatively, everybody's livelihood and socioeconomic status is in mutual relationship with governing policies. In line with the existing data, there is a clear relationship between socioeconomic status and mental health. So, it is one of the main tasks of every regime to handle the main fiscal challenges of its people with proper plans, and disregard its scheme or points. But unfortunately, and along with the available facts, a remarkable number of administrators around the world, whether in industrialized or unindustrialized countries, are oblivious with respect to main impressions or intentions of public livelihood, due to lack of confusion in their national political economy or sociopolitical intentions, and so they are part of the problem because they do not know, basically, that what they are working for and why they are among the officials. In the present article, the pragmatic concept and importance of political economy and its relationship with community mental health has been reviewed briefly.

Key words: political economy; economics; politics; governmental health policies; public socioeconomic status; mental health.

Introduction:

Mental health can be defined as "... a state of well-being in which the person recognizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal pressures of life, can work fruitfully and productively, and is able to make an aid to his or her community". The said definition makes it clear that mental health is influenced not only by personal attributes or characteristics, but also by the socioeconomic status in which people find themselves and the broader surroundings in which they live [1]. Mental health makes up an important part of a person's aptitude to lead a pleasing life, as well as the ability to form connections, work, study, or pursue leisure happiness, in addition to making daily choices and decisions about housing, employment, education, or other selections. Disturbances to a person's mental health can unfavorably compromise these abilities and elections, leading not only to weakened functioning at the personal level but also wider wellbeing damages at the domestic and group level. Depending on the native milieu, certain crowds in society may be mainly vulnerable to experiencing mental health complications, including households living in poverty, persons with long-lasting health problems, minority groups, and people exposed to and/or relocated by conflict or war [2]. On the other hand, persons with mental disorders have their own set of risks and vulnerabilities, as well as an increased chance of experiencing debility and premature death, stigma and discrimination, social segregation and poverty [2]. In the present article, the reciprocal

effects between economics, politics and psychological healthiness have been discussed, briefly, to check unseen dynamics that are influential with respect to public health, in general, and mental health, especially, which can determine the final prosperity and confidence of every society.

Background:

A) Economics and mental health:

Mental well-being is an inseparable part of public healthiness and meaningfully affects countries and their social, economic, and human capital. Mental well-being is not only the nonexistence of mental complaints or symptoms but also a supply that supports complete health and efficiency [3]. Confident mental well-being is a state of health in which the person recognizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal pressures of life, can work fruitfully and productively, and can contribute to his or her society [4]. Fitting your mental condition permits emotional and cognitive flexibility, which are the basis for resilience and social skills in the face of tension. This mental capital is extremely vital for the apt functioning of society, communities, and families. On the contrary, whereas monetary calamities may have mental health effects, mental health complications have important fiscal effects [5, 6]. Accordingly, a positive correlation exists between socioeconomic status (SES) and mental health; namely, high SES persons have better mental

health than do persons of low SES [7]. Also, with regard to the incidence of psychopathology, some studies have found a slightly higher than usual percentage of bipolar I disorder among high SES persons and a greater number than usual of schizophrenic people in low SES groups [7]. The sequence between unfortunate mental health and poverty in low-income countries has been detected in a number of studies [8 -10]. For example, more than 85 percent of suicides occur in low- or middle-income countries [11], and suicide is more common in areas of high unemployment, socioeconomic deprivation and social fragmentation [12, 13]. Likewise, great increases in unemployment have been linked to a rise in deaths from alcohol abuse [3]. Hence, it can be concluded that the financial crisis is expected to, adversely, affect well-being, particularly mental health [14]. Besides, people with severe mental ailments have a higher prevalence of physical diseases and higher mortality from physical complaints, in comparison with the public [15]. Whereas 61.5 percent of European countries spend more than 5 percent of their health budget on mental health care, 70 percent of countries in Africa and 50 percent of countries in Southeast Asia spend less than 1 percent [16]. While relatively high rates of common mental disorders are linked with unemployment, poor education and material disadvantage [17], some mental health complications are, as well, related with strain on families, poor employment experiences, and a higher-than-average risk of vagrancy and contact with the criminal justice system [18]. The unfavorable results of poor mental health in low-income nations may be even worse than in high-income ones, due to the absence of social protection safety networks, which is compounded by the high levels of stigma and misconception [19]. Poor maternal mental health, too, has longstanding adversarial consequences for children in low- and middle-income realms, which is restrictive with respect to their lifetime chances [20]. Contagious ailments, which are the major focus of health policy in poorer countries, are also intimately associated and worsened by poor mental health. Therefore, interventions to inhibit and manage mental health complications could help in the management of these disorders, for example in the case of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (21, 22). On the other hand, the said low seeming priority is worsened by stigma, which has contributed to a similar carelessness by both policy makers and people [23]. Furthermore, mental illnesses prolong the cycle of poverty by interfering with the person's capability to work in either salaried or non-income roles, leading to decreased social and economic efficiency. Accordingly, people with mental health difficulties are often the poorest of the poor, for the reason that neither they nor their kindred maybe able to work effectively [24]. On the other hand, unfortunate mental wellbeing in childhood and adolescence increases the risk of poverty and other adversarial economic consequences in adulthood (24). Mental illness in parents can, badly, impact on the healthiness, growth and schooling of their offspring [25]. Besides, though the effects of poor health on poverty are absolutely not unique to mental disorders, their undesirable effects are worse in comparison with the most acute and chronic medical diseases [24]. Given the tough role of social factors in mental wellbeing, rehabilitative interventions, too, must address poverty decline, as a healing goal [24].

B) Political economy:

Political economy is a subdivision of social science that studies the associations between persons and society and between bazaars and the government, using miscellaneous tools and techniques, which are derived mainly from sociology, economics, and political science [26]. Anyhow, it is not easy to give an agreeable definition of the term "political economy". Factually, it points to national housekeeping or the theory of national housekeeping. It might be said that the meaning of political economy as an applied science is the scheme of the method of satisfying human requirements, which provides the greatest possible gratification to society. When we say that a thing is valuable or harmful from the point of view of political economy, this way of speaking is based on a moral or

logical postulate; namely, on certain conceptions about the natural right of people to live and enjoy the good things of life [27]. The term political economy is derived from the Greek "polis", meaning "city" or "state," and "oikonomos", meaning "one who manages a home or country estate." Accordingly, political economy can be assumed as the study of how a country - the public's household - is governed or managed, by taking into account both economic and political factors. While political economy is not a new subject, it is a relatively novel academic discipline. So, though the analysis of political economy has been traced to Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, it has emerged as a distinct field of study in the mid-18th century, largely as a reaction to mercantilism, which called for a strong role for the state in economic regulation. Afterwards, scholars like Adam Smith, David Hume and François Quesnay began to approach this study in methodical and not fragmentary terms. In the mid-19th century, communist historian and economist Karl Marx, too, proposed a class-based analysis of the political economy. The field of political economy now involves several areas of study, comprising the politics of economic relations, national political and economic matters, global political economy, and the comparative study of political and financial schemes. The appearance of international political economy, first within international relations and later as a distinctive field of investigation, marked the return of political economy to its origins as a holistic study of persons, governments, bazaars, and society. Comparative political economy probes interactions between the regime, marketplaces, and society, both on a national scale and all over the world [26].

C) Political affairs, Mindset and Mental Health:

Probing elector conduct during polling has acknowledged both the role that financial factors play in voter choices and the association between electors' professional background and their predilections for sociopolitical reform. In this sense, the effect of money matters has been felt more toughly in present-day political science than any other social science [28]. Then again, along with some studies, a connection is observable between suicide, voting and party-political matters [29 - 31]. Thus, a chain of psychosocial explanations, too, has been settled in recent years to describe, in whole or in part, the role of health status across social layers, as echoed in conditions of revenue supply and social inequality [32]. Nevertheless, the proportions of suicide are related with general changes in fiscal situations, reflected for example in rates of joblessness among the inhabitants [33]. So, it seems that party-political affiliation and participation in the governmental process could be similar to a sensitive barometer with respect to health status [34]. Therefore, political economy studies of health policy offer more than simple monetary or party-political studies. Political affairs can have a greater impact on health policy decisions and their application than either financial or health considerations [35]. Thus, political economy analyzes the distribution of power and wealth between different people and groups, and the processes that generate, bear and change these relationships over time. When applied to circumstances of crisis and conflict, political economic analysis tries to comprehend both the economic and the political aspects of struggle, and how these combines to affect outlines of authority and susceptibility. In line with a political economic approach, susceptibility should be understood in terms of weakness and not simply material need. Power and vulnerability are hence investigated as an economic and political process, in terms, for example, of exploitation, exclusion, or neglect, where a variety of actors and groups play a part [36]. Persons are most susceptible when their source of revenue and coping tactics are intentionally undermined or blocked, or if their political position, group identity, and/or material settings mean that they are specially exposed to vehemence [37]. A political economy approach should combine a broad chronological and environmental outlook, describe why the relative authority and susceptibility of different groups alters over time, and explicate how the activities and fortunes of one group in society affect others. The outlook that it boosts is, as a result, broad, dynamic,

explanatory and longitudinal [38]. Accordingly, political affairs, money matters, and public strategy are important determinants of inhabitants' health. For example, countries with social democratic governments, greater public spending, and lesser revenue inequities have populations with healthier well-being [39]. Likewise, countries accounting for more than 2 billion of the world's people spend less than 1% of their whole public sector health care funds on mental health [40]. Alternatively, only 51% of the world population in low-income countries has access to any public care facilities [40], and at least 85% of folks with severe mental health complications do not get treatment within any twelve-month period in a number of low-income nations [41]. Nonetheless, mental health services may be mostly vulnerable during financial calamities [40]. Moreover, around 40% of low-income countries recounted out-of-pocket expenses to be the main method for funding mental health care, compared with only 3% of high-income countries [40]. This dependence on out-of-pocket payments is both inequitable and inefficient, as it dampens consumption of services by those with limited revenues, which is particularly worrying given the close associations between poor mental health and poverty [42]. Similarly, poor distribution of accessible assets, which are often greatly concentrated in metropolitan areas, is an extra important issue in low- and middle-income nations [43]. There is, as well, the problem that funds are used unsuitably to support facilities that do not match epidemiological requirements, or the predilections of service consumers, or the evidence based on efficiency and cost-effectiveness [44].

Discussion:

Since the range of threats to mental well-being is extensive, responses to them must be multi-sectorial and multi-layered. Wide-ranging approaches include: promotion of essential personal characteristics in the formative stages of life (such as resilience and self-esteem); early recognition and prevention of behavioral or emotional difficulties, particularly in infancy and teenage years; provision of living and working settings that help self-determination and psychosocial development (particularly among susceptible people); enhancement of positive communications between and within social groups; anti-discrimination laws and campaigns; social protection for the poor; and promotion of opportunities, rights, and care of persons with mental illnesses [2]. Gender or social inequities and discrimination are examples of adversarial causes of mental complications. Likewise, a person's level of self-esteem could be heightened or reduced depending on social backing or financial safety at the family level, which in turn might be influenced by the degree of political steadiness, social fairness or commercial growth in a country [1]. Furthermore, the said link operates in the opposite direction; namely, the rate of mental illness is a significant interpreter of the rate of joblessness and poverty [45, 46]. Besides, lack of involvement in the life and activities of the native community in which persons and their kinfolds live can exert a negative influence on a person's health and on the human capital of the community [2]. Nonetheless, the mental health effects of a financial disaster can be counterbalanced by social welfare and other related strategies. For example, dynamic labor market programs intended for assisting persons to keep or to recover careers offset the mental health effects of monetary catastrophes. Likewise, family support programs, increasing alcohol prices, restricting alcohol availability, and debt relief programs can help to neutralize the mental health effects of financial disasters [47]. Anyhow, unemployment, poverty, and hunger, primarily, and worries about affordability of some of the basic requirements, like medical and educational services, are known public difficulties that can be found, more or less, in most countries around the world, disregard to their dominant political schemes. Though a form of political system may, importantly, influence the folk's socioeconomic status, social vulnerabilities are evident, relatively, everywhere, and their difference is usually proportional, not absolute. But why are the said weaknesses not eradicable, even in industrialized and wealthy nations?

While it is understandable that many of the unindustrialized nations, due to multiple reasons, mostly monetary causes and insufficient manufacturing, are not capable of solving basically the said problems, it is surprising why advanced countries, too, cannot resolve them, based on their remarkable resources, progressed technology, experienced staff, and financial capabilities. Maybe the reply is implied in the political economic outlook of leading executives and decision makers. Though previously the concept of political economy had often been ascribed to Marx and Marxist politicians, now it is classified according to the form of a dominant political and economic system; namely, a capitalistic, socialistic, and social democratic political economy. Moreover, after the inauguration of globalization, a new variety of political economy has been introduced, which is principally about integration of neoliberal profit-making formulations plus unnationalistic commercial collaboration; a pattern that is not out of the frame of transnational entrepreneurship and the worldwide free market. Nonetheless, over again, radical eradication of the aforesaid liabilities, except in a few countries, is not commonly tangible. Unexpectedly, in recent years and for a series of reasons, the fiscal problems have been intensified vigorously, which has deepened the existent socioeconomic gaps between deprived folks and rich people, or has created new kinds of gaps, bunches, or monopolies. Even countries with abundant reservoirs of raw materials, like gas, oil and petrochemicals, have massive budgetary problems and are incompetent with respect to filling the above-mentioned gaps or difficulties. While, formerly, unemployment was identified as one of the most important reasons as regards delinquencies or social susceptibilities, today many occupied people, as well, are disappointed with respect to their socioeconomic circumstances and ask for extra backup. Presently, in many of the developing countries, brain drain and movement of skilled workers [48], decreasing value of national currencies, monetary hyperinflation or mark-up price inflation, awkward privatization, and economic slump or recession, are among habituated conditions. Now another question arises. When a negligence or inept system distinguishes that ignoring the said problems may prepare the background for new threats or troubles, which may agitate the foundations of the associated regime over and over, then why it remains recurrently debilitated, especially when enough assets are available for momentary or perpetual reparation of some of the breaks? While, maybe, an underprivileged system has nothing to distribute among its inhabitants except scarcity, a wealthy administration is anticipated to act in a different way. If not, then there is something wrong with the administrators. What can be wrong, if there is no mafia, idiocy or intrigue? Maybe, the inflexibility of the socioeconomic problem is due to the weak standpoints of political figures regarding the apt national political economy. On the other hand, they don't know what they are working for, and why they are among officials, whether they have been selected democratically or chosen domineeringly. While political stability is an important prerequisite for economic development, social instability is a quandary that halts it. Therefore, disregard to dominant system, solving exposed breaks is mandatory if further development is a decided goal. Then why must the politicians be confused? Maybe, they have marginalized or ignored the masses; that is to say, they may have carried out their responsibilities very well, but, at the same time, they have overlooked that the desired development should be in the service of a society, not in the service of a specific social class or a group of elites. Every industrial or financial development is dependent on the labor of a large group of people, from different classes, and with different skills or means. The first task of every government is provision of suitable shelter and supplies for its residents to make them capable of working, coupling and reproduction; prerequisites which can keep a nation-state alive. It is not important how and in the frame of which political or economic schema these requirements are being delivered, because ignoring this fact, whether inadvertently or unwisely, can be equal to commencement of an annihilating process. History is full of such shortfalls, idiocies and dissolutions. Why should officials close their eyes

on people's condition? Because, similar to fascism [49], technocracy, as well, can turn into a one-sided and selfish philosophy and does not see anything except its own purposes. Consequently, it is the duty of political figures to change their domestic purposes in line with social circumstances, demands and challenges. According to some radical mottos, if development demands sacrifice, then its cost can be loaded on people, because they will be the final beneficiary of progress. But, if such a rationalization becomes a formal doctrine and never-ending guideline, this may hurt society, partly or entirely, momentarily or lastingly, due to juggernaut impacts of deranged development. Disregarding inhabitants and their livelihood by domestic governments is an unforgivable slip which can be comparable to a felony; like wrongdoing of a guardian, who does everything except that guarding. Basically and in the current epoch, governments are answerable with respect to their residents' safety and living. Though administrations may continue the said ignoring with no accountability, or with further incomprehensible and worthless explanations, they can recognize themselves responsible for further social turbulence, too. While economic growth is monetarily important, human capital, too, is not for free. Forgetting citizens by an ignorant system is a dishonest performance, which is comparable to forgetting defenseless offspring by ignorant parents, and so is misconduct which deserves legal persecution. A complete and sensible national political economy may lessen or prevent, effectively, such kinds of predictable social complications. Anyway, mental health complications are major contributors to the global illness burden, they are related to premature death and intense socioeconomic effects on people, and they cause remarkable expenses to the countrywide budget [50]. On the other hand, while mental health promotion and carefulness have been generally ignored when compared with levels of investment in care for somatic ailments, even where funding is reachable, access to and use of facilities may be poor. A combination of factors, like lack of empowerment within extremely susceptible people, stigmatization, misuse of individual human rights and unwillingness to change the accustomed style of distribution of assets have prolonged a situation in which the chance to prevent and improve mental health difficulties has until now, generally, been lost [50]. Accordingly, overcoming these challenges needs a multi-dimensional policy. Fiscal analysis of the cost-effectiveness of interferences can play a role in this scheme. Monetary study is also required of more general approaches to discuss risk factors for poor mental health, such as poverty and interrupted education. Maybe the main difference between mental illnesses and other health distresses is that the former is more often regarded as a low priority because they are supposed to be less lethal. In any case, although investment in mental health can cause financial and quality of life benefits, this is not a stress-free mission, because barriers to operative mental health care begin with barriers in traditional thoughts [50].

Conclusion:

Political economy can be accounted for as a kind of compromise between social, commercial and political challenges for modification of socioeconomic complications. No government, disregard to its form, can resolve the said problems without appealing to a clear program, which is goal-directed and has been organized honestly and nationally, for provision of citizens' sources of revenue and basic needs. Lack of systematized financial understanding among politicians may bring about unfair and corrupted economics, which may induce desperateness among overlooked inhabitants. No nation may survive without fairness, respect, care, optimism and fit mental health.

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