

Malnutrition And Forced Labour Conditions in Liquid Modernity

In his book *Liquid Modernity*, Zigmunt Bauman presents what is the chaotic continuation of modernity. Among its features is the human rights crisis. Malnutrition and forced labour conditions are two of the present problems regarding human rights. I believe that Bauman's theory can help us understand the causes of these problems and think of possible solutions.

The Universal Declaration of human rights states that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude. However, this is not fully respected. In the article "European governments oblivious to forced labour conditions, says report," we learn that nowadays there are up to 880,000 people being exploited in Europe.

As to malnutrition, the article 28 of the Universal Declaration of human rights states the right to food. Undernutrition remains, however, a major problem, especially among the child population of underdeveloped countries. A recent article, titled "Malnutrition identified as root cause of 3.1 million deaths among children," shows that undernourishment represents 45% of all the causes of death among children under the age of five.

The two problems I named above require a set of political, economic and social measures to be solved. Nevertheless, they remain unsolved due to the political and economic interests of liquid modernity. Addressing the problem of malnutrition involves political commitment, investment and long-term measures. Tackling the problem of forced labour conditions needs an agenda protecting workers; nowadays the agenda is unregulated, it favours low-cost production and blurs the line between bad treatment and forced labour. It is the governments that must take the appropriate decisions to face these problems, but it is also key to raise public awareness about them.

Bauman's theory accounts for these problems and the reason why they are not solved. Liquid modernity represents the continuous shift of our social position, the increase of uncertainty and consumer capitalism, the pursuit of instantaneous satisfaction and the focus on individualism. It is this extreme individualization of the human being that underpins the incapacity of society and governments to tackle the problems of malnutrition and forced

labour conditions. As a result, modern society is ignorant (consciously or unconsciously) of these problems.

I believe that the Polish sociologist describes modern society in a way that enlightens us on how we perceive the world. Because malnutrition and forced labour conditions are two of the major problems in the world, it becomes mandatory to foster awareness and create a long-term agenda about them. Only by doing this will we be able to address these problems appropriately.

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