

## ANALYSIS OF VACCINE BATTLE, INEQUALITIES AND COVAX PROGRAMME WITH DEPENDENCY THEORY

### AŞI SAVAŞI, EŞİTSİZLİKLER VE COVAX PROGRAMININ BAĞIMLILIK TEORISI BAĞLAMINDA İNCELENMESİ

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the “Vaccine Battle” and COVAX Programme at COVID-19 pandemic and possibility of using Dependency Theory as a tool for existing global inequalities and dependencies. Through this aim, this paper proposes main premises and theoretical bases of Dependency theory, beginning from its original and theoretical background established by Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Dos Santos and Prebisch. Following the theoretical discussion, the ongoing capitalist world order have been discussed. Finally, study intended to establish a correlation between dependency of 1960s Latin American Dependency School and COVAX programme, at which peripheral countries still remain dependent to core countries for accessing vaccines at COVID-19 pandemic.

Within that regard, this paper focused on Dependency Theory and its main arguments on dependency and unequal distribution among Core and Periphery countries. Therefore, methodological foundation is based on analysis on Dependency School and theoretical analysis of this theory and focusing on history of capitalism to provide an outlook for persisting global inequalities and COVID-19 pandemic is tried to be analysed through the lenses of Dependency school.

**Keywords:** Dependency, Inequality, Covid-19 Pandemic, COVAX Programme

#### ÖZET

Bu makale, COVID-19 pandemisinde “Aşı Savaşı” ve COVAX Programını ve Bağımlılık Teorisini mevcut küresel eşitsizlikler ve bağımlılıklar için bir araç olarak kullanma olasılığını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu makale, Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Dos Santos ve Prebisch tarafından kurulan özgün ve teorik arka planından başlayarak, Bağımlılık teorisinin ana öncüllerini ve teorik temellerini ortaya koymaktadır. Teorik tartışmanın ardından devam eden kapitalist dünya düzeni tartışılmaktadır. Son olarak, çalışma, 1960’ların Latin Amerika Bağımlılık Okulu’nun bağımlılığı ile çevre ülkelerin COVID-19 pandemisinde aşılarla erişmek için hala çekirdek ülkelere bağımlı kaldığı COVAX programı arasında bir ilişki kurmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, bu makale Bağımlılık Teorisi’ne ve Merkez ve Çevre ülkeler arasındaki bağımlılık ve eşitsiz dağılıma ilişkin temel argümanlarına odaklanmıştır. Bu nedenle metodolojik temel, Bağımlılık Okulu analizine ve bu teorisinin teorik analizine dayanmakta ve süregelen küresel eşitsizliklere bir bakış sağlamak için kapitalizm tarihine odaklanmakta ve COVID-19 salgını Bağımlılık Okulu merceklerinden analiz edilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bağımlılık, Eşitsizlik, COVID-19 Pandemisi, COVAX Programı

### 1. Introduction

The year 2020 has marked a mile stone for the whole globe and all countries regarding the dramatic fight against COVID- 19 Pandemic. While health care systems experiencing drastic burden over increasing case numbers day by day and numbers of losses have surpassed three millions of people by April 2021, the ‘urgent’ race against time towards vaccine development has become one and only solution for getting over the global crisis of the humanity.

Within that regard, SARS CoV, so –called COVID-19, virus has locked the whole World on Health Care systems capacity. A global lock down through March 2020 to June 2020, has influenced not only social lives of all people but also political and economic structures of nearly all countries. Thus,

since SARS CoV is named to be a virus spreading rapidly between human, its effects on political, economic and social structures are also contagious. Therefore, so called ‘Vaccine Wars’ have started rapidly by mid-2020 at countries, many of which are not surprisingly Western or developed countries. Success stories has started to get around by autumn 2020 and especially German, United States and United Kingdom have taken up the challenge and completed trials on different phases and declared their vaccines effectiveness over COVID-19 disease. From that time onwards, the whole World has plunged into ‘*Vaccine Battle*’ and the critical issue has aroused as to reach maximum amount of vaccines to provide maximum immunity among citizens.

At that point, the race for accessing vaccines has turned the pandemic into a wave of inequality, where the so called motto of pandemic, “*equality in front of Covid 19 virus*”, has been destructed. Wealthy, developed or ‘Core’ nations started to reserve billions of doses even before production of the Vaccines and inevitably inequality became more visible at that point. Many of the less developed or ‘Periphery’ African, South- East Asian, Western Pacific and Latin American countries did not have chance to get any dose from leading vaccine manufacturing countries. Chinese and Russian Vaccines are also declared as safe and effective and that make Vaccines available for a second group of populated countries. United States, Canada and all European Countries, together with European Union, have established bi-lateral agreements on supply of billions of doses even before production from leading Companies like Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Astra-Zeneca vaccines.

Many developing and populated countries like Turkey, Indonesia, Brazil and Indonesia have turned their way to Chinese or Russian vaccines called Sino vac, Corona vac or Sputnik V. Number of vaccine rollout has made a division among nations depending upon their economical welfare levels and created *vaccine apartheid* and In early February, the World Health Organization said nine-in-10 coronavirus vaccinations had been in richer countries<sup>1</sup>. Many debates started to rise around the problem of inequality among nations over vaccine supply and World Health Organization with partners CEPI<sup>2</sup> and GAVI<sup>3</sup> have established COVAX Programme with aims as declared;

*COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and WHO. Its aim is to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world.*<sup>4</sup>

Due to contagious nature of the COVID-19 disease, every human in the world should have access to the vaccine and be protected since no one wins the race unless everyone wins the race. Therefore, since world is again divided into parts of wealthy and suffering countries (high and low income countries), chance of low income and less developed countries to access to fair supply of vaccine has decreased. However, the necessity and the rush for vaccine and equal distribution of health care products and test kits to become available and accessible for everyone in the world, also bring the debates on dependency theory regarding “periphery” and “core” nations on their economic wealth and health care capacity to cope with the pandemic. The fact that high income or ‘core’ countries have reserved and provided available doses of Western-developed and manufactured vaccines, have brought the discussion of unequal and capitalist nature of the nations and world political system to the forefront. Thus, narrating one of the pioneering theories of capitalist unequal distribution over economic resources, raw materials and productions, through *Dependency Theory*, predominantly focusing on Latin American Nations, provide a significant grasping of the issue over competing

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/17/covid-19-vaccinations-in-europe-which-countries-are-leading-the-way>

<sup>2</sup> CEPI is a innovative global partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil society organisations. We're working together to accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and enable equitable access to these vaccines for people during outbreaks. <https://cepi.net/about/whoweare/>

<sup>3</sup> Gavi's impact draws on the strengths of its core partners, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and plays a critical role in strengthening primary health care (PHC), bringing us closer to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), ensuring that no one is left behind. <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/about>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax>

countries over “vaccine supply”. Within that framework presented above, this paper intends to analyse the possibility of using Dependency theory as a tool for examining the COVAX programme and vaccine battle among countries at COVID-19 pandemic regarding persisting global inequalities and interdependence.

## 2. Dependency Theory and Its Historical Legacy

Dependency theory originated from Marxist legacy, mainly derives from the concept of exploitation of the Less Developed Countries of the “periphery”, by Developed countries of the “core”. For a detailed description; dependency can be defined as *a form of unequal international relationship between two sets of countries*. Marx by examining British capitalism as a world-polarising and ever-expanding system, developed a systematic analysis of British ‘free-trade imperialism’ and the general law of capitalist accumulation has to be understood as a law of capital accumulation on a world scale and, as the state maintains a fundamental role in this process, of imperialism (Pradella, 2013 :119).

Paul Baran as a prominent scholar in dependency theory has developed dependency theory first at 1957 at *Political Economy of Growth* on capitalistic features of the developed “core” over peripheral features of Latin America and following Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Theotonio dos Santos have contributed to the theory on different aspects. Dos Santos defined dependency as;

*[Dependency is]...an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected (Dos Santos, 1971 : 226).*

Although different scholars focused on different theoretical aspects, general consensus among dependency theorists was that the process of global capitalist expansion generated development in its core locations (Western Europe, North America and Japan) and underdevelopment (poverty) in its periphery locations (Africa, Asia and Latin America) (Tapia, 2017:86). Frank claims that; Historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries’ (Frank 1966: 28). Frank, discusses the “capitalist” influence on underdevelopment of the periphery nations as follows;

*..historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole (Frank, 1972 quoted in Ferraro 2008, 59).*

The distinction between core and periphery, are closely related to the development or underdevelopment theories, which focused on the lack of self-sustaining economic growth and continued low living standards in the periphery despite the arrival of the political independence (Blaney, 1996:460). Periphery states are left to be producers and suppliers of primary commodities for international trade of core states. However, this exchange in international trade is mainly based on unequal exchange. Prebisch was the first scholar to conceptualize the notions of centre and periphery based on unequal exchange and trade.

*His basic argument was that trade cycles affected primary goods exporters and manufactured goods exporters differently, because of the different economic structures in the two groups of countries. The center, characterized by a greater rate of technological innovation, well organized powerful labour unions and oligopolistic markets, experience smaller amounts of decline in her export prices in a cyclical downturn than the periphery, which lacks all these characteristics. Thus the workers of the centre are able to absorb real economic gains during*

*the upswing and keep a stable portion of the gains during the downswing, thanks to institutionally downward sticky wages. Workers of the periphery, on the contrary experience most of the system's income contraction. (Birkan, 2015: 157).*

Unequal exchange between core and periphery, defined as the disparity between North and South by non-Marxist scholars of dependency school as Mahbub ul Haq and Raul Prebisch. On the other hand, André Gunder Frank, Theotino dos Santos and Immanuel Wallerstein's views on dependency reflect a Marxist explanation.

For Haq, the era of colonialism exacerbated the disparities between the rich and the poor countries by placing the rich countries of the North in the centre of the world and the poor countries of the South at the periphery, supplying raw materials to the North (Agbebi, Virtanen; 2017:432). Another non-Marxist explanation from Raul Prebisch, different from Haq's explanation on historical colonialism established and paid much attention on Western Industrialisation. Prebisch argued that the rapid industrialisation of the North as well as export competitiveness created a divide between the global North and South resulting in declining terms of trade for the South and eventually dependency of the South on the North (Agbebi, Virtanen; 2017:433).

Monopolies and exploitation can be defined as main characteristics of capitalist world system. Periphery is exploited by the centre and surplus extracted in the periphery and accumulated in the centre. Transfer of surplus to the centre from the periphery is provided by international trade instruments like organization of production, subcontracting and dependent state structures. In this context one of the mechanisms that lead to the development and persistence of underdevelopment is unequal exchange in international trade (Birkan, 2015: 157). Thus, unequal exchange, in a system where surplus value is differently established, create wage differentials and inequality of wages as such, all other things being equal, is alone the cause of the inequality of exchange and periphery is exploited by the centre; more precisely as the working class of the centre, who are the basic consumers of peripheral goods, exploiting the fellow workers of the periphery (Birkan, 2015: 159).

*Although the logic and impact of the nature of the relationship between centre and peripheral countries, or the impact of external factors – yet these factors, though predominant, were not all alone in operation. There were internal factors that operated inside the peripheral country, and they added to a stronger dependence as they had an important grip on the economy, the society and the polity, and used it to their own and the centre countries benefits. These internal factors were basically structural in nature; they related to class structure and relations, vested interest groupings, institutions designed to serve the powerful, the rich and the influential (Sayigh, 1991).*

Discussion through dependency, also illustrate that external political and economic influences that also affect cultural and social aspects. Moreover, dependence can be seen more than dependence in trade or fiscal matters, dependence also covers political, cultural and technological aspects in a country. All these affects are rooted in a deep historical process closely related with the history of capitalism. Therefore, debates on exploitation and interference of the developed/core over periphery/underdeveloped are closely related to development and ongoing process of capitalism and its new forms. Although, dependency theory originally designed to examine the process of underdevelopment regarding North American nations, its scope has extended to comprise a general theory of discussion on dependency of underdeveloped nations all over the world and its connections to the developed/core states' process of development.

*The distinction between underdevelopment and undevelopment places the poorer countries of the world in a profoundly different historical context. These countries are not "behind" or "catching up" to the richer countries of the world. They are not poor because they lagged behind the scientific transformations or the Enlightenment values of the European states. They are poor because they were coercively integrated into the European economic system only as producers of raw materials or to serve as repositories of cheap labour, and were denied the*



*opportunity to market their resources in any way that competed with dominant states (Ferraro, 2008:62).*

As presented above, exploitation of the periphery based on inequality of wages, re-create more development gaps on every aspects of life at periphery countries. Since surplus and raw materials are transferred on favour of core development, periphery is left to be “supplier” of the development for certain ‘core states’. These arguments on inequality or unequal exchange in trade and all goods and services, mainly aforementioned the 1960s Latin America states’ underdevelopment discussions and moreover, this model of dependency was also used to explain many different “underdevelopment case studies” of other states at that time. Within that regard, Gülalp, argue that nationalism was a catalyst to spread the idea of independence for ‘*The Third World*’ and nationalism played a critical role to spark industrialisation in many colonised nations and fuelled the nationalist movements in the post-war period and nationalist writing in many parts of the world during this period anticipated the so-called Latin American dependency theory (Gülalp, 1998: 953).

The paradigmatic shift provided by “The World Systems Theory” has decreased significance of dependency theory by 1970s and 1980s and Wallerstein have brought another perspective to Dependency Theory. The new focus was on a system rather than single nations, defending the idea that national units could not easily escape from capitalism and hence their revolutionary efforts for independence and socialism were in vain (Gülalp, 1998:956). From that time on, the idea of nation-states to reach goals on sustainable economic growth, full employment and welfare for citizens through social welfare policies individually, have been abandoned. The new era was Eurocentric notion of development where Europe or West development model was taken as “Unique” model. Thus, capitalism and its bonds have fostered its scope and it was nearly implausible to discuss a single development theory of a nation, without taken into account its international trade and connections and supranational actors interference in states’ politics and economies. Through 20<sup>th</sup> and more at 21<sup>th</sup> century, international dependency of periphery or say it “Underdeveloped” countries and control over natural and social resources have changed its appearance but have never diminished. Therefore, so-called “dependency” have come into existence in different forms in changing world order.

Although there have been criticisms that dependency theory, like modernization theory, is ethnocentric and leads to generalizations without considering specific and unique conditions of countries and their histories, dependency theory can still be used as a tool for global inequalities. Farny shares the same idea and argues that;

*The problem of these categorizations is that they are inherently ethnocentric because the “Periphery” or the “South” is characterized by socioeconomic and political backwardness, measured against Western values and standards and this simply should not be ignored (Farny, 2016).*

To cope with that criticism against generalization, Farny quotes from Randall, ,

*...it seems to be useful to lump countries that have a shared experience of colonization and economic dependence into one single category in order to explain global inequalities. But in an increasingly globalized world, challenging the question of global inequality based on arguments that rely on neocolonialism and economic dependency becomes difficult to sustain (Randall 2004, p. 42).*

After the end of Cold War and collapse of Soviet Union, the World has encountered great changes in economic, political and social aspects of life. Liberalism after the Cold War era and emergence of free market have created new establishments and new integration trends for so-called ex-Soviet Countries to integrate with European Union. In fact, separation from Communist bloc did not mean fully independence, on the contrary, a new era of interdependence and a new version of integration

to the core in European Unions' eastward and southward enlargement have been realized. Thus, to cope with centre-periphery asymmetrical relationships and to overcome inequality is not an easy task and system of neo-liberalism creates new versions of interdependence. Therefore, further integration rather than separation and access to the benefits of globalization have been unevenly distributed and has fostered global inequalities along North-South divide (Farny, 2016). In addition, due to persistent forms of dependency through trade relations, foreign direct investments and development aid, it is possible to argue that the standing of less developed countries or periphery on the global economic stage was still characterized by dependence on the Global North or core developed countries (Farny, 2016).

### 3. Vaccine Battle. COVAX and Remembering Dependency

The pandemic that dramatically changed and locked down nearly all countries and economies starting from March 2020, has brought so many problems to the fore front for every country. On the one hand, Covid-19 pandemic and its burden on mainly health care workers, losses and on the other hand, the rush for providing newly-developed vaccines constituted most significant aspects for many countries through Autumn 2020. At that point, inevitably, economic and political capacities of every country became more significant and new concepts have arisen out of that struggle for vaccine supply. "Vaccine Nationalism", is one of the most commonly pronounced one in which rich countries bid against each other to secure bilateral contracts with vaccine manufacturers and stockpile vaccine doses for their own citizens (Kupferschmidt, 2020). In order to prevent hoarding vaccine doses for highly- income countries and providing crucial doses for those countries that cannot afford any doses for their citizens, have constituted the idea of establishing a fair distribution programme for vaccines through Covax programme. Led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the WHO, it was designed to reduce the risk of 'vaccine nationalism' and grant access to countries who do not have the fiscal or political means to secure bilateral or multilateral agreements with vaccine manufacturers (Sharma et.al 2021: 2).

COVAX Programme was launched with World Health Organization, France and European Commission to establish a consortium together with governments, scientists, civil society organizations, manufacturers of vaccines and diagnostics. The COVAX is a pillar of Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) and it is focused on providing global solution to COVID-19 pandemic with an effort to ensure that people in all corners of the World will get Access to COVID<sup>5</sup>. Within that regard, COVAX aims to deliver around two billion doses of vaccines to provide vaccine protection to vulnerable people under high risk and health care workers at 92 countries located at six different regions in the world. These countries can be defined as lower- income or middle income countries at Africa, Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South- East Asia and Western Pacific regions. Some of the countries can be listed as, African Region countries like; Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Namibia, South Sudan, Zambia, Americas countries as, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Peru, Eastern Mediterranean Countries as, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, West Bank and Gaza, Yemen, European Countries as, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, South-East Asia countries As Indonesia, Nepal and Western Pacific Countries like, Cambodia, Fiji, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea.

At COVAX programme, two ways of participation have been declared for two contrary group of countries, Highly Income Countries or "Core" Countries as 'self-financing' countries and Low Income Countries or "Periphery Countries. Core countries, by joining COVAX, commit to procure enough doses from the facility to vaccinate 10%–50% of their populations and also make an upfront payment to support vaccine development and manufacturing. The amount they pay is a reflection of the number of doses they want. These upfront contributions will support the facility to enter into agreements with vaccine manufacturers to secure future vaccine doses for participating countries.<sup>7</sup> For low income 'funded' countries, way of participation is ensured as, with their financial

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/covax-explained>

commitments covered by official development assistance (ODA). Within COVAX, a financing mechanism called the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) will be used to raise funds, mostly ODA, to pay for vaccine supply to these funded countries (Mc Adams et al. 2020).

Through official aims of COVAX, vaccine roll out is planned to be extended to whole globe, since low income countries have two barriers for accessing COVID diagnostics and vaccines. First one is inevitably, economic capacities of these so called low- income or Peripheral countries, that does not allow to provide opportunities for mass vaccination. Second and most significant than the first barrier is the High Income Countries' vaccine hoarding and blockage over vaccine supply even for the next years. These barriers and additional problems in vaccine manufacturing and supply process made it difficult to urgently access vaccines.

The anticipated level for vaccination is estimated as at least % 20 of the population in each country to be vaccinated, to secure vulnerable people at high- risk age groups and health care workers. WHO and COVAX initiatives focus on a model of proportional allocation in an effective and fair way, for those countries that do not have any access to any doses. Within that regard, programme intends to ensure that each of the more than 170 countries participating in COVAX would receive some vaccine in the initial phase of distribution—first for 3% of their population, with priority to health personnel, then for 20% of their population, with priority to high risk groups—regardless of their ability to pay (Herzog et al. 2021). With proportional allocation model, it is aimed to prevent unregulated market conditions, where battle for vaccines can be defined as unethical since “vaccine nationalism” rise in high income / “core” countries of paramount significance.

European Commission as a partner COVAX programme declared clear support for vaccine allocation to low income countries, since pandemic hit the world as a whole and solution could not be provided in individual countries. Thus, European Commission and COVAX vaccine delivery team, Team Europe have officially declared that ; From huge India (10M doses) to tiny Fiji (12K doses), from Africa to South East Asia, without forgetting Latin America or the EU's eastern and southern neighbourhood countries, COVAX vaccines flights will have delivered<sup>6</sup> the first shipments to around 60 countries worldwide by the end of March.<sup>7</sup> For reaching these targets on race for vaccine and safety for everyone, deliveries have started by March 2021, at which Ghana has received 600.000 doses of vaccines. Following first deliveries of vaccines COVAX have officially declared<sup>8</sup> that COVAX so far shipped over 40.5 million COVID-19 vaccines to 118 participants. These shipments have reached 71 countries at six regions, for instance Brazil received 1.022.000 doses of Astra Zeneca (AZ) vaccines (by March 21, 2021), Peru received 276.000 AZ and 117.00 doses of Pfizer BioNTech (PBT), Iran received 700.800 AZ doses, Iraq received 336.000 AZ doses, Libya received 58.000 AZ doses, Serbia received 576.000 AZ doses, Ukraine received 117.000 PBT doses of COVID-19 vaccines<sup>9</sup>.

Although numbers displayed above present an explicit intention of International Collaboration for a global crisis, the wave of “share and equity” have turned to a negative direction since European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen declared, the “lack of capacity for EU to share its vaccine stocks with poorer countries” at 21 March, 2021. President blaming Astra Zeneca, as a major manufacturer for European vaccine supply, for delay in vaccine production and lack of promised doses are presented as giving up vaccine support for “poorer countries”. In addition, vaccine nationalism is officially mentioned through European citizenship as a whole, with statements of the

<sup>6</sup>The COVAX mechanism, a global collaboration to which the EU is a major contributor, will deliver 32 million doses to 59 countries by the first quarter of 2021, and aims to secure 1.3 billion doses for 92 low and middle-income countries by the end of the year.

<sup>7</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/95712/team-europe-delivers-first-wave-covax-funded-vaccine-shipments-worldwide-channel-way-out\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/95712/team-europe-delivers-first-wave-covax-funded-vaccine-shipments-worldwide-channel-way-out_en)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility> (Date of Access: 22.04.2021)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gavi.org/covax-vaccine-roll-out> (Date of Access: 22.04.2021)

President as: *"I can't explain to European citizens why we are exporting millions of vaccine doses to countries that are producing vaccines themselves and aren't sending us anything back,"*.<sup>10</sup>

Leyen's statement has many significant aspects to highlight, regarding *Europeanness*, as an identity uniting European Union citizens or EU governments together and excluding outsiders of the Union with that discourse. The European Union is pronounced as "we" and unity among that Supranational body represent the identity of Europeanness. Leyen's other statement as *"There is quite a bit of pressure on member states to obtain the vaccine for themselves,"* also exhibits that pressure on member states comes from European citizens to their governments and vaccine nationalism expands to "vaccine regionalism", since European Union acts as a single body at COVAX programme. Thus, Eurocentric tone of Europeanness can be grasped from European Commissions' official statements regarding vaccine supply and reversal of the EU's earlier promises for COVAX support. At this point, although successful deliveries to nearly 71 countries and over 40 million of doses of vaccine supply, the sustainability of COVAX programme seems problematic since each country acts on behalf of their own and national interests for the sake of protecting their citizens. At that point, "vaccine nationalism" can be fostered on behalf of Europeanness or any other regionalism/ nationalism of any other national identity and inequality between countries for sharing their resources including all kinds of Covid diagnostics and vaccines, become more visible. Sharma et al claims the same risk of sustainability for COVAX as; "Given the self-interested nature of states, it is unlikely they would partake in the facility if they did not have access to vaccines during the first allocation round, thereby likely resulting in the collapse of the COVAX facility" (Sharma et al. 2021).

Given the fact that countries inevitably act depending on their self- interests and dependency still persists on core and periphery distinction, which can be also defined as a socio-economic classification, equal share, international collaboration and humanitarian aspects of politics and economics will always be of secondary importance. Possibility of getting rid of that dependency of periphery to the core or South to the North does not seem plausible in a world of fostering dependencies on varying scarce resources, like vaccine battle in COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4. Conclusion

As a result of the discussion of dependency theory, its premises, criticisms and its changing forms in a more global and more dependent world, illustrate that albeit its deficits on explaining unique conditions in countries and over generalizations, dependency theory still is thought to be an appropriate tool for 'still' existing global inequalities. Within that regard, changing forms of dependency, as experienced after the end of Cold-War, and increasing enthusiasm of former Communist bloc to integrate to European Union, display that dependency theory and its main premises can still be observed even in different international relationships.

Depending on that possibility to use dependency theory to explain new forms of inequalities, this paper intended to discuss and revisit dependency on COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine battle in that global crisis. Due to economic and political capacities of countries, the rush for vaccine hoarding has constituted the main debate for COVID-19 vaccination among countries. Inevitably, developed countries of the core or centre had the opportunity to reserve doses for their populations even for the upcoming years and started very rapid vaccination programs and reached to high levels of vaccination in proportion to their populations, to cope with the new waves of the pandemic. On the contrary, many periphery countries in Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia, Western Pacific, Africa and Latin America did not have any chance to get any doses of vaccines even at least for their high-risk groups and frontline health care workers. For that reason, COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and WHO aimed to accelerate the development and

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-eu-not-ready-to-share-covid-vaccines-with-poorer-countries/a-56944274>  
(Date of Access: 22.04.2021)



manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines and fair distribution of vaccines for periphery countries as mentioned above. Since, COVAX officially declared for at least providing enough doses of vaccines for at least %3 of the low income countries, organization have started the deliveries to 71 countries and 6 regions. By this way, many low income countries have reached their first doses of vaccination. Due to contagious nature of the SARS CoV virus, the whole world is should fight together to manufacture vaccines and diagnostics to stop the spread. Therefore, pandemic made dependency of low income, periphery, countries over high income, core, countries more visible.

Through COVAX programme, high income countries along with European Union have dominated the vaccine market and lead its way for benefits of core countries. Since vaccine manufacturers have failed to meet its promises to supply vaccines for high income countries and European Union, shortages of vaccines have eroded the capacity of COVAX programme to meet its aims. European Unions' official declaration regarding "inability of the Union for COVAX programme and problems for explaining the idea behind "vaccine sharing" to European citizens, as declared by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, has made "vaccine nationalism" expand to "Vaccine regionalism". That shift from fair allocation of vaccines to reserving upcoming doses to European citizens has made it more clear that dependency has never diminishes but it gets new forms. Dependency theory, although designed for unequal distribution among core vs. periphery states by 1960s, has still many corresponding points with fostering inequality among core vs. periphery countries at a more globalized world. In addition, COVID-19 pandemic has also increased dependency of low income peripheral countries over core countries for accessing COVID diagnostics and vaccines, since lockdowns and high number of deaths have dramatically hit the whole world and each country should provide rapid solutions to the most destructive crisis of the world in the 21th century.

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