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eoliberalisation in Turkey and in the UK – A Critical Perspective

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Abstract

This paper provides a detailed account of neoliberalism as a “particular organisation of capitalism”. It aims at a modest contribution to the discussion of the conceptual background and historical development of neoliberalism, focusing not only on its economic outcomes but also its social, cultural and ideological effects. This paper shows that there is no single neoliberalism but there are variegated-hybrid forms of it; hence it stresses the “socially and spatially differentiated character” of neoliberalisation. This study also draws interesting parallels between the neoliberalism experiences of UK and Turkey through a comparative historical analysis. Here the political and discursive similarities between Thatcherism and Özalism, in terms of their authoritarian and populist characteristics, draws special attention. As a conclusion, this paper introduces moral economy, with reference to Andrew Sayer, as an alternative point of view. Moral economy, this paper argues, provides a theoretical and ethical ground on which the hegemonic neoliberal premises of our time could be questioned and criticised.

Keywords

Neoliberalisation, variegated neoliberalism, Thatcherism, Özalism, moral economy.

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Introduction

Neoliberalism has been a part of both academic and political vocabulary since the late 1970s. This article aims at a modest contribution to the literature on neoliberalism, emphasising its variegated nature. In other words, the article attempts to discuss neoliberalism not as “a unified social (or state) structure” but stresses the processes of neoliberalisation instead, as “the constitutively uneven, institutionally hybrid and chronically unstable” forms of regulatory transformation (Peck, *et al.* 2012, 268). Peck, Theodore and Brenner argue in a recent article (2012, 269), that the process(es) of neoliberalisation represents “a historically specific, unevenly developed, hybrid, patterned tendency of market-disciplinary regulatory restructuring”. The argument follows that even though neoliberalisation “produces geoinstitutional differentiation across places, territories and states, it does this systematically, as a pervasive, endemic feature of its basic operational logic”. What should be added to this sophisticated understanding of neoliberalism is that these processes of neoliberalisation are shaped through diverse and multi-levelled social struggles and represents more than regulatory restructuring as they involve political, social, cultural and ideological transformations, which are again spatially and temporally differentiated and hybrid but remains closely related with the systemic and pervasive operational logic of neoliberalism that Peck, Theodore and Brenner underline.

Adopting their emphasis on the geographically and institutionally differentiated character of neoliberalisation, this study aims at different manifestations of its operational logic through a comparative analysis of the processes of neoliberalisation in the UK and in Turkey, focusing on the historical period between 1980 and 2002. The AKP (Justice and Development Party) period in Turkey requires a much deeper analysis which is beyond the limits and aims of this article, as does the post-Blair period of the Labour Party power in the UK and the Tory government that follows. Hence the article limits itself with a time frame that is useful to show the economic, social and cultural impacts of neoliberalisation and with a discussion of the initial policies of the Labour Party in the UK and AKP in Turkey. It also contributes to the discussion on the “alternatives to neoliberalism”, introducing the concept of moral economy is developed by E.P Thompson and used by social movements resisting neoliberalisation as well as scholars who work on the issue. In this article, I take Andrew Sayer’s contemporary interpretation of moral economy as a basis to criticise and transform neoliberalism.

Setting the Frame: Neoliberalism as a Historically Specific Organisation of Capitalism

Defining neoliberalism is not easy as it is a complex phenomenon with economic, political, ideological and cultural dimensions. To reduce neoliberalism to an economic theory and strategy would conceal its profound social and political effects that are transforming entire social formations in complex ways. Thus, instead of defining neoliberalism in a limited manner, we should develop a more comprehensive understanding that conceives it as a prospective social order, a hegemonic system based on a specific understanding of the world (Duménil and Lévy 2005).

Neoliberalism emerged as a reaction to the crises of Keynesian welfare national states in the advanced capitalist countries (particularly in the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) and gradually became a global phenomenon affecting, directly or indirectly, most other countries. What makes neoliberalism a pervasive global phenomenon is not

only its direct impact in social formations in which it is adopted and more or less actively pursued by capital and/or the state (whether or not this pursuit secures active popular consent or is imposed upon the subordinate classes and the population), but also its broader repercussions in creating, reinforcing, and institutionalising neoliberal rules of the game through the logic of the world market under threat of exclusion. "Either adjustment or exclusion" is the neoliberal motto of our epoch.

The post-war period in advanced capitalist economies is often characterised as based on the expansion of Atlantic Fordism and its associated state form, i.e., the Keynesian welfare national state¹. The basic features of the Keynesian welfare national state were the state's steering of the economy through either direct or indirect mechanisms, construction of systems of welfare provision through a mixture of collective consumption financed by the state and individual state-sponsored social insurance for the purposes of public health, education, housing, pensions, and unemployment. This economic-social organisation of capitalism in the advanced economies worked well during "les trente glorieuses" from post-war reconstruction through to the mid-1970s. Fordist economies managed to improve their productive capacity and profitability while maintaining a compromise with the working class on the basis of continuously increasing living conditions, development of the welfare system and low unemployment rates. And export-oriented economies, while they had less well-developed and often dualist welfare systems, did, at least benefit, from increasing prosperity even though export success often rested on the repression of organised labour and restrictions on democracy.

However, the 'Keynesian compromise' began to decompose in the first half of 1970s. The collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates in 1971 was the first serious signal indicating the downturn of the system. As Lapavistas argues (2005), the crises following the first oil shock of 1973-74 could be seen as the end of Keynesianism and post-war international institutional arrangements as the basis for a global order. The mid-to-late 1970's were lived as a period of crises especially in the western world. Inflation and unemployment increased in a serious manner — producing the unique phenomenon of stagflation — while the rates of profitability and growth tended to fall. The golden years of capitalism were coming to an end and it took just a few years before there was widespread acceptance of the argument that capitalism could no longer afford the 'burdens' of the Keynesian compromise.

Neoliberalism was one of the responses to the crisis of Atlantic Fordism and the Keynesian welfare national state and it proposed an entirely different organisation of capitalism². The main ideas of the Austrian School and, especially, Friedrich von Hayek, which were developed in the 1930s and 1940s, were taken over by the Chicago School and re-shaped

¹ John Maynard Keynes is a British economist who developed a new macroeconomic theoretical and policy paradigm in response to the context of the Great Depression. Overturning key tenets of mainstream economic theory at the time, Keynes argued that aggregate supply tends to exceed aggregate demand in free market conditions with the crises emerging tendentially from the imbalance between (over-) production and (under-)consumption (cf. Lapavistas 2005). On this basis, he recommended that the state achieve stable economic growth through counter-cyclical economic policies to secure full employment levels of demand.

within a monetarist perspective primarily by Milton Friedman in the 1970s. Monetarism conceived stagflation, which was the novel form of economic crises during the 1970s, as a monetary phenomenon and proposed the restriction of the growth of the money supply in order to prevent inflation (Lapavitsas 2005). This monetarist revival of economic liberalism, which became an important plank of roll-back neoliberalism (see below), was influential among right-wing political circles, business organisations, think-tanks and academic orthodoxy during the crises of the 1970s and 1980s. The neoliberal prescription of non-interventionism came to be seen as the only way to break out from the prevailing structural crises, as crystallised in stagflation, increasing taxation, the legitimacy crises of the state, the disorientation of party politics, and the rise of new social movements campaigning against the crisis-prone features of post-war capitalism, the Keynesian welfare national state, and the wider social order.

Neoliberals initially demanded a re-organisation of state-society and state-market relations on the basis of free market rationality. Prevailing forms of economic regulation and social protection were conceived as obstacles preventing the full functioning of the free market economy. Thus, all the basic premises of the Keynesian welfare national state on state intervention, income distribution, employment determination and welfare provision were rejected and, where neoliberal policies were pursued, all social relations were progressively exposed to the logic of free market. The election victories of Thatcher in the UK and Reagan in the USA signalled a rupture in terms of the official embodiment of neoliberalism. As underlined by Peck and Tickell (2002), these electoral victories signalled the transition in neoliberalism from being an abstract intellectual project to one promoted by specific states. This transformation was realised through complex social struggles. In this sense, the rise of neoliberalism as a social phenomenon designates the changing balance of forces in the post-1980 era. Whilst the Keynesian welfare state rested on and symbolised a kind of compromise between working class and capital (especially industrial capital oriented to domestic markets) in a social environment in which the working class was well organised to pursue its immediate economic-corporate and political interests within the logic of the market and electoral politics, the neoliberal era involves the breakdown of the compromise in favour of capital and a concerted effort to reduce the power of working class organisations, to fragment the working class more generally, and to undermine class-based politics in general.

This attack on the rights of the working class and its power over the social-political system in general, is closely related to the changing accumulation strategy. In the Keynesian

The key instruments for this, at least as far as the liberal economist was concerned, would be monetary and fiscal policies, allowing market forces to work within the resulting macroeconomic parameters.

² Neoliberal ideas were not new. In fact, the Austrian School-especially its primary figure Friedrich von Hayek-began to criticise Keynesian state interventionism, together with Soviet socialism, immediately after the Second World War. Hayek revived and adapted neo-classical economics (giving more weight to the epistemic functions of markets) and praised the role of free markets and the rule of law as twin sources of economic development and individual freedom. In turn, state interventionism, in all its forms, was accused of creating inefficiency and injustice through monopolisation, its bias towards vested interests, and corruption. Conversely, the free market was presented as a self-regulating mechanism of economic development, individual freedom, collective learning, and social justice and should not be disturbed by any other external mechanism.

period the economic-corporate interest of the working class was compatible with rising profits — for rising wages within a relatively closed national economy were conducive to rising demand and rising profits. Conversely, in a neoliberal era, under the competitive pressures of the global market, wages began to be treated as a cost of production rather than a source of domestic demand (Jessop 2006). This change of accumulation strategy was not disconnected from the social-political struggles of the period. The regression of left-working class forces within the social-political struggles and the rise of neoliberal strategy mutually reinforced each other within the historical conjuncture of the late 1970s and 1980s. Thus, the victories of Thatcher and Reagan, and neoliberalism in general, could be seen as a product of social struggles of the post-war era, which witnessed the defeat of the working class.

Thatcher and Reagan applied rigid monetarist policies to overcome the stagflationary crises and to maintain macro economic stability. Their simple formula, which would be exported to other parts of the globe throughout the 1980s and 1990s, was full application of strict monetary policies, removal of obstacles preventing free movements of capital, goods and services, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, cuts in public expenditure, gradual elimination of welfare provisions and employment protections, deregulation of the labour market. These neoliberal policies were not simply about economics; on the contrary, they sought to transform the entire social and political formation. In this sense, it was not surprising for neoliberal governments of the USA and the UK to present trade unions as a source of instability and to attack the labour movement. Neoliberalism is not an economic theory solely concerned with macroeconomic stability; it is a comprehensive social project that aims to re-organise social relations in favour of capital in general in economic, social, political and ideological sense. In the words of Saad-Filho and Johnston it is “a particular organisation of capitalism which has evolved to protect capital(ism) and to reduce the power of labour” (2005, 3).

Variegated Neoliberalism

Despite having certain common characteristics, the process of neoliberalisation has been realised in different ways in different parts of the world. Since capitalism itself “is a relatively unified but unevenly developed and polymorphic” system (Peck and Theodore 2007, 732), neoliberalism emerged in different forms within the very polymorphy of global capitalism. We can distinguish different forms and degrees of neoliberalisation, referring to Jessop (2002), in terms of neoliberal regime shift, neoliberal policy adjustment and neoliberal system transformation. Neoliberal regime shift reflects a paradigm shift in accumulation and regulation regimes and the introduction of new (neoliberal) economic and political principles. The USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand experiences illustrate the neoliberal regime shift. Neoliberal policy adjustment involves adaptation of certain neoliberal policies to improve economic performance in line with the new circumstances but aims to maintain, as far as possible, the prevailing mode of growth and mode of regulation. We could see different examples of neoliberal policy adjustment in coordinated economies including the Rhenish cases and Scandinavian economies. Neoliberal system transformation, on the other hand, involves the pursuit of neoliberalism as a strategy in the transition from state socialism to capitalism. This mode of neoliberalisation, which has

been experienced in post-socialist Eastern and Central European economies, illustrated the most brutal face of neoliberalism with severe effects on the living conditions of the people (Jessop 2002).

While trying to make generalisations about the “socially and spatially differentiated character” of neoliberalisation by distinguishing certain forms, we should keep in mind that there are intermediate positions between those forms, nuances that could not be analysed through them. In this sense, the approach of Peck and Theodore (2007), which offers the term *variegation* (as a response to the limitations of varieties of capitalism approach) as a relational conception of variety, should be considered. This approach of *variegation* directs attention to deeper forms of geographical differentiation and spatial dynamics, to variegated hybrid forms of neoliberalisation and to dynamic polymorphism of capitalism in general shaped by its uneven and combined development (Peck and Theodore 2007).

Thus, as long as neoliberalism exists in variegated-hybrid forms, the analysis should focus on the historical analysis of specific cases of neoliberalisation. As long as forms of neoliberalisation vary, the effects of the process will change from country to country, and from region to region. Although neoliberalism has made a negative impact on general economic performance and the living conditions of the people throughout the globe in terms of declining economic growth rates, rising unemployment and widening income inequality in comparison with the previous period (Palley 2005; Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005), the real sufferers of neoliberalism have been the periphery. As Duménil and Lévy state “the further a country was from the centre, the more damaging was its transition toward neoliberalism” (2005, 17). The typical neoliberal recipe imposed on peripheral countries resulted in consecutive financial crises, a considerable increase in unemployment and debt, and decrease in living standards. In 2000, the debt of the peripheral countries was four times larger than in 1980 (Duménil and Lévy 2005, 17). This rising debt also acts as an anchor ensuring the loyalty of those countries to neoliberal strategy by preventing them from pursuing independent development strategies.

Besides raising inequality, unemployment and poverty, and leading commodification of previously non-marketised services and resources, political access of the people in decision-making processes has been progressively reduced with decision-making in key issues transferred to supranational bodies that generally function beyond democratic-popular access. Politics ceased to be a process based on the collective participation of citizens, but instead proved to be an instrument in the service of economic requirements, a complementary mechanism that would ensure the necessary legal and institutional adjustments. “The dominant mode of political imagination become technical know-how as technocrats replaced the politicians” as Cizre and Yeldan state (2005, 400). Since the adversaries of neoliberalism have been marginalised and since acceptance of the “rules of the game” has become the legitimate grounds of mainstream politics, real political differences have disappeared and the political discussion reduced to the personal

³ See Crouch (2004) and Dean (2009) for the discussion of 'post-democracy' and 'post-politics' and see Ranciere (2006a) and (2006b) for a more philosophical approach.

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qualifications and charisma of politicians. This condition is depicted by concepts such as 'post-democracy' or 'post-politics'³.

Neoliberalism has also shaped the realm of ideas, ideology and meaning making. As Harvey notes (2005, 3), the basic premises of neoliberalism have become “incorporated into the common sense way many of us interpret, live in and understand the world”. Neoliberal ideology and discourse has become so widespread that it appears to lose its ideological character. As Fairclough (2001) underlines, this effect of obviousness created through the incorporation of the discourse into the common sense is the main ideological effect. In other words, the ultimate success of the ideology is to appear as if it is non-ideological since “ideology works through disguising its nature, pretending to be what it isn't” (Fairclough 2001, 92). Neoliberal ideology is a good example of this functioning of ideology by disguising itself. It has succeeded to presenting itself as a universal and objective truth, as if a natural phenomenon.

The ultimate success of neoliberalism is closely related to its capacity to penetrate common sense. It made people accept that “there is no alternative”, that the free market is a natural order, that economics has 'scientific' rules that should not be disrupted by popular political will. Most importantly, it successfully depicted human beings as self-seeking individuals rather than as social beings. It is widely accepted that we have a “human nature” independent from our social existence that drives us to maximise our interests and that the free market order provides the optimal context to realise our interests as atomised individuals. Thus, the key achievement of neoliberal ideology is to decompose society into atomistic individuals. This decomposition of society is crystallised in Thatcher's claim that: “there is no such thing as society, there are individual men and women, and there are families”.

With respect to the variegated characteristics of the processes of neoliberalisation across territories, it is possible to make comparative analysis of two historically specific cases of neoliberalisation thanks to the systemic features of the process and its pervasive operational logic. Also as neoliberalism has “only ever existed in a range of partial and ‘impure’ forms and messy hybrids” (Peck, *et al.* 2012, 274), the process of neoliberalisation manifests itself as differentiated articulations of free-market orthodoxy and path-dependent regulatory landscapes, historically specific and geographically varied forms of state and institutions, shaped in and through previous political contestations and social struggles. The reason for comparing the UK and Turkey is the interestingly similar articulation of free market and authoritarian populism, which marked the discourses and practices of the Tory regime in the UK and the ANAP government in Turkey, followed by a military coup. In this section, I will try to draw parallels between the British and Turkish experiences of neoliberalisation, in the light of a comparative logic.

As stated frequently, the election victory of Thatcher in May 1979 was the 'official start' of the era of neoliberalism. In this sense, the UK could be seen as the pioneer, as a sample case to understand the main dynamics that prepared the ground for the rise of neoliberalism. Mrs. Thatcher's victory indicated a major shift in British politics since her discourse was

represented a brutal attack on the fundamentals of the post-war economic and political order. It is true that certain transformations had already begun in the Labour Party period, but it was her regime that set out to roll back the post-war settlement and would later seek to re-organise the entire economic and social system to conform it to a neoliberal vision of the best economic, political, and social order. The Thatcher government introduced a strict monetary macroeconomic policy to overcome the structural crises of British economy crystallised by stagflation. Reducing the money supply to control inflation was followed by reductions in unemployment benefits and in marginal tax rates. This monetary macroeconomic policy was accompanied by privatisation of main public utilities such as telecommunications, gas, electricity, and water. Removal of the barriers to the operation of the market (such as regulations that limit the entry into a market or industry) and a retreat from the industrial policies of the post-war period were among the main policies of the Conservative government (Arestis and Sawyer 2005). These policies broke with Keynesian economics and were accompanied by a rigid discourse breaking the Keynesian compromise. Trade unions were attacked as the main supports of the post war settlement among the working class. Thatcher presented trade unions as a source of inefficiency and instability and undertook several reforms to reduce the power and influence of trade unions.

Her hostility to trade unions became apparent even before the elections, especially during the 'Winter of Discontent' (1978-1979), which became the symbol of the militancy of the working class movement with widespread strikes and demonstrations. This made the Conservative slogan, "Labour isn't Working", a very effective battle slogan in the electoral campaign. The election victory gave Thatcher power and legitimacy to attack trade unions severely. In other words, she used the popular discontent towards the long-term strikes and the short-term collapse of public services as the basis on which to reinforce her right-wing, authoritarian project. In this sense, Thatcherism could be analysed as a hegemonic project that mobilised popular support around its right-wing neoliberal solution to the economic and political crisis of British social formation. As Jessop *et al.* state, it is a comprehensive project involving economic, political and ideological dimensions, which had gained a hegemonic position following a conjuncture of crisis. Besides the structural crisis of the British economy, in the 1970s, the British state experienced a dual crisis of parliamentarism and corporatism (Jessop, *et al.* 1988). As a response to these political and economic crises, Thatcherism introduced a new hegemonic project (that was defined with the term authoritarian populism by Stuart Hall (1985)), which was accompanying a neoliberal accumulation strategy promoting full functioning of the free market.

This new hegemonic project broke with the traditional 'One Nation' consensus politics of the post-war, with its polarising discourse and practices, and pursued a 'Two Nations' project that conceives society in a duality between productive and parasitic (see Jessop, *et al.* 1988). In this sense, Thatcherism was a radical break with the inclusionary one nation project of the post-war period, which was "an attempt to integrate the poor, deprived and unprivileged into membership of the community through economic growth, full employment, and, increasingly, universal welfare benefits" (Jessop, *et al.* 1988, 87).

The Two Nations project was exclusionary and argued that the first (productive) nation was not obliged to support the second (parasitic) nation. Thatcher's two nations project, despite its exclusionary nature, gained popular consent, hence, hegemony by re-defining the 'national-popular' interest and creating a new common sense, new modes of thought, and a new philosophy and morality.

This two-nations hegemonic project emerged not immediately after the election victory, but formed gradually through complex social and political struggles, through the interaction of agency and structure. In this sense Thatcherism is not a uniform phenomenon but a complex process, "a complex, contradictory, unstable, inchoate, and provisional product of social forces seeking to make their own history" (Jessop, *et al.* 1988, 13). As Jessop *et al.* (1988) indicates, Thatcherism should be analysed in its historical development through an appropriate periodisation of its era. We can periodise Thatcherism on the basis of three main stages: development of Thatcherism as an oppositional force, consolidation of Thatcherism through its control of the Party, the Cabinet and the government, and finally, the era of consolidated Thatcherism in which a coherent Thatcherite project emerged (Jessop, *et al.* 1988).

It follows that the full Thatcherite project was not on the agenda (or in mind) from the beginning; it has emerged as a result of complex process of strategic development of Thatcherism itself. At first, Thatcherism emerged as an oppositional force, as a reaction to the organic crises of British society, which deteriorated in the mid-1970s. By gaining the support of pressure groups, think tanks, mass media and certain intellectuals in addition to big capital and 'Middle England', it seized the leadership of Conservative Party, and then, the government. The second stage of Thatcherism is the consolidation through achievement of real control of the Party, the Cabinet and the government. In this stage Thatcherism raised its popularity and legitimacy, aided by conjunctural developments such as the Falklands War while raising its effectiveness through internal struggles gaining support from the Establishment (or traditional power bloc). Finally, in the third stage, thanks to its control of the political apparatus, Thatcherism could pursue the longterm transformation of British society. In short, Thatcherism as a coherent project that aimed to remake the British economy, state and civil society emerged in the third stage, after its political consolidation. Only then did Thatcher and her radical circle try to eliminate the main pillars of the post-war settlement and transform the social formation.

Thatcherism made a great impact on British society. It radically transformed the entire social and political structure of the country. The privatisation of council (social) housing, the sale of shares in privatised industries, the freeing of private sector workers to engage in wage bargaining, and reductions in taxes enabled by North Sea Oil revenues brought some measure of legitimacy to Thatcherism in the form of 'popular capitalism'. Some initial measures were also introduced that pointed towards an eventual commodification of health care and the penetration of education by market values and entrepreneurial culture. Competitive pressures of the market penetrated each and every aspect of social life and individualism dissolved legendary working class culture based on values such as solidarity. Ideological apparatuses, especially the mass media, were one of the main

tools of this re-structuring process. Thus, Thatcherism not only sought to transform the socio-economic structure but also aimed at changing the meanings, values, perceptions and everyday practices of the people, in short, the common sense.

Conservative rule ended in 1997 with the victory of Tony Blair but this did not cause a radical break with the neoliberal project. The 'Third Way', which was an attempt to humanise neoliberalism, adopted the fundamentals of Thatcherism since they accept that free market economy is the requirement of our age. It attempted to change the exclusionary and authoritarian two-nations project with a more socially inclusive project but remained its neoliberal accumulation strategy remained intact (Jessop 2003). In other words, despite changing some forms, it maintained the core content of neoliberalism⁴. For instance, the basic impacts of the neoliberalism, such as inequality, continued to increase under Labour rule⁵.

Under the rule of New Labour the basic elements of Thatcherism's neoliberal accumulation strategy, which were liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, (re-)commodification, internationalisation and reduction of direct taxes, have continued to dominate policy. But New Labour did attempt to adapt neoliberal strategy on the basis of a more inclusionary hegemonic vision that aims to ameliorate its effects and thereby to enable its continuation. In this sense, what New Labour has introduced are flanking and supporting measures to keep neoliberalism on its trajectory in changed circumstances. The notion of social inclusion, interpreted differently from the welfare state period, is understood and secured through labour market attachment and imperatives of economic flexibility. As long as social policy is subordinated to the demands of labour market flexibility and global competition, we can define it as a workfare regime in which social policy becomes a form of human resource management (Jessop 2006).

Using the terms of Peck and Tickell (2002) and referring to Bob Jessop (2006), the successive phases of the Thatcherite period could be seen as pursuing primarily 'roll-back' neoliberalism while New Labour could be understood as shifting the balance in favour of the 'roll-out' phase. In other words, whilst conservative rule was mainly concerned with discrediting and eliminating Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions, New Labour has been busy constructing the institutional architecture of a new regime by introducing new (neoliberal) forms of state, modes of governance, etc. (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Jessop 2006). Thus, New Labour has been attempting to consolidate and "routinise" neoliberalism, "securing the operation of the emerging neoliberal regime through normal politics, developing supporting policies across a wide range of policy fields and providing flanking mechanisms to compensate for its negative economic, political and social consequences" (Jessop 2006). Introducing an institutional architecture and policy framework conducive to a globalising 'knowledge-based' economy and constructing a new state form (which Jessop (2006), has termed the Schumpeterian workfare post-national state) are key indicators of the consolidation or 'rolling-out' of the neoliberal project.

⁴For instance they went along with the privatisation trend under the form of private finance initiative (PFI) which is the private provision of services to the public sector (Arestis and Sawyer: 2005: 200-201).

⁵Arestis and Sawyer states (2005: 206), that "amongst households, the share of income received by the top 10% increased from 20.4% in 1979 to 26.0% in 1990 and 27.8% in 2002, whilst the share of the bottom 10% decreased from 4.2% in 1979 to 2.9% in 1990 and 2.7% in 2002".

Turning to the Turkish case, we can say that British neoliberalism, Thatcherism in particular, was seen as a model case by Turkish rulers. Turgut Özal, who took the role of Thatcher in Turkey, adopted both authoritarian and populist characteristics of Thatcherism and its 'two nations' project. Under his rule, the political system disclosed typical features of authoritarianism such as limitation of parliamentary democracy to ensure fast implementation of neoliberal reforms and use of Cabinet Decrees to bypass normal parliamentary procedures. At the same time, he was a populist politician who presents even the most exclusionary policies with an anti-elitist, anti-statist and anti-bureaucratic discourse as if those policies were promoting people's interests and freedoms against the establishment.

As with the UK experience, "putting an end to the class-based politics" was the core of the new hegemonic strategy in Turkey. This strategy, which crystallised in the 'law and order' rhetoric, gained the consent of the masses to a certain degree "who were disenchanting by the repercussions of the political as well as the economic crises on their daily lives during the pre-coup era" (Yalman 2001, 41). As Yalman (2001, 41) emphasises, both Thatcherism and Özalism "were keen to consolidate the new order by portraying the previous one as a highly undesirable one characterised by civil strife and disorder on the one hand, and an economic crisis caused by outdated policies on the other". The "there is no alternative" rhetoric to justify the detrimental effects of the neoliberal economic policies are also borrowed from Thatchers Britain (Yalman 2001, 42).

As minister of economics, Özal designed the January 24th (1980) decisions, i.e., the famous stability programme that prescribed neoliberal structural adjustment based on devaluation, privatisation, elimination of import quotas and liberalisation of foreign trade regime, promotion of exports, elimination of state investments (especially in heavy industries), social expenditures and real wages of working people (Boratav 1993). These decisions were a response to the crises of the inward-oriented accumulation strategy and were supported by large-scale domestic capital groups, which were aiming at further integration with the world market. However, these decisions could not be implemented within a political environment conditioned by left-wing militancy and a strong working class movement. Their effective implementation had to await changed conditions and the articulation of neoliberal economics with more popular (or populist) politics-this is where the Thatcherite model became influential.

The military coup of 12th September provided a 'sterilised' environment for the 24th January decisions to be implemented without any reaction. After three years of military regime, Özal came to power in 1983, to rule in a political environment, which was radically different from the end of 1970s. As noted by Ercan and Oğuz (2007), export promotion and wage suppression were the main features of the earlier phase of neoliberalism. When this phase reached its limits and the export drive lost its momentum in the late 1980s, financial liberalisation was introduced in 1989 through the transition to the convertibility of the Turkish lira (Ercan and Oğuz 2007) and capital account de-regulation. This second phase of neoliberal transformation, i.e., financial deregulation, led to instability, making the Turkish economic structure extremely fragile in the face of financial crises. The cost of

fiscal instability in an environment of an open capital account regime was three successive financial crises in 1994, 2000 and 2001 (Öniş 2006). This crisis-proneness of the Turkish economy is still there because of large current account deficits and dependence on short-term capital inflows has continued to haunt the economic system (Öniş 2006). In this sense, the Turkish economy illustrates important general features of peripheral economies that have adopted neoliberal policies: instability, successive financial crises, unsustainable growth, current account deficits, and increasing internal and external indebtedness.

The Turkish case is also typical in terms of the mechanisms through which neoliberal transformation operates. Neoliberal formula of privatisation, flexible labour markets, financial deregulation, flexible exchange rate regimes and fiscal austerity, which has been imposed on nearly all developing countries, caused serious crises in Turkey. But these were presented as government failures to maintain the macroeconomic targets and implement the structural adjustment reforms (Cizre and Yeldan 2005). Thus, the crises have been used to deepen the neoliberal transformation process under the guidance of international financial organisations such as the IMF. Within such circles, every crisis prepares the ground for another, usually for a more destructive one, while serving the re-organisation of social relations in line with the neoliberal free market order. In this sense, as Cizre and Yeldan states (2005, 389), “the post-February 2001 predicament in Turkey painfully illustrates the theoretical debate on how to modify the state-market relations in a country to convert it into a reliable and stable partner state in the global capitalist order”.

This cycle of worsening crises also heightens Turkey's dependence on external debt and, hence, on the prescriptions of financial organisations such as the IMF (see Yeldan 2006). In each crisis, an urgent need for financial aid occurs and, in return for each round of aid, a stand-by agreement must be signed that reinforces the structural adjustment process. Thus, foreign aid has been used as an instrument of neoliberal transformation. It is true that this vicious circle of crises and simultaneous IMF agreements condemned Turkey to implement the typical structural adjustment programme that would deepen neoliberal transformation. Given its huge debt, Turkey had no chance of developing an independent development strategy using heterodox policy instruments (Öniş and Şenses 2005). However, this does not mean that neoliberal transformation is purely an external imposition. On the contrary, it is driven by internal actors such as big business and its organic intellectuals in academia, in media, in politics and in bureaucracy. The fact that no mainstream⁶ political party, no major civil society or media organisation is openly opposing neoliberalism and/or fundamental neoliberal premises in Turkey indicates the success of the neoliberal project,

⁶ Big capital and its representative TUSIAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) actively promoted neoliberalisation before and after the 1980 military coup. During May-June 1979 TUSIAD organised a media campaign demanding full liberalisation of the economy, respect and encouragement for free enterprise, abolition of government controls, efficient operation of state enterprises, pursuit of strict monetary measures and a tax reform (Arat 1991). The campaign, which brought the social democratic down, corresponds closely to the typical neoliberal economic policy set elsewhere in the world and anticipates concisely the early phase of neoliberal transformation in Turkey during the 1980s. For a detailed discussion of big capital's commitment to neoliberalism, see Ozan (2012); for the alliances it has built around neoliberalism and privatisation, see Öniş (2011); for a discussion of big capital and organic intellectuals, see Yaka (2011).

⁷ For a detailed account of the changing cultural climate and values in Turkey after 1980, see Gürbilek (2011).

as in Britain. Thus it became hegemonic in Turkey by penetrating common sense, changing the meanings and values of the people. The changing common sense is also reflected in the normalisation of corruption, nepotism and expediency. Honesty, solidarity and altruism have been depicted as old-fashioned, even ridiculous.⁷

1999 marked a new phase in terms of the neoliberal transformation of Turkish social formation. In December 1999, Turkey was accepted as a candidate for EU membership and the EU adjustment process served as a road map for the development of a legal and institutional framework to consolidate and stabilise the process of neoliberalisation. In this sense, while the Özalist period illustrates roll-back neoliberalism aiming to eliminate the economic, political, institutional and legal structure of the previous period, the post-1999 period can be interpreted as the roll-out phase of neoliberalism in Turkey, whereby the legal and institutional structure is constructed to regulate the neoliberal accumulation strategy. The EU project, which symbolised welfare and development for the majority of Turkish people, also assisted in the construction of a more inclusionary hegemonic strategy as a key part of the consolidation of the neoliberal project.⁸ In addition, the early phase of the AKP government⁹, which came to power in 2002, could be seen as a different form of the British Third Way in terms of its discourse of social inclusion on the basis of solidarity links and local communities compensating for the absence of state provision of social services (Türk 2005). AKP used the Islamist discourse of solidarity, charity, etc. to ameliorate the destructive effects of the neoliberalisation process.

To conclude the section, despite the geographically differentiated characteristics of neoliberalisation, drawing parallels between the early (roll-back) and late (roll-out) phases of different cases are possible. In the case of the UK and Turkey, while the specific articulation of free market and authoritarian populism marks the roll-back phase of neoliberalisation, different manifestations of the 'Third Way', which aimed at re-articulation neoliberalism with a more socially inclusive (hegemonic) project, were operationalised in the roll-out phase of it.

Moral economy is a concept developed by E.P. Thompson during his extensive research on the food revolts during the 18th century. In his famous article titled "Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" (1971), he opposes the view that bread riots of the 18th century were "instinctive reactions of virility to hunger". Instead he argues that every 18th century crowd action involves a legitimising notion. The crowds, E.P. Thompson argues, believed that they were defending traditional rights and customs

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⁸ This phase, however, has been exhausted after 2005, with the apparent signs of the 'enlargement fatigue', unwillingness of the core countries of the EU and growing disappointment of Turkish public opinion. This exhaustion of the EU membership project also corresponded to the rising hegemony of AKP (Justice and Development Party) government, which has acted as the major executor of the EU adjustment project between 2002 and 2005.

⁹ After its second election victory in 2007, though, AKP's discourse on EU membership and on other major issues has been gradually changed and the EU-led neoliberalisation has been transformed into a project of Islamic-neoliberalisation. AKP has been actively supported and supported by the so-called green capital (once small and medium sized Anatolian firms that shares a conservative-religious world view) See two excellent edited volumes for further discussion on the transformation of AKP: Duru and Uzgel (2009) and Sümer and Yaşlı (2010).

and were supported by the wider consensus of the community. Moral economy, for E.P. Thompson, was constituted by these traditional rights, customs, social norms and obligations “which taught the immorality of any unfair method of forcing up the price of provisions by profiteering upon the necessities of the people”. He contrasts moral economy with the modern capitalist political economy where the drive for profit overrides the 'subsistence ethic'. Peter Scott has worked with the concept of moral economy in his research on rebellion and resistance of Southeast Asian peasantry (1976).

I propose here that the idea of moral economy could be re-contextualised, not as a pre-modern, pre-capitalist set of normative attitudes shared by peasant communities but a modern idea of subsistence ethics. Andrew Sayer’s conceptualisation of moral economy, as “norms and sentiments regarding the responsibilities and rights of individuals and institutions with respect to others” (Sayer 2000, 79), helps us to modernise the concept as a basis to criticise and transform neoliberalism. This modern understanding of the concept has a potential to unite the subsistence ethics with an analytical intervention that reveals the (im)moral norms and sentiments are inherent in the functioning of market economy.¹⁰ In other words, to bring the forgotten normative dimension into play could help us to break the technical language of contemporary market economies.

From a moral economy perspective, one should first set an alternative definition of economy. The meaning we are familiar with is the distribution of scarce resources that involves complex calculations. Economy as we know it is an isolated system to be handled by highly specialised technocrats separate from other spheres of social life. Hence, challenging this idea by stating and showing that economy is indeed a part of social life and, as such, internally related to other social spheres, is necessary. The definition I suggest, inspired by Marx and shared by many critical scholars, is: a set of social relations among people mediated through the instrumentality of things. Thus economic phenomena (such as market, profit, price, unemployment, etc.) should be treated not as technical but as social phenomena. We can take the free market as an example. Despite its appearance as a system of exchange organised around the maximisation of self-interest that functions beyond any ethical principle, the free market order does have a clear moral implication. The market morality, which is implicit in the fundamental premises of neoliberalism, claims to reward hard work, foresight, initiative and enterprise and penalises the idle, the incompetent and the lethargic (Clarke 2005). This is the kind of morality that legitimises and naturalises raising poverty and inequality on the basis that the “market pays people what they are worth” (Palley 2005, 23). So, for neoliberals, the free market is not only a mechanism through which individuals achieve freedom, but also a moral principle that ensures 'social' justice. If individuals are born with unequal intelligence and talents, then justice requires the confirmation of this 'natural' inequality in social life.

This neoliberal understanding of morality illustrates the free market approach to all relations and values. Indeed, as Sayer argues, what is right is overridden by what is

¹⁰ Even though largely overlooked by contemporary literature, the normative standing of the market was one of the main issues discussed both by classical political economists such as Adam Smith and also by its radical critics.

profitable; in the moral economy of capitalism, economic and moral norms are mutually reinforcing (Sayer 2004). The imposition of neoliberal-free market morality is a dimension of general neoliberal transformation and an object of social struggle just like neoliberal transformation more generally. This understanding of morality should be challenged with an alternative morality emphasising social existence of human beings and our dependence on social co-operation and fellowship as well as social responsibilities and empathy. In this sense, the task is to establish an alternative conception of economy as a set of activities aimed at the substantive production and reproduction of human life rather than allocation of scarce resources to competing ends on the basis of expectations about profit. Thus, putting the human dimension at the centre of the analysis and thereby breaking decisively with the view that market economics is a natural order or a technical field best left to 'scientific' calculations by experts, is the first step toward developing an alternative understanding.

This perspective of moral economy can also be accompanied by a historical materialist critique, which would help us to reveal the social content of economic forms. The fundamental ideological effect of the capitalist mode of production is to naturalise and universalise historically specific forms of social relations such as free market, private property and money form. These historical forms are abstracted from their historical contexts, from the specific social relations that produced them, through attribution of transhistorical ontological essences. Thus, private property appears as a natural, God-given institution inscribed in human nature rather than being an expression of particular form of social production (Clarke 2005), disposition over other's labour power (Marx and Engels 1994).

Similarly, the free market presents itself as a natural-universal order even though, as Polanyi (1957) shows, the construction of the market order was far from spontaneous but had to be planned and implemented through concerted political action. The same point holds for neoliberalism today. In this sense, the self-regulating market is illusory because markets have been established and maintained by continuous state intervention, what Munck calls the political making of the market (2005). Universalisation of the neoliberal premise of human nature based on the idea of the rational, self-seeking, self-interested, atomised individual is another example of transhistorical abstractions being treated as objective truths. This premise could easily be challenged with the idea that social beings are bound up with each other through complex social relations and that these must be cultivated to ensure a just social order.

When certain historical forms are universalised and naturalised in this way they are protected from social criticism and political-normative contestation. As Sayer indicates (2004: 5) certain forms and relations (such as profit) have become normalised as if they were basic, timeless facts despite having been previously contested normatively. For example, despite the taken-for-grantedness of the profit motive in the neoliberal worldview, it has been regularly challenged in the name of other intellectual and moral principles as well as for its complicity in market failures and economic injustices. Turning to our current conditions, this normalisation process continues in terms of the commercialisation of sectors such as education and healthcare which were conceived as social rights before. It is important to

Conclusion

de-naturalise market forces and the profit-oriented, market-mediated, and amoral logic of capital accumulation and to promote alternative solutions to environmental, economic, political, and socio-cultural problems. In these terms, historical materialist critique and moral economy would be the main theoretical tools for establishing such a criticism of neoliberalism. But they must be combined with specific forms of social mobilisation and collective action on many different scales.

After a detailed discussion on neoliberalism, we could conclude that neoliberalism, which has emerged as an intellectual response to the crises of Atlantic Fordism and the Keynesian welfare state, has been translated from being an intellectual project into a political one by the conservative governments of the late 70s and early 80s. This translation, however, was realised through complex social struggles.

Another conclusion is that by stating the term neoliberalism, we are in fact talking about a variety of different neoliberalisms, emerged in different forms in different spatio-temporal contexts, and shaped by uneven development and polymorphic character of global capitalism. The term variegation, suggested by Peck and Theodore (2007), as a response to the limitations of varieties of capitalism approach and to introduce the relational conception of variety to the political economic analysis, could be helpful to analyse different forms of neoliberalism. This approach of variegation directs attention to deeper forms of geographical differentiation and spatial dynamics, to variegated hybrid forms of neoliberalisation and to dynamic polymorphism of capitalism in general shaped by its uneven and combined development (Peck and Theodore 2007).

A comparative-historical analyses of the UK and Turkish experiences of neoliberalism shows us how the social formations of those countries has been transformed in light of neoliberal principles under the right-wing, conservative governments of Thatcher and Özal, not only in economic but also in social, political and cultural senses. Various interesting common features are clearly observable in the UK and Turkey experiences both at the policy level and in terms of the discursive strategies used. Also we see in both cases that different phases of neoliberalisation, the roll-back and roll-out phases that articulate similar elements (authoritarian populism and Third Way respectively) although they differ in their targets, policy tools and discourses. It is also shown that the neoliberal transformations in both countries were held in and through various social and discursive struggles.

To conclude, this article introduces an alternative understanding of economy to challenge the basic premises of neoliberalism, with reference to the concept of moral economy and historical materialist critique. This alternative understanding stems from the idea that economy cannot be defined as a technical area of calculations and equations. It is a set of social relations mediated through the instrumentality of things. Putting the human dimension and social relations at the centre, it is possible to develop an alternative definition of economy as a set of activities aiming at the substantive production and reproduction of human life rather than allocation of scarce resources to competing ends on the basis of expectations about profit.

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Özet

Türkiye ve Birleşik Krallıkta Neoliberalleşme Deneyimleri - Eleştirel bir Perspektif

Bu makale neoliberalizmin kapitalizmin tarihsel ve spesifik bir organizasyonu olarak bir incelemesini içeriyor. Makale neoliberalizmin kavramsal çerçevesi ve tarihsel gelişimi üzerine yürütülen tartışmaya yalnızca neoliberalizmin ekonomik sonuçlarına değil aynı zamanda sosyal, kültürel ve ideolojik etkilerine de odaklanarak mütevazı bir katkı sunmayı hedefliyor. Makale tek bir neoliberalizm olmadığına, neoliberalizmin çeşitlenen-melez formlarına ve neoliberalleşmenin toplumsal ve mekânsal anlamda farklılaşan karakterine dikkat çekiyor. Toplumsal ve mekânsal farklılaşma özelliğine rağmen farklı neoliberalleşme süreçlerinin farklı alanlarda ortak deneyimler ürettiği de bir gerçek. Makale bu bağlamda karşılaştırmalı bir analiz üzerinden Birleşik Krallık ve Türkiye'nin neoliberalleşme deneyimleri arasındaki ilginç paralelliğe dikkat çekiyor. Bu örnekte ekonomik süreçlerin ötesinde Thatcherizm ve Özalizmin siyasal ve söylemsel benzerlikleri, özellikle otoriter ve popülist söylemleri bağlamında göze çarpıyor. Sonuç bölümünde makale moral ekonomi kavramını, özellikle Andrew Sayer'e referansla alternatif bir bakış açısı olarak sunuyor. Bu bölümde moral ekonomi kavramının çağımızın hegemonik neoliberal öncüllerinin sorgulanması ve eleştirilmesi için teorik ve etik bir temel teşkil edebileceği savunuluyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Neoliberalizm, neoliberalleşme süreleri, Thatcherizm, Özalizm, ahlak ekonomisi.