
NEOLIBERAL DEVELOPMENTALISMS: TURKEY AND BRAZIL SINCE THE 2000s

Aylin Topal*¹

¹Middle East Technical University – Turkey

Abstract

It explores the similarities and differences between Turkey and Brazil with respect to transition to as well as consolidation of neoliberalism. It argues that in both countries the neoliberal reforms throughout the 1980s and 1990s have curtailed the economic interest of certain section of bourgeoisie that marked the forthcoming decade of neoliberal developmentalisms. More concretely, both in Turkey and Brazil the neoliberal reforms through the 1980s and 1990s brought about deindustrialization. Some sections of the discontent fractions within the bourgeoisie have raised their demand for a more regulated –if not protected- free market, bringing a shift in party politics in the 2000s. In Turkey, a brand new political party became the victor of the 2002 elections annihilating most of the previously existing parties from the political scene. The Development and Justice Party (AKP with its Turkish acronym) won the parliamentary majority. It was the first time in fifteen years that any party has been in a position to govern alone. The same year, Brazilian politics witnessed a turning point albeit with a different ideological reference. The Brazilian Workers' Party (PT with its Portuguese acronym) won the presidential elections in 2003, considered as an historical achievement of the Brazilian working class. Luis Inacio Lula da Silva's PT and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP proved to be the bearers of "roll-forward" neoliberal policies in some areas (cf. Jessop, 2012). The fact that capitalist attack against organized labor was more successful in Turkey than in Brazil during the 1980s and 1990s, roll-forward policies of neoliberal developmentalisms took right-handed and left-handed paths respectively. The neoliberal policies were simply adopted in Turkey while they were adapted in Brazil to reconcile inherently antagonistic interests with significant implication in regime types: exclusionary authoritarianism of AKP and inclusionary but fragile democracy of PT.

Keywords: developmentalism, authoritarianism, democracy, Turkey, Brazil

*Speaker