

The Impacts of Neoliberal Policies on the Performance of Middle Sized Cities: The Case of Turkey¹

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1.0. Introduction

Although the origins of the term neoliberalism goes back to 1930s, (Birch, Mykhenko, 2010) it became effective following the oil crises of 1970's. The ideological project of today's neoliberalism has a shifted meaning than 1930's social market economy. It puts forward old policies of classical liberalism represented in a fancy parcel which can be summarized as privatization of public assets, liberalization of trade, primacy of market and deregulation resulting in the rolling back of government. Following 1980s, such neoliberal policies have been implemented by right-wing politicians around the world. Margaret Thatcher (1979-90) in the UK and Ronald Reagan (1981-9) in the USA, -whose policies became known respectively as Thatcherism and Reaganomics- became prominent political figures in this respect.

Turkish experience followed a similar pattern after the 1980 military coup. Though, the austerity policies were put into effect several months before the coup, their peaceful and smooth implementation was made possible thanks to the repressive military rule. In this respect 1980 became a turning point in the Turkish socio-economic as well as the political life of the country.

This paper aims to investigate the impact of neo-liberal policies, pursued since 1980, on the demographic and socioeconomic development of the middle sized cities in Turkey.

The paper will consist of three parts. The first part will summarize the development of urban planning history of Turkey in the Republican Period with an emphasis on the spatial distribution of the urban settlements. The second section constitutes the main body of the paper in which various data related to the demographic and socio economic variables is used to show the development of the middle sized cities between 1980 and 2000. The last part will evaluate the findings in respect to the creation of sustainable city distribution in Turkey will be discussed.

2.0. Part I.

A Brief Historical Background

Before presenting the findings on the development of middle sized cities in Turkey following the implementation of neoliberal policies, I would like to give a brief summary of the historical background.

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Turkish nation state came into being after the fragmentation and demise of the 600 years old Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. Therefore the nation state had to be established politically, top down, by the military and civilian elites. However, its sustainability could only be achieved through the creation of a social consciousness, and an accompanying economic development strategy based on domestic production via industrialization. Spatial policies in accord with this social and economic strategy were needed in order to create a westernized but an independent nation state.

In order to achieve this goal, the Republican government gave great importance to spatial strategies, the most significant of which was moving the capital city to Ankara. Abandoning Istanbul which had been the capital city of three big empires and declaration of Ankara as the capital city was a radical decision. Istanbul was the most westernized part of the country, i.e. it was articulated to the West the most intensely. Istanbul was rejected because the Ottoman westernization was perceived to be spoiled and a new and a 'real' westernization model tried to be found. (Tekeli, 1998).

In mid 19th century Istanbul was the Capital and the primate city of the Ottoman Empire. More than ¼ of the urban population lived in Istanbul. With approximately 750.000 inhabitants, it was almost ten times bigger than the second biggest city, İzmir (Erder,1978: 176).

The policy of creating new development centers was “contrasted to the economic policies of the single large city and growth focus in Istanbul, being the major point of capitalist integration in the beginning of the 19th century. In this respect, creation of a new capital and establishment of industrial cities were important regional development strategies dealing with regional underdevelopment. The regional development policy of creating a new capital is unique case in the world planning experiences” (Keskinok, 2010).

Fair and equal treatment of regional development within national boundaries has been a major spatial aim of the early Republican era. Thanks to this policy which was strictly pursued in 1930's several middle sized cities have been revitalized and consolidated by direct state investments. By 1950's the Turkish regional pattern was rather different, that is more evenly distributed urban centers throughout the country was achieved compared to the first years of the Republic.

Until 1980 Turkey pursued import substitution policies which became official instruments for economic development. From the early 1960s until 1974, Turkish economy generated high growth rates accompanied by healthy balances of payments. From 1974 onwards, however, particularly with the adverse effects of escalating oil prices and the ensuing recession, inflation and rising unemployment in the West, this rosy picture began to deteriorate. The annual growth rate of GNP fell from 8 per cent in 1975 to -0.7 per cent in 1980. Coupled with adverse developments

in the world economy these conditions resulted in large deficit in the balance of payments, high inflation and high unemployment rates by the end of the 1970s.

“In brief, all the symptoms mentioned above signaled the end of industrialization policy based on import substitution. The economic and political life of the country sank into a series of crises which eventually led to the proclamation of an austerity program in 1980. Beginning with the January 24th decree, the country was ushered in a new era in economic history. The Implementation of neo-liberal policies brought with it the further integration of the Turkish economy into the world capitalist system” (Ersoy,1994: 523-524). Neoliberal themes such as export promotion, rolling back of the state, privatization and liberal competitive individualism replaced the popular policies of the previous two decades.

“The suppressed and disciplined social environment created by the military coup d'état of September 1980 made the enforcement of such strict economic measures possible with little or no opposition from organized labor and other groups which bore the brunt of the new policies” (Ersoy,1994:524).

The central assertion of this study can be summarized as follows: neoliberal policies which have been in effect in Turkey since 1980 have functioned to the detriment of middle sized cities in Turkey in several respects. In the next section official statistics are used to prove the validity of the above assertion.

3.0. Part II.

Presentation of the Findings

As mentioned above, 1980 became a turning point in the Turkish socio-economic as well as the political life. Opening of the Country to the global economy and the implementation of the neoliberal policies had serious effects on various fields. Below, effects of neoliberal policies on middle sized cities are studied by utilizing different socioeconomic indicators. In this respect, the data for the variables examined between the years of 1980 and 2000 in 46 middle sized cities³ -city centers of provinces- having an urban population between 100.000 and 500.000⁴ are worked on. These values are compared with the overall average value for the country as well as with the value found for the greatest metropolitan city, Istanbul.

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Adıyaman, Afyonkarahisar, Ağrı, Aksaray, Amasya, Aydın, Balıkesir, Batman, Bingöl, Bolu, Burdur, Çanakkale, Çorum, Düzce, Edirne, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Giresun, Hatay, Iğdır, Isparta, Karabük, Karaman, Kastamonu, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, Kütahya, Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Muş, Nevşehir, Niğde, Ordu, Osmaniye, Rize, Siirt, Sivas, Tekirdağ, Tokat, Trabzon, Uşak, Van, Yalova, Zonguldak.

⁴ 2000 census of population

3.1. Demographic Analysis in terms of Zipf's Law

Since 1950's Turkey has undergone rapid urbanization. Following Table gives the comparative change in demographic terms.

The table below shows how the uneven distribution of the populations of the most populous city and the 46 cities studied has been reverted between 1927 - 4 years after the foundation of the Republic- and 1980 thanks to persistent state policies. Istanbul's share in the total population of the country dropped from 31 percent to 14 percent.

Table 1. Population Change of Turkey, Istanbul and 46 Middle Sized City

Year	Total Population	Urban Population Over 10,000)	%	Istanbul (urban)	% T.Urban Pop.	Urban Pop. Of 46 Cities	% T.Urban Pop.
1927	13648270	2236085	16,4	704825	31,5	1227527	54,9
1945	18790174	3441895	18,3	809050	23,5		
1950	20947188	4883865	18,5	1002085	20,5		
1955	24064763	5328846	22,1	1297372	24,3		
1960	27754020	6967024	25,1	1465535	21,0	1501405	21,5
1965	31391421	9343006	29,8	1792071	19,2		
1970	35605176	11845423	33,3	2203337	18,6	2165550	18,3
1975	40,703,525	16713696	41,1	2648006	15,8		
1980	44736957	20330265	45,4	2848987	14,0	3376266	16,6
1985	50664458	25789000	50,9	5560908	21,6		
1990	56473035	31468877	55,4	6620241	21,0	4576534	14,5
2000	67803927	41713716	61,7	8803468	21,1	6213391	14,9
2010	73722988	56222356	76,3	13120596	23,3	7758500	10,5

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Related Censi

During the same period the share of the population of 46 cities decreased from 55 to 17 percent, which indicates that the cities having populations more than 500.000 - except Istanbul- have increased resulting in a more even development.

In the neoliberal era beginning from 1980 onward however, the workings of opposite dynamics is witnessed. As can be calculated from the data, the urban population of Istanbul increased 460 percent, while Turkey's urban population increased 276 percent between the years 1980-2010. The total urban population of the 46 mid sized cities grew 230 %, half of Istanbul's growth rate during the same period. This picture illustrates the uneven development 1980 and 2010 in terms of demographic change.

An attempt has been made to reaffirm the above claim by using the Zipf's well known "rank size rule". The "rank size rule" states that cities in a certain geographically or politically determined region are ranked in a striking regularity such that, the size of a city is inversely proportional to its rank. In other words, the

population of any individual city has a direct relationship to its rank by size and to the population of the largest city, which can be shown in a formula given below:

$$Pr = \frac{P1 \cdot q}{R^2}$$

Where, P1 denotes the population of the largest city; Pr denotes the population of the city of rank R; R is the rank of the city, q is a constant.

In logarithmic terms the above equation can be rewritten as;

$$\text{LogPr} = \text{Log P1} - q \text{ LogR}.$$

If cities are ranked as proposed by Zipf, on a double log scale x-y axis, they are expected to be scattered on or around a line with a slope around -1. (Dokmeci,1986:13).

Therefore, "if we tabulate all the cities of a country and rank them according to their size, for example by population, the first largest city is twice as big as the second largest, thrice as big as the third largest, and so on" (Jiang and Jia,2011: 1269). If the slope of the line exceeds 1, "cities are more dispersed than predicted whereas a slope less than 1 indicates that cities are more even sized than the prediction" (Knudsen,2001:123).

Dokmeci (1986) has studied the evolution of the rank size curves of Turkey for cities having the population more than 10,000 between the years of 1946 and 1975. She concluded that, "as a result of the rapid urbanization from 50s onward and integration of the urban system...the city system has moved to a state more adjusted to the rank size rule... the slope of the line was - 0.75 and $r^2 = 0.98$ in 1945; it has approached the rank size linearity in each decade since then, and it became -0.90 and $r^2 = 1.00$ in 1975" (1986:14). Her findings demonstrate that "the most developed and urbanized region, the Marmara, has the most regular city distribution pattern...However, despite the rapid rate of urbanization, the lack of medium size cities is remarkable all over the country" (Dokmeci, 1986:17).

Marin (2007) investigated the validity of the rule two decades after Dokmeci. His findings demonstrated that distribution of the population of cities in Turkey after 1985 deteriorated by becoming more uneven. Pareto coefficient which is calculated as $0,9337$ in 1985, dropped to $0,9202$ and $0,8949$ in the years of 1990 and 2000, respectively. As pointed out earlier, diversion from value 1.00 indicates that the size of the metropolitan cities grew faster than the middle and small sized cities. Deliktas's (2008) findings also support the above assertion. He states that the coefficient dropped from $0,917$ to $0,858$ between 1990 and 2007.

In brief, the Turkish experience shows that the ameliorated national distribution of the cities in terms of population after the Independence War (1927) has deteriorated dramatically in the 25 years following the implementation of neoliberal policies based on the ideology of "marketization of the society.

3.2. Analysis of the Economic Variables

Today, Turkey is experiencing unbalanced national and spatial development patterns. In the study economic transformation in 46 middle sized cities during 1980 and 2000 are investigated in comparison to Turkey and Istanbul based on the official data on the share of GDP, the rate of employment, percentage of workers in non agricultural production works and in manufacturing industry, the rate of professional, technical and related workers in total employment.

Table 2⁵. The Share of GDP

Year	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	100	100	100
Istanbul	19,35	20,02	22,12
	100	103	114
Av. 46 Cities	0,84	0,66	0,62
	100	78	74

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

The development of the distribution of the share of GDP at the provincial level between Istanbul and the middle sized cities depicts a very clear picture of uneven development. Following the implementation of the neoliberal policies Istanbul increased its share in the country's total GDP while middle sized cities share decreased 25% of their original share.

Table 3. Rate of Employment

Year	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	0,54	0,46	0,39
	100	85	72
Istanbul	0,37	0,49	0,49
	100	133	132
Average of 46 Cities	0,39	0,46	0,37
	100	118	95

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Above table shows that the rate of employment in middle sized cities though above Turkish average is quite below the value for Istanbul. The data also verifies the claim that the neoliberal policies did not positively affect the lot of the people living in middle sized cities in terms of employment rate between 1980 and 2000.

Table 4. Employment in Industry (in percentage and the rate)

Year	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	0,116	0,128	0,133
	100	110	115

⁵ Data given are at provincial level unless it is mentioned otherwise.

Istanbul	0,344	0,336	0,322
	100	98	93
Average of 46 Cities	0,073	0,077	0,075
	100	105	102

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Table 5. Rate of Employment in Manufacturing Industry

Years	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	0,116	0,128	0,126
	100	110	109
Istanbul	0,336	0,328	0,316
	100	98	94
Average of 46 Cities	0,062	0,068	0,067
	100	110	108

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

For developing countries the percentage of the people employed in industrial sector, and particularly in manufacturing sector of industry are important signifiers to show the percentage of the people working in commodity production related works. It also provides a clue for the economic base of urban areas for sustainable development. As demonstrated in Table 3 and 4, during the last two decades middle sized cities did not experience a significant increase in rate of employment and performed below the country's average both in industrial sector and in manufacturing industry.

Table 6. Rate of Professional, technical and related workers in Total Employment

Years	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	0,06	0,06	0,08
	100	167	233
Istanbul	0,08	0,09	0,11
	100	112	137
Average of 46 Cities	0,03	0,04	0,05
	100	133	167

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Final indicator to investigate the change in the economy of the middle sized cities following the implementation of neoliberal policies is the rate of professional, technical and related workers in total employment. In this respect middle sized cities seem to show some improvement though rather below the value found for Turkey as a whole. However, since this category includes a range of different professions⁶ a

⁶ The category of "professional, technical and related workers" includes professions as; professionals, technicians, architects, engineers and related technicians scientists, medical, dental, veterinary and related workers, statistician, mathematicians, system analysts, economists, jurists, financial counselors, workers in religion, teachers –from nursery school to university level-, authors, journalists, sculptors, painters, writers, composers, sportsmen, etc.

detailed analysis is needed to find out at which specific professions a real improvement is experienced before making a final assertion. As a matter of fact, the share of the sub category of “architects, engineers and related technicians” in the total employment in Istanbul is 2, 8 times higher than the average of 46 mid-sized cities.

In brief, the above data paints a rather vivid picture in demonstrating the validity of the arguments which reads that the middle sized cities are not among the “winners” or champions of the neoliberal policies.

3.3. Social Variables

Under this title we have chosen two variables, education and health statistics, in order to trace the effects of neoliberal policies on different size cities.

The low level of education is one of the major problems in developing countries which must be overcome. As the Tables below suggest, after three decades of implementation of neoliberal policies, Istanbul did not fare well above the average year of schooling in Turkey while 46 middle sized cities catches up with the country’s average. Data for the schooling of women affirm the same trend as well. Basing on this data one can argue that Istanbul, as the fastest growing city both demographically and economically could not develop its social infrastructure at the same pace, resulting in an uneven development within the metropolitan area.

Table 7. Average Year of Schooling

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010
Turkey	3,29	4,71	5,30	6,23
	100	143	161	189
Istanbul	3,95	4,98	5,50	6,28
	100	126	139	160
Av. 46 Cities	3,07	4,53	5,06	6,07
	100	147	165	198

Source: Calculated from the data of Turkish Statistical Institute

Table 8. Average Year of Schooling for Women

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010
Turkey	2,69	3,93	4,47	5,04
	100	146	166	187
Istanbul	3,48	4,38	4,67	5,26
	100	126	134	151
Av. 46 Cities	2,32	3,75	3,86	4,81
	100	161	166	207

Source: Calculated from the data of Turkish Statistical Institute

Health statistics show similar findings at a more dramatic level. Data for 2005 show that both the number of doctors and the hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants decreased more than half of the values found for 1980. Health statistics for middle sized cities fared better than Istanbul but are nevertheless much behind the average values for the country.

Table 9. Number of Doctors per 1,000 persons

Year	1980	2002 ⁷	2010
Turkey	0,55	1,35	1,65
	100	2,45	300
Istanbul	1,65	2,22	1,89
	100	134	114
Av. 46 Cities	0,23	0,93	1,56
	100	404	678

Source: Health Statistics

Table 10. Number of Beds per 1,000 persons

Year	1980	2002 ⁸	2010
Turkey	2,20	2,19	2,50
	100	99	114
Istanbul	5,53	2,78	2,33
	100	50	42
Av. 46 Cities	1,60	2,87	2,54
	100	179	159

Source: Health Statistics

3.4. Municipal Revenues

We have also explored the change in total municipal revenues and the local revenues per capita after 1980. This variable also provides clues about the growth potential of the middle sized cities studied. As shown in the following Table, total municipal revenues per person calculated for the middle sized cities dropped more than 30 percent between 1980 and 2000, while for Istanbul 9 percent increase is observed.

Table 11. Change in the Total Municipality Revenues per person

Years	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	1,00	1,00	1,00
Istanbul	1,10	1,65	1,20
	100	150	109
Average of 46 Cities	1,04	0,78	0,71
	100	75	68

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

⁷ 2002 values divided by the population of 2000

⁸ 2002 values divided by the population of 2000

Table 12. Change in the Local Revenues of Municipalities per person

Years	1980	1990	2000
Turkey	1,00	1,00	1,00
Istanbul	1,94	2,14	1,43
	100	110	74
Average of 46 Cities	0,70	0,59	0,66
	100	84	94

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Table 12 indicates that between the years 1980 and 2000 the local revenues per person decreased both for Istanbul and middle sized cities. However, the change is more dramatic (-26,02 percent compared to -5,07 percent for the average of 46 middle sized cities. This finding is reaffirmed the conclusion arrived at by the author a decade ago. It reads, “The findings of the study ascertained the uneven distribution of the citizens’ already too limited contribution to the municipalities’ revenues. Contrary to what is expected, people living in low income, low service-level regions pay a higher share of their personal income than their peers in high income regions. The equalization effect of the transfers from central government does not work properly. A significant amount of such transfers is distributed among municipalities solely on the basis of population”. (Ersoy, 1999:92).

3.5. Political Attitude

Final variable investigated is the change in the political attitude of the constituencies inhabiting in these cities. As shown at the following Table, Turkey is not an exception regarding the general trend in which conservatism went hand in hand with neoliberal ideology throughout the World. The sum of right wing votes increased steadily both for Turkey, Istanbul and middle sized cities. The share of right wing votes in Middle sized cities increased from 55 percent to 71 percent between the years 1977 and 2011 despite the detrimental effects of neoliberal policies on these cities. This finding is to be investigated by the political scientists and analysts.

Table 13. Change in the Political Attitude (%)

Year		Center-Right	Conserv.	National.	Sum of Right Wing	Social Democrat	Kurdish Movement	Socialist	Sum of Left Wing
2011	Turkey	0,8	51,8	14,3	66,9	26,2	6,6	0,2	33,0
	Istanbul	0,5	51,8	10,7	62,9	31,5	5,3	0,2	37,0
	46 Cities	0,7	54,8	16,1	71,5	20,8	7,4	0,3	28,5
2002	Turkey	20,0	36,8	17,3	74,1	11,9	6,2	1,0	19,1
	Istanbul	12,3	41,0	14,7	68,0	25,2	5,5	1,3	32,0
	46 Cities	13,9	42,9	16,5	73,3	16,7	7,1	2,9	26,7
1999	Turkey	26,2	15,4	19,5	61,1	31,0	4,8	1,2	37,0
	Istanbul	22,2	21,3	11,2	54,7	39,4	4,0	1,6	45,0
	46 Cities	15,5	23,5	24,0	63,0	25,4	7,5	1,0	33,9
1995	Turkey	39,8	21,4	8,6	69,8	30,0	3,6	0,2	33,8
	Istanbul	38,1	23,9	4,0	66,1	25,4	4,2	0,5	30,0

1977	46 Cities	37,1	24,5	10,4	72,1	21,5	5,6	0,2	27,3
	Turkey	38,8	8,5	6,4	53,7	43,7	0,0	0,1	43,8
	Istanbul	29,6	6,6	2,7	38,9	60,6	0,0	0,3	60,9
	46 Cities	36,9	11,5	6,8	55,1	40,1	0,0	5,2	45,3

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute

Conclusion

The ideological project of neoliberalism which became effective following the oil crises during 1970's is presented as "the sole alternative" and the indisputable solution to the prevalent economic crises. Hayek went further asserting that, market freedom came before democratic freedom because 'only capitalism makes democracy possible' (quoted in Turner 2007: 73).

Until 1980 military coup Turkey followed the well known economic policy named as "import substitution" which required tight customs and fiscal regimes with strong government intervention in the economy. At the end of 1983, the new civilian government in power announced that their philosophy of government derived from liberalization, private ownership and democratization principles and promised substantial legal changes to this end. This policy is in effect since then in Turkey.

The ideology of "marketization of the society" has an impact on the political and spatial organization of the nation states. Decentralization policies have been supported in the name of economic efficiency and competition. In terms of political development it is claimed that decentralization and democracy goes hand in hand (Ersoy:2001). Local development by local initiatives through local elites or local alliances is alleged to create growth machines at local level.

This paper aims to investigate the impact of neo-liberal policies which have been pursued in Turkey since 1980 on the demographic and socioeconomic development of the middle sized cities in Turkey.

In this study an attempt is made to show by using official statistics that the implementation of neoliberal policies in Turkey did not result in impressive social and economic development in middle sized cities. In fact contrary to the arguments in favor of the view that decentralization will bring competitive leverage at the local level, the indicators studied show the opposite. In other words, the official statistics between the years 1980 and 2000 compiled by the Turkish Statistical Institute concerning demographic, economic and social indicators, display the uneven development in spatial terms between middle sized cities and the most developed metropolis of the country, Istanbul.

In the paper this uneven development between the middle sized cities and Istanbul is traced from 1980s onwards for various social, economic and demographic indicators, in order to rebut the presumptions of neoliberal approaches.

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