

FLEXIBILITY ESNEKLİK

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Flexibility

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Preface

Flexibility

This book consists of the selected papers presented at the International Conference of Political Economy, the fourth in a series of political economy conferences. As the previous three, the fourth conference was held in Kocaeli, on September 27-29, 2012 and organized by Kocaeli University in collaboration with the University of Westminster, UK, Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic, Technical University of Ostrava, Czech Republic, and IRES Piemonte, Italy. The conference has been supported by a range of institutions including Social Research Foundation (SAV), Turkish Social Sciences Association (TSBD), Journal of İş Güç, Akademia Sosyal Bilimler Indeksi (ASOS), Journal of Çalışma ve Toplum, Ijopec Publication, and financially assisted by Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (TCMB), Petroleum, Chemical and Rubber Industry Workers' Union of Turkey (Petrol-İş), Kocaeli Chamber of Industry (KSO), and Türkiye İş Bankası (İşbank).

We would like to thank all supporters and contributors to the conference, including the invited speakers and the scientific committee, as well as other participants.

Introduction

Since 1970s the adaptation of flexible policies and practices to the almost all areas of life has been so prevalent in many countries around the world. Mostly, the spreading of these policies was explored with neoliberal ideology and globalization that emerged as a solution to the crisis of capitalism in the 1970s. In other words, the concept of flexibility which is put forward in order to accommodate the changes in the neoliberal globalization age, appears in various venues ranging from the ingredients of economic activities to the geographical space, from the process of production to the labour regime, from the nation state to various political institutions and ways of doing politics, from the basic social institutions such as family to ethnic and religious identities. On the other hand, flexibility bears the potential for social contradictions and struggles; it includes new forms of dependency and risk along with possibilities of progress and freedom. Because of its broad coverage, the different forms and meanings of flexibility can be discussed within various interdisciplinary frameworks. Therefore, the papers in this book cover a range of topics related to main theme of the conference, titled “flexibility”, from social movements to subcontracting and reforms in public administration, urban labour to flexibility and alienation in employment and labour relations, place-branding to transporting and traffic infrastructure. In addition the studies explore different aspects of flexibility covering various parts of the world and thus address the issue at the global level. The authors attempt to discuss conceptual and actual appearances of the flexibility as a whole, reaching beyond the limits of economics, politics and labour relations.

The first study of the book deals with social movements. In his paper, titled “Contemporary Social Movements in Historical Context: Is a Progressive Alliance Possible?”, Mike O’Donnell compares the radicalism of the nineteen sixties with contemporary social movement radicalism mainly in Britain and the United States. He draws attention similarities between these movements that are an activist orientation to issues; a tentative, even sceptical approach to ideology; development of a life-style radicalism sometimes expressed as a convergence of the personal and the political; a commitment to democratic participation beyond representative democracy; and the development of independent means of communication. Focusing on the major factors involved in systemic change and addressed in both periods, he concludes with an as-

assessment of the potential for a progressive alliance of several contemporary groupings.

The second and third papers of this book deal with flexibility in public administration and public policies. Onur Ender Aslan's paper, titled "Subcontracting in the Public Sector as the Capital Accumulation Process", examines the subcontracting as one of the major constitutive elements of flexibility in public personnel regime in the post-1980 period by focusing on Turkish case. This article argues that subcontracting in the state has created a new capital accumulation area for the capital, because the services that carried out by public employees have been subcontracted, allowing the capital to determine surplus value by primary distribution channel. Thus, Aslan draws attention subcontracting in the public sector as the capital accumulation process through the case of Turkey from 1980s to present-day.

The paper titled "Thoughts on Public Administration Reform in Turkey" looks into the whole process of public administration reform through the conceptual framework of new public management and post-new public management. Focusing on the Turkish administrative reforms undertaken since 1980s, Selime Güzelsarı and Hülya Kendir argue that the study of public administration reform in the era of neoliberal globalization requires analysis of state restructuring in that public administration reform trends have been promoted by privatization, deregulation, commercialization, and marketization of public services together with a number of legal and institutional changes in Turkey.

The three papers of this book deal with flexibility in employment and labour relations. Firstly, focusing on İzmit Gypsies, Örgen Uğurlu looks into the impacts of urban transformation projects operate as a conversion of urban areas into new areas of rent by removing their former inhabitants and transferring those areas to the middle and upper income groups. In her study, titled "The Others in the Production of Urban Labor: The Case of İzmit Gypsies", she argues that declassed people of the system of capitalist accumulation, with no regular and secure work and subsequently income, drop out of the well structured urban areas. In the study, the Gypsy population in the province of Kocaeli is discussed with regard to both their displacement process and their re-settlement conditions depending on economic income levels and their identity, in the light of the findings of the search carried out in İzmit town.

Secondly, Mehmet Rauf Kesici's study, titled "Alternative Suggestions to Flexibility and Deregulation Policies on Enhancement of Interactive Relation between Growth and Employment in Turkey" deals with possible alternative measures to flexibility and deregulation, which could have a positive impact on the relationship between growth and employment. In other words, in contrast to the labour market approaches suggested by mainstream neoliberalism, he adopts an approach that emphasizes the role of public policy and changing economic mentality, as well as the importance of democratic participation. Finally, Kesici discuss how macroeconomic labour force planning, activating vocational education, extending active labour market policies and adjusting working hours affects employment generation in Turkey.

Thirdly, in the paper titled "Critical Analysis Of New Work Relations And Flexible Specialization: Are You Among Those Whom We Could Not Alienate?", Orkun Saip Durmaz attempts to explain the approaches of new labor relations and flexibility concerning with organization and management of work, assume an assertive claim as overcoming alienation in capitalist labour process. He is discussing that it is really possible that the flexible specialization re-skill the worker and enable worker to join indecision-making process in the axis of alienation debates. Therefore, this study argue that the characteristics of new labour relations do not certainly transform the essential features of capitalist labour process and the alienation of worker from his/her own product, his/her self-being and his/her social environment, is still fundamental characteristic of the new labour relations.

Gülçin Tunç's paper, titled "Place-Branding As a Strategic Tool For Market-Oriented Urban Planning" deals with the "branding discourse" is to a large extent utilized for the legitimization of the rapid and intensive urban transformation process that the Turkish cities are currently going through. Focusing on the recent tourism development in Bursa, this study argues that neo-liberal urbanization requires the re-organization of the urban planning regime and its main objective is to elaborate on the nature of this re-organization. In addition, Tunç draws attention that this re-organization indicates a critical diversion of urban planning from its ontological roots since the balance that urban planning is supposed to find between public and private interests over land is shifting in favor of the latter by the very intervention of the neo-liberal state.

Josef Botlík, in his paper titled “Precedence Analysis of the Relation between the Evolution of the European Population and the Transport Infrastructure” develops a method to examine the changes in population and the transport infrastructure of the European countries. By using precedence matrices, he compares the population flows between the bordering countries and the changes in traffic infrastructure. Therefore, this study argues that precedence analysis allows us to compare dimensions, which are normally hardly to compare by using classical analytical methods.

The paper titled “The Impact of the State Interventions on the Traffic Infrastructure Financing”, by Milena Botlíková argues that development of the traffic infrastructure is being combined with the economic growth, raising employment and investors’ interest. Focusing on declining income levels of State Fund for Traffic Infrastructure in Czech Republic, she tries to analyze the reasons of this change by using regression analysis. She argues that if there are nonsystematic interventions in tax items and the road tolls, it is not possible to make financial sources for subsequent growth on traffic infrastructure.

Despite the wide range they come from, many of the papers in this book emphasize the radical changes concerning flexible practices and policies spreading worldwide and point to neo-liberal globalization, emerged as a solution to the crisis of capitalism in the 1970s, as one of the most important sources of these processes. We think that it is possible to display the dynamics of this transformation concerning flexibility and to develop alternative policies and practices across the world, as the papers in this collection attempt to do. So, we hope that, this would provide significant contribution to solving the problems caused by flexible practices and policies.

As the outcome of the fourth international conference of political economy, the papers in this volume, cover a range of topics, related to the conference theme of “flexibility”, from social movements to subcontracting and reforms in public administration, urban labour to flexibility and alienation in employment and labour relations, place-branding to transporting and traffic infrastructure. Despite the wide range they come from, many of the papers in this book emphasize the radical changes concerning flexible practices and policies spreading worldwide and point to neo-liberal globalization, emerged as a solution to the crisis of capitalism in the 1970s, as one of the most important sources of these processes. We think that it is possible to display the dynamics of this transformation concerning flexibility and to develop alternative policies and practices across the world, as the papers in this collection attempt to do. So, we hope that, this would provide significant contribution to solving the problems caused by flexible practices and policies.

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