

TURKEY’S AUTHORITARIAN REGIME OF ACCUMULATION: DEVELOPMENT BY DISLOCATION

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Addressing foreign capital investors at a meeting hosted by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges in July 2017, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then the President of the Turkish Republic, infamously defended the extended state of emergency – following an attempted coup in the previous year – as was good for business:

We keep the State of Emergency so that our business community can work better. I am asking you, do you have any troubles, any barriers in the business world? When we came to power there was [another] State of Emergency in place. Yet all the factories were being threatened by [labour] strikes. Remember those days. Is it at all the case today? On the contrary. Now we intervene immediately at any threat of a strike. We say No, we do not allow strikes here because you cannot debilitate our business community.¹

This is perhaps the most vivid illustration of how the rising authoritarian rule under Erdoğan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP in its Turkish acronym) within the last decade was wedded to the aggressive neoliberalisation that marked much of the same era. Many have, indeed, used the analytic of ‘authoritarian neoliberalism’ in explicating Turkey’s more recent trajectory under the AKP rule, albeit through different entry points. Tansel (2019), for instance, mobilises the concept to denote the

¹ <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/326078/erdogandan-itiraf-ohalle-grevlere-musaade-etmiyoruz>, authors’ translation.

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process of executive centralisation in the country's urban governance, through which the state apparatus is used to facilitate capital flows and extend commodification of urban land and housing. Tansel argues that centralisation not only articulates and accelerates a state-led commodification process by rendering the executive branch as the main arbiter of social and economic policy, but also curtails mechanisms of democratic contestation and voicing dissent. Özden *et al.* (2017), on the other hand, frames the trajectory of neoliberalisation in Turkey as a history of different configurations of authoritarianism *vis-à-vis* deepened conflicts unleashed by the country's integration into neoliberal globalisation. Accordingly, while the AKP's hegemonic project has always been authoritarian, its contemporary and specific form – police and judiciary-centered security state and the Islamist discourse – has been triggered by factors that made control over the state apparatus crucial to quash social and political opposition. Similarly, Adaman *et al.* (2019) and Adaman and Akbulut (forthcoming) identify a continuity in the authoritarian state form in Turkey and posit its more recent guise, together with developmentalism and populism, as a mechanism for reproducing the AKP's rule within a context of heightened social and ecological costs, and as signalling a breakdown of broad-based consent and societal legitimacy.

While building on these accounts, we aim to take a different path and elucidate a particular regime of accumulation that took shape under authoritarian neoliberalism in Turkey, distinct in the interlinked flows of resources, capital and labour that it mobilises. Many have observed that Turkey's contemporary developmental regime fundamentally depends on the expropriation of resources and space, thereby invoking the concept of accumulation by dispossession. Yet, we claim that the analytic of 'dispossession' is inadequate in capturing the broader constellation of markets, state and capital in which flows of resources and labour are mobilised and redirected to specific aims. Instead, we use the term '*accumulation by dislocation*' to emphasise that this regime relies not only on the expropriation of resources, but also on their dislocation and transformation.

More specifically, we use the qualifier 'dislocation', rather than dispossession, to point to the visibly spatial organisation in which the expropriation of resources into circuits of capital is taking place. Secondly, we utilise the term to tackle the aftermath of the 'moment' of dispossession – *ie.* considering what happens to the expropriated means of production and the dispossessed, the mechanisms by which they are managed and the

ends toward which they are mobilised. In doing so, we illustrate that a distinct logic exists in the state's participation in accumulation processes, as both the spatial organisation of dispossession and that of its aftermath are closely tied to the role played by the state, especially under its authoritarian form.

Our argument deploys the case of Artvin, a provincial region in Northeastern Anatolia, where we conducted extensive field research between 2012-18. The region has been the target of intensive hydropower development and mining investments for much of Republican history, but more pronouncedly within the last decade. We demonstrate that this recent influx set-off dynamics that not only comprise dispossession processes but also, more importantly, the dislocation and mobilisation of the dispossessed (labour), as well as the extracted materials and energy, away from the region to urban industrial centers. Both the separation of producers from their means of (re)production and the subsequent incorporation of labour, energy and raw materials into circuits of accumulation took spatial forms organised and managed by the Turkish state under neoliberal authoritarianism: it mediated the flows of labour, materials and energy through a constellation of markets, incentives and actors, on the one hand, and increased reliance on authoritarian measures, on the other. This process further intimates a particular form of developmentalism shaped under authoritarian neoliberalism, where the Turkish state marshals flows of capital, materials, energy and labour to specific ends – not through explicit action, but via the construction and organisation of markets (see also Arsel *et al.* forthcoming).

While the role of the state in organising and mobilising this particular form of accumulation is a focal point in our argument, we do not see state involvement, or even increased state involvement, as the distinguishing feature of authoritarian neoliberalism. States have always actively constructed, instituted and facilitated market operations, even (and no less) under neoliberalism (Madra and Adaman 2018). Beyond the recognition that different processes of neoliberalisation have historically been accompanied by varying types and levels of state involvement (Peck and Tickell 2002), as convincingly argued by Bruff (2014), neoliberal reform has always been envisioned as a mobilisation of non-market institutions, including the state, rather than their annihilation. As Tansel (2017: 2) underlines, although contemporary neoliberalism – especially after the 2008/9 crisis – reinforces and increasingly relies upon coercive state practices (that discipline, marginalise and criminalise oppositional social

forces), as well as judicial and administrative state apparatuses (that limit the opportunity sets of the opposition), this does not suggest 'that the deployment of coercive state apparatuses for the protection of the circuits of capital accumulation is a new phenomenon', nor 'that the pre-crisis trajectories of neoliberalisation have been exclusively consensual'. In that sense, we join those who do not see as exceptional the increased scope and scale of the state's role in contemporary neoliberalism. Instead, we locate the authoritarian turn in the specific constellation of practices and discourses that both restructure the state and refashion state-society relationships around heightened centralisation, smothering of social opposition and increased use of coercion.

Furthermore, we conceptualise neoliberalism not exclusively as an extension and/or deepening of marketisation or commodification *per se* (see, *eg.*, Bruff 2014), but rather as the economisation of the social and political realms (Madra and Adaman 2014, 2018; Adaman *et al.* 2019). That is, we, understand it as a mode of governing, where all social and political issues are to be resolved by creating appropriate economic incentives and, relatedly, producing subjectivities and conditions that are conducive for market relations to be institutionalised. Understood as such, 'neoliberalism can accommodate a range of theoretical and political positions with diverse policy implications, including those that can be identified as state interventionism' (Adaman *et al.* 2019: 519). Within the context of authoritarian neoliberalism, then, we do not locate neoliberalism in state involvement to extend marketisation, but rather in how that involvement – economization – re-organises the social ontology. That very imposition, which has taken a more authoritarian form since the 2008/9 crisis, is central in correctly locating contemporary neoliberal states. Framed as such, we echo Bruff (2019: 375), who claimed that 'neoliberalism is fundamentally about the coercive, nondemocratic, and unequal reorganisation of societies'.

Our argument, thus, focuses not only on the role that the Turkish state plays in extending, constructing, facilitating, mediating and/or participating in markets. More importantly, it addresses how it effectively renders the rural space as a resource and people as human capital to be mobilised to developmentalist aims. In so doing, we aim to contribute to the literature on authoritarian neoliberalism, as well as the massive scholarly tradition on accumulation by dispossession.

From dispossession to dislocation

Building on Marx's (1977 [1867]) original formulation of enclosures and primitive accumulation, the conceptual framework of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2005) – with its various extensions, such as accumulation by decarbonisation (Bumpus and Liverman 2008), by conservation (Büscher and Fletcher 2015), by securitisation (Massé and Lunstrum 2016) and by contamination (Demaria 2010) – has gained renewed relevance in describing processes that (re)shape the space-state-capital nexus in a variety of settings within contemporary capitalism. Such reworkings of the concept can be taken to underscore its purchase as an analytical category, as this scholarship reveals how extra-economic forms of capital accumulation (*ie.* those outside of appropriation of surplus value through relations of production) are acquiring ascending significance.

Concomitant to the revamped literature on accumulation by dispossession, the concept itself has come under scrutiny and further elaboration. A main issue taken-up within this context relates to the protagonists of dispossession. Li (2014) and Hall (2013), for instance, point out that dispossession is not always carried-out by capital and/or the state, and that small producers themselves can initiate waves of dispossession. In particular, they draw attention to how aspiring small producers can be the ones enclosing forms of rural commons in efforts to take advantage of opportunities presented by the introduction of cash crops, and the asymmetric market dynamics whereby more successful farmers buy up the lands of the less successful ones. Furthering this line of critique, Li (2014) challenges the assumptions around the much-romanticized notion of small producers/farmers by illustrating that the small producer is not necessarily a defender of common property, nor is the field of rural economy one marked by the absence of market relations. Levien (2018), somewhat similarly, takes issue with understanding of capital as a monolithic category; instead, arguing that different processes of dispossession benefit different fractions of capital.

An equally important theme within this debate is related to the aftermath of dispossession. Hall (2013), for instance, takes issue with the assumption that dispossession leads to the conversion of (expropriated) means of production into capitalist property and formalisation of property rights. Li (2014), on the other hand, rightly criticises the functionalist readings of the concept of accumulation by dispossession, and challenges, in particular, the assumed link between dispossession and emergence of wage

labour. Arguing that the dispossessed masses are not automatically (or ever) incorporated into circuits of capital as wage labourers, she rather points to regimes of managing the dispossessed. In a similar vein, Read (2002) argues that both capital and wage labour are produced in the sense that the temporal and spatial coincidence of the two cannot be assumed *a priori*; and Hall (2013) emphasises that even when the dispossessed masses are eventually incorporated into circuits of capital, this often happens with a temporal and spatial discrepancy.

Perhaps a more fundamental point is related to what exactly constitutes dispossession. An implicit assumption within different operationalisations of the term is the suppression and transfer of existing (common) rights to resources – be it through privatisation or statisation, market mechanisms, or use of legal or extra-legal force. Li (2014), for instance, adopts quite an expansive definition of dispossession that includes forms of transfer of property rights through market exchanges, *eg.* stress sales of land. In Li's account, then, there is not much that distinguishes dispossession from the inequality-producing tendencies of market dynamics, or market transactions between private property holders that result in asset concentration. This is, however, in contrast to more conventional understandings of dispossession as expropriation of rights to different forms of social wealth held in common, drawing on Marx's original formulation of primitive accumulation. Yet, as Atasoy (2017) demonstrates, such expropriation can also take the form of commodification of lands and resources under state jurisdiction. Relatedly, dispossession does not only imply the suppression of (formalised) ownership rights, but includes the eradication of access and use rights that provide material and immaterial bases of (re)production. Seen in this light, dispossession is better understood, to paraphrase Sevilla-Buitrago's (2015: 1003) take on enclosures and dispossession, as a mode of spatial alienation that erodes social and material links that enable a 'community to produce itself as a work of its own'.

What we aim to do here is to further complicate the framework of accumulation by dispossession, building on the case of Turkey's contemporary developmental regime, along two interrelated dimensions. Firstly, in much of the literature on accumulation by dispossession, the role of the state is left unaddressed and/or implicitly assumed to be limited to

passing appropriate legislation.² Yet, in-practice, nation-states increasingly emerge as actors both choreographing a particular dynamic between markets and capital, and participating in processes of capital accumulation. In turn, comprehending how state involvement might imply logics beyond being mere tools at the service of capital in not only providing the conditions of dispossession but orchestrating – *ie.* building, participating in and mediating – a certain mode of accumulation, calls for a more comprehensive and analytical treatment of the roles assumed by the state. Tackling the role of the state more capaciously is all the more pressing within the context of authoritarian neoliberalism, as the restructuring of state powers widen and deepen its involvement within regimes of accumulation.

Secondly, in its recent uses, the notion of accumulation by dispossession has largely been divorced from the intertwined dynamics of the physical-spatial transformations and changing forms of labour that this process engenders. Dispossession, itself a territorial articulation organised within spatial mechanisms (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015), does not only imply a change in rights and control over resources, but also the form and objective of their use with obvious socio-spatial implications. More fundamentally, the literature on dispossession pays inadequate attention to how the dispossessed, on the one hand, and the means of (re)production they are alienated from, on the other, are mobilised within a subsequent regime of accumulation. Our point here is not only that the encounter of money and worker is contingent (Read 2002: 29), echoing the critical perspectives we summarised above, but that both the production of labour and capital as such, and their incorporation into circuits of accumulation, need to be organised and managed within spatial arrangements. This organisation and management can take a variety of forms under different political economic and regulatory regimes, including neoliberalism.

These two dimensions, on which the literature on accumulation is largely silent, are critical in explicating Turkey's contemporary developmental regime under authoritarian neoliberalism. Many scholars of Turkey's contemporary development have observed the qualitative differences that

² A notable exception is Levien (2015), who argues that the state needs to assume an active role to ensure that dispossession is not contested, often through using a combination of coercion, legitimacy (*ie.* the perception that dispossession is instrumental for investments in public interest) and material concessions. While we agree with Levien's point, a more comprehensive and analytical treatment of the roles assumed by the state is required.

mark this era – be it in the way that capital-state relations are forged, the shifts in the structural composition of the economy, or the predominance of financialisation. But it is the ascent of extractive sectors, such as construction, energy and mining, that has been the hallmark of the AKP's regime of developmentalism. These revamped venues of accumulation are marked with the explicit and visible role that the state assumed in their restructuring, as a series of critical changes in the legal infrastructure – ranging from market liberalisation measures to centralisation of policy making – enabled their boom. The restructuring and liberalisation of energy markets were consolidated under AKP rule to open fields of energy investments previously beyond reach to the private sector, most notably coal and hydropower, buttressed by consistent relaxation of environmental legislation that could halt the development of the sector (Erensü 2017). In the case of construction, state expropriations of land for purposes of redevelopment and unlatching of public lands into construction investments were eased, triggering a new wave of land commodification and marketisation. Concomitant to the appropriation of space and resources inherent to the ascent of extractive sectors has been the proliferation of urban and environmental resistances, unprecedented in scope and public visibility. From the Gezi Uprising of 2013 (Arsel *et al.* 2019) to neighborhood resistances against gentrification, mobilisations against mega projects and rural revolts against mushrooming energy plants, the defense of rural and urban commons has been a common thread that social opposition has built on in this era .

Undergirding this 'neoliberal' turn was an authoritarian one that built on centralisation, top-down decision-making and use of coercion. Existing legislation was modified, eliminated and/or sidetracked through a heavy reliance on executive measures, such as governmental decrees and eminent domain – both within the context of urban governance (Tansel 2019) and that of rural land and environmental protection. Governmental decrees have been systematically utilised to amend land-zoning provisions and designated protection statuses to allow energy, construction and mining investments (Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming), or to provide legal exemptions for particular projects. Eminent domain, on the other hand, has become almost a commonplace practice under the AKP regime, with a total of 2,186 cases until the end of 2018, with an overwhelming majority of land expropriations carried out for construction, infrastructure or energy projects. As has been observed (Tansel 2019; Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming), such streamlining of social and economic decision-making

– often justified on grounds of executive efficiency – does not merely imply a centralisation of state powers but, more fundamentally, serves to block and/or preempt mechanisms of contestation and opposition. Perhaps the most egregious example of this is the AKP's systematic practice of shielding especially large-scale infrastructural projects from the environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes. Despite the fact that EIA is operationalised more as a bureaucratic formality than a genuine and democratic process, it had become a primary vehicle through which both civil society actors and local communities could mobilise opposition and public awareness.

That the ascent of construction, energy and mining coincided with the authoritarian turn under the AKP is no accident. These sectors rely fundamentally on the state's ability to claim and redirect land and resources effectively, while simultaneously insulating itself from contestation (Adaman *et al.* 2017), through direct expropriations (either ordinary or under eminent domain), revision of zoning designations and commercialisation of public lands (Atasoy 2017). The processes of dispossession under the AKP included not only a transfer of private property rights from small/subsistence producers to capital, but also the eradication of rights to common and public resources under dynamics of executive centralisation and top-down decision-making. In this sense, authoritarianism has been inherent to, and a prerequisite of, the contemporary regime of developmentalism in Turkey. It also served to block and suppress opposition – both by blocking existing venues of social contestation, and the heightened use of force against urban and environmental resistances and their continued criminalization under the rhetoric that they were orchestrated by forces acting against the country's progress and development (Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming).

Perhaps more importantly, the developmentalist appeal of these sectors was integral to reproducing the hegemonic project of the Turkish state. Within a context where the state has historically acquired consent to its claim to rule through the promise of modernisation via economic growth – constructed as the collective interest of the people – the symbolic and material significance of these sectors have garnered support and legitimacy. Construction, energy and mining projects initiated in this period have unexceptionally been framed as key contributors to economic growth, defended in terms of employment creation, and cast as endeavors that will benefit all. The authoritarian clamping-down was, thus,

effectively fastened to the developmental promise through which social support was achieved and grievances were pre-empted.

This accumulation regime, coupled with the rolling-out of the World Bank-backed liberalisation of agriculture through the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP), led to new forms of dispossession and proletarianisation, massive rural-urban migration, and radical changes in the patterns of land use (Keyder and Yenal 2011). While this process suggests a familiar picture of accumulation by dispossession, we argue that it actually depicts a more complicated dynamic. We claim that a specific form of accumulation has gained prominence in contemporary Turkey, distinct in the interlinked flows of resources, capital and labour that it mobilises, which would only inadequately be described as accumulation by dispossession.

Instead, we propose the concept of *accumulation by dislocation*, to highlight that Turkey's contemporary developmental strategy relies heavily not only on the expropriation of resources (and space), but also on their dislocation and transformation. We use the term dislocation with the aim of capturing the spatial dynamics through which resources and labour are organised into circuits of capital and mobilised towards industrial urban centers. In doing so, we draw particular attention to (i) the shifts in prevalent forms of labour, (ii) the changes in the use of land and space, (iii) spatial arrangements that accompany the process and aftermath of dispossession, and (iv) the changing nature of the state's participation in accumulation processes. We argue that this regime of accumulation is a particular form of developmentalism, shaped under authoritarian neoliberalism.

While we claim that this dynamic is more broadly discernable as a regime of accumulation in contemporary Turkey, we will focus on the case of Artvin, a provincial region located at the Northeast corner of the country, to demonstrate our argument. Our analysis makes use of fieldwork conducted in the region intermittently between 2012-18, as well as in Western industrial centers Bursa and Kocaeli, which have been primary destinations of migration flows out of the region.³ While the initial impetus

³ The first round of the field study was conducted in October 2012, followed by three more rounds in August-September 2013, May 2014 and January 2018, respectively. The field study comprised in-depth interviews held with locals residing in the region, as well as those who had migrated to Bursa and Kocaeli. A total of 42 interviews were held. We would like

for our focus in the region was provided by the widespread local resistances against hydropower plants (Akbulut *et al.* 2018), the qualitative data we employ here builds on an expanded analytical and empirical scope that includes in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted between 2012 and 2018 with local residents, administrators and environmental activists, in addition to locals who migrated to Western industrial centers.

Dislocating nature, shifting people: The case of Artvin

I cannot help but wonder if the actual issue is to de-populate the region as a whole. In order to use the water more freely, to extract the mines more easily (Yıldırım, Mayor of Ardanuç 2012).

We were doing fieldwork in the region in 2012 on local resistance movements against small-scale hydropower plants when we were struck by the words of the mayor of Ardanuç, an eastern township of Artvin provincial region, quoted above. The mayor was referring, first and foremost, to the micro-hydro power plants (HPPs) that had mushroomed in the region after the energy market liberalisation of the mid-2000s (Adaman *et al.* 2016). But he was also appealing to a broader dynamic by which the heightened flow of extractive investments into the region was dismantling the conditions that sustained rural communities and pushing them out in seeking livelihoods in urban centers; that ‘they are taking everything away from the people but doing nothing to maintain them in the region’. Similar remarks were repeated by an environmental lawyer/activist from the region two months later, during a workshop we held in Istanbul, where he framed the interlinked processes of environmental destruction and hydropower development as a more comprehensive – and intentional – project of ‘depopulationisation’ in order to convert Artvin into a region that ‘spits out’ raw materials, rather than a space where communities live.

Artvin has been the target of intensive hydropower development and mining investments for much of the Republican history, but more pronouncedly within the last decade. In addition to the three big dams associated with the gigantic Çoruh River Basin Development Plan and

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enormous Yusufeli Dam expected to be completed by the end of 2020, the liberalisation of Turkey's energy market made the region a hotspot for small-scale hydropower investments. These small-scale, diversion type run-of-river hydropower plants –which re-route streams to a suitable height by covered channels, from where they are dropped on turbines – mushroomed after the mid-2000s. There are around 100 planned HPPs within Artvin provincial area, of which 28 are operational and seven are under construction, in addition to more than 14 that are in various stages of licensing.⁴ While the construction and operation of HPPs do not require large tracts of land, their impact on the local availability of water has been critical, not least due to the appropriation of streams at their source and building of several consecutive plants on a given stream. Reduced water availability, in turn, did not only hurt market-oriented irrigated farming, but also subsistence production and livestock grazing due to its reportedly adverse impacts on pastures.

The region's hydraulic potential is matched by its mineral wealth, in particular gold and copper. Numerous mining projects – mostly at exploratory stages – are ongoing, some of which have gained high public visibility, such as the contested Cerrattepe gold mine. According to the General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA in its Turkish acronym), there are 11 active mines and 22 confirmed deposits within the provincial region.⁵ While exact figures on land use by mining are notoriously difficult to obtain, 39.5 percent of all land within the provincial region had been licensed to mining companies as of 2016, adding-up to almost 300,000 hectares under 153 licenses.⁶ It is safe to assume that this figure has only increased since then. For instance, in 2019, news broke of two large mining concessions – approximating 3,500 and 4,000 hectares, respectively – being given to companies known to be close to the government.⁷ Finally, this rush to hydropower and mining has taken place against the backdrop of massive out-migration, as 5-7 percent of the province's population migrated every year from 2008 to 2018.⁸

4 <https://www.enerjiatlasi.com/sehir/artvin/>.

5 <https://www.mta.gov.tr/v3.0/sayfalar/hizmetler/maden-haritalari/artvin.pdf>.

6 <https://www.birgun.net/haber/dogu-karadeniz-deki-6-kentin-yuzde-38-7-si-madenlere-ayrilmis-108546>.

7 <https://www.artvinden.com/artvin-hod-maden-projesinde-halkin-katilim-toplantisi-yapilacak/>, and <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2019/08/30/cengiz-ve-kalyoncu-artvinde-yeni-maden-sahasi-acacak/>.

8 Data compiled by authors from address-based population registry system.

That the influx of energy and mining capital often implies large scale dispossession of rural producers is now well discussed. Yet, we claim that the dynamics we observe point to something more than dispossession that cannot be adequately captured by it. We argue, in particular, that they comprise an accumulation regime that dislocates and mobilises labour, raw materials and energy from the region to centers of industry predominantly, but not exclusively, in Western Turkey. We call this regime *accumulation by dislocation*, rather than dispossession, for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, the term points to the spatial mechanisms through which resources and labour are organised into circuits of capital. It also complicates the notion of dispossession by shedding light on forms of alienation that fall outside of direct dispossession of producers from means of (re)production, as we demonstrate below. Secondly, the term highlights the aftermath of the moment of expropriation – *ie.* what happens to the expropriated means of production and dispossessed, through which mechanisms and towards which ends they are mobilised and managed.

Below, we focus on three dimensions to further explicate how this regime of accumulation unravels: (i) the shifts in the forms of labour in which the dispossessed producers engage, (ii) the changes in the spatial arrangements that accompany the process and aftermath of dispossession, and (iii) how the flows of different elements of accumulation (energy, labour and resources) are choreographed by the Turkish state through construction of markets and incentive mechanisms.

Forms of labour

Our interviews, both in Artvin and industrial centers like Bursa and Izmit, illustrate that extractive investments in the region have triggered a switch from subsistence-oriented activities to wage labour. Mirroring the general pattern in the region, the majority of our interviewees used to significantly rely on farming and livestock production, often with limited market-orientation, yet complemented them with some form of paid employment. With the influx of hydropower and energy investments, many were forced to switch to wage-labour as their sole source of livelihood, as they had been separated from their means of (re)production, such as land and water.

This separation took more variegated forms than the literature on accumulation by dispossession suggests. While the most evident mechanism within this context is land expropriations tied to extractive

investments, a less visible – but possibly more prevalent – dynamic is the dismantling of the conditions of production and subsistence by their indirect impacts. The reduced availability of water with the construction of HPPs had adverse impacts on small-scale agriculture and livestock production, leading many to give up livelihood activities. Furthermore, the noise and pollution associated with construction, together with micro-climatic changes, disrupted beekeeping, a prevalent source of livelihood, where many interviewees reported lost hives. These cases illustrate a form of separation through a dislocation from the spatial conditions of production and subsistence, rather than a direct dispossession from the means of production. Extractive investments dislocated and ultimately dispossessed the rural communities through undermining the (spatial) conditions of their (re)production and many have sold their land and other assets as they switched into wage labour. One of our interviewees' remarks about the expected impacts of a planned HPP project in her village in 2012, summarise what already had occurred, and was expected to happen, more broadly in the region:

Water is everything here [...] If they build [the HPP], there won't be any produce in the garden, there won't be any water in the pastures. If the pastures dry out, there won't be any hay to give to the livestock; if the grass dries out, that will put an end to livestock. If livestock ends, I'm asking you, how are we going to make money? If the water ends, we all end.

While some found employment locally in hydropower and mining projects, often as temporary staff or in subcontracting firms during construction phases, most moved to urban centers in the West or within the region seeking paid work. Significant outmigration occurred, first triggered by land expropriations associated with large dams (most notably the Yusufeli dam, displacing around 20,000 people) and perpetuated by the more recent wave of HPPs. Our interviewees framed migration as the adopted coping mechanism when bases of livelihoods were eradicated and wage labour became the only viable option. Yet migration does not guarantee or automatically imply incorporation into wage labour. Some of our interviewees had found paid employment and a few had established small businesses, but these seem to have been short-lived and precarious. In addition, migration to urban centers was not an opportunity equally available to all: both the mobility it presupposes and possibility to find employment in its aftermath, require access to networks and resources. As

succinctly put by one of our interviewees, ‘if you don’t have the chance to go anywhere else, you stay and fight [against the HPP]’.

In pointing to the changes in forms of labour, we do not imply a kind of functionalism that Li (2014) criticises as a teleological trap. In other words, we do not claim that dispossession had been undertaken explicitly and intentionally to create wage labour for fractions of capital that has benefited from the immediate processes of dispossession. While some of the dispossessed have, indeed, been incorporated into local circuits of capital as wage labourers, this has been more a strategy to preempt local resistances employed by energy and mining companies. Our argument is not about an inherent and intentional direction of this process: the separation of rural producers from their means of (re)production forced them out of their traditional networks and bases of livelihoods and subsistence, making them more dependent on wage labour. In this sense, following the original formulation by Marx, as well as later work on the continuous character of enclosures (*eg.* De Angelis 2004), we see the defining point of changing forms of labour arising from dispossession as less the moment of being incorporated into wage labour, than having to rely (to an increased extent) on the sale of labour power to secure one’s livelihood.

What the concept of dislocation opens-up for us is the spatial organisation of the separation from means of (re)production and its aftermath. This organisation reveals a specific dynamic by which the dispossessed are not directly or automatically absorbed into circuits of capital within the region (echoing Read [2002], Hall [2013] and Li [2014]). Rather, they are dislocated and mobilised to urban centers as potential or actual wage labourers, in precarious or secure conditions. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact targets of this movement, our interviews and migration statistics suggest that industrial centers in the West – such as Bursa, Istanbul and Kocaeli – have been the primary destinations precisely due to the potential of finding paid employment in industry.

Rearrangement of space

The revamped literature on accumulation by dispossession has paid only scant attention to the spatial processes through which resources are converted into capital and, subsequently, incorporated into circuits of accumulation. This lack of attention, as we discussed earlier, risks

overlooking the physical-spatial transformations wrought by the dynamics of dispossession.

The case of Artvin is a vivid demonstration that dispossession implies a change in the form and objective of the use of the means of reproduction, with obvious socio-spatial implications. Land use in the region has changed dramatically as lands previously devoted to subsistence and/or small-scale market-oriented farming are now devoted to raw material extraction and energy production. That around 40 percent of the province's area is licensed to mining companies is illustrative in this respect. Another striking example is the land expropriations associated with the massive Çoruh Basin Development Plan. The Yusufeli Dam alone required 864 hectares to be expropriated, whereas lands expropriated for the three completed dams totaled up to approximately 1,000 hectares, more than 80 percent of which had been used for agricultural purposes (Bahçalı *et al.* 2017).

This staggering shift in land use happened within an approach that crystallised during the AKP era, best encapsulated in the words of Taner Yıldız, who served as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources between 2009-15: 'we prefer [what is] beneath the land if it is richer than [what is] above it'.⁹ Recited numerous times by our interviewees, the Minister's statement points to the predominance that economic rationality gained in approaching land, where it is framed as a resource that should be allocated to its most economically valuable use, based on a calculation of costs and benefits, *ie.* economisation (Madra and Adaman 2014). This allocation has been organised and realised indirectly by the Turkish state, where it set up markets and incentive mechanisms that would bring about a redirection of land to energy and mining investments and away from the subsistence use.

A second, and interwoven, dynamic that the case of Artvin suggests is the *dislocation* of energy and extracted resources away from the region. Much like labour, energy and resources produced in the region have not been incorporated into immediate circuits of capital, but rather mobilised towards industrial centers, often in the West. While detailed data to demonstrate this movement is very difficult to acquire, we provide a few

⁹ https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=115186, authors' translation.

illustrations.¹⁰ The ratio of energy-produced to energy-consumed for the provincial region is 935 percent, which points to a huge energy surplus directed outside.¹¹ In this respect, Artvin is in stark contrast to Western industrial centers – such as Bursa (61 percent), Kocaeli (23 percent) and Istanbul (14 percent) – which emerge as energy importers. Such an outflow seems to be the case also in mining: although data on the flow of mined materials or the profits of mining firms are not available, the few big investors happen to be capital groups known to be close to the government and headquartered in Istanbul.

Our argument is not about the direction of this flow *per se*, but rather that a specific spatial organisation has been inherent to this accumulation regime. The case of Artvin demonstrates that the incorporation of resources into circuits of accumulation cannot be presumed; rather, it needs to be organised and managed, often with spatial arrangements. We claim that this process took a specific form, in which energy and extracted resources (together with labour) have been mobilised away from the region and towards urban industrial centers. It is this form and organisation that we capture by the term ‘accumulation by dislocation’.

Role of the state

The case of Artvin illustrates the layered and multiple roles that the Turkish state plays in building, participating in and mediating the processes of accumulation by dispossession. The state does not only expropriate resources acting on behalf of capital, but also – and more importantly – introduces dynamics that alienate rural communities from the spatial conditions of their (re)production. As we discussed earlier, a more pervasive dynamic of dispossession within the context of Artvin was brought by the restructuring of energy and mining sectors that have culminated in processes alienating small producers from the territorial basis of their livelihoods – not through their direct expulsion from land, but rather by undermining the spatial conditions of their (re)productive activities. In this sense, the Turkish state emerges as an actor that sets the stage for dispossession, as much as one that directly carries it out, through

10 Neither the names of mining and energy companies operating and/or licensed to operate within the region, nor their sales data, are public. Access to information requests on the issue have also been systematically denied by the AKP government.

11 <https://www.enerjiatlasi.com/sehir/>.

constructing markets and appropriate incentive mechanisms. Relatedly, the state's role in extending commodification is not limited to directly embedding rural resources – such as land and water – within market dynamics, but also includes the choreographing of markets and capital in specific ways that enable (further) commodification.

The Turkish state's role in the aftermath of dispossession is similarly an orchestrating one. As the case of Artvin illustrates, the automatic or immediate absorption of labour and resources into circuits of accumulation cannot be assumed *a priori*. They have neither been incorporated into the same circuits of capital accumulation, nor have they been absorbed by the fractions of capital that have benefitted from dispossession. The dispossessed and resources from which they are alienated have been mobilised into circuits of accumulation through the state's constellation and mediation of markets, viz. those for labour power, land, energy and extracted minerals, and its establishment of conditions conducive for their institutionalisation.

Furthermore, a particular spatial dynamic has been built into this process, as labour and resources have been dislocated away from their immediate surroundings and mobilised towards industrial urban centers. As we have illustrated above, migration to urban centers, primarily industrial cities in the West, has been concomitant to the alienation of rural communities from their means of (re)production, and the resultant switch from subsistence production into wage labour. Our interviews and desktop research suggest that energy produced and minerals extracted in the region are similarly shifted elsewhere, predominantly the West. This spatial dynamic has been driven by broader processes produced and mediated by the Turkish state, including the comprehensive wave of agricultural liberalisation with the roll-out of ARIP; ongoing eradication of rural infrastructure and extensive commodification of rural commons; and labour market policies that incentivise various forms of precarious employment. In turn, it has 'energised' and enabled the commodification of land and housing, which gained an unprecedented 'effectiveness' with the executive centralisation in urban settings (Tansel 2019), as it transported the energy and labour power that underlie the construction boom in urban centers.

What makes the case of Turkey distinct is that this orchestrating role of the state intimates a particular form of developmentalism shaped under authoritarian neoliberalism. The Turkish state has not given up on its claim on developmentalism, as modernisation and progress through rapid

economic development continues to be the strongest ideal that marks state-society relationships (Arsel 2005; Adaman *et al.* 2017). As such, it forms the most important basis through which the state can represent itself as a neutral actor embodying the collective interest of society and eliciting consent to its claim to rule (Akbulut *et al.* 2018; Akbulut 2019; Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming). This points to the fact that states, while participating and mediating accumulation processes, can become actors beyond passive instruments of capital – instead, holding motivations that pertain to the reproduction of their own existence and legitimacy.

Yet, the realisation of this project in contemporary Turkey is discernibly different than that found in traditional developmentalism. On the one hand, rather than a Rostowian logic of explicit state action directing resources to particular ends, the Turkish state emerges as a choreographer that establishes markets, incentives and participant actors, and indirectly mobilises labour, resources and capital from the countryside to industrial centers. Inherent to this choreography is the rendering of rural space as a resource and people as human capital to be allocated where it will be most efficiently used – *ie.* the economisation of economic, political, social and ecological spheres. On the other hand, increased centralisation, heavier reliance on the executive, and immobilising social contestation under authoritarianism have, together, allowed the Turkish state to move much more effectively and rapidly in constructing and mediating markets. It is in this sense that accumulation by dislocation emerges as a regime of developmentalism under authoritarian neoliberalism.

Conclusion

In the summer of 2015, a new wave of environmental resistance was sparked by the AKP's proposed Green Road project that would span the Northern coast of the country. A 2,600 km-long highway to connect the plateaus of eight provinces with tourism centers planned in 40 different locations along the route, the Green Road was defended, unsurprisingly, as a regional development project by the government. Yet, it was fiercely opposed by activists and locals, who said it would destroy traditional grazing routes and disrupt beekeeping. In addition to taking direct action (occupying the planned itinerary in tents) and initiating legal struggle, the activists started floating the idea that the younger generations still living in the region should take-up animal grazing as their livelihood *en masse*.

For them, it represented a way of reclaiming the land and reproducing the material basis of their link to rural space. It was framed as reversing the dislocation of rural communities that had paved the way for such a destructive project in the first place; it was a strategy to *relocate* and enable resistance through relocation.¹²

This anecdote speaks to how resistance and struggle have been shaped in response to processes of dislocation engendered by Turkey's contemporary developmental regime under authoritarian neoliberalism. We have used the term 'accumulation by dislocation', rather than dispossession, to explicate this regime for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, the term points to the spatial mechanisms through which resources and labour are made elements of accumulation. It complicates the notion of dispossession by shedding light on forms of alienation that fall outside of direct dispossession of producers from means of (re)production. We have argued that, within this context, an emerging dynamic has arisen from processes dismantling rural communities' conditions of subsistence/existence and dislocating them from their means of (re)production without directly expropriating them. This dynamic entails not only the liberalisation of agriculture and consequent loss of income from farming ('the push factor', according to Adaman *et al.* [2019]); more importantly, it also involves spatial-environmental impacts triggered by extractive projects which destroy the basis of livelihoods and dislocating producers by pushing them to pursue wage labour.

Secondly, the term directs our attention to the aftermath of the moment of expropriation, *i.e.* what happens to the expropriated means of production and dispossessed, the mechanisms through which they are managed, and the ends to which they are mobilised. We have argued that their incorporation into circuits of accumulation took a specific spatial form in Turkey, in which they have been dislocated from their immediate surroundings and mobilised towards urban centers. This form has been organised and managed by the Turkish state under neoliberal authoritarianism: it depended, on the one hand, on a constellation of markets, incentives and participant actors that mediated the flows of labour, materials and energy. On the other hand, this particular constellation was enabled by increased centralisation, heavier reliance on

¹² Personal communication with the first author.

the executive, and the blocking-off of social contestation under authoritarianism.

The notion of 'accumulation by dislocation' also serves as an entry-point to illustrate the active role that states can play within this context. We have demonstrated that the Turkish state cannot be seen as a passive instrument at the service of capital. Rather, it is a mobiliser of a specific developmental paradigm, in which flows of capital, materials, energy and labour are marshalled to specific ends via the construction and organisation of markets. Relatedly, we have argued that this process reproduced the Turkish state's hegemony more broadly by eliciting consent to its claim to rule. This points to the need for a more nuanced treatment of the role and logic of state involvement in processes of accumulation by dispossession.

While our argument builds on the specific case of Artvin and the contemporary form of developmentalism in Turkey, the regime of accumulation by dislocation is neither historically novel, nor unique to contemporary Turkey. As the notion complicates the framework of accumulation by dispossession, it can, indeed, be applied more broadly to explicate dynamics so far inadequately captured within this framework, *eg.* various forms of managing the production of labour and capital as such, along with their incorporation into circuits of accumulation. Perhaps more importantly, the notion sheds light on aspects that have arguably gained more global pertinence with the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism and continued appeal of developmentalism – namely, the changing logic and form of state involvement in accumulation processes.

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