

# **The Constitution of the Concept of “Development” in Turkish Political Life**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The concept of “development” is used as equal for economic growth generally; it is employed to describe a change in a country’s economy involving qualitative as well as quantitative improvements. Economic development first became a major concern after the

II. World War as the era of European colonialism ended, many former colonies and other countries with low living standards came to be termed underdeveloped countries, to contrast their economies with those of the developed countries

The concept of “development” has been also a widely debated issue throughout Turkish political life after 27 May 1960 coup. This paper will examine how the concept of “development” constructed, maintained and transformed in and through political struggles in 1960’s by different political and social groups. The paper suggests a twofold analysis of the subject- matter; an historical analysis complemented with a discourse analysis. An historical analysis, which dwells upon particular political moments as manifestations of discontinuities and continuities will illuminate the nature of economical, political and social relations paved the way for the constitution of a particular “development” discourse, and eventually prepared the conditions of its dissolution. A discourse analysis, in conjunction with the historical analysis attempts to show the ways in which development discourse articulated itself as a political project and constituted its hegemonic subjectivity and will illuminate the ways in which its counterparts articulate their challenge, undermining the certainty of its constitution

## **Introduction**

After the Second World War largely destroyed Europe was herself in need of development. Instrumental in this development was the massive aid program from the US, the Marshall Aid. This program had the double purpose to get the world economy working (in accordance with the Bretton Woods system) and to contain communism.

From the reconstruction of Europe there was a straight line to the problem of development in the new nations, known by many names: backward, underdeveloped, emergent, poor, less developed, developing etc. These countries needed to be supported for financial, technical and food needs. These countries have to make more contribution to the world trade, they have to produce more and export more in acknowledgement of the service of USA. Actually, nobody actually was caring about the welfare of the third world, but the discourse was different. Moreover, this discourse not only appropriated by the ones who put forward but also by those of the old and new elites of the “third world” countries.

The concept of “development” has been also a widely debated issue in Turkish political life after 27 May 1960 coup, especially during the preparation debates of 1961 constitution. This paper will examine how the concept of “development” constructed, maintained and transformed in and through political struggles in 1960’s by different political and social groups. For this purpose it suggests a twofold analysis of the issue; an historical analysis complemented with a discourse analysis. An historical analysis, which dwells upon particular political moments as manifestations of discontinuities and continuities, will illuminate the nature of economical, political and social relations paved the way for the constitution of a particular “development” discourse, and eventually prepared the conditions of its dissolution. A discourse analysis, in conjunction with the historical analysis attempts to show the ways in which development discourse articulated itself as a political project and constituted its hegemonic subjectivity and will illuminate the ways in which its counterparts articulate their challenge, undermining the certainty of its constitution (Laclau, 1994, 35)

### **Turkish economy- politics: 1946-1961**

The main theme of 1961 constitutional debates made by the scientists, the press and the army, was to reconstitute the society and the political arena on the basis of a scientific framework and legal procedures as well as the necessity to apply authoritarian planning view to reach to the rational development targets.

Towards 1960, in a ten years period, the main problem of the Turkish politicians was to find a solution and to create stability for the Turkish economy. The urgent problems were to achieve economic development and in this way relieved in the external payments and the supplied required human power. Although the idea that economical development has to be realized in the frame of social justice principles was accepted by all the groups, when there was a conflict between social justice and economical development, the idea of economic development was indispensable.

In order to understand rational and planned development theme in Turkish politics one has to look at the Turkish economy- politics 1946 onwards. The crucial steps have been

taken in favor of individual initiatives and against statism with USA's pressures and encouragements in 1946. This year was the beginning of a period to loosen sixteenth years closed, protective politics based on external balances and internal economy step by step. Since that date there had been a big increase in freed import, external gaps had began to be chronic and it was situated an economic structure based on foreign helps, credits and foreign investments (Kaçmazoğlu, 1998: 195). After 1945, USA was the new and undisputable leader of the capitalist system. In this period, USA politicians came one after another try to situate the belief of "impossibility of the development without foreign help". In this manner, 1947 general assembly of Republican People's Party became a turning point where the most of the economic demands of the capital owners accepted and the statism had been reinterpreted as a principle towards to improving the private initiatives.

One of the main themes of Democrat Party during its opposition period was "freedom of enterprise" in such a way that the party was defending economical growth policies as against statist introvert politics. Democrat Party believed that in economic arena, the state should only carry out basic duties and economy politics should only include promotion, regulation and audit functions. In other words, the state must stay away from the business and leave them to the private corporations. In fact Democrat Party's Kemalism view based on the idea that Mustafa Kemal put republican reforms into practice so that Turkey would be a westernized capitalist country based on a free market. The decision of Kemalist regime to put importance to the state intervention and planning was temporary and limited with the world economical conditions. Even in that time the main purpose was to create a private entrepreneur class. When this class developed enough the state corporations would transfer into them and in this way a free market economy would be established.

Democrat Party wanted to apply liberal system in economical arena, proceed to the huge state investments in some areas such as roads, harbors, irrigation systems but; on the other hand DP carried out very large credit and price subsidies to develop the farmers and to increase agricultural production. DP also gave higher grain prices than the world prices to support the villagers so that they wouldn't let free market work. So, liberal economy politics fragmented by the time and even though Democrat Party asserted being liberal, in practice it's policies turned into be statist and interventionist. So, the liberalization policies of 1950's resulted in fiasco and brought about general hopelessness between 1955- 1956 years in Turkey. Because of these problems scarcity started in some goods and a lot of needful things in daily life couldn't be found. The economy policies of Democrat Party, especially economical difficulties after 1955, made the opposition being more powerful. This led DP governors be more oppressive based on their majority in the parliament.

In that period, bureaucracy hand in hand with Republican People's Party (RPP) opposed the new government by claiming the limitation of voting power and they had chance to realize this claim after 27 May 1960 coup. In essence this conflict was an announcement of a new ideological polarization which would become dominant in 27 May 1960 period and afterwards. On the one hand, the defenders of pure free market ideology, on the other hand the defenders of state regulation idea on the way to industrialization and development. In other words the division was between petty bourgeoisie in the cities and in the villages and industrial bourgeoisie (Keyder, 1993: 173).

Towards the end of 1950's due to the inflation, scarcity and increasing foreign debts, DP applied to IMF, on the other hand as a result of inflationist policies there was an increase in private accumulation and consequently the result was the emergence of new classes and new millionaires in the cities (Eroğul, 1990: 141). In consequence army people and civil servants became poorer and lost their status.

In 1960 constitutional debates, according to the hegemonic discourse as against the failure of the economy policies of Democrat Party, DP followed an economic policy as open, liberal and in favor of the private sector which paved the way for a part of society to be exposed to their income loss except for merchants, small industrialists and some villagers.

According to this discourse economy would be out of control if it left to a powerful government and in doing so, it would not be possible to reach a rapid developed welfare society. For this reason, it was claimed that an economic system needed to be established with the control of the institutions such as The Higher Economical Assembly and The State Planning Organization in the control of technocrats. Nevertheless there was also conflict about this issue in the 1961 constitutional debates in such a way that the *political group*<sup>1</sup> declared that it would not be possible to reach the development goals with such a control over the execution body. Whereas, other group, so called *legalists* pointed out that planning and control mechanisms have got crucial role in achieving national state obligations. In fact “development” meant to become a developed capitalist country and rational planning strategies was needed not friend-fellow relations as in the case of DP.

### **From the “Free Enterprise” to the “Authoritarian and Rational Development”**

In fact, while 1950-60 period closed with an enormous failure both in political and economical aspects, this failure also constituted the basic ideology of 1961 constitution. The main targets of 1960's were to find solutions to the economical problems and obtain the stability. These problems were related to economic development and to do so it aimed to get required human power and relief in foreign loans.

In consequence, in addition to the economic development, establishing The State Planning Organization and doing five years development plans to realize so-called social purposes were at the agenda. Apart from these, within the development of the country, it was also aimed to renovate the worker's conditions. What was aimed to bring about a development policy in suitable with Turkey's conditions over the three axes: labor- capital- bureaucracy (Kili, 1998: 67).

In essence, planning was one of the important inventions of the 20'th century which in so much as that it became a method to use the sources of country in a rational way in company with the common mind supposed to exist in society (Kuruç, 1998: 73). Agreeing to solve the problems by common mind can be considered both as a strong sign in the direction of the development and serious movement points for the economic and social attacks of the century. If we take the problem of total development as

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<sup>1</sup> This differentiation occurred during the preparation process of the new constitution after the 27 May 1960 coup. The political group was much more in favor of democratic rights and freedoms in achieving development of the country, the legalist group emphasized the importance of the state control over the political parties and civil society based on the idea that without control mechanisms a party by gaining the majority in the parliament would pervert the country as against the Kemalist modernization principles.

absence- presence in a large scale one must admit that the central planning issue as a main method started in USSR in the beginning of the century. Nevertheless, the close relation between the development and the planning became widespread after the Second World War<sup>2</sup>.

When Jean Monet as the father of European Union started French planning in 1946, the strong development demands of the old exploited countries brought the planning issue on the agenda. Among them, India which had its independence in 1948, became a rich laboratory for the “development based on planning” idea in 1950’s. Towards the end of 1950’s it was so clear that the planning had become a crucial lever to implement the foundation of nation-states (Kuruç, 73).

Together with 1961 Constitution being in western side of the polarization Turkey stabilized its economic place with the political decisions and practices made in 1950. One of the important roles of the constitution by uniting many discourses in it, as against the powerful dominant economies, was to restructure and reorient Turkey in accordance with their preferences. In other words, in an effort to westernization, 1961 Constitution was responsible to provide the efficiency in the western capitalist world by rationalizing Turkish economy. For the western countries ensuring the efficiency meant to realize all activities on direction with western power relations (Önder, 1998: 87).

During the preparation of the constitution the development goal had been accepted and defended by all political groups. According to the head of The Constituent Assembly 27 May coup was a great step towards the realizing the development goal. For this reason, 1961 Constitution could be regarded as the most important work of Turkey’s social and political development continuing from Tanzimat onwards.

This development discourse which, points out that the power must have taken from the interest- seeking politicians and given to nationalist planners had been built up in 1930’s in *Kadro* journal and following *Forum* and *Yon* journals. In this framework According to Aydemir, Turkish revolution was not a class based revolution; rather it was based on nationalism (Aydemir, 173). Turkish nationalism shaped by Turkish national salvation movement, as a result of the historical conditions had been anti- capitalist for outside and anti- imperialist for inside (190).

These requirements were performed in the state order of the national salvation movement that is to say in the statizm ideology (Aydemir, 200). This was a kind of statizm idea which would enable the country appropriate, create and institute the high technology and also during this development some conflicts of the western democracies wouldn’t be carried to structure of the society. According to *Kadro* movement Turkey was following a unique, out of any order, a third way. *Forum* also declares that the articles of the constitution about social and economical issues could be considered as being interventionist rather than being liberal. While in political arena liberalism and

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<sup>2</sup> In fact the dominant ideology between 1930’and 1970’s a was nationalist- statist development ideology. Whereas, after the Second World War, the nationalist approaches was still dominant whereas the real development realised in full intgration to the world economy. In this development model there was a double conflict in terms of the reality and ideology: On the oe hand deep integration and being dependent to the world economy via nationalist promise, on the other hand together with the legitimation of the natonalist- statist approach within the society and the class differentiation out of the emergence of a national bourgeoisie and their corporation with western interest groups contradict with each other and the promises of the development couldn’t be carried out. (Gülalp, 1998: 48).

accompanying control was dominant, in economic arena the responsibilities of the state defined very largely. In fact the ideology Forum represented was not against the state intervention at all. The real problem was that because of the state interventionism, controlling of the executive body excessively would prevent the capitalist development.

Another striking arena in economical and social issues was the working conditions of the laborers. According to Onder, the economical development on the one hand was depending on 7% growing rate, on the other hand the target of bringing qualitative technicians and scientists shows us the goal was not only quantitative but also qualitative (Önder, 1998: 101). It is obvious that when there is a development, employment follows it too. Nevertheless, the employment described in the plan was related to a kind of employment that kept increasing and people were rushing towards the big cities. Since human power pulled out of the agricultural arena and rushed to the cities as a result of the mechanization program in agriculture, led the governors take some cautions in 1950-60 period. In an effort to do that first, job opportunities would be created in rural areas so that the population flow would be prevented and second employment opportunities would be supplied for the population who came to the cities.

### **“Liberties After the Development”**

In the beginning of a new development period of the world which started with the glory of the ‘democrat’ west capitalism and it meant to be ‘abundance’, ‘democracy’ and limitless development at least for a part of the world. The popular discourses of the Kemalist elite were insisting on creating the conditions for modernism and the rapid development (Aydınöglu, 1992: 58). Together with 1960 transformation, economic development was considered to be realized with social justice. So, 27 May economy policies were quite different from 1950’s liberal policies in which Turkey opened its door limitlessly to the imperialist capitalist flow<sup>3</sup>.

In one of the debates of that period, Bahri Savcı put forward a question: “If we try to solve the development problem of Turkey, wouldn’t be natural having gaps in the freedom arena?”(Savcı, 1962: 55)

One of the answers to this question claimed that the development issue was the biggest problem of Turkey, but 27 May movement preferred the settle development claim within the democratic procedure. Accordingly, the only way to deal with the development problem was to have a strong executive function. On the other hand, another solution came from Istanbul Constitution commission declaring that the executive function must be checked by some institutions and control mechanisms.

The dominant discourse on the development issue of Turkey in 1960’s can be summarized as follows: The main problem was to establish real mass democracy. In order to make investments in a condition of poverty, capital accumulation was needed and to do so social justice issues must be taken into account. The only possible way to

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<sup>3</sup> According to Izzettin Onder this difference is quite superficial. When we analyze deeply, we see that what exists in the essence of these two approaches, different reflections of the demands peculiar to the development of Western capitalism. When the demands of the west flow from good transfers to the capital transfers, the periphery economies turned from the commercial liberalism to the income substitution policies. In this way western capitalism escaped from the destructive competition, and divide the periphery economies among itself, and tried to transfer the production activities towards that countries. For Onder, in this very particular point 1950 and 1960 transformations carry the sign of the same economy- politic code (Onder, 1998: 101).

do this was statism. Accordingly a large part of the economic life will be ruled as the public administration in such a way that the more the country developed the more the social justice and security issues would be held. In consequence the *statism* as a third way seemed to be the only way to realize rapid development and social justice together in Turkey's conditions. Social justice was needed to protect democracy and freedoms so that it would function as a safety-valve.

As a result of this way of looking "the rapid development accompanying with social justice" formula has been accepted by article 41 of the constitution. In fact the idea of social justice in rapid development became dominant in 1961 constitution. 1961 Constitution and the prepared plans in this direction determined social and economic development as the first goal, thereby the basic structure of the work thought to be designed in terms of these strategic plans and social and unionist rights also undertook within the frame of this basic structure. In this way, the development and social justice principles of 1961 Constitution relocated completely to the plan strategy. The other goals mentioned alongside development and social justice could be considered partly as means to reach to these goals or the required results or sub- purposes of these goals.

## CONCLUSION

After 27 May 1960, coup a new term began in Turkey in such a way that within the new social and institutional structure the theme of social justice in rapid development marked the period. According to this theme, before all else, the profit- oriented branch of bourgeoisie developed. Their interests had began to conflict with the national interests in such a way that they turned into the elements which prevent the development moves; therefore the only thing to do so was to return Kemalism in other words the populism and the statism approaches of Kemalism.

According to this dominant discourse in the debates of 1960's the harmony between "rapid development" and "Kemalism" was guaranteed this way: This statism approach would move together with social benefit and social justice principles. The development based on big sacrifices. Unless, the national income distribute fairly, the public cannot be convinced for the sacrifice and the development cannot be implemented. According to *Yon* declaration contemporary civilization level aimed by Kemalist reforms would be reached by succeeding in rising national production level. For this reason, the intellectuals expected to be agreeing on the main lines of the development discourse. (Küçük, 1985: 86). The departing point of this development discourse is to mobilize the society, ensuring social justice, and practicing real democracy. The name of this approach according to those who signed the declaration was "new statism" (Özdemir, 2002: 19).

Consequently, the liberation regime of 1960's, coalescing of the students, intellectuals and the workers who run after their rights and freedoms were necessary for Turkish capitalism to proceed further. As Küçük Pointed out, without the unionist works of Revolutionary Workers Union, big businesses couldn't be successful in producing durable consumer goods. (Küçük, 1985: 86). On the other hand, another justification as crucial as economical requirements was a development program without based on democratic rights and freedoms would cause social conflicts by creating excess differences among people. The unions, enactment of the strike and lockout laws not only as harmonious as with the social justice principles but also it can be interpreted as a wish to re-organize of the labor movement. Besides, raising the labor income and

widening the internal market, enables at the same time the cohesion of labor and the business. Granting the right to collective bargaining and strike only to the workers also shows the dominance of the system dynamics.

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