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The rise and fall of community development in rural Turkey, 1960–1980

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Abstract

Turkey's Community Development Program (CDP), implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, has remained a largely underexplored subject in the global history of rural community development schemes. Based on detailed archival research, this article shows that the programme's central goal was to mobilize the labour and financial resources of the villagers to carry out rapid infrastructure construction. Turkish policymakers hoped that such mobilization could help achieve a high level of rural development far beyond what could be achieved by relying solely on government spending and might also allow the allocation of more resources to urban industrialization. Despite its initial promise, the CDP was unable to effectively mobilize the countryside due to a combination of structural, political, and bureaucratic challenges, including unequal land distribution, intense electoral competition, and inadequate administrative coordination. However, the CDP was not entirely inconsequential. It played a modest role in the commercialization and capitalist transformation of Turkish agriculture.

KEYWORDS
community development, developmentalism, global south, rural development, Turkey

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Compared to the vast literature on the state's role in fostering urban industrialization, agrarian and rural dimensions of state-directed developmentalism in the Global South after World War II remain relatively underexplored.[1] Substantial research has been done regarding the Green Revolution, an ambitious agricultural modernization effort across the developing world. Focusing on the Green Revolution is legitimate, given its centrality to global agrarian change. The extant literature provides rich historical accounts of the cooperations among national governments and international institutions for carrying out the Green Revolution, as well as its effects on food production, social relations and the environment.[2] The Green Revolution necessitated significant government expenditure to develop agricultural infrastructure, establish industries for farm machinery and agricultural inputs, provide credit to farmers and train and hire agricultural extension staff. Moreover, since the great majority of the population in the Global South lived in the countryside without adequate access to healthcare, education, electricity, roads and industries, the required government spending for comprehensive rural modernization was much higher than Green Revolution investment. The question of how the underfunded and understaffed state bureaucracies of the Global South dealt with such expensive affairs has not received sufficient attention in academic literature.

The literature on international debt can be useful in explaining a part of the puzzle because developing countries used some—although usually a relatively small—part of the loans they got from rich countries and international institutions to finance rural development.[3] The growing literature on development assistance as a critical front of the Cold War also sheds important light on the issue by pointing to the dissemination of money and expertise from the United States, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to the developing countries.[4] Nevertheless, since the governments of the Global South attempted to achieve rapid industrialization and rural modernization simultaneously, more than external funding was needed to meet their growing needs. Moreover, most states prioritized urban heavy industry and tended to spend less on rural development. These fiscal constraints compelled the states to devise mechanisms to mobilize villagers' labour and financial resources to construct rural infrastructure. By shifting a substantial part of the fiscal burden of rural development to villagers through novel schemes, developing country governments aimed to continue spending considerably more for urban industry without compromising their ambitious rural development goals.

Despite the significant variation of national policies, two main approaches to rural resource mobilization emerged in the Global South in the post-WWII era. The radical collectivist model, primarily represented by Maoist China, relied on large-scale and compulsory labour mobilization for infrastructure construction and heavy agricultural taxation carried out by rural collectives, known as the 'People's Communes' (Hung, 2016, pp. 43–51; Nickum, 1978). The second and globally more prevalent approach, referred to as 'community development', also aimed to shift some of the financial burdens of rural development to villagers but differed from radical collectivism in three crucial respects. First, the community development approach protected private property and the market economy and did not pursue anti-capitalist goals. Second, it pursued much less ambitious mobilization goals to keep villagers' burden relatively light. Finally, community development primarily relied on voluntary methods to raise labour and money from villagers (Holdcroft, 1978).

The community development approach has a history of over a century, tracing back to rural development projects in India and other British colonies. In parallel with the hegemonic transition from the United Kingdom to the United States and the emergence of the Cold War, the United States became its chief global sponsor. From the 1950s onward, the US government engaged with dozens of countries in designing and financing community development projects (CDPs hereafter). The community development approach's basic assumption was that local communities could identify their problems through democratic deliberation and collectively mobilize to solve them

[1]For a notable exception, see Looney (2020).
[2]For notable examples, see Gupta (1998), Perkins (1998) and Schmalzer (2016).
[3]For a comprehensive survey of the role of international debt for agricultural and non-agricultural spending in the Global South, see Wood (1987).
[4]For notable examples, see Bräutigam (1998), Engerman (2018) and Lorenzini (2019).

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by donating labour and money to local projects. The governments must support such bottom-up initiatives regarding finance and personnel, and local officials must receive training in community development methods to gain the capacity to lead villagers. The urban youth was also encouraged to volunteer in CDPs. By improving rural economies and living standards and facilitating development-oriented cooperations between the states and their rural citizens, CDPs aimed to protect the non-communist regimes from the rising tide of rural-based communist movements that swept across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Different varieties of CDPs were implemented in dozens of countries, resulting in vastly different degrees of success (Immerwahr, 2015; Sinha, 2008).

Community development was a popular subject in Turkish academic and policy circles during the heyday of state planning and import-substituting industrialization (ISI) between 1960 and 1980. Turkish government implemented the Community Development Program (CDP) (*Toplum Kalkınması Programı*) between 1962 and 1980.[5] Like similar programmes elsewhere, Turkey's CDP was framed as a policy that could help address rural underdevelopment through state-society cooperation. The CDP was designed to mobilize Turkey's large surplus of rural labour—comprising of unemployed and underemployed villagers—to construct various types of rural infrastructure. CDP was also seen as a way to address the Turkish state's long-term failure to tax agricultural incomes directly.[6] Encouraging the villagers to donate money to local projects that may benefit them appeared as a practical—and indirect—method to tax agriculture. Transferring a part of the financial burden of rural development to villagers' shoulders through CDPs was expected to strengthen public finance, which might have enabled the Turkish state to allocate greater resources to ISI without relying on external debt.[7] Finally, academic and policy circles believed that higher rural living standards obtained through the CDPs could help check the (already) rapid rural outmigration, mitigating problems like sprawling shantytowns, urban poverty and political radicalization (Acaroğlu, 1966; Askwith, 1966a; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a; Geray, 1967; Satılmış, 1972).

Turkey's CDP experience has remained a largely underexplored subject in the existing literature on modern Turkish history and the global history of community development. Besides the official reports and academic works published before 1980 cited in this paper and some passing references to the CDP in studies concerning other subjects, we lack credible (Turkish or English-language) scholarly literature on the subject. A history of Turkey's CDP, which can complement similar accounts of other countries and thereby help to establish a truly global history of community development, is yet to be written. This study makes an initial contribution to this endeavour. By analysing a large body of material, including official reports, minutes of the parliament, press archives and academic and non-academic literature, this article examines the national and global contexts that gave rise to the CDP in Turkey, the primary purposes of the programme and the structural, political and bureaucratic factors behind its failure.

This study shows that the CDP's central purpose was to mobilize the labour and financial resources of the villagers to carry out rapid infrastructure construction in rural Turkey. Policymakers hoped that such mobilization could help achieve a high level of rural development far beyond what could be achieved by relying solely on government spending and might also allow the allocation of more resources to urban industrialization. Despite initial enthusiasm, the CDP failed to achieve its central objectives due to three main factors. First, intense electoral competition compelled the political parties to distribute state resources to rural voters rather than demanding labour and financial contributions from them. Second, the persistent economic inequality in the countryside, especially unequal land distribution, stifled the enthusiasm of the land-poor villagers to make substantial contributions to infrastructure projects. Finally, the lack of coordination among various bureaucratic branches also played a role in the program's failure.

[5]In this paper, we use the abbreviations of institutions and programs based on their original names in Turkish. However, we abbreviate *Toplum Kalkınması Programı* as 'CDP' rather than 'TKP' for two reasons. First, 'TKP' is the standard abbreviation of the Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*). Hence, we avoid any possible confusion that may result from that usage. Second, when comparing the Community Development Programs of Turkey and other countries, it seems more convenient to use the 'CDP' abbreviation rather than TKP.

[6]On the near absence of agricultural taxation in Turkey, see Metinsoy (2020).

[7]On the priority given to the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie during the 1960s and 1970s, see Keyder (1987, pp. 145–148).

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The article is organized into six sections. Following this introduction, the second section reviews the transnational developmental regime that bolstered the popularity of CDPs in Turkey and beyond after WWII. The third section examines how this regime led the Turkish bureaucracy to conceive the CDP as a project for labour and financial mobilization. Supported by both qualitative and quantitative evidence, this section also describes the implementation phase of the CDP and its failure to mobilize villagers. The fourth section delves into the factors contributing to this failure. The fifth section briefly examines the program's modest role in the capitalist transformation of Turkish agriculture. The conclusion highlights the main findings of the study.

2 | NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS OF TURKEY'S CDP

During the Cold War, CDPs became the primary rural development strategy of the non-communist world under the US hegemony, with funding coming from various sources such as US bilateral aid, the Peace Corps, the US Department of Defense and philanthropic foundations (Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 55–57; Miniclier, 1969; Holdcroft, 1978, p. 3). After the Chinese Revolution (1949) and the Korean War (1950–53), the US government prioritized containing communist-led peasant insurgencies in the Global South. In addition to using coercive means such as training and financial support to counterinsurgency efforts of allied governments, the United States also used benevolent means such as CDPs (Immerwahr, 2015, p. 100). India's CDP, implemented after 1952 with the support of the United States Economic and Technical Evaluation Agency (later renamed as United States Agency for International Development, USAID), the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, the World Bank and various UN agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was arguably the most showcased CDP of the post-WWII era (Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 76–77; Sinha, 2008, pp. 71–80). Another notable case was the Presidential Assistant on Community Development of the Philippines, which was founded in 1956 with the direct support of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other US agencies and carried out tens of thousands of projects (Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 111–121). By 1956, the United States was funding and staffing 47 CDPs in 23 countries (Holdcroft, 1978, p. 4). By 1960, more than 60 countries had already launched their CDPs (Holdcroft, 1978, p. 3; Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 5–9).

Although CDPs contributed to counterinsurgency efforts, most of them failed to bring decent rural development. The existing literature stresses the implementing governments' failure to touch on power relations, especially their failure to carry out land reforms, as a crucial factor behind the failure of CDPs. Douglas Ensminger, a key figure in India's CDP as the Ford Foundation's representative from 1951 to 1970, argues that the programme's failure to meet its objectives was largely due to the lack of substantial land reform and other redistributive measures aimed at addressing class and caste disparities among villagers. Lacking genuine broad-based participation via labour and financial contributions, the CDP swiftly degenerated from an initiative promoting self-help to a typical government-dependent programme, prompting politicians from diverse rural areas to compete for the attraction of CDP projects to their regions (Ensminger, 1972, pp. 18–25, 68–79).

Likewise, Immerwahr notes that the United States relied on the Philippines' oligarchy, which blocked genuine popular participation to CDPs (Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 92–110). In his extensive review of CDPs across the world, Holdcroft argues that governments' failure to guarantee rural livelihoods, unequal distribution of programme outputs among rich and poor peasants, rapid increase in pilot projects without sufficient consideration for bureaucratic coordination and personnel training and the top-down approach of governments were some of the key factors behind the ineffectiveness of CDPs in many countries. Eventually, many programmes were terminated in the mid-1960s due to their failure and the interruption of US financial support (Holdcroft, 1978, pp. 25–32).

Compared to most countries that attempted to develop their countryside based on CDPs, Maoist China's radical collectivist strategy was far more successful in mobilizing the labour and financial resources of the peasantry. As a result, despite the disastrous human toll and economic setbacks caused by the ill-conceived Great Leap Forward campaign (1959–1961), Maoist China achieved remarkable success, particularly in comparison to post-independence

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India and most countries in the Global South. This success included not only transferring significant agricultural surplus to urban industry but also developing rural infrastructure, advancing agrarian modernization, promoting rural industrialization and improving rural healthcare and education (Saith, 2008).

On the other hand, the post-WWII history of CDPs was not devoid of success. Taiwan's 'People's Livelihood Construction Campaign' (1955–1965) and 'Community Development Campaign' (1969–1981), and South Korea's 'CDP' that started in 1953, right after the end of the Korean War, and *Saemaul Undong* ('New Village Movement', also known as the 'New Community Movement') between 1971 and 1980 are two notable successful cases. These campaigns combined American money and expertise with indigenous ideas and practices (Looney, 2020; Leet, 1979, pp. 25–27). Although the US-sponsored CDPs embraced bottom-up democratic deliberation (Holdcroft, 1978, p. 11; Immerwahr, 2015, pp. 4–5), Korean and Taiwanese campaigns were implemented under military dictatorships, which tightly controlled local farmers' organizations. Therefore, the degree of compulsion to participate was significantly higher in Taiwan and Korea than in CDPs elsewhere (Looney, 2020; Holdcroft, 1978, p. 56). Relatively egalitarian land reforms in the 1950s also helped the Korean and Taiwanese administrations to obtain considerable voluntary support from the villagers (Looney, 2020).

In the broader landscape of global rural community development initiatives, Turkey's CDP is notably unsuccessful. This failure mirrors others where the absence of substantial land reform—due to landowners' resistance—inhibited the creation of a conducive environment for the active participation of the rural poor. Consequently, the CDP in Turkey swiftly shifted from a self-help paradigm to a standard model reliant entirely on state funding. Moreover, the bureaucratic apparatus in Turkey was insufficient and misaligned with the principles of community development. Lacking political endorsement, the planning bureaucracy was unable to overcome the resistance from predominant political parties, which favoured government-funded projects as a means to garner rural votes instead of encouraging villagers' investment in local development initiatives. To comprehend these political dynamics from the 1960s and 1970s, one must acknowledge the historical importance of labour and financial mobilization in Turkey, dating back to the interwar period. The principle of self-help, pivotal to the CD philosophy, allowed planners to form a continuum with past Turkish initiatives. Furthermore, expert discussions on Turkey's CDP in the 1960s and 1970s often highlighted the domestic origins of rural community development, tracing back to the policies of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) during its single-party rule from 1923 to 1946.

The Village Law (Köy Kanunu, 1924), passed on 18 March 1924, only 5 months after the founding of the Republic of Turkey, was seen as a milestone that laid the foundations of subsequent rural mobilization schemes during the single-party regime and after (Askwith, 1966a, p. 6; Geray, 1974a, pp. 5–7; Hussain, 1962; Yavuz, 1962). One of the key concepts the law mentioned was *imece*, which refers to cooperative work and mutual aid with a long history in Anatolia that traces back several centuries. According to Article No. 15 of the Village Law, 'many of the village works' were to be 'done collectively by all villagers through *imece*'. The law categorized villagers' tasks into two: 'compulsory works of villagers' (*köylünün mecburi işleri*) and 'works that depend on villagers' will' (*köylünün isteğine bağlı olan işler*). Compulsory works listed by the law included the construction of village roads[8] and primary schools and tasks related to public health. The law authorized the village elderly councils (*köy ihtiyar heyetleri*) to determine the fees that villagers must pay for organizing these works. The law also compelled villagers to collectively cultivate the lands of orphans and those conscripted for military service.[9]

The Road Tax Law of 1925 further expected that financially incapable villagers would contribute by participating physically for 10–12 days in road construction (Metinsoy, 2021, p. 24). Moreover, during the 1940s, village councils were asked to provide land, and villagers living nearby were compelled to work 20 days a year to construct the Village Institutes, which aimed to raise a new generation of teachers from within the village youth (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, pp. 47–73, 56–57).

[8]This mainly refers to roads within village boundaries. The state, not the villagers, was responsible for financing the construction of roads connecting villages with urban areas and other villages.

[9]'Köy Kanunu', 18 March 1924. https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.3.442.pdf.

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However, since the early Republican regime left the power of the traditional elites mostly untouched, it was unable to garner the support of the rural poor. Existing authority structures and figures, such as landowners, money-lenders, merchants, religious leaders and other traditional institutions, remained strong. The penetration of the state into rural society remained limited (Tuna, 2018). As noted before, many Turkish villages had a tradition of local self-help based on *imece* and *salma*, which the single-party regime attempted to capitalize on through the Village Law. However, the developmental effects of these traditions were minimal, and the state's power at the village level was weak. Consequently, the early Republican regime failed to develop rural infrastructures based on labour and financial mobilization. In fact, despite the repressive political atmosphere of the single-party era, villagers across Turkey expressed their frustration with compulsory labour practices, taxes and fees through open protests and everyday forms of resistance (Metinsoy, 2021, pp. 21–122).

The transition to a multi-party regime weakened the possibilities of state-directed rural mobilization. One of the first reforms of the CHP during the transition process was to abolish the agricultural income tax in 1945 (Ashford, 1974, p. 2). Furthermore, the centre-right Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) successfully capitalized on peasants' frustrations with the CHP's previous labour mobilization and taxation attempts and came to power with a landslide victory in the May 1950 elections. During its decade-long rule, which ended with a military coup on 27 May 1960, the DP followed a rural populist strategy, which enabled it to garner significant rural support and win the 1954 and 1957 elections. Village Institutes, which were dysfunctional since the late 1940s, were closed by the DP government in 1954 (Bahadır, 2002, p. 284). The DP government also abolished the road tax in 1952 (Berk, 1968, pp. 58–59) Significant funds were allocated to develop rural infrastructure, and farmers were heavily subsidized through low-interest credit given by the state-owned Agricultural Bank and crop purchases by the state at favourable prices (Keyder, 1987, pp. 127–131).

As part of the global promotion of the community development framework, United States and United Nations officials recommended that the Turkish government implement a CDP in the 1950s. Some Turkish intellectuals made similar recommendations (Köymen, 1952). However, government spending appeared to be the surest way to consolidate the DP's political hegemony in the countryside, without demanding sacrifices from the villagers. In 1959, Robert College students and teachers launched the only CDP-related initiative of the DP era: the 'International Voluntary Work Camps'. Inspired by US-sponsored CDPs, these camps aimed to unite Turkish youth and Western visiting students for rural community development (Ünver, 1965, pp. 30–36; Ünver, 2005, pp. 25–27). The DP government allowed this modest private initiative as it made no significant labour or financial demands from the host villages. Aside from this, there were no government-sponsored CDPs during the DP era.

Circumstances changed after the military coup in 1960, which represented an urban coalition dissatisfied with the DP's agriculture-first strategy (Keyder, 1987, pp. 141–144). Although direct military rule ended a year after the coup, civilian governments remained under military tutelage during the first half of the 1960s. To avoid a rural populist comeback, the 1961 Constitution banned the establishment of party branches below the district level (Turan, 1989, p. 3).[10] The Turkish state also embraced the ISI strategy. The State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*, DPT), founded on 30 September 1960, was tasked with preparing 5-year plans (Akçay, 2007, p. 121, 195). Although agriculture was not overlooked, industry was prioritized.

While the DPT helped subsequent governments to make economic plans, it also led to conflicts between the planning officials and politicians. Agricultural taxation was one of the critical issues of contention. Planners advocated the taxation of agricultural incomes and using the price scissors mechanism, that is, keeping the prices of industrial goods substantially higher than agricultural prices, as a means to spur industrialization. Implementing these policies was technically possible because of the significant share of the state-owned enterprises in industrial production and the state's considerable capacity to set agricultural prices and monitor farmers' income through government institutions' bulk purchases of agricultural products at officially set prices.

[10]Another notable development was the government's appointment of some village heads after the coup, see Frey and Roos (1967, p. 38). However, this was a temporary and partial measure that did not fundamentally alter the fact that village heads were elected through free elections.

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In this context, Nicholas Kaldor, a professor of Economics at Cambridge University, was invited by Turkish planners to prepare a report on taxation. In his report, submitted to the Prime Minister's office in May 1962, Kaldor identified the scarcity of resources as the primary barrier to Turkey's industrialization. He noted that although agriculture comprised over 40% of Turkey's GDP, it contributed only between one tenth and one eighth of the total tax revenues. To address this, he proposed a progressive agricultural tax. Kaldor also proposed to tax uncultivated lands held by large landowners, encouraging them to sell land to land-poor peasants and thus promote land distribution through market mechanisms (Kaldor, 1981/1982). However, big landowners and large holding companies with landowner origins lobbied against Kaldor's proposal (Akçay, 2007, pp. 90–96, 281). Consequently, the CHP-led coalition government rejected it, prompting leading planning experts from the DPT to collectively resign in protest in September 1962 (Akçay, 2007, pp. 85–89; Önder, 1981/1982, pp. 91–93; Buğra, 2007, p. 43).[11]

Moreover, intense electoral competition required political parties to secure votes from the countryside, where most of the population lived. Taxing agriculture and keeping farm prices low was seen as political suicide (Turan, 1989, p. 86). Thus, persuading villagers to voluntarily contribute labour and finances through the CDP was seen as a promising method to indirectly tax agriculture, allowing the state to allocate more resources to industry (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963b).

One of the notable characteristics of Turkey's CDP is that it emerged within a US-led transnational development regime. During the parliamentary debates, Deputy Prime Minister Feyzioğlu stated that experts from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Massachusetts Institute of Technology approved the first 5-year plan and the CDP (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962b, 1962e). The Rural Development Research Project, which was sponsored by USAID and employed consultants from top American universities, including MIT, carried out two large-scale rural surveys in Turkey in 1962 and 1968 (Adalet, 2015), whose findings informed the Turkish officials working on the CDP. Moreover, 14% of the 1,201 US Peace Corps volunteers who came to Turkey between 1962 and 1970[12] participated in CDP-related activities (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1971a). Furthermore, between 1962 and 1968, USAID implemented the 'Participant Training Program' in Turkey, which aimed to disseminate knowledge of self-help techniques (Participant Journal, 1964; van Dyke, 1963). A total of 3,727 individuals received training, 1,374 of them worked in agricultural projects (Participant Journal, 1966, p. 9, 21).

Turkey's transnational connections regarding the CDP were not limited to the United States. During the above-mentioned parliamentary debates, Deputy Prime Minister Feyzioğlu disclosed that the DPT devised the CDP by considering the recommendations of a Swedish expert, an Indian expert and two Canadian experts, one of whom was sent from the UN (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962c). India's CDP experience was profoundly influential. In their visit to India in 1963, DPT officials met with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the members of the Planning Commission. Indian and Turkish planners stayed connected through bilateral meetings and joint works at the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Okyar, 1964). Abid Hussain, who worked in India's CDP, participated in the planning of the pilot project in the Altınözü district of Hatay province (Bilge, 1972, p. 36). Likewise, Tom Askwith, a Commissioner for the CDP in Kenya, was involved in the pilot CDP project in the Bünyan district of Kayseri province (Geray, 1967, p. 64).

3 | DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDP IN TURKEY

Turkey's CDP, like other CDPs, emerged within the context of the post-WWII Green Revolution. Under the Marshall Plan, Turkey received over US$1.2 billion from the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. These funds, along

[11]It is important to note that Kaldor also prepared tax reform proposals for India and Ceylon. However, as in Turkey, these proposals were not implemented, Önder (1981/1982, p. 91).

[12]However, Turkish-American cooperation regarding community development did not go as smooth as expected. The Peace Corps programme 'ended for all practical purposes in 1970 because of the anti-Americanism of the late 1960s' (The Comptroller General of the United States, 1974, p. 6).

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with significant Turkish government investments, were crucial for modernizing agriculture. Rapid mechanization expanded cultivated areas from 14.5 million hectares in 1950 to 23 million hectares in 1962. The use of chemical fertilizers increased ninefold, high-yielding seeds almost tripled and irrigated areas doubled in the 1960s. Additionally, Turkey's highway network grew from 12,000 km in 1947 to 40,000 km in 1960, boosting agricultural commercialization and rural-to-urban migration (Gürel, 2011, p. 203).

These developments profoundly affected agrarian class relations across Turkey, though unevenly. In the Kurdish-majority Southeast, some of the big landowners used machinery to displace tenants, transitioning from semi-feudal to capitalist farming. In the Çukurova Valley and parts of Western Anatolia, large-scale capitalist farming advanced. Elsewhere, large-scale land dispossession did not occur in the 1950s and 1960s, but small-scale farmers saw internal differentiation. This led to the rise of commercial middle farmers and the rapid proletarianization of millions of villagers. Many became semi-proletarians, maintaining small farms while earning most of their income through non-farm work (Gürel, 2011, pp. 205–212). As we will show in the fourth section, these class inequalities, especially the antagonism between big landowners and land-poor peasants, posed significant obstacles to the implementation of CDP projects.

Government reports and academic publications from the 1960s and 1970s explained the CDP's purpose based on demographic, economic and political factors. Over 70% of Turkey's population resided in rural areas, with about 90% of villagers working in agriculture in the early 1960s. Agriculture, comprising over one third of the GDP in 1960, remained crucial despite urbanization and industrialization. The dispersed countryside, with 40,000 villages, posed challenges for delivering socio-economic services. Around 10.7 million people lived in forest-adjacent villages with minimal infrastructure (Geray, 1974a; p. 16; Hussain, 1962). By the early 1960s, 53% of villages lacked sufficient drinking water, a problem projected to take 30 years to resolve (Geray, 1965, p. 539; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a, p. 2). Almost all villages lacked stable electricity, and rural roads were in poor condition, with an estimated 150,000 km of new roads needed (Acaroğlu, 1966, pp. 157–160). Despite rapid growth in the 1950s, Turkish agriculture faced productivity constraints. For instance, 'per hectare plant crop productivity in Turkey in 1965 was approximately one ton, lower than the average of all continents including Africa' (Ashford, 1974, p. 26). The primary constraint was irrigation. Although 32 large-scale irrigation facilities constructed by the central government made the effective irrigation of 500,000 ha of farmland, due to the lack of small-scale channels linking these facilities to farms, only one fifth of that potential could be tapped (Geray, 1965, p. 538).

Policy documents also identified significant surplus labour in the countryside, using concepts like 'idle workforce' (*atıl işgücü*) and 'hidden unemployment' (*gizli işsizlik*). The First Five-Year Plan highlighted that even in July, the peak agricultural season, about 1 million people had no productive work. Additionally, it projected that if the Turkish economy grew by 7% annually over the next 15 years, an optimistic scenario, 700,000 more people might join the unemployed ranks (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a, p. 36, 105). According to the Second Five-Year Plan, 9.9% of the agricultural workforce was surplus labour. The seasonal fluctuation in surplus agricultural labour for 1967 was estimated as follows: 7.8 million villagers from December to February, about 5.6 million from March to June, 910,000 in July and August and approximately 5.3 million from September to November (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1968, pp. 132–133).

For Turkish planners, failing to utilize this workforce was a colossal waste of resources. The First Plan argued that hiring labour at current wage levels could slow down rural infrastructure construction and increase inflation. Therefore, it emphasized convincing underemployed villagers to volunteer for infrastructure projects without receiving market wages (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a, p. 147). The First Plan also estimated villagers' contribution to infrastructure investments at 4–5% and aimed to raise it to 30% (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a, p. 105). The CDP, launched almost simultaneously with the First Plan, was tasked with achieving this goal (Cumhuriyet, 1962a; Geray, 1963; Güresin, 1962; Halkevleri, 1966).

The DPT's focus on rural surplus labour aligned with international perspectives (Hartmann, 2020, p. 288). A 1959 FAO report, prepared by a team led by Fritz Baade, estimated that two million of Turkey's nine million agricultural workers were underemployed and urged the government to utilize this workforce. Baade cited Maoist China's

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expansion of irrigated land through rural labour mobilization as a positive example. Baade criticized Turkish peasants' reliance on state investment without contributing financially.[13] The report also suggested extending compulsory military service from 2 to 3 years, with half of that time devoted to development projects (Food and Agricultural Organization, 1962, pp. 19–27, 165–167).

The CDP was a major point of contention during the parliamentary debates on the First Five-Year Plan in November 1962. The coalition government, consisting of the centre-left CHP and the centre-right Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP), presented the plan for approval. However, while the CHP enthusiastically defended the CDP, many AP deputies were critical. The centre-right opposition New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*, YTP) harshly criticized the CDP. In response to AP deputy Tahsin Demiray's claim that Soviet communism influenced India's 5-year plans as a warning for Turkey's plan, Deputy Prime Minister Turhan Feyzioğlu (CHP) defended the Indian experience, emphasizing its anti-communist stance and Western sponsorship: 'If Indian planning served the dominance of the Soviet outlook in India, states fighting against communism would not have poured that much money for its success' (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962b).

When the CDP came into focus, Zeyyat Kocamemi, a YTP deputy, attacked it as a programme based on corvée:

> *Dear friends, on page 70 of the plan, there is a theme called 'Community Development'. […] According to the plan, this means mobilizing resources to enable communities to work together. This means collectivizing society […] When one reads these, despite Article 42 of the Constitution, one inevitably recalls the corvée system and the labor detachments of the socialist countries.* (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962b)

Feyzioğlu responded by emphasizing the US sponsorship of CDPs worldwide through the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, commonly known as PL-480:

> *Why is the United States doing this? It does it to fight communism. It purchases wheat with the money it collects from taxpayers and distributes it to countries by telling them to do such works; you can work for free and voluntarily, but if the state goes to its citizens who open canals for bringing potable water and give them some food, they will work more enthusiastically. The United States of America is distributing these to the democratic countries that implement such programs as an additional incentive.* (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962c)[14]

In support to Feyzioğlu, CHP deputy İhsan Önal explained the gist of the CDP:

> *Turkish villagers work no more than two months in a row all year […] Enabling and encouraging each villager above the age of 18 to construct two dönüms of vineyard and garden is not corvée. In addition to compulsory primary education, obliging every villager child to do that means villagers will be saved from poverty, and therefore, the national income will increase by 50%.* (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962c).

At the end of the session, Kocamemi's proposal to revise the plan by adding the words 'suggest' (*telkin*), 'recommend' (*tavsiye*) and 'encourage' (*teşvik*) to ensure that community development would not include compulsory labour, was unanimously accepted (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962d). The fact that even the CHP, the party that seemed most enthusiastic about the CDP, quickly backed down in the face of charges of corvée was an early

[13]Similarly, a 1967 study argued that there exists a 'common and discouraging predilection in rural Turkey to slough everything off onto the central government' (Frey & Roos, 1967, p. 31).

[14]On the PL-480 Act, see Office of the Historian, n.d. ; Public Law 480: 'Better Than a Bomber', 1987 .

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indication of the immense difficulty in demanding labour contributions from peasants in a rural-majority country with competitive elections. Although subsequent governments programmes in 1963, 1965 and 1969 embraced the CDP on paper (Kaynar & Kalkan, 2022), as we will show below, they amounted to little more than lip service.

The DPT's First Five-Year Development Plan aimed to include one district from each province in the CDP framework by 1967 and expand it to all 40,000 villages in Turkey by 1977 (Geray, 1963) The CDP implementation began in 1963 in six pilot districts, with the Community Development Group (*Toplum Kalkınması Grubu*) within the DPT overseeing the pilot projects (Çağlar, 1965, pp. 20–39). This group was tasked with consulting relevant government ministries to establish a clear policy framework, training local officials and 'village leaders' (including village heads, teachers, imams and individuals with leadership capabilities) and conducting programme evaluations (Acaroğlu, 1966, pp. 186–187; Çağlar, 1965). DPT officials selected the first pilot districts based on local infrastructure needs, financial and personnel requirements, and existing and expected levels of public participation (Sayar, 1965, pp. 12–18). District officials' willingness to coordinate with the DPT was also emphasized as a criterion for selecting pilot regions (Güçbilmez, 1964, pp. 147–153). In 1964, six additional districts were included in the programme (Güçbilmez, 1964, pp. 158–159; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966, pp. 6–7). At the end of 1964, the administration of the CDP was transferred to the recently established Ministry of Village Affairs (*Köy İşleri Bakanlığı*) (Geray, 1968, p. 193). The organizational framework of the ministry appeared 'to be inspired largely by the organizational setup of the Ministry of Community Development in India' (Ünver, 1965, p.16). The programme of the coalition government (led by the CHP and joined by two rightist parties, the YTP and the Republican Peasant Nation Party) (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*, CKMP) in 1963 stressed the Ministry's central role in the CDP: 'The Ministry of Village Affairs will lead the effort to accelerate rural development with a new spirit and enthusiasm through the participation of the people and the voluntary efforts of the youth and utilizing the power of the state' (Aktürk & Dağlı, 1988, p. 2, 66).

The central coordination of the CDP was assigned to the Inter-ministerial Community Development Board (*Bakanlıklararası Toplum Kalkınması Kurulu*), which included representatives from all ministries and was chaired by the Minister of Village Affairs. Each province established a coordination committee to prepare local plans and supervise programme implementation, incorporating representatives from various government agencies, political parties and local organizations. Additionally, village community development boards, including officials and representatives, were established at the district level. Village heads and councils of elders were also held accountable for local grassroots activities (Köyişleri Bakanlığı, 1964; Çağlar, 1965, pp. 31–32).

The number of pilot districts rapidly increased, from 12 in 1962 to 53 in 1968 (Geray, 1968, p. 183). However, pilot programmes were discontinued after 1969 (Geray, 1981, pp. 48–50; Çelik, 2005, pp. 65). Moreover, while the number of training activities for provincial and district officials was 35 and 38, only 13 activities were organized for village-level state officials. Likewise, only 13 village leader camps were organized for potential village leaders. Different evaluations have indicated that between 1966 and 1968, the intensity of CDP work progressively declined as it moved from officials' desks to villages (Askwith, 1966a, pp. 8–9; Geray, 1981; pp. 48–50; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966, pp. 7–15; Köy İşleri Bakanlığı, 1973, p. 23).

Since compulsory participation was ruled out from the beginning, villagers' participation in the CDP was entirely voluntary. There was no formal selection process; those willing to work were allowed to participate. Construction work remained a male-dominated area, with village women's participation being almost nonexistent. The responsibility to involve ordinary villagers in local projects fell on the village heads and the elder councils. However, villagers were more inclined to join when they saw local officials above the village level doing manual work, which was rare, or when those officials came and talked to them directly, which was relatively common. Sometimes, employees of government institutions were sent to join the volunteers (Ünver, 1965, pp. 37–40). In some cases, local officials tried to convince villagers to donate voluntary labour to a specific project in exchange for government investment in another (Geray, 1981, pp. 152–153).

Despite initial enthusiasm, the CDP pilot projects failed to become a nationwide programme and were discontinued after 1969. More importantly, they failed to attract significant voluntary labour from villagers

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(Askwith, 1966b, p. 250). Although an initial increase in villagers' participation was reported in Bünyan and Altınözü, the most showcased pilot districts (Geray, 1981, p. 54; Askwith, 1966a, pp. 9–11; Bilge, 1972), results remained unimpressive. While the local participation rate in infrastructure works related to drinking water supply in villages of Turkey was 20% in 1965, Bünyan registered a 34% rate. Whereas the average participation rate in road works in Turkey was around 2%, the figure was 7% in Bünyan (Geray, 1967, p.149). In Altınözü, the CDP's most tangible result was the building and repairing of a 35 km road. The construction of an olive oil press factory, a much-publicized project, failed to realize (Bilge, 1972, pp. 116–122, Askwith, 1966b, p. 10).

Despite signs of failure during the First Plan period, the Second Five-Year Development Plan (1968–1972) introduced new mechanisms to foster public participation (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1968, pp. 250–253; Geray, 1981, p. 63). In parallel, the responsibility for coordinating community development was transferred to the Ministry of Interior Affairs in 1969 (Geray, 1974a, p. 141). According to the Second Plan, CDP would not be limited to pilot projects but would also support selected projects proposed by village communities (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1968, pp. 250–252). Special provincial administrations (*il özel idareleri*) were tasked with selecting and funding such projects. To receive funding, projects had to be participatory, serve most of the village and be implemented through village-level cooperation. Like the CDPs in other countries, the Turkish state promised to cover 50% of the costs of selected projects, with a government contribution limit of 25,000 Turkish Lira ($2,777).[15] Notably, the regulation required villagers to provide 25% of the estimated costs for launching local projects. In December 1971, the upper limit of government contribution to each chosen project was reduced to 10,000 Turkish Lira ($671), but it was increased again to 25,000 Lira ($1760) in October 1973.[16] The table below shows the peasant and state contributions to these projects in 1968 and 1969.

As Table 1 shows, 440 projects were funded in 1968 and 486 in 1969, covering about 1% of Turkey's 40,000 villages each year. Moreover, the total investment budget for these years was 40,940,310 TL (slightly over $4.5 million), a meagre amount given the immense need for rural infrastructure investment (Geray, 1981, pp. 56–57).

During the Second Plan period, the government also attempted to revitalize the village unions whose history traces back to the 1930s. Following a directive issued by the Ministry of Interior in 1967, the number of unions reached 487 in 1970. However, this figure corresponded to only about 1% of all villages. Additionally, data from 371 unions showed that only 34 had budgets between 100,000 and 1,000,000 TL ($8,849–$88,495), while over 20% had budgets below 5,000 TL ($442) (Geray, 1974a, pp. 165–74).

Another initiative was establishing Agricultural Village Development Cooperatives (*Tarımsal Köy Kalkınma Kooperatifleri*, TKKKs), which gave villagers organizing CDP work priority to go to Western Europe as 'guest workers' (Geray, 1974a, pp. 33–35; Turan, 1989, pp. 46–47).[17] TKKKs scheme was the only CDP-affiliated initiative that made significant progress. The number of TKKKs increased from 13 in 1964 to 3,641 in 1973 (Geray, 1974a, pp. 33–35). Between 1961 and 1979, 888,102 people from Turkey found employment abroad (Keyder & Aksu-Koç, 1988). About 47,000 of them were TKKK members (Akgündüz, 2013, pp. 191–211). This growth was mainly due to villagers' enthusiasm to migrate to Europe. Migrants' remittances made a significant economic contribution, covering about 60% of Turkey's current account deficit between 1960 and 1980 (Erdoğan, 2015, pp. 125–126). However, as people were primarily motivated by going abroad rather than developing their villages, their financial contributions to TKKKs did not lead to genuine public cooperation for rural development (Turan, 1989, pp. 46–47). Moreover, since wealthier farmers often controlled them, TKKKs were not conducive to broad collective action. The situation worsened when labour emigration halted due to the economic crisis in Western Europe in the late 1970s, causing TKKKs to cease functioning (Aydın, 1990, pp. 329–330).

[15]Our conversions of the Turkish Lira to U.S. Dollars in the article are based on yearly averages provided by the following sources: Wikipedia, 'Turkish Lira', 11 February 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_lira; FXTOP, 'Historical Exchange Rates Graph', 11 February 2023, https://fxtop.com/en/historical-exchange-rates-graph-zoom.php.

[16]Three versions of the following document: Resmi Gazete (1968, 1971, 1973).

[17]For a similar use of guest worker programs, see Snodgrass (2022, pp. 756–787).

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TABLE 1 Utilization of the funds according to project types (1968–1969)

Project type	Number of projects	Budget (Turkish lira)	People's contribution (Turkish lira)	%	State's contribution (Turkish lira)	%
Social facilities						
1968	193	6,290,761 ($698,973)	3,849,289 ($427,698)	61.10	2,441,472 ($271,274)	38.90
1969	273	7,310,841 ($812,315)	4,671,553 ($519,061)	64.40	2,639,288 ($293,254)	35.60
Village infrastructure						
1968	115	7,346,660 ($816,295)	5,403,990 ($600,443)	73.20	1,942,670 ($215,852)	26.80
1969	56	6,767,721 ($751,969)	5,099,818 ($546,646)	75.20	1,667,903 ($185,322)	24.7
Economic facilities						
1968	115	5,468,278 ($607,586)	3,517,071 ($390,785)	64.30	1,951,207 ($216,800)	35.7
1969	127	4,999,451 ($555,494)	3,385,642 ($376,182)	67.8	1,613,809 ($179,312)	32.2
Touristic facilities						
1968	17	1,763,389 ($195,932)	1,229,194 ($125,477)	73.4	539,195 ($59,910)	26.60
1969	12	988,209 ($109,801)	786,209 ($87,356)	79.40	202,000 ($22,44)	20.60
Total						
1968	440	20,874,088 ($2,319,343)	13,999,544 ($1,555,504)	67.00	6,874,544 ($763,838)	33.00
1969	486	20,066,222 ($2,229,580)	13,943,222 ($1,549,024)	61.50	6,123,000 ($680,333)	38.50

Source: Geray (1981, 295).

After examining its components, as shown in Table 2, we can now present a nationwide overview of the CDP's performance. On 5 July 1971, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel addressed the Turkish parliament, stating that the estimated total required for rural development investment was 241.1 billion Turkish Liras ($16.18 billion). The government spent about 9.5 billion Turkish Liras ($1.05 billion) on the CDP between 1963 and 1967, less than 5% of the required amount (Cumhuriyet, 1962b). The CDP aimed to raise the public's contribution to rural investment to 30%, but pilot projects failed to meet this target. During the first plan period, public contributions were estimated between 112 and 120 million TL ($12.4–$13.3 million) (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1969; Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1971a), just 1.26% of the CDP budget. By the end of the Second Plan period, public contributions to potable water projects reached 445.9 million TL (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973, pp. 628–629). State investment in potable water infrastructure was 2.7 billion TL during the same period (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1968, p. 299), making the ratio of public participation 12%, well below the 30% target. Between 1965 and 1971, the combined contributions of the state and villagers to rural road, water and electricity projects were 4.18 billion TL ($411 million) and 622 million TL ($61.1 million), respectively (Adalet Partisi, 1972, pp. 192–195). This resulted in a public participation rate of 14%, still well below the targeted 30%. The slow development of rural infrastructure was partly due to the CDP's failure. By 1971, 75% of Turkey's villages lacked roads, 56% lacked access to clean drinking water, and 96% lacked stable electricity access (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1971b).

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TABLE 2 Projects planned under the Community Development Program in Turkey.

Project	Target	Result
Pilot districts	Expanding the CDP to all (40,000) villages of Turkey by the end of 1977	A total of 53 districts were selected for pilot projects by 1968. The expansion of pilot districts ceased thereafter.
Project funding through special provincial administrations	Supporting select village projects, 25% of whose costs were covered by the villagers	About 1% of villages were covered, with 440 projects in 1968 and 486 projects in 1969.
Village unions	Financing infrastructural projects by raising money from villagers	By 1970, just about 1% of all villages had a union, but only 34 of these unions had sufficient budgetary resources to implement infrastructure projects.
Village development cooperatives	Financing projects with contributions from villagers who emigrated to Western Europe as migrant workers	They were generally controlled by local elites. Most ceased to function after labour emigration nearly halted in the latter half of the 1970s.

These outcomes affected Turkey's comparative developmental performance during this period. For instance, Turkey's GDP per capita was more than five times that of China in 1960. Turkey also received significantly more external funding, with a foreign debt to GDP ratio nine times that of China by 1981. However, Maoist China, with its radical collectivist model, improved various rural development indicators—such as farm irrigation, electrification, healthcare, literacy and rural industrialization—more rapidly than Turkey between 1960 and 1980 (Gürel, 2019, pp. 42–44).[18]

4 | THE STRUCTURAL, POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC FACTORS BEHIND THE CDP'S FAILURE

Based on our analysis of available evidence, we identify three primary factors behind the failure of the CDP in Turkey: unequal land distribution, intense electoral competition and insufficient bureaucratic coordination. We will briefly examine these factors below.

4.1 | Land inequality as a structural obstacle

United Nations reports on community development, translated into Turkish, argued that unequal land distribution discouraged landless villagers and recommended comprehensive land reform to boost participation in CDPs (Ad Hoc Group of Experts Appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1963; Geray, 1964; Holdcroft, 1978; Köy İşleri Bakanlığı, 1959; United Nations, 1959). Evidence from East and South Asia supports this view. Redistributive land reforms in the 1950s were crucial to the success of state-directed rural infrastructure schemes in South Korea and Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s (Looney, 2020). Likewise, relatively equal access to land and other assets helped Chinese rural collectives to tax agriculture and mobilize labour in the same period. Overall, land reforms allowed the Chinese, South Korean and Taiwanese governments to convert agrarian surpluses into capital for industrialization (Pei, 2015, p. 213).

[18]A detailed comparison of Turkey's rural development with that of South Korea and Taiwan—successful cases of CDP-based rural development—is lacking. However, it is clear that, like Maoist China, these two countries performed much better than Turkey.

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Negative cases also highlight the importance of land reform. As Gunnar Myrdal aptly states, 'genuine cooperation can emerge only when the long-standing cleavages in status and power that divide the agricultural community have been repaired' (Myrdal, 1968, p. 1355). Likewise, in his comparison of Bangladesh and the West Bengal state of India, James Boyce shows that 'possibilities for such direct labor investments are severely curtailed by the fact that those who could most readily contribute their labor—the landless and near landless families—own little if any of the land that would be improved' (Boyce, 1987, p. 234). As Subir Sinha notes, 'it was difficult for the poor to be enthused about' India's CDP 'when it was biased against them and in favor of landowners' (Sinha, 2008, p. 76).

Similar factors were evident in the case of Turkey. Though landlessness was lower than in South Asia and Latin America, land distribution remained a challenge. Comprehensive land reforms were avoided due to the political power of large landowners. A 1945 survey showed that 418 families owned more than 5,000 dönüms each, while one third of farm households were land-poor, and nearly 5% were landless. In 1945, the CHP government passed the 'Law for Providing Land to Farmers', distributing roughly 22 million dönüms to 446,000 families from 1947 to 1970. Yet large landowners' influence kept private properties largely unaffected, and most distributed land was publicly owned. By the 1963 and 1970 agricultural censuses, about 40% of farm households cultivated no more than 20 dönüms, while about 10% controlled nearly half of all cultivated land. The 1973 'Land and Agricultural Reform Law' failed to change this situation (Gürel et al., 2022, pp. 10–11, 26–27).

In the absence of land reform in Turkey, land-poor peasants feared possible elite capture of created assets, which discouraged them to participate in the CDP:

> *The new methods and techniques aimed at increasing production, productivity, and income are not being adopted and implemented by villagers, as they do not see any benefit. This is because any increase in yield or income from these methods and techniques will go to the landowner rather than the peasant.* (Geray, 1974a, p. 333)[19]

Nabi Dinçer, the head of the Community Development Group of the Village Affairs Presidency, argued similarly: 'Landless rural families are not interested in community development programs. It is necessary to empower the landless rural population by granting them land ownership to overcome their sense of inferiority and establish a sense of identity' (Dinçer, 1965, p. 6). Likewise, Askwith noted that 'unequal pattern of land ownership' was a chief factor that 'inhibited popular development activities' (Askwith, 1966a, p. 8). A study on 12 villages from 1978–1980 found that in areas with high land and asset concentration, landless and land-poor villagers were less likely to support development initiatives due to limited potential benefits (Turan, 1989, pp. 22–24). A 1976 study using data from MIT's Rural Development Research Project concluded that in the 1960s, less stratified villages in Turkey were significantly more successful in organizing community-based infrastructure works compared to villages with significant land and wealth inequalities (Copur, 1976, pp. 108–220).

Irrigation schemes under the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) in the Kurdish-majority Southeast, the region with the highest land inequality in Turkey, clearly illustrate how land-based class inequalities hinder peasant cooperation. An assessment of the Devegeçidi Dam in Diyarbakır, constructed in 1972, found that villagers were reluctant to participate in the construction and maintenance of irrigation channels. Many channels were broken due to anger towards the government, property owners or neighbours. Farmers often ignored irrigation schedules, leading to drainage issues and leaving extensive fertile lands uncultivable (Taraklı, 1987, pp. 37–45, as cited in Miser, 1994, pp. 38–39).

[19] Also see Geray (1967, pp. 324–333).

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4.2 | The lack of bureaucratic coordination

In his extensive review of CDPs across the world, Holdcroft stresses the widespread 'problem of coordination among various government agencies', which 'arise from rivalries between the technical ministries, i.e., agriculture, health, and education [...] and the rural development agency or ministry' (Holdcroft, 1978, p. 29). Turkey's development planners were aware of this issue. The First Plan's section on community development stated that although about 70,000 civil servants were involved in rural development, they were not working in harmony: 'Ministries and various departments within the same Ministry perform similar tasks without knowledge of each other, leading to an unnecessary waste of human effort and resources' (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963a, p. 102). The Ministry of Village Affairs, established in 1963, still lacked a legal framework explaining the scope of its administrative authority as late as 1971. Furthermore, in the same period, the Inter-Ministerial Community Development Board remained dormant, with no meetings being held (Geray, 1974a, p. 141; Güçbilmez, 1964, p. 160; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966, pp. 11–12).

In 1969, the coordination of community development in Turkey was transferred from the Ministry of Rural Affairs to the Ministry of Interior. The Community Development Group was restructured and placed under the Ministry of National Education (Geray, 1974a, pp. 139–141; Geray, 1981, 2). Such changes worsened the confusion and disorganization at the central government level. Lack of coordination persisted down to the district and village levels, with some local branches of the Ministry of Village Affairs receiving directives from multiple agencies. About 30 institutions with disparate approaches were involved in rural development affairs (Geray, 1974a, p. 38). Governors of some pilot districts prepared projects without considering available resources. Consequently, projects either never started or were discontinued, wasting public resources (Çağlar, 1965, p. 26).

The shortage of personnel was another shortcoming (Çağlar, 1965, p. 26; Güçbilmez, 1964, p. 144). Similar to issues with India's CDP (Frankel, 2005, pp. 102–103; Sinha, 2008, p. 75), Turkish agricultural extension officers could visit only a quarter of the villages in pilot districts monthly, with 15% completely out of touch. This, combined with the lack of close relationship between officials and villagers, significantly constrained development efforts (Geray, 1974a, pp. 114–115). Moreover, there were no community development experts at the district level to guide officials in programme planning, implementation and monitoring (Güçbilmez, 1964, p. 159; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966, pp. 7–8). Staff appointments were made without considering experience in community development. Additionally, many personnel who received community development training were later assigned to unrelated posts (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966, p. 7). As a result, district administrations lacked adequate staff to implement and oversee projects (Geray, 1974a, pp. 158–159; Geray, 1981, pp. 59–60; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, 1966; Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973, p. 252).

4.3 | Electoral competition, rural populism and the CDP

Mobilizing villagers for infrastructure construction was a common strategy among developmentalist elites in the Global South. However, consistently pursuing such strategies under democratic regimes proved challenging. In rural-majority democracies like India, competing parties often avoided demanding sacrifices from villagers, instead keeping the agricultural sector untaxed and providing significant agricultural subsidies to garner rural votes (Gupta, 1998, p. 89; Varshney, 1995). Similarly, increasing competition for rural votes prevented the Turkish state from mobilizing villagers. To prevent a return to DP-style rural populism, the 1961 Constitution banned parties from establishing branches in villages. Despite the ban, rural populist dynamics re-emerged following the return to civilian rule with the 15 October 1961 elections. During the 1960s and 1970s, villagers were not passive recipients of state policies but actively pressured politicians to bring investments (Turan, 1989, pp. 80–83). A 1962 survey conducted by scholars from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with support from the DPT, involving approximately 8,000 villagers

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from 446 villages scattered across all 67 provinces of Turkey, found that 52% of male villagers believed 'it was necessary to depend on the government', while only 13% thought that 'a joint effort by government and villagers could help solve the problems' (Frey & Roos, 1967, p. 49).[20]

Rural populist pressure diverted the CDP from its original goals, shifting it from a scheme that raised labour and financial contributions from villagers to a regular government investment programme. This shift began in 1962, the programme's first year. Right-wing politicians' accusations of forced labour led the CHP-AP coalition to exclude any use of compulsory labour in the CDP from the start. Heated debates over the new 'Regulation on the Construction and Maintenance of Village Roads', enacted on 13 March 1962, revealed the difficulty of implementing even voluntary methods. The regulation aimed to construct 150,000 km of village roads over 30 years, with 25,000 km planned for each 5-year period. As part of the CDP, the regulation sought to combine villagers' labour and money with state investment, prioritizing villages that donated money. Villages unable to contribute financially faced long waits for state investment (Duran, 1962, p. 229). Turkish press extensively covered the new regulation. On a front-page headline, CHP-affiliated *Ulus* informed its readers that 'People and State Will Work Together in Road Construction' (Ulus, 1962). The centre-right *Tercüman* gave the news with the headline, saying 'Villagers Will Build Roads Themselves' (Tercüman, 1962b).

The regulation quickly sparked a crisis within the coalition. AP president Ragıp Gümüşpala, who held no ministerial post, criticized it as an unconstitutional corvée policy. Prime Minister and CHP president İsmet İnönü assured Gümüşpala that no corvée was involved. Gümüşpala, unwilling to relent, demanded that CHP-affiliated Minister of Public Works Emin Sükan publicly declare the regulation constitutional and carefully implemented. Sükan ignored this demand, and the centre-right press backed Gümüşpala's criticism (Duran, 1962, pp. 229–230; Baban, 1962; Akis, 1962; Milliyet, 1962; Tercüman, 1962a).

Deputies from various political parties also objected to the new regulation. During the parliamentary session on 19 September 1962, YTP senator Osman Hacıbaloğlu declared that building village roads through corvée was wrong (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1962a, p. 617). Deputies also brought villagers' complaints from their districts to parliament. On 10 January 1966, an exchange between Minister of Village Affairs Sabit Osman Avcı (AP) and Bahattin Uzunoğlu, a deputy from the right-wing Nation Party (*Millet Partisi*, MP) representing Samsun, highlighted the political challenges of state-directed rural mobilization. Uzunoğlu noted that while tobacco-growing villagers in fertile valleys could pay for road construction, poorer villagers in hilly regions could not, and he asked the minister to stop demanding financial contributions from them. Minister Avcı replied that due to the state's fiscal limitations, it was sensible to prioritize villages that could partially fund road construction. Uzunoğlu persisted with his demand (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1966, pp. 319–324). The village roads controversy escalated, becoming a primary reason for the coalition government's breakup in June 1962, just 3 months after the regulation's announcement.

Deputies also criticized other aspects of the CDP. MP deputy Uzunoğlu condemned the government's handling of a drinking well construction in a Samsun village, where the state invested 750,000 TL and villagers contributed 5,000 TL. He complained that the well was not functioning because the government required villagers to pay for diesel fuel. CHP deputy İlyas Kılıç from Samsun supported Uzunoğlu's demand (Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 1966, pp. 324–328), demonstrating that electoral pressures influenced deputies from all parties, including the CHP, the main sponsor of the CDP.

The broad opposition in Turkey to rural labour and financial mobilization shares similarities and differences with the resistance to what Vivek Chibber describes as 'disciplinary planning' in the Global South after World War II. Chibber defines disciplinary planning as the requirement for the national capitalist class to meet specific performance criteria set by the planning bureaucracy to enjoy benefits like market protection and state subsidies under the ISI strategy (Chibber, 2003, pp. 86–89). The similarity lies in the fact that Turkish parliamentary deputies opposing

[20]'The remaining villager responses were distributed among a number of alternatives; 11 per cent mentioned specific techniques and equipment while 17 per cent did not know or did not answer' (Frey & Roos, 1967, p. 49). The number of provinces increased later. Currently, there are 81 provinces in Turkey.

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the CDP echoed villagers' demands for better infrastructure and services without requiring their labour or financial contributions. However, unlike the small and economically influential national bourgeoisies, Turkish villagers, lacking economic power, relied on their electoral strength to influence policy. Therefore, the political resistance to the CDP in Turkey, characterized by rural populism, was more akin to the successful rural opposition in India against 'cooperative farming' in the late 1950s (Democratic Research Service, 1959) and the emergence of the 'New Farmers' Movement' in the late 1970s and 1980s (Varshney, 1995), rather than Chibber's example of capitalist opposition to disciplinary planning during the Bombay Plan of 1944–45 and the First Five-Year Plan (1951–56).

Such populist pressures eventually led to new policies that fundamentally altered the CDP. The Third Five-Year Plan (1973–1977) abolished the requirement for public participation in infrastructure construction in low-income regions by designating those provinces as 'regions prioritized for development' (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973, p. 865).[21] More importantly, in its 1973 election manifesto, the CHP promised to cancel public contribution requirements for all villages. Given that the CHP had been the CDP's chief sponsor over the last decade, this declaration marked the end of political commitments to the programme. The AP government, which took office in 1975 after the fall of a CHP-led coalition, made the same promise in its programme (Kaynar & Kalkan, 2022, p. 707; Aktürk & Dağlı, 1988, p. 322). Law No. 2032, prepared by the AP government and enacted on February 8, 1977, prohibited projects based on villagers' labour and financial contributions (Geray, 1981, pp. 266–267). Although the CDP was not officially discarded, the law effectively sounded its death knell, as raising labour and financial contributions from villagers was its primary goal.[22]

While identifying the constraints posed by electoral pressures, we do not suggest that an authoritarian regime is a prerequisite for the success of state-led mobilization efforts. Indeed, successful community development projects have occurred under authoritarian regimes, such as in South Korea and Taiwan, from the 1950s to the 1980s. However, CDPs have also failed in authoritarian contexts, like the Philippines during the 1970s. This indicates that factors such as land reform, asset distribution and bureaucratic organization are critical for the success of such programmes, not merely the presence of an authoritarian state. In Turkey, the CDP faced significant challenges due to insufficient support from the political establishment and the rural poor, compounded by a lack of adequate bureaucratic capacity.

Consequently, issues highlighted in the First Plan remained unresolved. Planned rural infrastructure investments were not realized, leading to regional investment imbalances. In response, the strategy of centralizing villages and enhancing rural urbanization, relying on state investment rather than self-financing by villagers, became a cornerstone of rural development policy (Geray, 1974b). The Third Five-Year Plan emphasized the widespread and dispersed nature of rural settlements and noted the high costs of providing services in such settings. It proposed reducing costs by centralizing villages, with subsequent investments focused on 'central villages' (*merkez köyler*) that would incorporate surrounding smaller villages (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973, pp. 857–865).

Similarly, the 'Village-Town Project' (*Köy-Kent Projesi*), featured in the CHP's 1969 and 1973 election manifestos and incorporated into the Fourth Plan (1979–1983), aimed to urbanize and industrialize rural areas (Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1979, pp. 286–300, 664–667). Specifically, the KKP aimed to meet the needs of the rural population at low cost, create job opportunities for the unemployed agricultural population and promote 'healthy urbanization' by curbing rural outmigration (Geray, 1974b; pp. 59–64; Kaynar & Kalkan, 2022, pp. 457–524, 712–789). Unlike the CDP, which aimed to establish a robust cost-sharing arrangement between the state and the villagers, the Village-Town Project relied on government spending.

[21]The 'regions prioritized for development' were primarily the Eastern and Southeastern regions, where Kurds make up a significant portion of the population.

[22]The only Community Development Project (CDP) implemented after the military coup in 1980 was in Tokat province in the mid-Black Sea region after 1984; see Ayhan (1990). In the 1990s, some academics proposed that the government adopt the community development framework to make the Southeast Anatolia Project more effective; see Miser (1994). However, this recommendation was not put into practice.

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5 | CDP'S ROLE IN AGRARIAN CHANGE IN TURKEY

Our discussion has shown that the CDP failed to achieve its core targets. However, it was not entirely inconsequential. It played a modest role in the further commercialization and capitalist transformation of Turkish agriculture. Two examples may suffice to illustrate this historical role.

The first case is the 'Çorum-Çankırı Integrated Rural Development Project', implemented in Central Anatolia between 1976 and 1984. The project was funded by a $75 million loan from the World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1975) and involved eight government agencies (Aydın, 1990, p. 315). Although not officially designated as a CDP, the project incorporated elements of the community development framework, such as cost-sharing of infrastructure construction between the state and peasants, and the establishment of Village Development Cooperatives mentioned earlier. The project contributed to the extension of Green Revolution technologies and enabled villagers to access bank credit. The most important consequence was the intensification of farmers' market orientation. Although the project claimed to promote equity, it mainly benefited a few large farm owners (Aydın, 1990, pp. 323–330). In summary, the project furthered the commercialization of agriculture and increased agrarian class differentiation in the region.

The second case is the Development Foundation of Turkey (*Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı*, TKV). TKV was crucial in tapping the CDP's potential for transformation. The extensive career of Altan Ünver, the founding president of the TKV, reflected key aspects of the CDP. Ünver was one of the organizers of the 'International Voluntary Work Camps' in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the first rural community development initiative in Turkey. He completed his MA thesis on Turkey's CDP at the University of Texas in 1965 (Ünver, 1965). After returning to Turkey, Ünver established the Social Service Club at Tarsus American College, which ran a pilot project in nine villages from 1965 to 1969. This project aimed to improve poultry production. In 1969, Ünver founded TKV, bringing together academics, bureaucrats and business leaders. TKV's approach to rural development involved collaboration between the private sector, government agencies and smallholders to modernize agriculture (Ünver, 2005, pp. 29–52).

TKV's most important activity was the 'Tarsus Integrated Poultry Project', launched in 1972. Funded by a $25 million World Bank loan, the project aimed to implement a contract farming model for poultry production, quickly expanding to 12 regions in Turkey. As Ünver notes, TKV's poultry production model laid the groundwork for a 'nationwide agro-industrial system' involving smallholders and private entrepreneurs 'in a competitive market economy'. By the early 2000s, TKV-linked producers accounted for about 20% of Turkey's broiler chicken production (Ünver, 2005, p. 73) In short, although the CDP failed to achieve its primary goals, it contributed modestly to the further commercialization and capitalist transformation of Turkish agriculture.

6 | CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of official reports, parliamentary minutes, press archives and academic and non-academic literature, this article examined the national and transnational contexts, central objectives, implementation and the main reasons of failure of the CDP that was implemented in Turkey between 1962 and 1980. We showed that like similar programmes elsewhere, the United States played a crucial role in Turkey's CDP by disseminating knowledge and providing funds. The CDP's central goal was to mobilize the labour and financial resources of the villagers to carry out rapid infrastructure construction. Policymakers hoped that such mobilization could help achieve a high level of rural development far beyond what could be achieved by relying solely on government spending and might also allow the allocation of more resources to urban industrialization.

Despite initial enthusiasm, the CDP failed to mobilize the countryside for three main reasons. First, intense electoral competition compelled the political parties to distribute state resources to rural voters rather than demanding labour and financial contributions from them. Second, the persistent economic inequality, especially unequal land distribution, stifled the enthusiasm of the landless and land-poor villagers to make substantial contributions to local

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infrastructure projects. Finally, the lack of coordination among various bureaucratic branches also played a role in the failure. As a result, Turkey's pace of rural development in the 1960s and 1970s lagged behind the radical collectivist model of Maoist China and the successful CDP-based efforts in South Korea and Taiwan.

Nonetheless, the CDP was not entirely without impact. It played a modest role in the capitalist transformation of Turkish agriculture, as illustrated by the World Bank-funded Çorum-Çankırı Rural Development Project and the Tarsus Integrated Poultry Project in the 1970s. With its consequences and failures, Turkey's CDP provides important insights into rural development policies in the Global South in the post-WWII era.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they do not have any conflicting interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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