**Rural Community Development That Never Was: The Turkish Experience, 1960-1980**

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Turkey’s Toplum Kalkınması Programı (Community Development Program, CDP), implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, has remained a largely underexplored subject in the existing literature on rural development in Turkey and the global history of rural community development schemes. Based on detailed archival research, this presentation will make three main arguments regarding this program. First, like similar programs elsewhere, the transnational development regime of the post-WWII era under the United States’ hegemony profoundly influenced the design and implementation of the CDP. Second, the program’s central goal was to mobilize the labor and financial resources of the villagers to carry out rapid infrastructure construction in the countryside. 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. Finally, despite initial enthusiasm, the CDP failed to mobilize villagers due to several structural, political, and bureaucratic factors. Intense electoral competition compelled the political parties to distribute state resources to rural voters rather than demanding labor and financial contributions from them. 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. The lack of coordination among various bureaucratic branches also contributed to the CDP’s failure.