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A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND MENTALITY: THE CASE OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCY EMPLOYEES

Harun KAPTANER*

Abstract

It is a sociological reality that individual differences exist in society. However, despite all our differences, we see that we have mentalities that show that we do not think very differently from each other in our social life. These mentalities also affect the unique development and progress processes of each society. In our research, from such a point of view, the universe of meaning of the phenomenon of mentality that determines and transforms attitudes and behaviors was revealed and it was evaluated how working in a regional development agency has an effect on the perception of development agency personnel towards the concept of development. This study is the first of its kind in Türkiye since the relationship between development and mentality has not been revealed in a sociological sense until today. The data of the research, which adopts the interpretative sociology method, is limited to the results of in-depth interviews conducted with 45 staff working in the development agency between December 2019 and February 2020. According to the findings obtained in this study, it is understood that the habitus of regional development agencies provides a multidimensional perspective to the agency staff, but the authoritarian mentality elements dominant in the public sector shape the habitus in this field.

Keywords: *Development, Mentality, Socius, Habitus.*

JEL Codes: O110, O150, R580, Z130.

KALKINMA İLE ZİHNİYET ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİSELLİĞE SOSYOLOJİK BAKIŞ: KALKINMA AJANSI ÇALIŞANLARI ÖRNEĞİ

Öz

Toplumda bireysel farklılıkların var olduğu sosyolojik bir gerçekliktir. Ancak bütün farklılıklarımıza rağmen toplumsal yaşamımızda birbirimizden pek de farklı düşünmediğimizi gösteren zihniyetlerimiz olduğunu görürüz. Bu zihniyetler, her toplumun kendine özgü gelişme ve ilerleme süreçlerini de etkiler niteliktedir. Araştırmamızda böyle bir bakış açısından hareketle tutum ve davranışları belirleyen ve dönüştüren zihniyet olgusunun anlam evreni ortaya koyularak kalkınma ajansı personelinin kalkınma kavramına yönelik algısının oluşmasında bölgesel kalkınma ajansında çalışıyor olmasının nasıl bir etkiye sahip olduğu değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma bugüne kadar Türkiye’de kalkınma ve zihniyet arasındaki ilişkinin sosyolojik anlamda ortaya konmamış olması sebebi ile ilk olma özelliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yorumlayıcı sosyoloji yöntemi benimsenen araştırmaya ait veriler Aralık 2019–Şubat 2020 tarihleri arasında kalkınma ajansında çalışan 45 personel ile gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine görüşme sonuçları ile sınırlıdır. Bu çalışmada elde edilen bulgulara göre, bölgesel kalkınma ajanslarının habitusunun ajans personeline çok boyutlu bir bakış açısı kazandırdığı ancak kamuda hâkim olan otoriter zihniyet unsurlarının bu alan içinde yer alan habitusu şekillendirdiği anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Kalkınma, Zihniyet, Socius, Habitus.*

JEL Kodları: O110, O150, R580, Z130.

* Dr., Specialist, South Aegean Development Agency, Economic Researches and Planning Unit, DENİZLİ.
e-mail: hkaptaner@gmail.com, (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1941-4858>).

1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the modernization process is considered to be the era of capitalism, which is expressed as the economic perspective of the West (Weber, 2012: 36-38), and the emergence of states with the acceleration of centralization (Delmas, 1967: 22-40). This period not only witnessed profound changes in the political and economic fields, but also in social structure and values (Tanilli, 1995: 44-45); it was a period of significant developments in art, literature, and architecture as a result of the social mobility experienced with the Renaissance, Humanism, and Reform movements (Nakavi, 1997: 11-13). As a result of all these changes in the West, Europe has gained strength and progress in all areas compared to its contemporaries, and especially with the 1789 French Revolution, it began to spread its ideas to nations around the world (Wallerstein, 2006: 57). The rapid development and changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, which was also defined as the bourgeois revolution, and the resulting thoughts and social regulations have formed the basis of regional imbalances (Huberman, 2013: 172-174). The Industrial Revolution gave rise to a new social order in the West, in which the capitalist bourgeoisie class, consisting of industrialists and merchants that emerged towards the end of the Middle Ages, took on a dominant role and fostered a relativistic mentality (Wood, 2003: 10-11; Schumpeter, 1962: 134; Pirenne, 2011: 9; Braudel, 2002: 416-421). The aim of this class is liberalism (Smith, 2001: 285). The economic aspect of liberalism rejects state intervention in the market and emphasizes entrepreneurial freedom, while its political aspect defends individualism and rejects monarchy (Dobb, 1990: 25-31).

The use of the concept of "development" in Türkiye, especially in the context of development in the purely economic sense, is a projection of the development-oriented mentality. The use of the concept of development, which implies economic change and transformation, instead of the concept of development, which also includes social change, in the literature is a result of the meaning Türkiye has attributed to the process of modernization/modernization/westernization/contemporaryization for the last two hundred and fifty years. The concept of modernity that the West uses to define itself is based on the progressive, positivist, capitalist and secularist philosophy of the Renaissance, that is, on relativist and homogeneous mass organization (authoritarian) mentalities. Modernization has been a concept used by the West for non-Western societies (Rostow, 1980: 18-20). Non-Western societies have mostly preferred the concept of westernization to define themselves. Westernization is the approach that determines the social level that Western Europe has reached as a result of its historical progress as an ideal. In the Ottoman Empire, the Treaty of Karlowitz necessitated a change in mentality, and the superiority of the West in technology and military was accepted, leading to a process of Westernization. In other words, the belief that the salvation of the state lies in technological changes began to take root, and the mentality that shaped modern Türkiye started to emerge during this period (İnalçık, 2015: 3). After the Ottoman Empire turned towards Western Europe as a result of heavy defeats in wars, the westernization movements carried out in the fields of military and education were defined as *Islahat* and *Tanzimat*, and the concepts of modernization and modernization were used to express the lifestyles that emerged later (Karpas, 2014: 79-80). Developments in the last century of the Ottoman Empire and in the early periods of the Republic of Türkiye were described with definitions such as modernization, reaching the level of contemporary civilization, and with the simplification of the language, the word modernization began to be used instead of these definitions (Berkes, 2003: 39).

In this process, which is defined as modernization/development and started in the 19th century, the dominant mentality of social structures was formed on the basis of this change (Tönnies, 2001:22). This development, which started with the Renaissance (intellectual), established its legal infrastructure with the French Revolution (political), formed its economic foundations with the Industrial Revolution (technical), and caused states to undergo a major transformation economically, socially and politically, continued with the emergence of development differences across the world. Today, development consists of many components such as an increase in the quality of human resources of a region, an increase in per capita income and the fairness of distribution with this increase, an increase in productivity in the labor market, an increase in the welfare level of people, an increase in investments and environmental sensitivity, and refers to developments in the cultural, social and economic fields (Mankiw, vd., 1992: 402-430; Romer, 1986: 1002-1030; Nonneman ve Vanhocht 1996: 944-952).

With the dominance of modernization theories after 1945, the concepts of development/regional development have started to be used more as economic terms in the literature. In countries that develop policies to reduce the disparities in regional development within the nation-state structure or have such policies, the development gap is less significant. However, in underdeveloped or developing countries where these policies are not present, this gap is quite significant. The Keynesian-based policies implemented after 1945 began to lose their significance by the 1970s. Their strong aspect in underdeveloped regions has been their ability to increase employment (Dowd, 2006: 166). However, with the emergence of globalization, there have been ruptures in the understanding and policies implemented in the 1980s. Especially in the 1980s and beyond, when looking at the regional development policies implemented, it can be seen that the central authority has less influence and regional actors are more functional and dominant.

Until today, support mechanisms have been implemented worldwide for regions that are disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic structure, geographical conditions, and have not developed sufficiently. However, over time, it has been observed that this support is inadequate and there are problems and conflicts in its implementation. As a result, there is a need for a structure that can coordinate these mechanisms, have a high technical capacity, intervene in the market to a certain extent, coordinate actors who can determine or influence local development policies, and make regional plans to determine policies. The need for regional development policies has led to a shift away from the idea of direct state investments, support mechanisms, and state intervention, towards policies that can uncover the region's internal potential, improve the investment environment, and develop a skilled workforce. In this process, regions have gained importance in terms of economic and political structure. The shift from the Fordist understanding to the post-Fordist understanding, the transformation of the roles of nation-states in globalization, the dominance of market capitalism in globalization, and the transformations in consumption and production systems are the key elements underlying this process (Torre and Wallet, 2016: 23-45).

The process of globalization has had a significant impact on the implementation of regional development policies, shifting from central to local policies. With these transformations, regions have become economic actors and units, and inter-regional competition has emerged. The perspective on development has shifted towards minimizing the disparities among all regions of the country, and regional actors have been involved in achieving this goal. In this stage, central governments have moved away from being active actors in regional terms and have taken on a passive role in defining and coordinating the basic principles or framework of policies. The most important tool for implementing this transformation is regional development agencies, which vary in terms of their functions and structure from country to country, and involve multiple actors (Halkier, 2006: 3).

In contrast to Europe, Türkiye has been hesitant towards the concept of regional development due to political reasons, and instead has implemented various regional policies with a centralist perspective. However, over time, the significant disparities in development between regions in Türkiye and the political risks associated with the concentration of trade and industry in certain centers have been recognized. Regional development agencies and policies, which are one of the commitments Türkiye made to join the European Union, have gained importance since the 2000s. Regional development agencies, which have been operating in Türkiye for approximately 20 years, aim to determine local development policies, ensure participation, uncover the internal potential of the region, and coordinate institutions (Şen and Kaya, 2014: 206-207).

This study examines the understanding of development and the meaning attributed to this concept by the personnel employed within regional development agencies. The study primarily aims to describe the perspective of regional development agency personnel on the concept of development and the factors that shape this perspective, based on the meaning universe of social and economic mentality in relation to development.

2. THE CHANGE IN THE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT FROM THE OTTOMAN PERIOD TO THE REPUBLIC

While the East-West contradiction was previously organized by religious arguments, this contradiction evolved into eco-political and social dimensions with the Age of Enlightenment. The East-West contradiction is specific to the West-centered modern capitalist World (Giddens, 2008: 12). The East-West contradiction is a transformation in the Western mentality that has extended from the religious to the cultural, social, political

and even economic (Turner, 1974: 10-11). In the past of this transformation, both in the West and the East, there were different forms of idealist (patriarchal) and authoritarian mentalities in accordance with the feudal, economic structure based on the relationship between lord and vassal. With this mental transformation that started with the Enlightenment, the Western world distanced itself from the religious and metaphysical with the positivism it adopted with scientific developments, leaving the idealist (patriarchal) mentality without a base; and to accompany the authoritarian mentality, it created the relativist mentality and made it dominant in Western societies. The relativist mentality, which is the pillar of liberal thought, also formed the basis of the political and social infrastructure of capitalist industrial economics (Hirschman, 2008:31-32).

Throughout history, Turks have been under the influence of many different belief systems and religions. According to Güngör (1989:63), Islam was the first religion to unite all Turks. In the pre-Islamic Turkish states, although the khans thought that they had the special protection of God from time to time, they did not see themselves as religious leaders and the clergy did not interfere in state affairs and a secular model of government was applied (Arsal, 1947:72-76). It can be said that the administrative mentality of Turkish society was generally shaped under the influence of two different cultural and civilizational worlds. The first of these influences is the old Turkish state traditions and institutions that form the basis of the authoritarian mentality, and the other is the Islamic culture and institutions that form the basis of the patriarchal mentality. It is also necessary to add the Western culture transmitted through the process of westernization (Berkes, 1972). While the Western world re-developed in a new world of mentality with low power distance and individualist cultural elements, the Ottoman Empire remained under the influence of idealist (patriarchal) and authoritarian mentalities fed by high power distance and collectivist cultural elements until its collapse (Hofstede, 2001: 108,244; Ülgener, 2006a: 20). The Ottoman Empire and subsequent Republican Türkiye perceived modernization in the West as having advanced technology, a secular worldview and a nation-state, and perceived modernization as the removal of the patriarchal mentality, i.e. Islam, from social, political and economic life, but was not influenced by the relativist mentality (Berkes, 2003: 39), which is of great importance in the transformation of the Western mentality (Karatepe, 1997: 65). In this way, modernism and its institutions in Türkiye were defined solely through the authoritarian mentality and led to the state becoming an undisputed center of authority and power. Therefore, the changes experienced in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic were perceived as a reflection of the developments in the world, and a state-centered reflex (transformation of socius into polity) was developed to these changes and a number of innovation movements were initiated, but this did not lead to a new transformation of mentality (relativist and democratic mentality) (Ülgener, 2006a: 20). According to Keyder (2000:15), the dominance of the bureaucracy over economic structures has remained one of Türkiye's developmental problems. In other words, the paradigmatic transformations in the social, political and economic spheres during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic continue to stand above the continuities on the level of mentality (Mağçıyan, 2000:163-215; Ülgener, 2016: 18).

From the reading of the Tanzimat Decree in Gülhane Park in 1839 to the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, both the palace and the Turkish intellectuals known as the Young Turks made strong efforts to reorganize the institutional structure of the state and strengthen and modernize the Ottoman state. The three stages of human thought, as attributed by Comte to sociology, from metaphysical thought to positivist thought and thus to a positivist society, fascinated the Young Turks. The Young Turks were inclined to rationalize their ambition to include the Ottoman state and society in the project of modernity through an ideal type of positive society. However, the relationship between the palace and the Young Turks soon soured. The palace's pace of reform could no longer meet the demands for change from the Young Turks. While the palace administration carried out reform efforts with the Prussian state, which it saw as close to its own administrative system, the Young Turks began to be guided by the political ideas of French Jacobins, especially those who were modernists. What the Young Turks needed was not the memory of history and culture that the palace defended, but rather to break away from the elements they perceived as obstacles to modernization, which they considered a myth, as in revolutionary France. According to them, thanks to positivism, it is possible to reach the highest positivist stage without experiencing the theological and metaphysical stages (Işın, 1985: 352-362). After reaching the positivist stage, the ideal of an organic society of Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill can be concretized, making it possible to be free and modern. In the current conditions, the most consulted contemporary French

sociologist is Emile Durkheim; the most well-known Turkish sociologists of this period are Prens Sabahattin and Ziya Gökalp. Prens Sabahattin is known for his emphasis on decentralization and individual entrepreneurship. Although Prens Sabahattin spent his entire life in political struggles, his emphasis on sociology shows that he is talking about the socius and values it. Prens Sabahattin stated that the polity-centered administrative understanding created a socius among the Turks that carried communal elements and that this social mentality needed to be abandoned (Çelebi, 2008: 678-679).

Ziya Gökalp, an important figure in Turkish sociology, is unlike Prens Sabahattin in that he is a sociologist of polity, not socius. Ziya Gökalp deliberately opposed the Le Play school represented by Prens Sabahattin by emphasizing the communal structure of Turkish society, and advocated for the preservation of this structure. He made the sociological methods of French sociologist Emile Durkheim the epistemic paradigm of Turkish sociology and the Turkish state structure. Ziya Gökalp's establishment of the first sociology department in Türkiye in 1915 and his promotion of Durkheimian sociology in the curriculum, which continues to have an influence even after more than a century, ensured the continuation of Emile Durkheim's organic society ideal (Parla, 1989: 48).

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Socius

Socius is a multi-layered, multi-faceted human association in which human beings experience life and have a historical and cultural character. Hannah Arendt was one of the first to use this concept (Arendt, 1994: 47). Socius is a concept that encompasses both oikos and polis. The oikos is the micro-scale (primary relations) form of socius, while the polis is the macro-scale (secondary) form of socius. The social unit is the main component of the socius. Social units are "social acts". The state of social act is not epistemic but ontological. The social units that construct the socius are divided into two: The social person and the collective person. The main distinction between these two is that social persons have biological and psychological elements whereas collective persons do not. History and culture, which are the product of the mutual interaction between social units, have become one of the basic elements of the formation of the social units that begin to emerge after them. Polity, on the other hand, is a collective element based on the exercise of power, consisting of a form of socius that shares a common world of meaning at a certain time and place, in other words, a form of socius in which individuals are directed in the name of the common good without consulting their own opinions. Once polity emerged from socius, it tried to define all socius from its own point of view (Touraine, 1998:119-125). The difference between polity and socius is that there is a distance between what is done in polity and the expressions about them, while socius makes dialogue possible among human associations that are not polity. As the distance between the actions carried out for the public good and the expressions about these actions increases in line with the interests of the few who have great power, socius turns into polity (Çelebi, 2007: 50-53).

Socius is a bond that exists at all times and places and has a historical and cultural atmosphere. Historicity shows dynamism, transience, the possibility of human accumulation, and progress in their realization, while cultural specificity shows the specificity of each human relationship. Thanks to culture, people can survive and preserve what they are, regardless of everything they experience over time and all the changes they are exposed to (Wells, 1994: 45). Culture is what enables social units to build structures. Cultural specificity makes it possible to show the effectiveness of a social unit.

3.2. Play, Field and Habitus

Bourdieu (2006:143) uses the metaphor of a game to better understand the concept of field. In a game, there are players and their investments, interests, politics, rules (doxas/opinions) that are unspoken and unquestioned. The players, the agents in the socius, are obviously the constituents of the community in general. Players' investments in the game are the modules of capital that they risk in order to achieve their expectations of the outcome of the game (illusio/worth playing). The actual capital is the cards held by each player involved in the game. According to Bourdieu, the field is the space where this game is played. The chances of winning and/or losing the game vary according to the type/strength of the cards in the players' hands, that is, according to their capital. The tactics of the players during the game correspond to the concept of habitus. These predispositions are not specific stereotypical methods for success, but tendencies shaped in this process (Wacquant, 2003:25-26).

The creations within socius are neither the numerical sum of random actions nor the integrated result of a common design (Bourdieu, 2003: 61). Bourdieu (2006) has discussed the formative stages of this field in detail. According to these stages, the field is formed as follows. First, the realization of autonomy, then the formation of the second structure, and finally the formation of its own symbolic capital. In a sense, the realization of autonomy here is resistance against the field. In the context of this resistance, a two-sided battle takes place and constitutes its capital in its own field. This process continues with the formation of habitus; thus the field continues to reproduce itself constantly. At this point, the concept of habitus needs to be clarified. Habitus is an interaction that both influences individuals and is influenced by individuals. Through habitus, individuals gain the ability to adapt to different conditions (Wacquant, 2003: 27). In short, habitus is the tendency of the agent to not perform anything other than what is expected of them (Bourdieu, 2003: 121, 125). In other words, habitus is a set of behavioral skills that make individuals capable of playing their social roles. Habitus enables actors to become mentally and physically involved in playing the game. While habitus shapes the action from within, the field shapes the action and structure from outside (Calhoun, 2007: 104).

3.3. Mentality

Mentality is a major component of a group's cultural identity. For a group, mentality is a common frame of reference that emerges through the assimilation of the norms and values of the culture. Mentality also functions as a carrier of socialization. Membership of a social group also has another fundamental social function: acquisition-diffusion mechanisms and protection-defense mechanisms (Mucchielli, 1991: 21-22). Mentality is the visible face of society, meaning that social structures and mental structures are interconnected. Actions occurring in the social sphere cannot be considered separately from the general mentality of the society, nor can they be fully known without recognizing the mentality that directs these actions (Ülgener, 2006b:13). The mentality, which can also be expressed as social consciousness, refers to an element that is different from the individual consciousness of the members that make up the society and can exert pressure on them through norms, values, and ultimately institutions (Durkheim, 2006: 108-109). Since mentality is formed by the common but mostly implicit thoughts of society, sociological data is quite valuable in mentality research. Many domestic or foreign sociologists have used similar or related concepts to the mentality phenomenon and substantiated their views in their analysis of society. For example, Durkheim's collective consciousness, which he regarded as the totality of society's common conceptions (Aron, 1994: 220-226); Mardin's (1992: 19-20) root paradigm, which he claimed affects the individual subjectively outside of formal socialization tools, refers to a stance, way of thinking, and behavior set that is above the individual, encompasses them, and is mostly under their control. The concepts of "internalization" used by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann and "habitus" used by Pierre Bourdieu can also be shown among the concepts that can be used instead of the mentality concept.

3.4. Culture

Culture is a concept that has very different definitions in the field of social sciences. The reason for this is the evaluation of culture according to its usage area. Derived from the Latin word "coler," the term refers to the act of cultivating. Culture is defined as a human-made condition in response to the natural (Alver and Doğan, 2018: 54). According to Meriç (1986: 1), culture is a slippery concept. You cannot analyze it because its elements are infinite. You cannot capture it because it does not stand still. Culture has general characteristics that apply to every culture. According to Güvenç (1996: 101-104), culture is learned, historical and continuous, social, an ideal system, satisfying and meeting needs, changing, integrative and socializing. Hofstede's (2001: 108,244) Cultural Dimension Theory, which is used in the findings section of the study to define Türkiye's social mentality, creates a context that describes how and in what way cultural values influence actions and why individuals in a culture act in a certain way. According to this theoretical approach, a culture has six different dimensions; Power distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity versus Femininity, Long/Short Term Adaptation and Freedom versus Restraint.

Culture, according to Alver and Doğan (2018: 185), refers to how a society and the individuals within that society live, think, act, and produce. In sociological reality, culture encompasses the behavioral patterns in the process of socialization that individuals experience from birth to death. According to Fichter (1996: 130), from

a sociological perspective, every normal individual in society becomes cultured. Culture is not something that only includes a few lucky individuals in the upper echelons. Culture has very different and diverse contents. Every individual goes through the process of socialization in some way. The cultural relations system includes the values, norms, and beliefs that are the source of socialization (Akin, 2011: 98-99). Culture is a belief and tradition system that a group of people use to understand, structure, and construct their individual and collective lives. Culture is a way of understanding and organizing human life. When used alone, culture encompasses all aspects of human life. When used as an adjective, it is related to the domain or direction of human life defined by the adjective as in the examples of business culture, academic culture, political culture, coffee culture, family culture (Parekh, 2002: 184).

3.5. Development

The concept of development is an ever-expanding concept expressed in the “progress” motto of modernity, beginning with the Renaissance, continuing with the Industrial Revolution and continuing to the present day. Development is closely related to positive interventions aimed at influencing the process of social change. Development is a dynamic concept that proposes to be in a different state and position from the current state or previous position (Oakley and Garforth, 1985:1-2). In other words, development is a continuous positive change in the structural characteristics of a country. According to Sen(2004: 17-19), development is the process of expanding the freedoms that people desire. According to Schumpeter (2005: 108-120), development is the process of putting an end to a stagnant state and making a leap to a higher level of economic flow by abandoning the usual path. Bottomore (1977: 121-122) adds a more sociological approach to this concept, stating that development is a social phenomenon and should be evaluated within the social structure.

3.6. Factors Affecting Social Mentality

Individual Factors: The inherited characteristics of the individual are genetically based and almost impossible to change. The hereditary characteristics of individuals and the characteristics acquired from the social and physical environment in which they live constitute the personality of the individual (Bilgiseven, 1995: 16). Based on this premise, different personality traits of individuals may cause them to develop different perspectives and behavioral patterns within the general mentality of the society.

Social Factors: According to Berger and Luckmann (2008:90-91), the existence of a social world that exists in that world before the individual comes into the world and continues to exist independently of the individual after the individual leaves that world maintains itself ontologically as an objective phenomenon. The objectivity of this world is not free from the human experiences that construct it. Likewise, mentality bears the characteristics of the individuals who internalize it and the socius that externalizes it and remains under their influence.

Economic Factors: Economics is one of the most important factors that form the mentality in a society. As long as economic development is indexed to human intervention, it takes shape and direction according to the actions of individuals and the elements of mentality that affect these actions (Maillet, 1983:122). Regardless of the geography and era of the world, economic life reflects a world beyond the gathering of quantitative data and transactions. Taking the capitalist economic system as an example, Weber (1999:41-69) argues that the Protestant ethic played a major role in the emergence of industrial capitalism by creating a new way of economic thinking (the capitalist mentality, which is characterized by the increase in surplus value), as it was based on the belief in the virtues of individualism, calculation and rational work. Sombart also defends this view, but he argues that the source of the capitalist mentality is found in ancient Jewish religion and ethics long before Protestantism (Sombart, 2008: 281). Apart from Weber and Sombart, Veblen, who argues that there is a connection between the economic mentality and people’s consumption habits, argues in his “Theory of the Idle Class” (1995) that there is a close relationship between ostentatious consumption and consumption habits.

Cultural Factors: Unless the elements of culture such as beliefs, moral norms, traditions and rituals on which the mentality of a society is based are known, the general mentality of that society cannot be fully understood. This is because mentality is directly related to the culture of a society and the elements that make up that culture (Türkkahraman, 2010:42-43). Culture encompasses not only the beliefs and abstract artistic values of a society, but also all concrete forms of life and naturally its mentality. Therefore, mentality is a concept that includes thoughts and actions that develop within the concept of culture.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Humanitarian Development

Humanitarian development is a theoretical approach that puts human beings at the center of development studies, as it is much more comprehensive than the concept of development focused on income and quantitative growth (Sen, 2004:14). According to this approach, when development is portrayed solely in terms of income and growth, it can cover up the deficiency in the actual capacities of people. Therefore, the quantitative increase in income in a country cannot ensure that people in that country live a long and healthy life and have a quality standard of living. Starting from the last quarter of the 1970s, the measurement of humanitarian development and the elements of the humanitarian development index (literacy and schooling, income level, life expectancy at birth, per capita income according to purchasing power parity) have been extensively covered in the development literature. Humanitarian development is concerned with both the production and distribution of commodities and the expansion of the use of human capacity.

The concept of human development, based on a socius approach, refers to the process of expanding people's choices and achieving a high quality of life. This concept is based on the recognition of two different aspects of human development. The first aspect is a form of human capacity, such as strengthening health and increasing knowledge. The second aspect is the use of the capacity that people have acquired (HDR, 1990: 10). Human development is concerned with both the production and distribution of commodities and the widespread use of human capacity. Moreover, human development focuses on what people need to do and have in order to sustain their own life cycles. Human development is concerned not only with the satisfaction of basic needs, but also with the dynamic structure of human development (HDR, 1990: 11). P. Streeten (1994: 232) also places the focus of development on the human being. According to P. Streeten's approach, to achieve development, the human being should be considered as an ideal, and the focus should be on expanding people's choices.

"According to Amartya Sen, the development of society means the expansion of capabilities. If more people can participate in their communities and are healthy and safe, then that society has progressed. Education offers you the freedom to be the person you can be, primarily by being able to read, write, and think about things. Democracy also gives people the opportunity to influence how their communities are governed, and therefore, for Sen, it is another freedom that is an integral part of development. Real development is more than economic development measured by the production of goods. Real development is human development; that is, the freedom that arises from having the abilities necessary to lead a quality life for more individuals" (Kishtainy, 2018: 293).

The UNDP, the United Nations development organization that guides people to a better quality of life within the framework of human-centered development, began publishing the "Human Development Report" (HDR) systematically every year starting in 1990. The Human Development Index (HDI), which reflects the UNDP's human-centered development approach and is based on the capacity concept that Amartya Sen used in the 1980s, is included in the "Human Development Report." This report created the concept of human development and brought about a significant transformation in the development perspective. The report is published every year based on calculations made according to the parameters included in the human development index. According to the latest "2019 Human Development Report," Türkiye, which is in the highest human development category, ranks 59th among 189 countries, and 66th in the gender inequality index (HDR, 2019: 300).

5. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

5.1. Research Design

In this research, which adopts an interpretive sociology approach, a qualitative method is used. Qualitative research is a method that allows for the examination of human experiences using a variety of research methods such as monographs, life stories, content analysis, observations, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews (Hennink et al., 2010: 8-9). According to the interpretive science paradigm, truth emerges in the social environment, is complex, and constantly changes. In this sense, reaching the truth is possible by constructing

and interpreting how human beings analyze and interpret certain objects, phenomena, behaviors, perceptions, etc. (Glesne, 2014: 11). The interpretive scientific approach argues that an independent objective epistemology separate from human thought is not possible. It accepts that truth exists socially in the mind's process and, therefore, truth is social. According to this perspective, knowledge is subjective and constructed based on images accepted and shared by members of a culture. Truth varies depending on the unique experiences of different individuals. The focus of such research is to explore how individuals construct and interpret their experiences within their social environments, including their own socius, and make sense of them (Grbich, 2013: 7; Merriam, 2015: 88). In qualitative research, data collection is done by talking to individuals in the environments where they experience the problem, directly engaging with them, and staying within the context (Creswell, 2013: 185-186). In the study, depending on the course of the interview, the order of the questions is changed if necessary, and new questions can be added if needed. This technique provides flexibility to the researcher in terms of how to proceed with the content and progress of the interview (Bal, 2016: 163-392).

5.2. Data Collection Techniques of the Research

In this research, a semi-structured interview form consisting of twenty-four semi-standardized questions, which is a type of in-depth interview technique involving the application of a predetermined set of questions or topics, was used as the data collection method. In addition, a speech explaining the importance of the research topic was prepared in the framework of the points mentioned by Creswell (2013: 164-166) for the use of the semi-structured interview technique. Since regional development agencies provide services in the central districts of eighty-one provinces in Türkiye, multiple methods were determined to reach the interviewees and complete the fieldwork, including phone interviews and face-to-face interviews. The interviews with the interviewees were recorded and transcribed.

The questions directed to the interview participants in the field were within the framework of the questions in the prepared interview form, and questions that deviated from the main topic were not asked. Moreover, questions that could negatively affect the participant's psychological state, regional development agency work, private life, or thoughts were not asked. The questions in the interview were also made considering the participant's time, in addition to their psychological comfort. The interviews, which aimed to explain the information about the study in detail and deepen the topic, were generally conducted within a range of one and a half hours, taking into account the points emphasized by Creswell (2013: 164-166).

Before starting the study, a pilot interview was conducted in August 2019 with regional development agency personnel (experts, coordinators, unit managers, and general secretaries) in five different regions (Çukurova Development Agency, Fırat Development Agency, Eastern Marmara Development Agency, Eastern Anatolia Development Agency, and Middle Black Sea Development Agency) to determine whether any additional questions needed to be added to the interview form. Therefore, the questions were given their final form while adhering to the common thematic areas. After the interview form was revised based on the data obtained in the pilot study, the fieldwork was completed between December 2019 and February 2020. In accordance with ethical rules, a code was given to each interviewer for each interview conducted. Later, the information obtained in the interviews was categorized according to the thematic areas defined in the research and the relevant responses were reinterpreted from a sociological perspective based on the theoretical-conceptual perspective of the research.

5.3. Participants of the Research

The population of this study consists of personnel (686 experts, unit managers, coordinators, and 26 general secretaries) working in 26 "level 2" regional development agencies operating in Türkiye. The sample size for the study was initially determined as a minimum of 30, but it was later increased to ensure the representation of all regional development agencies. In total, in-depth interviews were conducted with 45 individuals within the sample of the study, as the interviews reached saturation. In this study, interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis, taking into account variables such as the individual's career, the unit they work in, gender, and geographical location, while paying attention to the weighting proportions within the population of the study, using a stratified sampling method.

Considering the size of the population, in order to strengthen the representativeness of the sample in revealing the perspectives of the personnel in terms of development and mentality, interviewees were selected from all regional development agencies operating in Türkiye. Furthermore, attention was paid to the ratio of female personnel to male personnel (1/3), taking into account the phenomenon of gender. The women interviewed in the sample generally consist of personnel in different positions with different ages and educational levels. The educational levels of the interviewees range from undergraduate to doctoral degrees. The differentiation of positions is of great importance in understanding the internal hierarchical structure of the organization. Therefore, the interviewees were selected from experts, YDO coordinators, unit managers, and general secretaries. Additionally, since the administrative structure in regional development agencies is organized in the form of project cycle management (program management unit, planning unit, monitoring and evaluation unit, promotion unit, administrative and financial affairs unit, and investment support offices located in the provinces), attention was paid to the selection of interviewees from all these units.

The average age of the participants was 37.73 years. The majority of the respondents were married (35) and the number of single respondents was 10. 40% of the participants were female. When their educational status is analyzed, 11 of the participants are bachelor's degree graduates, 20 are master's degree graduates or students, and 14 are doctoral degree graduates or students. Participants have been working in development agencies for 8.16 years on average. The participants work in different units in development agencies and 3 of them are general secretaries, 11 of them are unit heads, 5 of them are coordinators and 26 of them are experts. Approximately 85% of the participants have a pre-development agency work history (average 6 years). Considering the size of the research population, interviewees were selected from all regional development agencies operating in Türkiye in order to strengthen the representativeness of the sample at the point of revealing the perspective of the staff working in regional development agencies in terms of development and mentality.

Demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Demographic Findings of the Participants

Code	Age	Gender	Place of birth	Occupation Field	Administrative Duty	Educational Status	Working Time (Years)
K1	38	Male	Erzincan	International Relations	Expert	Phd Student	3,5
K2	36	Male	Bulgaria	Economy	Expert	Phd Student	9
K3	55	Male	Niğde	Sociology	General Secretary	Phd Graduate	10
K4	35	Woman	Gaziantep	Business	Expert	Phd Student	10
K5	35	Male	Bolu	Public Administration	Coordinator	Graduate	7
K6	44	Male	Mardin	Public Administration	Expert	Graduate	11
K7	49	Male	Siirt	Faculty Of Education	Head of Chair	Graduate Student	10
K8	47	Male	Siirt	Agriculture Engineering	Coordinator	Graduate	10
K9	34	Woman	Trabzon	International Relations	Head of Chair	Graduate Student	7
K10	39	Male	Van	Civil Engineering	Head of Chair	Graduate Student	10.5
K11	32	Woman	Konya	Business	Expert	Graduate	5
K12	34	Woman	Mersin	Public Administration	Head of Chair	Graduate	6
K13	41	Woman	Giresun	Public Administration	Expert	Graduate	10
K14	36	Male	Elazig	Civil Engineering	Expert	Bachelor	7
K15	34	Woman	Ankara	Statistics	Expert	Graduate	10
K16	34	Woman	Aydın	International Relations	Head of Chair	Phd Student	8
K17	45	Male	Mugla	Political Science	Expert	Bachelor	8
K18	32	Woman	Sinop	The Food Engineering	Expert	Bachelor	4

K19	32	Woman	Izmir	City And Regional Planning	Expert	Graduate	9
K20	35	Woman	Balikesir	Sociology	Expert	Bachelor	10
K21	38	Woman	Maraş	Sociology	Expert	Phd Student	12
K22	32	Woman	Tokat	Textile Engineering	Expert	Graduate	7
K23	45	Male	Adana	Economy	Expert	Bachelor	10
K24	38	Woman	Ankara	Sociology	Expert	Phd Student	11
K25	31	Male	Aydın	Economy	Expert	Phd Student	8
K26	35	Woman	Diyarbakir	City And Regional Planning	Expert	Phd Graduate	11
K27	43	Male	Kars	Mechanical Engineering	Head of Chair	Graduate	10
K28	38	Woman	Ardahan	Statistics	Expert	Graduate	9
K29	27	Male	Istanbul	Finance	Expert	Bachelor	1.5
K30	32	Male	Konya	Economy	Expert	Graduate	2
K31	38	Woman	Konya	City And Regional Planning	Head of Chair	Bachelor	11
K32	39	Male	Konya	Business	Expert	Graduate	10
K33	38	Male	Kayseri	Public Administration	Head of Chair	Bachelor	10
K34	59	Male	Kütahya	Agriculture Engineering	General Secretary	Graduate	11
K35	38	Male	Germany	Business	Coordinator	Graduate	7
K36	36	Woman	Kars	International Relations	Coordinator	Phd Graduate	10
K37	34	Male	Mersin	Economy	Expert	Bachelor	6
K38	33	Male	Kayseri	Labor Economics And Industrial Relations	Expert	Bachelor	4.5
K39	37	Male	Bursa	The Food Engineering	Head of Chair	Phd Graduate	10
K40	36	Woman	Ankara	International Relations	Expert	Graduate	5
K41	39	Male	Bolu	Business	President	Graduate	10
K42	33	Male	Ankara	Engineer	Coordinator	Graduate	4.5
K43	40	Male	Ankara	Finance	General Secretary	Phd Student	6.5
K44	39	Male	Karabuk	Construction Engineer	Head of Chair	Phd Student	10
K45	33	Male	Ankara	Economy	Expert	Phd Student	5

5.4. Assumptions

The assumptions included in this study are listed below:

- Every society has a certain economic structure.
- The general mentality of a society significantly affects an individual's economic actions.

5.5. Problem Statements of the Research

The main problem statement of this research is whether the socio-cultural system hinders or promotes economic development, and whether there is integration or conflict between the elements of the socio-cultural system and mentality. In this context, the study investigates the perspectives of personnel working in "level 2" regional development agencies, which were established by a special law and are also referred to as regional development agents, on the concept of development. Within the framework of this problem statement, three problem statements were developed:

What is understood by the concept of development?

Does working in a development agency lead to a change in the understanding of development?

Are there any limitations encountered in the context of the meaning attributed to development?

5.6. Analysis and Process of Data

In qualitative research, the proximity to the field, obtaining detailed and in-depth information through interviews, direct information from the field through observation, and the possibility of returning to the field for validation and obtaining additional information are important factors that ensure validity (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 35-53). In this study, the following steps were taken to ensure internal validity. The research findings were consistently explained while staying connected to the field and in a related manner. Direct quotations from the data obtained from the research environment were included in the conclusions and interpretations regarding the findings. To ensure consistency of the research findings, the data collected under a theme were organized in a meaningful way to form a coherent whole. During the analysis process followed by the researcher, the data were organized systematically and the consistency of the data was continuously checked. The literature on development was continuously reviewed before and during the data collection process. This allowed the theoretical framework to guide the researcher in obtaining the findings. The data obtained from the application were examined together with the theoretical framework, and this theoretical framework guided the creation of a code list that would facilitate the analysis of the data. The findings obtained through inductive analysis were supported by relevant literature related to the interpretations. The presentation of the findings followed a path from quotations to conclusions and interpretations, or from conclusions and interpretations to quotations. After the data were obtained, the researcher and the participants reviewed the data to validate them. Any misunderstandings or omissions were identified. Generalizations based on the findings were made, considering that similar groups and environments could benefit from these detailed descriptions and explanations.

One of the main characteristics of qualitative research is that the perception and sensitivity towards the natural environment raise questions about reliability. One of the main principles of qualitative research is to accept from the beginning that phenomena are constantly changing according to individuals and the environment, and that research repeated in similar groups cannot obtain the same results. In fact, it is impossible to replicate research that involves human behavior, regardless of the method used. Although some standards regarding reliability contradict certain qualitative research standards, some measures must be taken for internal and external reliability in qualitative research (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 35-53). In this study, the following steps were taken to ensure internal reliability. The research questions, the method of the research, the participants, the path followed in the research, and the data collection tools were clearly stated. The research data were obtained using an interview form in line with the research questions. The data were presented without interpretation initially, and relevant quotations from the data source were included. This was done to reflect the originality of the data. The consistency of the findings, whether they can answer the research questions, and the consistency of the obtained results with the findings were continuously checked.

The verbal data obtained from the research were coded in Nvivo 12 software according to themes and categories. Analysis processes were carried out on the coded data to reveal the participants' views on development. The numerical data of the research were organized in SPSS 22 software.

6. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

While giving the direct opinions of the participants about the questions asked, the code assigned to the participants by the researcher was written at the beginning of the statements. For example: (F1, M, Expert).

6.1. THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES ON THE SOCIUS' PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT

Within the scope of this study, the participants were asked whether there was a difference between their understanding of development before they started working in a regional development agency and their understanding of development after they started working in a development agency, and 62.22% of the

participants stated that there was a difference. When the participants were asked about the difference between their understanding of development before they started working in a regional development agency and their understanding of development after they started working in a development agency, the most frequently expressed point that the participants, regardless of profession/branch, started to think about development in a multidimensional way by being influenced by the existing society.

"I can say that there has been a positive difference, there has definitely been a difference. I used to think that development was economic. I used to think that if people had money, they were developed. But I don't think like that anymore, when we look at the example of Japan, for example, I went to Germany in 2014, for one thing, economics is of course important in development, but first and foremost it is about mentality, it is about human capital. If you have human capital, you are already developing. For example, you look at Germany, a country that was destroyed in two wars, but now it is among the most developed countries in the world, Japan was destroyed but it is among the most developed countries in the world, Germany is in the top 5. So I think what we call development is related to human capital, and let me tell you that my view has completely changed. I used to see it as something monetary, now I think of it as human capital" (K6, M, Expert).

"It was economically oriented. There was a logic that if we become very strong economically, we will develop, but this goes back 10 years or even earlier. With the experiences and experiences in this European Union program, I can say that this cannot be done only with the economic development process. Definitely, other needs, other social needs that increase people's happiness index or welfare level should also be met" (K8, M, Coordinator).

"Yes. I used to look more economy-oriented, but now, as I said, I look at it in a way that balances economy and social balance" (K14, M, Expert).

"Of course, there is. Because what you learn in school is very theoretical, you read a lot of theories about economic development, but you don't really know how they will play out in practice, how national dynamics can be activated and what the results will be. When I evaluate things based on what I learned as a student, I can see that the practices, information and theories there are not necessarily unsuitable, but they come together with very different dynamics and create very different results in real life. Development concepts are developed in sociology based on theories and concepts, but in real life, political environment, cultural influences, human expectations, external factors, everything comes together in a dynamic way and creates a completely different meaning... Of course, I realized that the dynamics in the region and human expectations have a very serious impact on the concept of development in 10 years." (K20, K, Expert).

"When it comes to Türkiye, it can be said that the concept of development, especially regional development, is better understood and adopted with Agencies, the importance of bottom-up planning is understood, it is understood that development is a concept that goes from local to general, and local potential, resources and dynamics are very important for development. It is possible to say that this change of mentality, which is built on more realistic strategies and policies that focus on the possibilities, potential and desires of the local rather than policies imposed from the center, has also occurred in me, as in all of Türkiye, by working at the Agency." (K44, E, President of the Board).

Almost all of the participants in the study considered the concept of development as a multidimensional concept. According to the definitions given by the participants, in general, the concept of development can be defined as reaching the welfare level of people economically, socially, culturally and environmentally in line with UNDP's definition of Sustainable Development (UNDP, 2020). 80% of the participants used the terms economic and social together in their definitions.

Bringing the living standards of people to the living standards of developed countries can be achieved through the standard of living, that is, the standard of education, the number of teachers per capita, the number of classrooms, the number of doctors per capita, the ease of access to health facilities" (K10, M, Head of Chair).

"We can call it sustainable social development where social, economic and environmental aspects are all together" (K20, F, Expert).

6.2. OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MEANING ATTRIBUTED TO DEVELOPMENT

According to the statements of the participants, 91.11% of the participants stated that they encountered limitations in the context of the meaning they attributed to development during the agency's work. According to the statements of the participants, the limitations faced by the participants in the context of the meaning they attribute to development during the agency work can be grouped under several themes. Among these themes, the most emphasized theme is "limitations related to policy makers and the ministry". Participants stated that they were limited by the constraints, limitations, lines or policies determined by the state from a higher framework.

As a reflection of the dominance of a politics-centered mentality in both political institutions and bureaucracy in Türkiye, participants also expressed that they face obstacles when projects are not a priority for politicians (minister, member of parliament, head of the ruling party). Here, they also mentioned that they face obstacles when projects are not a priority for public officials (governor, mayor). In addition, participants emphasized that regional development agencies are used as implementers of certain political agendas and that there are interventions from different sectors. This is evidence that Gökalp's sociology is polity-centered and continues to influence the Turkish state system today (Çelebi, 2008:678-679). In particular, due to the obligation of the projects in the agency to be approved by the ministry, there are statements of the participants that the ministry goes to restrictions and different directions in terms of projects.

"In the meetings with the ministry that we plan, that we say "we can do this", there are external pressures such as "take this out", "make it like this", "define it like this"" (K20, F, Expert).

In addition, participants also complain about ministry personnel not knowing the regions. For example, participant K1 (E, Expert) expressed this issue as follows: "Although we are doing regional development, we have to shape our plans with directives coming from the ministry, which is based in Ankara. As you know, we are affiliated with the ministry and have to get their approval. Therefore, we can face problems due to ministry personnel not knowing the regions. This can lead to the problem being pushed to the background and activities related to the problem being limited, as well as budget constraints."

One of the themes emphasized by the participants is "preference for economic projects and neglect of social and environmental projects". Participants complained that the multidimensional understanding of the concept of development was not reflected in the projects. Stating that the fact that the Ministry of Industry and Technology is the ministry responsible for regional development agencies as a reflection of the central administration's purely economic capital-based view of development is also effective in this, the participants emphasized that they were asked to look at them from an economic perspective.

"For example, when we brought a financial support program on social issues or a civil society development program, there were some people who said 'this is not our priority issue, let's go for a financial support program or a tourism financial support program, they are the work of other institutions'" (K34, M, Secretary General).

"In activities related to social development, a long-term return can be achieved. However, in economic development, results can be seen more quickly along with performance indicators. Unfortunately, the general mentality of management in Türkiye is focused on short-term gains rather than investing in the future, which is why I think there is more emphasis on economic development. I don't find this normal, to be honest." (K11, K, Expert).

"The development agency set the goal of increasing quality of life in the new strategic plan. This goal is present in all activities. In 2020, we prepared a new program. This program went through 4-5 changes from the moment it was submitted to the ministry. Initially, it was designed around increasing quality of life. In the fifth change, it was transformed into developing women's cooperatives and changing the conditions in vocational education. All the social-focused work turned into something that can be measured solely by economic parameters." (K41, E, President of the Board).

"Looking at the establishment law of the agency, it is clear that agencies are framed from an economic perspective. It is the same for Türkiye as well. When we talk about development, economic development always

comes to mind first. This is wrong, in my opinion. Social and economic development should go hand in hand. Otherwise, it is not development, it is just progress when it is only economic.” (K15, K, Expert).

One of the main reasons for the emphasis on economic development is, according to participants, the general economic mentality of Turkish society, which tends to focus on short-term gains (Hofstede, 2001: 108, 244). When working in the economic field, visible and applauded projects are carried out. The results of projects related to social development are seen in the long term and it is also difficult to determine their concrete and measurable effects. Economic development projects have more appeal due to their short-term nature, and decision-makers may be hesitant to take risks with long-term projects.

Another theme that participants highlighted is “limitations related to local stakeholders,” with seven participants expressing the limitations they face, while two participants stated that there are no limitations from local stakeholders. Participants mentioned that they face difficulties in getting projects approved by local stakeholders. They noted that local stakeholders, as a reflection of the general economic mindset of Turkish society, tend to prioritize short-term gains and tangible results (Hofstede, 2001: 108, 244), and are not as receptive to long-term projects. They prefer projects that have immediate impact and are more visible. This issue is not only observed among local stakeholders, but also among other institutions and politicians that have an influence on the agency.

“Our board members or beneficiaries in the region, especially in public institutions, have a different perspective on development compared to ours. From provincial administrative authorities to the subunits preparing projects in public institutions, they don’t seem to have the concern or perspective of ‘what is the contribution of their work to development’. We can’t go beyond supporting the projects that are supported by provincial administrative authorities” (K13, K, Expert).

“Generally, the other party in the issue can be an institutional authority or external stakeholders. Generally, they don’t align with us and tend to have a short-term perspective. For example, if it is a mayor, they mainly focus on their own term. If it is a governor, they are constantly on the move and tend to focus on solving immediate problems. Instead of working in that way, for example, a municipality can take on the responsibility of sewage, which should not be the agency’s task, but when it comes to implementation, it can be included as an infrastructure project” (K32, E, Expert).

As a result of the abolition of the Ministry of Development in 2018, the dominant polity-centered view in Türkiye decided to connect regional development agencies to an economy-based central organization. Being affiliated to an economy-based central organization with a defined mission (Ministry of Industry and Technology) causes regional development agencies to experience handicaps in their relations with the center from time to time in sustaining their activities outside the field of economy. Participants stated that since the ministry to which the regional development agency is affiliated is the Ministry of Industry and Technology, the ministry’s perspective is in this direction.

“However, today, all these tasks and processes mentioned above need to be submitted for approval by the Ministry” (K14, E, Expert).

Participants also mentioned limitations related to the position of the agency. Participants stated that there are limitations arising from the transformation of socius into polity (Çelebi, 2007:50-53) and the agency’s inability to be an implementing unit, that they have to adapt their work to the legislation, that the agency does not have a clear job description and that there are limitations of authority. Another issue emphasized by the participants is the problems related to local stakeholders. Participants emphasized the perspective of the board of directors the most in this regard. There are cases where the board members of regional development agencies with a polity-centered mentality consider the regional development agency unnecessary, and there are also cases where the regional development agency is not very important and not embraced. In addition, there are also views of the participants that the board of directors causes multi-headedness. Another issue that the participants emphasized a lot in this theme is the lack of personnel with sufficient capacity to carry out these projects in local public institutions and organizations where regional development agencies work together in the region. Participants

reported that due to the low capacity of stakeholders in the region, there is a mismatch of mentalities with local stakeholders (local governments, chambers of commerce and industry, stock exchanges, associations, foundations, public institutions and organizations, cooperatives, universities, etc.), and that frequent changes in board members hinder the completion of long-term projects. According to the participants, within a five to ten-year project period, many members of the board change and it becomes difficult to get new members to accept the same projects. Due to this change and the desire for immediate results, local stakeholders choose short-term projects. In addition to these, there is also a problem of cohesion among local stakeholders and it is difficult to unite local stakeholders.

“The approach of our board of directors can be restrictive for us. Because they are the decision-makers, sometimes we have to do something later, or make more effort to explain it more, or sometimes we cannot do what we want to do at all” (K4, F, Expert).

“I think that the management boards cause multi-headedness, sometimes there are conflicts and reservations between the decisions of the ministry and the board of directors, and the regions suffer. I think that the existing public budget cannot be used effectively” (K12, F, Head of Chair).

Participants also mentioned many problems with the location, functioning and authority of the agency. As a result of a polity-centered understanding of public administration, the center does not share its powers with the local in any way. In Europe, regional development agencies, which are local development units, prepare, fund and even manage many projects. In Türkiye, the situation is in the opposite direction of the European examples. The most frequently mentioned problem with the functioning of the agency is the lack of an executive function of the agency and the lack of sanctions on projects. Participants emphasized the inadequacy of the legal personality of the agency and the need to amend the legislation in this regard. Some participants shared the view that the agency has become increasingly centralized and that this has slowed down the work.

“The agency does not have an executive role. It does not really have a coercive function but it has a lot of responsibilities” (K2, M, Expert).

“First and foremost, the administrative structure. The place and position of development agencies in the Turkish administrative structure is not clear at the moment. It is an institution with many duties and little authority. To the extent that we provide grants, to the extent that we provide support, it is something that you are welcomed, you are welcomed well, but when you cannot provide enough support, you are put a little more in the background.” (K17, M, Expert).

Participants also mentioned political pressures, political obstacles and some problems with the ministry. Participants mentioned that there is a problem with the ministry’s perspective, that the ministry sees development agencies as a provincial organization as a reflection of the polity-centered perspective, and that the ministry also creates problems in the approval of activities. They also emphasized that being under the ministry increases bureaucracy and slows down work. Participants also emphasized political pressures, which they said created obstacles for them.

“I think there are primarily structural problems with the ministry. They have started to see regional development agencies as provincial organizations. They can put obstacles to our activities in this regard.” (K9, F, Head of Chair).

“Some stakeholders have a political side - I mean, there is no political conflict in our region, but we hear about it. Having board members from different parties prevents this. Or there can be a conflict between the local and Ankara. In a meeting we had yesterday, for example, what is dictated to us from Ankara and the demands of our board of directors can clash. The board of directors is a strong structure, but it cannot resist the center. It takes it out on the agency employees, the secretary general, the heads of departments, and can block other projects you are planning to do” (K39, M, Head of Chair).

7.CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

This study examines the concept of development and the meaning world attributed to this concept by the personnel employed in the regional development agency through a qualitative research method. The study aims to describe the perspective of the regional development agency personnel on the concept of development and the factors that determine this perspective, primarily through the meaning universes of social mentality and economic mentality concepts related to development.

In Türkiye, the realization of development has remained a problematic issue that has been debated for years, especially in the discipline of development economics. As the gap in GDP between developed countries and developing/underdeveloped countries, including Türkiye, widens, the issue of development will continue to be discussed in the field of social sciences. However, when examining the database in the National Thesis Center, it can be observed that the concept of development has not been given as much importance in Turkish sociology as it has been in the discipline of development economics and has mainly been included in the research topics of economists. This situation gives the impression that sociologists in Türkiye also approach the concept of development from an economic perspective. This study aims to examine the concepts of development and economic mentality from a sociological perspective.

The findings from the in-depth interviews conducted in the field show that almost all of the participants think of the concept of development as multidimensional. It has been observed that the definitions of the meaning attributed to the concept of development are largely similar to the internationally recognized development literature. 90% of the participants stated that they encountered limitations in terms of the meaning they attributed to development during their agency work. The most emphasized issue in this regard is the limitations arising from the high power distance based on the authoritarian mentality of the centralized state structure that emerged as a result of the transformation of socius into polity, which is related to policy makers and the ministry. As stated in a study emphasizing the central-local dichotomy in development (Savrul, 2012), the existence of uniform/national development policies determined and implemented from the center weakens the effectiveness of regional development efforts. According to the study, the polity-centered understanding determines the rules of the game (Bourdieu) related to local development. For example, when regional development agencies were established between 2006 and 2010, they had the authority to make decisions on their own, such as annual work programs, appointments of unit managers and investment support office coordinators, hiring new personnel, and conducting domestic and international activities, including organizing fairs and conferences. However, today, all these tasks and processes mentioned above need to be submitted for approval by the Ministry. Another limitation in this regard is that the asymmetrical center-periphery (provincial) relationship created on the basis of authoritarian mentality creates the problem of inter-institutional coordination and lack of governance. This is the case for both development agencies and other public institutions and organizations in the region.

Regional development agencies, despite the centralized public administration, have been seen to continue their collaboration with institutions and organizations on specific themes and issues. Participants have interpreted the dominant view of regional development agency activities, which are predominantly based on a policy-centered approach to economic development, in different ways. While some participants accept the dominant role of economic development in increasing social welfare, there are also those who believe that this dominance is not correct. The selection of the Ministry of Industry and Technology as the central organization to which the regional development agencies are affiliated is a concrete proof that the administrators of the Republic of Türkiye also view the concept of development on an economic basis. According to Bourdieu (2006: 11), attributing the development of an area to infrastructural elements, i.e. physical capital, allows politicians to reduce all social events to their purely economic dimensions, allowing them to avoid taking too much risk in policy making and implementation. This perspective reflects not only that of the central government but also that of the local stakeholders of regional development agencies.

When we consider the working environment of regional development agencies in the context of Bourdieu's concept of "habitus", it is seen that the aforementioned reasons and the dominant authoritarian mentality elements shape the habitus in this field. On the other hand, approximately 65% of the staff who started working in a regional development agency reported that the meaning attributed to the concept of development and the

development perspective changed positively in the context of society-economy-environment (the triple pillar of sustainable development). In this respect, it can be said that the habitus of regional development agencies has provided agency staff with a multidimensional perspective. As for development being a matter of mentality, approximately 85% of the participants reported that development can be realized through a transformation of mentality.

The social mentality and the rationality of political, economic, and social institutions and organizations that have emerged based on this mentality, within the framework of a democratic mentality that stays within the limits of rationality, can be seen as a hybrid model that includes elements of the existing patriarchal and authoritarian mentality. It is similar to implementing More's (2010: 92-125) "Utopia" in Türkiye, which involves a utopian approach to quickly bring about a paradigm shift, that is, a shift from polity to society. Based on the fact that the mentality of societies can change in at least a few generations, at least in the context of establishing an institutional culture, the practices of regional development agencies can be changed in order to recreate the habitus and perceptions related to these habitus in the fields specific to regional development agencies. In this regard, it is necessary to completely change some parts of the current regional development agency law and service guidelines, and/or revise certain articles, in order to minimize the limitations hindering the achievement of goals in terms of human development by the personnel working in regional development agencies.

Finally, when the data obtained from the literature review, observations and in-depth interviews conducted within the scope of this study are analyzed, it is seen that regional development agencies have not been able to achieve the objectives stated in the establishment law. Because the efforts to change this situation are mostly from a polity-centered perspective. In the study, it was understood that this perspective, which is at the source of the problem, reproduces the problems and turns them into a ball of problems in an effort to solve the problems. It is also clear from the analysis of the literature that regional/local development issues cannot be focused on or successful without leaving a polity-centered jacobinist perspective. In this context, in order for a local development-oriented institution, which is quite new in Türkiye, to be successful, a governance-based structure in which local dynamics take action should be built. Without building this structure, it seems very difficult to talk about a socius-centered development (humanitarian development) approach that puts people at the center. The proposition of "against the people, for the people" has been ineffective in terms of development, at least since the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. Despite the implementation of fifteen national plans and numerous local development projects, none of them have been able to fully achieve their goals. This can be seen as a failure of the development approaches based on this premise. Today, regional development agencies in Türkiye do not have a defined and relevant legal status within the administrative system. It is believed that granting these agencies a specific status would enhance their functionality and effectiveness at the local level. It is expected that these agencies, with a parallel perspective to the theoretical approach of human development, would take action to promote human development in their activities.

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