

## **The Political Construction of Urban Development Projects: Comparative Case Studies From Turkish Cities**

### **1. Introduction and Theoretical Framework to Investigate the Politics of Urban Development**

The production of urban space is a politically constructed process to reproduce the dynamics of capitalism. In this political process, a hegemonic-ideological power has been constructed over the definition of urban political priorities. Urban development projects (UDPs), in this political process, could be investigated as politically-ideologically constructed hegemonic projects, providing dynamics for the reproduction of capitalist socio-spatial relations.

UDPs have become the dominant mode of producing urban space in capitalist countries over the last three decades. With the formation and implementation of UDPs, new central business districts, waterfront developments, tourism-oriented consumption complexes, gated and luxury residences and shopping malls... etc. have been produced to provide a “competitive” and “attractive” urban space for the sake of capital accumulation.

However, political-economic dynamics behind the formation of UDPs could not only be understood through analyzing the relations between the formation of UDPs and economic structure of capital accumulation. To reveal these dynamics, we should also critically investigate how governmental and non-governmental agents, in the capitalist system, form hegemonic block (a coalition of social forces in Gramscian terms) and organize political-ideological (superstructural) mechanisms with these UDPs to shape the policies of urban development. This paper focuses on such an empirical survey to reveal the political construction of UDPs in Turkish cities.

In the literature of urban development politics, there are different views on the politics of UDPs. Neo-pluralist and neo-Weberian theories including “urban regime” and “growth machine” approaches put emphasis on agent-based aspects, relations and organizations in the political construction of UDPs. Urban regime approach emphasizes formal and informal relations and networks between the agents of government and business (Stone, 1989). Growth machine approach underlines the central role of growth-oriented coalition formations and reveals how such coalitions have been formed by the involvement of land-based business elites, local media, universities and local non-governmental organization (Logan & Molotch, 1987).

These neo-pluralist and neo-Weberian approaches are critically reviewed by neo-Marxian regulation perspective and it is concluded that such agent-oriented approaches neglects to research the economic base of UDPs, they ignore the role of capital accumulation processes, class conflict and hegemony in the political construction of UDPs and fail to reveal how the capitalist state intervenes to this process (Macleod & Goodwin, 1999). These approaches develops an overtly emphasized agent-oriented focus at the expense of losing the structural capitalist

dynamics behind the formation of UDPs. Therefore they propose voluntarist explanations for the investigation of the political construction of UDPs.

On the other hand, there are Marxist geography approaches, focusing on the capitalist economic structure of urban development processes. As the leading Marxist Geographer, Harvey (1989a) argues that there is a structural relation between the production of space and capital accumulation. UDPs, within this approach, reflect entrepreneurial urban policy mechanisms, aiming to provide a good business climate for a better functioning of capitalist market forces under the dominance of coercive laws of inter-urban competition (Harvey, 1989b). Through following Harvey's framework of capitalist urbanization, Smith (2002) points out that UDPs have become global capitalist urban strategies to reduce the rent-gap between actually ground rent realized from the present and highest best use in terms of exchange value.

Marxist geography approaches are criticized since they overtly emphasized the role of structural dynamics and develop an economic determinist/reductionist approach in explaining the political-ideological dynamics behind the formation of UDPs. Marxist geography approaches do not provide a critical theoretical base to investigate the political-ideological superstructural dynamics of UDPs. What role the agents of state and capital play through which hegemonic-ideological discourses and activities in the political construction of UDPs? To answer these questions, neo-Marxian perspectives of urban politics should move beyond both the economic determinist explanations of Marxist geography approaches and voluntarist-agent oriented explanations of neo-Weberian and neo-Pluralist approaches. Paper argues at the theoretical level that this could be provided through adopting the dialectic relation between the structures and agents of capitalist urbanization and revealing how UDPs, as the policy-making mechanisms of urban entrepreneurialism, have been politically-ideologically constructed by a coalition of state and capital actors within the context of capitalist system.

Within this context, in order to formulate a neo-Marxian theoretical perspective to investigate the political-ideological construction of UDPs, Gramsci's (1971) idea of "hegemony" and Lefebvre's (1991) concept of "the production of space" and the relations between these conceptions are critically elaborated and discussed in this part of the paper. Gramsci (1971) defined hegemony as the "political and ideological activities, moral and intellectual leadership with which ruling class becomes capable to take active consent of those over whom it rules". Hegemony plays the central role in constructing a political-ideological power over the definition of political priorities in policy-making processes. However, hegemony is not the only basis through which the political-ideological power of capitalist ruling classes are produced and maintained. Force is also another key and important dimension of political power, therefore it is widely argued by Gramscian Marxist perspectives that hegemony (consent) and force (coercion) force are two underlying, interrelated and articulated dimensions of political power (Forgacs, 2000). In other words, political power of

capitalist ruling classes have been constructed by a differential articulation of hegemony and force.

Hegemony is constructed by the formation, operation and domination of “hegemonic projects”. According to Joseph (2002) to reveal how hegemony is constructed it is needed to investigate “different hegemonic projects, the particular social groups and classes involved to these projects, the interest that they represent, the various values and world-views that they hold and the political blocks and alliances that are constructed in these projects”.

Gramscian perspective of politics shows that the conditions for capital accumulation are not given but have to be socially secured through political and ideological mechanisms as well as economic ones (Gramsci, 1971; Forgacs, 2000). Hegemonic projects of capitalist ruling classes emerge from such a political-ideological superstructural context of capitalist system. Moreover, hegemonic projects are formed, organized and operationalized through utilizing organizing capacity of the state, which provides institutional frameworks for the implementation of these projects. Therefore, as Jessop (1997) argues, the state and its policy-making mechanisms could be viewed as strategic terrains upon which different social groups compete to implement their hegemonic and counter-hegemonic projects. This is how class struggle has occurred within the contexts of political-ideological superstructures of capitalist system.

With his neo-Gramscian regulation approach, Jessop (1997) also provides critical insights and perspectives to elaborate further the conceptions of hegemony and hegemonic project. According to Jessop (1997) hegemonic projects are very important mechanisms of political power, reflecting a unity of social forces (governmental and business actors, chambers and non-governmental organizations, universities and media institutions) and developed to secure the economic base of capital accumulation processes and relations.

Jessop’s (1997, 1999) neo-Gramscian regulation approach has also provided new paths to investigate urban political economy within the context of hegemonic project concept. Since the accumulation of capital entails political, ideological, moral and intellectual leadership, hegemonic projects play a significant role in the formation of this leadership under the dominance of capitalist ruling classes. In other words, to investigate the relation between capital accumulation and hegemonic projects in a particular urban context, we need to investigate how hegemonic projects reflect a unity of diverse social forces and how they mobilize support behind a particular program of action that support long term interests of capitalist ruling classes. Hegemonic projects could be investigated, within this perspective, as the strategically selective sites of urban policy-making, reflecting how the interests of powerful capitalist ruling classes have been prioritized over the interests of powerless working classes.

Besides of the Gramscian perspectives discussed above, Lefebvre (1991) approached the conception of hegemony from a different perspective. As Kipfer (2002) unveiled, Lefebvre viewed hegemony “as a reformulation of the problematic of alienation and reification within the practices of everyday life”. According to Lefebvre (1991) hegemony of capitalist system has been constructed through the relations of commodification, alienation and the contradictions of everyday life. Thus, Lefebvrian view of urban politics uncovers that everyday life practices and projects and activities to produce space within these everyday life practices could be investigated as a strategic terrain upon which hegemonic power of capitalist classes aim to acquire the active consent of the large segments of the society (Kipfer, 2002; 2008).

As Lefebvre (1976) revealed, state interventions and capital, the rise of new sectors including tourism and leisure, bureaucratically administrated consumption and rapid urbanization have all given rise to the deepening of capitalism in everyday life. Through observing and critically interpreting such alienating and commodifying socio-spatial relations, Lefebvre revealed that the serialized production of abstract space internalized in the everyday life through the moral principles and consent that provides a hegemonic-ideological power over the definition of political priorities. Thus, Lefebvre’s conception of the production of space could be considered as an urbanized conception of hegemony, which gives rise to the commodification, alienation, homogenization and fragmentation of everyday life practices (Kipfer, 2008). From the perspective of Lefebvrian urban politics, it could be argued that Urban Development Projects play the key roles in urbanizing Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, since these projects give rise to the alienating and commodifying socio-spatial relations in the contemporary capitalist city.

Through elaborating the concepts of “hegemony”, “hegemonic project” and “the production of space”, it is formulated a Lefebvrian-inspired neo-Gramscian approach to investigate the political construction of UDPs. Lefebvrian-inspired neo-Gramscian theoretical perspective show that UDPs could be investigated as a strategically selective mechanisms of urban policy-making, reflecting how the interests of powerful capitalist ruling classes have been prioritized over the interests of powerless working classes. The most important contribution of this approach to the field of urban politics is that UDPs could be investigated as politically constructed **“hegemonic projects of the production of space”**, serving not only to the construction of a moral, intellectual and ideological leadership in urban planning efforts but also to the strategy of capital accumulation in particular historical-geographical contexts of capitalism. Moreover, UDPs have also become a mechanism of entrepreneurial urban governance that reflects attempts to build a coalition of social forces at the urban socio-political context. UDPs are politically constructed attempts to acquire public support and consent behind a particular program of action that support long-term interests of capitalist classes.

As a result of this theoretical discussion, a Lefebvrian-inspired neo-Gramscian approach is formulated and within this theoretical perspective, paper puts forward

two initial arguments that give direction to the design of empirical research. These initial arguments are mentioned below.

- UDPs (Urban Development Projects) are attempts to form “hegemonic projects of the production of space”, therefore UDPs have become the mechanisms of constructing hegemony over the definition of urban political priorities.
- UDPs have been politically constructed through the hegemonic arguments, discourses and narratives of key decision-makers and these discursive practices have been used to mobilize public support and consent of different social forces.

## **2. The Politics of Urban Development Projects in the World**

The politics of UDPs are comparatively and critically analyzed through investigating six UDPs from different capitalist countries of the world, including Baltimore Inner Harbor Revitalization Project from US, London Docklands Regeneration Project and Olympic Games Urban Regeneration Project from UK, Potsdamer Platz Redevelopment Project from Germany, Abandoibarra Waterfront Regeneration Project from Spain and Lujiazui Central Finance District Development from Shanghai. The critical and comparative analysis of the politics of these six UDPs indicate that these UDPs have been politically-ideologically constructed by hegemonic discourses, arguments and narratives of key-decision makers from governmental and business actors. “Economic growth”, “investment” and “employment” based such hegemonic discourses aim to mobilize public support and consent for the projects. As discursive practices to persuade different segments of civil society, such discourses show how capitalist forces behind the projects aim to redefine urban political priorities on the basis of “economic growth” oriented targets.

The critical analysis of the UDPs also show that not only discursive practices of hegemony construction, but also coercive-legislative mechanism of capitalist state play a very important role in the formation of UDPs. In this respect, through reorganizing urban planning powers and empowering new state institutions in the projects, coercive-legislative mechanisms of capitalist state have been utilized.

The utilization of hegemonic discourses and coercive-legislative mechanisms have differentiated according to different relations and articulations of state, capital and society. For instance, hegemonic discourses and activities to mobilize public support and consent may become very important in particular socio-political contexts of some countries where civil society is powerful. However, in socio-political contexts where state has a high repressive power over the society, there may be no or even less need to use hegemonic discourses and activities. Therefore, as a general interpretation, it could be argued that the role of hegemonic discourses or coercive-legislative mechanism have differentiated according to different contexts of state-civil society relations. In western capitalist countries (like US, UK, Germany and Spain), since the agents of civil society are powerful over the formation of the structure and policies of the state, hegemonic discourses and are frequently produced and disseminated through entrepreneurial urban governance institutions, local

business associations, media institutions, universities and chambers. However the political-ideological superstructure of UDPs have not only been constituted by these hegemonic discourses and activities of powerful capitalist forces. Coercive-legislative mechanism of the state is still important in these countries, since they provide exceptional power to reorganize urban planning authorities and to incorporate business-driven interests into the decision-making processes through the establishment of new entrepreneurial urban governance institutions.

### **3. The Political Construction of Urban Development Projects in Turkey**

The political construction of urban development projects (UDPs) in Turkey are investigated through focusing on four UDPs from three major metropolitan Turkish cities. Haydarpaşa and Northern Ankara urban regeneration projects are critically and comparatively investigated to explore what roles hegemonic-ideological and coercive-legislative mechanisms of capitalist forces play in the political construction of UDPs in Turkey. A more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the political construction of New City Center (NCC) and İnciraltı Tourism Center (İTC) Development Projects from İzmir constitute the main empirical focus of the paper. The political-ideological dynamics, decision-making and opinion-buildings processes of these two projects from İzmir are elaborated and comparatively analyzed and they provided the empirical base to rethink the theories of urban development politics.

#### **3.1 Haydarpaşa and Northern Ankara Urban Regeneration Projects from İstanbul and Ankara**

The political dynamics of Haydarpaşa urban regeneration project could be discussed with reference to six main dimensions of the project. Firstly, in the first years of the 2000s, it was observed a struggle between local and central governments over the reproduction of urban space in Haydarpaşa. Both central and local governments intended to acquire the power and the authority of space production through initiating and leading an urban regeneration project in an urban location like Haydarpaşa which has a high level of rent-production potential (Urkun Bowe, 2008). There was a struggle to get the power of space production for an economically valuable urban space. However, towards the end of the 2000s, this struggle turned to a collaboration to implement a rent-oriented development. Central and local governments (Turkish State Railways, Privatization Administration and İstanbul Greater Municipality) have sustained and strengthened a pro-active rent-oriented development approach through agreeing upon the major land-use decisions and development strategies in the production of space in Haydarpaşa.

Secondly, the common point in the activities of local and central government was arranging an urban design competition. Turkish State Railways and İstanbul Greater Municipality intended to initiate urban regeneration process through arranging urban design competitions. In the early 2000s, urban design competitions was arranged before the preparation of development plan and thus, it was intended to give a direction to the key decisions of the plan. However, in the late 2000s, it is declared that a new urban design competition will be organized after the approval of the new development plan. Preparation of development plans and arrangement of urban

design competitions have become successive events, defining a new organization in urbanism through prioritizing a project-led and profit-driven intervention logic over planning process. The third dimension in the political construction of the project points out the role of hegemonic discourses in mobilizing public support behind the formation of the projects. Central and local governments have proposed the same development logic (profit-driven and rent-oriented development) and they also proposed the same land use decisions including tourism and residential-based activities (like convention centers, shopping centers, luxury residents, culture centers, five star hotels and restaurants). Such a profit-oriented capitalist reproduction of urban space and its concomitant land-use decisions have only been realized through a common social legitimization ground which is provided by similar hegemonic discourses of key decision-makers. In this context, the key decision-makers developed a dominant rhetoric on the basis of “attracting investment and consumption”, “providing new employment opportunities” and “national image improvement”. Such hegemonic arguments are reflected in the media to mobilize public support behind the formation of the regeneration project. In other words, these hegemonic discourses play a very important role in constructing and sustaining political dynamics behind the regime of capital accumulation.

Fourthly, as Haydarpaşa case highlights, legislative interventions are very important in the political construction of UDPs. Legislative interventions provide exceptional power mechanisms through facilitating the implementation of the project and eliminating counter-decisions and actions (including the decisions of the Court and Regional Conservation Councils) against the formation of the project. Within the urban regeneration efforts in Haydarpaşa, new laws are introduced as a collection of changes in a number of laws and these new laws facilitate urban property transfer and privatization and they also give rise to the consolidation of urban planning powers through empowering central government institutions (like Turkish State Railways and Privatization Administration) and bypassing the decisions of oppositional actors (like Regional Conservation Councils, Districts Municipalities and some Court decisions). The fifth dimension in the political construction of the regeneration project emphasizes the role of the collaboration between the influential actors of the project. After the decisions of the Court and Conservation Council against the formation of the regeneration project, some governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (including Conservation Councils, İstanbul Greater Municipality, Kadıköy Municipality, Üsküdar Municipality, Chamber of Architects, Chamber of City Planners) were invited to the preparation process of conservation plan for Haydarpaşa (Urkun Bowe, 2008). Oppositional actors were invited to the process by neo-liberal central government to construct a common politico-ideological ground for the formation of the project. In other words, through using Gramscian terms, such a state-led collaboration effort could be interpreted as a search for a broader coalition of social forces in the production of urban space in Haydarpaşa. This was an obvious attempt to form a hegemonic block at the urban context through eliminating oppositional claims and contrary arguments of different social forces. However this attempt did not succeed since the Chambers of Architects and City Planners did not involve to this process owing to their concern to

become a part of the support for the formation and implementation of a rent-oriented development. The sixth and the last political consideration highlights how oppositional groups act and define their criticism and counter-politics against the formation of the project. In fact, oppositional actors have mobilized their struggle on the basis of public interests. On behalf of public interest, such actors bring judiciary action for the cancel and nullity of the plans, laws and all sorts of regulatory frameworks related with the regeneration project. Some influential oppositional actors are Haydarpaşa Solidarity Group (consisting of 86 NGOs), Chambers of Architects and City Planners, and Union of Port Workers (Çavuşoğlu, 2010).

Policy-making efforts, new plans and laws, hegemonic discourses and arguments have not provided the political ground to overcome the opposition of different actors against the formation of the project. However, regeneration efforts never end. In 2011 a new development plan was prepared and approved by the collaboration of central government (Turkish State Railways) and local government (İstanbul Greater Municipality). In the following years, the implementation of this development plan is expected for the regeneration of Haydarpaşa.

There are four major conclusions that could be drawn from a political consideration of Northern Ankara Urban Regeneration Project. Firstly, to implement urban regeneration project, the first location-specific legislative intervention was made with the law no. 5104. This law shows how Greater Municipality of Ankara has been given exceptional power in terms of the preparation and approval of development plans, property transfer and carrying out construction works and infrastructure facilities. Urban regeneration areas, with this law, was released from current urban planning system and development legislation. Law no. 5140 show us again how legislative intervention is important in the political construction of rent-oriented UDPs. Secondly, there is a partnership of local and central government in this regeneration project. As a partnership of local and central governments, TOBAŞ has carried out key functions in managing and coordinating activities within the implementation of the project. Private sector involves to this partnership through the revenue-sharing scheme. Thirdly, although Greater Municipality of Ankara and Housing Development Administrations argued that the priority of this project is “enhancing the quality of life of the people living in the squatters”, there was not such an increase in the quality of life of middle and low income groups, living previously in the project area. Contrary to such hegemonic arguments of the state (made to mobilize support behind the formation of the project), the majority of the people living in the project area have tended to move away from the newly constructed residences because they face a high cost of living in these residences. Under such conditions, most of the middle and low income groups (constituting the majority of the people living in the project area) have started to move to out of the regenerated north of the Ankara. For some of the scholars, this displacement of the low and middle income groups shows the first step of gentrification within the regeneration project (Özdemir-Sönmez and Yüksel, 2007; Uzun, 2006). Fourthly, this urban regeneration project unveils how a rent-oriented and project-based approach have become the mainstream urban (re)development policy since the 2000s

within the urban political context of Ankara. For instance, 2023 master plan of Ankara underlines the importance of urban (re)development projects for even a long term consideration of Ankara's urbanization (ABB, 2007). In this sense, it supports project-led initiatives and their roles in the production of attractive urban spaces in terms of attracting investment and employment opportunities and making the capital of Turkey a competitive city within the context of rising global competition between cities (ABB, 2007). Furthermore, the new urban regeneration areas are defined according to some new legislative interventions since the 2000s (like laws no. 5216 and 5140) and these regeneration areas have been subjected to rent-oriented development initiatives, increasing the level of property prices and the displacement of powerless low-income classes and enhancing socio-spatial polarization (TMMOB, 2007; Uzun, 2006). As a result, a critical consideration of Northern Ankara Urban Regeneration Project unveils that behind the political construction of UDPs there is a strong state intervention and this state-led urban regeneration initiatives have given rise to the dominance of a rent-oriented and project-based approach in the making of entrepreneurial urban policies, redefining the priorities of urban (re)development and intending to obscure the class conflict behind such urban processes.

To conclude, the comparative and critical investigation of the politics of UDPs from different capitalist countries of the world and Turkey give rise to the formulation of two further initial arguments. In addition of the two previously stated initial argument, that were formulated within the theoretical framework of thesis, these two initial arguments are mentioned below. These total four initial arguments constitute the starting point in investigating the political construction of New City Center and İnciraltı Tourism Center development Projects from İzmir.

- In the political construction of UDPS; not only discursive practices of hegemony construction, but also coercive-legislative mechanisms of capitalist state (new laws, change in the existing laws, decree laws ...etc.) play a key role.
- UDPs have been politically constructed through the complementary relation and differential articulation of the discursive practices of hegemony construction and coercive-legislative mechanisms of the capitalist state

### **3.2 New City Center and İnciraltı Tourism Center Development Projects from İzmir**

New City Center (NCC) and İnciraltı Tourism Center (İTC) development projects from İzmir are critically investigated through employing three methods of qualitative analysis with a complementary manner, which are (1) critical discourse analysis (of plan reports, related documents and media texts), (2) institution and neighborhood questionnaires and (3) semi-structured in-depth interviews. These different sources of empirical evidence are used complementarily to reveal different dynamics of decision-making and opinion-building in the political construction of NCC and İTC projects.

Paper intends to find out to what extend four initial arguments, that are mentioned in the previous parts, are capable to explain the political construction of NCC and İTC

projects. Different empirical research methods including critical discourse analysis, questionnaire and semi-structured in-depth interviews are combined and used together to test the validity of these arguments.

Critical discourses analysis of media texts and key documents reveal that governmental decision-maker and business actors in both of the projects use common economic development oriented words like “investment”, “local economic development” and “employment”. In addition to them, there are also different words specific to each project. For instance in the formation of NCC project; İGM, investors and local business associations use “urban regeneration” based words and themes extensively. Such actors, on the other hand, use “tourism” and “EXPO” based words and themes in the formation of İTC project. Moreover, there are coalition-based words like “cooperation” and “collaboration” of “different stakeholders”. Such hegemonic discourses are ideologically constructed to mobilize and consolidate public support in the formation of the projects.

The findings of critical discourse analysis show that news, articles and advertisements in mass media tools play an important role in disseminating and dominating hegemonic discourses in the formation of both of the projects. It is observed that the declarations of governmental and business actors dominate the formation of news and articles in most the media sources. Hegemonic discourses stated in these declarations play a facilitative role in the dissemination of predominant view in the formation of the projects. However there are also oppositional discourses against the formation of the projects, therefore, discourses could be seen and studied as a political-ideological site of power, struggle and opposition of different social forces in the formation of the projects. Powerful state and capital actors (re)produce and disseminate hegemonic discourses to mobilize public support for the formation of the projects. However, on the other side, oppositional actors confront against these discourses through putting forward their counter/oppositional discourses. There is a struggle at the level of discursive practice in the formation of the projects. This struggle could be observed obviously in the formation of İTC project.

One of the main argument of thesis is that governmental and business actors aim to construct a **“capacity to produce consent” (CPC)** through the domination of hegemonic discourses and the collaboration with key agents of civil society like local business associations, chambers, universities, media institutions. The main target of CPC is to mobilize public support and consent for the project. This politically-ideologically constructed hegemonic capacity focuses on the mobilization of public support and consent in the formation of the projects and plays role in redefining the priorities of urban planning and policy. The construction of each capacities of producing consent (CsPC) for each project may vary according to different actors involved; but the common basis of each CsPC is that they are embodied by the hegemonic discourses of powerful capitalist actors in the formation of the projects.

Which hegemonic discourses have played role in mobilizing public support and consent for the projects? This major research question is answered by the findings of critical discourse analysis and urban field survey. The findings reveal that NCC project is defined and presented to public as “an opportunity attract investment” and “to provide employment”. Such hegemonically constructed discourses are also supported with “urban regeneration” based discourses defining the problems of the project site as “urban decline”. İTC project, on the other hand, has become a site of “tourism” and “EXPO” based discourses. Most of the governmental and business actors state that with İTC project “an economically unproductive” and “agriculturally declining” area will be transformed to “an attractive space of tourism development”. In both of the projects, through (re)producing and dominating “economic growth”, “investment” and “employment” based hegemonic discourses, a notion of “abstract space” (with reference to Lefebvre) is politically-ideologically constructed.

The findings of field survey show that the vast majority of the people and institutions, who support to the formation of the projects, adopt hegemonic discourses. Most of the people whatever their class positions state “investment”, “economic growth” and “employment” based hegemonic discourses while they are expressing their support to the projects. This widespread tendency shows that hegemonic discourses have become common sense in the formation of the projects and therefore they play a political-ideological superstructural role in dominating and manipulating the formation of public opinion.

Through which mechanisms hegemonic discourses of the projects have been disseminated and dominated as common sense over the formation of public opinion? There are two common and influential mechanism in both of the projects namely (1) mass media tools and (2) the declarations of powerful governmental and business actors in these tools. Besides these common mechanisms, there are project-specific mechanisms. For instance, the advertisements of shopping malls, office towers and luxury residences have become influential in dominating hegemonic discourses, therefore they have played a constitutive role in constructing the CPC of NCC project. The other project specific influential mechanism of disseminating hegemonic discourses is EXPO. As field survey uncovered, the governmental decision-makers and local business leaders intend to mobilize public support for İTC project through forming the project with an EXPO-based strategy. To sum up, the CsPC of the projects have been constructed by the utilization of mass media tools. Particularly in the formation of İTC project, mass media tools have become the platform of political-ideological struggle between the predominant-supporter view (of governmental and business actors) and oppositional-counters view (of chambers affiliated to UCTEA and some other NGOs). However, it could be stated that predominant-supporter views have more advantages in manipulating the shaping of public opinion since they dominate and command most of the mass media institutions.

Although hegemonic discourses target to mobilize the consent of local public of İzmir as a whole, it could be identified particular targets. There are two particularly

targeted actors in the mobilization of consent which are “occupational professions” like city planning and “chambers affiliated to UCTEA”. Governmental decision-maker actors intended to strengthen the CsPC of each project through “collaborating-cooperating” with such actors of civil society in the formation of the project. In the formation of NCC project, such efforts to collaborate with key actors of civil society have become successful since İGM, chambers and some academicians from universities have collaborated in the preparation of NCC development plan. However, since the opposition of chambers against İTC project has a political-ideological basis, they do not respond positively any consensus based discourse and reject cooperation-collaboration with the MCT in the preparation of İTC development plans. As a result, the CPC of İTC project has not become powerful owing to the failed attempts of MCT to collaborate with oppositional actors of civil society.

Thesis argues that under the guise of such “collaboration-cooperation” based relations, powerful governmental actors may exert dominance over the role and priorities of urban planning in the formation of the projects. Furthermore this “cooperation-collaboration” discourses and strategies could also be viewed as a hegemonically-constructed strategy to absorb and pacify the oppositional power of counter-oppositional actors. Governmental decision-makers fail to absorb and pacify the opposition of non-governmental social forces and therefore, the CPC of İTC project is restricted by the politically-ideologically motivated activities of chambers, environmentalist NGOs, some universities and political parties. Unlike the governmental actors of İTC project, the key decision-makers in İzmir Greater Municipality has “successfully” cooperated-collaborated with chambers in the formation of NCC project. This “strategically taken consensus based decision” enable them to strengthen the base of the CPC of NCC project, since they mobilize the support and active consent of the chambers with consensus-based relations. As a result, case study provide the empirical evidence to argue that the existence and the mobilization of counter-oppositional views and activities directly influence the construction of CsPC of each projects.

Since governmental decision-makers do not provide collaboration with oppositional non-governmental actors (like chambers, environmentalist NGOs) in the formation of İTC project, they tend to enact a project-based law to impose a coercive and legally legitimate base of power for the formation of İTC project. In other words, the CPC of İTC project is not strength because there is a powerful and ideologically-motivated opposition of chambers and some NGOs whose active consent could not be acquired by the governmental decision-makers. Thesis argues that owing to the weakness of CPC, powerful actors tend to dominate and impose a coercive and legally legitimate mechanism with a project-based law. However, such a project-based law still remain socially illegitimate since it is not a product of a consensus between different actors of İTC project.

Urban field survey also revealed that powerful governmental and investor-business institutions aim to acquire the consent of not only local residents and some non-

governmental organizations, but they also need to mobilize the active consent of their own members/officials/employees. Therefore, the capacity of producing consent (CPC) of the projects is constructed to dominate the views of these insider people who performs particular administrative or occupational duties. The level of intra-institutional consent is related directly and positively with the construction of CPC and high level of intra-institutional consent provided in a particular project means the more powerful CPC in the formation of this project. In other words, high level of intra-institutional consent facilitates the construction of hegemony over the definition of urban political priorities in the formation of the projects. The most important empirical evidence, in this respect, is that NCC project has a higher level of intra-institutional consent when compare with ITC project. Lastly, survey results indicate that the level of intra-institutional consent also changes according to the duties of the people and the political-ideological tendencies of these people in performing their particular occupations.

Institution questionnaire revealed that institutional categories such as “state institutions”, “universities”, “political parties”, “chambers” and “media institutions” do not reflect one single coherent view; rather there are conflictual and contrasting views in these institutional categories concerning the formation of the projects. Such contrasting views are more observable for ITC project since there is a significant level of political-ideological opposition against this project. With reference to theoretical approach of thesis, such institutional categories could be identified as a site of political-ideological struggle upon which “a war of position” (in Gramscian terms) occur amongst the social forces of urban politics. As field survey results unfold, not NCC project but ITC project reflects such a site of political-ideological struggle.

As a general conclusion, it could be argued that governmental and investor-business actors have constructed a powerful CPC succeed to mobilize public support and consent in the formation of NCC project. However, the CPC of ITC project has not become powerful and failed to mobilize the consent of oppositional actors of civil society, therefore it could not have a hegemonic power over the definition of urban political priorities. The CsPC of the projects have also affected the implementation of the projects. Since NCC project is politically-ideologically constructed with a powerful CPC, it is started to be implemented. Unlike NCC project, ITC project is not implemented yet owing to the judiciary actions against ITC development plans, which also reflect the powerlessness of the CPC of ITC project.

#### **4. Conclusion: Overall Summary of Empirical Evidence and Final Remarks on the Political Construction of Urban Development Projects**

The critical and comparative analysis of rent-seeking UDPs from different capitalist countries of the world indicated that UDPs have become the mechanisms to secure the economic base of capital accumulation processes and relations. However, the political-economic dynamics behind the formation of UDPS could not be revealed only with reference to capital accumulation processes and relations, paper argues that UDPs are politically constructed “hegemonic projects of the production of space”

and that they reflect a unity of diverse social forces at the urban political context. With these profit-oriented and rent-seeking UDPs, public support and consent of large segments of civil society have been mobilized through producing, disseminating and dominating “economic growth”, “investment” and “employment” based hegemonic discourses.

The main argument of the paper is that UDPs play the key roles in urbanizing Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. However this hegemony is not something given or taken for granted, but rather it is constructed by consciousness collaborative-cooperative efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors including central and local governments, public-private partnerships, business associations, chambers, universities and media institutions ...etc. The unity of these political and social forces, in the formation of the UDPs, could be defined with reference to Gramsci as the “political society + civil society”. The key point to reveal is how the hegemonic power of UDPs have been constructed over the definition of urban political priorities through the hegemonic discourses of these governmental and non-governmental actors. UDPs from Turkish cities are critically and comparatively investigated to find out the answers of this question.

The empirical evidence of four UDPs from three Turkish metropolitan cities reveal that UDPs gain a hegemonic character if they are politically-ideologically constructed by the “growth”, “regeneration”, “investment” and “employment” based hegemonic discourses of powerful governmental and non-governmental actors. In addition to these hegemonic discourses, collaborative-cooperative relations amongst governmental and key non-governmental actors (including business associations, chambers, universities, media institutions ...etc) in the formation of the projects also play crucial roles in constructing hegemonic power. Paper argues that hegemonic discourses and activities of these powerful actors aim to construct a “capacity to produce consent” (CPC), which aim to mobilize public support and consent for UDPs. However, it is also uncovered that not only this hegemonically constructed CPC, but also coercive-legislative mechanisms of capitalist state (including news laws, change in the existing laws, decree-laws and all sorts of legislative interventions) play important roles in the political construction of UDPs.

The utilization of hegemonic discourses, activities and coercive-legislative mechanisms have differentiated according to different relations and articulations of state, capital and society. For instance, hegemonic discourses and activities to mobilize public support and consent may become very important in particular socio-political contexts of some countries where the agents of civil society are powerful. However, in socio-political contexts where state has a high repressive power over the society, there may be no or even less need to use hegemonic discourses and activities.

Thus, within the light of the empirical evidence, paper argues that not only discursive practices of hegemony construction, but also coercive-legislative mechanisms of capitalist state (new laws, change in the existing laws, decree laws ...etc.) play a key

role in the political construction of UDPs. UDPs have been politically constructed through the complementary relation and differential articulation of the discursive practices of hegemony construction and coercive-legislative mechanisms of the capitalist state, which means a differential articulation of hegemony and force in the political construction of UDPs.

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