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REGIONS AND REGIONAL PLANNING IN TURKEY

REGIONY I PLANOWANIE REGIONALNE W TURCJI

Summary: Region is evaluated as a spatial unit which defines the economic-social structure and in which the planning processes like determining, implementing, managing and inspecting the regional development strategies and politics changing within the scope of paradigm changes are carried out. In Turkey, experience related to regional development politics goes back to the 1960s; it has been analysed to what extent regional planning and the concept of a region are affected by the changing processes which are experienced in economic and social structure, according to which criteria the borders for regional planning are determined and the role of these borders in the success of regional politics. According to the results, being unable to provide the interaction between regional planning and the meaning attributed to the concept of a region is the main factor in the non-occurrence of the success which has been aimed in regional development politics although regional planning and the concepts of a region are affected from the paradigm changes.

Keywords: Turkey, regional planning, regions.

Streszczenie: Region jest oceniany jako jednostka przestrzenna, która definiuje strukturę społeczno-ekonomiczną i w której procesy planistyczne, takie jak: określanie, wdrażanie, zarządzanie i kontrola strategii rozwoju regionalnego i polityk, zmieniają się wraz ze zmianą paradygmatu rozwoju. W Turcji doświadczenia związane z prowadzeniem polityk rozwoju regionalnego sięgają lat 60. XX wieku. Analizowano wówczas, w jakim zakresie planowanie regionalne i koncepcja regionu są warunkowane przez procesy zmian zachodzące w strukturze społeczno-ekonomicznej i według jakich kryteriów wyznaczane są granice dla planowania regionalnego i rola tych granic w sukcesie polityk regionalnych. Rezultaty wskazują na niemożność zapewnienia interakcji pomiędzy planowaniem regionalnym i znaczeniem przypisywanym koncepcji regionu jako głównego czynnika niepojawienia się sukcesu określonego w politykach rozwoju regionalnego, pomimo że planowanie regionalne i koncepcja regionu warunkowane są paradygmatem zmian.

Słowa kluczowe: Turcja, planowanie regionalne, regiony.

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1. Introduction

Although evaluations are conducted from different perspectives related to the concept of a region, it has been defined as a functioning areas or a management unit for national economies in the literature of economic geography and regional planning. The concept of a region, in the literature of economic geography and regional planning, started to be defined in the middle of 20th century as a spatial base for regional planning approaches which have been developed for the purpose of terminating socio-economic problems occurring in many areas. Although a concept of region has experienced significant changes within the historical process, it has been accepted as the main element for regional development in all periods. Especially in the nation-state period, it was specified according to the normative rules with the impact of environmental determinism in the period dominated by the liberal capitalism agenda. A Region that had been considered a self-enclosed local unit became a current issue within the frame of regional development approaches together with the development of wealthy or social state like incentives, infrastructure investments and national development approaches in the 1960s. The study of Walter Isard called "Region Science," the concept of a region was accepted as the main element of regional development scientifically. Region was tried to be explained with respect to logical positivist approaches and as based on rationality and it was considered a result of politic-economic processes. New production types which occurred with the 1970 economic crisis have triggered the change in regional planning paradigms. Within this frame, it has been found out that economic structure is a product of many determining elements referring to the social and cultural embeddedness emphasized by theoretical approaches. Also, the theoretical approaches related to this period refer to the theory of "Endogenous Growth Theory" which was developed as focused on moving the sources of regions belonging to them and with innovation-focus; and it was foreseen that regions develop within the frame of externalities which were brought by the data sources of the region-core and the accumulations in a region. The theory of "New Economic Geography" is another regional development approach, which is based on the endogenous growth model. In the literature on economic geography, a region has been defined as a place that is shaped depending on the socio-cultural characteristics in addition to the natural and physical characteristics. Regions, thus, occurred as a new definition of spatial organization and in which national states are forced by multi-national actors and processes [Keating 1997, p. 19; Higano et al. 2002, pp. 1–3]. In this process, "region-based" development models have started to be dominant and an institutional structure which adopts the management model in which the participation of actors is considered as different from the centralist model.

The aim of this paper is to explain how the relationship between regional planning and the concept of a region has changed in connection with theoretical

frameworks. In the last two decades, the regional and sectoral oriented projects in Turkey struggled with the problems of public administration and spatial planning system. These problems weakened interdependencies between lower and upper-scale spatial plans [Beyhan 2008, p. 136].

2. Rethinking regions and regional planning

Within the frame of implicit meaning and the scope of the concept of a region which is in the interest area of disciplines like economy, geography, sociology, political science, etc., regional planning is defined as a process which determines the development of a region with the classification, programming and application of social, economic and physical activities [Köroğlu 2012, pp. 31–32]. Region, which has been a component of a spatial unit for regional planning, was defined as a homogeneous area related to the economic core until the 1970s. The main theme of regional planning in these periods has provided developing regions with decisions as determining new industrial zones, new settlement/urban areas, recreation areas, etc. [Haughton, Counsell 2004, p. 135]. A sector-based understanding of planning has been dominant and regions have been considered as the places that look like one another in terms of physical characteristics. In this period, a region has been evaluated in two categories as uniform regions which are characterized with certain economic activities and homogeneous physical features, and polarized region which are characterized with socio-economic factors having an important role within national economy [Korenik, Miszczak 2011, p. 16]. However, a region started to become the main units in setting the economic system and relationships, meeting the expectations related to society, carrying out the actions and re-shaping the political structure since 1970s [Eraydın 1997]. This has been defined as "the increasing importance of region" or "the revival of region" in the literature. After the 1970s, region-oriented planning approaches gained a relatively superior position with the effects of improvements such as the point explanation of economic activities instead of areal distribution, the explanation of region based on the idea that activities focus on the points and immediate vicinity of these points rather than the assumption of homogeneous and a certain endogenous structure, the dominant position of globalization, restructuring of the nation-state concept and the dominance of neo-liberal politics which put emphasis on the increasing social interests [Dulupçu, 2006, p. 234; Köroğlu 2012, pp. 31–32]. This revealed a need for re-defining the concept of a region with different viewpoints within the context of regional development struggles in parallel to the process of adopting the governance model instead of the nation-state model. The nation-state structure was compelled by the occurrence process of regional local government with the reinforcement of local institutional structure in terms of economic and political agenda [Keating 1998, p. 75]. In other words, some authorities and responsibilities of nation-states were taken over by new

institutional structures that had locally emerged [Keating 1998, p. 14; Higano et.al. 2002, pp. 1–3]. In parallel to this, new regionalism approaches started to be referred to together with many concepts like local government, regional development, economic performance and competition, democracy, etc. This process started a tendency to form new competitive economic places and to provide local dynamics [Karasu 2009, pp. 5–6]. A region became the focus of localization and development phenomena; and actors like agencies that form the institutional dimension of new regionalism approaches at the local level and NGOs appeared [Karasu 2009, p. 6].

This process created new viewpoints to be developed related to multi-staged governance models and institutions in regional economic development together with the new regionalism approaches [Haughton, Counsell 2004, pp. 136–137]. The new regional planning approaches that were brought by this viewpoint had a content that is strategic, united with more political frame, more participating and more priority to the social consensus before government-oriented agenda. This discourse with reference to the endogenous growth theory emphasized the importance of externalities stemmed from the dynamic (flows) and static (embedded characteristics) advantages in regional area.

In parallel to all these developments, the changing position of a region in the world system with the movement in global capital and the rise of neo-liberal politics started to define a new function of regional planning. Today, the main objectives and interest areas of regional planning which are defined as the project of unification and democratization with the world system have been completely re-shaped [Eraydın 1997]. New paradigms which have been brought to the institutional dimension of regional development and planning have caused the regional planning to be evolved from sectoral planning to an understanding of strategic planning. In this period, together with the dominance of the understanding of strategic planning in the planning system, neo-liberal politics and new regional approaches with the economic paradigm have started to be referred to with a number of concepts, such as local management, regional development, economic performance and competition, innovation, democracy, etc. Against this new situation, forming new competitive economical places and the tendency to provide this process with local dynamics have occurred in institutional meaning [Karasu 2009, pp. 5–6].

In response to the literature which considers the region approach convincing for regional development, a view emerged that the dependence of the regional approach on normative classifications at the national–regional level is the most important obstacle to a deeper analysis related to a region. For this reason, it has been revealed that a region and regional development should be evaluated in relational dimension by putting an emphasis on the social and cultural dimension of economy which occurred in the 1970s as new production types and focusing on the assumption that economic life is a product of a number of determiners. This relational dimension is accepted as the third way or new regionalism. The economic geographers such as M. Storper, P. Cooke, A. Amin, N. Thrift, R. Camagni, B. Asheim, M. Gertler, supporting the

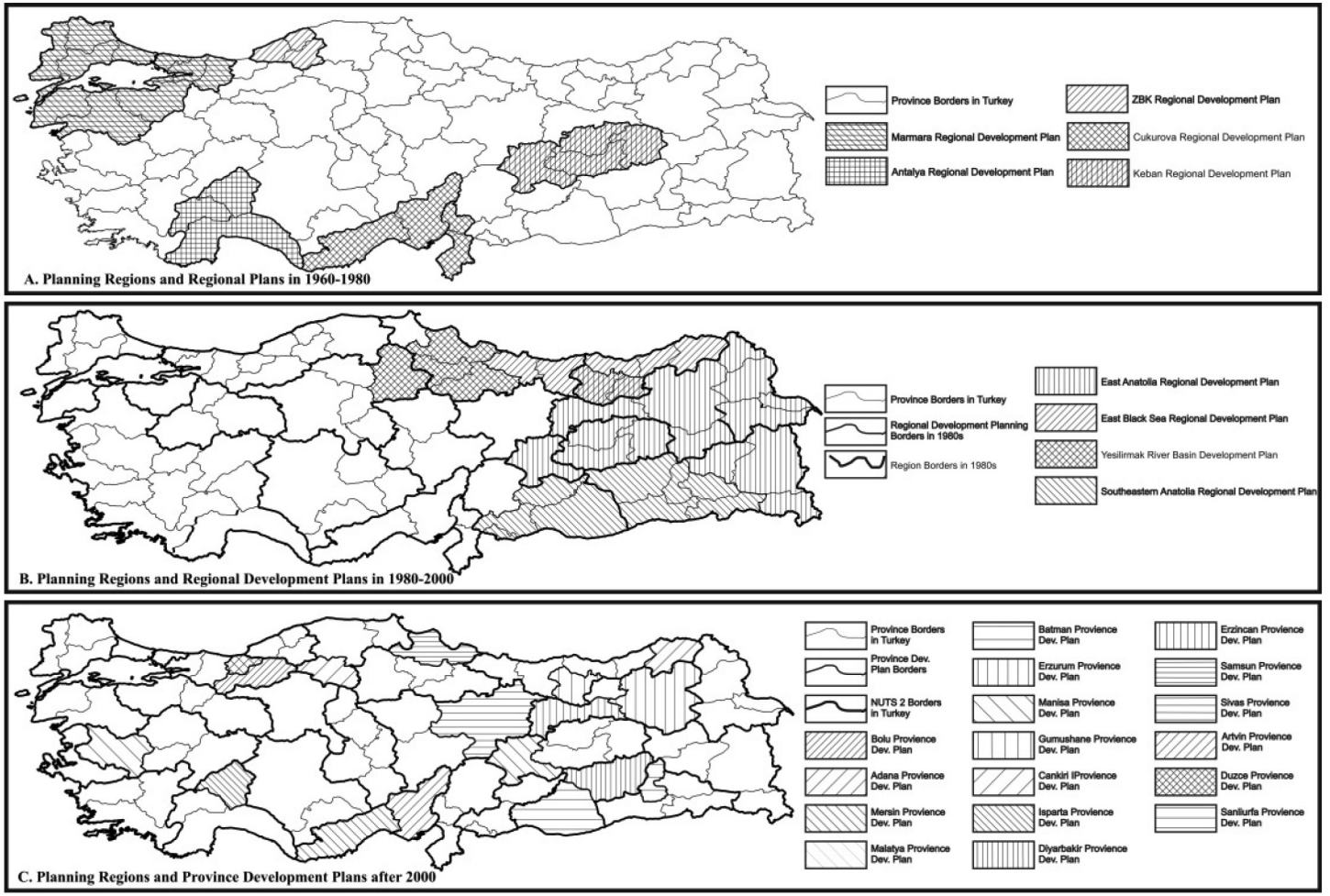
third way approach assert that a region or a social place is defined with non-economic factors such as social capital, trust, face to face relationships, cooperation, spatial and social embeddedness, local habits and norms; and the relational approaches formed by social and relations factors, such as the social capital of Coleman [1988, p. 97], trust of Fukuyama [1995], untraded interdependencies of Storper [1999, pp. 210–211] and institutional thicknesses of Amin and Thrift [1995, pp. 93–95], have a significant role in regional development [Hadjimichalis 2006, p. 692].

3. Regions and regional planning in Turkey

In Turkey, planning with regional scale goes back to the 1960s which are accepted as the planned period. In 1960s, in parallel to the "Region Science" and the dominance of regional development approaches, the planning studies with regional scale in Turkey were accelerated by national institutions, with especially the establishment of State Planning Organization (SPO). Regional planning which was conducted in this period aimed to overcome the problems occurred due to the great urbanization process, regulating the physical environment and solving inequalities between regions [Tekeli 2008, p. 23]. During the 1980s, the content and priorities of the regional projects in Turkey were confronted with a paradigmatic change through new theoretical approaches shaped by globalization and new-right neoliberal policies. The process of change which was experienced by the theoretical background and region related to the regional planning studies led to the evaluation of Turkey regional planning experiences in three different periods: the period which aimed at forming the pressure of urbanization and the physical environment in 1960–1980, the period which focused on the inequalities between regions in 1980–2000 and the period which has focused on the competition-based and network-based development since 2000.

Regional planning studies in 1960–1980 were directly affected from the movements experienced in science. Walter Isard's [1975] discovery of quantitative tools in regional development and positivist/rationality opinions together with "region science" started to have their effect in Turkey. The adoption of quantitative analysis techniques in the studies conducting in Turkey and long-term planning approaches based on positivism and the calculations of projection occurred as a result of these movements.

The period accepted as the first period in terms of regional planning experiences in Turkey especially focused on the policies related to urbanization and physical environment. Istanbul and its surroundings, in which the pressure of rapid urbanization was experienced, were the topic for the first upper-scale planning studies. The regional plan named Marmara Regional Plan Project was prepared in 1958. This plan foresaw a great industrial line along the cities of Izmit and Adapazari, which are at the east side of Istanbul; and it aimed at developing the Anatolian side.


Province Borders in Turkey
Marmara Regional Development Plan
Antalya Regional Development Plan
ZBK Regional Development Plan
Cukurova Regional Development Plan
Keban Regional Development Plan
A. Planning Regions and Regional Plans in 1960-1980
Province Borders in Turkey
Regional Development Planning Borders in 1980s
Region Borders in 1980s
East Anatolia Regional Development Plan
East Black Sea Regional Development Plan
Yesilirmak River Basin Development Plan
Southeastern Anatolia Regional Development Plan
B. Planning Regions and Regional Development Plans in 1980-2000
Province Borders in Turkey
Province Dev. Plan Borders
NUTS 2 Borders in Turkey
Bolu Provience Dev. Plan
Adana Provience Dev. Plan
Mersin Provience Dev. Plan
Malatya Provience Dev. Plan
Batman Provience Dev. Plan
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C. Planning Regions and Province Development Plans after 2000

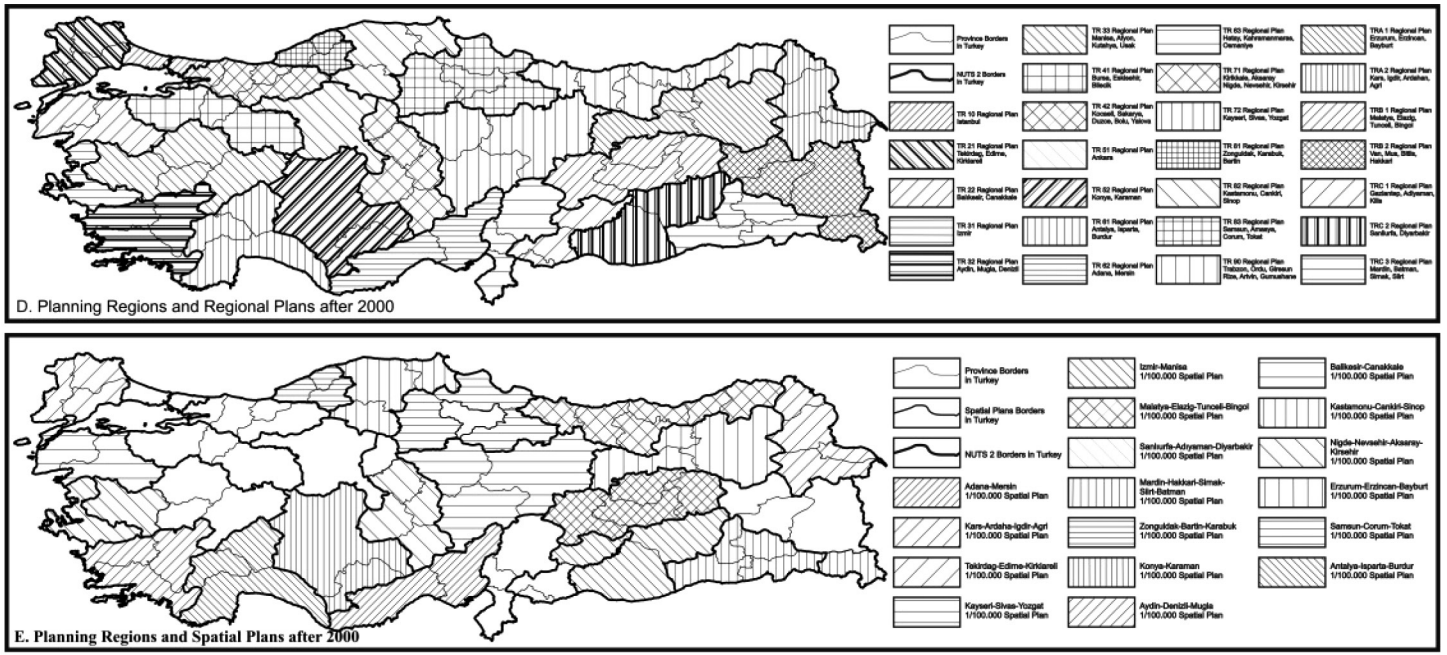

Figure 1. Upper-scale planning experiences in Turkey

Source: author's own research, planning borders for upper-scale plans accepted by the institutions in Turkey.

In 1961, Zonguldak Regional Plan aimed at setting a connection between the speed of population increase and the level of development, improving the infrastructure in the region, increasing urbanization and job opportunities except for agriculture and setting a balance between the investments of the public section and the private section. The most comprehensive regional plan enterprises in this period were conducted for Antalya and Cukurova. Antalya Regional Plan was prepared in accordance with the basic principles, such as preparing surveys in the areas having regional development potential, determining the growth poles, determining the projects which would form a driving force in the region with necessary infrastructure and superstructure regulations. Cukurova Regional Plan was prepared in accordance with the understanding of sectoral planning with the focus of agricultural development by considering the potentials of the region [Mutlu 2008, p. 233].

Another regional plan was the project of Keban, which aims at dealing with the problems and potentials occurring in the region after the construction of Keban Dam. Keban Project aimed at accelerating the economic development of East Anatolian Region and terminating the inequalities in the region by increasing the share of agricultural income within the total income. The plans could not find the chance to be applied mostly; and the identified politics and strategies were transformed due to the rapid changes experienced in the institutional and administrative structure (see Figure 1A).

In this period, some Marxist sociologists like D. Harvey and M. Castells referred to such issues as social dynamics and environmental determinism in regional economic development and this provided clues for the zoning studies which will form references for regional development plans [Wheeler 2002, p. 268]. However, regional development plans were carried out within the borders which were determined by taking physical and geographical data into consideration more in Turkey. The dominance of the understanding of analysis which is long-term and based on quantitative data in studies with regional scale was effective in the determination of normative borders. In other words, the areas in which quantitative data can be determined with the use of geographic and physical determiners constituted reference points for regional development plans. Therefore, the existence of a region cannot be mentioned.

Regional planning studies in 1980–2000 aimed to determine the strategies and politics related to decreasing the inequalities between the regions as a result of the crisis experienced in economic and social systems and the failures experienced in the Keynesian economic policy. The plans were mostly applied although regional plans did not show any difference in terms of institutional structure when compared to the former period. The most important plan prepared as a regional development plan was South Eastern Anatolian Project (SAP). SAP foresaw a construction which was planned as the group of 12 projects related to watering and the production of hydro-electrical energy in the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris and included 22 dams, 19 hydro electrical power plants and the water network of 1.7 million hectare. It has started to be taken into consideration as a regional development project which is

based on sustainable development with human development and which includes the investments of agriculture, transportation, industry, infrastructure, education, health, house and other sectors in addition to the development program of water sources. The main objectives of SAP are to increase the income level and life standards of the people in the Southeastern Anatolian Region and to contribute to the national development missions, such as social power and economic growth by increasing the fertility in rural areas. Eastern Black Sea Regional Development Plan (EBSRDP) and Eastern Anatolia Regional Development Plan (EARDP) were prepared for same purpose like SAP.

The main approach of the plans in this period was the provision of regional development by revealing their own potentials. With the dominance of communicative planning approaches in terms of planning theories, although the understanding of determining politics as a result of the cooperation with the local actors had become dominant, new viewpoints which occurred in terms of planning theories in this period was not reflected in the preparation process of regional development plans in Turkey except for YRDP. For this reason, the plans were prepared as long-term plans based on the positivist and rational. However, the one of the most important issues is emerging of institutions like Southeastern Anatolia Regional Development Administration (SARDA), Eastern Anatolia Regional Development Administration (EARDA), and East Black Sea Anatolia Regional Development Administration (EBSARDA). These institutions are responsible for both the implementation and administration of the projects. Although there is also a study for region borders to be determined by considering the economic, social, cultural and physical relationships of settlements from the town scale to the province scale which has been formed by SPO against normative perspective, it was not accepted as reference of the plans. This has led to the identification of strategies for the same regions in two different plans in addition to doing normative approaches (see Figure 1B).

Regional planning studies have been intensively discussed in the world and Turkey since 2000. This period can be seen as the one in which the Marxist viewpoint based on positivism, and rationality was abandoned in majority, and the globalization has become dominant in planning processes. New application devices for spatial planning and re-definition of spatial planning have revealed that the system of traditional regional planning is not enough in global competition. Regional approaches should be re-evaluated. The factors which have caused changes in the planning system can be evaluated within the frame of new conception definitions related to the concept of a region and the changes in planning theories. In this period, new region classification studies for regional development were determined as a result of the coordinative studies conducted between SPO and Turk Stat in 2002 as parallel to the process of EU official candidatures in 1999. As a result of these studies, a three level territorial-statistical system, Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) was adopted in Turkey. In this statistical system, 26 new administrative units at NUTS 2 level became the main ground for regional planning

projects as well as the emerging provincial development plans at NUTS 3 level. In this period, regional scale plans such as province development plans, regional plans and upper scale spatial plans were prepared in Turkey. Province Development Plans were prepared as the set of strategies which aims at reinforcing the local within 17 province borders till 2005 (see Figure 1C). However, these plans only became a kind of an inventory in which evaluations related to the existent situation and potential of the regions are conducted. On the other hand, province development plans has restrained the planning studies due to not including spatial decisions and have been locked up into a subjective and irrational frame.

After 2005, Development Agencies (DA) started to be established as a new institutional structure for the purpose of providing regional development at the level of NUTS 2. In 2006, together with the acceptance of the law 5449, the institutional structures of DA were determined and the establishment process of DA in 26 regions at NUTS 2 started. Within this new institutional structure, the missions and responsibilities of DA which were accepted as the most important actors of regional development were determined within the frame of the related law and SPO has preferred to use its authority of preparing regional plan with DAs since 2006. DAs, which have completed their process of institutional structuring, have taken region approaches since 2009 and conducted regional planning studies in 26 regions (see Figure 1D). However, the seven-year experience of DAs is far from a complete success in development planning due to the local and institutional conflicts and the structural problems of public administration in Turkey. This situation is the most striking example of being unable to provide institutional coordination.

Spatial planning studies have been also started by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization; it has not taken as references the strategies and politics which have been determined in province development and regional plans (see Figure 1E). Theoretical approaches like new regionalism and new planning theories have shaped the planning process in this period. It has been seen as the reflection of an administrative organization with local devolution of government responsibilities to regional and local actors. Although in terms of their theoretical right hosting, one can see in the example of Turkey that this practice is not a process that shall support the regional development. The main reason for this is that new regionalism cannot go further than the normative evaluations in Turkey. In this process, a normative region opinion has been the main reason for the weak relationship between economy/social policies and the place.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Regional planning which aims at creating relationships between social-economic factors and the place has been directly affected by the changes experienced in economic and social structures. With region science, which started in the 1960s,

new theoretical in the economic and social system have been effective in shaping the approaches of planning with upper scale in Turkey. Liberal economic politics have forced the Turkish regional planning system with theoretical and institutional restructuring growing on terms such as social capital, path-dependences, and untraded interdependencies. These developments gave a new momentum to the regional development processes and strategies in Turkey since 2000. The relationship between experience of upper-scale plans and the region concept from 1960 to the present is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Regions and regional plan approaches in Turkey

Criterion	The first period (1960–1980)	The second period (1980-2000)	The third period (2000–present)
Region	Uncertain demarcation	Normative line of demarcation for regional planning	Normative line of demarcation for regional planning
Era	Regional science, rationality and positivist approach	Neoliberalism, development that focused on region, communicative planning	Third way, new-regionalism
Dominant approaches to regional plan creation	Regional economic development, quantitative analysis with lengthy periods	Regional economic development, endogenous growth theories, new quantitative analysis	Regional competitiveness, regional resilience
The form of a plan	Physical Land Use Plan	Strategic plans, land use focus	Strategic plans and spatial planning, land use and strategy focus
Dominant regional institutional architecture	Central Government, State Planning Organization (SPO)	Central government, State Planning Organization (SPO), Southeastern Anatolia Regional Development Administration (SARDA), Eastern Anatolia Regional Development Administration (EARDA), East Black Sea Anatolia Regional Development Administration (EBSARDA)	Development Agencies (Das), Local Devolution and Ministry of Environmental and City
Key Issues	Physical renew, well-balanced development, welfare especially in social issues	Unbalanced development, life quality, market-led growing	Sustainable, clustering, policy integration/disintegration, competitive growing
Tasks and aims	Regional development, regional polarization, urban compulsion	Regional inequalities, enhance of rural systems, create of regional centres	Sustainable regional development, regional competitiveness,

Source: Karakayacı [2015, p. 588].

Region phenomena in Turkey could not be a spatial unit in which successful planning politics can be determined although it is evaluated as the main element of planning processes. Although a region has started to be defined as a part of the international system with the changes in the viewpoint for place, manufacturing type, technological and cognition improvements since 1980s, it has not gone beyond the normative approach. In other words, national government politics for terminating the inequalities in Turkey could not go further the efforts re-arranging synthetic regions rather than forming analytical regions [Özbek 2012, pp. 139–150]. One of the most important reasons for this phenomenon is the need for economic, geographic, sociologic and statistical studies with wide-scoped in determining synthetic regions. The normative approach ignores the value and importance of functional regions that shall represent the socio-economic phenomena better in place [Özbek 2012, pp. 139–150; Higano et.al. 2002, p. 1; Gezici 1998, p. 8]. Therefore, regions can be successful as long as they exist as places with their own identity.

Since the 1980s, the region oriented development projects in Turkey have been supported by new quantitative analysis techniques like GIS. The techniques have helped in determining especially area usage-focused strategies and politics. However, the techniques having the positivist viewpoint have not sufficiently contributed to the determination process of identities and potentials peculiar to a given region. DAs occurring as a new institutional structuring played an important role and have become the most effective actor of the regional development politics to take the opportunity to be applied. Region-based development models have come to the front as the dominant period instead of completely centralist development models in the 2000s. Because of the inadequate institutional capacity occurring in DAs which have emerged as a new actor for especially regional planning studies, it could not be the key to regional development.

In conclusion, since the Planned Era of development policy in the 1960s, the region centric development approaches and policies in Turkey have undergone a radical transformation through key parameters, such as macroeconomic policy choice, public administration system, institutional system and spatial planning system. These parameters are key to the regional planning attempts in Turkey. Although the planning studies of Turkey with regional scale have been structurally affected by the paradigm changes, its staying away from being integrated into new economic and social structures of a region and insufficient institutional capacity did not have the expected impact on the regional plans.

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