

# EMERGING REGIONAL PLANNING STRUCTURES IN TURKEY: LIMITS AND CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

While developed economies have been experiencing renaissance of regional planning and development, Turkey faces revolutionary pressures in regional policy making compared to developed countries, yet these radical changes still fall behind the recent renaissance.

Especially with the effects of the dynamics of globalisation and localisation, social, economic, cultural, spatial and political settlements has become into a state of flux and crucial changes have been experienced in terms of the conceptualisation of regional development, the structure of regional planning, and the implementation of regional policies. Network systems, flexible-production and organisation, new locality, competitiveness, border erosion, knowledge co-production, innovation and global crises are among the most crucial outcomes. With the corollary of these processes, radical transformations both in the regional development policies and in the structures of regional planning in Turkey are being experienced.

In this process, it is quite difficult to claim that understanding of regional development and planning in Turkey follow a uniform and consistent path. Instead, Turkish economy may be characterised by regional disparities. The basic policy aim is shaped according to the geographical span of the country that creates disadvantages in terms of natural factors such as the lay and climate conditions when moved from west to east, the unequal distribution of population, the fact that the economy is at the development phase, and the regional disparities, however national and regional planning approach could not go beyond the Keynesian-fordist region perception. The unfavourable experiences in the past, the role of the government and the inadequacies in governmental intervention, the existence of bottlenecks, complications in planning hierarchy, unclear definition of the term of region, floating policy or instability of development plans, the lack of an applied regional plan experience, the unclearness of sectoral and active policy tools and development hierarchy, the state of internationalisation, political and economic instabilities, a non-functioning system of statistics, policies that cause immiserizing growth etc. are crucial reasons of this failure.

The regional planning and the development policies in Turkey that have been shaped according to social and political factors, rather than economic ones, were first brought to agenda in 1963 and five-year national development plans were prepared following the "planned period". Although some 'in the strict sense traditional regional policy' applications based on promotion factors were made in 1970s and 1980s, the sustainability of de facto applications could not be maintained following the 1980s because of macroeconomic instabilities. Unlike European countries Turkey was not in search of a harmonisation with global developments in 1990s. The transition into modern regional policies was hardly initiated in 2000s after the initiation of EU accession period. In 2003, the 2004 – 2006 Preliminary National Development Plan – PNDP that encompasses all the regions was prepared in order to form a strategic frame for the pre-EU accession period financial aids. The 9<sup>th</sup> Development Plan is prepared for 7 years in order for efficiency and total harmonisation to EU programming period. However, because of the lack of operational

planning tradition; the formation of new regional policies, funding, application, and coordination and organisation dimensions persist to be the weaknesses of planning in Turkey.

In 2002, as seven geographical regions are too large for economic and infrastructural investments in Turkey and as the provinces are tiny, the NUTS II level regions that constitute an optimum geographical scale were determined and came into force. In order to create local programming and implementation capacity the first step for establishing regional development agencies on the basis of NUTS II was taken in 2006; but concerns and discussions on both theoretical and practical functions of the Agencies are still lasting.

The effects of the EU and internationalisation, the democratisation of Turkey, the use of new planning and development tools, the help of technological developments to planning, and the changes in legislation (laws of municipality, special provincial administration and RDA) illustrate recent transformation of regional planning. The deblurring of the basic term of "region", the development of original and active policies and plans for each region, the enabling of Agencies, removal of floating development policy of its instabilities, the deblurring of enforcement units, ensuring the consistency of aims and priorities, the formation of sectoral strategies, the accurate assessing of regional externalities, the relevant and efficient use of public incentives, and the fulfilment of new reforms and regulations would make this transformation meaningful for Turkey.

The study, inspired by this chaotic but improving environment, tries to scrutinize and categorize the recent changes in regional planning in Turkey. To do this, first we examine the evolution of regional planning understanding in Turkey. Second, the radical changes in regional planning stemmed from EU acquis and relatively higher growth rates are discussed. Lastly the bottlenecks due to heavy and intensive reforms in the field of regional policy making in Turkey are discussed.

**Keywords:** Regional development, regional planning, regional disparities, regional development in Turkey, regional development agencies

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays when the world is turning into a global village, the absorption of the differences among regions located in the same borders has become inevitable while the fundamental differences among countries lose significance. Today, these interregional disparities have turned into crucial problems of each and every country. Consequently countries strive to remove the disparities among the regions located in their own borders. In some regions the problem is economic while in others it is social and cultural deficiencies.

The disparities are more explicit in developing countries. The significance of this imbalance was first realised by developed western countries and they were of the opinion that the government should intervene these regions. After some countries had inserted precautions in their government programs in order to reduce existing regional disparities, economists and town planners started to think about the principles, aim and tools of such a policy.

The political, economic, juridical cooperation movement that countries have enrolled through the creation of common systems by regionalisation is one of the new developments emerged in this process.

Regional formations aiming at economic development through foreign trade increase have gathered pace following the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and were mostly adopted in developing countries.

Few of these formations especially seen in Africa and Latin America have got permanent success. However in these years to be titled as former regionalisation period, the seeds of today's one of the most successful regional integrations, namely European Economic Community were being planted in Europe.

In the post-1980 period following the end of Cold War the transformation wave in the whole world has also involved the regionalisation movements. Along with the new regionalisation formations, the number of which is increasing, deepening and expansion movements in previous formations have also been observed. In the new regionalisation process in which traditional templates are abandoned, developed countries, direct investments, multinational companies and the developments in information and communication technologies are coming into prominence. For countries involvement in regionalisation movements is seen as one of the basic keys of economic development.

Turkey has also attended this worldwide regionalisation movement by choosing European Union. The rough (??) European Union adventure of Turkey that has been lasting till 1959 accelerated with the initiation of actual negotiations. Yet there is a long and challenging marathon in front of Turkey who is going to realise a lot of reformative structural transformations together with European Union process. Besides European Union, Turkey is also a member of both Economic Cooperation Organisation and Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The aims of these memberships are to assess the potentials in related regions and to realise commercial relations with the countries in the region and Turkey has come to the fore in these two movements. The Economic Cooperation Organisation is the only regional cooperation movement that Turkey attends with Turkic Republics. The Economic Cooperation Organisation is quite crucial in order to develop commercial relations with these countries. Many of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation member states have significant energy resources and are located along energy lines. Furthermore these countries have high trade potentials. The involvement in the movement that is going to be more crucial in the future would be very beneficial for Turkey.

## **2. WAVES OF CHANGE: POSITIONING TURKEY**

Some reasons such as the decrease in geographical distances or their convergency with the developments in information, news and communication systems, the increase in interaction possibilities, the erosion of nation states' supervision opportunities on their own territories and nations, impossibility of supervision of different permeative flows, the strengthening of trans-national or multi-national companies, their high negotiation power against nation states and localities have weakened nation-states and transfer its functions to global governance and to regions or localities.

In this new period in which transnational and sub-national concepts collide, *global* erodes and transforms *national*, and this transformation process features the concept of 'region' that undertakes the mediation mission in order to resolve the tension between national and global. The concept of region to be defined 'relative' to space, subject, criterions chosen, scale, time and objective (Tekeli, 2008: 174) has changed and transformed in the "similarising" process of globalisation and pushed its traditional characteristics that distinguish the region from other into the background (Thorns, 2004: 21).

Until the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially the last quarter, a “regionalisation” wind has been blowing in the world. In general, it is claimed that the fundamental factor under “regionalisation” notion is globalisation. While “integrations” occur at different scales and levels as a reflection of globalisation, on the other hand a “localisation” notion can be mentioned.

The “globalisation-localisation” processes that seem to be contrary to each other are described with the concept of “glocalisation”. Globalisation occurs with the squeeze of the world as a whole and with the integration of localities and this process brings the “local” to light.

Globalisation intensifies not only the international relations, but also city-region relationships. In this context, it is observed that the concept of border among these units lose validity. In other words, this process is not against the developments towards localisation and regionalisation but it is encouraging. The “region” that emerged and is still emerging as a result of both the “localisation” effect of globalisation and the unique economic, political, administrative and cultural characteristics of each country is a “real” concept that is on the agenda of Europe and many countries.

The developments in information technologies that emerge together with economic and technological changes and developments experienced especially in developed countries, the strategic source characteristic of information, social changes that cause the prominence of localisation and participation principle in the society have featured local economies by causing crucial changes in regional development policies. Today there are regional and local administrations in Europe, where a centralist structure was dominated at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Large part of the public services are realised by these administration.

As the results of being administratively and economically centralist country and therefore the necessity of planned development and the removal of inter-regional disparities the question that whether regional institutionalisation is necessary in Turkey is quite significant. As the development of the country with regional plans is a constitutional provision, is an organisation structure that would implement regional plans an obligation? What would be the rational choice of the model that can realise these necessities either with private organisations (GAP – Regional Development Agencies) or with regional organisations connected to central government but also involve local authorities? Is it acceptable that a regional institutionalisation is necessary in order to ensure the entirety, coordination, equivalency and co-plane in the development end to ensure an equivalent democratic development countrywide?

For Turkey as a unitary state, regionalisation may be found as inconvenient by some segments because of separatist ideas. Yet when the regions in regionalised countries of European Union are taken into consideration it is seen that these countries are regionalised because of economic and administrative concerns. No doubt, ethnical, linguistic and cultural regionalisation also prevails; but in this context there is also the opinion that regionalisation outpaces separatist movements and serves the integrity of the state.

Either Spanish Estado de las Autonomias, English institutional reforms, quite comprehensive regionalisation in France and Italy, federalisation in Belgium or decentralisation movements in Portugal and Greece have turned Europe into a more regionalised map, furthermore it may

be claimed that countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland carry their regions beyond federal system.

### **3. LOST IN TRANSLATION: EXPERIENCES AND BOTTLENECKS**

In 1960s the understanding of welfare settled and the development of third world countries is shaped with development plans, hence a theory of development economy was appeared. The regional planning emerged as a sub-planning category created by this general approach (Tekeli, 1997: 12).

The socio-economic varieties of the societies affect the geographical space. This kind of a differentiation emerges especially in under-developed countries as a problem of “interregional economic and social disparity”. Turkey experiences the problem of interregional disparities in economic, political and social dimensions. In order to resolve the problem, political desire for making regional plans was quite alive especially in 1960s. The regional planning efforts had been made in the pre-SPO period by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, found an official ground for the first time with entering of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Law of Formation, No. 7116 into force in 1958 (Tekeli, 1972; 130).

Regional planning has substantially altered with the establishment of SPO on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1960 and the efforts of institutionalisation came into prominence. As per Article 7 of State Planning Organisation, Law of Formation, No. 91 the tasks of making necessary search in the region and of preparing long- and short-term plan and programs were assigned to the institution. In order to ensure the most optimal distribution of resources among regions according to national plan aims and also to ensure its coordination a regional planning department was established under the SPO. After 1960, the Five Year Development Plans (FYDP) were initiated.

It is quite difficult to claim that the understanding of regional and sub-regional development in Turkey proceed on a comprehensive and consistent path. Although the removal of regional disparities is still effective as the fundamental policy goal, national and regional planning approach could not go beyond the Keynesian-fordist region perception. Regional development squeezed between “two separate goal”, namely the regulations of urbanisation and rural development (SPO, 2000a, 2000b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001), is shaped by 18 distinct institutions, 8 of which are ministries and in fact none of these 18 institutions have a region-characteristics.

Analysing development plans it could be claimed that a “uniform” model is effective in regional development planning. With traditional incentive mechanisms, firstly investment incentives are utilised (e.g. support premium for sourcing) and operational incentives follow (e.g. energy support) in the captivation of capital and investment by under developed regions. After the meeting of development plans with the concept of Development Priority Localities (DPL) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> planning period (1973 – 1977) the canalisation of investments into under developed regions was seen as the fundamental tool for the removal of regional disparities and before long the number of administrations in this context increased to 49, from 22. This enlargement, on the other hand, has restrained the efficient utilisation of public resources (Dağ, 1995). Furthermore the political process for the choice of development priority provinces has caused a DPL scope that is not scientific (Gezici & Hewings, 2001).

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Plan, 16 functional regions designed based on the urban settlement hierarchy were brought to agenda. This approach in which certain provinces are accepted as development centres could not be materialised. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Plan, the joint-utilisation of sectoral development and spatial analysis came to the fore (SPO, 1996; Dağ, 2000). The emphasising of 16 functional regions in the 8<sup>th</sup> Plan (see Section Seven, SPO, 2000a) could be accepted as the reflection of imperception of the global transformation experienced during the planning period and the reflection of the obscureness in the EU process (in other words the ignorance of the EU process by Turkey). Yet the regional development perspective has radically changed before the end of 8<sup>th</sup> planning period.

In the development efforts made in Turkey through Five-Year Development Plans (FYDP) the dimensions of region and sub-region always find an opportunity to take part in the plans. As could be seen clearly in the 8<sup>th</sup> FYDP and in its Regional Development Specialised Commission Report (SCR), four fundamental policy sets and tools are utilised for regional development (See SPO, 2000a; 2000b). First of these sets and tools is the “regional plans” prepared for the removal of interregional disparities and for the realisation of sustainable development. These plans are structured for the integration of sectoral priorities and their spatial dimensions in the context of development plans’ goals and strategies. The major ones of these are; East Marmara Planning Project, Antalya Project, Çukurova Region Project, South-eastern Anatolia Project, Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük Regional Development Project, Eastern Anatolia Project – Main Plan and East Black Sea Region Development Plan. Except for the GAP, transformed into an integrated regional development project, other projects have not been realised due to various reasons. Second is the “development priority localities tool”; but the tool could not generated expected results as it was limited to fiscal precautions. Third tool is the “provincial development plans”. These plans could be prepared only in certain provinces due to fiscal constraints, therefore the necessary fiscal sources (and time) for the implementation period, were neglected. Although vision and strategies were determined (appropriate) implementation ground could not be found. The last tool is called “the regional dimension of other development policies”. In other words, there are regional effects of those policies applied for national development.

The principles, goals, policies and tools applied in five-year development plans could be found in the following table.

**Table 1. Regional Policies and Tools of Five-Year Development Plans (Adaptation of SPO (2005:41))**

	Principles	Approach and Policies	Goals	Tools
I. Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP)	-Diffusion of economic development into regions - Regional economic integration	- Regional planning - Poles of growth (for example East Marmara, Çukurova, Antalya, Zonguldak)	- Balanced urbanisation - Inter-regional balance (in terms of public services and income distribution) - Efficiency of investments	- Financial incentives - Investment based precaution alternatives for underdeveloped regions

<b>II. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concentration on population problems caused by rapid urbanisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional and provincial planning</li> <li>- Indirect regional planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced interregional development</li> <li>- Balanced distribution of regions in terms of social equality</li> <li>- Efficiency of investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tax reductions</li> <li>- Financial incentives aiming at private sector investments</li> <li>- Pilot project</li> <li>- Keban</li> </ul>
<b>III. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Removal of regional disparities</li> <li>- Development of some certain underdeveloped regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sectoral and provincial planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same as the 2. Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial incentives</li> <li>- Industrialisation programs for underdeveloped regions</li> <li>- Inventory related studies</li> <li>- Provincial planning</li> <li>- Sectoral planning</li> <li>- Package projects</li> <li>- Development priority provinces</li> </ul>
<b>IV. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mobilisation of resources for regional problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consolidation of inter-sectoral and inter-regional ties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The development of underdeveloped provinces</li> <li>- Inter-dependence of sectors and regions</li> <li>- Spatial organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction of interest rates for investments</li> <li>- Various financial assistances</li> <li>- Package projects</li> <li>- Investments at provincial and regional levels</li> <li>- Çukurova Urban Development Project</li> <li>-GAP (SPO-JICA)</li> </ul>
<b>V. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boosting the development at underdeveloped regions that have sectoral potentials through the rationalisation of sourcing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct Regional Planning encompassing the regional effect of projects (16 functional region suggestions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced regional development that takes social equality into consideration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of regional development for the determination of potential resources</li> <li>- The selection of investments in line with these programs</li> <li>- The enhancement of the infrastructure of priority regions and sectors for the industrialisation projects</li> <li>- Financial assistance for the investments in development priority provinces</li> </ul>
<b>VII. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Handling of social, administrative and financial dimensions as a whole for application purposes</li> <li>- Adaptation of a statistics system that is consistent with international standards (especially with the EU)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional and sub-regional planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced development in the regions</li> <li>- The support of districts in order to hinder migration from villages to towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The transfer of financial resources to development priority localities</li> <li>- Incentives for development priority provinces and the formation of a special fund.</li> <li>- Industrial zones</li> </ul>
<b>VIII. FYDP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integration of sectoral and special studies</li> <li>- Sectoral specialisation of provinces</li> <li>- Town planning</li> <li>- Removal of regional disparities</li> <li>- Enhancement of competitiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional and sub-regional projects</li> <li>- The mobilisation of regional capabilities</li> <li>- Sustainable development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rationalisation of migration and demographic development</li> <li>- Handling of the problems of Metropolitan regions as a separate category</li> <li>- Policy development efforts against housing problem</li> <li>- Regional disparities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prolongation of development priority policies</li> <li>- Immediate support program for Eastern and West eastern Anatolia</li> <li>- GAP</li> <li>- Legal regulations</li> <li>- Housing projects</li> <li>- Support for SMEs located in development priority provinces</li> <li>- ZBK, Yeşilirmak Basin, DOKAP, DAP</li> </ul>

<b>IX. FYDP</b>	The activation of - Sustainability - Sourcing of attendant plans - Harmonisation with EU regional policies	- Strategic regional planning - Clustering - Provincial development plans	- Enhancement of competitiveness - The mobilisation of local entrepreneurship and local resources - Regional disparities	- SME support - EU funds - First comprehensive regional plans - Human capital
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The relatively dominant position of industrialisation policy in Turkey has mostly shadowed alternative regional development tools. These industrialisation policies could not go beyond traditional tools, besides they have not sufficiently taken the regional dimension into account.

As could be seen in Table1, province-level planning could not entirely take part until the 8<sup>th</sup> planning period. Also analysing planning periods as a whole would reveal that there are inconsistencies among principles, policies, goals and tools (Dulupçu & Gövdere, 2005: 137); but in the 8<sup>th</sup> FYDP period a critical step was taken with the adaptation of 3-level Statistical Regional Units Classification (İBBS) parallel to EU Statistical Classification (NUTS), (See Figure 1) (European Commission, 2000; 59; Commission of the European Communities, 2001: 78). However local actors are excluded. Although regions are officially determined according to “geographical and economic similarities”, quite a lot of specialists find this division artificial (Dulupçu, 2005: 105) and some claim that current cultural regions are voluntarily bypassed to the new ones.



**Figure 1. New Statistical Units in Turkey (NUTS I, II and III) [Source: Eurostat].**

In the field of regional development, the formation of an institutional mechanism that would apply regional development policies locally and the execution of some project management related tasks by Development Agencies (DA) are anticipated both in 2003 Accession Partnership Document (APD) and in the Preliminary National Development Plan (PNDP) that is based on APD.

Regional development together with Preliminary National Development Plan, Accession Partnership Document, SME Action Plan and Industrial Policy Document has become one of the key stages of EU harmonisation and accession processes. The realisation of this radical



change through “supra-nationalisation” seems to confirm “up-to-down regionalisation” proposal, instead of “regionalisation caused by local”. Thereafter for this transformation to lead “regionalisation caused by local” an understanding that takes the potential and structure of the region into account should develop. Current provinces and new NUTS2 regions are going to face a regional development and planning process that analyse not only public sector but also analyse and encompass NGOs. Hence the importance of EU experiences and regional development literature for Turkey is going to increase. However getting over of Turkish regionalisation from “Fordist-Keynesian” effect would not ensure its automatic transition to “Post-Fordist-Schumpeterian” effect (Polat, et. al., 2011).

In the current period formed by global economy, despite “Fordist-Keynesian” industrialisation policies and national developmentalism have lost their effectiveness, the effort to structure development strategies upon region/sub-region and locality, and central governments’ parallelly developed endeavour of “decentralisation” has caused social, cultural and political characteristics of local to gain importance (Dulupçu & Özgür, 2006: 4).

The situation is perceived as a crucial difference between Turkey and West European Regions. In empirical studies on the regionalisation dynamics of West-Europe, it is seen that territorial (local or regional) mobilisations play an important role in terms of regionalisation dynamics. In these regions sub-national actors are effective in different fields in terms of confrontation to public monopoly; this applies both for politics (through the territorialisation of party system) and policies (together with the emergence of regionalist parties and certain regional problems). Local and/or regional mobilisations form social, economic and/or political spaces; with the transformation of central priorities these spaces determine the type of regionalisation.

Hence the formation of regional units in Turkey is not the result of territorial mobilisation and almost for that reason alone is an “**up-to-down**” process. In this context while especially the local administration level mobilisations provide more autarky and power than the level experienced in 1970s, in contrast, its formation process at regional level is quite different.

#### **4. MAKING TRANSFORMATIONS WORK: REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS**

One of the crucial characteristics of planning in Turkey is that they have always been initiated and applied by central government, even the regional policies. In these experiences local and provincial actors had no effect on the determination of regional policies and further, even their hopes about local enterprises and partnerships are restricted. As a part of this development oriented planning regional development policies and goals are determined in the context of Five-year Development Plans.

In Turkey, traditional planning approach has always been sector-based. The dimension of region could only be integrated in Five-year Plans and thus the integration of regional affairs reflects an atomistic understanding (Dulupçu, 2005: 109). The main goal of this development oriented planning is to promote investments in certain sectors without any emphasis on the geographical distribution of related sectors. On the contrary, EU planning is multi-sectoral and regionally integrated. In this context, GAP, once more, is an exception as it is multi-sectoral and somehow decentralised (Loewendahl-Ertugal, 2005: 24).

In this sense 5<sup>th</sup> Five-year Development Plan (1982-1986) adopts a more integrated approach. In 1982 SPO proposed the formation of 16 functional regions that would have a centre province supported by each spillover effect and created the “Regional Development Plans”. Although this region classification would be more appropriate, there has not been any public policy applied at the spatial level. In these regions, in addition to the lack of any administrative definition, regional policies are mostly defined based on provinces, not on functional regions (Gezici & Heawings, 2004: 118, 123). The necessity to take “Sectoral Development” and “Spatial Analysis” at the same time into consideration was first stated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Five-year Development Plan (1996-2000) (Dulupçu, 2005: 110). At the beginning of 2000s a new department that would especially be responsible for monitoring and assessing regional development programs was established under the SPO (Commission of the European Communities, 2994: 131) and in fact, this was thought as a reaction against the desires of the EU (European Commission, 2000: 60).

One of the common characteristics of EU and Turkish regional planning is that they allocate resources primarily to under developed regions. The removal of regional disparities has been one of the two fundamental goals of Turkish regional planning since 1960s. While the establishment of Development Priority Localities (DPL) in 1971 led this movement, it did not have serious contribution to the removal of regional disparities. The policies developed for the removal of regional disparities in Turkey have probably increased these disparities. In the last 10 years especially, it has been observed that there has been an inequality in terms of the distribution of investment. Therefore it may be claimed that developed regions have further developed in terms of investments and allocation. While 60% of the public credits were allocated to developed regions in 1980, only 4% were allocated to under developed regions (Danielson & Keleş, 1985: 35). Besides the increase in the number of DPLs from 22 to 49, instead of socio-economic criteria the emphasis on political concerns (Gezici & Heawings, 2004: 118) has caused the rise of such a picture.

When viewed from the perspective of the priority of national growth maximisation, this opposite situation in the conglomeration of high-growth activities may be perceived as a “political conflict”. This, in turn, presents the conflicting situation of the goal of regional development disparity removal (Gezici, Heawings, 2004: 129; Loewendahl-Ertugal, 2005: 27-8). Also this is emphasised in most of the European Commission Progress Reports (European Commission, 1999: 40-1; European Commission, 2000:60).

Considering NUTs and development agencies from this perspective, the word *agency* is used as “neologism” that connotate governance in Turkish. Agencies form a new level among local, provincial and national levels, and have the mission to coordinate local actors for the preparation and application of regional plans. Hence, planning is going to be handled not only centrally but also at the regional level.

As could be seen from the figure above when the change of regional development perception is handled in terms of base and ceiling interaction, centrally administered regional policies in which the poles of growth and sectoral planning methods apply has given way to semi-autonomous institutions that is formed with the “relationship-network-innovation” cooperation of corporations, local administrations and NGOs as a result of the altered regional policies together with the globalisation movements in the world. In parallel to the change in the world, some crucial changes in regional policies have also been experienced in Turkey (See Figure 2). In this process a set of numerous and diverse tools, from “Regional Development

Agencies” to “Regional Innovation Strategies”, from “Incubation Centres” to “Technocities/Technology Development Centres/Science Parks and Business Agglomerations” have been brought to agenda.

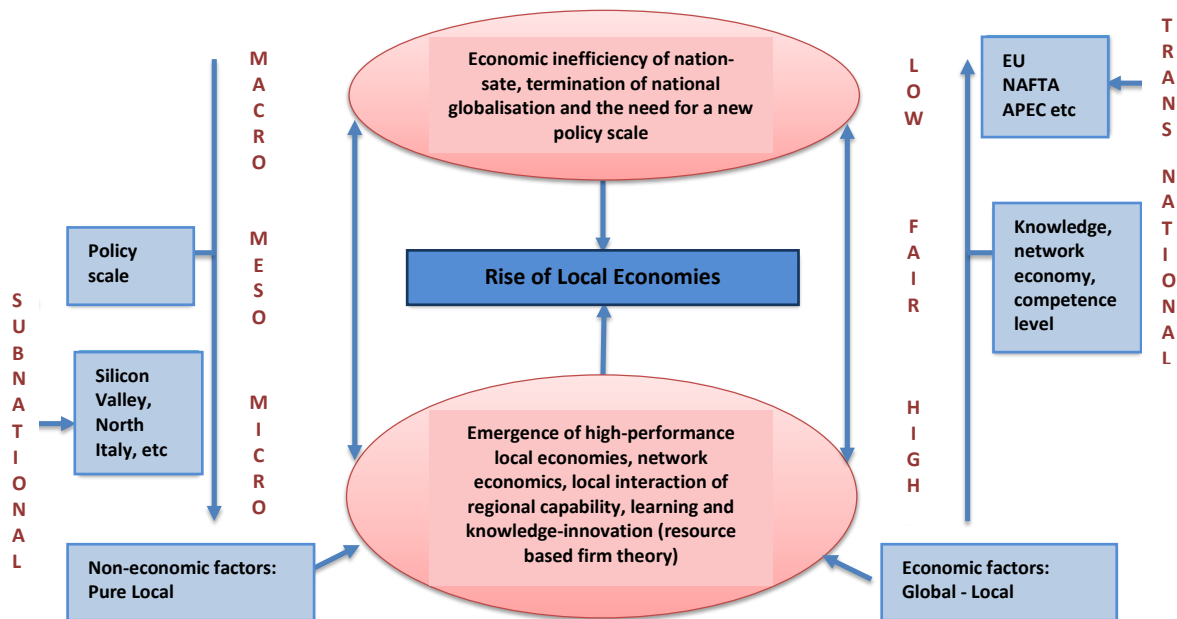


Figure 2. Changing Scales and Regional Political Patterns

In 1950s the concept of regional development gained currency together with development economics. Until 1950s, prominent concepts in regional development policy have perpetually altered and the changing condition of the world and with the new concepts that have appeared the dynamics of regional development has continually changed (Eraydın, 2004: 128). The experience and breaking points of regional planning of Turkey is given in Figure 3.

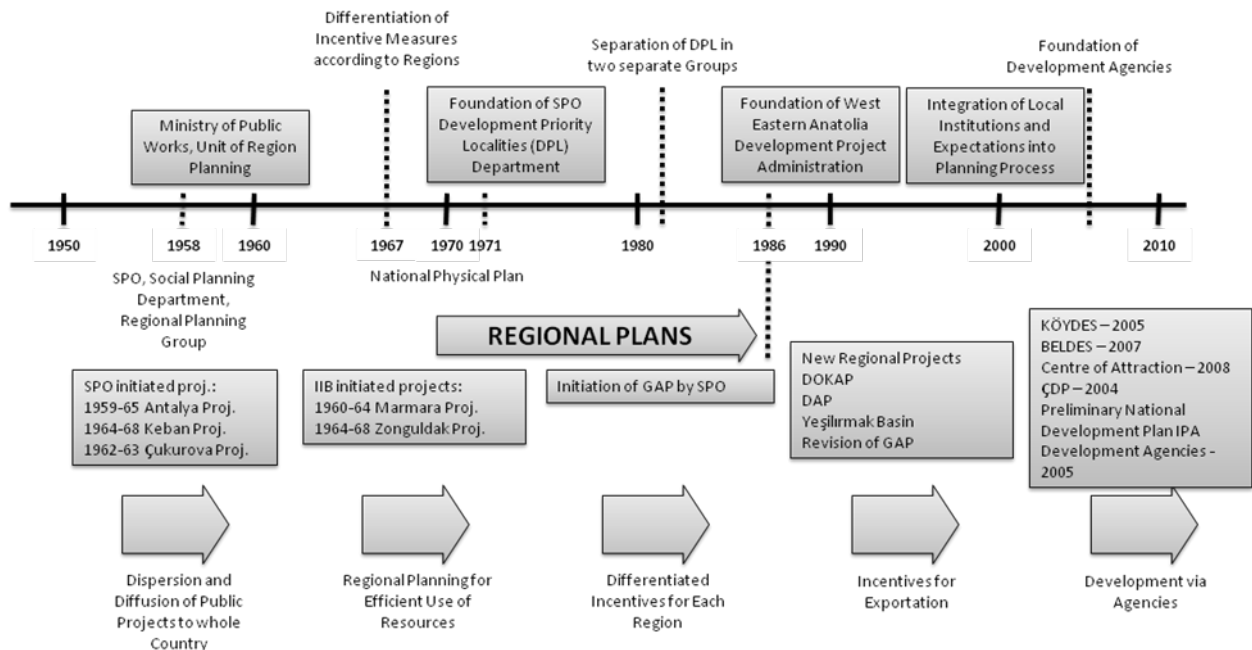


Figure 3. Regional Planning in Turkey (adaptation of Eraydın, 2004)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

It is well known that Turkey has experienced quite a serious level of regional disparity for a long period of time and these policies did not manage to remove the disparities. Due to the accession period of Turkey to the EU on the one hand and the intolerable level of civil problems caused by interregional disparities, it is urgently necessary to form consistent understandings of regional policy and planning and then apply them.

In Marcou's regional reform typology the regionalisation process of Turkey may be best defined as "administrative regionalisation". It means not only the creation of related institutions directly related to administration, but also a service provider as an organ of this administration; thus it is the functions of these institutions that support the creation of regional economic development generally related to central regional policies; therefore regional policies are in the hand of government (Marcou, 2002: 141, 153). This differentiates current local communities from decentralisation (regional policies are at the hands of current local public authorities) to regional decentralisation (decentralised public authorities are responsible for regional policies).

In Turkey there are significant regional disparities in terms of personal income distribution, interdivisional level of development, population density and employment ratios of workforce. These disparities exist both among different regions of the country and among different sub-units of one region. Among the most developed districts, a district from the southern part of the country (Gaziantep, Central District) may take part while some districts from the most developed regions, namely Marmara and Aegean Regions, may fall behind. Consequently it is impossible to denote one certain region as developed or under developed yet it is more meaningful to talk about developed/under developed districts. Accordingly the necessity to apply regional development policies in the countrywide is attained.

Regional policy is a type of policy between local and national levels, and aiming at not only economic but also social development. As aforementioned, especially in consequence of regional disparities to be the main focus of interest of regional development for a long period both in developed and developing countries regional policy has kept away from its originality and interpreted as the continuation of national economic and social policies. Recently regional policy and development is recovering from being "a residual category" and moves according to "competitiveness based originality creation".

Nowadays it is observed that policies that are grounded on institutional recruitment and governance are increasingly accepted. Regional Economic Development (RED) activities in which public-private enterprises, namely private-public partnerships, take part, aim to carry private sector to a sustainable and competitive platform; with this platform an economic development which is self-propelling is focused.

First reason of the popularity of RED is the efforts of nation-states to actualise decentralisation policies in conjunction with globalisation. An apparent result of this tendency is the transfer of responsibility related to the actualisation of "economic development" to provincial and local administrations, or at least sharing with local administrations. Second fundamental factor is the confrontation with the constraints about the public service delivery and governance. The loss of the efficiency of Keynesian (fordist) industrialisation policies and the beginning of central governments to new quests with decentralisation, bring RED to the fore as industrialisation/development. The third factor that popularise RED is explained

through the change in the nature of economy. The proliferation of knowledge economics has increased the mobility of capital through pushing the importance of physical space to the background.

Recently, in the field of regional development the approaches which are appropriate to the maps of regional and local problems that are becoming more complex are developed according not only traditional policy approaches but also to new regionalism, institutional stratification and endogenous development. Therefore more comprehensive approaches should be developed both for the development of regional capacity and for the recruitment of socio-cultural economic environment. Furthermore regional development policies should fundamentally be consistent with the understanding of sustainable development. In other words, sustainable development should take the recruitment of the standard of living into account; should struggle for the establishment of social and economic balances, should consider cultural variety and equality of opportunity, should ensure social, economic and political participation, should respect to the environment and should leave a habitable world to the next generations.

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