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## THE TENTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2014–2018) OF TURKEY AND THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE REGIONAL AREA. PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

## DZIESIĄTY PLAN ROZWOJU (2014–2018) TURCJI I KONCEPTUALIZACJA OBSZARU REGIONALNEGO. PROBLEMY I PERSPEKTYWY

**Summary:** This paper discusses in a critical way how the regional area is conceptualized in the Tenth Development Plan of Turkey (2014–2018). The Tenth Plan introduced in 2014 considerably rests on the strategic framework of the preceding Ninth Development Plan (2007–2013). The regional area in Turkey was and is a strategically ambiguous area where the delineation efforts were mostly devoted to the concerns of public administration and territorial sovereignty rather than functional regionalization. The treatment of the regional area in the Tenth Plan seems to confirm this premise. Here, the main topics of the analysis involve new institutional bodies and governance, new and old policy tools of development planning and sustainable development as well as a territorial statistical system. These three analytical areas will be elaborated on by the relevance to geographical representation system, spatial setting and hierarchy. In that vein, the paper attempts to develop a somewhat different view of the development planning in Turkey by focusing on the treatment of the regional area and the spatial context in the latest development plan.

**Keywords:** Turkey, development planning, regional area.

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł omawia w sposób krytyczny, jak obszar regionalny jest określony w Dziesiątym Planie Rozwoju Turcji (2014–2018). Dziesiąty Plan Rozwoju wprowadzony w 2014 znaczco opiera się na ramach strategicznych poprzedniego Dziewiątego Planu Rozwoju (2007–2013). Obszar regionalny w Turcji był i jest strategicznie niejasnym obszarem, w którym wysiłki wytyczenia były głównie poświęcone kwestii administracji publicznej i suwerenności terytorialnej zamiast regionalizacji funkcjonalnej. Próby uleczenia pojęcia obszaru regionalnego w Dziesiątym Planie Rozwoju wydają się potwierdzać to założenie. Główne obszary analizy obejmują nowe ciała instytucjonalne, governance, nowe i stare narzędzia polityki planowania rozwoju i zrównoważonego rozwoju, jak również terytorialny system statystyczny. Te trzy obszary analityczne zostaną opracowane pod względem przydatności

dla systemu reprezentacji geograficznej, ustawienia przestrzennego i hierarchii. W tym duchu artykuł próbuje rozwijać nieco inny pogląd na planowanie rozwoju w Turcji, skupiając się na leczeniu obszaru regionalnego i kontekście przestrzennym w najnowszym planie rozwoju.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Turcja, planowanie rozwoju, obszar regionalny.

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## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses in a critical way how the regional area is conceptualized in the Tenth Development Plan of Turkey (2014–2018). The latest development plan of Turkey rests on the tradition of a relatively long planned development since the introduction of the First Industrial Plan (1933–1937). Recent studies on regional science in Turkey highlighted and criticized development planning in terms of the realization of long-term economic goals and they draw attention to the ideological content of the policies and implementation tools in these plans.

The paradigmatic framework of the Tenth Development Plan centers on the sustainable development approach. The approach of sustainable urban and regional development and livability has characterized worldwide development policies since the declaration of Agenda 21 in the United Nation Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. The sustainability approach of the plan is tied up with the concerns of regional disparities and national development goals. However, the spatial concerns of this approach are not prominent in the plan with reference to the formulation of specific urban and regional development projects.

In that vein, the paper attempts to develop a somewhat different view of the development planning in Turkey by focusing on the treatment of the regional area and the spatial context in the latest development plan. The unique socio-economic and political climate in Turkey in the second decade of 2000s makes necessary an idiosyncratic analysis here. The topics addressed in the paper include regional disparities, quality of life, sustainable development, regional-territorial system, institutional and legislative structure, growth pole approach, regional borders, subsidies and regional investments, public administration and governance. These topics are discussed with their relevance to regional concepts and spatial context.

Methodologically, the paper rests on secondary research resources for the Tenth Development Plan and the conceptualization of the regional area in Turkey. Here, a key document is the report of the Tenth Development Plan. Focusing on the strategic topics in the plan highlighted above, the paper primarily uses the deductive method to elucidate the spatial, institutional and political content of development planning in Turkey in a critical manner.

## **2. The Tenth Development Plan of Turkey and the conceptualization of the regional Area**

The planning of economic development and the configuration of territorial system have been two parallel but incompatible processes in Turkey for nearly 80 years. The modernization and westernization efforts started in the second part of the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire bore fruit through the foundation of Modern Turkish Republic in 1923. Here, the spatial planning and the national development policy were two important task areas of these modernization efforts. The planning attempts on the socio-economic development in Turkey can be mainly traced back to the Era of the Modern Turkish state. From the early planning experiences through the industrial plans in the 1930s (based on the economic planning tradition of Soviet Russia) to the introduction of the Ninth Development Plan in the 2000s, the priorities of national economic development strategies determined the scope of regional development planning. Since the foundation of its republic in 1923, Turkey has managed to pursue a socio-economic development policy for both eliminating developmental differences among regions and extending the area of economic and political sovereignty of the state. In the Early Republican Period (1923–1929), the content of Turkish development policy was determined by economic, social and spatial priorities like the rebuilding of the destroyed towns and rural settlements in the Independent War (1919–1923), “the elimination of semi-colonial institutions” inherited by the Late Ottoman Period and “the restructuring of national economy” [Kazgan 2002, pp. 44–73]. The etatist-oriented policy pursued throughout the 1930s shifted to the liberal policy of “rapid industrialization” and rural development in the post-Second World War period. In the evolution of the ideological content of economic development in Turkey, “regional development” is a relatively recent issue and regional concerns were included in the development agenda in the Planned Era of Turkish macroeconomic policy in the 1960s.

The Tenth (2014–2018) Development Plan of Turkey introduced in 2014 considerably rests on the strategic framework of the preceding Ninth Development Plan (2007–2013). Especially, local devolution and regional prioritization based on a growth pole strategy characterized the strategic framework of the Tenth Plan. The widespread concerns of sustainable development, new planning and governance models for metropolitan development are other key topics addressed in the latest development plan. The main spatial approach of the Tenth Development Plan centers on sustainable development and livability. Here, some of the important topics include economic growth, competitiveness, pre-disaster planning, social interaction, cultural values and environmental soundness. Under the title of “Livable Spaces and Sustainable Environment” in the report of the plan, the priorities of environmental protection, the concerns of urban and rural living quality and the elimination of regional disparities are addressed [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly

of Turkey 2013, p. 3]. Here, a competitive, livable and sustainable urbanization process is considered as an important precondition for reaching the goals of national development. For realizing regional and urban competitiveness, the strategic content of the plan rests on creating a development climate through investment in human and physical capital [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013].

In the pre-plan period, important regional institutional developments occurred. These developments involved both the establishment of new institutional bodies and the introduction of new action plans and programs as well as a new subsidy system. Table 1 presents these developments in the graphical manner. They include the establishment of new institutional bodies (like regional development agencies) for promoting regional development and specific regional development projects and programs, for example the introduction of municipal infrastructure project (BELDES).

According to the initiatives of the plan, a new settlement order and organization in Turkey is needed to reveal a realistic portrait of regional income distribution. The convergence of regional borders with the real socio-economic status of urban and rural settlements is considered as an important task for the reorganization of the regional territorial system [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013].

Another key policy area addressed in the Tenth Plan is metropolitan governance. With the new metropolitan law, the provinces whose populations are higher than 750,000 (total 30 municipalities) became metropolitan municipalities by their provincial borders. This legal arrangement serves for a number of purposes: to strengthen the institutional structure of public administration; to provide an efficient coordination in the supply of local welfare services and to benefit from the economies of scale [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, p. 26]. For ensuring an efficient public administration and local governance, the plan draws attention to a need for new planning, organization and service supply models in the metropolitan areas, whose number has recently grown from 16 to 30 in recent years. In addition to this necessity, in the report of the plan, it is stated that networks between public institutions, non-governmental organizations and private sector actors must be strengthened [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, p. 136].

The plan also highlights the importance of governmental funding in especially assisted regions (most provinces of the Eastern Black Sea, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions). The plan aims to enable a better implementation of the new investment subsidy and the regional evaluation system launched in 2012 and based on the six provincial levels of socio-economic development. The evaluation of the performance in the investment subsidies for the private sector rests on the measurement of macroeconomic, sectoral and regional effects and changes [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, pp. 94–95]. This new system can be seen as a reinterpretation, or extension, of the already existing policy tool of Turkish development planning, “priority regions for development” since 1968.

**Table 1.** Strategic and institutional developments in the pre-period of the Tenth Development Plan of Turkey

Scope	Development	Operational scale
Institutional	the establishment of the High Council of Regional Development the establishment of the Committee Regional Development the establishment of 26 regional development agencies the establishment of 81 investment support agencies the establishment of regional development authority for the Eastern Anatolia Project (DAP) the establishment of regional development authority for the Eastern Black Sea Development Project (DOKAP) the establishment of regional development authority for the Konya Plain Project (KOP)	national national sub-regional provincial regional regional sub-regional
Strategic	the provision of fiscal funds and technical aids for regional development agencies the preparation of an action plan for the Southern Anatolia Project (GAP) the addition of a regional dimension to the investment subsidy system the introduction of the regional growth pole program the introduction of the rural infrastructure project (KÖYDES) the introduction of the municipal infrastructure project (BELDES) the introduction of the water and sewerage infrastructure project (SUKAP) the introduction of social development programs the institutional and legal developments for industrial clustering	sub-regional regional regional national rural municipal municipal national national

Source: Summarized from the Tenth Development Plan of Turkey [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, p. 27].

The Tenth Development Plan targets a strategic allocation of public investments for eliminating regional disparities and mobilizing regional development potentials. These investments involve the urban development and social infrastructure projects in the assisted regions and the action plans for ongoing regional development projects (GAP, DAP, DOKAP and KOP). A policy of regional prioritization will be pursued in the spatial allocation of these projects [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, p. 93].

To achieve a socially and economically sound rural development, not only rural units and regions, but also functional regions where urban and rural settlements have close functional interrelations must be defined. For an efficient pre-disaster planning and risk management, integrated thematic maps displaying risks, hazardous areas and thresholds must be prepared [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2013, pp. 135–137].

After a brief overview of the policy tools in the Tenth Plan, prime importance can be attached to the treatment and conceptualization of the regional area in the plan. As mentioned in the previous section, the regional area in Turkey was and is a strategically ambiguous area where the delineation efforts were mostly devoted to the concerns of public administration and territorial sovereignty rather than functional regionalization. The treatment of the regional area in the Tenth Plan seems to confirm this premise.

Here, the main topics of the analysis involve new institutional bodies and governance, new and old policy tools of development planning, sustainable development and the territorial statistical system. These three analytical areas will be elaborated by their relevance to the geographical representation system, spatial setting and hierarchy.

Three institutional developments characterized the pre-plan period: the establishment of national development bodies (the High Council of Regional Development and the Committee of Regional Development), the establishment of sub-regional development institutions (development agencies at NUTS 2 level and investment support agencies at the provincial level) and the establishment of regional development authorities for the ongoing development projects (DAP, DOKAP and KOP).

As the main decision making body, the High Council of Regional Development is responsible for both the approval of all national and regional development strategies and the determination of the priorities of national development strategies. Being consistent with its legal functions, the operational area of the Council covers national development space as well as the regional area at NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) 1 (regional) level. The Committee of Regional Development was founded with the aim to establish a bridge between national and regional development strategies. As an intermediary decision making and monitoring body, the Committee's scope includes monitoring and evaluating the performances of the ongoing development projects and the implementations of development agencies at both regional and sub-regional levels [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Development 2014]. The areas of responsibilities of both institutions appear consistent with the inter-scale implementation tools of the Ninth Development Plan. However, two institutional problems tend to create uncertainties for the spatial planning system in Turkey. The first problem is related with the way these new institutions are to interact with the existing institutions of regional development in Turkey. The second one emphasizes the way these new bodies operate in a socio-political sphere in which every province and every development region has specific and different development priorities and performances. Here, the sub-regional and intra-provincial "patronage" networks [Tekeli 2001] are a major obstacle for ensuring the operational efficiency of these new institutions in their areas of responsibility.

The geographical concerns of two institutional bodies, development agencies and investment support agencies are also worth mentioning with respect to the conceptualization of the regional area in the Tenth Plan of Turkey. The Law No. 5449 on

the Establishment, Coordination and Duties of Development Agencies was introduced in 2006 and the agencies started to operate in 2008. Due to the same law, investment support agencies were formed as an organizational and assistive unit of development agencies. The main duties of development agencies are to support and monitor regional development projects and strategies; provide the coordination between the regional actors involved in socio-economic development and eliminate regional disparities through the improvement of regional economic and social indicators. Investment support offices assist regional actors in the bureaucratic process of investment appraisal [Resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey 2006; T.R. Prime Ministry State Planning Organization 2010]. Here, three spatial and institutional obstacles are likely to negatively affect the performance of development agencies and investment support offices in the achievement of broader regional development goals and objectives in Turkey. First, since the operational scope of the development agencies is based on the NUTS 2 regions, the extent and range of regional development projects under the management of the discussed agencies is limited to the synthetic or administrative regions. Second, a normative classification of regions in Turkey, mostly based on the institutional priorities of the provincial administrative system, inevitably brings about centralization in terms of use and allocation of planning power between local and central actors in economic development. In this case, the financial and managerial autonomy of development agencies appears to be problematic. Third, the role of development agencies in the implementation of existing regional development plans at the sub-regional and the provincial level is not clear. The lack of a clear hierarchy in spatial planning and the inadequate definition of the interdependencies between and within the different institutions concerned with regional development issues lead to blurriness on what constitutes the scope of authority for development agencies [Özbek 2010, pp. 114–115].

The problems related to the geographical scope of development agencies and their support offices are also evident for the regional development authorities of the ongoing development projects in the Eastern Anatolia, the Eastern Black Sea and Konya plain. While the first and second development projects aims to achieve the broader goals of socio-economic development in the underdeveloped regions of Turkey, the third project focuses on an efficient agricultural development and irrigation management in the sub-region of Konya Plain. With reference to the debate on administrative and functional regions, the implementation areas of these three projects seem to be problematic due to the formation of project regions through a simple combination of provincial areas: 14 provinces for DAP, 8 provinces for DOKAP and 4 provinces for KOP. This normative delineation poses a major problem for both determining and reconciling the region specific development priorities as well as using and monitoring the financial funds in distinct and blurred development geography.

The second issue addressed in the plan is the tools of development planning. Inherited from the former policies of “priority regions for development” and growth

pole strategy, regional prioritization is the main policy for the strategic allocation of investments in the plan. A new investment subsidy and regional evaluation system at the provincial level is designed to underpin the policy of regional prioritization. However, a key question arises here: How will new growth centers at the provincial level contribute to the diffusion of socio-economic development without establishing functional linkages beyond provincial borders? An interesting parallel might be drawn at this point between the cases of Turkey and Poland [Mempel-Śnieżyk 2010; Miszczak 2010, 2012]. In Poland, the recent analysis of “growth centers of polycentric spatial systems” and “five bipolar activity concentration spheres” [Miszczak 2012, p. 137] reveals the fact that the growth pole strategy works best with establishing “functional linkages on learning economy” between different historical and cultural regions [Mempel-Śnieżyk 2010, pp. 49–55; Miszczak 2010, pp. 62–67].

The last issue covered in the Tenth Plan, the territorial statistical system can be treated in a spatial manner. The strategic framework and implementation scope of the plan rests on a pure normative territorial system: provinces, sub-regions (group of provinces) and regions (group of sub-regions). The adoption of the regional statistical system of the European Union (NUTS) in 2002 caused the problems of delineation and classification of the regional area which were extensively discussed by regional scientists, geographers and economists in Europe in the last ten years to the development agenda in Turkey. Similary to the studies on the debate of normative and functional regions in Europe, some studies of regional science and regional geography in Turkey highlighted and criticized the administrative scope of development planning. The policy issues of growth pole strategy, regional prioritization, local devolution, metropolitan governance and rural planning in the Tenth Plan are addressed in the territorial framework of the public administration and the provincial system as well as the NUTS system. Despite the emphasis on the need for the formation of functional regions for rural development and pre-disaster planning in the plan, the geographical scope of these policy areas seems to be provincial area.

### 3. Conclusion

The regional area in Turkey was and still is a strategically ambiguous area where the delineation efforts were mostly devoted to the concerns of public administration and territorial sovereignty rather than functional regionalization. The treatment of the regional area in the Tenth Plan seems to confirm this premise. A close analysis of the three policy areas of the Tenth Plan (institutional system, policies and territorial system) highlights the fact that development planning in Turkey geographically rests on both the normative delineation and the centralized public administration system.

In institutional terms, the normative delineation of the regional area leads to ambiguity and inefficiency in terms of the area of jurisdiction and operational scope

of new institutional bodies, such as development agencies and investment support agencies, despite the existence of the well-defined provincial system of public administration (inclusive governorship system).

The normative delineation of development space seems to be problematic in terms of the formulation of the region specific development priorities and the allocation of investments in the project areas. At this point, a key question arises: How will new growth centers at the provincial level contribute to the diffusion of socio-economic development without establishing functional linkages beyond provinces?

Lastly, the adoption of the regional statistical system of the European Union does not contribute to the solution of the delineation problem in development space since the NUTS system strengthens the dominance of the provincial area in the formation of planning regions.

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