

EVALUATION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN TURKEY

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Abstract: Economic growth and development are the main objectives of all countries. Development means an effort to develop the variables of social structure by being influenced by political authority by certain policies. Therefore, development also has a political content. The development is the mobilization of the contemporary civilization and technology stage of a society in line with its structural features and the change of individual abilities, skills and behaviours as a part of this mobilization.

Although the main objectives of the countries are to ensure economic growth and development, differences may occur between regions in terms of development and prosperity. Interregional imbalance and development gap is one of the socioeconomic problems that can be encountered in all developed and developing countries. However, interregional imbalances and development differences are more chronic in developing countries. Many countries have resorted to various instruments and mechanisms, such as incentives and grants, to eliminate interregional imbalances, to ensure balanced development and to direct investments to backward regions.

In Turkey, regional imbalances have been decisive for many years applied in the preparation of 5-year development plans. Turkey's western regions, compared to the eastern region; have a higher level of development in terms of many economic and social indicators such as share of national income, employment rate, education level, health expenditures.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of regional development policies implemented to reduce disparities between regions in Turkey. Therefore, in this study Turkey's regional development policies will be evaluate and make recommendations for reducing and eliminating regional imbalances.

As a result, the main factors that create development differences between regions are; lack of education, insufficient capital accumulation, underdevelopment of a local market, lack of geographical location and infrastructure and rapid population growth. Turkey's rural population is rapidly migrating to the urban areas. The phenomenon of rapid migration hinders the development of migrant regions, but also creates many socio-economic problems in the migrated regions. Development plans in Turkey, have been insufficient on regional policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation for many years. In order to ensure regional development, it is necessary to internalize regional policies, strengthen cooperation, participation and mutual relations and increase investments that strengthen human capital.

Keywords: regional development, development plans, economic growth, regional disparities, welfare level.

Introduction

Economic growth and development are the main objectives of all countries. Development means that the variables of social structure are developed by the political authority under the influence of certain policies. Therefore, development has a political content as a term used in economic and social sciences. Although the concept of development has multiple definitions, generally development is defined as; increasing production and income per capita, improving value judgements of people to World standards, changes to regulate socio-cultural and economic structure. (Korkmaz and Taşlıyan, 2012). In order to bring local dimension to economic development, it is necessary to direct the people of region to production, to increase real income per capita in the local population and to increase employment by mobilizing local employment opportunities (Cankorkmaz, 2011).

Regional development can be defined as activities aimed at increasing the welfare of the region by activating the economic and social potentials of human resources. (Kilinc and Isik, 2011). In regional development, it is aimed to improve the interaction of the regions in the country's geography with the surrounding regions and the world, and in addition, it is aimed to increase the welfare of the region by using economic and social potentials more effectively (Özaslan and Ünlü, 2015).

The concept of interregional development difference has naturally brought along the policy of bringing underdeveloped regions closer to developed regions in terms of social welfare. In this context, the main objective of regional development policies is to improve minimum living standards in rural areas, which often displace excessive migration to large cities by reducing interregional development disparities. Thus, with regional development, it is aimed to spread the national welfare throughout the country in a balanced way by increasing the competitiveness of the regions both at home and abroad. A variety of incentive mechanisms are used to eliminate interregional imbalances, ensure balanced development and ensure that investments are directed to backward regions.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of regional development policies implemented to reduce disparities that exist between regions in Turkey. Therefore, in this study Turkey's regional development policies will be evaluate and make recommendations for reducing and eliminating regional imbalances.

Regional Development Policies in Turkey

Regional development policies are generally applied to developing or underdeveloped regions of countries. Regional development projects, as well as general policies, ensure that the tools applied for the development of the region are handled as a whole and consistently by making physical, economic and social planning for the region.

In this context, efforts to ensure regional development in Turkey are divided as unplanned and planned economic policies period. Common opinion in Turkey is the transition to the planned period began in the post-1960 period. However, it is seen that there were some regional policies in the previous period. It is also known that there was a regional report between 1934 and 1935, and the 1932 First Industrial Plan included regional concerns. However, regional policies were clearly introduced in the planned period after 1960 (TÜSİAD, 2008). In addition, although the existence of interregional imbalances was known during this period, as the priority was given to industrialization rapidly, investments were generally directed to the west and to the regions with abundant resources and good transportation facilities Investments are mostly focused in Istanbul and Marmara Region. The main strategy of regional policy in this period is the creation of a national economy and society under a new political and administrative system, the distribution of the population to various parts of the country, the establishment of industrial facilities in Central Anatolia and the Middle Aegean, with the exception of Istanbul and the Marmara Region, and the development of a system of railways connecting various parts of the country. In this process, the state has established industries in distant parts of Anatolia by considering strategic security concerns (Göymen, 2005).

Regional development policies made before 1960 remained very limited due to the socio-political situation in Turkey. In the planned period, regional development disparities were seen as one of the most important problems of the country and special attention was given to them. After 1960, a comprehensive planning approach was adopted and efforts were made to accelerate economic, social and cultural development (DPT, 2003). In the planned period, regional policies were formed on the basis of giving priority to development in some provinces. Since the 1960s, in this context, Turkey's economic and social development; it has implemented the Five-Year Development Plans (BYKP), which aims to reduce regional inequalities and achieve social and economic balance.

Various regional development plans have been prepared in various periods in order to reduce development disparities between regions and to achieve sustainable development in order to integrate sectoral priorities and spatial dimensions of development plans. Elimination of interregional imbalances has been one of the primary objectives of all development plans. (Sevinç, 2011).

The most common tools used for regional development in Turkey is the incentive system organized by region and sector. This system is applied at different rates according to the development levels of the provinces. Incentive measures include income tax reduction; customs duty reduction; exemption from taxes, duties and fees; long-term, low-interest or non-interest loans; development and regional incentive funds; government subsidiaries; priority in foreign currency allocation; energy support; employment support; sale or rent of public land, buildings and facilities; public contribution in training staff; state guarantee or publicly organized industrial zones, such as the establishment of small industrial sites (Incekara, 2001).

The main tool used except the incentives is public investments. Public investments, which were initially used as an effective tool, have decreased recently. Therefore, the use of public industrial investments as a tool in regional development was abandoned. In industrialization, priority has been given to private investments (Arslan, 2005). Another tool used in Turkey is supporting the establishment of organized industrial zones and small industrial sites to influence industry site selection decisions and indirectly support regional development. In addition, regional development plans for eliminating regional imbalances and ensuring economic development; tools such as priority regions, corporate social responsibility and rural development projects were used in development. Regional development plans, in the context of overall development policy strategy in Turkey, the reduction of regional disparities, are prepared in accordance with basic socio-economic objectives, such as increasing the welfare of the population living in underdeveloped regions (Tutar and Demiral, 2007).

Regional Development Projects in Turkey

Many regional development projects have been applied by the SPO and research institutes for regional development in Turkey from before and after the planned period until today (Atay and Sugözü, 2010). The factors that are effective in the preparation of regional development plans include reducing regional development disparities, balancing rapid migration to urban areas, preserving the environment and space quality by controlling urban growth, and increasing the space size in the effective implementation of macro-development plans (Çelik, 2005) in regional development programs implemented by the historical process in the climate of Turkey is given in Table 1.

Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP); GAP, which was originally planned as a total of 13 project packages for irrigation and hydroelectric power generation in the Euphrates and Tigris river basins, envisages the construction of 22 dams, 19 hydroelectric power plants and 1.7 million hectares of irrigation networks. It is an integrated regional development project based on sustainable human development, including investments in urban and rural infrastructure, education, health, housing, tourism and other sectors (GAP, 2001). The main objectives of the GAP are to increase the income level and living standards of the people of the Southeastern Anatolia Region, to eliminate the difference in development between this region and other regions, to contribute to national development goals such as social stability and economic growth by increasing productivity and employment opportunities in rural areas (Doğanay, 1995).

Eastern Black Sea Regional Development Plan (DOKAP); Artvin, Bayburt, Giresun, Gumushane, Ordu, Rize and Trabzon covering the provinces of the Eastern Black Sea Region, is one of the least developed regions of Turkey. The regional development objectives of the project have been expressed in a way to eliminate the problems observed in social, economic and environmental issues. Increasing the average income level by strengthening the economic structure of the region and improving the income distribution within the region have become the main target (SPO, 2000).

Eastern Anatolia Project (DAP); It covers 14 provinces in the Eastern Anatolia Region (Ağrı, Ardahan, Bingöl, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars, Malatya, Muş, Tunceli, Van) and Gümüşhane and Bayburt. The main objectives of the project are; to put forward the policies and practices that will accelerate the socio-economic development of the region compared to other regions, to make sectoral analyzes and priorities in various fields to accelerate the sectoral developments, to determine the important public investments in order to ensure the rural and urban development in the region and to encourage policies and practices to encourage private sector investments and to develop regional development in cooperation with public, local governments, private organizations and non-governmental organizations (İsbir, 2002).

Yeşilirmak Basin Development Project; with this project, it is aimed to provide the most appropriate and economical land use planning without disturbing the ecological balance and to ensure the current monitoring and management of the natural resources, upon the significant dimensions of floods, erosion, water and environmental pollution problems arising from the irregularity of the flux regime in the basin where Yeşilirmak and its tributaries are located. In this context, it is desirable to provide solutions to problems in the prevention of erosion, control of water pollution, improvement of pastures, determination and monitoring of forest areas, monitoring of urbanization and industrialization and planned development (DPT, 2000).

Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük Regional Development Project; Turkey Hard Coal Authority was reduced and Karabük and Ereğli Iron & Steel Enterprise was privatized. Therefore, the possible economic and social consequences in the region should needed to be analyzed. The main objectives of the project work are; to analyze the expected economic and social consequences, to identify new investment alternatives to enable the private sector to operate in new investment areas, to prepare a Regional Development Plan that is applicable in the medium and long term and to define the investments that can be made in the Region (Özcan, 1997).

Konya Plain Project; (KOP) region covers Aksaray, Karaman, Konya and Niğde provinces. The most important feature of the project area is that it has 3 million hectares of agricultural land. The main problems of this region, which is also known as an agricultural region, are to find new water resources and to use the existing ones economically; on the other hand, it is to develop non-agricultural sectors within the region (Keleş and Mengi, 2017).

Table 1. Regional Development Projects in Turkey

Project	Cities	Aims
Köyceğiz – Dalaman Project (1957)	Muğla	-Restoration of damages caused by earthquake around Köyceğiz -Re-establishment of the city
Antalya Region Project (1959)	Antalya – Isparta – Burdur	- Describe the characteristics of the region's economic structure -Determining the elements that prevent development - Efficient use of resources
East Marmara Region Project (1960)	İstanbul (Kocaeli – Sakarya – Düzce – Bolu – Yalova)	- Integration of sectoral planning - Reducing inter-sectoral policy to regional scale
Zonguldak Region Project (1961)	Zonguldak	-Infrastructure development - Reduction of income differences - Equilibrating between public and private sector investments

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Project	Cities	Aims
Çukurova Region Project (1962)	Adana – Mersin	- Agricultural and industrial development - Determination of tourism potential in the region
Keban Project (1965)	Elazığ – Malatya – Bingöl - Tunceli	-To accelerate the economic development of the Eastern Anatolia Region -Reduce interregional development imbalances in the country
Konya Ovası Projesi (1985)	Konya – Karaman – Niğde - Aksaray	-Bringing water to Konya plain -Drinking water production and energy production
South East Region Project (1989)	Mardin – Şanlıurfa – Adıyaman – Diyarbakır – Siirt – Batman – Şırnak – Kilis – Gaziantep	-Socio - economic development -Urban and rural infrastructure -Hydroelectric power plants -Supporting investments in agriculture, transportation, industry, education, health, housing, tourism and other sectors
Zonguldak – Bartın – Karabük Regional Development Project (1995)	Zonguldak – Bartın – Karabük	-Finding solutions for Turkey Hard Coal Authority and Karabük and Ereğli Iron and Steel Operations’ problem -Elimination the economic problems that will arise as a result of downsizing Turkey Hard Coal Authority and privatization of Karabük Iron and Steel Enterprise -Encouraging private sector investments
Marmara Region Plan (1999)	Kocaeli – Sakarya – Yalova – İstanbul	-Elimination of the negative effects of the earthquake, -Balancing migration to urban areas, agriculture, industry, trade, tourism, housing etc. restructuring of the settlements related to these issues by considering disaster risks
East Anatolia Project (1999)	Ağrı – Ardahan – Bingöl – Bitlis – Elazığ – Erzincan – Erzurum – Hakkari – Iğdır – Kars – Malatya – Muş –Tunceli - Van	-Preparation of a training program to mobilize potential entrepreneurs in the region - Providing information support to entrepreneurs by establishing project and investment consultancy
East Blacksea Regional Development Project (1999)	Artvin – Bayburt – Giresun - Gümüşhane – Ordu – Rize- Trabzon	-Increasing the average income level -Providing intra-regional integration -Preventing environmental damage by protecting the natural resources of the region -Realizing long-term sustainable development
Yeşilirmak Basın Project (2005)	Amasya – Çorum – Samsun – Tokat – Yozgat	-To solve the problems of erosion, flood, water and environmental pollution due to the irregularity of the flow regime in the watershed where Yeşilirmak and its branches are located.

Source: Sezgin, 2013; Taştekin, 2018

Conclusion

Interregional disparities in Turkey is quite high. The main factors that create development differences between regions are; lack of education, insufficient capital accumulation, underdevelopment of a local market, lack of geographical location and infrastructure, rapid population growth.

While regional policies are more important in developed countries., in developing countries, such as Turkey, instead of regional policies, the concern of creating rapid employment is more prominent. Integrated projects such as EAP, DOKAP and GAP constitute the most important policies implemented to eliminate regional development disparities in Turkey. The main objective of these

projects are; to increase the income level and living standards of the people, to reduce and eliminate the difference of development of these regions with other developed regions, to stop the migration to developed cities by increasing the productivity and employment opportunities of the rural areas.

Rural population in Turkey has begun to migrate to the cities parallelly to the disintegration of the agricultural sector. The phenomenon of rapid migration hinders the development of migrant regions, but also creates many socio-economic problems in the migrated regions. The development plans that aims balanced growth, migration, rural development and infrastructure have been insufficient in regional policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation for many years in Turkey. The development tools in the plans prepared in previous years are disconnected from each other.

Regional development policies and practices (plans, projects, etc.) was not given much space to the participation of local people outside the community development approach in Turkey. Policies and practices were established, planned and implemented centrally, without local or regional participation. There is no method to ensure the participation of all stakeholders in rural areas to the rural development process. Thus, these applications showed that; the success of the policies, plans and implementations determined by the central decision-making bodies was not achieved due to the exclusion of the participation of local people. In rural development practices, project monitoring and evaluation studies are not performed sufficiently. The studies are completed with the completion of the implementation process of the projects. On the contrary, the sustainability of the projects and the continuity of their outputs in terms of the traceability principle should be ensured.

As a result, in order to achieve regional development, it is necessary to internalize regional policies, strengthen cooperation, participation and mutual relations and increase investments that strengthen human capital. In addition, infrastructure investments play an important role in the regional development. Roads that facilitate transportation should ensure that many products from developed regions to reach less developed regions at a cheaper price.

It is not possible to solve regional development problems with traditional policies. For this reason, development policies should be implemented in a way to analyze both internal potentials in the region and the potentials in the country and to realize development both at national and regional level. Because local actors and institutions are more aware of the needs of their region and they will work harder for a solution. The regional development planned and provided under the leadership of these actors will improve economic and social indicators, especially employment and income.

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