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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Discussing the Concept of "Hierarchy" in Urban Planning Studies

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ABSTRACT
While preparing analysis, synthesis, and planning approaches in City and Regional Planning studies, the concept of "hierarchy" is important at all stages, regardless of the location and size of the planned settlement. In these studies, the role of settlement within its country, region, sub-region, identity, potentials, problems, and dynamics within production-consumption relations are explained with the concept of "hierarchy". Various components of settlements through this concept; Transportation, centre size, green and open areas, and population and building density distributions, are important in terms of determining priorities qualitatively and quantitatively. There are criteria that determine the degree/content of "hierarchy" in discussions of every function, sector, and size. Although there are criteria that determine inter-scale, inter-plan, inter-sectoral, and inter-functional staging in urban planning studies in Turkey, including the urban design scale from upper-scale plans, the inconsistencies between accepted criteria both in public institutions and organisations related to urban planning, in academic studies, and in the legal system, the criteria are not updated according to changing conditions, and there is a lack of comparative database; It makes it difficult to make healthy analysis, analysis, and make decisions for the future. This study discusses the "settlement hierarchy" criteria, which differ and need to be updated, within the scope of administrative borders, jurisdictional borders, and criteria determining borders.[1]

Keywords: Hierarchy, settlement hierarchy, hierarchy criteria, administrative border, geographical border

Introduction

The concept of "hierarchy", which comes from the concept of hierarchy, is a military term that indicates uninterrupted communication with each other, a sequential, orderly relationship, and interdependence within the scope of both relationships and people's duties and status. When the content of the word hierarchy is examined; It based on the French word "hiérarchie", which means "clergy, religious ranks, chain of command, rank order". The word is derived from the Ancient Greek word ^{h}ierárχēs *ιερα΄ρχης*, which is used in the sense of "high-ranking priest, sacred ritual leader, abbot" and expresses a step up in religious leadership status. It consists of the words hiéro (sacred, saint) and archie (management, power) (Turkish Etymology Dictionary, 2024).

The concept of 'hierarchy' is explained as a form of social organisation in which authority is strictly and precisely distributed among different orders of importance, such as the order of stages, a series of steps gradually increasing in terms of importance and value, and authority being at the highest level to the greatest extent in the Turkish Language Society (2024).

Although each of these definitions is expressed in different ways, a series of gradually increasing levels of importance and value constitute the general acceptance. In the concept of radialization, reaching the highest rank / degree is seen as a basic goal, and the idea that the target point has passed the previous steps successively and successively is adopted. Therefore, the concept is based on the assumption that the highest level dominates all previous stages, surpasses them step by step, and includes all previous stages.

In these definitions, a reverse or static process, such as skipping a step, staying in place, or going down a step, etc. is not included/not taken into account, and these situations are considered failure. This acceptance considers and aims at the continuous growth of all settlements in terms of spatial, demographic, national, and international relations in urban planning.

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Since the 1960s, zoning implementation plans and national development plans prepared by the State Planning Organisation (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı-DPT) have also adopted this approach. "Hierarchy of Settlement Centres in Turkey-Country Settlement Centres System", which was conducted in the 1980s, was built on this behavioural pattern and understanding. The State Planning Organisation acceptances dated 1982 are still in force and are used, at least partially, in both professional and academic environments.

Within the scope of this study, several basic issues are discussed, such as the role of "hierarchy" in urban planning and the facts that need to be reconsidered, especially the authority limits of institutions, their different evaluations on staging, and the effects of the lack of a comparative database on the planning process.

Relationship between Geographical and Administrative Borders and Hierarchy in Turkey

The concept of “border,” which is also used in different disciplines, is the line separating the lands of two neighbouring states, provinces, districts, villages, or individuals; the last line from which something can spread or expand; and the point/end where something ends; It is defined as the external environment of the entity or domain (Turkish Language Society, 2024). Beyond its physical meaning, the concept of “border” also has an important place in creating space and defining and establishing relationships in urban planning.

Geography is the science that studies people and places and the relationship between them. A geographical region is the largest geographical unit that is similar within itself and is distinguished from its surroundings by certain geographical features (Dictionary of Geography, 2007). With the region, the coherent part of a spatial whole in terms of certain qualities is described and spatial clusters / sub-regions are defined (Yiğit, 2006). While determining the boundaries of geographical regions, natural conditions and social and economic features are taken as the basis. Small units that differ in terms of these conditions and characteristics within a geographical region are called ’geographical sections’ (Geographical Dictionary, 2007).

This study focuses on the effects of the "borders" of physical space on "hierarchy", which is an active concept in city and regional planning throughout the historical process, and the accepted and used research topics related to it. These are the "Hierarchy of Settlement Centres in Turkey - Country Settlement Centres System" study, which started with the 1st Turkish Geography Congress in 1941, conducted by State Planning Organisation in 1982, and then "The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - NUTS" conducted in 2002. Urban and Rural Settlement Systems Research in Turkey (Türkiye’de Kentsel ve Kırsal Yerleşim Sistemleri Araştırması - YER-SİS)” study and provincial and district “Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research (Sosyo-Ekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırmaları - SEGE)” conducted in intermittent years. In addition to these studies affecting staging, the changes in provincial and district borders, their numbers, and the number of metropolitan municipalities and their effects on staging have been taken into consideration, but the legal regulations in Figure 1 have not been elaborated in detail. The studies carried out by the central government, the laws that have been reconsidered and regulated, and the acceptances that have affected the classification of settlements since 1941 are shown in Figure 1.

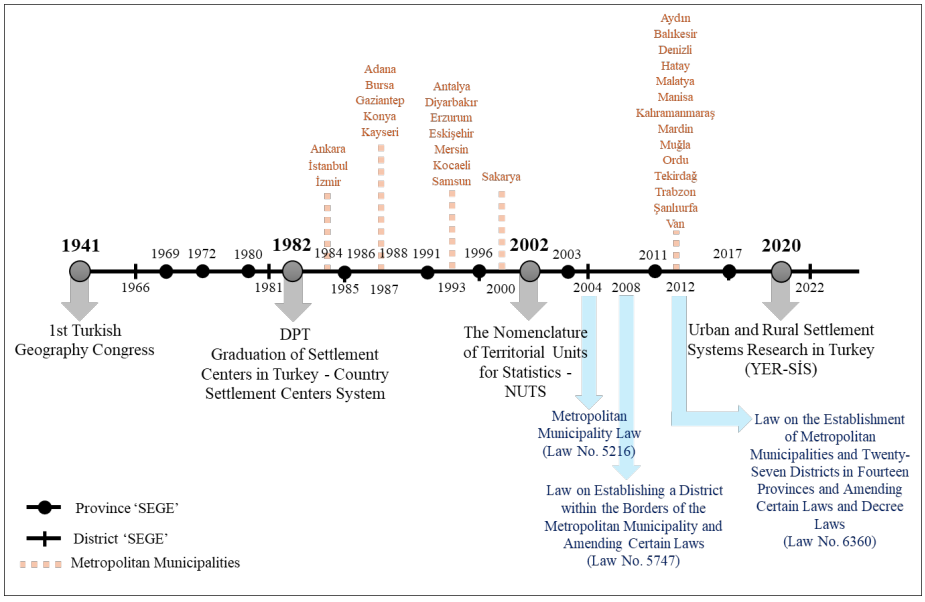

Figure 1. Studies and changes in law regarding staging in Turkey after 1940

The geographical regions of Turkey known today were determined at the First Turkish Geography Congress held on 6-21 June 1941, and the country was divided into 7 (seven) main geographical regions and 21 geographical divisions (Table 1, Figure 2) (Turkish Geographical Society, 2006).

It is understood that in the First Geography Congress (1941), a distinction was made mainly by taking into account the administrative borders, landforms, and vegetation under the conditions of the period in determining the regions, and regional natural thresholds were not taken into account. Today, many provinces remain within the borders of more than one geographical region, as the borders of geographical regions do not overlap with the borders of provinces and districts, or as provinces later include different districts within their administrative borders (Figure 2, Figure 4).

Table 1. Geographic regions and divisions

Geographic region	Geographic division
The Aegean Region	Aegean Division
	Inner West Anatolian Division
The Mediterranean Region	Adana Division
	Antalya Division
The Marmara Region	Southern Marmara Division
	Çatalca-Kocaeli Division
	Ergene Division
	Yıldız Mountains Division
The Black Sea Region	Western Black Sea Division
	Central Black Sea Division
	Eastern Black Sea Division

Geographic region	Geographic division
Central Anatolia Region	Konya Division
	Upper Sakarya Division
	Middle Kızılırmak Division
	Upper Kızılırmak Division
Eastern Anatolia Region	Upper Euphrates Division
	Erzurum-Kars Division
	Upper Murat-Van Division
	Hakkari Division
Southeastern Anatolia Region	Middle Euphrates Division
	Tigris Division

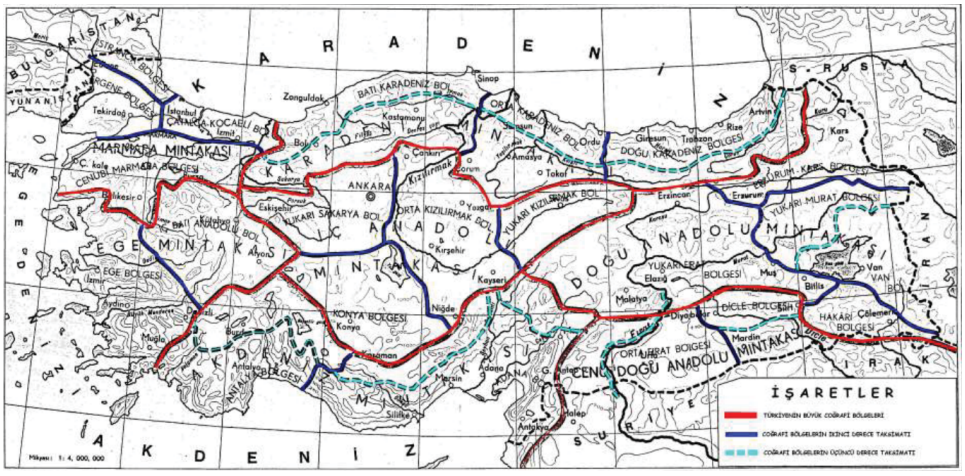

Figure 2. Geographical Regions of Turkey according to the First Geography Congress (1941) (Özçağlar, 2006)

In the 1950s, studies on rivers, plains, plateaus, etc. related to this problem at the borders of geographical regions and divisions were conducted. Criticisms were made on the basis that natural elements were not taken into consideration, it was pointed out that the geographical border between the Black Sea Region and the Eastern Anatolia Region was incorrect, and the borders of the Central and Western Black Sea geographical sections were incorrect, and discussions were made emphasising that the border between the Mediterranean Region and the Southeastern Anatolia Region should pass through the Euphrates River (Erinç, 1953; Gürsoy, 1957; Yiğit, 2006). In the 1980s, studies from foreign sources (Erol, 1983 and Louis, 1985) indicated that Turkey could be handled with different regional and departmental borders. On the other hand, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the number of districts established increased (Table 2); the borders of districts, provinces and regions have changed. However, these studies did not change the situation, and our geographical division has remained the same for 83 years.

In 1941, within the scope of division into geographical regions and sections, the country's population was approximately 18 million and consisted of 62 provinces and 401 districts. During this period, Turkey had 81 provinces, 922 districts, and a population exceeding 85 million (Table 2, Figure 3).

Regarding regional and province-district border disputes, although the administrative borders of 53 of the 81 existing provinces remain within a single geographical region, the administrative borders of 28 provinces are located in more than one geographical region (Figure 4). Apart from the provincial level, the administrative borders of 15 districts at the district level are located within different regional borders. This situation causes problems in regional approaches and district/provincial level urban planning

Table 2. Number of provinces and districts in Turkey by year (Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Provincial Administration)

Year	Number of Provinces Established	Number of Districts Established
Before 1923	55	285
1923-1926	0	26
1927-1936	6	43
1937-1947	1	47
Late 1947 (subtotal)	**62**	**401**
1948-1958	5	119
1959-1969	0	37
1970-1981	0	0
Late 1981(subtotal)	**67**	**557**
1982-1992	9	276
1993-2003	5	16
2004-2018	0	73
Grand Total	**81**	**922**

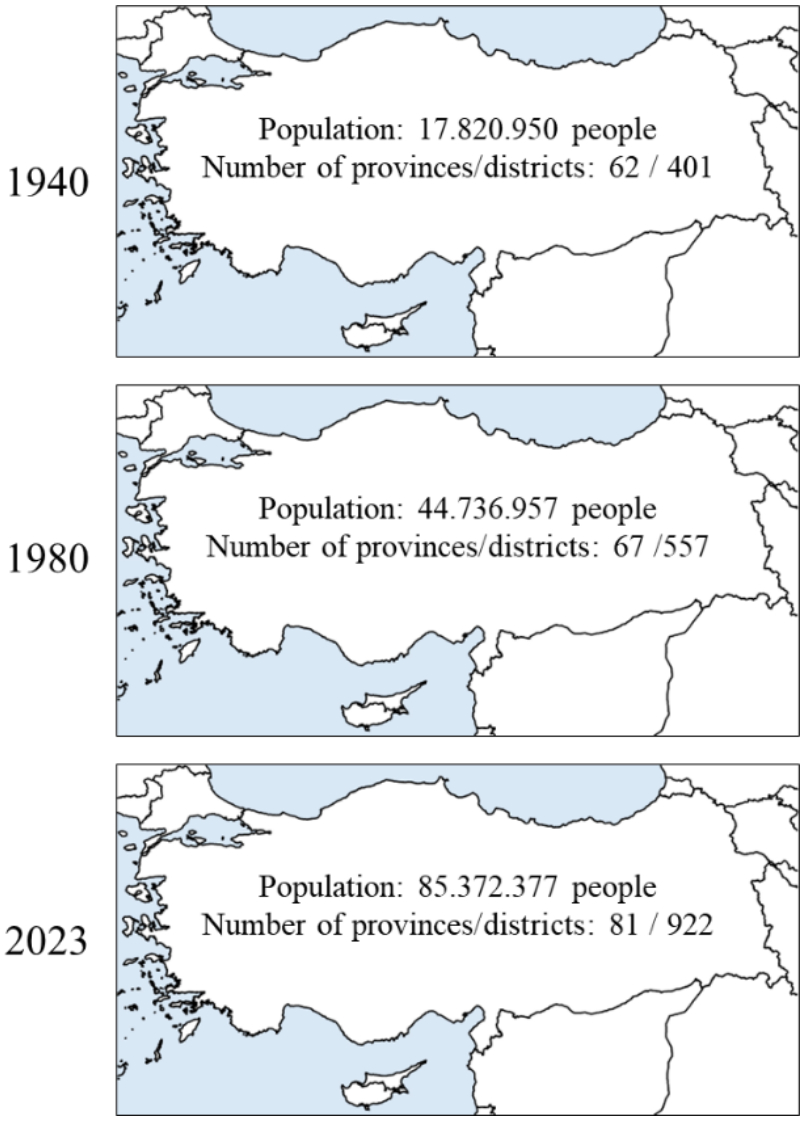

Figure 3. Population and number of provinces/districts in Turkey by years (1940-1980-2023)

studies, especially in obtaining and comparing quantitative data and statistical information. Because being located within the borders of more than one geographical region affects the relations between settlements and hinterland, residence-workplace, residence-service areas, sometimes a district or settlement is located outside the administrative borders within which it is located, but is closer to it and/or another geographical region and/or It may be related to the province. The partnerships, intercultural relations, similarities, and socioeconomic associations established with settlements located in different geographical regions on the map, but with which they have more relations than the province / geography to which they are administratively connected due to their natural and artificial thresholds, are increasing.

Figure 4. Turkey's geographical regions and provincial borders (The authors created the figure schematically adding geographical region and section boundaries to the provincial administrative boundaries.)

When the study "Hierarchy of Settlement Centres in Turkey - Country Settlement Centres System" was published by The State Planning Organisation in 1982 and is still valid, the country consisted of 67 provinces and 557 districts (Table 2), while the "township", "forest village", "hamlet", which are not valid today, were made. There were settlements with defined borders and characteristics such as. This hierarchy, dated 1982, consists of seven degrees, and the Istanbul Metropolitan Area is stated as the seventh level as the highest degree and the hamlets as the first degree as the lowest. However, the hierarchy criteria of the study differ within themselves. While the 1st, 2nd and 3rd level settlements were considered in terms of their administrative borders, cities after the fourth stage were evaluated according to the diversity of goods and services they offered.

Another important issue in this regard is the diversification and change of goods and services offered in the country since the 1980s, and the fact that the goods or services that were required to be present in a settlement in the mentioned years or the services that were an important development to offer are now invalid / ineffective and other services have replaced them.

For example, in the 1990s, while the presence of a PTT, even a mailbox, or a telephone in public spaces in a settlement was an important service for the settlement, in the early 1990s, with the introduction of mobile phones into daily life, base stations were located, different operators offered services, and mobile phone ownership increased. Hierarchy has increased in the settlements where it has increased, and academic research has been updated in this sense. Nowadays, cargo, moto courier, application usage, e-invoice, e-commerce, frequent use of e-mail, purposes of use, qualities of transported goods and presentations, etc. affect the hierarchy. Therefore, the evaluation criteria affecting hierarchy should be updated. Accessibility to technological and global developments only by settlements with high socioeconomic levels is another issue that needs to be discussed.

During the 2000s, when Turkey's negotiations to join the European Union (EU) gained momentum, the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) was effective in strategic planning in European countries to ensure compatibility with EU policies. In this application, which aims to produce regional statistics in the EU according to a single spatial classification, to form a basis for socioeconomic analyses and to determine the general framework of regional policies, administrative unit borders, area, and population sizes are considered.

This classification, which came into force in Turkey in 2002, was made according to the criteria of population size, socio-economic homogeneity, and being in the same functional region and geographical neighbourhood. There are differences between regions because the reasons are not considered using a holistic approach when determining the regions. In this classification, a classification has been made within the existing provincial and district borders and regions without introducing any new questions

about geography, natural structure, or new information. In this context, 81 provinces in Turkey are accepted as Level 3, 26 regions as Level 2, and 12 regions as Level 1 (Table 3).

Table 3. Statistical Regions in Turkey (Level I, II, III) (Ministry of Industry and Technology, Development Agencies Directorate)

Level I Code	Level I Region Name	Level II Code	Level III-Cities	Level I Code	Level I Region Name	Level II Code	Level III-Cities
TR1	İstanbul	TR10	İstanbul	TR7	Orta Anadolu	TR71	Kırıkkale, Aksaray, Niğde, Nevşehir, and Kırşehir
TR2	Batı Marmara	TR21	Tekirdağ, Edirne, and Kırklareli			TR72	Kayseri, Sivas, and Yozgat
		TR22	Balıkesir, Çanakkale	TR8	Batı Karadeniz	TR81	Zonguldak, Karabük, and Bartın
TR3	Ege	TR31	İzmir			TR82	Kastamonu, Çankırı, and Sinop
		TR32	Aydın, Denizli, and Muğla			TR83	Samsun, Tokat, Çorum, and Amasya
		TR33	Manisa, Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, and Uşak	TR9	Doğu Karadeniz	TR90	Trabzon, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, and Gümüşhane
TR4	Doğu Marmara	TR41	Bursa, Eskişehir, and Bilecik	TRA	Kuzeydoğu Anadolu	TRA1	Erzurum, Erzincan, and Bayburt
		TR42	Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce, Bolu, and Yalova			TRA2	Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, and Ardahan
TR5	Batı Anadolu	TR51	Ankara	TRB	Ortadoğu Anadolu	TRB1	Malatya, Elazığ, Bingöl, and Tunceli
		TR52	Konya, Karaman			TRB2	Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkâri
TR6	Akdeniz	TR61	Antalya, Isparta, and Burdur	TRC	Güneydoğu Anadolu	TRC1	Gaziantep, Adıyaman, and Kilis
		TR62	Adana, Mersin			TRC2	Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır
		TR63	Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Osmaniye			TRC3	Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, and Siirt

Figure 5. Geographical Regions of Turkey and NUTS Level I Regions (the authors created the figure schematically adding geographical region and section boundaries to the NUTS regions.)

The geographical borders of 1941, the settlement classification of 1982, and the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) of 2002 have resulted in data whose criteria do not support each other, whose borders do not overlap, whose authorities differ, and whose statistical data cannot be compared (Figure 5).

As can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 2, after the classification of all these regions, in 2012, 30 metropolitan municipalities were formed with border changes made by Law No. 6360 on the Establishment of Metropolitan Municipalities in Fourteen Provinces and Twenty-Seven Districts and Amendments to Certain Laws and Decree Laws. After 32,247 neighbourhoods and 18,253 villages, 81

provinces and 922 districts were reached within the borders of the country (Ministry of Internal Affairs Turkey Civil Administration Departments Inventory, 2024) (Figure 6).

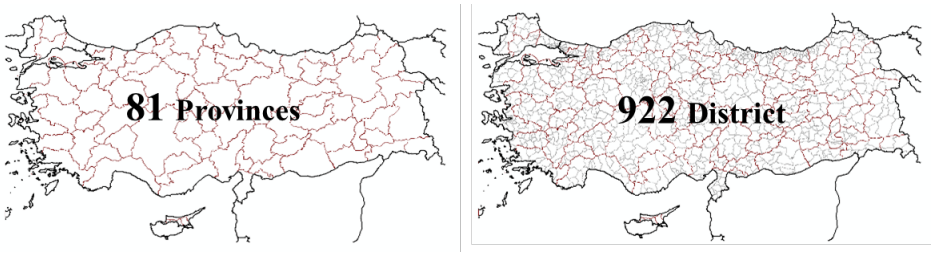

Figure 6. Administrative borders at the provincial and district levels in Turkey

Another criterion used in urban planning studies to determine the role, identity, and future mission of settlements within the region is socioeconomic development levels. Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research (Sosyo-Ekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırmaları - SEGE) studies are prepared at the provincial and district level by the Ministry of Industry and Technology. These studies are carried out intermittently to determine the development levels and trends of districts, provinces, and regions.

Provincial level Socio-Economic Development Ranking Researches of Provinces and Regions were prepared in 1969, 1972, 1980, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2011, and 2017. In 2017, Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research (SEGE) measured socio-economic development through 52 variables for 81 provinces. With the research, the index scores and ranks of Level-2 regions and provinces were determined, according to the natural breakdowns in the scores; Provinces are grouped in 6 development levels, and Level-2 regions were grouped into four development levels (Figure 7). However, considering the periodic intervals of the years in which the studies were conducted, it is seen that they were not conducted at standard intervals and were last conducted in 2017.

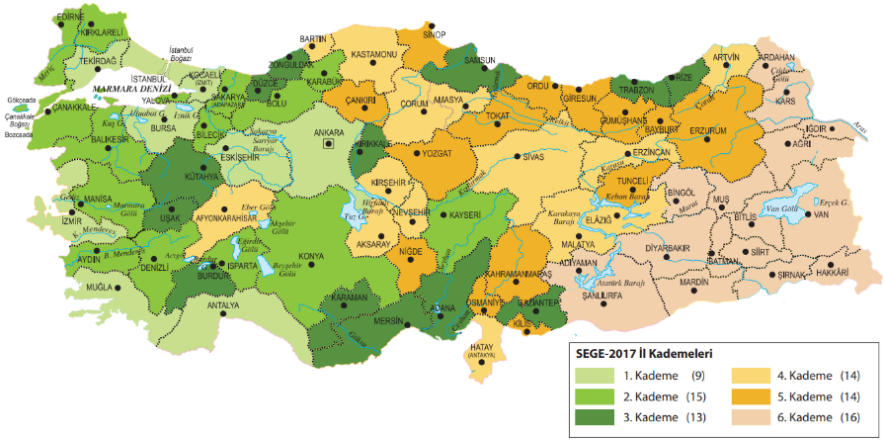

Figure 7. Provincial level SEGE in 2017 Map of Development Levels (Ministry of Industry and Technology, General Directorate of Development Agencies)

District-level Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research was prepared in 1966, 1981, 1985, 1996, 2004, 2017, and 2022. In 2022, Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research (SEGE) will measure socio-economic development through 56 variables for 973 districts. In the research, the index scores and ranks of the districts were determined according to the natural breakdowns in the scores; The districts were grouped into six development levels (Figure 8). Since the studies conducted at the district level and the socioeconomic development level studies conducted at the provincial level were conducted on different dates, it becomes difficult to compare and make inferences about the province-district dynamics.

In the studies in question, socio-economic development of the provinces and districts; It is discussed within the framework of the basic variables of demography, employment and social security, education, health, financial, competitive and innovative capacity, quality of life, and accessibility.

In 2020, the study “Urban and Rural Settlement Systems Research in Turkey (YER-SIS)” was conducted to reveal the effects of developments on settlements, to analyse the direction and intensity of relations between urban and rural settlements, and to reveal the service delivery sizes and areas of influence of settlements by the General Directorate of Development Agencies of the Ministry of Industry and Technology. As part of this study, the "Interprovincial and Regional Socio-Economic Network Relations Report" was prepared. The aim of this study is to determine the socioeconomic horizontal and hierarchical relations between settlements, to determine the intensity of the relations that settlements establish with each other with different needs, and to reveal their positions and importance in the network by examining these relations within the "network approach".

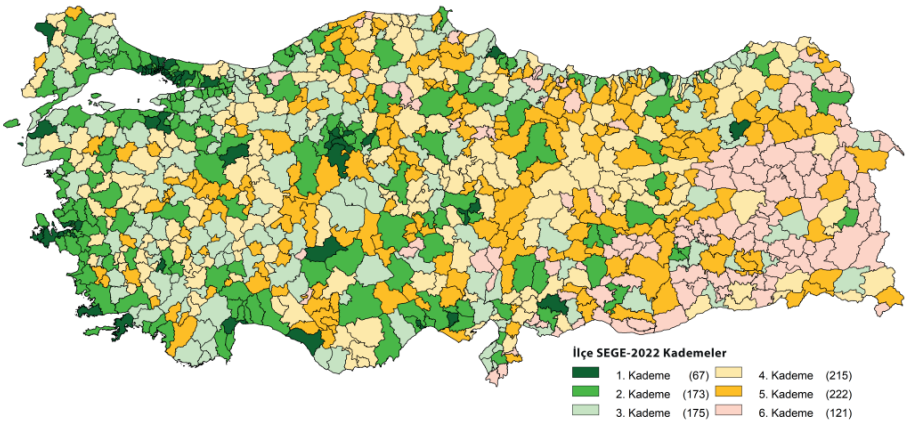

Figure 8. District-level SEGE in 2022 Map of Socio-Economic Development Levels(Ministry of Industry and Technology, General Directorate of Development Agencies)

Mersin–Anamur District as an Exemplary Settlement

Mersin is a city located in the Mediterranean Region in the south of Turkey, adjacent to the provinces of Karaman, Konya, and Niğde in the north, Adana in the east, and Antalya in the west, consisting of 13 districts and with a coastline of 321 km to the Mediterranean. Anamur District of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, located in the west, which was examined in terms of inter-settlement relations within the scope of this research, is approximately 206 km from the city centre and approximately 3 h away on the D-400 highway, which is parallel to the coast. The fact that the district is related to the Gazipaşa District of Antalya Province, which is located in the west at a distance of approximately 80 km and can be reached in 1 h and 20 min, is one of the many settlements that can serve as an example of this problem (Figure 9). In this case, while Anamur District is located within Mersin Province for all kinds of interaction due to administrative dependency, its economic, social, and cultural relations are with Gazipaşa District of Antalya Province, making Anamur's development, global connexions and accessibility different when evaluated together with Antalya and different centres affects the results to be achieved. This situation is interpreted in different ways in regional development and provincial strategic and environmental plans. In fact, in the Çukurova Regional Plan (2014-2023) covering the provinces of Mersin and Adana (TR62) prepared by the Çukurova Development Agency, Anamur District has no relationship with either the central districts or other regional centres of Mersin in terms of socio-economic relations and is defined as a relatively low-level centre in its sub-region (Figure 10).

Figure 9. Anamur District's Relationship with Mersin Centre and Gazipaşa District (The Figure created by authors.)

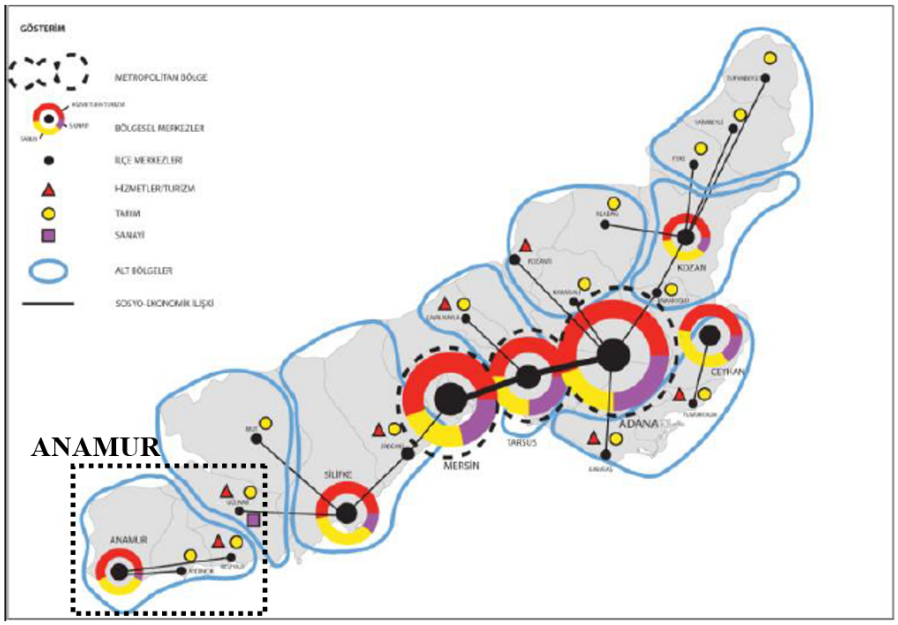

Figure 10. Metropolitan Centre, Sub-Regions, and Anamur District in the Çukurova Region (Çukurova Development Agency 2014-2023 Çukurova Regional Plan)

Legal Systems and Institutions Regarding Hierarchy in Urban Planning

Regarding inter-scale hierarchy, which is one of the most basic elements of urban planning, in the Third Chapter of the Spatial Plans Construction Regulation, titled Spatial Plan Hierarchy and General Principles, there is a hierarchical unity of plans according to the 2nd paragraph of Article 6, where spatial planning stages and relations are discussed:

"Article 6 - (2) Spatial plans are prepared in accordance with plan staging. In accordance with the principle of hierarchical unity between plans, each plan must comply with the decisions of the upper level plans in force, form a whole with its report, and direct the plan at the lower level."

According to this article, each plan level must comply with previous upper-scale plan decisions and, in principle, reflect the decisions on the lower-scale plans.

The hierarchy relationship between scales is important to ensure the integrity of plan decisions, and 1/100,000 scale Environmental Plans are accepted at the top level of upper-scale spatial plans. However, the boundaries of 1/100,000 scale plans differ according to Statistical Regional Units, such as those prepared by Development Agencies, those prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, and those prepared by Metropolitan Municipalities within the provincial borders. In fact, because plan changes and revisions are made at short intervals, such as two or three years, this causes problems in compatibility with subscale plans.

Regardless of the scale and settlement boundaries within which City and Regional Planning studies are conducted, within the scope of the analysis required by the plan scale, it is mandatory to obtain opinions, information, ongoing projects, projects that are being conducted, projects that are planned to be conducted, and the problems of the area from the institutions and organisations related to the plan.

In paragraph j of the first paragraph of Article 7 of the section on General Planning Principles of the Spatial Plans Construction Regulation published in the Official Gazette No. 29030 dated 14.06.2014:

"In the preparation of plans, it is essential to obtain the opinions of institutions and organisations and relevant parties by using methods such as surveys, public opinion polls and research, meetings, workshops, announcements, and information on the Internet to ensure participation according to plan type.",

In the first paragraph of Article 8 in the Principles on the Making of Spatial Plans section:

"In the process of preparation of spatial plans, plan changes, revisions and additions, public institutions and organisations or plan authors obtain data, opinions and suggestions from relevant institutions and organisations on the subjects specified in general headings in this Regulation, according to the type and level of the plan, and carry out the necessary analysis, surveys, research and studies are carried out."

Expressions is included.

These institutions are especially important in making decisions that affect upper-scale plans and their projections, lower-scale plans, investment decisions, and projections. Differentiation of jurisdictions/authority limits of institutions and organisations makes it difficult to obtain data within common borders. Because the projection years and project boundaries of the projects produced by the institutions in question vary, it is not always possible to make sound decisions.

For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry conducts studies on agricultural lands, agricultural forest regions, agricultural basins, Turkey's Agricultural Basin borders, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regions, Turkey River Basin borders, and the Directorate General for State Hydraulic Works (DSI)'s authority borders, areal sizes, and different province and district settlements (Figure 11). The differentiation of agricultural areas, basin borders, and thresholds according to institutions, which are expected to be highly defined and effective in determining the boundaries in question, creates problems in evaluating the data needed in urban planning studies.

Figure 11. Ministry of Agriculture And Forestry Affairs Borders of Turkey's Agricultural Basins, Regions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Borders of Turkey's River Basins, and the authority limits of the Directorate General for State Hydraulic Works (DSI) (The figure was created by combining the regional maps obtained from the websites of the relevant institutions (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Directorate General for State Hydraulic Works).)

Another example of receiving institutional opinions is the jurisdiction of different transportation modes such as Highways and State Railways under the transportation heading, as well as the intersection of different provincial borders. It is understood that the upper-scale plan decisions in question are not taken into account in the lower-scale urban planning studies of the cities, which cover different geographical regions and sub-regions and do not carry out coordinated studies and sharing with the settlements they pass through (Figure 12).

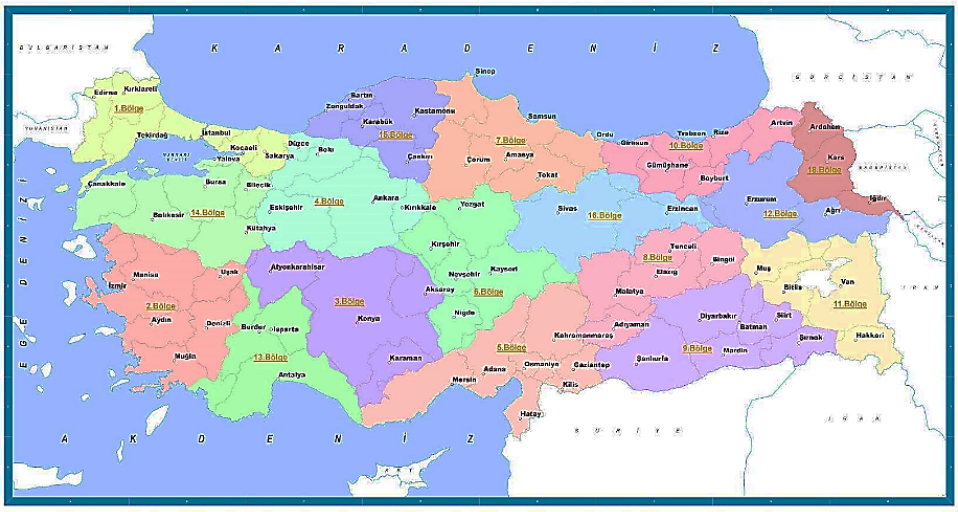

Figure 12. General Directorate of Highways Regions: 18 regions (Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure General Directorate of Highways)

Another differentiation regarding boundaries is the theoretically defined and accepted bounded areas that are emphasised in scientific studies at the academic level and during urban planning education, such as “sub-region”, “district”, “neighbourhood (different from administrative size)”, “neighbourhood unit”, “small neighbourhood unit”.

Settlement Characteristics Affecting Hierarchy

Up to this section, the studies that are in force in Turkey and affect the classification of settlements have been explained. The most important issues that need to be taken into consideration in "hierarchy" research, where quantitative values are mainly based on administrative boundaries, are the natural structure and the economic factors related to the natural structure.

These are the settlements where geography-based boundaries are effective, considering the natural structure, which is the main subject of this study. Typologies of settlements, goods and services offered in the settlement, the qualities of these services and the change in their qualities, areas of influence, access to services, public/private sector investments in the settlement, and their sustainability are related to staging. The subject of natural structure-geography changes in the context of the "settlement hierarchy" in the context of the locations of the settlements, their macroforms, and their relationships with the topography.

This difference directly affects the economic and social structures of the settlements, the demographic structure, and the components of the demographic structure. Not every settlement legally defined as "village" or "rural", for example, is considered to be at the same level within the system of settlements, even if their population size is the same. Even the location of coastal settlements on the shores of rivers, lakes, or seas impacts the level of settlement. The fact that settlements and cities are on the coast, in coastal plains, on slopes, on hills, in mountains, in forests, or near forests affects the labour potential, livelihoods, and natural economic structures of these settlements.

In Conclusion

In this research article, the relationship of "hierarchy", "borders" and "study area / planning area boundary", which have an important place and meaning in City and Regional Planning studies, is discussed. The institutions and organisations in Turkey and the Spatial Plans Regulation and the current ones made on different dates are also discussed. The incompatibility of the current criteria with each other and the effects of this incompatibility on urban planning are revealed.

Within the scope of this study, in which some findings of the research are presented, settlement typologies, changing qualities of the goods and services offered by settlements, risks such as natural disasters that will affect the future of settlements, and global climate change are also discussed.

Apart from the population and area size of a settlement, its current and future role in revealing international sub-regions, national and regional relations, sustainability within the scope of different scenarios, and the determination of geography and natural structure should be accepted as inevitable in the preparation processes of plans dominated by public interest facts.

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