

# LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATION IN THE TOURISM PLANNING PROCESS

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## Abstract

The aim of this article is to explore the weaknesses and strengths of local authorities in terms of their participation in the tourism planning process in Turkey. A two-page questionnaire was applied, along with structured interviews with 71 administrators of metropolitan, provincial, and district authorities, between January 1 and September 31, 2011. The findings of the survey suggest that tourism planning responsibilities should be devolved to local authorities. Local authorities do not extensively participate in tourism planning at present because of inadequate budgeting and tourism allocation facilities, insufficient cooperation among stakeholders, and a domination of central administration traditions. Causes of insufficient participation in tourism planning statistically differ among local authorities, in terms of insufficient realizations of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders, and public land allocation for the purpose of tourism. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant difference between local authorities that have a tourism master plan and those who do not, in terms of a lack of educational opportunities for planners.

**Keywords:** local authorities, tourism planning, land allocation, tourism master plan, land usage, Turkey.

## 1. Introduction

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide increased from 25.3 million to 983 million, and international tourism revenue reached 1.030 billion USD between 1950 and 2011 (UNWTO, 2012). With its increasing importance for the economic development of nations, as well as the globalization of economic relationships (Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001), tourism has accelerated international competition among countries that want to increase their market share in the tourism industry 'at national [...] sub-national, and/or local level in order to seek to establish local distinctiveness' (Dredge and Jenkins, 2003, p. 383). For destinations operating in a highly competitive market, tourism planning is one of the most important points in increasing their success (Costa, 2001; Lai, Li and Feng, 2006). In order to enhance the benefits of tourism development for local residents and tourists (Borrelli and Kalayil, 2011) and to minimize negative impacts (Miyakuni and Stoep, 2006) a balanced relationship between tourism planning and tourism development is necessary (Inskip, 1991), as tourism facilities depend on natural and cultural resources. Throughout this process, sustainable planning is required to balance the costs and profits of tourism (Kauppila, Saarinen and Leinonen, 2009), and for maintaining controlled tourism development, as infrastructural and similar problems due to unplanned development in a destination or tourism region will be harder to solve in both financial and physical terms (Bas, Kilic and Gucer, 2007).

Tourism plans around the world are prepared either by central or local authorities. Research on tourism development, planning and policies has found that the process is closely related to the political, economic (Baidal, 2004; Sharpley, 2008), and social factors (Goymen, 2000). In many countries local authorities have not been closely involved in tourism and have little experience of its planning, development and management. In recent years this has been changing, and the key role of local authorities is now recognized. Especially in recent years, local authorities in Turkey have voiced their demands for participation in the decision-making processes of various subjects, including the tourism planning process. Local authorities are widely acknowledged as a pivotal and influential stakeholder in a destination, and they are important actors to support tourism development within a destination due to their local knowledge (Bramwell and Lane, 2010; Briedenhann, 2007; Connell, Page and Bentley, 2009; Dinica, 2009; Dredge, 2001; Timothy, 1998). They assume much of the responsibility as they are closest to many of the problems associated with tourism development (Aronsson, 2000) and they control most of the development planning aspects associated with tourism (Dredge and Jenkins, 2007). It is highly important for the local authorities that they will benefit, or that are currently benefiting from tourism to prepare the relevant tourism plans, or to take part in plans prepared by central government for attaining capacities and realizable goals.

With respect to providing the regional tourism product, local authorities are essentially responsible for preparing tourism policy statements and developing manage-

ment strategies, controlling development within the local planning system, providing tourism information services, and undertaking the marketing of the destination (Godfrey, 1998). Local authorities play an important role in developing policies to promote and shape the development of tourism in their areas. They carry a broad range of tourism activities such as:

- strategic planning, policy-making and implementation (economic development, land use/physical development, marketing and promotion);
- provision of visitor information services;
- development and management of attractions and events;
- coordination and development of destination-based private/public partnerships;
- research;
- visitor services;
- development control (zoning through development plans, by-laws);
- public land management; and
- capacity building for community.

Local governments have responsibilities for land-use planning, development applications for tourism-related land uses, and the provision of local infrastructure and public amenities (Hall, 2000). Dredge (2001) claims that the provision and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities by local governments can have a significant influence on the image and attractiveness of a destination, the depth and diversity of the available product, and, ultimately, on how tourists experience a destination. Elliot (1997) argues that local governments are the critical partners in tourism, as they have the power to provide the political stability, security, and the legal and financial framework which tourism requires.

Post Local Agenda 21, local governments have shifted away from their narrowly defined role in servicing and infrastructure provision to embrace a more active role in achieving sustainable development (Dredge and Jenkins, 2007). This local-government-led, community-wide, participatory effort enables to establish a comprehensive action strategy for environmental protection, economic prosperity and well-being of the community in the local area. This also requires the integration of planning and action across economic, social and environmental spheres. Local Agenda 21 makes evident that the local authorities play important roles in the planning of the destination regarding all the stakeholders' interests and the well-being of local communities for a sustainable development.

Local governments' role in planning for a destination, and in regulating development there, is pivotal in facilitating the destination's tourism development objectives and its sustainability. Hunter (1997) claims that it is difficult to imagine the formulation and implementation of any approach to tourism in the absence of strong local authority planning and development control. For instance, it is at the local or community level where tourism negative impacts are generally felt most acutely (Aronsson, 2000; Tosun, 1998), and so the actions (or inactions) of local authorities can play a large part in ensuring that overt environmental degradation is avoided and adverse impacts on

the host community are minimized. As the negative impacts of tourism began to overshadow the positive ones in some destinations, and as anti-tourism sentiments grew, government-led planning was instigated to control tourism development and attempt to mitigate undesirable socio-economic and environmental impacts (Inskeep, 1988). Certainly local government involvement and direction in addressing or attempting to meet the objectives of sustainable development in a tourism destination context are essential and supported (Godfrey, 1998; Hall, 1998; Hunter, 1997; Weaver, 2006). Local authorities can minimize the negative impacts of tourism such as environmental degradation, deformation of the local culture, and can preserve and maintain the environmental, economic and cultural resources of the destination by tourism planning activities. Local authorities are often the best placed organizations for establishing a sustainable approach to tourism in destinations, setting a strategy and balancing the interests of tourism enterprises, tourists and local residents. Effective tourism development and management require a vested community interest, research to inform planning, planning to inform development, and a serious commitment on behalf of the community and local government to the implementation and management of tourism. Local governments should represent the interests of the whole community and not just those of particular interest groups or certain stakeholders. They are in a strong position to promote a broader base of involvement in tourism planning. Churugsa, McIntosh and Simmons (2007) noted that local governments can play leading roles in bringing partnerships together to facilitate destination development, to plan strategically, and to define effective tourism policy. Therefore the involvement of the local community in the planning process can be provided by local authorities.

Various studies in the literature have analyzed the administrative dynamics of tourism development (Goymen, 2000), the relationship between central and local authorities (Ersoy, 1992), and the difficulties of sustainable tourism development (Tosun, 2001). The activities of authorities related to tourism (Kılıc, 2006) and the role of local authorities in sustainable tourism (Tortop, 1988; Bas, Kılıc and Gucer, 2007; Dede and Guremen, 2010) have also been dealt with in the literature. However, these studies are not based on empirical research conducted on sub-national authorities. Furthermore, few works have dealt with the relationship between successful tourism development plans and local administrative capabilities (Churugsa, McIntosh, and Simmons, 2007). Hence, the relatively small number of prior empirical studies on this topic conducted on Turkey as a developing country makes this research meaningful. In this regard, the paper's goals are threefold: (1) to measure the participation degree of different levels of local authorities in the tourism planning process; (2) to determine the perceptions of local authorities regarding the planning process for tourism, and the ways in which sub-national authorities have been engaged (or not) in the planning process; and (3) to emphasize how best practices or lessons learned can be transferred to other countries with similar features.

The article has been organized in the following way. First, in literature review section, it approaches the emergence and the evolution of tourism planning and partici-

pation of local authorities in the tourism planning process both in the world and Turkey. It will then go on with the methodology by explaining how the questionnaire has been prepared, sample has been chosen, and data has been collected and analyzed. Finally, some theoretical and practical implications are highlighted for researchers, and public and local administrators of developing countries.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Emergence and evolution of tourism planning

The main characteristic of planning is to resolve problems in areas that have improvement capacity. Planning, which is crucial for solving increasingly complex social problems, has improved in recent years (Alipour, 1996), taking on new forms in order to become a proper means for problem solving and prevention. The aim of planning is to prepare action plans for the foreseeable future, and to realize these plans. Planning for the foreseeable future is not a new idea, and physical planning has long been in use. For example, in England, the physical planning of urban sites has been employed for 200 years; this was made necessary due to social and physical problems as a result of industrialization (Gunn and Var, 2002).

When compared with urban planning, tourism planning is a more recent phenomenon which can be dated back to the post-Second-World-War era. For example, Inskip (1988) notes that the national and regional tourism planning process in the Asia-Pacific region started in the 1950s. During the post-war period, the region experienced a tourism boom such that various investors and national governments started to implement tourism plans or investments. Tourism development has taken different paths, and has also been sustained by different plans around the world.

Planning, which has regional, economic, political, and technological dimensions, is an integrated development model. In addition to economic and social dimensions, environmental concerns have been paid attention to in the last 20 years. In this study, the scope of tourism planning encompasses macro and physical functions such as choosing a government system for tourism authorities or determining tourism centers, as well as micro functions such as determining the type of tourism establishments that will be built in tourism development regions.

With reference to Hall (2008), public tourism planning can be identified in five traditions:

1. *Boosterism*. According to boosterism, tourism is beneficial to a destination and its inhabitants. The main objectives of planning are to increase economic revenues and support tourism-related businesses. Regional resources are viewed as objects to be exploited for tourism, and negative impacts on social, economic, and environmental landscapes are neglected. Under the boosterism tradition, residents of tourist destinations are not involved in the planning process.

2. *Economic, industry oriented approach*. Under the economic approach, tourism is seen as an industry that can be used as a tool by governments to achieve certain goals of economic growth and restructuring, employment generation, and regional devel-

opment. Therefore, the planning emphasis is on the economic impacts of tourism and its efficient use in terms of creating income and employment benefits for regions or communities.

3. *Physical/spatial approach.* Physical planning refers to planning with a spatial or geographical component, in which the general objective is to provide for a spatial structure of activities (or of land use). The planning is related to physical and social carrying capacity, environmental thresholds and limits or acceptable rates of change.

4. *Community-oriented approach.* The community approach is a 'bottom up' form of planning which emphasizes the development in the community, rather than the development of the community, and it aims to raise the living standards of local people through the economic benefits of tourism, and it implies a high degree of community participation in the planning process.

5. *Sustainable tourism approach.* Sustainable tourism planning involves planning practices which aim to conserve tourism resources, and maximize the economic, social and environmental returns to stakeholders in the community in the long term.

Edgell *et al.* (2008) offered three tourism policy evaluation stages: (1) the formative phase of tourism policy evaluation relates to the reformulation of tourism policies when tourism-related issues have arisen, such as increased environmental pollution, depleted public utility resources and escalated real estate prices, as a result of rapid growth in the destination; (2) the development phase of tourism policy evaluation enables the evaluation of policy implementation midstream; and (3) the summative phase refers to the evaluation of long-standing policy issues, and accepted norms and doctrines for continued validity.

According to Tosun and Jenkins (1998) in developing or third-world countries tourism planning evolved in five steps. It is accepted that these five stages are not separate and distinctive, but are continuous and have evolved over time.

1. *Unplanned period.* During this period, tourism planning was an unusual, disliked, and even unwanted idea. In the 1950s, tourism planning was not an identifiable and specialized field; rather, it was subsumed under the broader umbrella of urban planning (Costa, 2001). Hence, tourism has developed as an unplanned phenomenon in most places around the world.

2. *Partially supply-oriented tourism planning period.* This period can be especially observed in the early 1960s from the viewpoint of the enterprises supplying tourism services, including hotels and restaurants. The main objective during this period was to build infrastructure and tourist facilities such as hotels, restaurants and other amenities. Physical planning of buildings and transportation and infrastructure investments characterized the period. According to Inskeep (1991), tourism planning is related to the process of hotel construction, and to maintaining transportation facilities to tourist destinations. This classic planning model is known as the 'comprehensive model'. Inskeep's (1988) model is especially based on national, regional, and local land usage plans.

3. *Entirely supply-oriented tourism planning period.* This period can be seen during the 1960s, 1970s, and the first half of the 1980s. The main aim of central governments in terms of tourism industry is to sustain economic development. On some occasions, this aim is measured by indicators such as number of visitors and tourism revenues. On the other hand, the overall goal of private enterprises in the tourism industry is to maximize their profits. Therefore, factors such as the negative influences of tourism, visitor satisfaction, host communities and hospitality are not taken into consideration in the tourism planning process (Gunn and Var, 2002).

4. *Market/demand-oriented tourism planning period.* Since a number of governments and developmental agencies began to consider environmental, social and cultural issues in addition to economic returns in the 1980s (Tosun and Jenkins, 1998), planning aimed to meet the demands and expectations of visitors. The basic needs and prior experiences of tourists directly influence tourism marketing strategies and planning. In this period, new markets were created based on the expectations of consumers, and new products and the appropriate marketing tools to meet expectations were developed.

5. *Contemporary tourism planning period.* In this period, which took place in the 1990s, the most important subject added to the planning process was sustainability (Hughes, 1995, p. 51). During this period, the environmental and socio-cultural effects of tourism were added to tourism planning, in addition to economic goals. Well-governed, well-planned, and well-developed tourism has positive environmental effects. Tourism can also bring about both benefits and problems to the host community and its cultural patterns. Tosun and Jenkins (1998) state that this new approach could be used as a means for economic and socio-cultural development, and might contribute to tourism sustainability.

## 2.2. *Evolution of tourism planning in Turkey*

While it should be acknowledged that there are no definite borders between the phases of tourism development, development of planned tourism in Turkey can be analyzed according to four phases: unplanned, planned, liberal and strategic (Table 1).

*Unplanned period.* In Turkey, there was no tourism planning in the period between 1923 – the establishment of Turkish Republic, and 1963. At this stage tourism was developing not as a result of conscious and systematic efforts from either central government or local authorities. The number of tourist arrivals to Turkey in 1963 was 198,841 ([www.kulturturizm.gov.tr](http://www.kulturturizm.gov.tr)). Boosterism was the dominant tradition in Turkey during the unplanned period and at the beginning of the planned period.

*Planned period.* In Turkey, the participation of public administration in the planning process has been sustained through five-year development plans prepared by the Ministry of Development (formerly the State Planning Organization, SPO), as it is the case in some developing countries such as Malaysia (Marzuki, Hay and James, 2012), India ([www.tourism.gov.in](http://www.tourism.gov.in)), and Tanzania ([www.tanzania.go.tz](http://www.tanzania.go.tz)). Tourism planning has been partially dealt with in these general plans. The first five-year de-

**Table 1:** Phases of tourism development in Turkey

	Years	Number of International Tourist Arrivals	Annual Average Growth Rate (%)
Unplanned period	Before 1963	Period: 1923-1963	
	1963-1967-1 <sup>st</sup> development plan	Period: 1963-1970	
First phase:	1968-1972-2 <sup>nd</sup> development plan	198,841-724,784	37.3
Planned period	1973-1977-3 <sup>rd</sup> development plan	Period: 1970-1980	
	1979-1983-4 <sup>th</sup> development plan	724,784-1,288,060	7.77
	Tourism Promotion Law (no. 2634) enacted in 1982	Period: 1980-1990	
Second phase:	1985-1989-5 <sup>th</sup> development plan	1,288,060-5,389,308	31.8
Liberal period	1990-1994-6 <sup>th</sup> development plan	Period: 1990-2005	
	1996-2000-7 <sup>th</sup> development plan	5,389,308-21,124,886	19.46
	2002-2006-8 <sup>th</sup> development plan		
Third phase:	2023 Tourism Strategy, which is a course of action for objectives to be realized until 2023; accepted in 2006.	Period: 2005-2011	
Strategic period	2007-2013-9 <sup>th</sup> development plan	21,124,886-31,456,076	8.15

velopment plan concerned the developmental goals for the period between 1963 and 1967. The elaboration and application of the development plans has continued to date, with some exceptions. Currently, the Ninth Development Plan, which concerns the period from 2007 to 2013, is in operation (SPO, 2011).

In Turkey, the tourism development plans are made as part of general development plans, and they are no more than estimations of tourism revenues, and are not evaluated from a general perspective. In this period, tourism is used as a tool by governments to achieve certain goals of economic growth and employment generation. The main aim of the five-year development plans is to sustain economic development, and the supply-oriented tourism planning is given priority.

Between 1963 and 1970 the annual average growth rate of tourist arrivals was 37.3%. This rate continued between 1970 and 1980, at a somewhat slower rate. In 1980, the number of international tourist arrivals reached 1,288,060, and the number of beds that were available in tourism certificated accommodation enterprises increased to 82,000. It can be said that tourism plans, as part of a larger development plan, which is generally set forth by the central government without any major contribution from the local authority, improved to some extent the tourism infrastructure up to 1980.

*Liberal period.* After 1980, Turkey adopted a market economy, flexible exchange rates, export-oriented growth, and a liberal import policy within stable political conditions (Demir, 2004). As a reflection of these liberal policies in the field of tourism, a Tourism Encouragement Law (no. 2634, Official Gazette of March 16, 1982) was enacted under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). The law, which mainly aims to contribute to the growth of mass tourism, envisions the allocation of public land to investors, and the construction of infrastructure facilities by the public sector. The Tourism Encouragement Law establishes as its main objectives the formation of culture, tourism protection and the development of regions, tourism ar-



eas, and tourism centers, which are currently 248, according to the ministry's records (MCT, 2012).

Four out of the nine development plans (5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>) were prepared during the liberal period. At this time, some environmental concerns arose in relation to environmental degradation, which was an undesirable side effect of mass tourism in the south and west of Turkey. By 1985, beginning with the 5<sup>th</sup> development plan, land use/the physical approach was emphasized in the development plans as a result of increased environmental problems, changing tourists' preferences, and tourists' sensitivity to environmental problems, as stated by Hall (2008). However, no proactive provision was in fact made to counteract the negative environmental effects of tourism. Although community-oriented tourism planning and community participation in the decision making and development process were taken into consideration in the 7<sup>th</sup> development plan (1996-2000), the implementation of the community participation policy and the plan was very weak in most places.

Law no. 2634 authorized the MCT to make, approve and amend plans at all levels of culture and tourism protection, as well as in development regions and tourism centers. The public authority therefore has the right to prepare development plans, master plans, and land usage plans in tourism areas. In addition to the macro and physical functions of tourism planning, MCT, as the central government authority, is also responsible for the micro functions of tourism planning that determine the type of building, such as shopping centers or hotels, and the quality level of establishments, such as five-star hotels or holiday villages, that will be built in tourism regions. Hence, the planning process is heavily centralized, with no direct participation of local authorities in these areas.

The analysis of law no. 2634 shows that the MCT has applied the classic model developed by Inskeep (1991). Although this period signals the application of a comprehensive model for tourism plans, these plans – which do not include environmental and socio-cultural components at local and national level (Goymen, 2000) – are inefficient, and do not reflect contemporary approaches to tourism development (Tosun, 2001).

The implications of the law no. 2634 cannot be seen at the beginning of the 1980s. The number of international tourist arrivals rose from 1,288,060 in 1980 to 5,389,308 in 1990, with an average growth rate of 31.8%. The results of the law no. 2634 emerged between 1990 and 2005, since international tourist arrivals increased to 21,124,886, with an annual average growth rate of 19.46%. During this period, bed capacity grew, and in 2005 it reached 762,000 beds, as certified by MCT ([www.kulturturizm.gov.tr](http://www.kulturturizm.gov.tr)). This period was dominated by land allocation facilities of central government, which is the starting point of the Turkish tourism engine.

*Strategic period.* Followed by a steady growth of tourism industries, tourism planning for tourism at some point became separated from the general development plan. After 2006, the participation of the MCT in the tourism planning process increased, and gained a new dimension in the form of the tourism strategy developed for the

year 2023, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, in addition to the 9<sup>th</sup> Development Plan. The period post-2006 is marked by a transition to physical planning and a strategic tourism planning phase. In its strategy report, the MCT dealt with developing cooperation among the public and private sector, involvement of local authorities, alternative tourism facilities, sustainable tourism and spreading tourism activities across the whole year.

### *2.3. Participation of local authorities in the tourism planning process*

Systematic planning study is crucial for the tourism industry development of a destination. One of the most important roles in this planning activity is conducted by local authorities. Kauppila, Saarinen and Leinonen (2009) have stated that local actors began to take part in tourism planning starting with the mid-1980s. However, Baidal (2004) notes that the localization process in Spain, which started in the late 1970s, paved the way for new perspectives in regional tourism planning.

While the roots of local authorities in Turkey can be traced back over 150 years (Ersoy, 1992), the development of tourism, sports, recreation, arts, and cultural services has mostly become the domain of central government. Although local authorities have been authorized with some authority regarding tourism, this is mostly related to basic infrastructure services. However, the Law on authorities (no. 5393) permits authorities to have a say in tourism and publicity activities. Additionally, the law envisions providing free or low-priced areas for authorities to use in tourism projects, with the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, the areas mentioned in the law include those areas that are owned by the authorities. In sum, tourism planning involved two-tier governmental systems at the beginning, in the form of central government and local authorities.

Due to the political system and prioritizing the socio-economic development of Turkey, tourism policies and plans were centralized and predominantly developed by the central authority during the period 1960-2000. Although there are many different organizational structures for government involvement in tourism (Hall, 2008), including the SPO, MCT, and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, there has also been involvement from regional and provincial agencies in the tourism planning process for the last 10 years. In Turkey's tourism planning system, the central government is the dominant planning agency with the local authorities below it. Most of the guidelines and strategies for tourism development in Turkey have been based on five-year plans.

Via the establishment of development agencies, which are governmental bodies organized regionally and comprised of 26 agencies, tourism policies and plans have been developed at the regional level in order to provide regional development. Hence, the tourism planning system has become a three-tier governmental system with the addition of a regional governmental system. These agencies have roles in the preparation and monitoring of the regional tourism plans. However, these plans are not mandatory for either the public or the private sectors. The policies and plans include

alternative tourism types which can be developed in the region regarding the natural and cultural resources, and where the tourism activities can be implemented, including land usage plans.

For the last 10 years, local authorities, such as municipalities, and district governors of Turkey have become more involved in the planning process, and have been developing tourism plans for the destination including the implementation of touristic infrastructure, such as a water and sewerage system, transportation facilities for the development of tourism industry, destination marketing, promotion of tourism activities, protection of natural and cultural resources, restoration of historical buildings, assignment of natural and urban tourism areas, urban planning, allocation of areas for tourism activities, publications about tourism, and education of local people on tourism. However, central plans are still effective in the industry.

In the Turkish Tourism Strategy of 2023, the bottom-up approach was used for the development of the plan. The central authority encouraged the public's involvement by holding meetings with local districts or communities to determine what type of development they would like to see in the tourism industry. Coordination of tourism policy and planning problems can arise between government stakeholders and local authorities. In order to develop effective tourism strategies, tourism policies of different government tourism bodies, local authorities and private sectors must be integrated. It is important that each stage, at whatever level (national/regional/local), to be carefully integrated both laterally and vertically. In Turkey, the local tourism plans are prepared in line with the national plans.

### **3. Methodology**

This article sought to examine the degree of local authority participation in tourism development plans, and the possible reasons behind their insufficient participation. Within this context, the most rational way to identify the approaches of local authorities towards tourism planning was considered to be to conduct a survey and face-to-face interviews with local administrators. The questionnaire in the survey was initially prepared by the authors after a review of the relevant literature. It was then sent to several experts, who are tourism planners and scholars in the field, for validity checking and further modification. A pilot test was not used.

The first part of the survey contains questions related to the type of local administration, the number of citizens in the city, the participant's profession, and the existence of a tourism master plan. The most important part of the research deals with the reasons behind non-participation of local authorities in the tourism planning process. The survey mentions 12 possible reasons behind non-participation, and asks interviewees to answer according to a seven-point Likert scale (1 = absolutely disagree, 7 = absolutely agree).

The face-to-face surveys were conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> of January and 31<sup>st</sup> of September, 2011. Data obtained from these interviews were taken into account in the analysis of the findings. Based on the number of arrivals in tourism establishments as an indi-

cator of tourism development of a destination, 85 local authorities were selected for the survey. Of these, 14 either did not reply or refused to take part.

Of those that did take part, 28.1% (20) are in the Aegean Region, 29.5% (21) are in the Mediterranean Region, 12.6% (9) are in the Marmara Region, 11.2% (8) are in the East Anatolia Region, 9.8% (7) are in the Black Sea Region and South Eastern Anatolia Region, and 8.4% (6) are in the Central Anatolia Region. In other words, 73.2% are sea, sun, and sand tourism destinations and 26.8% are cultural and heritage tourism destinations. Figure 1 indicates the metropolis and provincial municipalities that participated in the survey. Provinces on the map have been colored based on the number of arrivals in tourism establishments.

As such, the survey was conducted with 71 local authorities: 14.1% of the participants (10 persons) are mayors, 56.3% (40) are deputy mayors, 14.1% (10) are urban planning directors, and 15.5% (11) are mid-level managers.

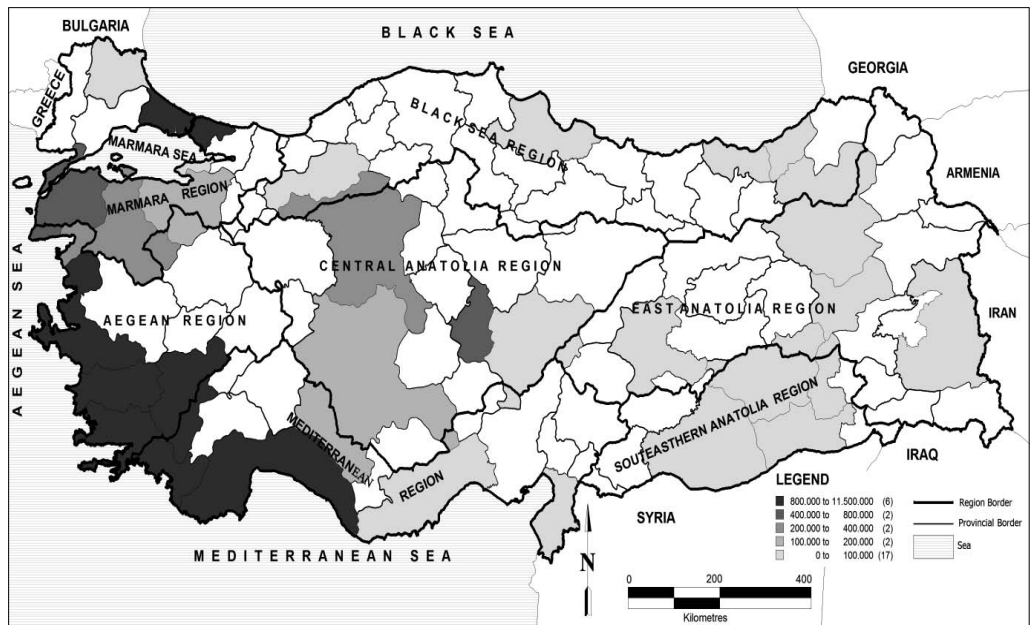


Figure 1: Metropolis and province municipalities that participated in the survey (2011)

Source: [www.kulturturizm.gov.tr](http://www.kulturturizm.gov.tr), 2011

Before the new regulation implemented on December 6, 2012, if the total population of one municipality was more than 750,000, it was defined as a metropolitan province (Law of Metropolitan Municipalities no. 5216); all other municipalities in provinces were called province metropolities (Law of Municipalities no. 5393). District provinces can be seen as sub-provinces of municipalities. Of the authorities that participated in the survey, 15.5% (11) are metropolitan authorities, 25.3% (18) are provincial authorities, and 59.2% (42) are district authorities. The survey was conducted not only in advanced destinations in terms of sun, sea and sand tourism, but also in local authorities with cultural, religious, and other alternative types of tourism.

Quantitative data obtained from the survey were analyzed using SPSS 18 for Windows. In addition to descriptive statistics such as mean value and standard deviation, Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were used to compare the quantitative data, and the Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine the groups that led to differences. The significance level has been calculated as  $p = 0.05$ . The Cronbach's alpha is found to be 0.88, which indicates high reliability.

In addition to quantitative data analysis, the qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed by utilizing content analysis. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the names of the mayors or managers were not recorded. The quotes from the participants were not given a pseudonym; they were distinguished using capital letters (e.g., Mayor A).

#### **4. Results**

##### *Strengths and weaknesses of local authorities*

Out of 71 respondents, eight (11.3%) of the local authorities have a tourism master and a development plan. Of these, five are metropolitan authorities, one is a provincial municipality, and two are district authorities.

The research findings indicate that most of the metropolitan, provincial, and district authorities agree with the idea that tourism planning authority should be devolved to local authorities (mean: 5.13; SD: 1.647; 1 = absolutely disagree, 7 = absolutely agree). The results of the same question are 5.09 (SD = 1.921) for metropolitan authorities, 5.17 (SD = 1.339) for provincial authorities, and 5.12 (SD = 1.728) for district authorities. Hence, lower standard deviations and higher mean degrees for provincial and district authorities indicate that they demand a more active role in the tourism planning process, compared to metropolitan authorities. The reluctance of the metropolitan authorities might be related to their broader jurisdiction area and responsibilities, as well as the lower rates of contribution of tourism revenues to metropolitan authorities, compared to provincial and district authorities.

Local authorities want to be involved in tourism planning because some of the administrators have perceived the negative environmental, economic and socio-cultural effects of tourism in the destination. For example, the following quotations from the mayor A of one district municipality showed that:

'Implementing a centralized plan for [...] cities like X, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is not convenient because most of the accommodation facilities are created by the restoration of old Ottoman houses. In our city it is not reasonable to increase the number of tourists and capacity of accommodation units in terms of preservation principles. The local circumstances are different from [those of] the central administration. [...] Local administration is very important in order to take reasonable and urgent decisions in [the] tourism development process'.

Local governors state inadequate budget, lack of allocation of public land to investors, the dominance of centralist tendencies, and a lack of cooperation among tourism stakeholders as the reasons behind their non- or insufficient participation in tourism

development plans. The mean values of these factors are 5.46, 5.18, 5.04, and 4.93, respectively (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Reasons for insufficient participation in tourism development plans

	Mean	SD
Absence of qualified planners	4.61	1.535
Lack of opportunities for the education of planners	4.66	1.630
Insufficient budget	5.46	1.548
Inadequate cooperation (public-private sector, local administrations, universities)	4.93	1.552
Legal restrictions	4.86	1.693
Insufficient realization of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders	4.85	1.770
Inadequate awareness	4.66	1.539
Inadequate capacity	4.85	1.802
Dominant centralist administration system tradition	5.04	1.792
Lack of efficient regulation and evaluation opportunities	4.59	1.573
Insufficient participation of local inhabitants	4.10	1.569
Lack of land allocation opportunities for tourism investors	5.18	1.710

Local governors consider budget, land allocation for tourism, opportunities for cooperation, and administrative power to be insufficient. These findings are consistent with the literature on the centralist tendencies of public administration. That is, the main characteristic of the Turkish administrative system is its centralist structure (Ersoy, 1992). Since tourism planning in Turkey is conducted within a centralist perspective, local authorities lack administrative power in the tourism planning field. Various services are handled by the central administration, even though they could be better managed by local authorities. As Tosun (2001) states, Turkey is characterized by a predominance of strong bureaucratic understanding of legal regulations and applications. Alternative perspectives that fall into conflict with the bureaucracy are neglected. As a result, various power domains such as planning of public services and allocation of financial resources to services and implementations are concentrated in the hands of the central government in general, and the MCT in the tourism sector.

On the other hand, an absence of opportunities for cooperation among local authorities and stakeholders might hamper the role of local authorities in sustainable tourism development, since it is expected from local governments to play a coordinative and facilitative function in designating the region's future, and an active role in eliminating the negative effects of the tourism industry by determining policies and plans with stakeholders during the evaluation process (Churugsa, McIntosh and Simmons, 2007). Although local authorities are expected to play a conciliatory role among tourism enterprises, host communities, and non-governmental organizations, the research findings indicate that the local authorities do not sufficiently maintain cooperation between the stated actors.

The following quotation from the mayor B of one province municipality shows the role and the capacities of local authorities in sustainable tourism:

'We do not have sufficient finance tools for tourism planning with adequate power authorization. Tourism allocation opportunities are also critical for us

since our municipality is located near the seaside [, which] increases the necessity of new areas for tourism investment. However, central government has all tourism land allocation opportunities.'

The research findings reveal that the participants considered the absence of efficient evaluation and regulation opportunities and qualified planners as the least important factors for their non-participation, with mean values of 4.10, 4.59, and 4.61, respectively. The findings indicate that metropolitan, provincial and district authorities have considerable numbers of qualified staff for tourism planning. In other words, the availability of experts who can be charged with tourism planning constitutes a strong point for local authorities. As stated by the manager C of a city metropolitan municipality which is one of the most popular sea, sun, and sand destinations:

'There are approximately nine planners, five of [which] have necessary qualifications in tourism planning. Even this number is not sufficient to make a metropolitan city's tourism plans; it is enough to ensure the implementation of tourism planning in these sub-provinces.'

Since tourism planning is a relatively new phenomenon in Turkey, most of the managers of municipalities do not know what tourism planning is, or who tourism planners are. Except for the quotation stated above, during the interviews it was apprehended that most of the tourism planners working in the municipalities were actually city planners. Based on the research, in reality, the number of tourism planners in the municipalities is relatively low. Hence, the interviews and surveys yielded different results on this issue because of the interpretations of who tourism planners are. Furthermore, the findings of the research show that the number of qualified tourism planners is higher in resort cities, especially in metropolitan municipalities.

The findings on the absence of qualified planners are inconsistent with the literature (Teye, 1999). For instance, Tosun and Jenkins (1998) found that contemporary and comprehensive tourism planning approaches are not rooted in developing countries. Tosun (2001) argued that the reason behind this is related to the insufficient education of tourism planners, meaning that local authorities are dependent on foreign experts or international advisors, as in the case of Jordan (Doan, 2006). Although Turkey is a developing country, the Turkish local authorities that participated in the survey stated that they have employed qualified tourism planners.

Respondents also believed that the participation of local inhabitants in the process will provide positive contributions, or will not influence negatively the implementation of the tourism development plans. Some of the determining factors for the success of tourism activities and efficient planning include the active participation of local inhabitants in the tourism planning process (Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012), and the benefits obtained from their participation and satisfaction (Pongponrat and Pongquan, 2007). The participation of local inhabitants is especially important in decision-making and evaluation phases, since the long-term success of plans depends on the commitment of inhabitants in the planning process, and their capabilities. For

example, in cities like Safranbolu, the city councils are the representatives of local people, and the members of these councils are chosen from stakeholders and tourism bodies within the city. This approach achieves greater local public involvement in the tourism planning process. However, as stated by Tosun (2000), public participation in tourism planning in developing countries like Turkey has not been appropriately implemented.

Success is only possible with the involvement of all stakeholders in the planning process. Participation of local inhabitants in decisions that will influence their daily lives will also facilitate the sustainability of tourism (Miyakuni and Stoep, 2006). In addition, their participation is required for understanding existing conditions, decision making and evaluation, and determining attainable goals for sustainable tourism. According to the research findings, the benefits provided to local inhabitants by the application of tourism development plans constitute an impetus for local authorities.

The participants considered their actions to be sufficient in terms of complying with legal restrictions, and understood the importance of tourism planning, awareness, administrative planning capacity, and educational opportunities. The research findings reveal that efforts to increase the awareness and knowledge of personnel, which is crucial for better tourism management (Churugsa, McIntosh and Simmons, 2007), are not required for Turkey.

#### *Reasons for insufficient involvement in the tourism planning process*

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used in order to determine the relationship between the type of authorities and their non-participation in the tourism planning process. This test was used because the basic data are not parametric, there are more than two groups to be compared, and there are more than 30 participants. The independent variable is the type of municipality (i.e., metropolis, provincial, district), whilst the dependent variables are the reasons for non-participation in the tourism planning process. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test are summarized in Table 3.

According to the Kruskal Wallis test results, there are differences between municipality types in terms of insufficient realizations of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders [ $\chi^2(2) = 6.248$ ,  $p = .044 < 0.05$ ], and the lack of land allocation opportunities for tourism investors [ $\chi^2(2) = 9.505$ ,  $p = .009 < 0.05$ ]. The Mann-Whitney U test was used in order to identify in which authorities the differences occurred; the results indicate that district authorities rank higher ( $M = 40.67$ ) than provincial authorities ( $M = 26.58$ ) in terms of insufficient realizations of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders, and that provincial authorities rank higher ( $M = 48.56$ ) than both metropolitan ( $M = 29.82$ ) and district authorities ( $M = 26.58$ ) in terms of lack of land allocation opportunities for tourism investors.

According to the Kruskal-Wallis test results, there are no statistically significant differences between the different municipalities types in terms of other reasons stated for their non-participation.



**Table 3:** Results of Kruskal-Wallis test for non-participation in tourism development plans according to the types of local administrations

		N	Mean	SD	$\chi^2$	P	Significant Difference**
Absence of qualified planners	Metropolis	11	29.95	2	1.376	.502	No significant difference
	Province	18	35.39				
	District	42	37.85				
Lack of opportunities for the education of planners	Metropolis	11	29.95	2	1.383	.501	No significant difference
	Province	18	35.25				
	District	42	37.90				
Insufficient budget	Metropolis	11	37.32	2	3.132	.209	No significant difference
	Province	18	42.67				
	District	42	32.80				
Inadequate cooperation (Public-private sector, local administrations, universities)	Metropolis	11	41.77	2	1.407	.495	No significant difference
	Province	18	32.61				
	District	42	35.94				
Legal restrictions	Metropolis	11	37.73	2	.130	.937	No significant difference
	Province	18	36.42				
	District	42	35.37				
Insufficient realization of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders	Metropolis	11	33.59	2	6.248	.044*	No significant difference
	Province	18	26.58				
	District	42	40.67				
Inadequate awareness	Metropolis	11	35.23	2	2.283	.319	No significant difference
	Province	18	30.14				
	District	42	38.71				
Inadequate capacity	Metropolis	11	35.05	2	1.187	.552	No significant difference
	Province	18	40.47				
	District	42	34.33				
Dominant centralist administration system tradition	Metropolis	11	33.64	2	1.107	.575	No significant difference
	Province	18	40.25				
	District	42	34.80				
Lack of efficient regulation and evaluation opportunities	Metropolis	11	33.18	2	1.283	.526	No significant difference
	Province	18	40.50				
	District	42	34.81				
Insufficient participation of local inhabitants	Metropolis	11	42.77	2	2.275	.321	No significant difference
	Province	18	31.17				
	District	42	36.30				
Lack of land allocation opportunities for tourism investors	Metropolis	11	29.82	2	9.505	.009*	Metropolis and province Province and district
	Province	18	48.56				
	District	41	32.24				

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* Based on Mann-Whitney U test results

The Mann-Whitney U test was used in order to identify the relationship between having and not having a tourism master plan, and the reasons for non-participation in the tourism planning process. The independent variables are the local authorities that have or do not have tourism master plans, whilst the dependent variables are the reasons for non-participation in the tourism planning process. The test results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the authorities that have, and those that do not have master plans, in terms of a lack of opportunities to educate

planners (Mann-Whitney U: 120.000,  $Z = -2.452$ ,  $p = .014 < .05$ ). The mean value of the local authorities that do not have tourism master plans is higher than those that do. This indicates that local authorities without any tourism master plans consider opportunities to educate training planners as being a relatively more important reason for their non-participation in the tourism planning process.

On the other hand, the Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare the differences between local authorities in destinations with sun, sand, and sea tourism, and cultural and heritage tourism in terms of planning issues. Based on the test results, there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of the absence of qualified planners (Mann-Whitney U: 333.000,  $Z = -2.156$ ,  $p = .031 < .05$ ), a dominant centralist administration system tradition (Mann-Whitney U: 243.500,  $Z = -3.340$ ,  $p = .001 < .05$ ), and a lack of efficient regulation and evaluation opportunities (Mann-Whitney U: 344.000,  $Z = -2.014$ ,  $p = .044 < .05$ ). Local authorities with culture and heritage see the absence of qualified planners, a dominant centralist administration tradition, and lack of efficient regulation and evaluation opportunities as a comparatively higher reason for their insufficient participation in the tourism planning process, since the mean values for the former are higher than those of the latter.

## 5. Conclusions

This research has theoretical and practical implications. The results reveal that the majority of local authorities do not have a tourism master and development plan, even though almost half of the metropolitan municipalities do. From the theoretical point of view, Turkey's tourism planning history shows that in developing countries, tourism planning became separated, at some point, from the general development plan because of increases in tourist arrivals and the tourism industry as a whole. Furthermore, this research shows that the evolution of tourism planning in a developing country does not necessarily follow the pre-defined steps stated in Tosun's and Jenkins (1998) study. For example, the evolution of tourism planning in Turkey has experienced some stages of the contemporary tourism planning period, such as sustainability, but it hasn't borrowed the characteristics of the market-oriented tourism planning period. Furthermore, the research shows that the tourism planning process in Turkey, which is part of its five-year development plan, has followed Gunn's model, or the supply-oriented tourism planning model.

The study also contributes to the tourism literature by identifying the reasons for the insufficient participation of local authorities in the tourism planning process – a phenomenon that has been ignored in other researches. The findings reveal that although provincial and district authorities want to take more responsibilities for tourism planning, they require additional local finance opportunities with adequate power authorization. This finding is consistent with Tosun's (2001) findings, since it is impossible for mayors without adequate financial resources and independent decision-making powers to meet the demands of tourists and local inhabitants in an efficient manner. In addition to an increase in the financial resources of local authori-

ties, the realization of the decentralization approach is crucial for local authorities that aspire to be effectively involved in tourism planning. This is due to the fact that tourism planning cannot be detached from the general political and economic system. In addition, this process should be supplemented via the establishment of an efficient coordination mechanism among stakeholders (Baidal, 2004; Bousset *et al.*, 2007; Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010), increased cooperation among the public and private sector, local authorities, and universities (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Dredge, 2006), and legal regulations to facilitate the allocation of the land owned by the authorities, as well as public land for tourism investments. As such, since tourism is a regionally applied activity, granting a more active role to local authorities in tourism development planning will lead to the determination of more realistic objectives (Doan, 2006).

The research findings reveal that the existence of a regulatory system and qualified personnel constitute strengths of local authorities. Hence, from the practical perspective of the study, central authority, especially that of the MCT, should pave the way for more efficient participation of non-governmental organizations in the tourism sector, as well as local authorities, in tourism development and planning.

According to the research findings, the existence of land allocation opportunities for tourism investment statistically differs between local authorities. Compared to those of district and metropolitan authorities, mayors of provincial authorities think that their resources for land allocation are less adequate. District authorities rank higher than provincial authorities in terms of insufficient realization of the importance of tourism planning by stakeholders. Hence, the importance of tourism planning in district authorities should be explained to stakeholders.

Finally, authorities without tourism master plans stated that they have fewer education opportunities for planners compared to those with tourism master plans, and hence argue that they cannot wholly participate in the tourism planning process. On the other hand, compared to local authorities with sea, sun, and sand, local authorities with culture and heritage consider an absence of qualified planners, a dominant centralist administration tradition, and lack of efficient regulation and evaluation opportunities as being a relatively more important reason for their non-participation in the tourism planning process.

Using a case study of Turkey, this paper has illustrated the weaknesses and strengths of local authorities in terms of their participation in tourism planning. These results are important, especially with respect to understanding the tourism planning aspect in similar developing countries that have been dominated by central authorities. First of all, public authorities should give higher importance to land allocation facilities for tourism investors, financial independence and empowerment of local administrations. Furthermore, this case study showed a best practice for similar developing countries that even the tourism plan is done by public authorities as part of a general development plan; the strategic tourism plan also should be prepared for sustainable development of tourism in the country.

Finally, the study can only be considered valuable if it is supported by additional research by focusing on a comparison of similar developing countries municipalities' perceptions about tourism planning. The methodology followed in this research may be implemented in similar developing countries. A limitation of the research is that, when choosing the research sample, the distinction between local authorities as developed or underdeveloped municipalities in terms of tourism was made only based on tourist arrivals to tourism establishments.

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