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THE ROLE OF CLUSTERS AS A TOOL FOR REALIZING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TURKEY

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Spatial distribution of investments

Economic actors operating in a free market economy want to keep their costs at a minimum while making their decisions. This situation directly affects the decision of the investors to choose a place. Apart from special circumstances and individual decisions, the placement of investments in the space occurs in two ways; these are dispersed or clustered settlements.

The factors that lead economic activities to settle as dispersed distribution are grouped under three headings. The first is the demand for a healthier and more natural environment, which is more common in tourism and housing investments. Tourism investments in Muğla and Antalya provinces are examples of this. The second is to be close to the source in order to reduce the cost of transporting raw materials and finished goods. Examples of this are investments in the mining sector and investments in the processing of agricultural products. The third is to be close to the Market areas. Commercial enterprises want to be close to the places where the demand is high in order to increase their turnover; Companies producing directly for mass consumption also want to be close to markets in order to minimize transportation costs [5].

Cluster, agglomerative factors, these can be listed under a few headings. These are division of labor and specialization; exploiting economies of scale through clustering and increasing sales by reducing costs; the need to closely monitor market trends; providing buyers with easy access to a wide range of goods and services [5].

Clusters

As a result of changes in mass production and consumption patterns and technological developments, companies had to adopt flexible production methods in order to survive. Mass production giant firms have allowed a portion of the production to be shared by smaller firms. This new situation has revealed a flexible, specialized, fast decision-making, organizational structures based on interaction networks and clusters among companies. A large number of companies have been clustered in certain regions in order to increase productivity and benefit from

economies of scale in production [5]. However, the geographical concentration of firms in one region is not sufficient to define them as clusters. In order to be defined as a cluster, there must be cooperation and competitive relations among cluster actors (enterprises, suppliers, educational institutions, research institutions, financial institutions and public institutions) [13].

The closest explanation to the current cluster concept was made by Alfred Marshall in his book *Principles of Economics*. He stated that firms in a certain sector are clustered in a certain geographical area in order to benefit from economies of scale. He stated that these areas, which he defined as industrial zones, create positive externalities that lower the costs of the firms [13]. Prior to Marshall, contributions to cluster theory were made by theorists from different disciplines and the foundations of today's approaches were revealed. These are Von Thünen, who developed the *Agricultural Location Theory*; Alfred Weber, who introduced the *Industrial Location Theory*; *Traditional Theories of Position and Agglomeration* based on the work of Christaller and Lösch, which explain the settlements of cities. It is seen that these studies, which conceptualize about geographical agglomeration rather than clustering until Porter, form the basis of cluster theory [13].

Regional Development

In terms of traditional approaches, competitiveness was determined by natural resources, cheap and abundant labor, raw materials and energy resources. However, with the dominance of globalization, the importance of competitiveness based on these classical advantages decreased; new perspectives emerged. One of the most well-known of these works is M. Porter, who stands out with his studies on regional competitiveness and clustering. Porter has found that firms with competitive advantages are usually clustered in certain countries and regions or cities. As a result of the globalization of economic activities, increasing productivity based on the effective and intensive use of qualified and expert workforce, advanced technology and communication technologies have gained importance [7; 8]. Achieving the targeted productivity increase through clusters has been a model adopted by developed economies. For this purpose, public policies are being developed both in the USA and in the European Union [5].

The main objective of the clusters is to increase national and regional competitiveness. Therefore, it is important to produce goods and services in an innovative and efficient way. In order to be permanent on a global scale, it is necessary to be competitive on a cluster basis, not on a firm basis. In this framework, clusters make important contributions to the realization and maintenance of regional development, as well as other regional development tools [2; 9]. Through smart specialization, it is easier for regions to host competitive and sustainable economic actors in the long term in the form of clusters [6].

Clusters in Turkey

In order to develop clusters in different sectors in Turkey, various supports have been provided and public policies have been implemented since the beginning of the 2000s [1; 10]. The "URGE Projects" carried out within the scope of the "Communiqué on Supporting the Development of International Competitiveness" by the Ministry of Trade, General Directorate of Exports, aiming to improve the

competitiveness of SMEs in international markets with a clustering approach and to open the SMEs up to foreign markets effectively. In this context, 418 projects have been supported since 2010. 8,686 SMEs were analyzed one by one; It was determined what they needed to be an exporter and to hold on in the market. Clusters are categorized under 4 main categories and different supports are given for each category. These categories are: potential clusters, start level clusters, developing clusters, mature clusters (see Tabl. 1 and Fig. 1) [11].

Tabl. 1 – The Distribution of Projects [11]

Sectoral Distribution of Projects		Regional Distribution of Projects	
Machinery-Automotive-Electronics	111	İstanbul	108
Agriculture	98	Ankara	58
Mining-Metal-Forest	98	Bursa	34
Textile	69	İzmir	24
Chemical	31	Gaziantep	21
Software	11	Antalya	15

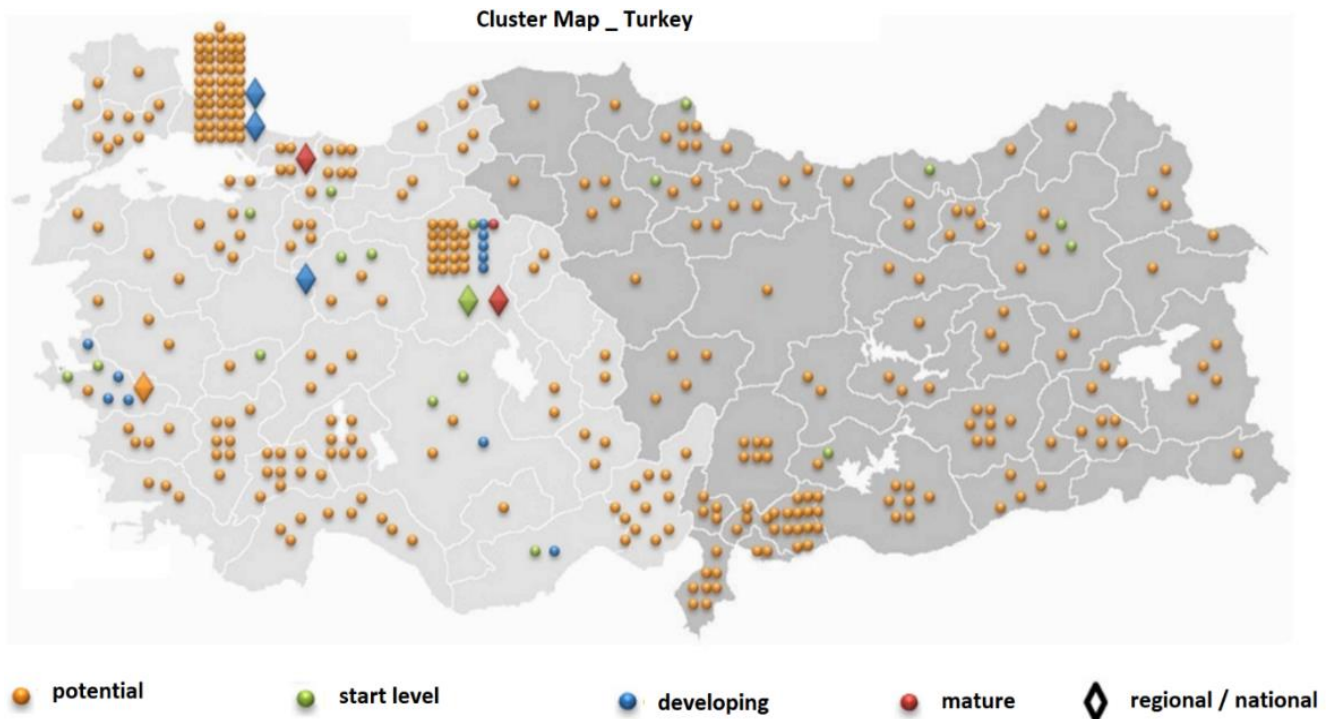


Fig. 1 – Turkey Cluster Map [12]

Clusters in The European Union

Across the EU within 201 regions, there are over 1000 cluster organizations, whose memberships on average are made up of 70% SMEs, 10% large firms, 8% research organizations [4]. There are four dimensions through which Clusters' strength performances are evaluated and monitored. These are size, specialization, productivity, dynamism (see Tabl. 2 and Fig. 2).

Tabl. 2 – Europe’s regional cluster hotspots (15 stars or more) [3]

Rank	Region	Name	Largest City	Size Stars	Specialis. Stars	Productivity Stars	Dynamism Stars	Total Stars
1	DE71	Darmstadt	Frankfurt	10	7	10	2	29
2	DE12	Karlsruhe	Karlsruhe	9	6	6	3	24
3	NL33	Zuid-Holland	Rotterdam	7	4	8	5	24
4	NO01	Oslo og Akershus	Oslo	4	5	9	6	24
5	DEA2	Köln	Köln	10	4	6	3	23
6	FR10	Île de France	Paris	10	3	10	0	23
7	DE11	Stuttgart	Stuttgart	10	5	6	1	22
8	DE21	Oberbayern	München	10	5	6	1	22
9	DEA1	Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf	10	3	8	0	21
10	UKJ1	Berks, Bucks and Oxon	Oxford	7	4	9	1	21
11	SE23	Västsverige	Göteborg	6	5	10	0	21
12	SE11	Stockholm	Stockholm	6	4	10	1	21
13	NL32	Noord-Holland	Amsterdam	5	4	7	5	21
14	IE00	Ireland	Dublin	8	4	8	0	20
15	DK01	Hovedstaden	Copenhagen	7	3	10	0	20
16	FI18	Helsinki-Uusimaa	Helsinki	5	5	10	0	20
17	DE60	Hamburg	Hamburg	8	2	7	2	19
18	UKI2	Outer London	Outer London	7	4	7	1	19
19	DE14	Tübingen	Tübingen	6	6	3	4	19
20	NL41	Noord-Brabant	Eindhoven	2	2	9	6	19
21	LU00	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	0	4	9	6	19
22	DEB0	Rheinland-Pfalz	Mainz	9	5	2	2	18
23	HU10	Kozep-Magyarország	Budapest	8	4	0	6	18
24	AT13	Wien	Wien	5	3	10	0	18
25	FR71	Rhône-Alpes	Lyon	10	3	4	0	17
26	DE30	Berlin	Berlin	8	5	1	3	17
27	FR82	Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur	Marseille	7	3	7	0	17
28	DE25	Mittelfranken	Nürnberg	6	4	4	3	17
29	UKJ2	Surrey, E and W Sussex	Brighton	6	3	8	0	17
30	SE12	Östra Mellansverige	Uppsala	2	5	10	0	17
31	NL31	Utrecht	Utrecht	0	3	6	8	17
32	TR10	Istanbul	Istanbul	10	0	0	6	16
33	DE27	Schwaben	Augsburg	5	5	1	5	16
34	UKI1	Inner London	Inner London	5	2	7	2	16
35	BE21	Antwerpen	Antwerpen	2	3	10	1	16
36	PL12	Mazowieckie	Warszawa	10	1	0	4	15
37	DE23	Oberpfalz	Regensburg	4	5	1	5	15
38	UKH2	Beds and Herts	Luton	4	4	6	1	15
39	SK02	Zapadne Slovensko	Nitra	4	3	0	8	15
40	SE22	Sydsverige	Malmö	0	5	10	0	15
41	NO03	Sør-Østlandet	Skien	0	5	10	0	15
42	BE24	Vlaams-Brabant	Leuven	0	4	10	1	15
43	BE23	Oost-Vlaanderen	Gent	0	3	10	2	15
44	DK04	Midtjylland	Aarhus	0	3	10	2	15

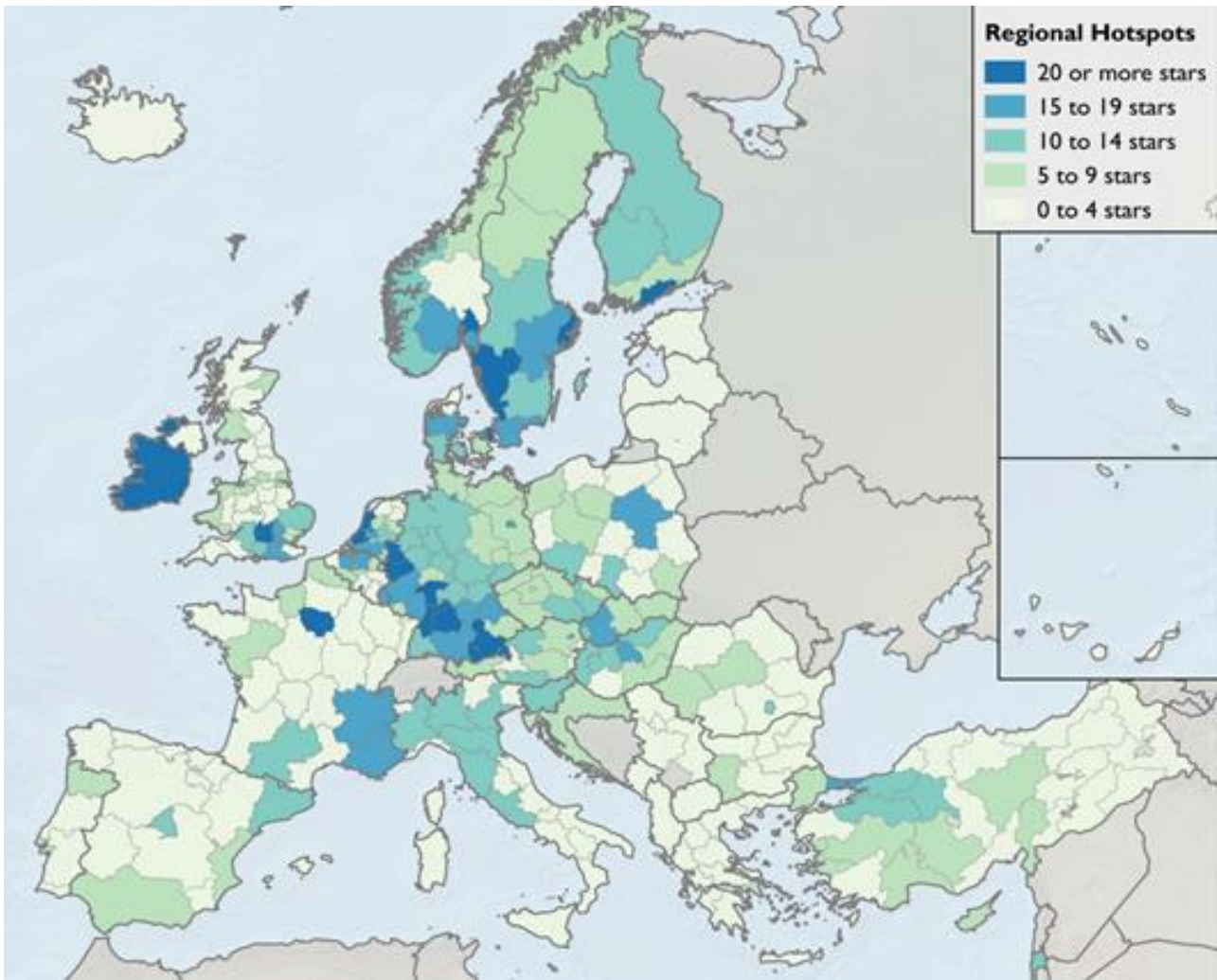


Fig. 2 – Regional hotspots [3]

Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned reports and academic research, clusters are actively used in regional development in the European Union and Turkey. While many clusters are still in their infancy, it has been observed that the institutional structures in some clusters are well-established and mature. It has been observed that policy frameworks have been prepared by public authorities and support mechanisms have been established. It has been observed that business circles, educational institutions, R&D centers, and non-governmental organizations have created active cooperation networks.

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THE ESSENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF THE ENTERPRISE IN MODERN CONDITIONS

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The competitiveness of the enterprise in international markets is a very important factor for its long-term development. Every company focused on the international market needs to clearly and effectively assess its capabilities and