

CONTRIBUTION OF COOPERATIVES IN THE DETERMINATION OF LEGISLATION CONCERNING COOPERATIVES: Case of Tekirdağ Province's Regional Unions

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ABSTRACT

The cooperative system in Turkey has a long history in when evaluated with activities similar to cooperatives. The cooperative system took a place as an economic activity only after 1860s. Today there are 73581 cooperatives in our country under 34 different types. These cooperatives are established under three different ministries and subject to three different laws and operate accordingly. The support of cooperatives in Turkey is under constitutional assurance. Depending on this assurance, governments have provided solutions for the problems and inadequacies of cooperatives as they were affected by the changing circumstances in the country. In different times and several ways, the articles of three laws cooperatives are subject to has been changed. These changes were usually temporary solutions. The excessive number of cooperative types and numbers and the pressure for a single type of cooperative instead of solution that cover all cooperatives have caused the continuing problems of the cooperative system. The cooperative sector cannot actively participate and get involved in the process of decision and policy making about the subjects related with the cooperative system due to lack of representation and leverage. A participatory approach should be adopted for the works on regulation and determination of policies in the cooperative system. The decisions should be evaluated by considering the data acquired from the base and the organizations above. In the Advisory Decision No. 193 about the Cooperatives, there are some suggestions for the governments. Tekirdağ is a province where cooperative activities are very intensive. There are four higher units of which the headquarters are in Tekirdağ. These are; higher unit of agricultural cooperatives, higher unit of fisheries cooperatives, higher unit of agricultural credit cooperatives and the higher unit of craftsmen association credit and suretyship cooperatives. In this study, the level of contribution of the managers of these four higher units in Tekirdağ, of the decision and policies regarding the cooperatives will be interpreted by considering their opinions on the cooperative system in Turkey and suggestions about it. To do this, interviews and surveys have been conducted with the managers of higher units and the data have been analyzed.

Key Words: Cooperative, Regional Union, Legislation.

INTRODUCTION

The cooperatives are the partnerships which are established in order to meet the economic, social, cultural, vocational and welfare needs of their partners that are gathered by voluntary, individual and corporate entities. (Kara, 2003) Cooperative system as a social and economical system depends on a series of thoughts and beliefs rather than a single concept or social theory. Flexibility and universality of the concept of cooperative system is in a level which enables the members of a certain type of cooperative in a certain place on the world to easily understand another type of cooperative in another place and see the intercultural difference when they visit that cooperative (Laidlaw,1981, p.11, 61). Cooperatives may be founded today in any area and sector. Cooperatives create diversity in economy in their countries, provide employment via their enterprises and contribute to the development of economy. They are founded and operated by their partners. The partners of equal voting rights decide together about the operation, plans, future of the cooperative. Cooperative sector can't

participate in the process of taking decisions and forming policies on the subjects concerning the area of cooperative systems due to deficit of representation and leverage. The decisions to be taken must be assessed by paying attention to the data obtained in a range from the bottom (partners) to top managements. Numerous changes made in the legislation puts forth the fact that this situation is not resolved through participative approach. To examine this situation, an interview is realized and a survey is applied directed to this subject with the board members of 4 regional unions located in Tekirdağ province. It is thought that the results of the research may contribute to more efficient participation of the cooperatives and top unions to the legislation decisions based on the international principles.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Cooperative System in Turkey

Cooperative system in Turkey is spread all around the country and found in all seven regions and 81 regions. According to the data of the Ministry of Customs and Commerce in Turkey, there exists 72.484 cooperatives and 7.427.781 cooperative partners in Turkey in 2014 in 35 different types. 17.875 of these 72.484 cooperatives are partners to the unions which are the next upper organs. The number of Unions is 533 and Central unions is 14. The ratio for the cooperatives to join to unions is %24,6, the ratio for the unions to join to the central union is %45,4 and the ratio for the central unions to join to National Cooperative Union of Turkey is %78,5 (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.14, 20-21).

2.2. International Principles in Cooperative System Applications

The most significant studies made in the world on the subject of cooperative system are realized by the International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA), United Nations (UN) and International Labor Organization (ILO). These studies form a basis all around the world for cooperative regulations and applications. Such regulations are also taken as basis in the works of policy development directed to the cooperatives of our country (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.61).

ICA Cooperative Identity Declaration; In the declaration, cooperative is defined and self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, justice, honesty and solidarity are listed as the basic values of cooperatives. 7 principles are determined to help the application of these values (cooperative principles).

United Nations Guidelines; General Assembly of United Nations has officially requested from all governments around the world in 2001 the creation of an environment to support the development of cooperatives through its Resolution number A/RES/56/114 and accepted a guide prepared for this purpose. The guide handles the legal, judicial and administrative provisions required to support the cooperatives, training activities and the possibilities of benefiting from the public funds.

ILO's Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation (193); In the recommendation, the governments are asked to consult the employer and worker institutions and cooperative organizations in the preparation of laws and regulations concerning the cooperatives, amendment of the laws and determination of related policies. This recommendation which deals in detail with the targets concerning the cooperatives, policy framework, the role of and precautions to be taken by the governments for promotion in this scope is used just in 70

countries to review their cooperative legislation (The Turkish Cooperative Strategy Paper and Action Plan 2012-2016, p.17-22).

2.3. Cooperative Legislation in Turkey

The most important regulation in the states is the constitution. Article 171 of the R.T. Constitution has put cooperative system under protection and assigned the state on the subject of its development by the provision “The state takes the precautions to provide the development of cooperative system which principally aims to increase production and protection of the consumer by considering the benefits of the national economy.” Cooperative activities are carried out currently on the basis of the provisions of Cooperatives Law number 1163, Agricultural Credit Cooperatives and Unions Law number 1581 and Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions Law number 4572.

Cooperatives Law number 1163 is the basic law which regulates the area of cooperative system. The Law which provides the foundation and development of many cooperatives is put into force on 24.4.1969. According to article 98 of the Cooperatives Law, the provisions concerning incorporated companies in Turkish Commerce Code are also applied to the cooperatives on matters not explained otherwise in the law. Many articles of Cooperatives Law number 1163 are amended 11 times from 1969 when it is put into force until the end of 2014.

Agricultural Credit Cooperatives and Unions Law number 1581; The first legal regulation of agricultural credit cooperatives is the Agricultural Credit Cooperatives Law of date 1929. However, Agricultural Credit Cooperatives law number 2836 of date 1935 has comprehensively determined the foundation and operation of agricultural credit cooperatives. Agricultural Credit Cooperatives law number 2836 of date 1935 is repealed by Agricultural Credit Cooperatives and Unions Law number 1581 of date 1972. Already current, Agricultural Credit Cooperatives and Unions Law number 1581 is amended 6 times.

Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions Law number 4572; The first legal regulation of Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions is Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions Law number 4572 of date 21.10.1935 and it is amended by the Statutory Decree number 238 of date 1984 and Law number 3186 and completely repealed by the Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions Law number 4572. Already current, Law number 4572 is amended 5 times.

Articles of Associations are the basic contracts which regulate the relations between the cooperative’s legal entity and the partners or between the partners. In the articles of associations, also the cooperative organs, duties, powers and responsibilities of such organs and the execution processes for other operations are included. In addition, the principles concerning the foundation, operation and dissolution transactions are included in the articles of association. In this aspect, the articles of association are qualified as secondary regulation in the cooperative legislation (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.6-8).

2.4. Public Administration in Cooperative System

The Ministry of Customs and Commerce is authorized in the execution of Cooperatives Law number 1163 which is the basic legislation of the cooperative system. At present, the basic duties concerning cooperatives is carried out by the Ministry of Customs and Commerce.

Building societies are regarded to be in the duty area of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and agricultural purpose cooperatives of the Ministry of Customs and Commerce. Cooperative services are carried out in the General Directorate level in the Ministry of Customs and Commerce, in department level in the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and in division status in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. The ministries have duties to prepare sample articles of association concerning the cooperatives under their areas of duty (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.18-20).

2.5. Managerial Organs of Cooperatives

The approach of “Economical Participation of Partners” and “Democratic Control”, basic principles of cooperative system, forms the basis of the managerial understanding of the cooperatives. Article 42 of the Cooperatives Law number 1163 has provided that the most powerful organ in the management of the cooperatives is the general assembly which represents all partners and foresees the election by the general assembly of “Auditors Board” to which the authority of examining all transactions and accounts of the cooperative is given on behalf of the general assembly (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.20).

3. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

In many investigations and researches made in Turkey on the subject of cooperative system, it is expressed that the most important problem of cooperatives is the legal regulations, the laws which regulate cooperative systems are inadequate and complicated and don't cover the principles and basic values of cooperatives sufficiently. The cooperatives in Turkey being in the duty area of three different Ministries causes differences in the articles of association prepared by the Ministries, in application and audits, an approach is rather developed according to the cooperative types and a common field of application can't be formed. International good practices show that the existence of upper organization structure of cooperative which participates in the regulative decisions, has self-governance, may present any service to and audit its members in order for the successful operation of cooperative systems and to make the cooperatives operate in compliance with the principles and values of cooperative systems (The Turkish Cooperative Strategy Paper and Action Plan 2012-2016, p.42-47).

The purpose of the research is to put forth how much the regional unions participate in the subject of decisions directed to the legislation. Because, those who shall be influenced from the decisions taken are the partners and their upper organizations. It shall be assessed if the opinions from the cooperatives and their upper organizations are taken in the thought changes, therefore the efficiency of international principles. Although the field of study is narrow, this may gain us a point of view on participation when it is considered that the unions are bound to the central unions and form a part of the whole.

3.1. Research Field

Tekirdağ which forms the research field is a province close to trade centers where the agricultural lands are fertile, modern agricultural techniques are applied, transport is geographically easy. It is ranked 4th in the list of provinces all around Turkey which meet its cost with its revenues with a ratio of %263,23. Food sector, leather sector and textile sector is intense in the province (1390 industrial plants). There are 13 organized industrial zones and European Free Zone within the boundaries of Tekirdağ. %59,3 of the total land assets of the

province is processed agricultural land (<http://www.tekirdag.gov.tr/ekonomi,15.08.2015>). Tekirdağ is in the upper ranks in the ratio of participation in cooperatives. There wasn't a decrease in the number of cooperatives of Tekirdağ's Regional Union in the process of restructuring of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives (Turkish Cooperative Report 2013, p.70).

Agricultural Credit Cooperatives Tekirdağ Regional Union operates in Çanakkale, Edirne, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli and İstanbul provinces with 101 unit cooperatives and 62 741 registered partners. It is also engaged in the supply of cash credit, fertilizer, agricultural pesticide, agricultural tools, machinery and equipment, feed, seed, fuel, breeding animal, essential consumables for the partner producers, crop purchase to support the products of the partners and insurance agency (Records of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives Tekirdağ Regional Union, 2015). Agricultural credit cooperatives have 16 regional directorates, 1625 cooperatives and 1.054.340 partners by the end of 2014 (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.40).

a. Merchants and Craftsmen's Credit Surety Cooperatives Tekirdağ Regional Union operates in Edirne, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli and İstanbul provinces with 28 cooperatives and 18 642 partners (Records of L.L. Merchants and Craftsmen's Credit Surety Cooperatives Tekirdağ Regional Union, 2015). Credit and surety cooperatives are organized under 32 regional unions and one central union. Merchants and craftsmen's credit surety cooperatives serve their partners to reach to finance by providing surety as specified in their articles of association. Total number of cooperatives is 994 and number of cooperative partners is 648.743 by 2014 (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.25).

b. Tekirdağ Region Water Products Cooperatives Union continues to operate with 8 cooperatives and 337 partners within the boundaries of Tekirdağ province (<http://www.surkoop.com/Bolgeler.aspx?BBD=www.tekirdagsurkoop.com>). Purpose of the cooperative is to serve its partners on the subjects of any kind of water product production, breeding, fishing, processing, storing, marketing and, as required, found and operate the plants concerning these subjects (<http://www.tarim.gov.tr/TRGM/Lists/KutuMenu/Attachments/24/Su%20%C3%9Cr%C3%B4nleri%20Koop.%20Anaszl%C5%9Fmsi.pdf>). There exists 549 water products cooperative by 2014 and these cooperatives have 30.632 partners (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.30).

c. Tekirdağ Agricultural Cooperatives Regional Union serves its 121 unit cooperatives and 18 401 partners within the boundaries of Tekirdağ province (Records of L.L. Tekirdağ Agricultural Cooperatives Regional Union, 2015). Agricultural Cooperatives Union (TAR KOOP) is included among the subject basis organizations of Agricultural Development Cooperatives. They have 850 cooperatives and 106 509 partners by 2014 (Turkish Cooperative Report 2014, p.44). They provide the inputs which the cooperative partners need in plant and animal production, market and support the products (especially milk).

3.2. Material And Method

Primary and secondary data forms the research material. The responses to the survey applied face to face to the board members of agricultural purpose cooperatives' upper union, water products cooperatives' upper union, agricultural credit cooperatives' upper union and merchants and craftsmen's credit and surety cooperatives' upper union with management center in Tekirdağ forms the original data. Although the purpose is to get information via interview, the inquiries are converted to a survey form from the point of including reminding

information about the subject and providing time and facility. There are differences in the structures and operation of cooperatives. There exist cooperative unions subject to different laws with variable number of board members. 5 random members are included in the study in the unions having more than 5 board members in order to prevent misleading results. Turkish Cooperative Reports of 2013 and 2014 prepared by the Ministry of Customs and Trade, The Turkish Cooperative Strategy Paper and Action Plan (2012-2016), the information got from the Regional unions, the studies made concerning the cooperative system form the secondary data.

The data obtained from the surveys is analyzed by SPSS 15 program. The results are assessed over the mean and standard deviations of the data. In addition, Variance analysis is included in the study. By the data of the study, the degree of participation by these four upper union managers in the decisions and policies concerning the cooperatives and how they see cooperatives of the country are obtained via their responses to the judgments offered on these subjects. In addition, it is examined how they assess the problems directed to the cooperative system and the solution proposals to such problems. An attempt is made to put forth the degree of participation of regional unions and cooperatives in the determination of legislation concerning cooperatives via the obtained data.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

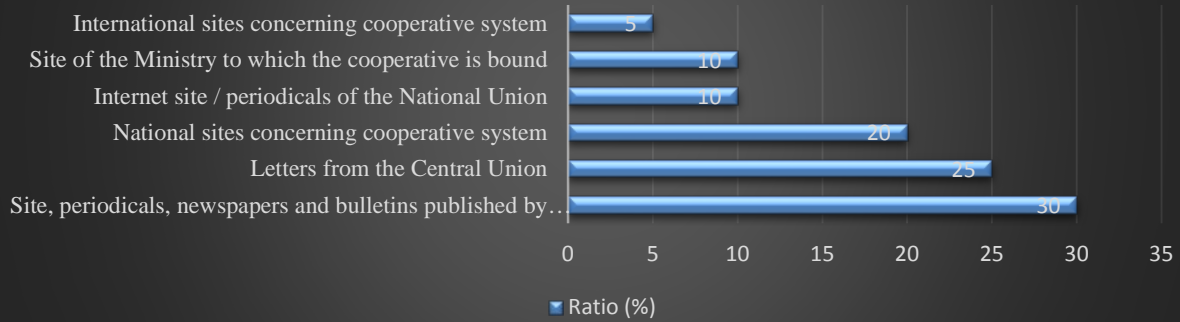
Average age of the managers who took part in the survey is 52. The managers whom age varies between 40-50 forms more than half (%55) of the population. There are 3 managers over 60 (%15). It may be said that the ages of managers is low for a manager elected to the union management. Cooperative history of the managers is not limited to their own cooperatives, but they have links to the other producer organizations. When assessed according to their educational status, %10 graduated from primary school, %40 secondary school, %40 high school and %10 university. While the ratio of those who are trained directed to cooperatives (certificate, etc.), the ratio of those who are trained directed to management and managerial is %35. Those who are trained for cooperatives and managerial are the board members of merchants and craftsmen's credit and surety cooperatives.

Training seminars are organized by Esgimtaş A.Ş. included in the body of central union of these cooperatives directed to the cooperative legislation, credit applications and the system used (<http://www.teskomb.org.tr/index.asp?p=65>, 10.08.2015).

Board membership of the managers is an average of 3 years. Those whose membership varies between 0-2 years form a slice of %30, between 4-6 %30, between 6-8 %20, between 8-10 %10 and 10 years and above %10. It may be said that an important proportion of the members are experienced in the management of the union. %35 of the managers have indicated that they have a foreign language, but in starting level. All members follow the developments directed to the cooperatives. They have indicated that they follow such developments in a rate of %30 from the internet site of the central union, %25 from the letters from the Central Union and %20 from the national sites concerning cooperative system. This situation puts forth that the board members are interested in their cooperatives both from the point of the cooperative of which they represent and from the point of the partners. The managers are aware of their responsibilities and, accordingly, stay up-to-date not to fall behind the developments.

Table 1. From Which Source The Developments Directed to Cooperatives Are Followed

From Which Source The Developments Directed to Cooperatives Are Followed



Board members of four regional unions located in Tekirdağ province are asked the degree of sharing the following judgments directed to the operation of their cooperatives. 5 point likert scale is used in grading. Scaling is as 1- I absolutely share, 2- I share, 3- I don't have any opinion, 4- I don't share and 5- I absolutely don't share. Board members of the union have indicated that they share the judgments directed to their relations with the central union. Such judgments are as we can get the information concerning our work subject and the activities of the cooperatives from our upper organization in time, we are satisfied to be partners to the central union, our central union fulfills its tasks specified in the legislation (law, articles of association), our upper union requests our opinions on the subjects concerned the bound cooperatives and our opinion is asked directed to legislation changes or policy determination concerning the cooperatives.

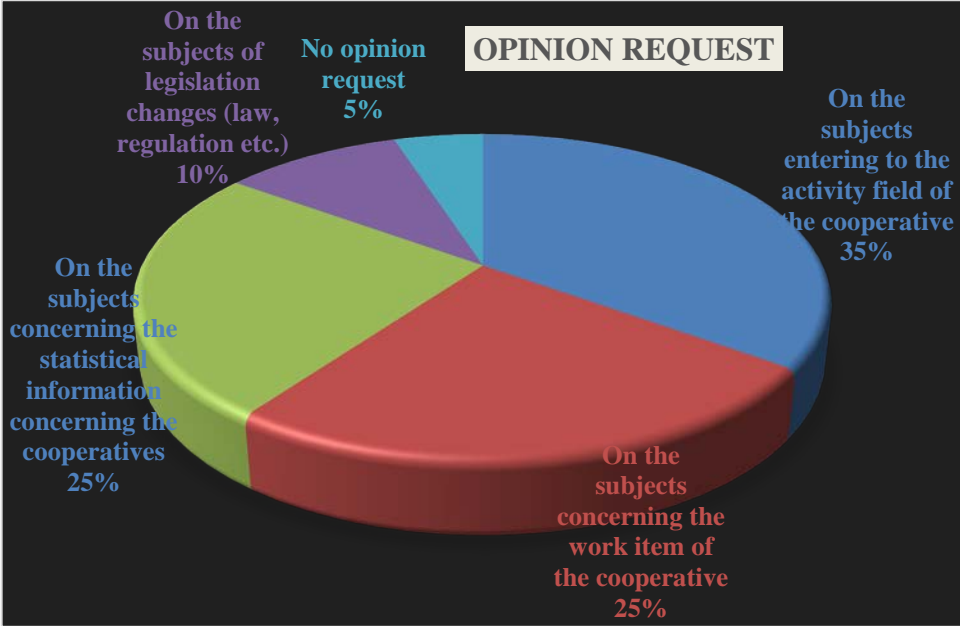
There are similarities between local governments and cooperatives in terms of both structure and purpose. Meeting of economical and social needs via the mediation of representatives elected from among and by the people in the same locality lays on the basis of such organizations which are functionally very close to each other (Ürper, 1995, p.78). However, the board members couldn't provide a clear share to the judgment "*Local governments in our province or the districts where the unit cooperatives are located contribute to support and reinforce the development of the cooperatives*" from the point of different settlements where the cooperatives are located and their types.

Table 2. Judgments Directed to The Operation of Cooperatives

Judgments Directed to The Operation of Cooperatives	Mean	Standard Deviation
Our upper union requests our opinions on the subjects concerning the bound cooperatives	1,8500	,87509
We also get opinions from bound unit cooperatives when opinion is requested	1,6000	,50262
We have a strong link as union with the bound unit cooperatives	1,6000	,50262
We can get the information concerning our work item and activities of cooperatives from our upper organization in time	1,6500	,48936
Our upper union may take decisions without paying attention to the structure and operation of the unions and unit cooperatives	2,5000	1,19208
We are satisfied to be partners to the upper union	1,7000	,57124
Our upper union fulfills its tasks specified in the legislation (law, articles of association)	1,7000	,57124
Opinion of our union is asked directed to legislation changes or policy determination concerning the cooperatives	1,8000	,89443
Determination and application of the policies and regulations concerning cooperatives must be left to the cooperatives in regional and local level	2,7000	1,30182
Central unions take opinions from the unions and unit cooperatives via the mediation of unions for their future actions and plans	2,2000	,89443
Local governments in the provinces in our province or the districts where the unit cooperatives are located contribute to support and reinforce the development of the cooperatives	2,9500	1,46808

The members are asked for which subjects the central union requested opinion from the regional union and the following replies are obtained. It is indicated that the central union has requested opinion on the subjects directed to the activity and operation of the cooperatives to a great extent (%85). Opinion request on the subject of legislation has a ratio of %10. The ratio of those who say that the central union doesn't request opinion is %5. In the above table, the members have indicated to share the judgment "Opinion of our union is asked directed to legislation changes or policy determination concerning the cooperatives." This is a situation which contradicts with the judgment shared when it is asked which subject the opinion request is on. The opinions concerning legislation changes are quoted more significantly by those who have more board membership experience and the members of other cooperatives and like organizations.

Table 3 Opinion Request of Central Unions from Unions



%65 of the board members have expressed opinion as no and %35 as yes to the inquiry "in your opinion, should the determination and application of policies and regulations concerning the cooperatives be left to the cooperatives of regional and local level". The opinions in the direction why these shouldn't be are indicated as inadequacy of training and briefing, insufficiency of the training and cooperative awareness of the partners, regional variations and political causes. The opinions why these should be are as the problems and needs are better known in local level and regional level, it is difficult to take decisions in unit cooperatives if they are left to local level, but regional unions may undertake this task.

The board members are asked if they find the cooperative system successful in Turkey and %15 have stated to find it successful, %30 not successful and %55 partially successful. The members who indicated that they didn't find the system successful are asked to what degree they share the judgments directed to the obstacles causing the system being unsuccessful expected from it. 5 point likert scale is used in grading. "Insufficiency of the cooperative awareness of the partners" is shown as an important obstacle for the system to be unsuccessful. Besides not having knowledge of their own organization, the partners who form the basis of the cooperative don't have that awareness and spirit and this expels the cooperatives from the place they deserve in the economy.

Table 4 Obstacles In Front of The Cooperatives Which Make Them Unsuccessful

Obstacles Which Make Cooperatives Unsuccessful	Mean	Standard Deviation
The society doesn't have sufficient awareness yet on the subject of cooperative system	1,9412	,89935
Intervention of the state continues	1,9412	,89935
Intervention of the state is insufficient	3,5294	,94324
Cooperative supporting policies of the state is not sufficient	1,8235	,95101
There exists problems arising from the legislation	1,9412	,89935
Upper organization is not in the desired level	2,2353	1,09141
Cooperative awareness of the partners is insufficient	1,7647	,43724
Deficits of cooperative managers on the subject of management	2,0588	,82694

How the interviewed board members assess the problems concerning Turkish cooperative system is determined by Likert scale. *“There exist more than one law directed to the cooperatives”, “Existence of three separate ministries directed to the cooperatives, the cooperatives are not collected under a single ministry”* are the commonly recognized problems. Some cooperative types are active in practice out of the ministry to which they are bound. For instance, while the water products cooperatives continue their activities bound to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, they are obliged to have connection too to the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in operation. Practices and permission procedures of the ministries vary. This situation makes the operation of cooperatives difficult. Differences are observed in the standard deviations in the replies to the inquiries. This situation arises from the variations in points of view to common problems by the cooperatives which are strong in finance, which operate systematically and have training activities, and also which central unions work better and the cooperative types which suffer finance difficulties, which operate in the agricultural sector and in which training activities are not made.

Table 5 Problems Directed to Cooperative System

Problems Directed to Cooperative System	Mean	Standard Deviation
Vertical and horizontal structuring is not in the desired level	2,4500	1,23438
There are problems concerning legislation	2,2500	,96655
Cooperatives become insufficient in policy determination	2,0500	,94451
Cooperatives have finance problem	2,2500	1,25132
Cooperatives have audit problem	2,2500	1,10024
There exists cooperative training and awareness problem in the partners and managers of the cooperatives	2,3500	1,18210
Support of the state to cooperatives is insufficient	2,3500	1,18210
There exists more than one law directed to the cooperatives	1,7000	,57124
Existence of three separate ministries directed to the cooperatives, the cooperatives are not collected under a single ministry	1,6000	,59824
Cooperative training is inadequate	2,0000	,97333
There is a problem of management	2,4000	1,14248
Insufficiency of statistical information directed to the cooperatives	2,4000	1,18766
Both governments and societies having no information about the business potential of the cooperatives	2,0000	,97333

Solution proposals of what might be done to solve the problems of cooperatives (system) are presented to the board members of four regional unions located in Tekirdağ province. These proposals are formed by using the studies made concerning cooperatives and the information obtained from the Cooperative Strategy Document. Union board members have indicated that they generally share the proposals directed to the solution of the problems of cooperatives (system) and generally share such solutions. Although the members support the proposal *“An independent auditing and regulating institution which has sole authority to determine the*

policies on the subject of cooperatives and apply the determined policies must be constituted’, they indicated that they have some drawbacks. This proposal may create problems from the point of partners especially to carry out the commercial affairs. Because, in practice, the cooperatives can be more flexible to facilitate the work of their partners who compose their base. Besides, a proposal is made on the subject of requirement of composing this institution from cooperative members. In the proposal “*Auditing activities must be realized by the upper cooperative unions or independent auditors*”, it is indicated that such auditing should be realized by the upper organizations. Although the proposal “*The goals indicated in the Cooperative Strategy Document must be put into practice*” is accepted, the members don’t have clear knowledge about the goals. The other solution proposals are the proposals shared by all board members.

Table 6 Solution Proposals Directed to The Problems of Cooperatives

Solution Proposals	Mean	Standard Deviation
An independent auditing and regulating institution which has sole authority to determine the policies on the subject of cooperatives and apply the determined policies must be constituted	2,4000	1,39170
The legislation must be renewed in the framework of current conditions and internationally recognized values	1,7000	,73270
A sole institution or ministry must have the right to talk concerning the cooperatives	1,6000	,50262
The state must by no means intervene in the cooperatives	2,3000	1,08094
Auditing activities must be realized by the upper cooperative unions or independent auditors	1,7500	,44426
Certain standards (such as necessity of certificate) must be brought to the cooperative managers and auditors	1,7000	,47016
Training activities directed to the partners must be increased	1,5000	,51299
Support of the state must be increased	1,7000	,73270
Authority must be given to upper organizations of the cooperatives in the solution of problems	1,7000	,47016
The goals indicated in the Cooperative Strategy Document must be put into practice	2,7000	1,26074
The state must provide credit possibilities and facility to the cooperatives	1,6500	,48936
Upper organization must be encouraged and facilitated	1,8000	,41039

The judgments directed to the operation of cooperatives according to the managerial time of the board members are tested as per variance analysis. The link between the board membership time and the judgment “We can take the information concerning the work item and activities of the cooperatives from the upper organization in time” is found meaningful ($F_{5,557}$, $Sig. ,006$). It is observed in the interviews that, as the membership time of the board members increase, they have more knowledge directed to the management of the cooperatives.

The members are asked to assess how they see cooperatives and their future in our country. Although some of them think that cooperatives shape up in their assessments, the pessimists are predominant. Pessimist thoughts are related with the problems experienced in the practice. These are insufficient development of the cooperatives and missing the goal, deficits in the practice, conflicts between the organizations in terms of purpose and activities especially in the agricultural sector, insufficient awareness of cooperative, being bound to more than one ministry and the cooperatives starting to ignore the benefit of their partners. Despite these problems, assessments are made where the importance of cooperatives increases and shall increase, and they should be spread and grow.

Cooperative types other than the agricultural credit cooperatives continue their activities according to Cooperatives Law number 1163. However, since all cooperative managers indicate that they follow the developments concerning the cooperatives, the question “Are you informed about the changes thought in the Cooperatives Law number 1163” is asked to all

members. While those who are not informed about the changes are %70, those who are informed about the changes have formed %30 slice. When the changes are asked to those who are informed, it is observed that they have not been able to quote clear information. An open ended question “What being successful in Turkey as a cooperative depends on” is asked and the replies are classified in the following table. The proposals especially involve increasing the training activities directed to the cooperative partners and managers (%40) and increasing the partnership consciousness and solidarity feeling (%15). These proposals are complementary proposals. The basic element which provides the cooperatives to maintain their existence is the partner and its loyalty to his cooperative. The other proposals are financial support to the cooperatives (%15), requirement of supportive and facilitative government policies (%10), serving by the cooperatives according to their purposes and activity items (%10), requirement of re-regulation of the legislation (%5) and support to the cooperatives by the local governments (%5).

Table 7 Proposals of Board Members Directed to The Problems of Cooperatives



5. CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

A participative structure in our country in which the cooperative upper organizations are predominant and efficient in the legislation studies directed to the cooperatives is not at the required point yet. Research results in the study shall be given under the following headings in the direction of the purposes of the study.

5.1. Participation to Decisions and Policies Concerning The Cooperatives

Being the research are, Tekirdağ province is high in the rank in the ratio of participation to cooperatives. Average age of the board members of four regional unions found in the province is 52 and their cooperative history is not limited to their own cooperatives. They also have links to the other producer organizations. All follow the developments directed to the cooperatives. Union board members have given positive opinions on the subject of the operation of cooperatives and their links to the central union and indicated that they share the judgments as “Opinion of our union is asked directed to legislation changes or policy determination concerning the cooperatives”. Their opinion on the subject of leaving the determination and application of the policies and regulations concerning the cooperatives to the cooperatives in regional and local levels is %65 no and %35 yes. The opinions in the direction why these shouldn't be are indicated as inadequacy of training and briefing, insufficiency of the training and cooperative awareness of the partners, regional variations and

political causes and the opinions why these should be as the problems and needs are better known in local level and regional level, it is difficult to take decisions in unit cooperatives if they are left to local level, but regional unions may undertake this task. This situation has shown us that the partners don't have knowledge yet to participate in the legislation and policy regulations and this is also verified by the union board members who are the representatives of the cooperatives.

5.2. Assessment of Cooperatives in Our Country

The board members are asked if they find the cooperative system successful in Turkey and %15 have stated to find it successful, %30 not successful and %55 partially successful. "Insufficiency of the cooperative awareness of the partners" is shown as one of the most important obstacles in front of the failure of the system. Although the cooperative types examined in the problems concerning Turkish cooperative system are in different sectors, "*There exist more than one law directed to the cooperatives*", "*Existence of three separate ministries directed to the cooperatives, the cooperatives are not collected under a single ministry*" have become the commonly recognized problems.

The members are asked to assess how they see cooperatives and their future in our country. Although some of them think that cooperatives shape up in their assessments, the pessimists are predominant. Pessimist thoughts are related with the problems experienced in the practice. These are insufficient development of the cooperatives and missing the goal, deficits in the practice, conflicts between the organizations in terms of purpose and activities especially in the agricultural sector, insufficient awareness of cooperative, being bound to more than one ministry and the cooperatives starting to ignore the benefit of their partners. Despite these problems, assessments are made where the importance of cooperatives increases and shall increase, and they should be spread and grow.

5.3. Proposals Directed to The Cooperatives of Our Country

Their opinions on "What being successful in Turkey as a cooperative depends on" is asked. The proposals especially involve increasing the training activities directed to the cooperative partners and managers (%40) and increasing the partnership consciousness and solidarity feeling (%15). These proposals are complementary proposals. The other proposals are financial support to the cooperatives (%15), requirement of supportive and facilitative government policies (%10), serving by the cooperatives according to their purposes and activity items (%10), requirement of re-regulation of the legislation (%5) and support to the cooperatives by the local governments (%5). Learning the cooperative tradition and ideas must be involved in every stage of the training. Cooperative training is the best way to form and understand the cooperative identity and message by the people in a wide range. Training programs are required for the future leaders to explain the cooperative identity. Presentation of this cooperative identity in the business schools and professional institutions must be widespread and research, theory development, publicity and spreading of ideas, cooperation between the managers, applicers and academics must be provided. (<http://www.turkkent.coop/>), Türk Kent, Strategic Planning Guide for Cooperatives (Annex: International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA) Strategic Plan for 10 Years of Cooperative (2011-2020), 2013, p.37).

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