



## Urban network, regional change and regionalization process in Turkey

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### Abstract

Turkey has undergone since 1950 a vigorous urbanization process resulting in a well-developed and hierarchized network of urban central places, with a strong trend towards metropolization in favour of the three biggest cities Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Thus a number of metropolitan and regional centres have progressively shaped, through regional directions of administrations and high level commercial, health and education facilities, *de facto* polarized regions, whereas several regional development plans have been engaged by the State Plan Organization, but without creating regions as political units and territorial collectivities. In response to European Union incentives, Turkey has adopted in 2002 NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 regional units and created Regional Development Agencies at the NUTS 2 level. The paper will analyze the criteria used to delimit these units and discuss how far the implementation of Development Agencies in this framework can be a first step in a regionalization process in Turkey.

**Keywords** : urban network – regionalization – NUTS 1 and 2 – Regional Development Agencies – Turkey

### 1.Introduction

This paper intends to explore the links between urbanization and regional development in Turkey. This country has undergone a vigorous urbanization process which has not only reversed the urban/rural ratio but also created a hierarchized network of urban central places (2). How far has this process led to the rise of regional identities in a cultural area where regional units were an almost unknown concept ?. Beyond broad natural regions, could the higher levels of the urban hierarchy develop *de facto* polarized regions, and did the government take such units

into account as a framework for development projects (3) ? Among a great number of reforms adopted in Turkey in order to meet the standards for entering the European Union, NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 statistical units have been created, and the latter have given the spatial framework for Regional Development Agencies. How far can these constitute a first step towards a true regionalization process in a country with a strong tradition of centralization (4) ?

## **2. A vigorous urbanization process leading to a well-developed urban system**

Like many other developing countries, Turkey has started in the 1950s a strong urbanization process which must be analysed both in its quantitative dimension, the global growth of urban population (2.1), and in its qualitative one, the differentiation of several hierarchized levels of central places (2.2).

### **2.1 The global shift from rural to urban**

Although a significant number of urban places had shown a remarkable continuity since the Antiquity, the young Republic of Turkey, proclaimed in 1923, was fundamentally a country of peasants, with 75 percent of the population living in villages at the time of the first general census of population in 1927. This rural/urban ratio remained the same until 1950, while the total population of the country gradually increased from 13.6 million to 20.9 million. In 1950 started both an acceleration of the global annual increase rate (from 2.17 percent in 1945-50 to 2.77 percent in 1950-55 and 2.85 percent in 1955-60) and an outmigration movement from villages to cities, resulting in a sharp discrepancy between the annual increase rates of urban and rural populations, respectively 5.57 and 1.75 percent in 1950-55 and 4.92 and 1.95 in 1955-60. Some peasants had already experienced seasonal or temporary work migrations to cities, especially from the Black Sea region towards Istanbul, as observed by Xavier de Planhol in 1950. Thus a “chain migration” process was developed, the first migrants helping relatives or neighbours to come.

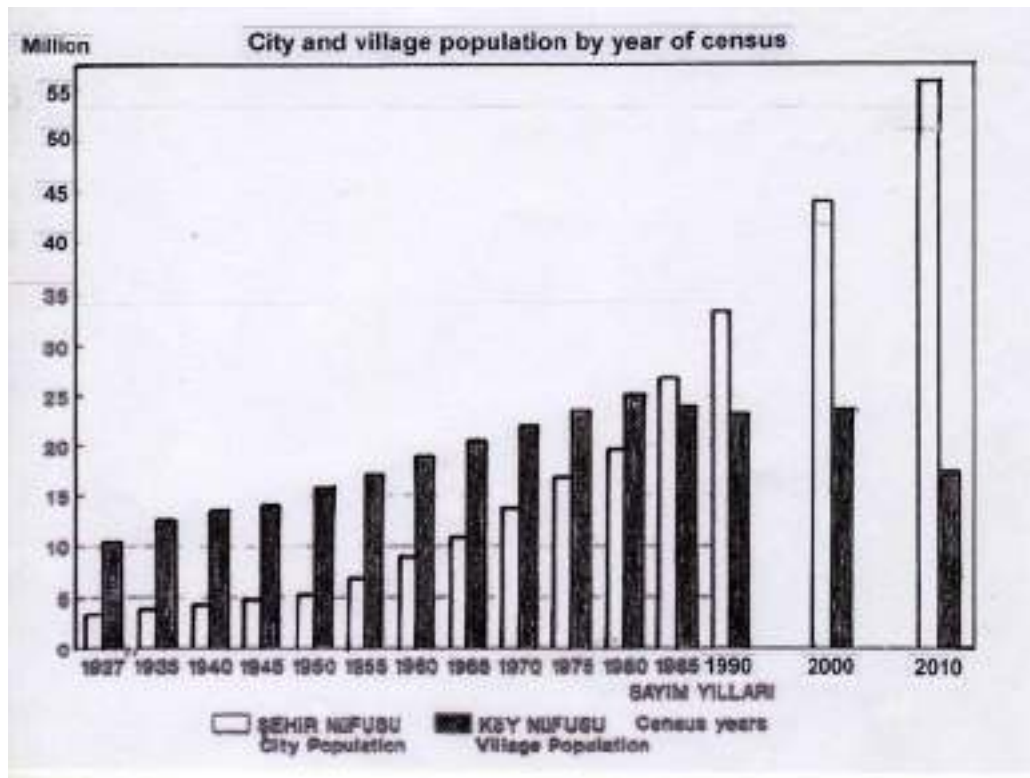


Fig. 1 – Evolution of the urban and rural population of Turkey (source DİE)

During the two next decades, this rural/urban migration process went on, not only towards Turkish towns and cities but also to foreign countries, mainly Germany together with other West European countries and oil-producing Arabian countries. The rural population as a whole was still growing, but much slower than the urban population, and reached its maximum at the 1980 census with 25 million people (56 percent of the total population of 44,7 million).

Then the rural population began to decrease, rather distinctly between 1980 and 1985 because the administrative reform creating the metropolitan municipalities for the biggest cities revised their limits in order to include actually urbanized former villages. Thus at the 1985 census urbanites became the majority, being 53 percent of the total population of 50.6 million. The rural population stabilized for a while between 1985 and 2000 and underwent a sharp decrease during the 2000 years, falling to 17,5 million, while the urban was strongly increasing, up to 56,2 million out of a total of 73.7 million on 31/12/2010, i.e. 76.2 percent of the total population. Actually, a new method of counting the population has been used since 2007, the Address Based Population Registration System, one may question whether it has introduced some discontinuity in statistical series or not. Anyway, as a whole, the proportion of villagers and urbanites has been reversed in just forty years.

## 2.2 The development of a hierarchized urban network

This urban growth has been distributed between a great number of cities, big and small, with differentiated functions, many of which give them the role of central

places for bigger or smaller areas : administration, education and health services, commerce, personal services. Turkey has thus built the most developed urban network of the Near East (Bazin 1997), the only Middle Eastern country having a comparable hierarchized urban network being its eastern neighbour Iran.

The first publication I devoted to this question (Bazin 1986) distinguished five levels in this hierarchized urban network :

a) The two capitals: At the top of the pyramid, the Turkish urban system appears to be bicephalous., due to recent history : Ankara has been appointed as the capital of the new Republic of Turkey in 1923, but the former Ottoman capital Istanbul, as a bimillenary world city (Stewig 1964), has kept a great part of its functions and demographic importance. Thus nation-wide functions are shared between the two cities : Ankara is the official political capital, with the Presidency of the Turkish Republic, all the organs of government, the Great National Assembly and the foreign embassies, and also the center of military power and of State-owned economic sector, whereas Istanbul has kept the roles of first harbour and commercial place, first industrial center, capital of the private economic sector and capital of academic, intellectual and artistic life. Of course, Ankara, being a very small town (25,000 inhabitants) when it became the capital, has undergone a very rapid growth (Pérouse 1997) while Istanbul, a city with more than 600,000 inhabitants when it lost its title of capital, was growing at a much slower pace until it accelerated its growth in the 1980s (Yerasimos 1997).

b) Regional metropolises: Three big cities following in the size-ranking list, Izmir center of the Aegean façade of Turkey, Adana in the Mediterranean region and Bursa in the southern Marmara region, have all begun to develop their industries together with their commercial role in the late Ottoman period, and have kept their advance.

c) Regional centers: a dozen of cities were identified as exerting a number of higher level functions, with regional-rank administrations, universities, a large hospital and many specialized services, and a strong commercial center. Contrary to the two upper levels present only in the western half of the country, they were scattered all over the national territory, and completed by half a dozen of centers with a less complete set of such functions.

d) Province (or Departments) centers: The province (or rather Department, *il* in Turkish) is the basic administrative unit in Turkey and corresponds to the French “Département” since Atatürk followed the French model of the Third Republic when he reorganized the administrative grid of the country. All these departements but four are named after their chief-town, which plays a prominent role in spatial identities : when a Turk says “I am from Sivas”, this means that he lives either in that city itself or in any township or village located in the department, and uses the numerous administrations, services and facilities of the city. Thus the remaining department centers (i.e. those having no significant regional-rank equipments) constitute the basic level of the urban network. The State is represented at that leve by the *vali* or “prefect”.

e) Districts or “arrondissements” centers: under the departemental level, Turkey is also characterized by the great number of small towns and townships, chief-towns of the inferior administrative unit called *ilçe*, equivalent of the French

“arrondissements”, the towns being the equivalent of French “sous-préfectures” hosting a subprefect. The multiplication of these smaller agglomerations is quite important : having a few administrations, a grammar school, a health center, a weekly market and a group of permanent shops, they offer to the inhabitants of surrounding villages the first contact with urbanity. Some of them have grown bigger thanks to the presence of industrial plants or touristic activity.

Compared to this situation of the mid-1980s, the urban network has kept its main characteristics and undergone a number of significant changes.

- The metropolization trend has boosted the biggest cities, governed since 1984 by metropolitan municipalities (*Büyük Şehir Belediyesi*, “municipality of the Great City”), especially Istanbul, now a megacity of 13.3 million inhabitants (end of 2011, see [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)) with important international functions, but also the capital Ankara with 4.3 million people.

The “club” of regional metropolises can now include, together with Izmir (2,7 million), Bursa (1.7 million) and Adana (1.6 million), a new member, Gaziantep (1,376,000) as a very important industrial center and the leader of developing Southeast Anatolia.

Most of the regional centers have reinforced their role and become quite large cities, five of them have more than 800,000 inhabitants : Konya (1,073,000) and Kayseri (844,000), “Anatolian tigers” with great industrial development in a socio-political conservative atmosphere ; Antalya (964,000), motor of the touristic boom ; Mersin (859,000), major industrial harbour, and Diyarbakır (875,000), leading city of the Kurdish Southeast. Some cities classified as uncomplete regional centers in 1986 have completed their functions, like Denizli in inner Aegean (511,000), Adapazarı east of Istanbul (429,000) or Van in remote mountainous Southeast (353,000). Only two of these cities have undergone demographic stagnation or slight decrease, Zonguldak with the decline of its coal mines and Edirne facing conjonctural changes at the Bulgarian boundary.

As for the province chief-towns, their total number (including the three above-mentioned categories), after having remained stable between 1955 and 1989, has increased in successive stages from 67 to 81 in 2000. Most of these are mid-size cities, or even very small, like Bayburt (25,000 inhabitants) or Ardahan (18,000), often at the head of a small declining area, and generally owe to political considerations their accession to this higher rank.

The number of smaller district centers has gone on increasing as well, they are more than 700 now, including in 2011 22 mid-size cities between 100,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, mostly industrialized cities, and 192 towns between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants.

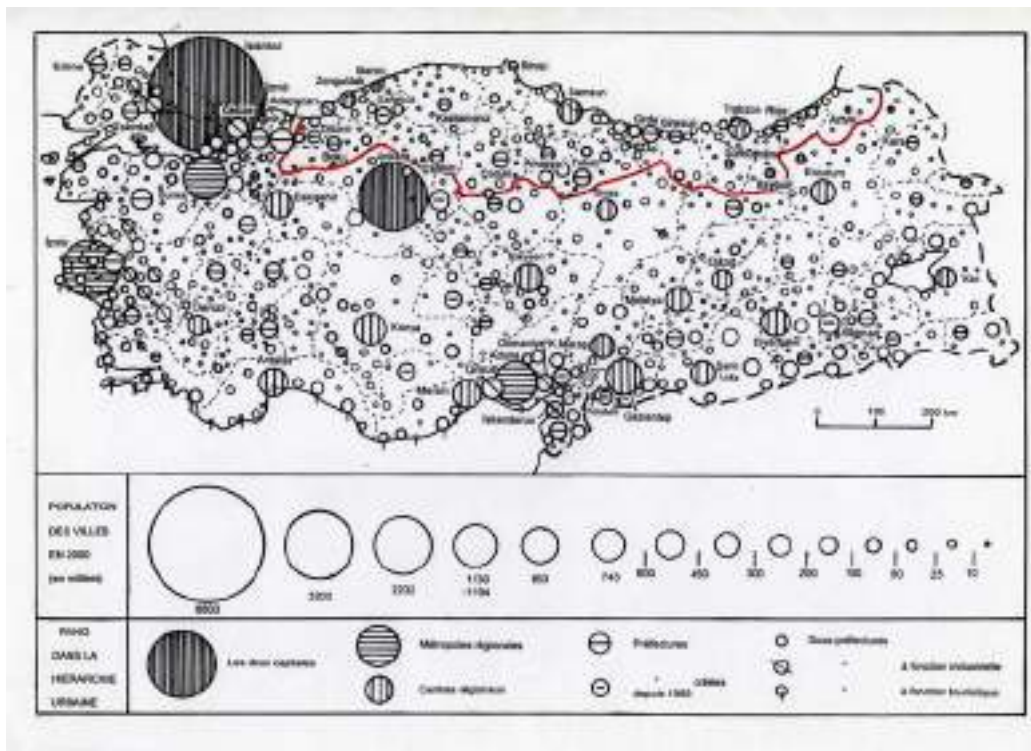


Fig. 2 – The urban network of Turkey in 2000

### 3. Regional centers and regional identities

The paradox of Turkey is that this country has numerous and strong regional centers, but no regions, or more precisely no regions identified through the influence of urban centers, but only natural regions (3.1). To what extent can these dynamix regional centers contribute to develop regional identities (3.2) ? A step further has been attained by a number of development projects at a regional scale (3.3).

#### 3.1 The “unknown region”

I used this expression (in original version “La région, cette inconnue...”) to underline the lack of regional units in Turkey and the Turco-Iranian cultural area (Bazin, 2000), an analysis which was more recently invoked and completed by Benoît Montabone (2011) in his excellent PhD thesis about the stakes of regional development in Turkey. In fact several words exist in Turkish to designate intermediate spatial units between the local place of everyday life and the national territory. The most often used one, *bölge*, is a neologism derived from the verb *bölmek*, “to divide”. Another word derived from the same verb, *bölüm*, is used for smaller units, especially subdivisions of the latter. *Yöre* is in turn used for even smaller local units. But if several common nouns designate different levels of spatial entities, very few specific proper nouns are in use. Administrative units themselves are usually named after their chief-town, it is the case of 77 of the present 81 provinces (*il*) and of the totality of the districts (*ilçe*).

However, a few regional nouns are used in Turkey. In fact the lack of such names had led orientalist and cultured travellers to use regional names of the classical Antiquity, such as Lydia, Phrygia, Cilicia etc. For instance, the thesis of Xavier de Planhol *De la plaine pamphylienne aux lacs pisidiens* (1958), which marked the beginning of his rich work on the cultural geography of the Middle East, was devoted to Pamphylia and Pisidia which had no other contemporary names than “the plain of Antalya” and “the lake district” or the “provinces of Burdur and Isparta”. Most of those antique names had totally disappeared from the daily use of people, to the exception of Thrace, *Trakya* in Turkish, which had remained well identified within the Ottoman empire for its partly Greek population, and has kept its name after the exchanges of populations in 1923. Other antique names have been brought back into use for regions having a high touristic value, first Cappadocia (*Kapadokya*) with its unique association of natural landscapes carved in volcanic tuffs and cultural heritage of medieval Christian populations, which you can admire now from the nacelle of a balloon, and later Lycia (*Likya*) for its original funeral monuments which you can discover by walking along the pedestrian Likya route : antique names as a marketing argument for new products !

Another name, purely Turkish, designates a very well identified regional unit: it is the Çukurova, the “hollow plain”, i.e. in the heart of the antique Cilicia a large alluvial plain surrounded by the chains of Taurus and Amanos and irrigated by the two rivers Seyhan and Ceyhan, mainly for the intensive cultivation of cotton. Thus it associates clearly perceivable physical features and agricultural speciality, well-known through the novels of Yaşar Kemal.

In fact, one set of regional units has been identified for the whole national territory, by the first national congress of Turkish geographers held in Ankara in 1941, and is still taught in elementary and secondary schools, memorized by all the population, and used in everyday life, for instance in the meteorological bulletins : seven natural regions (*doğal bölge*) characterized by a combination of physiographic and bioclimatic features (fig. 3). Four maritime regions are named after the four seas around the country, Black Sea, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions, and three interior regions are all called Anatolia completed by an adjective of position : Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia.



Fig. 3 – Natural regions of Turkey

This definition and delimitation of seven natural regions has been validated and precised by Oğuz Erol (1983) who used a modern approach based on the identification of geosystems and established a subdivision of every *bölge* into three levels : *bölüm*, *yöre* and landscape units. This division into natural regions is systematically used as the framework for regional descriptions of the country in atlases and handbooks. For instance the *Büyük Atlas* (Great Atlas) first produced in the late 1930s by Prof. Faik Sabri Duran and constantly reedited since that time, reported at once the limits of the natural regions on the four regional double pages (Duran, 2010, pp.24-31). Similarly, a new atlas of Turkey for the general public (Çiringel, 2010) devotes a substantial second part (pp. 53-85) to the presentation of the seven regions, the limits of which are also superimposed on most maps of the general part. Giving the first role to these natural divisions - which have not produced any administrative entities - underlines the unitarian vision of the Turkish territory.

### 3.2 *De facto* polarized regions versus centralization ?

However, the affirmation of regional centers rests upon a number of realities which are gradually building *de facto* polarized regions : people from the surrounding departments increasingly frequent these bigger cities for administrative affairs, for educational and health services, for shopping and leisure.

If the department (*il*) remains the basic level of administration in Turkey, with departmental directions (*X... il müdürlüğü*) for every State administration and public organizations, this scale has been quite early judged too narrow to treat many problems. Thus a number of State administrations and public companies have created regional directions (*Y... bölge müdürlüğü* or *baş müdürlüğü*) covering a number of adjacent departments. Although the need to address to this supradepartmental level is not very frequent, it gives a reason to go out of the usual departmental environment to a bigger city.



FIG. 3. — Erzurum, capitale régionale.  
 1. Balık Kurumu (Casino de viande, site d'approvisionnement). 2. Raffinerie de sucre de Ilca (Site d'approvisionnement). 3. Yaprak Mahulleri (Site produits de la terre). 4. P.T.T. 5. Devlet Su İşleri (eau). 6. Toprak Su (Sols). 7. Karayolları (Ponts et Chaussées). 8. İller Bölgesi (en partie aménagement du territoire). 9. Osmanlı Baş Müdürlüğü (Police). 10. Merkez Bankası (Banque Centrale).

Fig. 4 – Administrations and public organizations bound to Erzurum in 1966 (Bazin, 1969, p. 293)

However, as I checked it in the case of Erzurum in my first research work (Bazin, 1969, pp. 292-293), all these regional directions did not cover the same area – that was the same situation in France under the Fourth Republic -, which obliged the population to frequent several urban centers for different purposes. But this may have begun to be at least partly harmonized since that time.

High level social services such as most specialized health equipments or higher education can also play a significant role to make the population of an area to focus on a regional center providing these facilities. But in the Turkish case, the situation is quite different in these two fields of services. Actually, the contribution of universities to a regional identity is weaker in Turkey than in many other countries, for two opposite reasons. On the one hand a recent boom in higher education has led to the multiplication of universities : there were in 2011 (according to a list given on the website of the French embassy in Ankara) 75 universities and other higher education institutions located in 38 different cities, i.e. not only in regional centers, whereas the three main cities still concentrate more than half of these institutions (25 in Istanbul, 10 in Ankara and 5 in Izmir). If universities are almost exclusively hosted by regional centers in Black Sea region, Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia, in the western part of the country a number of mid-size province centers have also their own university now, for instance Çanakkale, Kocaeli, Bolu, Kûtahya, Kırıkkale, Niğde or Isparta. On the other hand the repartition of students between the universities is still organized in a much centralized way through a national interdisciplinary and interuniversity competitive exam. Thus every university receives students from all the regions of Turkey, and some of them a significant number of students from foreign countries as well. In fact, it always contributes to enhance the social animation and cultural life of cities, but only very partly in relation with its regional environment.

Health services, on the contrary, follow a logic of relative proximity, except for very rare illnesses. Big public and private hospitals are more numerous and have a bigger capacity and more complete equipments in regional centers, which offer as well a larger panel of specialists. The same logic applies to commerce and private services too. Together with concentrations of shops in the city center, which may be partly in a traditional bazaar and partly along the main avenues, important cities have begun to widen their commercial offer to two new forms : hypermarkets on peripheric locations and big commercial malls called *alışveriş ve yaşam merkezi* (“Shopping and lifestyle center”), often with a monumental architecture like the glass pyramid of Zafer Plaza in Bursa.

An important condition to the development of this regional attractivity is to improve the accessibility of these cities, and Turkey has in fact seen during the last two decades a real boom in transportation facilities. In terms of time-distance, in the 1980s regional centers were central places which one could reach in one day, nowadays you can go there, do your business or administrative formalities and come back home within the same day.

But shifting from this *de facto* growing polarization to a true regionalization reveals to be quite difficult. Centralization is deeply rooted in the political tradition of the Turkish Republic, and any attempts to decentralization are quickly perceived as a threat to the unity of the country. It is symptomatic to notice that the first step towards decentralization has been undertaken at the lower scale of departments by transferring some competences to “departmental special administrations” (*İl özel idaresi*) and to metropolitan municipalities.

### **3.3 First experiences of regional development projects**

In a more pragmatic way, a number of regional development projects have been undertaken, still in a centralized context under the impulse and control of the State Organization of Planification (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*, DPT).

The most ancient one was also the most ambitious, the Southeastern Anatolia Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*, GAP), an hydraulics-based integrated development project which has been subject to passionate discussions. It was launched in 1977, soon after the completion of the Keban reservoir-dam at the junction of the two upper branches of Euphrates, the Karasu and the Murat Su. The idea was to built a system of 22 dams on upper Euphrates and Tigris and tributary rivers combined with 19 hydro-electric power plants – including the biggest one in Turkey, fed by the Atatürk dam on the Euphrates, with an installed capacity of 2,400 MW -, in order to turn into intensive irrigated lands some 1,800,000 ha of extensive pluvial fields and steppic pastureland and to develop industries transforming regional mineral resources and agricultural products, especially cotton.

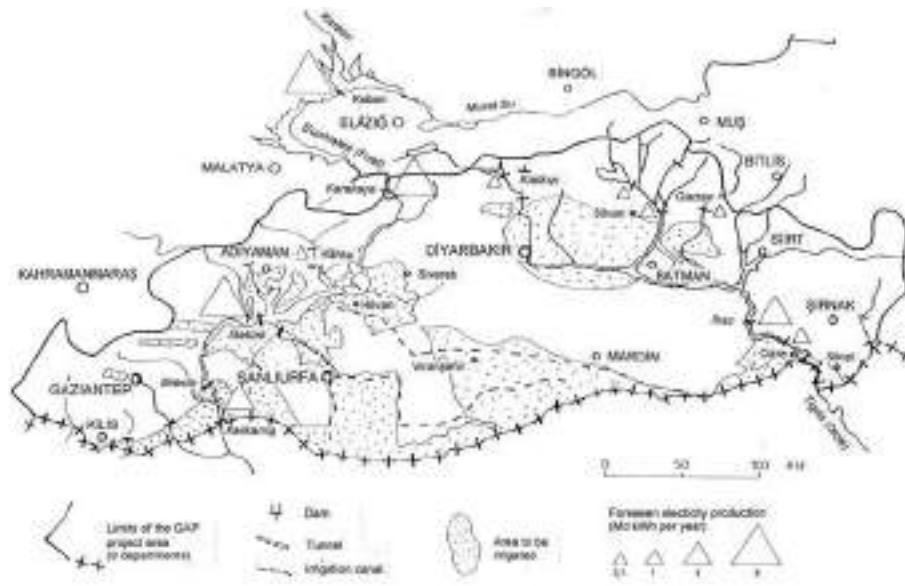


Fig. 5 – The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP)

The main objective of GAP was to seek a global remedy to the deep underdevelopment of Kurdish Southeast and to reduce spatial inequality by providing new infrastructures, increasing agricultural production thanks to irrigation and developing industry thanks to hydroelectricity. If the hydraulic programme and the extension of irrigated land is not achieved yet, Southeastern Anatolia has engaged deep changes, especially along the axis linking Gaziantep to Şanlıurfa.

Another set of more sectorial plans have been implemented during the successive five-year plans since 1970. Six rural development projects have successively been engaged by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and more precisely by its General Direction of Rural Services, in order to favour the growth of agricultural production by improving infrastructures, in areas covering one or two departments each, all in the northeastern part of the country. The last one, designed for the Erzincan-Sivas area (2005-2012), shows a new trend towards support to small familial holdings and sustainable development (Montabone, 2011, pp. 146-148).

The most interesting initiative, once again engaged by the DPT, concerns four Regional integrated Development Plans (RDP), all located in the north and east of the country (fig. 6) and adapted to the specific problems of these areas (Montabone, 2011, pp. 148-152) :

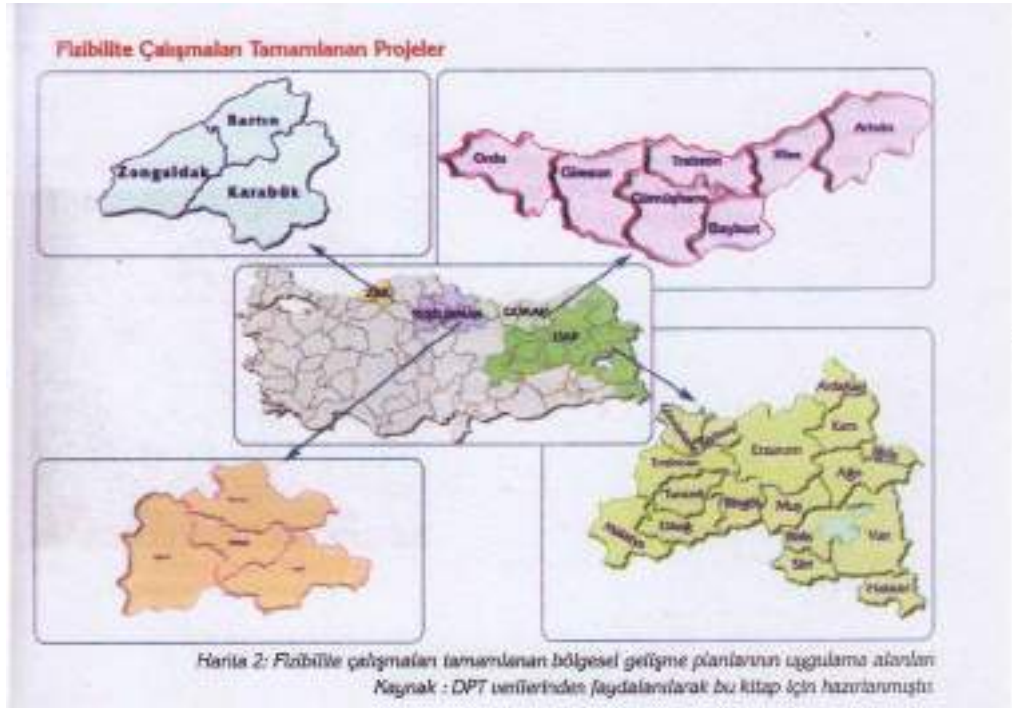


Fig. 6 – Regional development plans as presented in a secondary school handbook

- The Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük RDP(1996) aims to favour the restructuring of coal mines and iron and steel industry.
- The Eastern Black Sea RDP (acronym DOKAP, 1998) is a long-term plan prepared with a Japanese cooperation agency, based on a detailed territorial diagnosis and proposing ten structural programmes.
- The Eastern Anatolia RDP (acronym DAP, 2001) encompasses the poorest areas of the country. Elaborated by a pool of regional universities, it has ambitious but very general objectives of sustainable development and reduction of inequalities.
- The Yeşilirmak Basin Development Project (2004) takes its originality from its peculiar logic : organizing a catchment basin in order to lessen the pollution discharged into the Black Sea, which compels by retroaction to improve numerous aspects of economic and social life. Alas, it includes only the four departments located downstream, but not the upstream valley located in Sivas department.

As a whole, these plans have suffered from questionable delimitation, from the incapacity to mobilize the necessary financing resources, and from the lack of an institutional body ready to implement the plans, that remain virtual as for now. But they have opened an interesting way towards regionalization.

#### 4. From new statistical units to a real regionalization process ?

In the framework of the large pre-adhesion process engaged to meet the Copenhagen criteria for claiming membership in the European Union, Turkey has adopted two levels of supradepartmental units NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 (4.1). Although their

delimitation is criticizable in many cases, all the NUTS 2 units have been provided with Development Agencies (4.2). Can we consider the creation of these DA as the first step towards a real regionalization (4.3) ?

#### 4.1 The introduction of regional units between EU incentives and national concern

As in many other fields, Turkey has been facing strong EU incentives concerning the chapter 22 – Regional policy of the pre-adhesion process. The first *Partnership for adhesion* adopted in March 2001 indicates namely among the three priorities concerning the development of an efficient regional policy the elaboration of a NUTS classification. This objective met some actions separately engaged in Turkey, such as the above-mentioned Regional Development Plans and reflections about a reform of governance.

Thus two levels of statistical units have been defined and delimited in 2002 between the State and the existing departments, that have been subsequently labelled NUTS 3 units. The result is the official Classification of Statistical Regions (*İstatistik Bölge Birimleri Sınıflaması*, acronym İBBS) and the corresponding maps (fig. 7) :

- 12 NUTS 1 (*düzey 1* = level 1) big regions, which respect as much as possible the contours of the 7 natural regions and are named after them ;
- 26 NUTS 2 (*düzey 2*) regions, counting from one to six preexisting departments ;
- and 81 NUTS 3 (*düzey 3*), the existing departments.



Fig. 7 – The new NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 regional units in Turkey

The delimitation of NUTS 2 regions has apparently obeyed to several contradictory logics : having a comparable demographic weight ; constituting an homogenous natural or economic entity ; being polarized by one big city. The combination of these criteria results in a rather confused typology :

- Regions made of one single department : the three metropolises Istanbul (TR10), Ankara (51) and Izmir (TR31), a choice which avoids too big regions, but cuts the metropolises from their immediate environment ;
- Regions polarized around one single regional center : TR21 Edirne, TR22 Balıkesir, TR32 Denizli, TR33 Manisa (not so clear), TR52 Konya, TR61 Antalya, TR81 Zonguldak, TR83 Samsun, TR90 Trabzon, TRA1 Erzurum, TRB2 Van, TRC1 Gaziantep ;
- Bipolarized regions (often with a different weight of the two cities) : TR41 Bursa + Eskişehir, TR42 Izmit (Kocaeli) + Adapazarı, TR62 Adana + Mersin, TR63 Kahramanmaraş + Antakya ; TR72 Kayseri + Sivas, TRB1 Malatya + Elâzığ, TRC2 Diyarbakır + Şanlıurfa ;
- Little polarized interstitial regions : TR82 Kastamonu-Çankırı-Sinop, TR71 Kırıkkale- Aksaray-Niğde-Nevşehir.
- Little polarized peripheric regions : TR42 Kars-Ardahan-Iğdır-Ağrı, TRC3 Mardin-Batman-Şırnak-Siirt.

#### **4.2 The creation of Development Agencies**

After having been for some years just a new statistical grid – adopted at once by the Turkish Statistical Institute (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, TÜİK) -, this new territorial division of the country has suddenly increased its importance with the creation of Development Agencies (DA, *Kalkınma Ajansları*) in the territory of the 26 NUTS 2 regional units, in three steps : two pilot-agencies were created in 2007 in Izmir (TR31) and Adana-Mersin (TR62) ; 9 others, including Istanbul, in 2008 and the remaining 15 in 2010. Thus these new institutions cover the whole national territory. Benoît Montabone has focussed his research on this innovative institution (2011, chapters 4 and 5, pp. 155-217). The law n° 5449 published in the Official Journal on July 6, 2006, which has launched their creation defines their main functions: planification at the regional scale, including the elaboration of strategic plans : financial support to development projects ; support to innovation and external investments.

Initially called Regional Development Agencies (*Bölgesel Kalkınma Ajansları*), these DA have followed – after a number of preparatory visits and inquiries, for instance in West Midlands and in Alsace – an international and especially european model, defined by Halkier and Danson (1997) as private or semi-public organizations gathering together strategic stake-holders of a territory in order to favour innovation and improve economic governance. Several new members of E.U., such as Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, have in fact adopted this formula during their pre-adhesion period. But Turkish DA also take place in a much wider legislative package

launched in 2004 and aiming to give more autonomy to local levels like Departmental Special Administrations and Metropolitan Municipalities. They can thus be interpreted as the result of a convergence between a european demand and a national evolution.

One of the most important innovative features of DA is the creation, beside the usual Management Board (*Yönetim Kurulu*), of a consultative Development Council (*Kalkınma Kurulu*) of 100 members representing the economic and social forces of the region. In addition to the institutional personalities present in the Management Board, i.e. the prefects of all the departments composing the regional unit, the mayors of the chief-cities of every province, the presidents of the Departmental Special Administrations and those of the Trade and Industry Boards, they include representatives of municipalities, of State local administrations, of Trade and Industry Boards, of Organized Industrial Estates, of professional associations, of universities etc. Resting on the experience of a few pre-existent growth coalitions, for instance in Gaziantep, these new DA allow bottom-up mobilization for nation-wide recognition of regional competitiveness and attraction of investments.

#### **4.3 A first step towards real regionalization ?**

If Elise Massicard (2008) remained somewhat sceptic about the trend towards regionalization, speaking of “impossible regionalism” and “improbable regionalization”, her study dates back to the very beginning of the creation of Development Agencies., and she had not had the possibility of appreciating the first results of this innovation process, as Benoît Montabone has done.

The latter has chosen three examples to make field studies and inquiries, the DA of Istanbul, Izmir and Karacadağ covering the two departments of Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa. The two former examples have in common the fact that the choice of a NUTS 2 unit limited to one single department weakens the possibilities of strategic planification which should be elaborated for a much wider metropolitan area. In fact, in the case of Istanbul, where the authority of the metropolitan municipality covers now the whole territory of the department, the DA stands in concurrence with the Istanbul Metropolitan Planification board (*Istanbul Metropoliten Planlama*, IMP) directly bound to the municipality, which has actually produced a reflection at a much wider and more appropriate scale, that of the whole Marmara basin (fig.8).

In Izmir, where the DA was installed earlier, its strategic development plan has taken into account documents previously elaborated by the metropolitan municipality and by the Board of Trade, and explicitly proposed to extend the reflections to all the departments of the Aegean region, actually under the metropolitan influence of Izmir.

As for the Karacadağ DA, its territory depends greatly of development programmes engaged at the broader scale of GAP, which encompasses as well the two neighbouring DA of Gaziantep (*İpek Yolu*, “Silk Road”) and Mardin (*Dicle*,



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