

FRINGE: CHANGING CONTEXT OF THE URBAN PERIPHERAL AND 'NEAR-RURAL' AREAS IN A PROCESS OF STABILITY AND DEGROWTH

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Abstract

The dominance of the growth based theories over the planning literature and implications has once seemed to be unyielding and indomitable. For decades, growth has overwhelmingly been on the focal point of development strategies influencing both economic and spatial interventions in a wider range from national and regional level policies to land use planning. This picture, however, is itself receding in the past. Demographic structure changes having begun to be much more apparent especially after the 2000s in many countries represent a real challenge to almost all of the urban growth based strategies. These demographic structure changes seem to lead at least two vital questions. The first question deals with the need to find new strategies for efficient, suitable and so also 'smart' ways to entrench a certain level of economic success with possible near future labor market bottlenecks and without the existence of fast urbanization and rapid urban growth. The second question seems to be about the main 'problem' of the planning profession. The existence of population stability – or even decline – intertwined with the absence of rapid urban growth paves the way for taking quality based problems into the focal point of planning instead of growth based ones. The attention of the literature in relation to these two questions is directed toward new strategies which attempt to cope with controlling the economic consequences on the one hand and seeking problem based planning processes focused on qualitative issues of urban areas rather than just intending to manage growth problems on the other. In tune with this tendency in the literature, this study aims preliminarily at asking a third question having regard to the formerly identified two questions. This question takes urban peripheral areas wherein the 'urban' touches the 'rural', and near-rural areas wherein the accessibility to the amenities of urban life qualities and the proximity to the regional towns are minimally influenced by the friction of distance into consideration. This study aims secondly at contributing to the conceptual framework of urban fringe studies. To anticipate the direction, two major new industrial districts of Turkey, Gaziantep and Kayseri are examined in this research.

1. Introduction

Whatsoever might have been the reason, the Total Fertility Rates (TFRs) have begun to be dwindled after the baby boomers especially in the industrialized world. Although the total population of the globe still draws an upward tendency, many

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countries have already faced stability or even decline trends. The decreases in the TFRs intertwined with influential increases in the average life expectancies in these countries have provoked attention to the economic consequences of demographic changes. While the dependency ratios of younger cohorts have steadily been decreasing, an exact opposite tendency of the elderly dependency ratios have resulted economic impacts in a wide range from labor market bottlenecks to total efficiency losses. This kind of demographic structure change has influences on national level social security policies and so also on immigration policies which somehow find opposite reflections within the rise of right wing politics in some countries.

A similar demographic change tendency has begun to be apparent in Turkey especially after the 2000s. 'A young and dynamic population' component of the Turkish economy has already begun to lose its influences. The increase in the legal retirement age, revisions in the social security policies, preparations of ageing action plans seem to be the indicators of national politics awareness about what Turkey may face in terms of demographic change in the near future.

Fast population increases and rapid urban growth do not seem to be the fundamental components of the towns in Turkey as once they had been especially in the period between 1950s and 1980s. In tune with the prevalent demographic boom in this period, the main concern of planning had been the management of rapid urban growth. But beginning from the 1990s, the 'rapid' and 'fast' aspects of Turkey's population have gradually disappeared. The demographic indicators of the 2000s are becoming more like the ones in the European Union countries. Asking to what extent it is possible to maintain a certain level of economic growth without the population dynamism, therefore, indicates real challenging economic consequences of the demographic change. Both the national and local economies in Turkey have enjoyed the externalities of rapid urban growth and population increases, not only in terms of labor market but also in terms of industrialization. Until the 2000s, a somehow disguised interdependency between urban growth and industrial sectors has paved a way for remarkable local development success stories. A careful examination of these stories will certainly indicate the great merit of rapid urban growth and high amounts of urban population increases in these local development experiences, no matter if these success stories were planned or uneven.

This relation between economic development and urban growth seems to be one good reason explaining why urban growth is – and always have been for decades – so central in planning. Any forthcoming demographic structure change tendencies, in which the population draws stability or even decline trend, will presumably entail reconsidering urban growth based development politics. This shift in the focal point of planning indicates another challenge for the planning education, planning professionals and for the profession itself in Turkey.

The national planning agenda has already started to suffer from stridently brought up debates about what planning should deal with. A wide range of other professions from architects to engineers, sociologists, economists, geographers etc. take part

within these debates. These travails of the Turkish planning agenda, however, seem to give birth to new dimensions in planning in Turkey. These new dimensions are identified altogether as Turkey's new urbanization process in this study and in tune with these two questions mentioned above, this study aims preliminarily at asking a third one. This question takes urban peripheral areas wherein the 'urban' touches the 'rural', and near-rural areas (Hovardaoğlu, Çalışır-Hovardaoğlu and Sınacı, 2011) wherein the accessibility to the amenities of urban life qualities and the proximity especially to the regional towns are minimally influenced by the friction of distance into consideration. This study aims secondly at contributing to the conceptual framework of urban fringe studies.

The impacts of national level demographic structure change, perhaps, will not simultaneously be effective on local levels. Regional towns may face these problems in mid-term thanks to their central positions both in economic and urban terms. But the validity of these three questions depends on and requires empirical data from a case study. Examining the urbanization experiences of two major new industrial districts of Turkey, Gaziantep and Kayseri can give plausible evidence on the subject. Four main indicators are used in order to understand the direction of demographic change in these two towns that are the temporal changes of (a) TFRs, (b) population increase rates, (c) dependency ratios, and (d) cohort populations. Besides, the changes in the urban macro forms, urban growth and land use decisions of the towns of Kayseri and Gaziantep are researched in order to understand the rural urban fringes.

2. The Demographic Change Trends of the Global, National and Local Levels

2.1. The Demographic Change Trends of the Global Level

The term demographic transition was first used by the American demographer Warren Thompson in 1929 to label the changes — or transitions — he observed in birth and death rates in industrialized societies. The relation between demographic structure and development can preliminarily anticipate creating links between workforce or labor force demographics and productivity. This is why the effect of demography on economic performance has been the subject of intense debate in economics for decades. Actually, the demographic dynamics of nations, regions, and cities are thought to have vital importance in terms of general economic performance. However, the demographic structure is dynamic. It is easily possible to observe population fluctuations throughout the history in almost every scale, from settlements to regions, nations and even transnational levels.

The problem of population ageing is one of the most pronounced demographic change problems recently, particularly in the developed countries. The second problem is the fertility decline. The most common indicator for fertility is the Total Fertility Rate (TFR). It gives the average number of children per woman. Researchers show that TFR below 2.1 means a low fertility and decline in the total population. However, it is important to underline that, little fluctuations in this rate

result big influences. McDonald (2000), for instance, stresses that in a population with a fertility rate of 1.3, the population falls at the rate of 1.5 % per annum and such a population, in 100 years would fall to less than a quarter of its original size. He also shows that with a fertility rate of 1.9, the rate of decline in this population is only 0.2 % per annum which at the end of 100 years would result a population that is 82 % of its original size (McDonald, 2000). Despite the continuing increase tendency of the total world population, the increase amount is – owing to a decline in the TFR – gradually dwindling.

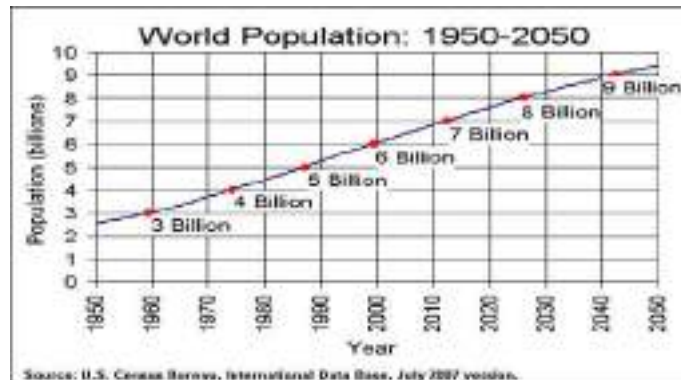


Figure 1. World population: 1950 – 2050 (Source: US Census Bureau, International Database, 2010)

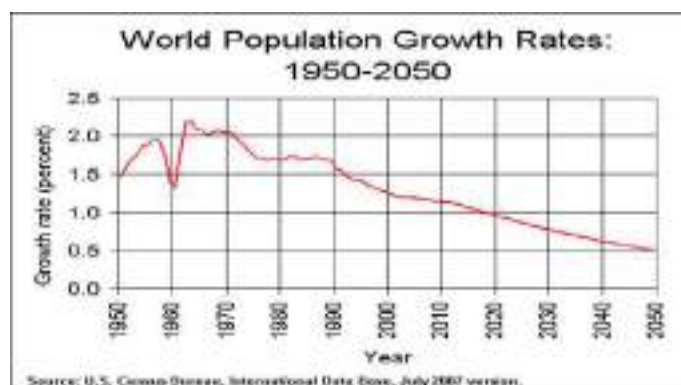


Figure 2. World population growth rates: 1950 – 2050. (Source: US Census Bureau, International Database, 2010)

An influential research example analyzes the possible near future influences of the recent demographic structure of the European Union (EU). At the 2nd Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) world forum, Rainer Muenz was trying to draw attention to the rapidly ageing demographic structure of Europe by stressing that Europe is facing the lowest fertility rates ever recorded in the history of mankind (Muenz, 2007). Almost all countries in Europe have a downward trend of total population, a fertility decline, and an ageing demographic structure, he expresses.

Table 1. Total (Period) Fertility Rates in the EU Region

	1960/64	1970/74	1980/84	1990/94	2000/03	2004/05	2050
Belgium	2.64	2.07	1.61	1.62	1.63	1.64	1.70
Czech Republic	2.22	2.14	2.01	1.72	1.16	1.23	1.50
Denmark	2.58	1.97	1.44	1.73	1.75	1.78	1.80
Germany	2.46	1.77	1.48	1.32	1.35	1.37	1.45
France	2.83	2.36	1.88	1.72	1.89	1.90	1.85
Ireland	3.91	3.84	2.92	1.99	1.95	1.99	1.80
Italy	2.50	2.37	1.55	1.28	1.26	1.33	1.40
Hungary	1.88	2.01	1.82	1.77	1.31	1.28	1.60
Netherlands	3.17	2.15	1.52	1.59	1.72	1.73	1.75
Austria	2.78	2.08	1.61	1.49	1.37	1.42	1.45
Poland	2.76	2.24	2.33	1.93	1.28	1.23	1.60
Slovakia	2.93	2.50	2.29	1.94	1.22	1.25	1.60
Finland	2.68	1.64	1.68	1.82	1.74	1.80	1.80
Sweden	2.30	1.90	1.64	2.04	1.62	1.75	1.85
United Kingdom	2.86	2.20	1.81	1.78	1.66	1.74	1.75
Turkey	6.18	5.68	4.36	2.99	2.42	2.20	1.85

Source: Eurostat from Europe's Demographic Future: Facts and Figures, 2007, p.17

2.2. The Demographic Change Trends of the National Level in Turkey

The TFR in Turkey in 2005 was 2.20 while it was 6.18 in the period between 1960 and 1964. In a forty-five-year period, therefore, the TFR has declined approximately 65 %. Having regard to this decline in TFR, the total national population in Turkey seems to stabilize and seems to decline in near future if this latest forty-five-year trajectory remains the same.

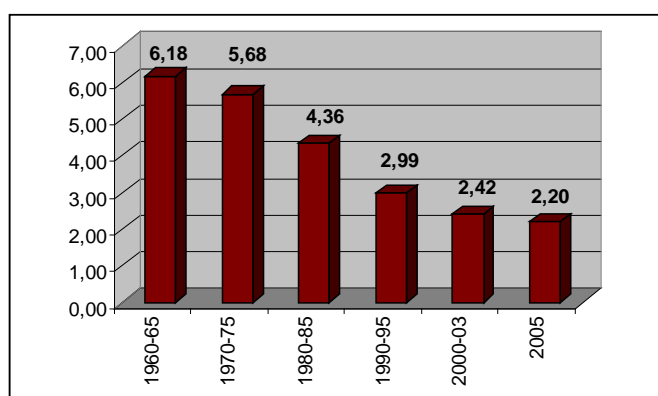


Figure 4. The national level TFR changes in Turkey in the period between 1960 and 2005 (Compiled from Europe's Demographic Future: Facts and Figures, 2007, p.17).

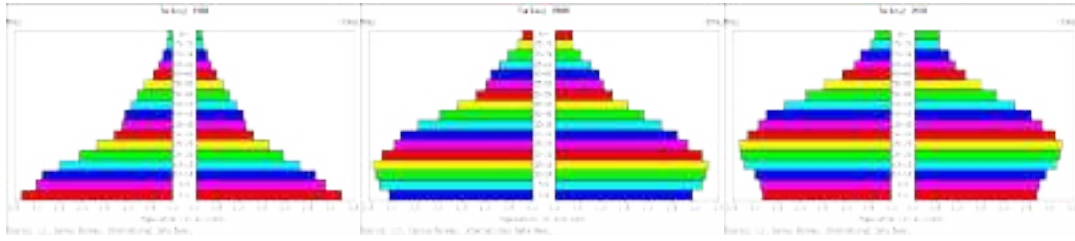


Figure 5. The national population pyramid of Turkey in 1980, 2000 and 2010 (Source: US Census Bureau, International Database, 2010).

In addition to the TFR decline trend shown in Figure 1, the population trajectory becoming much more apparent in the latest national population pyramid indicates the decline in the population increase ratios on the one hand and the shrinking proportion of the population of younger cohorts on the other. This trajectory, moreover, refers to a mid-term decline in the work force cohorts and to an increase in the population of the elder cohorts which indicates an increase in the elderly dependency ratios.

2.3. Contemporary Demographic Change Trajectories in Two New Industrial Districts of Turkey: The Towns of Gaziantep and Kayseri

Certain recent researches stress that the national level TFR change tendencies show some regional and geographical distinctions (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2006). Despite some minor distinctions from one another, two new industrial districts of Turkey; the towns of Gaziantep and Kayseri, however, represent a similar trajectory to the national level changes. According to TURKSTAT data, the provincial TFRs in the year 2008 were as in the following: Gaziantep: 3.30 and Kayseri 2.56; the TFRs in 2000 were: Gaziantep: 3.39 and Kayseri 2.51; and the TFRs in 1990 were: Gaziantep: 4.09 and Kayseri 3.64. There is a minor increase in the provincial TFR of Kayseri in 2008; however, the decline in the period between 1990 and 2008 is 29.68 %. Similarly, the decline in the same period in Gaziantep is 19.32 %. In the same period, the national level decline corresponds to 26.42 %. The rate of decline, therefore, in Kayseri is more than the national level, while the rate of decline in Gaziantep is less than the national level. All trajectories represent a decrease in TFR contrary to the trajectories of the period before 1980s. The population pyramids also represent a similar tendency.

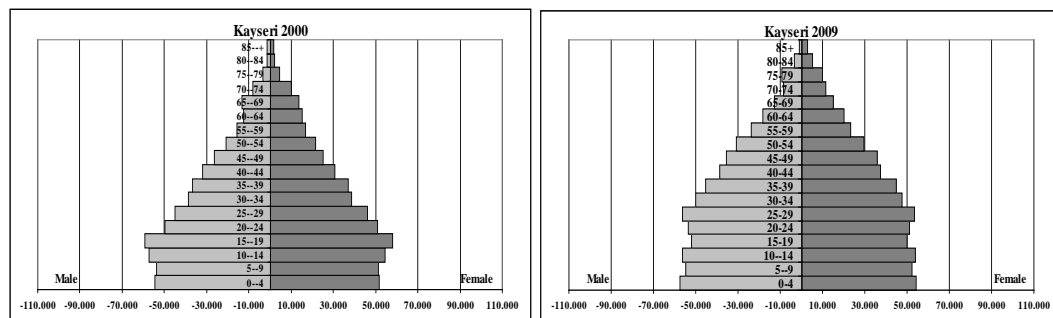


Figure 6. The population pyramid of Kayseri in 2000 and 2009 (Compiled from TURKSTAT census data).

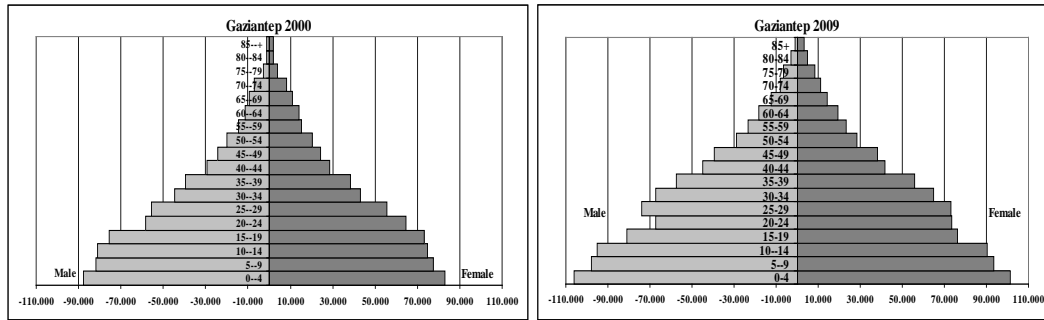


Figure 7. The population pyramids of Gaziantep in 2000 and 2009 (Compiled from TURKSTAT census data).

The change in the population ratios of working force and non-working cohorts in Gaziantep in the period between 2000 and 2009, however, seem to represent a coming decline particularly in the population of work force cohorts. In both towns, the population rates of younger cohorts have declined in this period while the population rates of elderly cohorts have increased. Table 2 apparently indicates the increase in the elderly dependency ratios and thus the population aging and the decline in the population rates of younger cohorts and thus the renewal rate of total population. In mid-term, both of these towns seem to represent similar demographic change trends to the national level trajectories and therefore, population aging, decline in the TFR and the dwindling proportion of population renewal rate seem to be the main determinants of the demographic structure of these towns.

Table 2. The population changes in Gaziantep and Kayseri in the period between 2000 and 2009 (Compiled from TURKSTAT census data)

Gaziantep	2000		0-14	15-64	65+	Total
		Male	250.515	373.296	21.482	645.293
2000-2009		Female	234.995	377.159	27.114	639.268
Total		Total	485.510	750.455	48.596	1.284.561
Population		Rate (%)	37,80	58,42	3,78	100,00
Artış Oranı	2009		0-14	15-64	65+	Total
28,73		Male	299.484	501.585	30.842	831.911
%		Female	285.468	494.730	41.561	821.759
		Total	584.952	996.315	72.403	1.653.670
		Rate (%)	35,37	60,25	4,38	100,00
Kayseri	2000		0-14	15-64	65+	Total
		Male	165.230	336.873	27.392	529.495
2000-2009		Female	157.771	341.061	31.934	530.766
Total		Total	323.001	677.934	59.326	1.060.261
Population		Rate (%)	30,46	63,94	5,60	100,00
İnceleme oranı	2009		0-14	15-64	65+	Total
13,73		Male	168.439	404.137	34.446	607.022
%		Female	160.390	393.805	44.655	598.850
		Total	328.829	797.942	79.101	1.205.872
		Rate (%)	27,27	66,17	6,56	100,00

3. The Rural-Urban Fringe

3.1. Theoretical Attitude toward the Rural-Urban Fringes

The post-war period after 1945 represents a major restructuring process both in economic and urban terms for almost all of the countries no matter if they joined the war or stayed as neutral countries. It is possible to distinguish between three significant realities of this period. Presumably, the most apparent one is the dominance of the Keynesian economics. In tune with the rise of welfare state and Keynesian economics, planned economy and planning profession itself had gained a central importance. The rapid population increase can be identified as the second clearly distinguishable realities of this period. It is not surprising that the short period after 1945 was called the 'baby boom' period in many countries. This generation is called the baby boomers. Rapid urban growth, fast urbanization and a higher amount of increase in the number of urban population than the total population can be identified as the most apparent consequences of this baby boom period.

This period also represents a beginning for an extremely high increase in urbanization in relation not only to the rapid population growth, but also to the industrialization based development strategies. Everything about 'urban' had become a focal point since development has been thought to be depended merely on urbanization; and thus industrialization. Even the indicators of development had been organized to measure the industrialization levels. The policies and strategies of this period have, therefore, focused on urbanization and industrialization. The dominance of welfare state policies and thus planned economy has paved the way of planning profession for a central importance. And central issues in planning were all related to 'growth' one way or another.

Drawing a brief perspective about how planning theoretically conceptualized the rural-urban fringe in a period in which 'growth' played the leading role seems to have a vital importance. The fringe has not been discovered recently, it has always been there in theoretical foundations of planning. It is possible to identify the first theoretical footprints of the fringe in von Thünen's influential work "The Isolated State in Relation to Agriculture and Political Economy" (von Thünen, 2009 [1863]) in a form of a dialectic between the core and periphery especially in 'Thünen's Rings'.

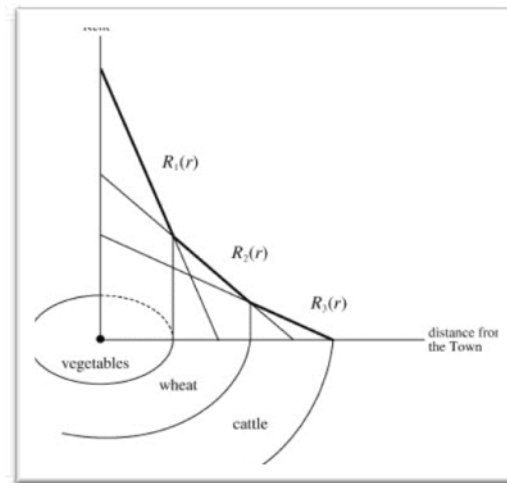


Figure 8: Thünen's Rings (Fujita, M., 2012).

Another influential study sharing a similar approach to the fringe with von Thünen's work is Walter Christaller's "Central Places in Southern Germany" (Christaller, 1966 [1933]). He identified the hierarchical relationship between the central places and 'hinterlands' wherein a dialectic between core and periphery results a hexagonal pattern of urban and regional services. In addition, McLoughlin (1969) draws attention to Charles Colby's (1933) study on 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces in urban geography and puts that centrifugal and centripetal forces in cities have "the effect of concentrating certain activities and dispersing others respectively" (p. 62).

Besides, both in Burgess' (1968, [1925]) studies on concentric rings and later, Harris and Ullman's (1957, [1945]) influential conception on multiple-nuclei, it is possible to identify the core-periphery type of relations between the urban and fringe. The common point of all these fundamental theoretical studies of planning is that they all focused on center and central; and explain the peripheral within a context of core-periphery relations.

Adding the concept "land-use" within all these conceptions will pave a seminal way for the attempts of this study to understand the theoretical position of the fringe. According to those theoretical studies in which the land-uses occupy the focal point, the rural-urban fringe is a valuable part of urban wherein the land-uses which entails huge amounts of area usage and which should not be 'located' within the urban area are 'located'. Or it is the location for inter-urban and / or inter-regional heavy transportation. Especially in land-use based theories, as Gallent, Andersson and Bianconi (2006) put, "fringe is often seen as a degraded area, fit only for locating sewage works, essential service functions and other less than neighborly uses" (p. xv). Stuart Chapin, Jr. (1972) most remarkably puts the attitude of land-use based theories toward the fringe as in the following:

General principles relating to the location of land uses customarily identify three major functional areas in the urban complex: the work areas, the living areas, and the leisure-time

areas. (...) The leisure-time areas are generally considered to include the major educational, cultural, and recreational facilities of the urban center consisting of colleges, museums, concert halls, libraries, colosseums, golf courses, large public parks and wildlife reserves for hiking, picnics and outings of all kinds, and similar facilities (Chapin, Jr., p. 371).

(...)Intensive manufacturing: variety of site sizes for modern one-story or multiple-story buildings and accessory storage, loading and parking areas in close-in and fringe locations... (Chapin, Jr., p. 372).

(...) Wholesale and related use areas: #2: range of choice in close-in and fringe locations, site sizes... (Chapin, Jr., p. 373).

(...) Region-Serving recreation, education and cultural facilities: Major parks, public reservations and golf courses: acreage sites in fringe and outlying areas... (Chapin, Jr., p. 374).

Finally, the attitude of growth-based approaches toward the fringe is tried to be shown. One of the basic methods of urban-growth based approaches is the threshold analysis. In their seminal work on threshold analysis, Kozlowski, Hughes and Brown (1972) define the thresholds as obstacles blocking minimum cost expansion opportunities of the urban areas.

(...) from which the most suitable physical growth directions for a town can be deduced. By estimating the threshold costs, indispensable for opening up new land for urban development, and by calculating the capacity of threshold areas (...) important data for determining the most viable possibilities for urban expansion taking into account existing physical conditions can be obtained. From this sequence in which adjacent areas should be developed can also be indicate (...) (Kozlowski, Hughes and Brown, 1972, p.25-26).

According to their statements above, rural-urban fringes are considered to be the thresholds for urban expansion. To put in a nutshell, even though the fringe has not been discovered lately and it has always been there with the urban areas, many of the theoretical studies, owing mostly to somehow reasonable grounds, tend not to take care with the rural-urban fringes. The fringe has sometimes represented thresholds, sometimes been thought to be a 'rational' location for 'less than neighborly' land-uses and so on. In certain cases, the roles and usages of the fringe has not even been considered theoretically. The rural-urban fringe of the towns in Turkey stands for a remarkable example of these roles and usages.

3.2. The Rural-Urban Fringes in Turkey

To put it briefly, it is possible to observe similar notions of the rural-urban fringes of the towns in Turkey. But in addition to them, the urbanization process of Turkey entails identifying two important and, to a degree, peculiar characteristics of the rural-urban fringes which are, in turn, the slum house (gecekondu) areas and economically influential amounts of speculative investment on urban land. Every urban settlement, but especially the big towns, in Turkey has experienced rapid population increases and thus rapid urban growth for more than 50 years. During the

1970s, the increase rates of urban population reached a level way higher than the total population increase, and this 50-year-long period represents incredible amounts of population flows from rural areas to urban. Even the population projections of those plans which predicted the most reasonable increase and growth rates have become insufficient owing to population boom.

Slum house areas and urban land speculations have been two of the main agendas of both urbanization and planning profession in Turkey. And the basic spatial component of these two agendas was – and to a degree still is – the rural-urban fringes. Any attempt to consider the rural-urban fringe in Turkey in those times, therefore, seemed to be sentenced to become useless owing to the growth rates of towns. In some cases like Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir, and so also like Adana, Bursa, Gaziantep, Kayseri etc., urban expansion rates would have defied all attempts even to define a rural-urban fringe in a period when one year's rural has become the urban of another.

It seems totally reasonable for planning, both in practical and educational terms, to focus on dealing with urban growth and other related problems. But as underlined in the foregoing sections, the national demographic dynamics of Turkey has already begun to change and the influences of this demographic shift have started to be much more apparent. Urban transformation related issues and debates seem to capture the planning agenda in Turkey recently and urban growth and urban expansion seem to lose their central importance at least on popular grounds. Even though the urban transformation and renewal implications result an unnecessary density increase type urban growth (Hovardaoğlu, 2010b), the growth itself now seems to fail in attracting direct attention.

In tune with this shift, certain new usages seem to appear in the rural-urban fringes. Gated community type low density and high priced housing areas and big malls are the most popular ones located in the fringes. However, in many towns, the fringe has already occupied by slum house areas, industrial zones, certain public services and institutions which need big areas etc. In these towns, those popular uses need to jump over the 'traditional' land-uses of the fringe and they create new circles sprawling beyond the existing edges of the towns which of course results the existence of the speculative expectations. However, owing on the one hand to the jam within the urban area and on the other to the old habitual attitude toward the fringes, these areas have not been considered sufficiently enough to be components of neither the total quality of life nor the local development efforts especially in terms of professional and urban agriculture. Examining real examples from case studies can clear the ambiguity.

3.3. Some Key Evidences from two Major New Industrial Districts of Turkey

The towns of Gaziantep and Kayseri have experienced rapid population increases and rapid urban growth in the period especially between 1950s and 1980s. Even though the demographic indicators shown in the foregoing sections draw a similar

trend with the national tendencies, and the recent population increase rates have dwindled more than twice since the 1960s, urban growth still seems to be a dominant variable in their planning processes. Since 2005, particularly after the acceptance of new Metropolitan Municipality Law (Law no: 5216), the municipal area of these two towns have grown approximately ten times in hectares which results an inclusion of a huge amount of rural areas within the municipal borders. Although a contemporary law arrangement discusses to enlarge the metropolitan area into the provincial borders, this first 'municipal growth' paves the way for officially perceiving these rural areas as if they were the fringes of metropolitan towns.

Actually, many of these rural settlements, in a somehow commonsensical way, fit a definition of 'neither rural nor urban'. However, neither these settlements are from those places where 'urban' touches 'rural', nor do they fit a prevalent contemporary definition of rural-urban fringes if they are defined as "*that zone of transition which begins with the edge of the fully built up urban area and becomes progressively more rural whilst still remaining a clear mix of urban and rural land uses and influences before giving way to the wider countryside*" (Countryside Agency, 2002, in Gallent, Andersson and Bianconi, 2006, p.5). They seem more likely to fit a definition of 'near-rural' attempted to be explained in this study. And those areas, those zones of transition as defined above still seem to be left unconsidered. A brief look toward the rural-urban fringes of these two towns will ease to understand the actual relationship of these areas between the fully built up urban areas.



Figure 9. The current land-use pattern of the town of Kayseri (Archives of Metropolitan Municipality of Kayseri)

The traditional growth directions of the town draw a linear form begin from the city center to the west in one direction and to the north-east in another. The main land-uses have been located toward these directions but there has been a traditional bulb-

like growth direction towards north owing to the Sumerbank Textile Factory. On the opposite edges of the town, on the west and north-east edges, two industrial areas are located and one of them is already unified with another industrial area and shares a border with the free zone. The north and south edges of the town are surrounded by hills and mountains, and these edges can be characterized mostly by housing areas. It is possible to identify certain slum house areas especially on the northern parts of the west edge and southern edges. But these areas are not as prevalent as the ones in other major towns in Turkey.

Until recently the characteristics of the rural-urban fringes of the town did not have peculiar features when compared with most of the other towns in Turkey except those areas of orchard houses and Mountain Erciyes. But three important land-use types have begun to be apparent on the fringes of the town currently. The first one can be characterized by regional health services. On the northern part of the west edge of the city, a huge regional health campus with complex health facilities has planned to be located. The second one can be characterized by regional transportation services. On the west edge of the town, the construction of a freight village has been considered for some time. And finally, the third one is characterized by prestigious housing areas. On the south eastern part edge, the construction of this kind of houses has started. The local administration, however, does not have a special policy neither for rural-urban fringes, nor for the near-rural areas yet; although the administrators seem to be highly aware of a possible new type of competitiveness based on attracting especially qualified population (Hovardaoğlu, 2010a). The local administration of the town of Gaziantep also seems to be aware of this type of competitiveness and spent certain efforts to improve the total quality of life in the town. However, their policies have not considered special strategies for the rural-urban fringes yet.

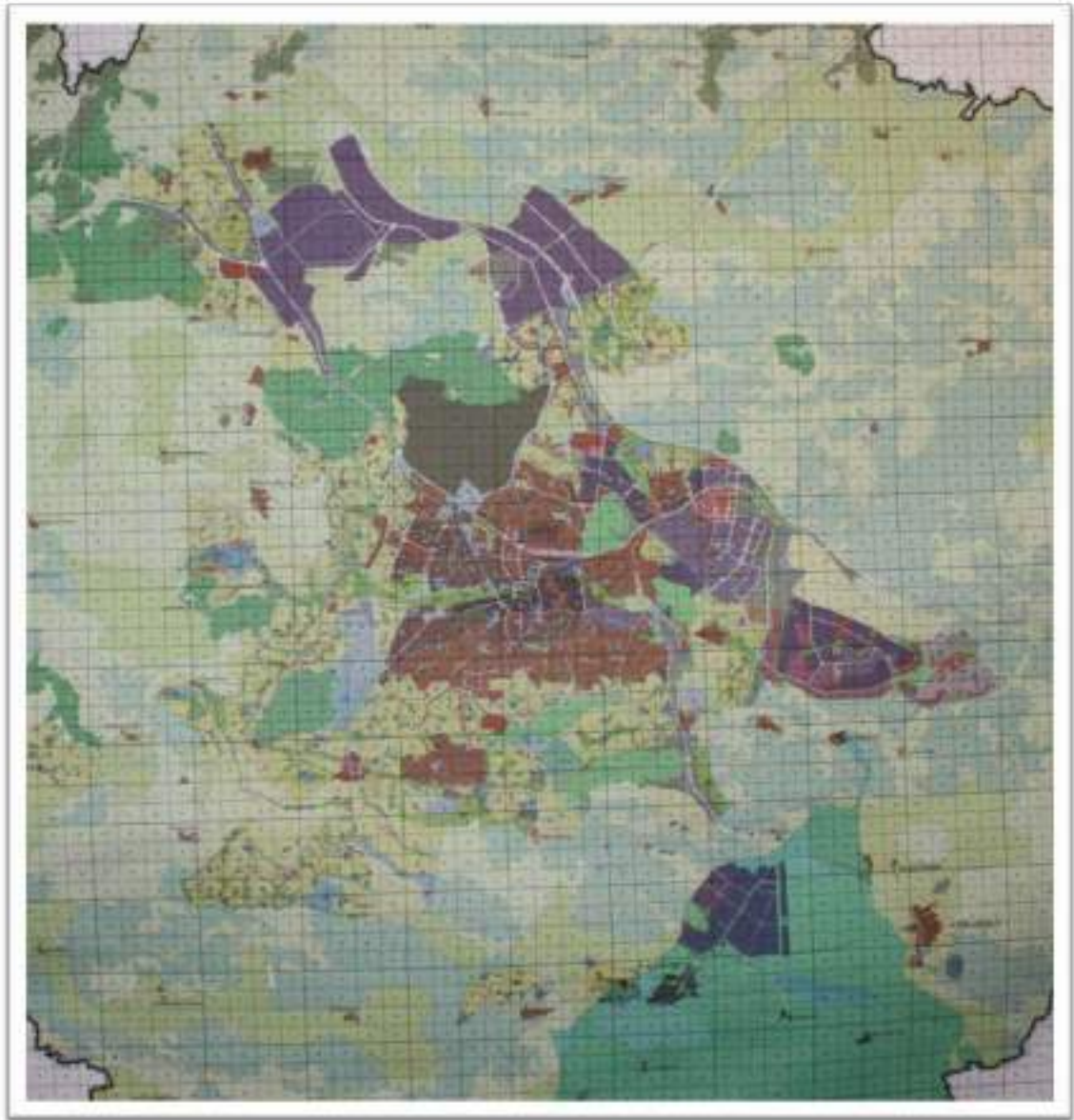


Figure 10. The current land-use pattern of the town of Gaziantep (Archives of Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep)

The industrial land-uses can easily be identified on the northern, eastern and southern edges of the town. But the actual distance and locations of these land-uses make it very difficult to relate the transition areas to the town, and especially on these parts, the transition seems to be ceased abruptly. There is a wide opening for the city, however, for such a transition especially on those parts begin from north-west edges and ends at south-west. This opening seems to give an opportunity for the town for a plausible rural-urban transition. In fact, it is already possible to identify some prestigious housing areas sprawling towards this opening which seem to be supported by the latest urban mass transportation investments. But still, the town does not have peculiar policies neither for fringes nor for near-rural areas.

4. Conclusion: Changing Context of the Rural-Urban Fringes and Near-Rural Areas

It is clearly possible to put that not considering the rural-urban fringes in conventional ways which tend to identify these areas in peripheral and rather passive terms can be much more helpful for those strategies attempting to improve the total quality of life with problem solving-based approaches on the one hand, and to find alternative ways of development in an era of deindustrialization on the other. The fringe, today, represents greater amount of opportunities than anticipated in the traditional conceptions of planning. Not only do prevalent contemporary discussions in the planning suggest, but also the current demographic dynamics entail reconsidering a change in goals and tools of planning implementations. In fact, after an era dominated by the frantic increases in urban population and thus by advocacy of urban growth and growth management comes a time when these goals and tools once seemed solid and unshakable foundations of planning implementations turn into inefficient repetitiveness of routine blocking the way for seeking problem solving-based and quality-based approaches.

In this new era, if agricultural production – in professional and multifunctional terms – and urban life quality will be the two of the leading variables of development equation, then it is possible to put an obvious need of reconsidering rural-urban fringes and near-rural areas. Again, in this new era, if planning theoretically tends to reconsider or reimagine the urban in terms of mixed spatialities which are open and cross-cut by many different kinds of mobilities, from flows of people to commodities and information as, for instance, Massey, Allen and Pile (1999), Urry (2000), and Amin and Thrift (2002) put, then there will be an obvious need of reconsidering and reimaging the rural-urban fringes and near-rural areas as certain spatialities which convey much more than just being the opposite of urban.

Table 3. A Brief Look towards the Conceptions and Uses of the Rural-Urban Fringes.

	Traditional Conceptions of Planning	Conventional practical uses	Contemporary practical uses
Rural-urban fringes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thresholds which block alternative growth directions - Areas for specific land-uses which <i>cannot</i> be located within urban areas - Areas for specific land-uses which <i>should not</i> be located within urban areas - Low-priced peripheral areas - A tangent for certain uses which need to touch but do not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slum house areas - Waste-lands waiting desperately to transform into urban - Farmlands also waiting desperately to transform into urban 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freight villages - Prestigious housing areas - Great malls & out-of-town retails - Areas for decentralized office space - Green energy production

	<p>cut into urban areas like heavy transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reserve areas for future expansion - Conservation areas like green belts - A hinterland piece connected to urban with dependency bonds - Areas for 'other' or 'excluded' less than neighborly uses - Areas for locating leisure facilities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation areas like green belts
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To put in a nutshell, planning, especially in Turkey and especially due to the current demographic dynamics, has a great opportunity to reconsider the rural-urban fringes and near-rural areas as vital components of both the development efforts and urban quality of life. In fact, these places seem to become the most valuable areas of urban agriculture and rural development.

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