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## Granting Greater Municipality Status in Turkey: Issues, Policy Process and Outcomes

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## **GRANTING GREATER MUNICIPALITY STATUS IN TURKEY: ISSUES, POLICY PROCESS AND OUTCOMES**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Currently, 16 greater (metropolitan) municipalities exist in Turkey in addition to 3200 other municipalities. All these greater municipalities were established by the Turkish Parliament based on the previous Greater Municipality Act of 1984, which stayed in force until 2004. According to 1984 Act of 3030, the major criteria for granting greater municipality status were economic and social development level, which was to be assessed by the Government and/or the Parliament. However, social and economic development indicators were never established for such an assessment. Therefore, decision for granting all current greater municipalities were made by the general political considerations and rough assumptions about the need and suitability of those urban areas.

Only five of the greater municipalities' population exceeds 1 million, and five of them were under 500.000 according to the last Census of 2000, before the New Greater Municipality Act of 2004 enacted in the Turkish Parliament with the number of 5216. Briefly to say, the new Act (5216) both expanded the area covered by each greater municipality by applying a simple and interesting formula and set new criteria which made granting greater municipality status to urban areas more difficult. Although the new Act of 5216 has introduced different criteria in order to grant greater municipality status, still it is not clear how and by whom to assess these newer criteria. Only population criterion is quite clear and greatly limits establishing new greater municipalities. The current Parliament, which enacted several major reforms in the local government area in the years of 2004 and 2005, seems to be reluctant to give greater municipality status. However, the same Parliament and Government has greatly expanded the boundaries and power of the current greater municipalities. With the launch of newer criteria and the reluctance of the elected political elites in Ankara, many major cities without greater municipality status seem to be forced to utilize other alternative models in managing their city regions. Before the enactment of Greater Municipality Act of 2004, greater municipality bills were prepared for 10 different middle sized urban regions of Turkey between 1993 and 2004. Greater municipality status campaigns, talks and/or preparations, without reaching to a bill level, were considered for another 10 major (middle size) city regions.

With the exception of population criterion, considering the lack of certain and clearly defined reasonable criteria for gaining greater municipality status, 10 major (populous)

municipalities (city regions) with the population of around 500.000, made several attempts to be granted greater municipality status by the Turkish Parliament. However, with the exception of Adapazarı (in 2000), all the greater municipalities were granted their status between 1984 and 1993 and no new greater municipality established thereafter. Granting greater municipality status after 1993 for the Adapazarı case was an exception. The idea behind this decision was to recover Adapazarı city region from the severe negative impacts of major earthquakes in the Marmara Region in 1999. Yet, those other major urban areas encompassing (some) metropolitan characteristics are still waiting for being granted greater municipality status. In fact, most of the middle sized city regions have lost their hopes, after the enactment of 2004 Act, to be granted greater municipality status.

The 2004 Act brings a new criterion, which requires settlements in a 10km diameter to have a minimum of 750.000 populations. Such a criterion is not based on academic and professional arguments or evidence. Ambiguously, economic and social development criteria are still effective in 2004 Act. However, middle-sized urban areas whose populations are around 500.000 and struggling for greater municipality status continue their existence being deprived of status, prestige, power, strong financial resources. Most of these urban areas are highly fragmented. Many local leaders of these urban areas believe that greater municipality status would provide them money, prestige, power and a comparative advantage. Greater municipalities take advantage of additional financial resources. Thus, determining precise, reasonable, and measurable criteria and processes for granting greater municipality status is an urgent and vital policy area in Turkish local government system.

The main objectives of this paper are to question the criteria and establishment process of granting greater municipality status and to develop comprehensive and precise criteria and procedures for major Turkish urban regions. After summarizing the evolution of Turkish greater municipality system, stories on the urban regions for which granting greater municipality status were attempted. This paper discusses the need for establishing alternative and comprehensive criteria for granting greater municipalities in Turkey in a wider context of international literature and similar cases in European urban regions. Paper finishes with evaluation of criteria and processes granting greater municipality status in particular.

## **2. GREATER MUNICIPALITY SYSTEM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN TURKEY**

Turkish greater municipality system can be examined based on three main terms/stages to better understand the continuation and transformation of it. The first step/stage is from late Ottoman time, when İstanbul Municipality established to 1984. The second stage is from 1984, when the first greater municipality Act of 3030 was enacted, to 2005, and the second is from 2005 forward. In the 2005, the third and current greater municipal act of 5216 has enacted.

Two-tier metropolitan area management system was initiated in Turkey in 1984. The original system was initiated to manage true/real metropolitan areas; however, the system quickly converted to a political manoeuvre arena. Starting from 1984, within 11 years period,

15 urban areas in Turkey were granted “greater municipality” status by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. At the beginning, greater municipality status was given only to the three largest cities of Turkey, namely İstanbul, Ankara<sup>1</sup> and İzmir, each with true metropolitan characteristics. Within ten years period, the numbers of greater municipalities reached to 15 and only one more greater municipality status was given (to Adapazarı) just after the 1999 earthquake.

The Motherland Party at the beginning of 1984 intended to establish a two tier metropolitan municipality system for the three largest urban regions of Turkey. With the little hope to win the upper tier and little need urged for a strong upper tier, lower tier municipalities are designed as strong ones. However, the new Law enacted in July 1984, after election, the lower tier municipalities lost their power and three upper tier municipalities become very strong and powerful in financial, administrative and political terms.

In parallel to other local government acts as the part of Turkish local government reform, in 2004, a new (second) Greater Municipality Act enacted. One of the major aims of the 2004 Greater Municipality Act is to reorganize greater municipality system by enlarging boundaries of current greater municipalities to cover real/functional metropolitan borders. The (second) Greater Municipality Act of 2004 expands the land area controlled by each upper tier municipality, based on simple radius formula.

Every growing major cities (or city regions) demanded greater municipality status as the main solution model for their increasing management problems. Not all these growing major cities are politically or administratively fragmented. On the other hand, some of the highly fragmented city regions in Turkey, like Aksaray and Osmaniye, have never seized for granting greater municipality status or only once, like Kırıkkale. The basic reason for this is lack of political support, provision of the province status to these regions only recently. Therefore, these city regions of newer provinces feel that it would be a too early attempt to seek greater municipality status for them, since their province status is quite recent.

Many cities seek to have greater municipality status. It was supported and proposed by their representatives in the Parliament until the enactment of the 2004 Act. The policy of granting greater municipality status to growing but actually middle-sized cities came to end as almost every big municipality with population over 200.000 demanded the greater municipality status.

There are many middle sized city regions in Turkey (Özgür, 2005), some of them are in the metropolitanisation process or already are metropolitan city regions (see for some more detail, Yaşamış, 1998).

Many middle sized city regions in Turkey are highly fragmented. Among these, Denizli, Malatya, Antakya and Trabzon are the most fragmented urban regions. It seems that there was

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<sup>1</sup> Firuz Demir Yaşamış claims that Ankara has no true/real metropolitan characteristics, at least fort he year of 1998.

no attempt at the Turkish Parliament for Antakya for granting greater municipality status, however some talks and discussion at the local level for the status can be observed.

The 2005 Municipal Act provides few solutions for fragmented urban regions. These are; municipal associations (mostly single-purpose), Article 11: amalgamation, annexation of settlements with village status (extraterritorial powers), abolishing any municipality status of settlements with a population less than 2.000. In addition to arrangements of 2005 Municipal Act, intermunicipal and interlocal cooperation are also encouraged by the Turkish Government and some Ministries. This become especially important after the enactment of Local Government Association Act of 2005

From 1993 till 2006, only Adapazarı, which is located between Ankara and İstanbul, was granted Greater municipality Status in the year 2000, to recover city and surrounding settlements which severely damaged due to major earthquakes of 1999 and 2000 in the Eastern Marmara covering several provinces.

Greater municipality status gives prestige, money, political power, capacity for major projects, extra borrowing rights and rights for privileged administrative/organisational arrangements for the upper tier municipality.

The 1984 Act provided significant additional financial resources (like 5% the total tax revenue in the province) to greater municipalities, and no certain criteria (such as population) was applied to grant greater municipality status, only required the governmental decision and decree.

### **3. ASSUMPTIONS FOR GREATER MUNICIPALITY SYSTEM OF TURKEY**

To briefly summarize the Turkish greater municipality system in general and granting the status in particular, following statements can be suggested:

In Turkey, metropolitan municipal system, with the revision (new Act) of 2004 has solved problems in a great extent for the largest city regions. However, a number of other large cities with metropolitan characteristics but around half a million population are left with their problems under the normal municipal act of 5393, which is enacted in 2005, and its system.

After the mid-1990s, the greater municipality system became problematic since the system was actually created to solve management problems of fragmented metropolitan areas. The system has solved some of the problems in fragmented and populous metropolitan areas of Turkey but created new issues which some of them are still unresolved.

#### **Positive statement:**

The two-tier system itself and granting greater municipality faces and creates significant problems to be dealt with. These problems are summarised/listed below:

Not all metropolitan areas have a greater municipality status.

The territorial borders for most of the greater municipalities do not match with metropolitan or urban area. Greater municipalities can not transcend province lines, however, few of metropolises passes province borders.

The area covered by greater municipalities is extended by a simple rule/formula.

The number of second tier municipalities has been increased by dividing current ones. The decision on this is given by the Turkish Parliament, not by local citizens or Greater Municipality.

Against international tendencies, few of the current greater municipalities were established by dividing a single unified (unfragmented) municipality to several municipalities and/or counties. By this way (division), artificial second tier municipalities were created. The current and previous Greater Municipality Act requires the existence of three or more (normal) municipalities in a city region where greater municipality status to be granted/asked.

Greater municipalities can be established only in province seats (central county/district of each province); however, there are some urban areas with significant population and fragmentation outside of province seats like Iskenderun, Alanya, Tarsus, Nazilli, Bandırma and Salihli.

At least at the granting stage, some of the greater municipalities were not shown metropolitan characteristics.

Almost all the passed and draft or rejected bills, seeking for greater municipality status for certain city regions, are too basic, insufficient, unsatisfactory, prepared in-rush. All these bills and drafts suffer from lack of academic, technical, and scientific preparation.

There is no model or solution for middle-sized urban regions.

Politics at national level, Turkish Parliament and Government play major roles in establishing greater municipalities

This paper focuses on two complementary topics, each of them is also divided themselves to two parts. The first one is the policy and politics of metropolitan areas and greater municipality in Turkey. On the policy side, both bills and draft bills and discussion on Turkish Parliament on the topic of metropolitan areas and greater municipalities are examined. On the politics side, possible reasons of granting and not granting greater municipality status are examined. After examining this national context, then six specific cases are scrutinized for the purposes of local needs, politics and preparations. Among these, examining the Adapazarı, the latest greater municipality seems to providing chances to understand the transformation of grating greater municipality status. In addition to Adapazarı case, Denizli, Malatya, Trabzon, Şanlıurfa and Aydın cases, where greater municipality status were sought, are investigated investigate. This study shows that there are important differences in their urban characteristics and processes / politics toward greater municipality status for each middle-sized city region. Searching for greater municipality status may also provide valuable insights for local politics in Turkey as well as for city region management alternatives.

## **4. EXAMPLES FROM THE CITY REGIONS SEARCHING FOR GREATER MUNICIPALITY STATUS**

Several other medium-sized urban regions in Turkey have attempted for granting greater municipality” status, but all attempts were unsuccessful. Multiple attempts had seized for most of these medium-sized urban regions. Three or more attempts for the status had been tried for Denizli, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş. Members of Parliaments (MPs) had attempted for granting greater municipality status once or twice for the cities/urban regions of Kırıkkale, Balıkesir, Van, Elazığ. Zonguldak MPs had promoted greater municipality status for their city regions in the Parliament without proposing a bill by giving speeches. Although no bill prepared and officially submitted to Turkish Grand National Assembly, some talks and preparations can be observed for the following city regions: Hatay/Antakya, Edirne, Aydın, Manisa.

Some of these urban areas have larger city and urban region population than other municipalities or urban areas which were granted greater municipality status by Grand Assembly of Turkish Parliament. Some middle-sized cities have attempted for the status several times. Denizli, Trabzon and Malatya are those ones which attempted at least three times for the status.

### **4.1. Adapazarı**

The latest and the 16th greater municipality of Turkey is Adapazarı, which is located in Marmara region where Istanbul is located. There were two major earthquakes in the Eastern Marmara region, in 1999 and 2000. The centre of the first earthquake was Adapazarı, the centre of Sakarya Province. This growing city in the Province of Sakarya due to its favourable location between Istanbul and Ankara was becoming a popular site for major industrial investments, like ToyotaSa auto factory. The Central County/District contains several major and many smaller municipalities. Several other municipalities in surrounding districts were also part of the urbanized area centred in Adapazarı. The then Government and Parliament with the influence of the Government granted the final greater municipality status to Adapazarı after seven years of granting similar status.

Adapazarı is one of the smallest greater municipalities in Turkey. The Parliament decided to apply a different formula for this last greater municipality when the status were granting. It covers small municipalities without county/district seats as well as municipalities with county seats. Therefore, in addition to the Central District, which is named Adapazarı in Sakarya Province case, several municipalities in Adapazarı/Central district and municipalities in other districts become the second tier municipalities.

### **4.2. Denizli**

In this paper, Denizli urban region is especially examined since it has some unique characteristics in addition to her representative characters to other middle-sized urban regions. First, there is a recent draft bill about Denizli metropolitan area which claims to make Denizli urbanized area just one single city. The plan in this bill is quite similar to some recent

Canadian examples and is called as unicity. The main city in the Denizli urban region, called Denizli, amalgamates the whole urban area. The current government's interest in solving management problems of Denizli makes her an interesting case and final solution model, whatever it is, would be a reference for other similar urban areas.

Denizli is one of those middle sized urban areas waiting for an administrative model for the management of its urban region which is located in and around of Central District. Denizli Municipality is a normal municipality with a population of 275.000 according to the 2000 Census.

In terms of population and other characteristics, it is between a normal and greater municipality. Definition of Denizli urban region: In narrow and wide terms. In narrow terms, Denizli urban region consist of Denizli Municipality, 13 smaller municipalities and 10 villages. All these settlements are located within the boundaries of the Central County/District. Population of the Denizli Province is around 925,000, population of the Central County/District is 405,000. 18 districts exist in Denizli Province and population is unevenly distributed among districts. The 5026 Unicity Bill/Act (2003) defines Denizli urban region in wide terms. Unicity Bill: Denizli urban region comprises 22 municipalities and 27 villages. A few of the settlements in the Unicity Bill are outside of the administrative boundaries of Central County/District. In fact, within the European context, the covered area of Denizli city region might be extended beyond the wider definition of the Unicity Bill. This extended area may cover the whole or parts of many surrounding counties (such as Sarayköy, Akköy, Honaz and Babadağ) and their other settlements (such as Kaklık).

Denizli as a growing mid-size city region has a great academic interest in her economic success; however, there is little academic interest about city of Denizli, there is a relatively great discussion on political environment how to manage Denizli city region and various attempts tried. Some alternative solutions models have tried to be applied several times. Some unique, such as unicity model, have specifically and only for Denizli has offered and tried to be an act.

A Denizli Unicity Bill was approved in the Turkish Parliament in December 2003, three months before the local elections. This Bill aimed to consolidate 22 municipalities and 27 villages into one single municipality. A Denizli Unicity Bill was approved in the Turkish Parliament in December 2003, three months before the local elections. This Bill aimed to consolidate 22 municipalities and 27 villages into one single municipality. Unicity regulation was a special arrangement for the Denizli urban region. Unicity Bill has not been discussed for any other city region. According to Denizli Unicity Act of 5026, Denizli urban region was defined a lot larger than ever imagined. If the Bill had been implemented at the time, Denizli municipality would have covered 10 times larger area then the current situation. One of the significant common characteristics of the unsuccessful bills for creating status of either unicity or greater municipality was the absence of detailed, satisfactory arguments and data. Subjective, very-short (one-page) draft text was introduced to seek a new and unique status.



The current mayor of Denizli Municipality is a close friend of Prime Minister. His candidacy became certain and probably Justice and Development Party were calculating that they were going to win the local elections in Denizli Municipality. Therefore, there is a possibility that they decided to unify Denizli urban region and if they are successful, they would have a major victory. Central Municipality, Governor's Office (Provincial Administration), the Government, local branches of political parties, Chamber of Commerce, and Denizli representatives in the Grand National Assembly are the major stakeholders who try to be parts of the solutions.

Smaller municipalities are basically willing to continue the current fragmented system not to lose their power and autonomy. Smaller municipalities are reluctant to almost all other models/choices and lobbying for keeping their status and existence. Despite reluctance of smaller municipalities even some villages, Denizli urban region suffering from significant problems. Planning, land use, transportation, water drainage, industrial sites, major parks are especially important problematic areas. Municipalities in the core area of the region are attached to each other (physically integrated). There are quite few natural or artificial/planned buffer/tampon zones between core municipalities.

Weak municipality concept/argument/motto is a common term in Denizli urban region. Most of the small municipalities are ready for consolidation. Consolidation idea is discussed in closed-circles only after the Unicity Bill. If the number of municipalities may be reduced to 4-5 by consolidation, then both their capacity may increase and their power to bargain strengthen. With consolidation, "the fragmented Denizli urban region argument" may not be used anymore for Unicity or amalgamation ideas. Villages would be either part of consolidation effort or may be amalgamated by these new consolidated municipalities using extraterritorial power. Since many small municipalities are adjoining to Denizli Municipality and/or to each other, consolidation may be a meaningful solution.

Current (second) Municipality Act (enacted in 2005 with number 5393) regulates amalgamation. According to Article 11 of 5393, any district or province seat (central/main) municipality regardless of their sizes, may start or asks for amalgamation process. They are allowed to amalgamate municipalities within 5km area beyond their borders in any direction. They may amalgamate the whole municipality and their extraterritorial land if existed, if any of the building left in 5km boundary/limit. 13 municipalities can be amalgamated by Denizli Municipality in accordance with the Article 11. If we remember that, the villages are kept under control by using extraterritorial power may not border municipalities using that power, this 5km criterion may be misused. By extending controlled land, municipalities may ask for amalgamation of large areas. The amalgamation process may be initiated only by main/central municipalities of each District/County, however this is not obligatory. After the decision of Municipal Council with the support of technical documents showing/proving why and which settlements should be amalgamated the Governor's Office may prepare its own documents and reports about the issue/request. Detailed proposal of Governor's Office, written positive opinion of the Presidency of Council of State (Danıştay) and the approval of Cabinet (Bakanlar Kurulu) is required for the completion of amalgamation process. It seems that to

complete this process is not easy and may not be finalized without proper political climate and support. Cabinet members may need to consider the possibility of similar request from other city regions. Since this regulation can be applied to hundreds of city regions with various land and population sizes, too many demands by smaller city regions may be converted to a time-consuming task and a major technical and political agenda for the Council of State and the Cabinet as well.

There are several gaps and unclear points in this amalgamation regulation, which is just enacted recently, in the year 2005. It is unclear what happens if two main municipalities would like to amalgamate the same surrounding municipality. Amalgamation by Article 11 requires lengthy and politically difficult process. It can not be initiated without proving the strong need.

In April 2006, the Council of Denizli Municipality took a decision with no opposition vote to amalgamate surrounding 13 municipalities and 10 villages. Denizli Municipality brought together many documents; each one was prepared for other purposes, to support the arguments having severe problems in providing area-wide planning, infrastructure and transportation services in the Denizli city region.

Some current practices relieve some of the problems of the management of area-wide services in the Denizli city region. Among these, intermunicipal cooperation, service agreements, parallel action, services provided by private companies or entrepreneurs can be especially mentioned.

Denizli Municipality provides or controls the provision of several services to municipalities and villages in Denizli urban region. Some services are provided regularly or in emergency cases even outside of the Denizli urban region. Denizli Municipality provides fire fighting and intra-city transportation services to many municipalities and villages in the urban region. Intra-city (urban) bus system, clean/drinking water supplement, solid waste disposal, rainwater drainage, urban transportation, transit roads/loops are major examples.

Denizli has a solid waste disposal facility: This is a sanitary landfilling site. Including Denizli, only 12 sanitary landfilling sites exist in Turkey. Denizli Municipality and 17 other municipalities dispose their solid wastes in sanitary landfilling which is owned-operated by Denizli Municipality. All small municipalities pay the real cost. Each city collects their garbage separately or privatizes the service.

No single purpose or area-wide municipal association exists in Denizli. However, it is recently in practice in other similar sized urban regions like Kırıkkale and Trabzon. Denizli is well-known for her cooperative SMEs and success in textile and marble sectors. Cooperation is claimed as one of the main reason for this achievement. Water resources are basically run by inter-municipal actions covering several municipalities in the urban region, but there are major disagreements. Wastewater treatment facility is located in a village and run by Denizli Municipality. Wastewater of several municipalities is processed in this facility.

There are few examples of interlocal cooperation in Denizli urban region. The major interlocal cooperation is area-wide physical (zoning) plan in 1/25,000 scale. The 1994 plan, revised in 2005, covers 18 municipalities. EXTEND THE PHYSICAL PLAN The loop to provide a short-cut between Ankara and Izmir State Roads are going to be constructed by Denizli Municipality. It passes throughout many villages and municipalities.

*In Turkey, every municipality may use extraterritorial powers, however, in practice only larger/main municipalities uses this power. Municipalities can not annex other municipalities whatever their size. The usage of extraterritorial powers, no borders required between the municipality and village. It is unclear, what happens if smaller municipalities in the region use extraterritorial power.* In limited cases, borders were extended by Denizli Municipality through using extraterritorial powers. Currently, Denizli Municipality provides some basic services to nearly 10 villages and controls land use. Many current small municipalities in Denizli urban region were villages in the near past and they would have been controlled by Denizli Municipality if extraterritorial power had been used before they gained municipality status. Usage of this power partially solves management and land use problems of less fragmented and smaller urban regions.

The first two tier metropolitan system for Denizli was suggested in 1993. Despite several attempts were made in the Turkish Parliament, still there is no strong and well-prepared bill. Although, metropolitan (greater) municipality for Denizli urban region was on the agenda, a Unicity (unitary) model is proposed in 2003. There was little and short-term preparation and no open discussion for the Unicity Bill. Opposition parties are proponents of current two-tier metro system; however, they do not have a concrete proposal.

One of the alternative solutions for Denizli urban region may be to create a new metro model. The main problem for Denizli Urban Region in the case of creating a two-tier metropolitan model with strong lower tiers and weak upper tier (which is reversal of current power distribution between tiers) is the existence of too many small municipalities. They need to be consolidated towards creating strong lower tier municipalities.

### **4.3. Malatya**

Malatya is one the most prominent city in the Eastern part of the Turkey. The Malatya city region covers three Districts and almost 20 municipalities.

Planning, land use, transportation, water drainage, major parks, industrial sites are especially important problematic areas.

Municipalities in the core area of the region are attached to each other (physically integrated)

There are quite few natural or artificial/planned buffer/tampon zones between core municipalities. Quite similar characteristics are valid for Denizli, Trabzon and Antakya.

#### **4.4. Aydın**

There was a strong and long-lasting local support for Aydın urban regions led by former Aydın Municipality Mayor, Hüseyin Aksu, during late 1990s. The main argument in Aydın was the mismatch between the land controlled by Aydın Municipality and surrounding smaller municipalities. Although Aydın Municipality controls a relatively small proportion of the Aydın city region and providing many area-wide services for the city region, it controls a small part of the total urbanized land. The larger areas of city regions are under control of either smaller surrounding municipalities or villages.

The greater municipality status campaign for Aydın city region was initiated by Hüseyin Aksu, the mayor of the Aydın Municipality of the time. Many local organizations, chambers and NGOs had been supported the campaign for several years.

Hüseyin Aksu had suggested a new concept: linear greater municipality. As clearly shown/proven by the thesis of IYTE, the towns in Aydın Province grew through the main state roads. With the growth of each town or city toward others along the major intercity roads, makes a linear greater municipality possible. A similar discussion was launched by Firuz Demir Yaşamış for Trabzon-Rize urban region developed alongside of the shoreline of Trabzon Province toward Rize Province centre. The proposition linear based greater municipality for Aydın city region were suggesting to include/cover two district centres, several villages and smaller municipalities in the Central District, few towns in surrounding Districts in addition to Aydın Municipality in the Central District as the main municipality and seat for the upper-tier municipality.

The Municipality of Aydın headed by Mayor Hüseyin Aksu prepared several documents and maps in addition to and for the support of political campaign of greater municipality status. When these maps, basically published in the weekly newsletter of Aydın Municipality,

Weak collaborative efforts have been observed in Aydın city region and other city regions in Aydın Province (Özgür, 1999). The new mayor of Aydın Municipality, İlhami Ortekin, reporting (demeç vermek) to a regional newspaper, Yeni Asır, summarized his ideas about management of Aydın city region. He emphasized that having greater municipality status is not necessary for the management of Aydın city region and collaborative efforts may be helpful enough.

#### **5. POLITICS IN THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT REGARDING GREATER MUNICIPALITY STATUS (METROPOLITICS)**

Since the new (2004) Greater Municipality Act requires to have a population of 750.000 within a 10km diameter land area as the Governor's Office is the centre. The borders in this case are clear, but the population criterion is not met. It is interesting to say that, the Parliament asked/required greater municipalities to expand their land covered to a minimum of 20 km diameter. It is 30 or 50 km in the larger metropolitan (greater) municipalities. Although the smallest greater municipality covers a 20km diameter land, the newer ones need

to catch/match to have a 750.000 population in a 10km diameter land. A few of current greater municipalities have a population less than 750.000!

During late 1990s and early 2000s, some MPs, mayors and other stakeholders had hoped that their related city regions would be granted greater municipality status, since there was a positive climate in the Grand National Assembly and many parties supported a few of the propositions in that matter. Even, parties achieved a gentlemen's agreement to support each others proposition about granting greater municipality status to certain city regions. However, either because of early national elections or other political instability problems, none of the middle-sized metropolitan city regions had found a chance for having greater municipality status.

## **6. IMPOSING NEWER CRITERIA FOR GRANTING GREATER MUNICIPALITY STATUS IN 2004**

One of the major aims of the 2004 Greater Municipality Act is to reorganize greater municipality system by enlarging boundaries of current greater municipalities to cover real/functional metropolitan borders. The (second) Greater Municipality Act of 2004 expands the land area controlled by each upper tier municipality, based on a simple radius formula.

By the establishment of 2004 Act of 5216, the Istanbul and Kocaeli greater municipalities now cover the whole province. These new borders mean that the land and population covered by Kocaeli Greater Municipality has greatly extended. Although the land for Istanbul Greater Municipality has significantly expanded, populations increased only around 10 percent. The New Act expands (or establishes new borders) for other 14 greater municipalities with a diameter formula to be applied based on their current population. The greater municipalities of Izmir and Ankara 50km.

The 2004 Act also requires a city to have at least 750,000 citizens within 10,000 meter diameter area. The office of the governor is taken as the centre to draw this diameter!!! Thanks to centralist state tradition and practical intelligence! i.e. New Ankara Greater Municipality Map

According to the Act, suitability of economic development level and physical conditions are to be assessed by the Turkish Parliament in order to grant greater municipality status. Yet, this assessment is not based on a scientific research or clearly defined criteria/findings.

Around ten middle sized/urban regions in the current situation –awaited greater municipality status until the new GM Act enacted-- now need alternative management models for their fragmented and growing urban areas.

## **7. OUTCOMES**

Nearly half of the current 16 greater municipalities haven't metropolitan characteristics. On the other hand, few urban regions with metropolitan characteristics are not granted greater municipality status.

There is no definite, clear and scientifically established persistent criterion for granting greater municipality status. Criteria changes without relevant and adequate academic discussion.

Few academicians and many lower tier municipality mayors are against the strong upper tier municipalities and urge to increase the power and autonomy of lower tier municipalities. Now, although never being discussed for middle sized urban regions without greater municipality status, such a system can be offered. However, there is a high risk of changes in the distribution of power in this theoretical model since mayors of upper tier municipalities might have easy access to MPs and politicians at the centre of their parties. They would have higher credibility in the political system.

## **8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the enactment of new Greater Municipality Act of 2004 and following minor changes indicates that a satisfactory model for the metropolitan/greater municipalities is achieved at last and settled in for a foreseeable future.

A number of big cities within the urban areas without having greater municipality status certainly need an alternative management model.

These models are generally complimentary. Models fit to consolidationist approach, like unicity model, are competitive to almost every model.

In any case/model, achieving cooperation, collaboration, partnership of most stakeholders is an explicit priority to be successful in attempts of finding and implementing the right model. No administrative body, like council of government or municipal association to ensure collaboration among municipalities in an urban region, exists in major city regions. In some services, like storm/rain water drainage, urban transportation to some extent, street and main arteries building, local codes, parallel action exist for several years. However, parallel action is limited to few services, may be easily extended

There is more room and need for mutual understanding and cooperation. In general, in Turkey, cooperation culture is not strong; however, it is weaker in Denizli urban region among leaders of local authorities. Models like city-county consolidation have never been discussed in Turkey.

Two-tier greater municipality model with weak upper-tier and strong lower tier would be a suitable model. In this case, we believe that, the smallest municipalities need to be merged to create strong and capable sub-units.

Attempts to find feasible and acceptable management models lack concrete research, well-planned arguments, a general consultation process, involvement of the great majority of stakeholders.

To a large extent, local citizens are not aware of the real context and the urgency of changing the current structure. Citizens are not decisive part/factor of the discussion.

The topic stimulates and necessitates research projects to analyse various perspectives of the problem.