



# Local Entrepreneurialism and State Rescaling in Turkey<sup>1</sup>

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Türkiye’de Yerel Girişimcilik ve Devletin Yeniden Ölçeklenmesi

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## Abstract

*The paper examines the links between the rise of local entrepreneurialism and state rescaling in a neo-liberal context. The thrust of the article is that the agency of localities, increasingly manifested in the form of local entrepreneurialism, emerges through the political activism of a local bourgeoisie, in pursuit of a multiscalar local accumulation strategy. The article focuses on the spatial interest representation strategies of the local bourgeoisie introducing the concept of scalar strategies of representation, to examine in what ways the broader state rescaling process contributes to the formation of local agency and how this agency influences state rescaling. The city of Gaziantep, Turkey, constitutes its empirical focus.*

**Keywords:** *local entrepreneurism, state rescaling, scalar strategies of representation, neoliberalism, ‘Anatolian tigers,’ Gaziantep*

## Özet

*Bu makale, neoliberal bağlamda yerel girişimciliğin yükselişi ile devletin yeniden ölçeklenmesi arasındaki bağlantıları incelemektedir. Çalışma, yerelliklerin giderek “yerel girişimcilik” biçiminde ortaya çıkan (siyasal ve iktisadi) bir aktöre dönüşmesi sürecinin doğasını açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Yerel girişimciliğin ortaya çıkışının, çok ölçekli bir sermaye birikim stratejisini hayata geçirmek için yerel burjuvazinin siyasal anlamda harekete geçmesiyle yakından ilgili olduğunu savunmaktadır. Makale, bu anlamda, devletin geçirmekte olduğu (daha geniş anlamda) yeniden ölçeklenme sürecinin, yerel siyasal hareketlenmenin oluşumuna nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu ve yerelliğin bir aktör haline gelmesinin de devletin yeniden ölçeklenmesini nasıl etkilediğini ele almaktadır. Bu amaçla, “ölçek temelli/ölçeksel temsil stratejileri” kavramının kullanılmasını önererek yerel burjuvazinin mekansal çıkar temsil stratejilerini odağına koymaktadır. Çalışmanın görgül odağı, Gaziantep kenti oluşturmaktadır.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *yerel girişimcilik, devletin yeniden ölçeklenmesi, ölçek temelli/ölçeksel temsil stratejileri, neoliberalizm, ‘Anadolu kaplanları,’ Gaziantep*

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<sup>1</sup> Bu makaleye, yazarın ve yayımlandığı derginin onayı alınarak kısaltılarak yer verilmiştir. Makalenin ilk hâli için bakınız: Urban Studies 47(2), February 2010, pp. 363-385.

## **Introduction**

This article aims to discuss local<sup>2</sup> entrepreneurialism as a politically constructed process in Turkey by concentrating on the case of the city of Gaziantep, deemed to be the chief of the ‘Anatolian Tigers’, a term often employed to refer to an emergent ‘economic model’ of development under neo-liberal policies. The paper argues that the economic success stories of these ‘Anatolian Tigers’ should be seen as a product of the political activism of local bourgeoisie in an attempt to respond to the increasingly crisis-ridden nature of the capital accumulation process, and the capitalist state rescaling, itself an attempt by the nation state to contain and facilitate associated broader accumulation strategy changes.

As opposed to the widely shared view among the policy circles in Turkey, who tend to see local entrepreneurialism as a purely economic phenomenon, this paper places the emphasis on its political nature. In this regard, the concept refers to an open and direct engagement with politics and political institutions on the part of the local bourgeoisie. This involves the politicisation and institutionalisation of interest representation. Hence, the concept, as used in the paper, incorporates broader political strategies pursue to establish the locality as a political agent. In other words, it does not simply refer to the emphasised agency of local bour-

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<sup>2</sup> Here, the term local refers to urban units—i.e. cities. Major cities (like Gaziantep, Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa) have their own greater city municipalities, whose jurisdiction covers the metropolitan area. The central government is organised at the scale of province, whose administrative centre is that major city. Provinces are divided into a number of districts, or counties, whose administrative centres are smaller towns, controlling and serving rural settlements. In our case, I use the term local to refer to these metropolitan cities, not provinces. Yet, some of the data pertaining to the economic performances of these cities are drawn from the databases of TÜİK (the national statistics institute) constructed on a provincial basis. Still, this does not cause a distortion in the picture, especially given the rate of urbanization in Gaziantep, where industrial activities are concentrated. In the maps that follow, the reader will see these administrative divisions.

geoisie in local politics, but the emphasised agency of the localities under the leadership of the local bourgeoisie. It is a mode of political mobilisation of the local bourgeoisie, now acting as the centre of the local integral state (see Jessop, 1990), establishing local business associations as the institutional core of the emerging local governance structure.

The paper builds on Brenner's conclusion that the increasing prominence of localities as strategic loci and actors of policy-making is a product and arena of the current rescaling of the capitalist state (Brenner, 2004, p. 112) and reworks Brenner's theoretical framework by asking: how the state rescaling process might lead to greater local agency; how it shapes the resulting political strategies; and, the ways in which these local interests are ultimately integrated into the spatiality of the rescaled state. The thrust of the article is that the rise of localities as sites of policy-making occurs through an active pursuit of scale politics, when local actors are able to manage their relations with the nation-state, and with other non-local actors, so as to establish the locality as an actor and a scale of decision making. Thus it is argued that the agency of localities, increasingly manifested in the form of local entrepreneurialism, emerges through the political activism of a local bourgeoisie mobilised in support of a specific and multiscale local accumulation strategy. In this respect, the article places the main emphasis on the spatial interest representation strategies pursued by these local actors. The concept of scalar strategies of representation is introduced to examine in what ways the broader state rescaling process contributes to the formation of local agency and how this agency influences the state rescaling.

The paper begins by critically analysing the mainstream arguments about the emergent economic model, in the case of Gaziantep, and emphasises the need to concentrate on the political activism of the local bourgeoisie. Given the aim of the paper, we are not concerned with taking the empirical picture of an economic model, here. Yet, if there is a need to portray the extent of economic achievement, it is enough to mention Gaziantep's entrepreneurs' success in getting the lion's share in

many direct and indirect state benefits, when compared with those of other Anatolian Tigers and Istanbul; as well as the birth of the city as a pilot city for many national and international (mainly EU-related) projects (Bayırbag, 2007).<sup>3</sup>

The paper, later, goes on to introduce the concept of scalar strategies of representation to rework the concept of local entrepreneurialism as a political project emerging in the context of state rescaling. Next, we shall return to the case, first to discuss briefly the dynamics of post-1980 state rescaling in Turkey.

Then the scalar strategies of representation pursued by Gaziantep's business associations are examined at length, where interviews held especially with the key names from the local business associations, as well as the documents about their strategies, play a crucial role in developing the analysis. The story of this political mobilisation, and especially how the bargaining power of Gaziantep has been built, could be best told by the originators and implementers of these political strategies. And a word of caution is due here about the limitations of the evidence strategy. Of course, one cannot claim that the intentions of the leaders or key names of these business associations truly reflect their achievements. Yet, it should also be noted that the paper is an attempt to examine a politically, and 'not simply discursively', established fact (see note 5). Moreover, the paper does not take local entrepreneurialism to be a totally harmonious, coherent or finished political project. Nor does it suggest that increased political visibility and activism will necessarily result in economic success. The pursuit of local entrepreneurialism via scalar strategies of representation could well have destabilising consequences both in political and economic terms, as we shall discuss in the concluding section.

The insights drawn from this section are discussed in the concluding section.

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, the findings of the paper are based on the field research of a doctoral thesis, conducted between 2003 and 2004.

## **Local Entrepreneurialism and State Rescaling: The Scalar Strategies of Representation**

### **Gaziantep's Entrepreneurialism and Mainstream Accounts: Testing the Main Claims**

Since the mid 1980s, Turkey has witnessed the surge of a new wave of industrialization spearheaded by a number of cities called the 'Anatolian Tigers', including Gaziantep, Denizli, Çorum, Kayseri and Konya. Their geographical distribution (Figure 1) indicates that industrialisation began to spread across an underdeveloped Anatolia, including South-eastern Anatolia (Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi; see Figure 2), one of the most underdeveloped regions of the country.<sup>4</sup>

According to many policy-makers and scholars in Turkey, the Anatolian Tigers have proved that the neo-liberal economic policies of the post-1980 era were a cure to the problem of uneven development, which had been poorly handled by the Keynesian policy interventions of the pre-1980 era. The city of Gaziantep<sup>5</sup> constituted one of the most remarka-

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<sup>4</sup> South-eastern Anatolia is one of the geographical and historical regions of the country, with a long past—constituting the upper north of Mesopotamia. Moreover, the region is mainly populated by the Kurdish population (although Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa's population are more mixed, ethnically, when compared with Diyarbakır). Hence, along with Eastern Anatolia, it has gained a political identity, especially with the rise of the Kurdish movement, centred in Diyarbakır, during the post-1980 period. This was one of the reasons why the South-eastern Anatolia project (see note 10) was introduced. Given the autonomy claims of the Kurds, the central government preferred to establish a 'GAP administration' as a central government agency, serving under the Prime Minister, not a regional government.

<sup>5</sup> With a population of 853 513, Gaziantep is the largest metropolitan centre of South-eastern Anatolia and functions as the economic centre of its region. The province of Gaziantep, whose administrative centre is the city of Gaziantep, houses the seventh-largest urban population in Turkey: 1 009 126, with a 78.52 per cent urbanisation rate and an urban population growth rate of 3.125 per cent per annum ([http://www.gaziantep.gov.tr/GAZIANTEP.php?page\\_id=152](http://www.gaziantep.gov.tr/GAZIANTEP.php?page_id=152)).

ble examples, in this regard. The city's experience in industrialisation was seen as a model to be adopted by other cities in Turkey and the (inter)national policymakers.<sup>6</sup> Yet, cities like Kayseri and Denizli fared relatively better, or at least showed a similar degree of success (see Eraydın, 2002; DPT, 2002). I argue that the main reason why Gaziantep was labelled by some as a national model is the way in which the economic development was handled by the entrepreneurs of Gaziantep.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, an ex-commissioner of the EU to Turkey, Michael Leigh, declared that integration with the EU would not work anywhere if it does not in Gaziantep. Similarly, in 1998, Süleyman Demirel, the then-president of Turkey, commented that "if you want to understand what is going on in Turkey, go and see Gaziantep" (Gözlem 1998). Here, Gaziantep rises up as a 'smaller scale model of the country' or as the 'scale of the country' (Nejat Koçer, editorial, *Değişim*, March/April 2003, p. 18), a model that the nation should follow. In this regard, the entrepreneurs of Gaziantep bear a national responsibility (interview with Rıfat Hisarcıklıoğlu, in *Değişim* July/August 2001, p. 15). Because of this perception, special attention is paid by national politicians to the city. For example, within two months of coming to power, the Justice and Development Party government sent the Ministers of Industry and Trade; Foreign Trade; and Agriculture to meet the representatives of the business associations (*Değişim* May/June 2003; also see *Gaziantep'te Sabah*, 30 May 2002, 13 June 2002). And given this attention, Gaziantep naturally became the place for many pilot projects. The most recent instance of these projects is the restructuring of the KOSGEB (Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation), whose first national pilot project was the small industrial estate built in Gaziantep in 1973. Erkan Gürkan, its new director, states that the KOSGEB was born in Gaziantep and its second-birth will happen in Gaziantep, too (*Değişim* May/June 2003, pp. 34-35). Similarly, the representative of the largest holding in Turkey (the KOÇ group), Ali Koç, declares that they will start a new information infrastructure service targeting the SMEs in Turkey (KOBİLİNE), in the capital of the Anatolian Tigers, Gaziantep (*Genç Çizgi*, 4(8), p. 25).

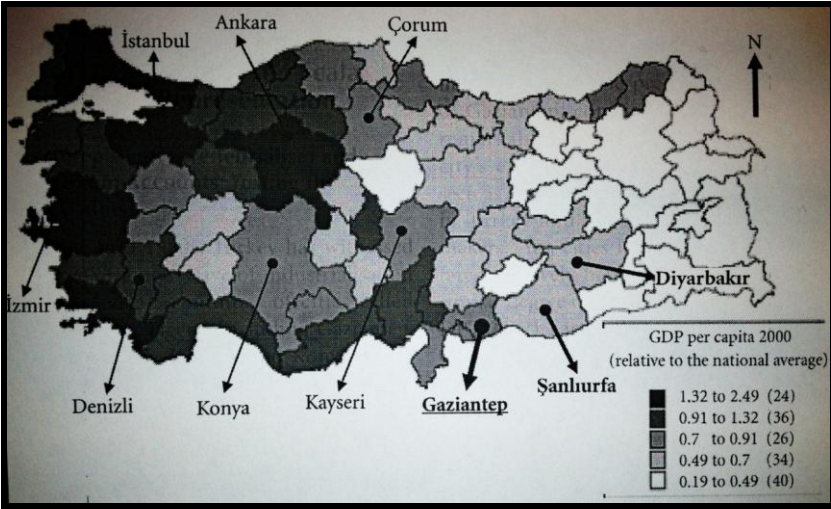


Figure 1. Anatolian Tigers and the uneven development in Turkey

Source: Adapted from Kılıçaslan and Saral (2005).

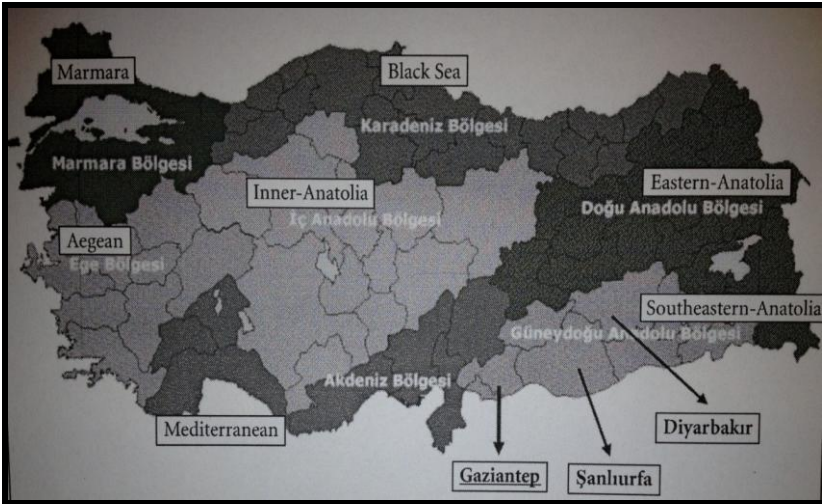


Figure 2. The geographical regions in Turkey

Source: [http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/biid/cog\\_bolge.html](http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/biid/cog_bolge.html).

The argument developed in this paper questions the mainstream view that the Tigers' performance represents 'a natural and unavoid-

able' local response to global market forces, whose theoretical premises are dealt with later.

There is a vast literature that aims to explain why and how localities have become prominent sites and agents of economic coordination and policy-making (for critical reviews, see Lovering, 1999; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999; MacLeod, 2001; Leibowitz, 2003; and Ward and Jonas, 2004). According to the emergent orthodoxy, cities and regions constitute a new spatial framework of capitalist production and accumulation that has been transformed by changing technologies of production (Cooke, 1997; Cooke and Morgan, 1998; Hirst, 1993; Piore and Sabel, 1984). The new mainstream literature also examines the socio-political framework within which localities come to acquire the power of agency, by focusing on local socio-economic particularities (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Fukuyama, 1995; Amin and Thrift, 1999; Storper, 1999; Soskice, 1999; Wood, 2000), expressed in notions such as 'social capital' and 'locality as community' (see Hirst, 1993). Here, community is introduced not only as a new unit of economic analysis but also as a political entity, whose agency is assumed to exist (for critical analyses, see Sengül, 2001; Güler, 2003). Then, to what extent can the concepts and accounts developed by this new mainstream literature help us to understand the experience of Gaziantep?

According to the ex-president of Gaziantep OSB (organised industrial district), who claims to have coined the term 'model city' for Gaziantep, what makes Gaziantep a model city is the priority given to production, and the industrialists' will to produce, even in the midst of national and/or global economic and political crises. Yet, Ekici also observes that there is still a need for the "logic of industry" — including institutionalisation; adoption and use of technology; and striking a balance in the relations between the employers and workers to be established and settled in Gaziantep (interview with Akif



Ekici). Hence, the unique face of Gaziantep's experience does not stem from the way the industrial production process is organised there. Or, could it be trust, or 'social capital'? The nature of the trust one can observe in Gaziantep is 'thin trust' (Putnam, 2000), where the relations are based on the mutuality principle of 'do unto others'. The competitive structure of the local economy does not leave much room for initiatives of economic co-operation (interview with Soren Hjorth; Eyüboğlu, 2000, p. 54; also see Müftüoğlu, 1992).

What is there to be transferred as a policy lesson from Gaziantep, the pioneer city, to other localities, then? The answer, this article argues, lies in the political activism of the representatives of Gaziantep's bourgeoisie, the level of political (not economic) co-operation displayed by forming a local corporate regime and the representation strategies they pursue to implement a local accumulation strategy (Harvey, 1989/2001). In other words, if there is a model, it is a political one, which emerged through local bourgeoisie activism to promote a multiscalar local accumulation strategy in the context of state rescaling.

### **The Rescaling of the Capitalist State in Turkey and the Rising Agency of Gaziantep's Bourgeoisie: The Roots of the Scalar Strategies of Representation**

The roots of the current industrialisation of the Anatolian Tigers and the associated local bourgeoisie activism can be traced back to the accumulation strategy, state interventions and the intrabourgeoisie struggles of the Keynesian pre-1980 period.<sup>7</sup> The accumulation strate-

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<sup>7</sup> Özsağır argues that inclusion of the province of Gaziantep into the KÖY regime (Kalkınmada Öncelikli Yörelere programı—the 'Areas Privileged in Development' programme) in 1968 (until 1973 and between 1978 and 1980) and the establishment of KÜSGEM (Small Industry Development Centre) in 1970 as part of a UN-related development project (in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce,

gy shift and the associated state rescaling process of the post-1980 period channelled this potential towards a business-led local mobilization and shaped the local accumulation strategies of its bourgeoisie.

### The Emergence of a New Local Accumulation Strategy: Roots of Industrialisation in Gaziantep

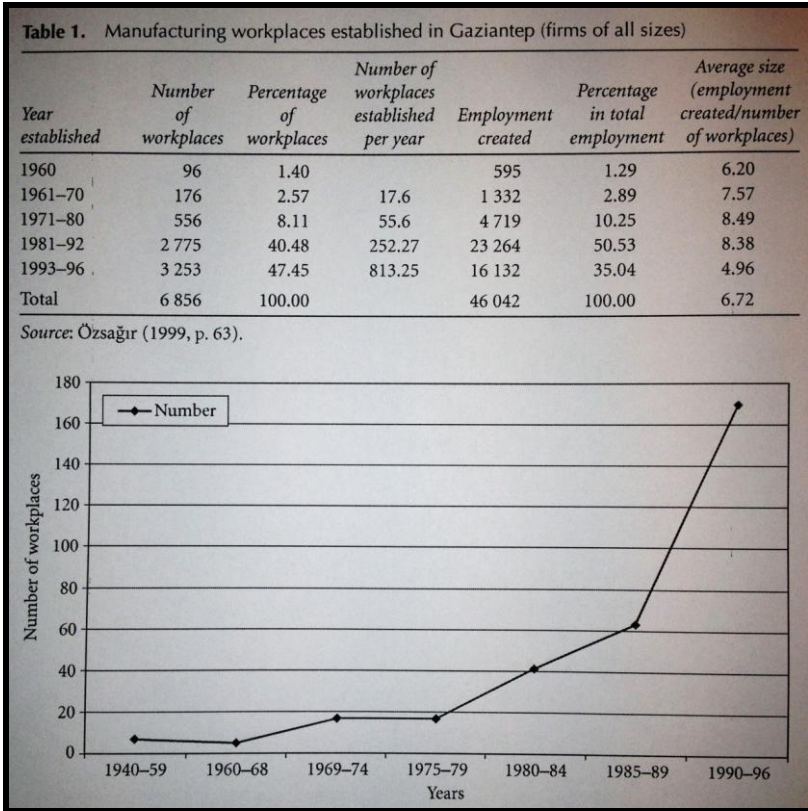


Figure 3. Number of workplaces established in Gaziantep (employing > 10 workers) from 1940 to 1996

(added to the existing industrial base)  
 Source: Adapted from DPT (2002, p. 10).

initiated the industrialization process in Gaziantep (Özsağır, 1999, p. 65; also see Eraydın, 2002, pp. 153-157; [www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/KÖY68-99.html#KOY68-73](http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/KÖY68-99.html#KOY68-73)).

Although the roots of Gaziantep's industrialisation can be traced back to the 1970s, the post-1980 era witnessed a sharp increase in the pace of the process (Table 1). This was not simply a quantitative change, but also a qualitative one, in the sense that the number of enterprises employing more than 10 workers began to rise steeply during the same period (Figure 3). This development also found its reflection in the place of Gaziantep's economy in both South-eastern Anatolia's economy and the Turkish economy.

Gaziantep's weight in the Turkish economy has increased both in terms of industrial net domestic product (NDP) and total net domestic product, especially since the late 1980s. Gaziantep's share of the total net domestic product has been influenced by the development of its industrial sector, as Gaziantep's share of total NDP runs parallel to that of industry. Even when the total NDP decreased after 1995, the industrial sector stayed at the same level in terms of industrial NDP (Figure 4). This economic performance of Gaziantep turned it into the economic centre of its region, contributing towards more than half of the industrial employment and exports.

Despite the fact that the post-1980 policies favoured the commercial and financial sector (Boratav *et al.*, 1995, pp. 5-6; Ilkin, 1992; Öngen, 2003, p. 185), the transition to the open economy strategy led the then-dominant commercial capital in Gaziantep to invest in the industrial sector, sparking a locally financed industrialisation process (MPM, 1998). The scale of capital initially invested in industry was not large enough to capture the benefits of a risky-rent economy. Also, the disappearance of trade barriers reduced the rents that the local merchants used to capture through illegal border trade during the pre-1980 era. The presence of an already-flourishing industrial sector, thanks to the industrial sites established by the state in Gaziantep during the 1970s, and the availability of skilled cheap labour thus encouraged a process of capital transfer. This was the first step in the formation of a local industrial bourgeoisie and the birth of a local accumulation strategy informed by an agenda of in-

dustrialisation. Yet, the real impetus came with the birth of the conscious and activist local industrial bourgeoisie, reflected in the establishment of an independent chamber of industry (the GSO, Gaziantep Sanayi Odası), upon the split of the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1989 (see Öncü,1980, p. 460).<sup>8</sup>

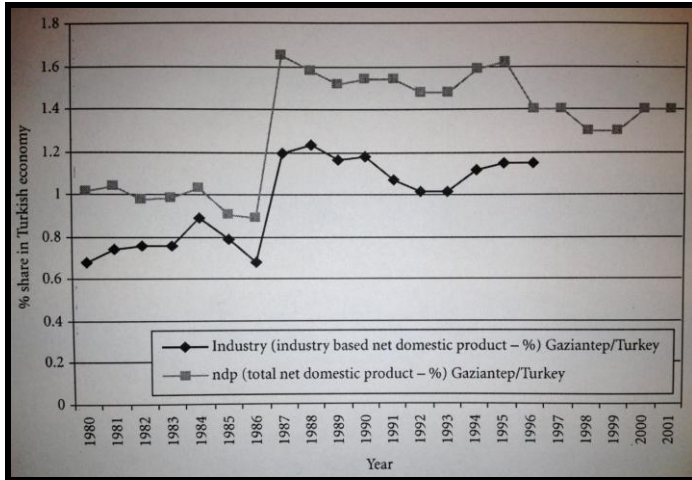


Figure 4. Gaziantep's economic performance in relation to the Turkish economy  
Source: Adapted from DPT (2002, p. 4); and, for 1997 onwards, www.tuik.gov.tr.

<sup>8</sup> Despite the emergence of a local bourgeoisie activism in Gaziantep in the 1970s, the local industrialists were not strong enough to institutionalise their activism. Öncü notes that, as of 1980, among the chambers of industry in Turkey:

Notably absent are the Bursa and Gaziantep chambers, which have been in the process of organisation since the early 1970s but have yet to be established. The difficulties encountered in the organization of these two chambers, in part, stem from the ongoing struggle between commercial and industrial interests (Öncü, 1980, p 460).

Thus, establishment of a separate chamber of industry in 1989 indicates that by then the local intra-bourgeoisie struggles had been settled in favour of the local industrial bourgeoisie. In fact, the group currently ruling the GSO had already become dominant inside the GTSO before the split (interview with Turgut Ercan). In this regard, certain industrialists fiercely opposed the split on the grounds that this could well prepare the conditions for future rifts between these two chambers, if controlled by rival groups (interview with Ali Burnukara). Yet, the diversity of interests and sectors, the size of the membership and the dispersed representation structure of the GTSO considerably lowered its (political) mobilisation capacity (interview with Aykut Tuzcu).

## The Rescaling of the Political Representation Structure in Turkey

Now, we will discuss how the state rescaling process and the associated changes in the political opportunity structure contributed towards the birth of scalar strategies of representation around Gaziantep's new accumulation strategy. The military coup of 1980 rendered organised representation of societal interests almost impossible for a large section of society and facilitated the implementation of an IMF-oriented economic programme designed by the top bureaucrat of a powerful state planning organization (the DPT), Turgut Özal. This created tectonic changes in the Turkish political-economy that have been felt in all aspects of the state (as form). Following the end of formal military rule, the Motherland Party of Özal (the ANAP) came to office after the national elections. The first step Özal took was to centralise the decision-making powers, especially in economic policy, to the post of the prime minister (Aksoy, 1995/2003; Güler, 1996).

Despite its pro-business attitude, the Motherland Party (in power from 1984 to 1991) preferred clientelist relations over the organised institutional representation of business interests (Barkey, 1990, p. 184; Bugra, 1994; see also Ergüder, 1991, p. 165), which discredited the umbrella organisations as channels of representation for the (local) business interests (Bugra, 1994, p. 349). This ultimately led to the rescaling of the institutional channel of representation to the local business chambers. Suppression of the labour activism, as well as the pro-business political atmosphere of the post-1980 era, turned local business associations into one of the few legitimate channels of representation of local concerns, thereby enhancing local business associations' credibility in local politics, as well as their capacity to speak on behalf of their locality.

## **The Rescaling of the National Intervention Strategies**

In combination with the aforementioned changes in the forms of representation, rescaling of the forms of intervention informed the representation strategies of Gaziantep's industrial bourgeoisie. In particular, two important policy choices of the ANAP were crucial: the export orientation and, to support this strategy, the use of universal state benefits (incentives, subsidies and credits) given to the entrepreneurs on an individual basis—along with a number of selective, territorially framed incentive/benefit programmes.<sup>9</sup> As the territorially framed programmes largely by passed Gaziantep, the most important form of state intervention that contributed to Gaziantep's industrialisation were the non-territorial state instruments (Özsabuncuoğlu *et al.*, 1999, p. 44), especially from the 1990s onwards.

Nevertheless, national politics and domestic economic strategies pursued by different post-1980 governments were not conducive to the emergence of a coherent and healthy industrialisation process in Turkey (Altıok, 1998, p. 262) and in Gaziantep. The local business associations in Gaziantep started to develop 'scalar strategies of representation' in the 1990s as a response to the economic crises of the 1990s (Yeldan, 2001), to representational barriers of clientelism and to the perceived failure of the 1990s' parliamentarism. The dispersed party structure of the parliament produced unstable coalition governments (1991-2002) (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002;

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<sup>9</sup> Including the now more selective KÖY programme, as well as the new incentive/benefit packages provided under the GAP (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi—the South-eastern Anatolia project). The GAP is a comprehensive regional development project including huge dam and irrigation projects associated with economic support and incentive schemes, as well as now more widespread social development projects. Although the roots of the dam and irrigation projects go back to the 1930s (Turgut, 1995), it was turned into a regional development project under the Özal government to support the post-1980 accumulation regime and to solve the Kurdish question.

Sayarı, 2002, p. 17). This resulted in a policy paralysis destabilising the financial sector, thereby making it very difficult for the industrialists in Gaziantep, and in Turkey, to find reliable sources of capital to sustain their industrial growth.

### **Scalar Strategies of Representation of Gaziantep's Bourgeoisie and the Rescaling of the Capitalist State in Turkey**

As noted earlier, the industrialisation process in Gaziantep during the 1980s was reactive and unplanned in nature. The situation was reversed with the emergence of the GSO in 1989, which consciously formulated a local intervention strategy of its own, while also pushing its sister GTO, along with the local government and local media, to articulate around this project of opening up Gaziantep's economy to the world. In an attempt to establish the GSO as a credible organisation, its leadership undertook an organizational reform in the 1990s (see Şerbetçi, 1997, p. 15). In late 1998, the chamber commissioned a report by the GTZ (the German Technical Collaboration Institution) to determine the future orientation of the chamber. Recognising the GSO's political dynamism (GTZ, 1998, p. 3),<sup>10</sup> the report suggested that the chamber use this capacity to construct and pursue a clearly defined political agenda with longer-term considerations:

What is advised to the GSO, to increase its influence, is not to isolate itself

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<sup>10</sup> The GSO, along with 42 other chambers in Turkey, applied for an accreditation programme, a collaboration of Euro chambers (Union of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry), Union of British Chambers and the TOBB. The GSO made it to the first shortlist of 10 chambers, and then to the first four chambers in Turkey, in terms of the organisational quality, and eventually participated in the certificate programme (*Değişim*, March/April 2003, p. 11).

from others but to collaborate with them. The GSO should try to establish dialogue and should try to create a consensus by working with other social groups and institutions to come up with a medium-term reform programme which will be attractive to most of the constituency. [It] should be honest with the people. [It] should stay in dialogue with MPs and party leaders, and improvement of its position should be maintained without prioritising any party. (...) The GSO, to be able to be more influential in the TOBB, has to enter into collaboration with other chambers of industry, [and] should concentrate on issues of strategic importance (GTZ, 1998, p. 5).<sup>11</sup>

The suggestion that followed was to introduce some organisational changes to facilitate such a co-ordinating function (GTZ, 1998, p. 5). The report also suggested that the GSO actively engage in image-building and promote Gaziantep at the international level (GTZ, 1998, pp. 2 and 4). These suggestions have been taken seriously by the GSO and its partners in Gaziantep. To summarise, this endeavour to rescale the focus of the local accumulation strategy involved an active search for new interlocutors who could help them to strengthen the position of Gaziantep in the national and international hierarchy of localities. At the same time, they also pursued an aggressive engagement strategy with the critical nodes of decision-making within the institutional boundaries of the national state.

### **Institutional Strategies of Representation: The National Scale**

The implementation of this latter strategy is a task which involves challenging the political hierarchy of localities and the balance of power inside the national bourgeoisie, as well as striving to get the support of the national state in territorial rescaling strategies. The nerve centres of the

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<sup>11</sup> This text has been translated from Turkish by the author.



integral state, where the national scale is (re)produced, constituted the major target.

The increasing centralisation of decision-making powers made it very difficult for the up-and-coming entrepreneurs of the Anatolian Tigers to find access to the political apex of the state during the 1980s and the 1990s, when the state benefits constituted the most reliable source of investment funding in a crises-ridden economy with an unstable financial system. Having unfettered access to the political apex of the state thus became apolitical priority for the GSO and Gaziantep's industrial bourgeoisie. As noted earlier, party politics did not offer a reliable channel of representation. The regained significance of the umbrella business organisations following the end of the Motherland rule, especially that of the Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges of Turkey (the TOBB),<sup>12</sup> turned them into a strategic site and channel of representation for Gaziantep's bourgeoisie.

In this regard, their institutional rescaling strategy involved an active effort to capture the control of the national umbrella business organisations. The GSO was particularly successful in establishing itself as an influential member of the TOBB. To quote Göncü, the general secretary of the GSO:

The GSO is the only chamber of industry in the region, other than Adana. We do not have the luxury to make a mistake. We are supposed to speak prudently. Thus, the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry is known as an institution whose predictions come true. Thus it emerged as a credible chamber. Be-

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<sup>12</sup> An important instance of this political weight was Yalım Erez's entry into party politics, after he left his presidency of TOBB in 1995. He was one of the architects of the Motherland-True Path (ANAYOL) Party, Welfare-True Path Party (REFAHYOL) and Motherland-Democratic Left and Democratic Turkey Party (ANASOL-D) coalitions. He served as minister in three separate governments (<http://eurasia-research.com/nta/1224nta.htm>).

cause the chamber represents Gaziantep, Gaziantep also emerged as a city which is taken seriously. While it was being represented with one delegate in the TOBB at the beginning, now it is represented with three delegates.

Our president of the chamber is on its management board. Our president of the [chamber] assembly is on the industry council. Since 1980, Gaziantep has sent ministers to every government. If Gaziantep says something to the benefit of society, [they] think that this should be done (interview with Kürşat Göncü).

This political investment strategy paid back its dividends, to the degree that the leaders of Gaziantep's bourgeoisie could claim that, "Now chambers have become more influential than the ministers" (interview with Mustafa Geylani).

Göncü's comment indicates his belief that increasing the credibility of the chamber is the key to success. This credibility largely came from the association of the formulation of their interests with the interests of their locality and Turkish society in general. Therefore, the struggle waged to capture the leadership of the umbrella organizations aimed not only to enhance the political visibility of Gaziantep, but also to redefine the content of 'national interest' in favour of the Anatolian capital and thus Gaziantep's bourgeoisie. An important instance of this rescaling strategy is the GAGİAD's<sup>13</sup> success in capturing the presidency of the TÜGİK (Tür-

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<sup>13</sup> The establishment of the GAGİAD (Gaziantep Genç İşadamları Derneği—Gaziantep Young Businessmen's Association) in 1993 reflects the changes in the socioeconomic composition of the local bourgeoisie in Gaziantep. Its membership comprises the new (third-generation) industrialists in Gaziantep, who mainly become true—professional— industrialists, unlike their fathers who started up their industrial enterprises using the capital accumulated via commercial activities. In fact, the GAGİAD has become the place where the leaders of these chambers are educated and prepared for leadership. Nejat Koçer, current president of the GSO and ex-president of the GAGİAD (3rd term), calls the GAGİAD a school for young business people and for Gaziantep (*Genç Çizgi*, 4(9)). Another ex-president (4th term) of the GAGİAD, Mustafa Topçuoğlu, commented that the solidarity between members of the GAGİAD turns them into the "infrastructure of the economy,

kiye Genç İşadamları Konfederasyonu—the Confederation of Young Businessmen of Turkey). Erhan Özmen, an ex-president of the GAGİAD, became the president of the TÜGİK in 2002. His vision as a candidate involved two important goals: to increase the credibility and influence of the TÜGİK in Turkey’s problems; and to promote the cause of the Anatolian capital. To quote:

Özmen, who claimed that Turkey has been ruled from metropolitan cities like İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and [that] Anatolia [’s contribution to] (...) production and employment has been ignored, continued as follows: ‘(...) When we look at the last 15 years in retrospect, we see that provinces such as Gaziantep, Maraş, Kayseri, Konya, [and] Denizli made great progress in terms of providing support to production, employment and SMEs.(...) It was SMEs that have been affected by every crisis, too. This power/force had to assume the responsibility at certain points. At this point we arrived, Anatolia gave Gaziantep the duty for the TÜGİK (Newspaper article from *Finansal Forum*, 28 May 2002; reprinted in *Genç Çizgi*, 2002(4)).

Özmen’s justification of his candidacy stands out as a nice summary of the cause Gaziantep’s bourgeoisie have been promoting. The strategy to control the TÜGİK was a part of the territorial rescaling strategy of organizing an Anatolian solidarity to challenge the metropolitan centres of Turkish capitalism.

### **Territorial Strategies of Representation 1: The Supranational and International Scales**

The necessity to rescale the focus of the local accumulation strategy led Gaziantep’s business associations to adopt territorial representation strategies, underlaid by domination and compensation concerns.

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social and cultural institutions of Gaziantep”.

The most significant strategy in this regard has been ‘intensification of collaboration with international, supranational and global actors’. The central objective has been to establish Gaziantep’s business associations as brokers and channels of communication between the national and regional policymakers, and those actors. The ‘model city’ discourse, in this regard, was a means of marketing the local corporate regime at the national and international scales. It was constructed to convince the interlocutors that Gaziantep had the capacity to experiment with economic and governing innovations, which would make it the best place to initiate different political/economic rescaling projects. The initiatives and endeavours informed by this strategy have aimed to ‘jump scales for domination’.

Another objective has been to contain (and to bypass) the national state’s territorial intervention schemes in the region (compensation). The crisis-ridden character of the domestic economy during the 1990s, and the associated national policy paralysis, led Gaziantep’s business associations to seek alternative and stable markets. Another crucial factor was the perceived inadequacy of the state bureaucracy in the transfer of technology and knowledge to the local actors (producers) (see Eyüboğlu, 2000). Thus, there was a need to import the experience and support of state-like partners for ‘long-term’ projects that would help them to implement their multiscale local accumulation strategy. Various political-economic or military crises rendered the neighbouring countries (the Middle East, Russia, etc.) unreliable in these respects. The European Union provided one of the best extra-local (and supranational) interlocutors and sites of interest representation.

**Domination concerns:** Turkey’s accession to the EU is a national project that can be understood in relation to the older ideals of Westernisation, modernisation and economic integration with the global capitalist econ-

omy. Thus, construction of a long-lasting partnership between Gaziantep and the EU-related institutions, and the EU's member countries like Italy, is seen to enhance greatly the legitimacy and influence of Gaziantep in the national and regional political-economy. Moreover, by acting as a pioneer in the establishment of EU-related institutions in Turkey, leaders of Gaziantep's bourgeoisie also hope to secure a privileged position in receiving the financial and non-financial benefits provided by the EU. According to them, the European Union and the state are complementary partners, rather than alternatives to each other (interviews with Mesut Ölçal and Kürşat Göncü).

The recent project of the 'European Union information office' hosted by the GTO represents one of the most significant instances of this strategy of rescaling for domination. The concept of an EU information office came as the result of an initiative by one of the corporate regime leaders of Gaziantep. The office in Gaziantep was the first ever established (in 1996) in a non-EU member country (interview with Aykut Tuzcu). The centre, and the GTO (the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce) as the host organisation, thus turned itself into a reliable partner in the eyes of the EU. This seems to have opened the doors of the EU to the GTO and Gaziantep. As Öğüt explained:

When we are to get in touch with someone from the EU via this representative [the office], we could reach them without facing any [EU] bureaucracy, directly, without any obstacles. (...) They know us well because of the [information] bureau. We are a partner here for them. When they have something to do here [in both Gaziantep and Turkey], they call us first/directly (interview with Figen Öğüt).

Here, we should also note that the office in Gaziantep is now acting as the national coordinator of the EU information offices in other cities and organises the visits of the EU countries' representatives to the region.

Another important instance of this strategy of scale-jumping for domination (and compensation) is the attempt to convince the US and Israel to set up a 'free trade zone' in Gaziantep with export privileges to the US, similar to the one that was established in Jordan by Israel and the US. A meeting took place between the presidents of the GTO and the GSO (Aslan and Koçer) and the ambassadors of these countries. According to Koçer:

What we really want is to sign a common trade agreement with both countries [although he does not specify if this means with Gaziantep or with Turkey]. (...) We explained that the US and Israel's desire to be present/ exist in the GAP region [the South-eastern Anatolia Project—Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi] should integrate with Gaziantep which is the centre of the region by its nature. Besides, we demanded a common trade agreement. Moreover, we stopped talking about Gaziantep [and moved on to] have meetings/talks about the technical infrastructure of the region (Yorum 2000 (35), p.5).

It appears that leaders of the GTO and the GSO assume the functions of the ministries of trade and foreign affairs and, while doing this, they work closely with the political core of the state. To increase further the credibility of their initiative, they presented themselves as the political representatives of their region and formulated their demands by reformulating the focus and content of the national regional policy with reference to international politics.

In other words, Gaziantep and the local business associations are slowly establishing themselves as institutional channels of communication between the region [and even the country] and the EU, as well as other supranational and international actors. Thus, the strategy is to locate Gaziantep between the nation-state and the world/EU as a site of interaction where globalization and the EU integration start to be felt and operationalised first.

**Compensation concerns:** As for the compensation concerns, the national accession to the EU and its market is a positive incentive to transform the institutional and technological infrastructure of Gaziantep's industry so as to create a competitive local economy. The EU-Turkish Business Centre established in Gaziantep in 2002 can be seen as a fruit of this strategy. The centre is part of a broader collaboration between the EU Commission and the TOBB. In the case of Gaziantep, the GSO and the GTO have acted as the local partners in this project and, indeed, have used their strong representation capacity within the TOBB. Once we consider the fact that there is a good number of cities whose economic performance and industrial structure could well provide a suitable atmosphere for such a centre (such as Kayseri, Denizli, Çorum, Bursa, Adana) and that it was Gaziantep that succeeded along with the leading industrial provinces/cities of Turkey, we can conclude that Gaziantep, and the GSO and the GTO in particular, have already reached a considerable level of credibility in the eyes of their European partners (interview with Hamit Doğan) and are slowly institutionalising the presence of the EU in the region.

## **Territorial Strategies of Representation 2: The Regional Scale**

**Compensation concerns:** If establishing close relations with the international/supranational actors was one strategy, to turn Gaziantep into the political hegemon of its region was another, mainly accompanied by the compensation concern. As noted earlier, while the economically underdeveloped cities, which involved those surrounding Gaziantep, could tap the benefits of the territorially selective support programmes, Gaziantep was denied these resources by the national government on the grounds that it already had a developed economy. This approach was perceived as a threat to the 'productive potential [read economic dom-

inance] of the city'. Thus, to escape 'unfair competition', and to contain this 'threat', Gaziantep's business associations began to implement two strategies: direct investment in the neighbouring cities of the region by Gaziantep based firms to benefit from the incentive scheme of the state; and, promotion of Gaziantep's local governance arrangement as a model for the region. As far as we are concerned with the first strategy, let me quote Nejat Koçer (the GSO's president), who offers a deal to the national government:

In Adıyaman, right under our nose, there are eight Gaziantep-oriented investments in total. *Let the government develop an incentive system with the 'negotiation method' for us [Gaziantep's industrialists] targeting Adıyaman. We do not want money or anything. Let incentive models be developed in SSK [Social Insurances Institution] premiums, tax, energy so that we will go there and create an investment boom* interview with Koçer, Hürriyet, 24 October 2003; emphases added).

Here, the industrialists of Gaziantep are framed as the 'potential implementers of the state's regional policy' aiming to overcome uneven development, without including Gaziantep in this territorial framework. Interestingly, the logic of this suggestion could be seen essentially as *contracting-out or privatisation of the task of regional development*, which is thought to be a public responsibility, given the Keynesian roots of the idea of regional development (see Brenner, 2004).

**Domination concerns:** The second strategy involves the promotion of Gaziantep's entrepreneurialism as the dominant mode of state–local relations in the region. We need to note that the state rescaling does not necessarily prioritise entrepreneurialism as a form of local governance. Indeed, there exist competing modes of local mobilisation adopting different representation strategies employed to influence the national state's



regional policy. The distinction Genieys makes between three strategies of political legitimation employed by the intermediary elite of different regions in Spain is apt here. According to Genieys:

The first repertoire of legitimation [is] based on the discursive strategies of announcing a 'loyalty option' with respect to the institutions of the autonomous Spanish state (...) The second repertoire rests on the 'voice option' of the intermediary elites wanting reform of the Autonomous Community statute. (...) The third repertoire of legitimation of the intermediary elites which occupies a marginal position within the autonomous parliaments is characterised by a 'defection' in the face of the present status (Genieys, 1998, pp. 176-178).

The most important difference between the strategies adopted by Gaziantep's corporate regime (and especially the leaders of business associations) and the political leaders of Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa, two other cities claiming to be the region's historical centre, is their approach to South-eastern Anatolia.

In the case of Şanlıurfa, where the leaders of the Kurdish, Arabic and Turkoman tribes are major political actors, the 'loyalty option' adopted. The tribal leaders ally themselves with the nation-state in fighting against the separatist Kurdish movement, to preserve the *status quo* in the region. They were successful in getting the South-eastern Anatolia-project's regional headquarters established there. There is no separate strategy that aims to transform the political economy of the region, and especially the interlocal relations, or the interlocal hierarchy. In the case of Diyarbakır, the local politics and agenda are deeply intertwined with regional politics. Yet, there is no extra attempt to transform or challenge the interlocal relations or hierarchies as Diyarbakır has been the historical centre of the Kurdish movement, which derives its bargaining power from its emphasison the 'exit option' (see Gambetti, 2004; also Şimşek, 2004). Gaziantep's has been a more interventionist and transforming

approach in terms of the relations between the region and the city, which could be interpreted as the 'voice option'. This interventionism has been formulated into two discourses. The first is the necessity to build regional economic strategies on the basis of a historically formed, natural economic division of labour: 'Not every city has to industrialise'. Apparently, this discourse aims to challenge the state's regional policy in the case of South-eastern Anatolia. The second is the emphasis on the centrality of 'economic development' as a regional political concern, against ethnicity and religion-based politics. The active pursuit of an economy-centred (read pro-business) local political agenda and the city's cosmopolitan nature turn Gaziantep into a political model for the region that will also work to the advantage of the national state by slowing down the momentum of separatism (see Ayata, 1999). Indeed, their confidence in the superiority of Gaziantep's liberal political model helped them to develop a more positive attitude towards the Kurdish question (see, for example, the supportive comment by the GTO's president on minority language rights, *Gaziantep'te Sabah*, 30 May 2002). To summarise, the territorial representation strategies pursued by Gaziantep's corporate regime aimed at rearranging interlocal relations in the region in a hierarchical manner with the broader goal of placing Gaziantep at the top, as the leader and representative of the region.

## **Conclusion**

The rise of localities as new loci of policymaking, especially in the form of entrepreneurialism, should be understood as a proactive process, rather than a reactive one. In other words, there is a need to go beyond the stimulation caused by 'external, non-local factors' that include the competition posed by other localities (Harvey, 1989/2001), the rescaling of the state's forms of intervention (the locational policies) and of inter-

nal organisation (decentralisation of the state, etc.) (Brenner, 2004). The increasing political significance of local governance, especially when local entrepreneurialism was its dominant political form, came as a result of a scale politics actively pursued by the local bourgeoisie, employing scalar strategies of representation. In this regard, the concept of local entrepreneurialism stands for a break with the past in terms of both the form and target of the political activism of the local bourgeoisie. The traditional significance of the local bourgeoisie in local politics was facilitated by informal ties between the local government and the local business concerns, patterned around a hidden agenda. This time, we are more interested in the question of what the local bourgeoisie does when it decides to act as its own executive.

Moreover, it can be suggested that localities, and especially those that are politically mobilised, can also function as scale-managers, along with the national state (see Mahonand Keil, 2006), and thus effectively shape the state rescaling process. Here, we can use an analogy used by Henri Lefebvre who likens the production of space to a spider weaving a web (Lefebvre, 1991). In our case, our spider was the business associations in Gaziantep, which were busily involved in weaving their 'space of engagement' (Cox, 1998) through institutional and territorial representation strategies. Here, scalar strategies of representation can thus be understood as instruments for shaping, co-ordinating and linking newly emerging structures, reproducing the 'capitalist state as a condensed form of rescaled social/class relations' that can no longer be constituted solely within the spatio-temporal matrix of the nation-state (see Poulantzas, 1978).

The paper also suggests that territorialisation of the state rescaling process takes place unevenly (see Hamel *et al.*, 2006, p. 35). Therefore, the rise of cities and regions is not a universal phenomenon to be explained by generalised and stylised 'models' of entrepreneurialism (Cabus, 2001;

also see DiGaetano and Lawless, 1999, p. 569) and interlocal competition can not simply be explained in terms of an economic struggle between entrepreneurial localities. Instead, we can talk about a competition between different political models of local governance, taking different scales of political economy as their target and frame of action.

It should be noted that this pursuit of scale politics around a multiscalar local accumulation strategy effectively stretches the boundaries of local governance towards non-local scales. It is inevitable that this has a potential to bring back home a host of problems for the mobilised local actors. The scalar strategies of representation inevitably expand the range of stakeholders in the local political economy, effectively turning Gaziantep into the meeting-point of actors from different scales, pursuing conflicting interests. In this respect, the rise of localities as new loci of policy-making in the context of state rescaling goes hand-in-hand with an unsettling and resettling process of local politics and policymaking, a research question that, I think, deserves much attention.

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## Appendix

### Newspapers and Other Non-academic Information Sources

*Değişim*: the GSO's official journal, Gaziantep.

*Gaziantep'te Sabah*: local newspaper, Gaziantep.

*Genç Çizgi*: the GAGIAD's official journal, Gaziantep.

*Hürriyet*, national newspaper, İstanbul.

*Yorum*: local journal, Gaziantep.

### **Interviewee List**

Atay, Aynur: General Secretary of the GAGEV; ex-policy specialist of the GAP-GİDEM centre in Gaziantep (2004, Gaziantep).

Burnukara, Ali: industrialist; ex-member of the GTSO assembly (2004, Gaziantep).

Doğan, Hamit: policy specialist, the EU Business Centre in Gaziantep; ex-policy specialist of the GAP-GİDEM centre in Gaziantep (2004, Gaziantep).

Ekici, Akif: ex-president of Gaziantep OSB (2004, Gaziantep).

Ercan, Turgut: industrialist; member of the GAGİAD management board. (2004, Gaziantep).

Geylani, Mustafa: ex-president of the GTO; ex-president of the GTO assembly (2004, Gaziantep).

Göncü, Kürşat: General Secretary of the GSO (2004, Gaziantep).

Hjorth, Soren: policy specialist (founding coordinator of the EU Business Centre in Gaziantep) (2004, Gaziantep).

Öğüt, Figen: Deputy-General Secretary of the GTO; Director of the EU Information office (2004, Gaziantep).

Ölçal, Mesut: General Secretary of the GTO (2004, Gaziantep).

Tuzcu, Aykut: owner of the local newspaper, Gaziantep'te Sabah; ex-member of the GSO assembly (founding member) (2004, Gaziantep).

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