



**THE EFFECT OF PERCEIVED SERVICE EFFICIENCY,  
PRODUCTIVITY, PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMIC-PHYSICAL  
SUFFICIENCY ON THE ATTITUDES AGAINST MUNICIPAL  
AMALGAMATION\***

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**STRUCTURED ABSTRACT**

The local government reforms of the last decade in Turkey resulted in continuous growth, expansion, and rescaling of larger municipalities in favor of larger administrative units. With the latest Act No 6360<sup>1</sup>, announced in 2012, there happened to be an important reform regarding local administration which applies to most of the town municipalities in Turkey. 30 special provincial administrations, 1.591 smaller municipalities, and 16.082 villages were dissolved as a result of the expansion of the 30 metropolitan municipalities to provincial borders in 2014.

The town municipalities' current statue as legal entities abated and instead they centralized to district municipalities as neighborhoods showing the reason of economics of scale. The factors of efficiency, productivity, participation and, physical and financial sufficiency, are asserted in relation to the economics of scale while the reforms on the basis of local administration are at stake in Turkey. Furthermore, these factors are presented as the main reasons of administrative transitions in the law's preambles. It is accepted that these factors are not sufficiently met by the small-sized municipalities so the legal entities of the town municipalities should be transferred as its neighborhoods to bigger municipalities. In other words, it is assumed that the community of the town municipality will be ruled by more participated

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<sup>1</sup> The Law Regarding the Foundation of Twenty Seven Districts and Fourteen New Metropolitan and The Law regarding Changes in Delegated Legislation (Official Gazette, date: 06.12.2012, number: 28489).



management, so they will have a financially and physically more equipped municipality.

The pathway of local government reforms in Turkey follows the international examples towards municipal amalgamation to benefit scale economies. Municipal amalgamation has been a common policy in local government reforms around the world (Reingewertz, 2012: 240; Calciolari, et al., 2013: 565). Academic debate has taken place for years regarding the best methods to organize municipalities (Spicer, 2012). The studies about the economic achievements of these reforms have produced mixed results. The discussion on optimal size of local government usually focuses on economic efficiency, democracy, distribution and development dimensions (Swianiewicz, 2002). However the complexity of municipal restructuring allows no easy answer as to whether amalgamation will lead to effectiveness and efficiency improvements in service delivery and financial situation or municipal governance (Vojnovic, 1998). According to Kjaer, et al. (2010) changes in municipal size are often considered as a balancing of two opposites, namely economy and democracy the larger the municipality, the greater the economies of scale, but the harder conditions for a well-functioning local democracy. It could be claimed that those who emphasize the existence of various administrative units in local governments hold a perspective which advocate local democracy, while those who support amalgamation of fragmented structures base their arguments in terms of efficiency and functional capacity.

The consequences of municipality amalgamation/abolition is an unresolved issue. So it is important to track the route of recent administrative reform in Turkey with empirical research findings. Because this topic, which is frequently studied in terms of economics and democracy, is a multi-dimensional process which involve legal, political, administrative, socio-cultural, demographic, ecological and even daily life issues aside from purely technical problems. Thus, it is important to understand the public perception about this reform.

Administrative transition towards the abolishment of the town municipalities is a difficult one because it will not be very well responded by the community and administrators. As the previous factors show, it is more difficult for the community to accept the transition if they have a perception that the current administration satisfies their needs. Hence, the research of Aktel et al. (2009) “the perception of communities who live in the small-sized municipalities in Isparta towards the decree about the municipalities’ abolishment” regarding the law no: 5747 asserts that “the reason put forward by the central administration is not interiorized by the local community and so they are against the abolishment.”

Similarly, the aim of this study is looking at the community of Gümüşlük whose town municipality will be closed regarding the law no: 6360, in order to understand the reactions of the community towards the conditions of the subclauses (efficiency and productivity in addition to the participation and, physical and financial sufficiency) set forth by the authorities as a reason to close the municipalities. Hence, “efficient and productive ministration” and “physical and financial sufficiency” are determined as independent variables and these independent

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variables are considered to be dependent variable of the research, “the negative attitude towards the abolishment of the town municipality.” In this context the following hypothesis is developed to inspect in this study: “The perception that Gümüşlük Municipality’s efficiency and productivity in addition to the participation and, physical and financial sufficiency affects positively the negative attitude towards the abolishment of the town municipality.” The research population is the residents of Gümüşlük. Our data gathering technique is a survey. The questionnaire is applied in November and December 2013 to 409 people who are picked randomly from the population according to the technique.

In the research, we take advantage of Aktel et al.’s sample (2009) developed in “Showing residents’ perception about abolishment of local municipalities in Isparta” under the law no: 5747. Questions are mostly overhauled in accordance with the aim of the research. 12 statements and total 43 statements are prepared for the “participation”; variable 8, for the “effective and productive service”; 14, for the “economic and physical sufficiency”; 9, for the dependent variable “the attitude for the abolishment of Gümüşlük Municipality”. The scale that enables us to understand participants’ attitudes and perceptions is a five point Likert scale. The data acquired are analyzed through the medium of SPSS<sup>2</sup>. Correlation and regression analysis are done to test the hypothesis and to show the relation between research variables.

It is established that there is a certain attitude towards keeping the current municipal system against centralization. It is confirmed that if the perception of efficient-productive service, physical and financial sufficiency increases, then the tendency towards not to lose the current system increases either. To test the hypothesis of the research, multiple regressions are analyzed and our model is determined to be meaningful and our hypothesis is verified. It was concluded that among the three perceptions, the perception of effective-productive service seems to be the dimension that explains the effect most. The data gathered showed similarities with the result of the study held by Aktel et al. (2009).

Since this study examines the conditions of towns before their transition, it is possible that it will be sourceful to compare the transition’s success with fieldworks. For this study is examined the condition before the transition focusing on a town, it is possible that it is going to be sourceful to inspect comparatively the transition’s success with fieldworks. The data to be collected this way would be instructive for both academicians and the government executives.

**Key Words:** Efficiency, Productivity, Financial Sufficiency, Local Government Reform, Economics of Scale.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistical Package for Social Science (version 15.0).

**ETKİN VE VERİMLİ HİZMET, KATILIM İLE MALİ VE FİZİKİ  
YETERLİLİK ALGISININ BELEDİYE TÜZEL KİŞİLİĞİNİN  
KALDIRILMASINA İLİŞKİN TUTUM ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİ  
BELİRLEMeye YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA**

**ÖZET**

2012 yılında yayımlanan 6360 sayılı Kanun kapsamında Türkiye'deki belde belediyelerinin birçoğunu ilgilendiren önemli bir yerel yönetim reformu gerçekleştirilmiştir. Belde belediyelerinin tüzel kişilikleri kaldırılarak ölçek ekonomisi gerekçesiyle ilçe belediyelerine mahalle olarak bağlanmıştır. Etkinlik ve verimlilik, katılım ile mali ve fiziki yeterlilik konuları, Kanun'da belde belediyelerinin kapatılmasını destekleyici bir unsur olarak ele alınan ölçek ekonomisinin alt başlıklarını oluşturmaktadır. Bu çerçevede araştırmanın amacı; Gümüşlük halkının belde belediyesini, 6360 sayılı Kanun'un gerekçesinde kapatılma için birer neden olarak yer verilen, etkin-verimli hizmet, katılım ile mali-fiziki yeterlilik unsurları açısından nasıl algıladığını ve bu unsurların belediyenin kapatılmaması konusundaki tutumlarını ne yönde etkilediğini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada kullanılan veri toplama yöntemi ise, ankettir ve evrenden rastgele örneklem yöntemine göre seçilen 409 kişiye uygulanmıştır. Ankete katılanların belediyenin kapatılmamasına yönelik bir tutum sergilediği tespitinde bulunulmuştur. Etkin-verimli hizmet, katılım ve mali-fiziki yeterlilik algısı artarsa belediyenin kapatılmaması yönündeki tutumların da arttığı saptanmıştır. Araştırmanın hipotezini test etmek için çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmış, etkin-verimli hizmet, katılım ve mali-fiziki yeterlilik algısının belediyenin kapatılmamasına yönelik tutum üzerindeki etkisini açıklamaya çalışan model bir bütün olarak anlamlı çıkmış ve hipotez kabul edilmiştir.

Çalışma, idari dönüşüm öncesi durumu bir belde özelinde incelediği için, yapılacak alan araştırmaları ile dönüşüm sonrası hedeflere ulaşıp ulaşılmadığının karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilmesine kaynaklık edebilecektir. Bu kapsamda elde edilen bulguların hem kamu yöneticileri hem de akademisyenler için yol gösterici olacağı söylenebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Etkinlik, Verimlilik, Mali Yeterlilik, Yerel Yönetim Reformu, Ölçek Ekonomisi.

## 1. Introduction

The local government reforms of the last decade in Turkey resulted in continuous growth, expansion, and rescaling of larger municipalities in favor of larger administrative units. With the latest Act No 6360<sup>3</sup>, 30 special provincial administrations, 1.591 smaller municipalities, and 16.082 villages were dissolved as a result of the expansion of the 30 metropolitan municipalities to

<sup>3</sup>The Law Regarding the Foundation of Twenty Seven Districts and Fourteen New Metropolitan and The Law regarding Changes in Delegated Legislation (Date: 06.12.2012, Number: 28489).

provincial borders in 2014. Increasing efficiency, productivity, enhancing participation and financial sustainability is frequently asserted as the basis of the latest local administration reforms in Turkey. Furthermore, these factors are presented as the main reasons of administrative transitions in the preambles of new local government laws and parliamentary speeches. For example, the Preamble of Act No 6360 (TBMM, 2012) states that “by means of centralizing services of metropolitan municipalities, the efficiency, coordination and quality of services will increase, so it will be possible to use less resources and offer more and better quality services”. It is argued that the small-sized municipalities are not sustainable due to their financial weakness and that the legal entities of the town municipalities should be transferred as neighborhoods to bigger municipalities. It is assumed that the communities of the town municipalities will benefit scale economies with a more participatory management, and financially stronger municipality. The complexity of municipal restructuring allows no easy answer as to whether amalgamation will lead to effectiveness and efficiency improvements in service delivery and financial situation or municipal governance (Vojnovic, 1998: 239). Academic debate has taken place for years regarding the best methods to organize municipalities (Spicer, 2012: 92). As a conclusion, the success of amalgamation in achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness will depend on the specific circumstances of the municipalities considering reform (Vojnovic, 1998: 239).

Actually, the pathway of local government reforms in Turkey follows the international examples towards municipal amalgamation to benefit scale economies. Municipal amalgamation has been a common policy in local government reforms around the world (Reingewertz, 2012: 240; Calciolari, et al., 2013: 565). An African proverb says that the best way to eat the elephant standing in your path is to cut it up into little pieces. This strategy was also popular in amalgamated municipalities, where the potential loss of closeness was a major challenge to the citizens (Bhatti and Olsen, 2011: 3). However, the studies about the economic achievements of these reforms have produced mixed results.

The discussion on optimal size of local government usually focuses on economic efficiency, democracy, distribution and development dimensions (Swianiewicz, 2002: 8). Changes in municipal size are often considered as a balancing of two opposites, namely economy and democracy the larger the municipality, the greater the economies of scale, but the harder conditions for a well-functioning local democracy (Kjaer, et al., 2010: 571). The rationale for amalgamation seems to derive from the wide-spread belief that bigger is better’ in local government rest on the assumption that municipal service delivery is characterised by considerable economies of scale and scope associated with greater population size. This view “... appears to have been universally accepted across all states that local government consolidation will result in reduced costs” (Byrnes and Dollery, 2002: 391). But Drechsler (2013: 159) claim that “this central belief is manifestly false, both on the empirical and on the theoretical level. In fact, there wasn’t a clearer image than in 2012 that altogether the sentence remains true that there are no automatic efficiency gains when enlarging administrative units. Empirically all recent studies this is very clearly. Therefore, assume quite safely that empirically, bigger does not mean better.

Discussions concerning amalgamation focus on taxes, service delivery, local representation, local identity, grants, political influence, professionalism, income/asset transfer and public opinion (Mckay, 2004: 26). The success of municipal consolidation and realization of scale benefits seem to depend on multiple factors such as the type of service to be delivered (Slack and Bird, 2013a: 5), municipality size (Reingewertz, 2012: 249), population concentration (Hanes, 2014: 12-13), organizational issues arising from municipal integrations (Nakazawa, 2013: 582), and local contexts (Vojnovic, 2000: 385). Debates about the democratic and participatory gains from the amalgamations also seem to be inconclusive. For example, some studies report lower access in local decision-making (Slack and Bird, 2013b: 121) and less political trust (Hansen,

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2013) while others claim that bigger municipalities provide more equal representation to different segments of the population (Spicer, 2012: 92).

Along with many other factors, there are arguments which claim that the voluntary and consensus based amalgamation, in contrast to forced ones, may play an important role in the success or failure of the unification (Vojnovic, 1998: 245). This is an important point since in many countries, municipal amalgamations were coercive and local residents' concerns and attitudes about administrative rescaling were largely omitted. The latest amalgamations in Turkey were also executed in a forced manner and arguments in favor of subsidiarite principle (Gözler, 2013) and local protests against involuntary mergers were mainly poorly addressed by decision makers. It could be argued that there is need to pay more attention to the attitudes of the local residents, since this dimension of the reforms have been less investigated than debated in the Turkish case. In this study, we determined three independent variables which include “the perceived level of efficient and productive administration”, “the perceived level of physical and financial sufficiency”, and “perceived level of participation”. These three independent variables cover the main arguments in favor of administrative rescaling. The dependent variable of the research is designated as “the attitude about the abolishment of the town municipality”. The field survey was conducted before the local government elections of 2014 at Gümüşlük, whose town municipality was closed after the elections due to the Act no: 6360. We believe our findings may contribute to future studies about the attitudes of the local residents about forced municipal amalgamations, and help to evaluate monitor success of municipal mergers in Turkey.

In the next section, we first review the process of local government rescaling during the last decade to illustrate the wider context in which the study was made.

## 2. Choosing the Right Size: Rescaling the Local Governments in Turkey

The local government system in Turkey is a tripartite system which includes provincial special administrations, municipalities (metropolitan, province, district, town) and villages. The municipalities, which date back to 19<sup>th</sup> century, have been subject to extensive regulations after the establishment of the republic, and they became the most important local government units (Aktel, et al., 2009: 46). In 1980s, the municipality model designed by the former Municipalities Law (Act no 1580, dating 1930) fell short in meeting the demands of the large metropolitan cities. In addition to the municipality law, a new law (Act no 3030) for metropolitan municipalities was enacted. The Municipality Law remained in force for seventy five years, and The Metropolitan Municipality Law remained in force for twenty years. As a result of the rising new public management paradigm of the early 2000s, revisions on the administrative structure of Turkey resulted in wide ranging reforms in local governments. From 2004 to 2012, all the main local government laws were renewed with the Metropolitan Municipality Law (2004), Provincial Special Administrations Law (2005), and Municipality Law (2005). These reforms turned the centralist approach, which prevailed through much of the administrative history of Turkey, upside down to create a much decentralized and empowered local government system. Moreover, municipalities were subjected to administrative rescaling in 2008 with Act no 5747, and again in 2012 with Act no 6360.

What accompanied the reforms of the last decade was the continuous growth, expansion, and rescaling of municipalities in favor of larger administrative units. Along with other examples around different parts of the world (Kızılboga and Alıcı, 2013: 60), benefitting scale economies became the *raison d'être* of the adjustments in local government system. The dislike of small administrative units is clearly seen in the preambles of new local government laws. For example in the preamble of Act no 5747 (TBMM, 2008) it is stated that small municipalities are blocking effective and appropriate use of resources. It is also argued that these municipalities allocate much

of their incomes for current expenditures and they do not have the capacity to create new sources, resulting in dependency on the shares which are generated from general tax revenues.

Similarly and in more detail, the preamble of Act no 6360 (TBMM 2012) mentions the waste of resources due to lack of planning and coordination among the many local administrative units in a specific geographical area. It is emphasized that the problems associated with industrialization, transportation and environmental issues cannot be solved by small-scale municipalities which lack the capacity to confront these issues. In terms of administration, planning and coordination, it is indicated that it is necessary to provide stronger governing structures which can create optimal services when the municipality border is the same with the territorial border and so it is the way to solve this problem. The reason why Metropolitan Municipalities should be formed is based on the fact that there is a need to designate small-scale politics of the districts and small-scale municipalities in a more integrated frame which is provided by the macro politics of Metropolitan Municipalities. One of the basic advantages of Metropolitan Municipalities is that “among the integrated governing structures, the new governing structure will provide a fairer share of the use of sources and opportunities”. It is predicted that public services should be provided by the local administrative units which can offer effective services in an ideal-scale and so the regulations are made accordingly.

For Çoker (1981: 84), it is costly to form a municipality in small-scale settlements as it is indicated in the law’s preamble. It is mentioned in a report of DPT (2001: 20) that these municipalities face resource shortage problems. The small-scale municipalities that serve small-scale fields and populations have problems finding experts who can help find resources, prepare projects and tender dossiers. Being understaffed causes problems for governing properly, especially in terms of basic technical issues (Çoker, 1989: 29). Also it is indicated that high personel cost hinders providing more services and new investments (Gürsoy, 2008: 91). It is additionally emphasized that small-scale administrative units makes it more difficult for the central administrative unit to provide aid and, it also causes the national resources to be divided into smaller shares, thereby diminishing effectivity. Additionally, it is thought that large-scale administrative units support the participation more (DPT, 2001: 20, 24). As it is seen, effectivity and productivity in addition to the physical and financial sufficiency issues are considered to be subclauses of scale economics and this is seen as a supportive element in the Law to close the town municipalities. Moreover, participation is seen as a factor on which the change is based and the public administration reform’s one of the principles so it is necessary to have participative administration and promote more participation.

Although arguments in favor of rescaling dominate legal documents, there are also strong arguments in favor of preserving current municipalities. Keser and Gökmen (2012: 39) think that, besides economical considerations, it is also necessary to take into account human standards, e.g., making the livable environment central and also considering the settlement’s physical location, its importance as socio-economical level of development, and the cultural and natural properties that should be protected and managed. Also, Kılınç (2010: 88) asserts that a town’s developmental dynamics, urban infrastructure investments, tendency to select sites for industrial and housing zones, plan prognosis should be bear in mind. Keleş (2012: 325) thinks that in the metropolitan, the transition itself, or to promote this transition, or to force this transition of local administrative units to larger ones will cause local units cease to exist; and this tendency to do it cannot be defended in terms of democracy. For Gözler (2013: 54), the extension of Metropolitan Municipalities caused this kind of a situation: “For example, a place in which there are houses or neighbors close to each other, there is another place 20, 30 km away from that with 10.000 houses, and another place 100-200 km away with several hundred houses...”. Thinking this area as one center causes us to not see participation and proximity to population in governing. Also, this situation is not suitable to the

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Constitution. In the current politics, in the countries which rule by democracy, municipality is considered to be prerequisite to democratic structuring because they are institutions that can provide a possibility “direct participation to governing” (DPT, 2001: 113). The differentiation of participation is actually in a close relation with the scale of the government unit. Arıkoğa (1998: 75) emphasizes that the possibility for small-scale units to practice direct participation is higher while the scale is getting bigger than the direct participation form is inclined to become a “representational” form. However, at the same time, as the increase in units is the result of demographic, technologic, economic factors, the solutions like minimizing units or stabilizing the scale for the sake of participatory governing will not be enough. It is necessary to reform local governing practice in parallel to the developing and changing conditions because this practice is the most appropriate form to carry out democratic principles like effective participation, pluralism, representation and public surveillance (DPT, 2001: 25).

According to Öner and Şen (2008: 424), administrative transition towards the abolishment of the town municipalities is a difficult one because it will not be very well met by the community and administrators. It could be more difficult for the community to accept the transition if they have a perception that the current administration already satisfies their needs. For instance, Aktel, et al., (2009: 65) who has studied the perception of local communities who live in the small-sized municipalities in Isparta about an earlier law about the abolishment of smaller municipalities (Act no 5747) states that “the reasons put forward by the central administration is not accepted by the local community and so they are against the abolishment”. Similarly, the aim of this study to investigate the attitudes of the local community about the reasons set forth by the authorities to dissolve their municipalities. We believe it is important to understand the reactions of the local residents against administrative reforms, since the success of such reforms depend heavily on the subjects, in this case the local communities, of these reforms.

There are two ways proposed for putting the problems behind without a change in cascading municipalities. The first way is a unification which is selected for local government reforms in Turkey, and it is the subject of this paper. The second way is an association. Associative governing saves the municipalities’ legal entities and it is superior because it does not generate a “distancing representation” problem that comes along when there is a transition from a lower unit to a higher one. Unification, on the other hand, removes the municipalities’ legal entities, and it makes municipalities become a completely other general authorized governmental unit (DPT, 2001: 22-23). The legal entity of the town municipalities that became neighborhoods and their rights and privileges are abolished. Removal of the legal entity means deactivating the decision mechanisms and supply possibilities (Ayman Güler, 2012: 64). For this reason, İzci and Turan (2013: 132) emphasize that this new regulation regarding the law should not be considered as a simple executive change because the population in the municipality that will be transferred to neighborhoods and will lose its legal entity will also lose most of its rights and privileges.

Consequently, many people wanted the local governmental system in Turkey to be changed in the course of time, however, these efforts remained ineffectual, and so they caused no major changes (DPT, 2001: 12, 17). As Aktel, et al., (2009) research and this study’s results show, emphasis should be on the reconstruction of the centralized administration before local reforms and policies are performed (DPT, 2001: 12, 17). To sum up, it can be said that the municipalities’ governing styles can be different in rural and urban areas. Therefore, municipalities should be entrusted with authority and economical potentials in accordance with the size of their area, the properties of the area they cover, economical and social structures and the diversity of the service which is expected from them to serve (DPT, 2007: 96).

Although discussions about the right scale still continue, it is a fact that rescaling in favor of larger administrative units has been the one-way direction since 1980s. After the repeal of Municipality Law no: 1580 dated 1930, Municipality Law no: 5393 enacted in lieu. According to this law, the population standard for a municipality to gain a legal entity statue increased from 2.000 to 5.000. Conversely, there was no population standard to gain legal entity statues due to the Metropolitan Municipality Law 3030, however, in the Law no: 5216, it is stated that the cities whose population is more than 750.000 can be transferred to be metropolitan cities. Within the scope of the law no: 5216, the existing 16 provinces' executive borders and municipalities' conditions are restructured: for Istanbul and Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipalities, the province border is defined as territorial border. Thus, these two provinces named as "integral-cities". All of the district and town municipalities inside these two cities are included in Istanbul and Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipalities. Thus, in the borders of Metropolitan Municipality, there is no village legal entity left, and so these two provinces became a "city" (Kavruk, 2008: 60).

In the case of other provincial municipalities (the rest 14), on the condition that the center is accepted for the current offices of the governor in the provincial territorial border, the following criteria for their borderlines follow (Table 1);

- Radius is 20 km if the population is at most 1 million
- Radius is 30 km if the population is between 1 million and 2 millions
- Radius is 50 km if the population is more than 2 millions

As the act of law is defined this way, it is also called "Pair of Compasses (Pergel) Law" in the literature. The borderlines of the Metropolitan Municipalities have changed due to measurement technique and the municipalities that remain in the circle on the paper are included in the Metropolitan Municipality. Villages are defined as neighborhoods, and they centralized to the municipalities within metropolitan.

The 11<sup>th</sup> article called "abolishment of legal entity" of the law no: 5393, set distance condition for the abolishment of municipalities' or villages' legal entity statues. It is predicted that the legal entity of the settings which are less than 5 kilometers away from the other settings whose population are estimated 50.000 or above are decided to be transferred to related administrations. Due to the distance condition judgment, after every inclusion of nearby small settings, the central municipality's borders will be redefined and so it will enlarge. Furthermore, this enlargement will make the borders of new settlements be close less than 5 km each time and so there is going to be new small settings which will be participated as a new neighborhood to the central municipality. Thus larger municipalities are candidate to be something which can enlarge unlimitedly and endlessly this way (Kavruk, 2008: 57).

Within the scope of the law no: 5747, the municipalities' legal entity in the Metropolitan Municipalities is repealed<sup>4</sup> and the neighborhoods within these municipalities became the neighborhoods of districts in the Metropolitan Municipalities (Article 1 and 2). The municipalities whose population is under 2.000 became villages (Provisional Article 1). The name of 862 municipalities which will become villages according to the Law, included as an appendix.

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<sup>4</sup>It is decided that the number of municipalities that are in the service area of Metropolitan Municipalities will be decreased. Because, according to the preamble of the Law no: 5747 (TBMM 2008), many town municipalities small or big transferred to Metropolitan Municipalities with the Law no: 5216, and a necessity to object new scale and area regulation to small-scale municipalities emerged.

However, as a result of the lawsuit which took action by the Opposition Party at the Constitutional Court, 836 of the afore-mentioned municipalities retained their statues as municipalities.

By year of 2012, there were two “integral cities” (Istanbul and Kocaeli), 14 Metropolitan Municipalities, 65 cities and 2.950 district municipalities in Turkey. Within the scope of the law no: 6360, there are important numerical changes regarding administrative divisions compared to the previous local government laws: 14 more cities became Metropolitan Municipalities, raising the total to 30. It can be seen in Table 1 that all of the metropolitan municipalities’ borders are integrated with the territorial borders as it the case for Istanbul and Kocaeli. Additionally, the legal entities of provincial special administration of 30 cities were repealed. 53 percent of the municipalities in Turkey and 47 percent of the villages (16.082 villages) have been transferred. Because of this regulation, the rural population has diminished 50 percentage (in 2011, the rural population was 23.2 percent of the total population and now it is 9.4 percent). Villages became neighborhoods; and smaller municipalities became unified neighborhoods of the district municipality where they were located in (YAYED 2012; Gülçubuk, 2013: 10).

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**Table 1: Metropolitan municipalities and their border enlargements**

Metropolitan Municipalities	Date / Legislative Regulation	Metropolitan's Populations 2012	Province Populations 2012	Square Measure (km <sup>2</sup> )	Act no 5216 (2004)				Act no 6360 (2012)
					20 km	30 km	50 km	Provincial Border	Provincial Border
Ankara	1984/3030	4.630.735	4.965.542	25.706			*		*
Istanbul	1984/3030	13.710.512	13.854.740	5.220				*	*
Izmir	1984/3030	3.401.994	4.005.459	11.973			*		*
Adana	1986/3306	1.636.229	2.125.635	14.030		*			*
Bursa	1987/3391	1.983.880	2.688.171	11.043		*			*
Gaziantep	1987/3398	1.438.373	1.799.558	6.554	*				*
Konya	1987/3399	1.107.886	2.052.281	38.257	*				*
Kayseri	1988/3508	1.004.276	1.274.968	16.917	*				*
Antalya	1993/504	1.073.794	2.092.537	20.591	*				*
Diyarbakır	1993/504	892.713	1.592.167	15.355	*				*
Erzurum	1993/504	384.399	778.195	25.066	*				*
Eskisehir	1993/504	659.924	789.750	13.652	*				*
Kocaeli	1993/504	1.527.407	1.634.691	3.505				*	*
Mersin	1993/504	876.958	1.682.848	15.853	*				*
Samsun	1993/504	547.778	1.251.722	9.579	*				*
Sakarya	2000/593	590.498	902.267	4.817	*				*
Aydın	2014/6360		1.006.541	8.007					*
Balıkesir	2014/6360		1.160.731	14.292					*
Denizli	2014/6360		950.557	11.868					*
Hatay	2014/6360		1.483.674	5.403					*
Malatya	2014/6360		762.366	12.313					*
Manisa	2014/6360		1.346.162	13.810					*
Kahramanmaraş	2014/6360		1.063.174	14.327					*
Mardin	2014/6360		773.026	8.891					*
Muğla	2014/6360		851.145	13.338					*
Tekirdağ	2014/6360		852.321	6.218					*
Trabzon	2014/6360		757.898	4.685					*
Sanliurfa	2014/6360		1.762.075	18.584					*
Van	2014/6360		1.051.975	19.069					*
Ordu	2014/6360		741.371	6.001					*
30 Metropolitan municipalities		<b>Total</b> <b>35.467.356</b>	<b>total</b> <b>55.294.905</b>	<b>total</b> <b>394.924</b>	In 2014, metropolitan population increased from 47% to 73% of the population; metropolitan areas increased from 30% to 50% of the country's total area.				

Sources: Çınar, et al., 2009; TÜİK, 2013.

After we briefly present the debates about the local government reforms and show the magnitude of rescaling in terms of population standards, statutory changes, and changing administrative boundaries, we can now present the methodology and the findings of our study.

### 3. Research Area

Gümüşlük is located in Turkey's Aegean Region, in Muğla, on the Bodrum Peninsula's most western edge. Before 1998, it was Karakaya Village under Bodrum's District Municipality. It became a town municipality on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1998, in a decision dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1998, numbered 06.11.1998, published in official gazette, as per article 7469 of the law no: 1580, based on Interior Ministry's sentence numbered 98/49852. Gümüşlük Municipality's body is defined by the local elections held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1999.

As 2012 population data shows, permanent resident Turkish citizens are 3.805 and foreigners are 600. Male citizens numbering among Turkish citizens are 1.979, and female citizens are 1.826 (TÜİK, 2013). Right along with Gümüşlük town municipality, as it can be seen on Table 2, 9 other town municipalities in Bodrum; Ortakent-Yahşi, Turgutreis, Yalıkavak, Gündoğan, Göltürkbükü, Yalı, Konacık, Bitez and Mumcular also lost their legal entities starting the time of general local elections on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2014. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2013, there was a plebiscite in the six of these town municipalities (Gündoğan, Ortakent, Göltürkbükü, Mumcular, Gümüşlük and Yalıkavak) and residents' ideas about this abolishment are questioned. The results of this plebiscite are indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: The results of this plebiscite on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2013**

Name of the Town	Number of Voters	Total Number of Votes	Valid Votes	Invalid Votes	Yes	No
GÜNDOĞAN	4.182	1.009	1.009		8	1.001
ORTAKENT	4.447	998	998			998
GÖLTÜRKBÜKÜ	2.792	459	458	1	11	447
MUMCULAR	2.276	731	729	2	1	728
GÜMÜŞLÜK	2.754	1.092	1.092		12	1.080
YALIKAVAK	7.030	1.981	1.981		7	1.974

Source: Milliyet, 2012.

1.092 of 2.754 residents in Gümüşlük Municipality joined to this plebiscite, and 1.080 residents said “no” to show that they think this abolishment is not right.

According to the Article 1 of the Law no: 6360, “Constitution of a Municipality and Definition of Its Borders”, where the Province Muğla, Gümüşlük is located, will be transferred into a Metropolitan Municipality, defining its territorial borders as executive borders. According to the law no: 6360 (article 1/ subclause 3), it is announced that the legal entities of town municipalities which are in the metropolitan municipalities will be removed starting the time of general local elections on 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2014. It is decided that they will be joined to district municipalities as “its neighborhoods by the same name”. One of these towns is Gümüşlük, the research area of this study, has 2 neighborhoods Karakaya ve Koyunbaba and it had its own town municipality for 16 years.

#### 4. Population and Sample

The research population is the residents of Gümüşlük. The questionnaire is applied in November and December 2013 to 409 people who are picked randomly from the population according to the technique. 177 of the sample in the research are female and 226 are male. 96.8% of the participants are Turkish citizens and 8 of the participants are foreigners. Average of age is 40.3 (SD=12.9). Among participants, permanent residents of Gümüşlük are 337, 82.4% of the sample. 16.2% of the sample residents in the summer session or because of other purposes. The duration of stay among participants is 18.4 year. (SD=17.3) 77.3% of participants live in Karakaya, 17.1% live in Koyunbaba neighborhood. 155 of the respondents graduated from primary school, 124 from high school, 111 from higher education, and 15 from graduate studies. 70 of the participants declared that they do not have an income. 155 declared that they have an incomes up to 1.500 TL, 101 declared that they have an incomes up to 2.500 TL, and 74 people declared they have more than 2.501 TL income. 1.7% of participants are students, 2.9% unemployed, 17.4% are housewives, 1.2% is senior executives, 11% are artisans, merchants, or craftsmens, 12.5% are civil servants and 1.2% is farmers. The proportion of students, senior executives and farmers is lower than the others. The most proportioned occupation is workers as 18.6%. The retired percentage is 12.2 and tourist traders are 6.8%. 14.2% declared that they have “other” occupations.

## 5. Data collection

As it was indicated under the title of the sample, the data collection tool is questionnaire. In the research, we take advantage of Aktel, et al., sample (2009: 45) developed in “Showing residents’ perception about abolishment of local municipalities in Isparta” under the law no: 5747. Questions are mostly overhauled in accordance with the aim of the research. 12 statements and total 43 statements are prepared for the “participation”; variable 8, for the “effective and productive service”; 14, for the “economic and physical sufficiency”; 9, for the dependent variable “the attitude for the abolishment of Gümüşlük Municipality”. The scale that enables us to understand participants’ attitudes and perceptions is a five point Likert scale.

In this respect, *productivity* is defined here as how good a business or a public body uses their sources in the production of goods or services. Productive analysis provides a proportional relation between outputs (goods/services) and the factor inputs (sources) (Arslan, 2002: 3). *Efficiency* is defined as the success to fulfill goals and it is a way to maximize outputs using political, economical and technological means. (Ekinçi and Yılmaz, 2002: 35; Dicle, 1975: 2). Efficiency is a performative dimension which defines the degree to which the goals and targets are attained as a result of the activities that are practiced to achieve defined goals and strategic targets. It shows us to what extent the targets are achieved and the relation between activities’ real effect and the planned effect. On the side of the public, the term efficiency is preferred because its scope is wider than the term productivity in terms of the production of goods and services (Arslan, 2002: 4). The quests for an efficient state make the investigation and restructure of the organizational structure and, the function and the goals of public administration necessary (Akyel and Köse, 2010: 10). What is effective for the administration of physical and financial sources is the acquisition of the sources at the best time, place and quality (Ulusoy, 2002: 31). *Participation*, for Sezen, is to be active in the process of application, determination and decisions of policies regarding the foundation, administration and supervision of the social order (Karaçor, 2009: 126).

The reliability ratio of the scale that is prepared for the “participation” variable in Cronbach’s Alpha value is calculated as 0.71. (1=Always, 2=Frequently, 3=Occasionally, 4=Rarely, 5=Never). The coefficient of the variable “effective and productive services” is 0.90; the coefficient of “economic and physical sufficiency” is 0.76; the coefficient of the scale prepared according to the independent variable is 0.79. (1= Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree). As these values are above 0.70, the statistics is meaningful. The data acquired are analyzed through the medium of SPSS. Correlation and regression analysis are done to test the hypothesis and to show the relation between research variables.

## 6. Findings

The descriptive statistics and the results of correlation analysis are given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Descriptives of scales**

	Average $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation(SD)	1	2	3
1. Attitude Against the abolishment of Municipality	2.63	.738			
2. The Perception of Effective and Productive Service	2.41	.870	.679(**)		
3. The Perception of Participation	2.65	.590	.536(**)	.634(**)	
4. The Perception of Economic and Physical Sufficiency	2.59	.736	.609(**)	.689(**)	.670(**)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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According to the analysis shown in Table 3, the average of attitude towards the abolishment of Gümüşlük Municipality is 2.63. This value is close to the centering however it can be said that participants showed an attitude against the abolishment of the municipality (2=agree). The percentage of the participants who think the abolishment will cause negative results is 49.9. The percentage of the participants who think that abolishment is not held for the sake of the public benefit is 48.9; the percentage of the participants who think that the abolishment is not held for the sake of more effective/productive services of residents is 57.3; the percentage of the participants who think that the abolishment is not held for the sake of preventing wastage of sources is 44.54.9% of all participants think that there will be negative results of abolishment because there is a high participation rate in town municipalities. The average of questions regarding the participation scale is 2.65, and this value is closer to the average than the other variables. At this point, it can be said that participants inclined more to the average values while answering this variable. Results show that 56.5% of participants never joined Gümüşlük council meetings, and they (54.1% )will not join either after the transfer to Bodrum Municipality.

Among the variables, the most distant from the average is the productive service perception with a value of 2.41. 67.1% of all participants accept that Gümüşlük Municipality works effectively. The perception ratio is 75.3% regarding the problems that would come up for services reaching the neighborhoods after the transition. Previously, in the study of Aktel, et al., (2009: 56, 65), which was conducted in the town municipalities of Isparta, all of the participants (100%) who are composed of mayor and council members stated that “municipalities work effectively and productively in terms of local services”. Hence, it is shown that the central government’s reason to abolish municipalities is not supported by local factors. As the results of the correlation analysis show, there is a meaningful and positive relation between the attitude against the abolishment of municipalities and all the variables ( $r_{\text{efficiency}}=0.679$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), ( $r_{\text{participation}}=0.536$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), ( $r_{\text{economic sufficiency}}=0.609$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). According to these results, the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities increases if the perception of effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency increases. The regression analysis’ result to test the hypothesis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Summary results of the regression analysis**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable The Negative Attitude on the abolishment of the Municipality						
	B	Std. Mistake	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance Value	VIF
Constant	.807	.124		6.523	.000		
The Perception of Effective-Productive Service	.409	.044	.484	9.300	.000	.459	2.179
The Perception of Participation	.099	.065	.078	1.540	.124	.487	2.054
The Perception of Economic-Physical Sufficiency	.223	.053	.223	4.184	.000	.436	2.296
R Square: 0.512 Corrected R Square: 0.508 Durbin Watson: 1.619 F=137.354 P<0.05							

According to the results of regression analysis given in Table 4, the model that is trying to explain the effect of the perception of effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency on the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities is meaningful as a whole ( $R^2=0.512$ ;  $F(3-393)=137.354$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value is calculated as 0.512 ( $F(3-393)=137.354$ ). According to this result, independent variables (the perception of effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency) can explain 51.2% of the attitudes. Hence, the research hypothesis that claims the perception of the effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency has a positive impact upon the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities is accepted.

Among these three dimensions, the perception of effective-productive service is a dimension that can explain at the highest level the change in the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities. The beta value of the perception of effective-productive service is more meaningful and higher in comparison with other dimensions ( $\beta=0.484$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). However, it is seen that the perception of participation does not have a meaningful impact upon the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities when the sample is taken into account.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

There are radical changes made in Turkey regarding local governmental systems in the course of time. The most important of these are the ones which cause to practise as legislative regulations since the beginning of the 2000's. In this context, "Metropolitan Municipality Law" no: 5216, "Municipality Law" no: 5393, "Law Regarding District Foundations' Definition within Metropolitan Municipality and Modification of Certain Laws" no: 5747, and "Law Regarding the Foundation of Twenty Seven Districts and Fourteen New Metropolis and The Law regarding Changes in Delegated Legislation" no: 6360 are accepted and the structure and operation of governing is restructured. The reason why there is an abolishment of the legal entities of municipalities with low population ratio is grounded on the scale economics. In the law: 6360's Preamble (TBMM, 2012), there is the attitude that "by means of centralizing services of metropolitan municipalities, the efficiency, coordination and quality of services will increase, so it will be possible to use less resources and offer more and better quality services". This way, there seems to be a thought that people will participate more in governing. To support this idea, the integral-cities, İstanbul and Kocaeli, are shown as examples for the benefits that metropolitan municipalities provide.

The regulations on the local level directly affect the populations and so can change the fate of the town. In this context, the effect of the perception of the effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency upon the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities is analyzed.

The method used in this study to gain data is questionnaire. When inspecting the averages regarding the research variables, it is seen that all values are above two. An observation is made that the participants have an attitude against the abolishment of the municipality. It is seen that participants think living in a town is more advantageous than living in a neighborhood. If the perception of the effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency increases, then the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities increases.

To test the hypothesis, multi-regression analysis that was applied and the model which tries to explain the perception of the effective-productive service, participation and economic-physical sufficiency's effect on the attitude against the abolishment of the municipalities that was analyzed appeared meaningful and so the hypothesis was accepted. It was concluded that among the three perceptions, the perception of effective-productive service seems to be the dimension that explains

the effect most. The data gathered showed similarities with the result of the study held by Aktel, et al. (2009).

When the results of the research are evaluated, it is possible to reach the conclusion that Gümüşlük Municipality is content with the current municipality governing system. Hence this result shows that before making a decision on terminating the municipality, public opinion should be taken. According to the 5th Article of the European Charter of Local Self Government's which is approved by Turkey with reservations on some sections, "on the border of local government, under the rules of the legislation, there can be no changes without asking to local communities by plebicit". The 1982 Constitution's 90<sup>th</sup> article says that "International Agreements if it is appropriately put into action are statutory". In this respect, abolishment of town municipalities is seen against European Charter of Local Self Government which is considered to be an International Agreement. According to the principle of subsidiarity, services should be practised by the closest units to the population. Regulation seems to be against this principle also.

Making radical changes in specifically local governmental system and generally in public administration system without making pilot schemes and without taking into consideration their possible economic, socio-psychological, cultural, environmental, political and social impacts on the population and only taking into account the economics of population and scale is an issue that must be questioned. At the same time, the fact that every regulation requires another regulation reveals the truth that the law-makers should be careful about the issue and revise the understanding of the public administration changes. The developed countries local self government examples should be taken into consideration, and municipalities as the most important subjects of the localization should be regulated in a way that it can become economically and legally stronger.

Also, each municipality should take into consideration the population profile in parallel with the geographical, physical, socio-cultural and economical properties. Also the different possibilities about the legal and economical opportunities, and their duties and responsibilities, and the research before making the decision about abolishment of a municipality can be seen as important options. For example, the research area Gümüşlük is a touristic area so it could be taken into consideration with the above properties.

It requires field research that could be conducted after the application of new regulations to answer the following questions: will the new regulations reach the target, will the larger-scale municipalities produce more effective-productive services and will they become sufficient in terms of economical-physical ways, and will the population participate more in public relations? The data gathered would be instructive for both public administrators and academicians.

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