

Presented at the FIG e-Working Week 2021,
21-25 June 2021 in Virtually in the Netherlands

SMART SURVEYORS FOR LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN A NEW REALITY



eWORKING WEEK 2021
20-25 JUNE

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**Evaluation of a Capital City's Transformation over 40 Years in Relation to
the Sustainable Development Goals: The Case Study of Ankara, Turkey**

21.06.2021, 15:00-16:30 (CEST)

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1. Introduction

Ankara (Turkey)

- a prime example of a city that has evolved from a small town to a major capital in less than a century
- rapid urbanization, population growth, limited economic and physical sources, increasing needs and changing living standards...

- This paper is based on;

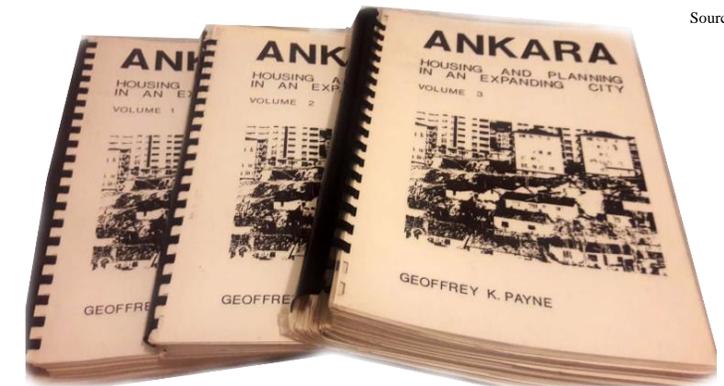
evaluating Ankara's current situation concerning the SDGs in terms of urban planning via a reference research study undertaken in 1975-6 by Geoffrey Payne in Ankara.

These aspects of the study are also elaborated regarding three of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) [i.e., No Poverty (SDG1), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)].

The paper aims to create a foundation for achieving these SDGs as part of the city's improvement during the last 40 years.



Source: Google Maps



The 3 Volume Reports by Geoffrey Payne



2. The Ankara Project and The Reflections of the Study

2.1 No Poverty (SDG 1)

- Focusing on the meaning and indications of poverty, and poverty with the parameters.
- The United Nations (n.d.) describes poverty both in relative and absolute terms:

“Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

Relative poverty defines poverty in relation to the economic status of other members of the society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context”.

- The World Bank (2020) defines ‘extreme poverty’ as living on less than \$1.90 per person per day and aims to terminate it by the end of 2030 (in PPP 2011).



<https://nachhaltigkeit.bvng.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/02/1-No-poverty.png>



<https://cdn.punchng.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/05092036/Poverty.jpg>



2. The Ankara Project and Reflections from the Study

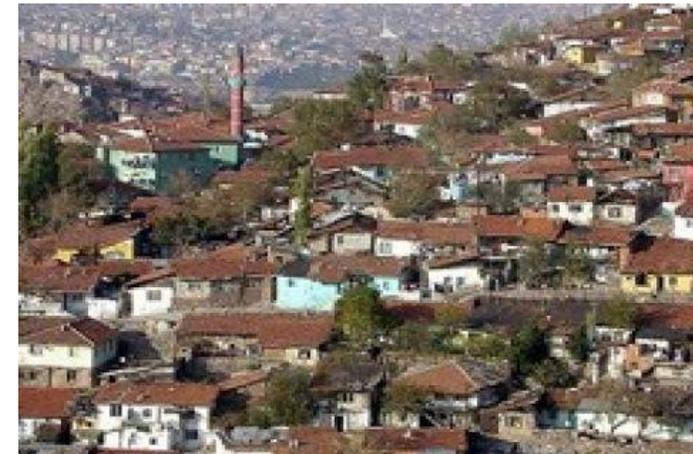
2.1 No Poverty (SDG 1)

Number of Slums (Gecekondus)

- The slum areas also have a significant place in the capital city **Ankara's urbanization process** in Turkey.
- Payne (1977) summarised *gecekondus* as a single term **covering all informal or unauthorised housing processes that are landed by night in the country.**
- Also underlined that *gecekondus* were **the only way for the urban poor and the migrants in the 1970s to meet their urgent housing needs** in Ankara.
- In 1973, approx. **3.5 million people were living in gecekondu in Turkey.**
- In 1970, 60% of the population (i.e. **750.000 people**) had been living in slums in Ankara (Karaboran, 1980) and there were around **140.000 gecekondu** in the city.
- **Urban Regeneration Projects (2000s - Present) : the Transformation of Areas Under The Risk of Disaster Law No. 6306**



<https://konuttimes.com/emlak-terimleri/2017-gecekondus-maliyet-bedelleri/72207>



<https://emlakkulisi.com/ankarada-943-bin-tiye-icradan-satilik-gecekondus/85735>

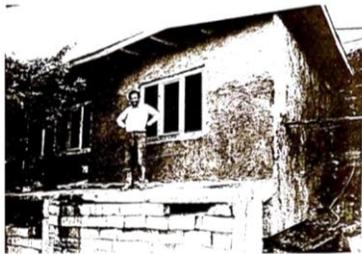


2. The Ankara Project and Reflections from the Study

2.1 No Poverty (SDG 1)



Çiğdemtepe in 1975 and 2019



Bahçelerüstü Mahallesi in 1975 and 2019



Dikmen Valley in 1975 and 2019

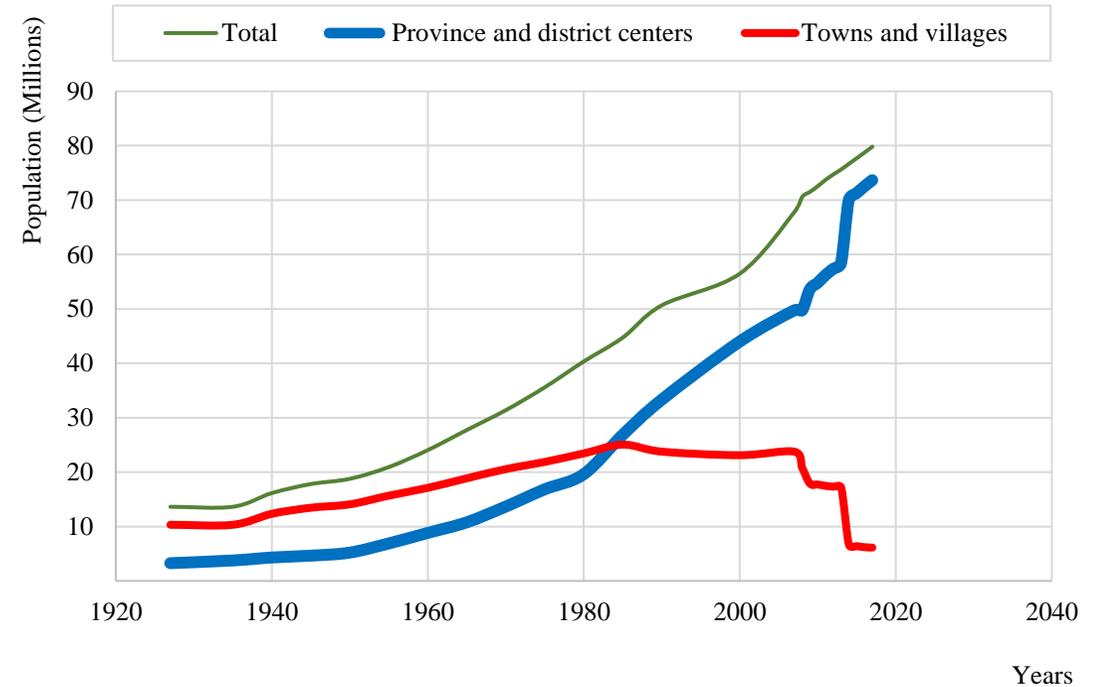
**The pictures from 1975 are taken from Geoffrey Payne's reference study.*



2. The Ankara Project and The Reflections of the Study

2.2 Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

- “Increasing *employment opportunities*, particularly for young people and reducing *informal employment and the gender pay gap* and *promote safe and secure working environments* to create decent work for all” (UN-Habitat).
- In the 1950s, Turkey was described as an ‘*agrarian country*’ with 25% of the urban population living in cities.
- Today, the situation has become reversed, and approximately 75% of the population live in the urban areas (World Bank, 2015).



Population changes in Turkey (TUIK [Turkish Statistical Institute], 2019)



2. The Ankara Project and The Reflections of the Study

2.2 Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Sectors	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	66.41
Mining and manufacturing	9.55
Construction	2.90
Trade	5.06
Transportation	2.73
Financial institutions	1.23
Public services	12.12
Total	100.00

Percentage Distribution of Working Population in Turkey in 1970 (Payne, 1977)

- In 1962, *Only 27% of these employees were skilled*, and the rest 73% were consisted of labourers, traders etc. in Turkey (Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, 1966).
- In 1970, the women in the non-agricultural activities among economically active women was *only 10%* in Ankara.
- In 1975, *3.9% of women were in the industry*, and *7.7% were in services* in Ankara (Toksöz, 2012).

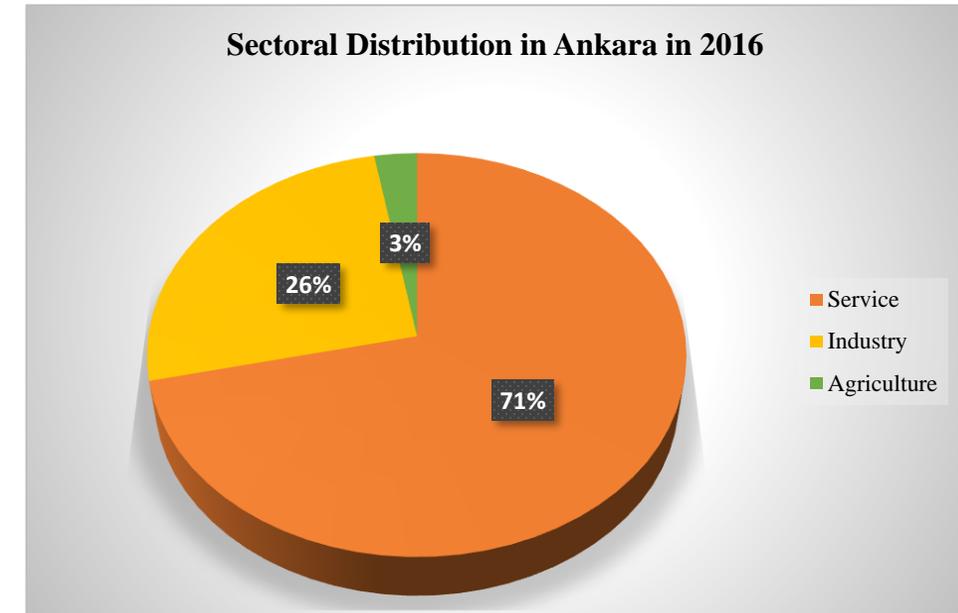


2. The Ankara Project and Reflections from the Study

2.2 Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Participation in labour force in 2010	Males	Females
Turkey	70.8%	27.6%
Ankara	68.7%	25.3%

«Although the employment rates and the participation in the labour force have been amended, there is still *a need for providing gender equality in the working system of Ankara, in parallel to the country.*»



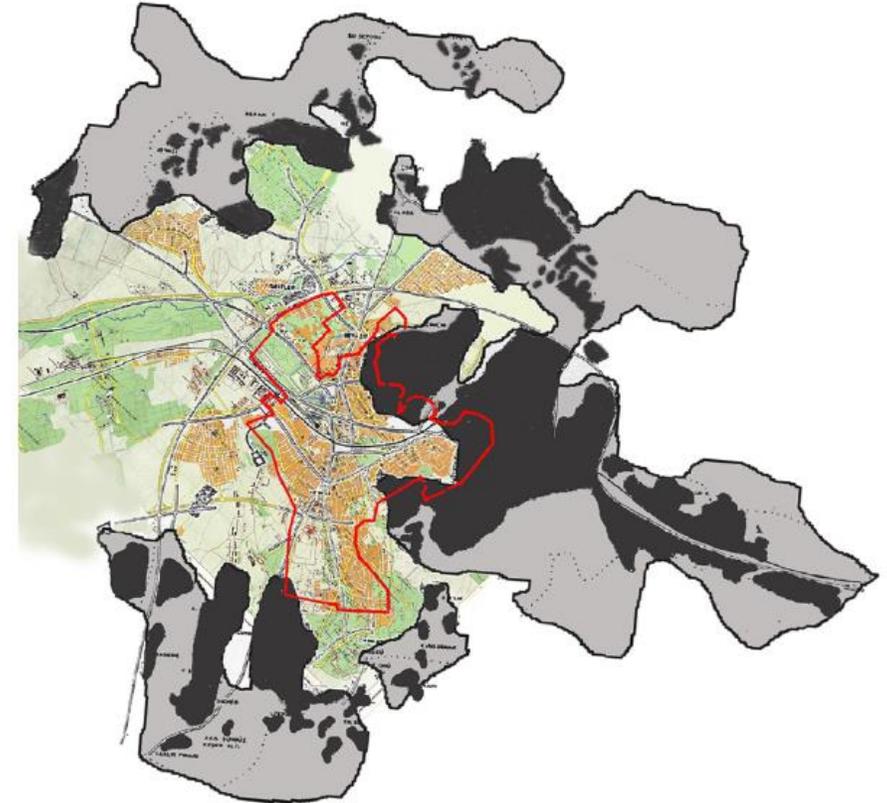
Sectoral Distribution of Employees in Ankara in 2016 (Ankara Development Agency, 2017)



2. The Ankara Project and Reflections from the Study

2.3 Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

- Currently, **over 1 billion people** are **living in slums** that need to create urgent actions.
- In addition to unsatisfactory physical conditions of the houses, having **no good-quality air**, limited accessibility to the **transportation facilities** and **lack of open spaces** are the main focuses of this goal to be improved (UN-Habitat, 2019).
- Ercoskun (2013) summarizes this **growth of the city** by indicating that **Ankara's borders have grown 30 times more** in the period of 1924 and 2023, according to the master plans.
- **The population of Ankara** went up almost **73 times** between 1927 and 2018 (TUIK, 2018).



Ankara's gecekondu areas in 1965 (in dark grey) and in 1990 (in light grey) and Jansen's plan borders (in red) (Batuman, 2013).



2. The Ankara Project and Reflections from the Study

2.3 Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

- A SWOT analysis by UN-Habitat Turkey (2019), regarding the SDG 11.
- In the analysis;
 - having an **ongoing rapid urbanization process**,
 - an **adequate number of personnel and capacity instruments**
 - decreasing number of **slums (gecekondus)**
 - **the Urban Transformation Law (2012)** that speeded up the transformation of the slum areas were noted as the **strongest points** of the country.
- However;
 - having **no nationwide strategy or plan settled yet in order to meet the SDG 11 target** yet in the country.
 - **A need for a large-scale integrated plan** that covers urban and rural areas
 - prior challenges of rapid urbanization such as **unemployment, migration issues, high housing demand, recycling and environmental problems** were noted as the critical points to be still solved.



<https://mabo-images.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/content/w740/173177.jpg>



3. Conclusions and Suggestions

- The **current situations of the country's and the capital city Ankara's related to the three of the SDGs** [No Poverty (SDG 1), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)] are **elaborated** with the **help of the reference study** undertaken by Geoffrey Payne and the literature review.
- It is seen that the country and the city have **improved their profiles in all the aspects over the last four decades**, and **Ankara** has become a **successful representative for the country**, considering its experiences in **rapid urbanization** that would be **difficult for any city in the world**.
- As understood from the study, **these three SDGs are closely related to each other**, and one may easily affect the others' development.
- Even though the selected SDGs are presented **under different titles**, the issues that **boost the SDGs' current situation in Ankara and the country can be very similar**.
- For instance, **the slums (gecekondus)** emerged due to the migration from the rural areas to Ankara, and it was accepted as a 'housing self-solution' of the newcomers. However, the issue is currently considered an **indicator of poverty** and limited economic conditions and became an obstacle to **sustaining the city's urban development**. Therefore, **any improvements in the gecekondu issue in Ankara** would help improve the conditions in terms of **poverty and economic activities and urbanization**, and support to reach the SDGs targets at the same time.
- Obviously, the **legislative regulations** would be a key factor in meeting the SDGs by 2030. As Payne (1977) stated in the reference study, the approaches of the politicians should be more objective to make the inhabitants feel free to discuss the issues with them. Therefore, a more **participatory approach** is needed to create **better and applicable planning in Ankara**.
- Lastly, **Turkey can also make a step on environmental issues** to provide **more sustainable cities and communities**. This could be conducted **via many serious climate actions**, such as signing the Paris Agreement and **creating new environmentally-friendly policies nationwide** concerning the global climate crisis.



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Thank you!

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The author (in the middle), in a gecekondu neighbourhood in Ankara, 1991