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Two Geographical Sections Where Traditional County Fairs Cluster in Turkey: Southern Marmara and Western Black Sea Subregions

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Introduction

Various spatial forms in which shopping and trade take place have been encountered throughout history. Fairs, an example of these forms, attract attention with their history, which dates back to very ancient times, and by embodying many functions (e.g. economic, social, religious, and entertainment) altogether (Çalışkan, 2008:218). The traditional fairs, whose existing examples in Turkey are predominantly found at the district centers – with their limited examples found in villages – today and which are established on specific days of the year, go on receiving great attention in the environments where they are held depending on the various functions they offer. Fairs are traditional shopping spaces where various needs can be satisfied altogether in short-term periods and where the visitors coming from rural environments make use of their shopping, entertainment, and social functions. Besides satisfying the everyday needs of the inhabitants of rural environments with no frequent or regular shopping possibilities, fairs are places in which seasonal or annual household needs and the need for various agricultural tools and materials can be satisfied. Animal sales, various entertainment activities (e.g. funfair, concerts, and performances) and traditional activities (e.g. oil wrestles) are also held in some fair organizations. Fairs may be regarded as entertaining rituals of annual and comprehensive shopping with no alternatives in the environments in which the rural life predominates.

Fairs not only attract visitors from various places, particularly from neighboring settlements, but also have a pull effect on the mobile retailing tradesmen who reside in various regions of Turkey. The significant majority of those who deal with trade at fairs are the mobile fair tradesmen who make a living by following the fairs established successively. These mobile retailers visit the fairs on a route that they regularly follow every year and use their box-body vehicles, which they generally drive by themselves, in carrying the goods and in their need for accommodation at the fair. During fairs, they sell goods and services in the temporary places they rent for a specific fee.

Until recently, fairs were particularly the trade and entertainment spaces of the rural section which had no alternatives. The interest in fairs has decreased at some localities with both an increase in shopping possibilities and the change in the entertainment culture. It is seen that in the process which has developed depending on urban, socio-economic, and cultural developments, the fairs have diminished nationwide and that their distributional areas have been confined to small cities and provincial areas (Çalışkan, 2008:217). On the other hand, the impacts of the industrialization and urbanization processes experienced in Turkey substantially vary by area. It is observed that especially in the places with a high rate of urbanization, the traditional fairs have been replaced by entertainment and trade fairs and festivals. In the past, the settlements in which fairs were established were areas with favorable locations in terms of transportation and trade. However, today fairs are encountered in the environments which fail to develop in agreement with transportation and trade trends and whose socio-economic development is relatively low (Çalışkan, 2008:219).

The studies on fairs that were carried out in Turkey include publications/manuscripts which predominantly cover various pre-Republican periods (e.g. Kayaoğlu, 1981; Sümer, 1985; Küpeli, 1989; Şen, 1993; Faroqhi, 2000; Özcan, 2006; and Ülgen, 2012). Nevertheless, the

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studies focusing on the fairs in the Republican period are rather limited (Tongur, 1940; Çalışkan, 2008, 2010). The lack of studies including fieldwork on this subject also attracts attention.

Purpose And Method

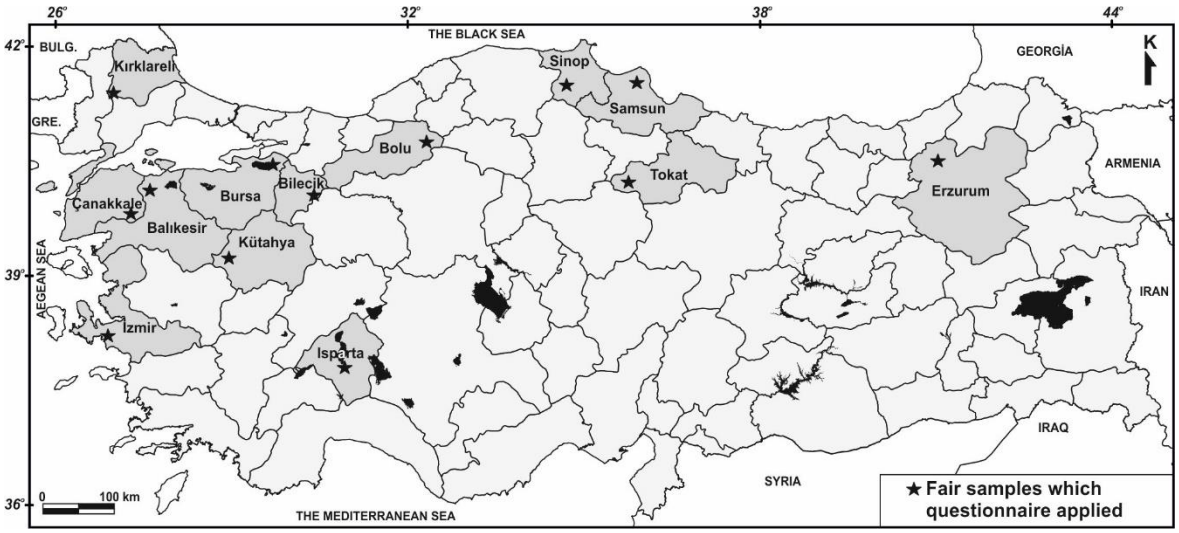
The existing fairs in the two neighboring geographical subregions of the Black Sea and Marmara Regions (the Southern Marmara Subregion and the Western Black Sea Subregion), which stood out in the distribution of traditional fairs in Turkey, were determined with the study presented here. The main purpose of the study is to find out the characteristics of clustering that occur according to the temporal and spatial distributional characteristics of the existing fairs in the two geographical subregions addressed, according to the administrative unit scale, and according to their positions in the fair series. In this way, it was aimed to find out the positions of the fairs in the study area within the temporal and spatial distributional patterns. Besides, determination of the main lines in which the fairs are concentrated and the spatial gaps which become evident in time are among the other purposes of the study. The study presented here reveals that fairs are not local phenomena but essentially display the quality of a retail trade network in integrity and in a relationship with each other. These attributes indicate that it is necessary to plan and manage fairs by considering them on the national scale and to produce policies for the future.

The information and data provided in the study are based on the questionnaires and interviews performed during the fieldwork in 13 different provinces between 2013 and 2014 (Table 1). A total of 611 questionnaires were applied to the tradesmen – one of the most important components of fairs. Some 235 tradesmen who also attended fairs other than the fair in which the questionnaires were applied visited 8 fairs per year on average. Hence, the data obtained from the mobile fair tradesmen were the basic sources of data about the annual cycle of the fairs. Besides, the information obtained from 63 municipalities and offices of the heads of villages via mail also provided current data about the existence of fairs in and around the settlements in which no fieldwork was carried out.

Table 1. The sample fairs at which fieldwork was carried out and the number of tradesmen surveyed within the scope of the research

Fair and Name of the Province in which it is found	Number of questionnaires applied to the tradesmen	Fair and Name of the Province in which it is found	Number of questionnaires applied to the tradesmen
İnhisar, Bilecik (*)	38	Pehlivanköy, Kırklareli	51
İznik, Bursa (*)	52	Karadede-Bafra, Samsun	35
Gönen, Balıkesir (*)	50	Zile, Tokat	51
Yenice, Çanakkale (*)	50	İspir, Erzurum	30
Gerede, Bolu (*)	52	Seferihisar, İzmir	46
Boyabat, Sinop (*)	52	Simav, Kütahya	52
		Pınarpazarı-Eğirdir, Isparta	52

The fairs indicated with (*) are within the field of this study.



Map 1. The fairs at which questionnaires were applied and fieldwork was carried out and their locations

The borders of the geographical regions and geographical subregions in the 1:1,800,000-scale Map of the Civil Administration Divisions of Turkey by the General Command of Mapping were taken as the basis for the maps prepared within the scope of the study.

In the study, the fairs held in May and June were evaluated as spring fairs and the fairs held in July as summer fairs. The fairs in August, September, October, and November were classified as autumn fairs.

Findings

Today a total of 71 fair organizations per year take place in 63 settlements distributed in 21 provinces in Turkey. Some of them are fairs which are held twice a year in different months (Bayramiç, Ezine, Manyas, and Çan). Some fairs (Gerede, Dörtdivan, Yeniçağa, and Pazarköy) are also held in two periods in successive months in autumn.

Today the existing fairs in Turkey are distributed in nine geographical subregions in four geographical regions. The most fairs are found in the Marmara and Black Sea Regions (55). The fairs in these two regions constitute 87% of the fairs in Turkey. Among the geographical subregions, the most fairs are established in the Southern Marmara Subregion of the Marmara Region (26). This subregion is followed by the Western Black Sea Subregion of the Black Sea Region (22).

In the Southern Marmara Subregion, the fairs are held in a total of 26 settlements – 15 district centers, 7 towns, and 4 villages – in 4 provinces (Çanakkale, Balıkesir, Bursa, and Bilecik). The number of settlements in which fairs are held twice a year is 4 in the Southern Marmara Subregion. So, the total number of organizations held in this subregion per year is 30. Hence, it is understood that 42% of the fair organizations in Turkey take place in the Southern Marmara Subregion only.

In the Western Black Sea Subregion, however, the fairs are distributed within the boundaries of 7 provinces, namely Bilecik, Sakarya, Bolu, Eskişehir, Kastamonu, Çorum, and Sinop. Fairs are established in a total of 22 settlements – 19 district centers, a town, and 2 village settlements – located within the boundaries of these provinces. Since the number of settlements in which fairs are held twice a year in the Western Black Sea Subregion is 4, the total number of fair organizations taking place in this subregion per year is 26. 37% of the fair organizations in

Turkey are distributed in the Western Black Sea Subregion. Accordingly, 79% of the fair organizations in Turkey are located in these two geographical subregions.
The number of settlements in Turkey with fairs held twice a year is 8. Of these settlements, 4 are in the Southern Marmara Subregion, while the other half of them are in the Western Black Sea Subregion (Table 2).
The total number of district fairs in Turkey is 45. 34 of them are in the two subregions which constitute the study area. The number of fairs established in the town settlements in Turkey is 9, and 8 of them are established within the study area. A similar case applies to the village fairs. 6 of 7 existing village fairs in Turkey are in the Southern Marmara and Western Black Sea Subregions. 79% of the fair organizations, 86% of the village fairs and 89% of the fairs held in the towns in Turkey are within the boundaries of these two geographical subregions.

Table 2. Distribution of the fairs in the Southern Marmara and Western Black Sea Subregions according to the number of times they are established per year

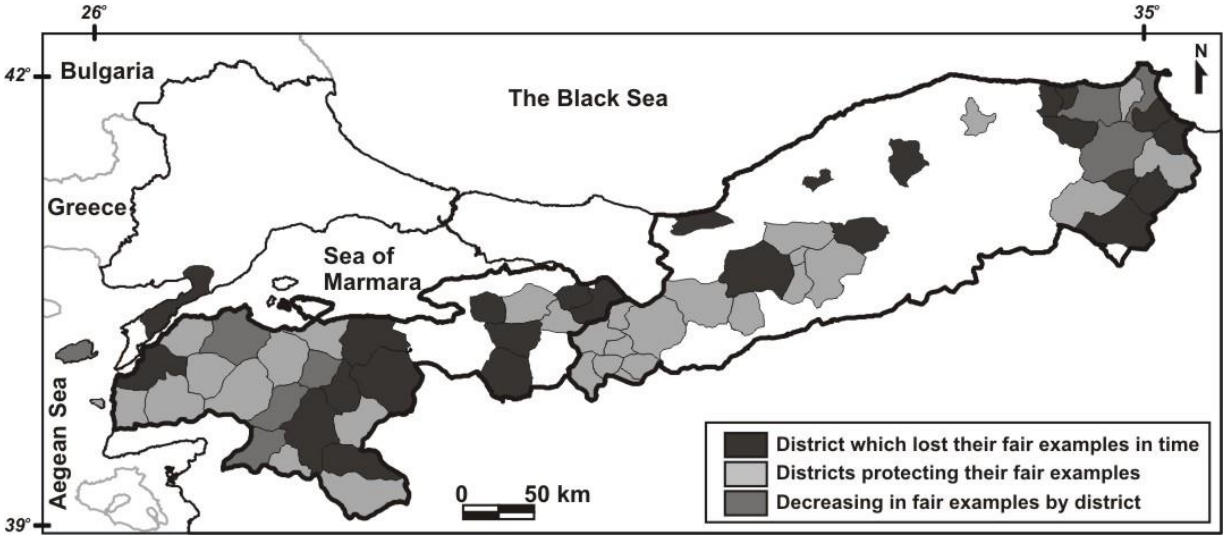
The fairs held once a year (40)
The Southern Marmara Subregion (22)
Gönen, İvrindi, Kepsut, Savaştepe, Büyükyenice, Korucu, Sarıköy, Şamlı, Kocakonak, Kuşcenneti, Orhanlar, and Yazlık in **Balıkesir;** Biga, Bozcaada, Gökçeada, Lapseki, Yenice, Akçakoyun, Pazarköy, and Çardak in **Çanakkale;** İznik in **Bursa;** and Osmaneli in **Bilecik**.
The Western Black Sea Subregion (18)
Gölpazarı, İnhisar, Söğüt, and Yenipazar in **Bilecik;** Göynük, Mudurnu, Seben, and Tekkeköy-Işıklar in **Bolu;** Ayancık, Boyabat, Durağan, Erfelek, and Bektaşağa in **Sinop;** Mihalgazi and Sarıcakaya in **Eskişehir;** Taraklı in **Sakarya;** Kargı in **Çorum;** and Ağlı in **Kastamonu.**
The fairs held twice a year (8)
The Southern Marmara Subregion (4)
Bayramiç, Çan, and Ezine in **Çanakkale** and Manyas in **Balıkesir.**
The Western Black Sea Subregion (4)
Gerede, Dörtdivan, Yeniçağa, and Pazarköy in **Bolu.**

Today the most fairs in Turkey are established in autumn (53). The number of fairs established in spring is 15, whereas the number of fairs established in summer is only 3. Despite the example of only 1 spring fair in the Western Black Sea Subregion, 13 spring fairs are available in the Southern Marmara Subregion. The number of autumn fairs is 25 in the Western Black Sea Subregion but 15 in the Southern Marmara Subregion. The months in which the most fairs are held are June (11) and September (12) in the Southern Marmara Subregion but September (13) and October (10) in the Western Black Sea Subregion. The spring and autumn fairs display a relatively balanced distribution in the Southern Marmara Subregion, whereas the majority of the fairs in the Western Black Sea Subregion consist of autumn fairs (Table 3).
The fairs still existing in the Western Black Sea Subregion are predominantly distributed in the Inner Western Black Sea Area. At this locality, remarkable concentration is particularly striking in the middle section of River Sakarya. On the banks of River Sakarya, which continues its westward flow through the deep valley starting from the Gökçekaya Dam Lake, are the districts of Sarıcakaya, Mihalgazi, and İnhisar. The other settlements in which fairs are established line up around the river in the section where River Sakarya is directed northwards with a curve and approaches the west most (Osmaneli, Geyve, and Pamukova). Again the settlements in which fairs are established (Söğüt, Yenipazar, Gölpazarı, and Taraklı) attract attention on the routes where the roads which follow the valley of River Sakarya are distributed into the inner sections. They are district settlements which are located at a distance of approximately 20 km from the valley of the river. In the Southern Marmara Subregion, however, it is striking that the existing fairs are particularly concentrated in the inner sections of the Biga locality as well as in the

environments where the Karesi locality neighbors the Bursa locality and the northern part of the Inner Western Anatolia Subregion.

Table 3. Distribution of the fairs in the study area by season and month

Season	Months	Fairs
Spring (14)	May (3)	Bayramiç and Ezine in Çanakkale and Bektaşağa in Sinop.
	June (10)	Akçakoyun, Biga, Çan, and Pazarköy in Çanakkale and Manyas, Şamlı, Orhanlar, Yazlık, Gönen, and Sarıköy in Balıkesir
	May-June (1)	Yenice in Çanakkale.
Summer (2)	July (2)	Tekkeköy-Işıklar in Bolu and Bozcaada in Çanakkale.
Autumn (40)	August (4)	Bayramiç, Çardak, and Gökçeada in Çanakkale and Yenipazar in Bilecik.
	September (24)	Manyas, Kuşcenneti, İvrindi, Korucu, Büyükyenice, Savaştepe, Kepsut, and Kocakonak in Balıkesir; Çan, Ezine, and Lapseki in Çanakkale; İznik in Bursa; Gerede, Dörtdivan, Yeniçağa, Mudurnu, and Pazarköy in Bolu; Gölpazarı, Osmaneli, and Söğüt in Bilecik; Sarıcakaya and Mihalgazi in Eskişehir; Ayancık and Erfelek in Sinop; and Ağlı in Kastamonu.
	October (11)	Gerede-II, Göynük, Seben, Dörtdivan-II, Yeniçağa-II, and Pazarköy-II in Bolu; İnhisar in Bilecik; Kargı in Çorum; Taraklı in Sakarya; and Boyabat in Sinop.
	November (1)	Durağan in Sinop

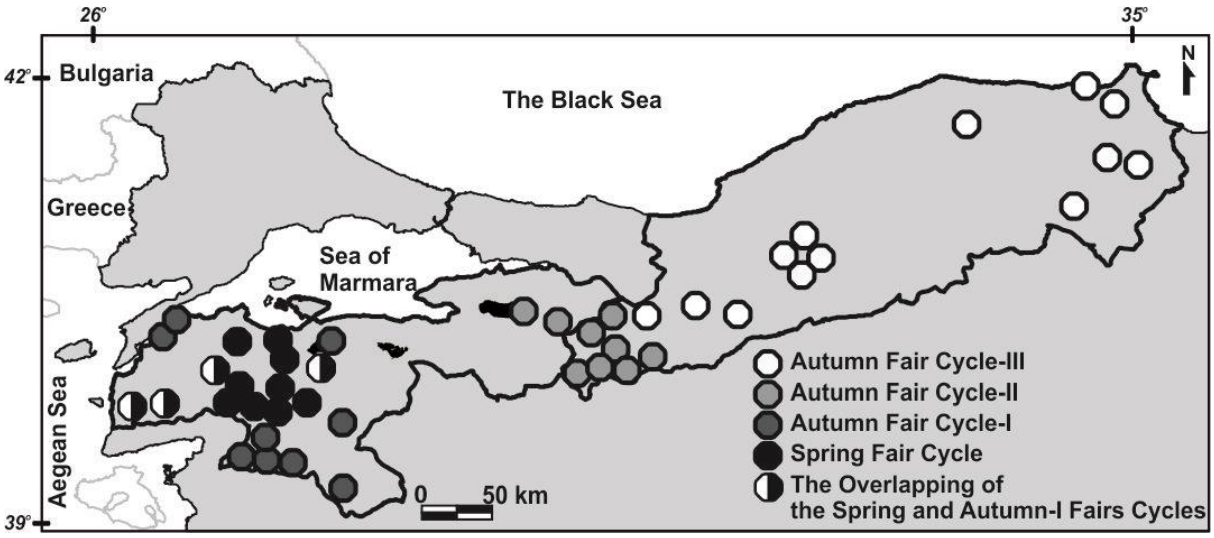


Map 2. The changes which occurred according to the existence of fairs in the districts in which fair examples in the Republican period were determined

Fairs are in series which follow each other in a specific order in specific seasons throughout the year according to their dates of establishment. The information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews applied to the tradesmen within the scope of the study reveals the flexible structure of each fair cycle within itself and in connection with the other cycles. Accordingly, it is possible to detect 4 different fair cycles – 3 in autumn and 1 in spring – in the two geographical subregions (Map 3 and Table 4).

Table 4. The seasonal cycle groups in which the fairs in the study area are included

Fair Series	Settlements in which Fairs are established
Spring Cycle	Bayramiç, Ezine, Yenice, Manyas, Çan, Biga, Yazlık, Sarıköy, Orhanlar, Akçakoyun, Pazarköy, Gönen, and Şamlı.
Autumn Cycle I	Çardak, Bayramiç, Ezine, Büyükyenice, Kepsut, Korucu, İvrindi, Kuşcenneti, Çan, Lapseki, Kocakonak, Manyas, and Savaştepe.
Autumn Cycle II	Yenipazar, Gölpazarı, Söğüt, Mihalgazi, Osmaneli, Sarıcakaya, Taraklı, İnhisar, and İznik.
Autumn Cycle III	Ağlı, Mudurnu, Dörtdivan, Yeniçağa, Pazarköy, Gerede, Erfelek, Ayancık, Seben, Göynük, Kargı, Boyabat, and Durağan.



Map 3. Spring and autumn fair cycles in the study area

The dates of establishment of fairs are adjusted every year for various reasons. Nevertheless, the dates of establishment of some fairs have remained unchanged for long years and they are well known with this feature of theirs. This is striking in the fairs with a central role or in the fairs with local cycles within themselves. In Turkey, the majority of fairs with unchanged dates are again in the study area: Pazarköy, Mengen, Gerede, Dörtdivan, and Yeniçağa in Bolu; İznik in Bursa; Yenice, Akçakoyun, and Pazarköy in Çanakkale; Kargı in Çorum; and Pehlivanköy in Kırklareli.

Furthermore, the dates of establishment of some fairs coincide. All the fairs with coinciding dates of establishment in Turkey are the fairs which are established in the study area (Seben-İnhisar, Taraklı-Mudurnu, Taraklı-Sarıcakaya, Ayancık-Gerede I, Sarıcakaya-Mudurnu, and İznik-Gerede II). The coinciding dates are essential in that they show that fair competition is particularly high in the Western Black Sea Subregion.

Some fairs which are known to have existed in the Republican period disappeared particularly in the last 30 years. Having resulted in the formation of gaps in the fair system due to the geographical neighborly relation, this process led to the weakening of the links of the chain. The non-existing İnegöl, Yenişehir and Orhangazi (Bursa) fairs and the non-existing Pamukova and Geyve (Sakarya) fairs in the Southern Marmara Subregion and the non-existing Akyazı and Sapanca (Sakarya) fairs in the Çatalca-Kocaeli Subregion created gaps in the fair cycle in the west of the Western Black Sea Subregion, with which they were connected more. The complete disappearance of the fair examples in the provinces of Düzce, Zonguldak, Karabük, and Çankırı created a wide gap between the east and the west of the Western Black Sea Subregion (Table 5).

Table 5. Classification of the districts according to the change in the existence of fair examples in the study area

Name of the Subregion	Districts which preserve their fair examples	Districts in which the fair examples have decreased	Districts in which the fair examples disappeared
THE MARMARA REGION			
Southern Marmara	Lapseki, Ezine, Bayramiç, Çan, Yenice, Bozcaada, Gönen, Bandırma, Sındırgı, Kepsut, İznik, and Osmaneli	Biga, Manyas, Balya, İvrindi, and Gökçeada	Çanakkale Mrk., Gelibolu, Karacabey, Mustafakemalpaşa, İnegöl, Yenişehir, Orhangazi, Geyve, Pamukova, Balıkesir Mrk., Susurluk, and Bigadiç
THE BLACK SEA REGION			
Western Black Sea	Mihalgazi, Sarıcakaya, Gölpazarı, Söğüt, İnhisar, Yenipazar, Taraklı, Göynük, Mudurnu, Seben, Dörtdivan, Yeniçağa, Gerede, Mengen, Erfelek, Durağan, Kargı, and Ağlı	Bolu Mrk., Ayancık, Boyabat, and Sinop Mrk.	Osmancık, Akçakoca, Gökçebey, Eskipazar, Eflani, Çatalzeytin, Hanönü, Türkeli, Saraydüzü, Dikmen, and Gerze

The districts in which the fair examples disappeared in the Southern Marmara Subregion are Mustafakemalpaşa and Karacabey (Bursa) as well as Büyükorhan, Harmancık, Keles, and Orhaneli (Bursa) in the area neighboring the Southern Marmara Subregion in the north of the Inner Western Anatolia Subregion – the Uludağ locality. The disappearance of these fairs also affected the fairs in Balıkesir, with which they were more connected in the fair cycle. Wide gaps separated from the fair system appeared within the provincial boundaries of Bursa and Sakarya.

"What are the three greatest fairs among the fairs you have attended?" was one of the questions that the fair tradesmen were asked during the questionnaires applied at all sample fairs on the scale of Turkey. The responses received reveal that of the greatest fairs, 2 are in the Western Black Sea Subregion, while the other one is in the Southern Marmara Subregion (Table 6).

Table 6. The 3 greatest fairs among the fairs attended by the tradesmen

Name of the fair	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gerede	72	35
Boyabat	68	33
İznik	66	32
TOTAL	**206**	**100**

The fairs in Turkey encompass a large number of fairs at which animals are sold too. We can determine the outstanding fairs among them as Gerede, Boyabat, Gönen, İspir, and Seferihisar. In fact, Seferihisar is entirely an animal husbandry fair. It is established that the examples representing the animal fairs in Turkey are also substantially represented again by the fairs in the study area.

Conclusion

The fairs in the Western Black Sea Subregion and the Southern Marmara Subregion display some characteristics of clustering as some of their distinctive attributes (e.g. according to the

number of times they are established throughout the year, according to the administrative unit scale, according to the season, according to the months, according to the seasonal cycles, and according to the animal husbandry function) separate.

In the two geographical subregions addressed in the study, the fairs go on existing at the district centers with which the rural environments with no frequent or regular shopping possibilities are connected particularly in the inner sections. With the study, it was demonstrated that the fairs established in these settlements were connected with local and regional cycles according to their successive dates of establishment.

Traditional fairs are rapidly diminishing depending on both the socio-economic developments experienced in the Republican period and the change in the understanding of entertainment and shopping. The fairs that disappear in this process leave gaps between the spatial relations. Essentially, local fair cycles and concentration lines have impacts which facilitate the connections between sellers and procurers in the procurement of products and goods. There is no doubt that the facilitating impact of local cycles on the marketing processes is also essential. Hence, the fact that the neighborly relations of fairs were economically supportive of the existence of each other influenced the formation of local cycles. By possessing such cycles, the fairs in the provinces of Çanakkale, Balıkesir, Bilecik, Bolu, and Sinop in the study area have become more enduring and been able to preserve their existence.

In Turkey, traditional fairs constitute a cultural, economic, and spatial system which should be regarded as a whole on the national scale. Therefore, the organization and planning processes of the traditional fairs whose existing examples are gradually diminishing should not be left merely to the responsibility of local governments. The institutions responsible for producing policies in the fields of economy, trade, and culture on the national scale should also be in this process. Strategies and policies on the national scale should be produced for the traditional fairs which attract attention with their economic, cultural, and social roles.

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