Chapter 4

Participation With Social Media:
The Case of Turkish Metropolitan Municipalities in Facebook

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ABSTRACT

By improving ICT within the scope of administration, new terms like e-government, m-government, e-governance, e-participation appeared in the field of public administration. The concept of e-government affects municipalities—closest service units to the citizens—and with this effect developed the term e-municipality. Municipalities in Turkey began to use the new technologies for the delivery of services, and terms like e-participation and e-governance are widening rapidly. This chapter investigates whether Facebook pages are an effective tool for local participation. The social media-citizen relationship that is claimed to be more effective, especially at the local level, has been evaluated through the Facebook pages of the municipalities. This chapter focuses on the role of social media in participatory administration.

INTRODUCTION

The steady growth at air transportation and communication sector after 1950s and the revolution by computer and internet technologies in 1990s have led people around the world get closer. Especially, services which emerged with internet technologies, such as e-mail and video-conference, are increasingly connecting overseas countries. In this way, every corner of the world becomes more accessible that this situation accelerates inter-country interactions and makes it easier for people to connect other countries. Therefore, changes and developments in a country show themselves in other countries in a very short time.

The information and communication technologies (ICT) creates difference in connecting local to global, increasing opportunities for communication, participation to politics and opens doors for direct political participation. Social media communication, on the other hand, has transformed these interactions into interactions, resulting in reciprocity and continuity.

Developments in the field of ICT effect the classic bureaucratic structures in the positive way and a new structure are forming, which make faster, easier and lower cost act and transactions possible. New developments especially effect mutual obligations between state and citizen. Administrations aim to form transparent, accountable, deliberative, effective, efficient institutions and citizens expectations support these goals. Transferring duties and services to e-channels is being a useful instrument in this process.

By improving ICT within the scope of administration, new terms like e-government, m-government, e-governance, e-participation appeared in the field of public administration. Concept of e-government effect municipalities –closest service units to the citizens- and with this affect develop the term of e-municipality. Municipalities in Turkey began also use the new technologies for the delivery of services, and the terms like e-participation and e-governance are widening rapidly. In these developments could be accepted as an organizational development, and technology as an instrument for participatory administration. In this study, it is investigated whether Facebook pages are an effective tool for local participation. The social media-citizen relationship that is claimed to be more effective, especially at the local level, has been evaluated through the Facebook pages of the municipalities. In this study, it is also aimed to show what kind of a communication channel preferred by municipalities by considering the interaction between municipalities and citizens on Facebook. Especially, it is aimed to show whether this interaction is one-sided or two-sided as of the Social Media's nature. After inspecting lots of materials, especially Rutgers E-Governance Performance Index Report prepared by Rutgers University School of Public Affairs and Administration National Center for Public Performance in 2010 and investigating the structure of Facebook pages, some

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