

CITY COUNCILS AS A MEANS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN TURKEY DURING THE EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS: THE INVESTIGATION OF THE AWARENESS OF THE BURSA CITY COUNCIL¹

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ABSTRACT

The Municipality Law enacted in 2005, has bought the "City Councils" application towards governance approach with the aim of having the civil society organizations, professional establishments and the other actors in the city take part in the decisions and practices. In accordance with this Law The City Councils Regulation entered in to force in 2006. In this study, Bursa City Council which is one of the first city council established in Turkey has been analyzed. In this study, a field study has been performed in order to identify the level of knowledge of the people living in the city of Bursa about the city councils and the Bursa City Council. Departing from the results obtained from the field work in which face-to-face survey technique has been used and interview with 2915 people has been carried out, recommendations have been made towards making the city councils in Turkey more familiar and effective.

Keywords: City Council, Bursa, Bursa City Council, Governance.

Jel Code: H70, H79, Z18

AB ÜYELİK SÜRECİNDE TÜRKİYE'DE YEREL KATILIMIN ARACI OLARAK KENT KONSEYLERİ: BURSA KENT KONSEYİNİN BİLİNİRLİĞİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI

ÖZ

Türkiye'de 2005 yılında yürürlüğe giren Belediye Kanunu, yönetim yaklaşımı doğrultusunda sivil toplum örgütlerinin, meslek teşekküllerinin ve kentteki diğer aktörlerin karar ve uygulamalarda yer alabilmesi amacıyla "Kent Konseyleri" uygulamasını getirmiştir. Bu yasa doğrultusunda 2006 yılında Kent Konseyleri Yönetmeliği yürürlüğe girmiştir. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de ilk kurulan kent konseylerinden birisi olan Bursa Kent Konseyi analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada Bursa kentinde yaşayan kişilerin Kent Konseyleri ve Bursa Kent Konseyi hakkındaki bilgi düzeylerinin tespit edilebilmesi amacıyla bir saha çalışması gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yüz yüze anket tekniğinin kullanıldığı ve 2915 kişiyle görüşmenin gerçekleştirildiği saha çalışmasından çıkan sonuçlardan hareketle Türkiye'de kent konseylerinin daha bilinir ve etkin olabilmeleri yönünde önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent konseyi, Bursa, Bursa Kent Konseyi, Yönetişim.

Jel Kodu: H70, H79, Z18

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1. INTRODUCTION

The city council in Turkey is a means of strengthening the local democracy with the features of participation, democracy and governance. The city councils, with their activities for determining the needs and the problems of the city and for the solution of these problems, are to be included in the decision making mechanisms in the municipalities. This structure of the city council brings about a transformation that will allow from the city management to the city governance.

The City Councils have been established as the application model of the Local Agenda 21 approach in Turkey. One of the basic approaches of this program is to collect the organized and unorganized (such as the young people, the elderly people, the disabled and the women) under the LA21 roof for the local solutions at the local scale (Güneş, 2004: 135). As the precondition of successfully implementation of all of the program areas included in the Agenda 21, the need for "multy-actorship" and "social consensus" emerge as two indispensable basics (Kuluçlu, 2011:183).

Bursa City council is among the first city council formations in Turkey. In 1995, "*The City Council and Solidarity Council*" was established with the initiative of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality in order to implement the pluralistic and participatory democracy principles at the local level and to discuss the city problems at a democratic platform. Local governments, the representatives of the public institutions and organizations, professional chambers, NGO representatives and the executives who served as governor and mayor level in Bursa participated in the council (Bulut, 2007:10). In this period, in Bursa, within the context of Strengthening the Local Government and Democracy Project (MED-DEM) of the European Union, in 1994 with the cooperation of IULA-EMME and the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, The District Advisory Centers (SEDAM) that compile the wishes, requests, complaints and recommendations of the district residents, determine the common needs of the district and organize the local services related with the economic and cultural prosperity of the district with leadership of the district headmen were established (Karabulut, 2009: 76). In 1997, with the project of "Promotion and the Development of Turkish Local Agenda 21's" prepared within the framework of the cooperation with the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, the Bursa Local Agenda 21 works were supported by IULA-EMME. In 1998, the "City Counciling and Solidarity Council" was restructured and transferred into "City Council" (Bulut, 2013: 94).

In this study, it has been aimed to determine to what extent the Bursa City Council which is among the first city councils founded in Turkey and situated in Bursa which is one of the most developed cities of the country is known by the citizens living in the city of Bursa.

There are two basic hypothesis of this study in which the recognition of the Bursa City Council is discussed. These are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The Bursa City Council being among the first city councils founded in Turkey is known by the people of Bursa through various activities conducted in the city of Bursa.

Hypothesis 2: The people of Bursa have no information about the structure and work areas of the city councils in Turkey in general and in particular of the Bursa City Council.

With the aim of investigating the accuracy of these specified hypothesis, an extensive field research has been conducted with the individuals living in the city of Bursa.

2. CITY COUNCILS AS A TOOL FOR LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN TURKEY

For all kinds of evaluation made towards the formation, duties and functions of the city councils in Turkey, the LA 21 works should primarily be examined. Because the city councils as mechanisms that opens the way for participation of the local people in the administrative processes in Turkey are consistent with the LA 21 works. In other words, the LA 21 works forms the basis of establishment of the city councils.

In 1992, in the action plan titled Agenda 21 starting with the the United Nation's "Earth Summit" held in Rio, each country was called to establish their own Local Agenda 21. Turkey's meeting with the Local Agenda 21 has been with the UN - HABITAT - II Human Settlements Conference held in 1996 in Istanbul. In 1997 with the support of UNDP, the project of "*The Promotion and Development of the Local Agenda 21's*" which has been conducted in coordination of the IULA-EMME (International Union of Local Authorities, the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Region) was started. The project launched by the decision of the Turkish Republic, Council of the ministers was completed in December 1999. Upon the success of this project, the UNDP has accepted to support the second stage, and following the adoption of this by the Turkish Republic, Council of Ministers, The second stage project having the title of "The Implementation of the Local Agenda 21's in Turkey" started in January 2000. During the second stage, after launching several sub-projects and after the number of project partner local governments exceeded 50 with new participations, by removing the Local Agenda 21 implementations from the frame of "project", they have been transformed into a long-term "Program". The City Councils established in the Local Agenda 21 Programme Partner cities, have supported city councils established with the Municipal Law and have been pioneered to have the works get rooted at the scale of the country (Soygüzel, 2012).

In the Municipal Law Number 5393, consideration of the public opinion in local decisions, improving the mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of the public in the administrative processes and the arrangements that will allow ensuring the cooperation between the corporations has come to the foreground. Within the framework of this governance based approach, instead of state-centered administration, society-centered and enabling feasibility strategy is taken as essential (Palabıyık, 2004: 63) In this context, to the extent that legal regulations allow, it has been required to open the ways for the citizens to be involved in the policy development processes. Thus, the possibility of closing the gap between the citizens and the administration has emerged (TEPAV, 2014: 15).

The items including the arrangements towards the fellow-citizenship law in the Municipal Law Number 5393, the preparation of strategic plan, the voluntary participation in the municipal services, the establishment of the specialized committees, and the city councils are important in terms of developing the participatory mechanisms (Göymen, 2010:216). Among the basic participatory mechanisms in the law, the city councils comes in the mostly debated issues.

In Turkey, with "The Regulation of the City Councils" enacted in 2006 based formerly on the article 76 of the Municipality Law Number 5393 and later on this law, the assemblies established within the body of the Local agenda 21 have be united under the roof of the City Council. Thus, in Turkey through the city councils, a local governance area has been revealed where the central government, the local government and the civilian society meet within the framework of partnership approach. It has been aimed that the city councils should act in accordance with the values, conditions and the priorities peculiar to each city not around a specific pattern (Lamba, 2012).

In the article 4 of the Regulation dated 2006, the City Council has been defined as governance mechanisms with democratic structures where the central government, the local government, professional organizations in the nature of public institutions and the civil society meet with partnership understanding, in the framework of citizenship law; where the development priorities, problems, vision of the city are determined on the basis of sustainable development principles, discussed, solutions improved, common sense and compromise are essential.

In the Article 6 of the City Councils Regulation, the operating area of the city councils has rather broadly been defined. It is possible to gather these tasks under four main headings (Görmez ve Altınışık, 2011: 43). These are as in the following form:

- *Tasks related to the city:* to make efforts regarding development of urban consciousness, protecting the urban values, making the cities more livable and using the urban resources.
- *Tasks related to the urban dwellers:* to organize activities for development of the culture of conciliation, social welfare and solidarity,
- *Tasks related to the environment:* to prepare environmentally sensitive and poverty relieving programs,
- *Tasks related to the city management:* to make efforts in order to develop multi-actor governance approach, to influence the city administration, to implement the principles of transparency-accountability in the city management.

The basic factor while the city councils are fulfilling these tasks is the importance of active participation of the public as much as possible in the working groups within the city council, in the assembly activities and in the general assembly meetings.

The City councils, in the context of local governments, although they are not of vital importance for Turkey, can fulfill rather important functions in terms of institutionalization and internalization of

democracy locally and generally (Çukurçayır and Eroğlu, 2015: 258). In other words, when the city councils are evaluated in terms of participation, they offer significant opportunities for the local people to participate in the decision making processes of the city. But, that the people are not even aware of the existence of the city councils makes the city councils mechanisms repeating the the representative democracy (Yeşildağ, 2014:129).

In this study, as the mechanism that opens the ways for the public participation in the administrative processes, it has been investigated that at which level is the awareness of the city councils by the people of Bursa. Thus, it will be possible to determine to what extent the Bursa City Council fulfills the tasks and misson specified in the relevant law and regulation.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Subject and Purpose of the Research

In order to reveal to what extent the City Councils of which establishment is a legal obligation for all municipalities in Turkey within the frame work of laws and regulations, a comprehensive field study has beed conducted in Bursa titled as "Awareness of the Bursa City Council". In this context, 2915 citizens living in the city of Bursa were primarily asked whether or not they are aware of the existence of an organization named "City Council". In the field study, the study has been terminated with the citizens who stated that they are not aware of the existence of the City Councils. In the field sudy, the survey has been carried on with the individuals who stated that they are aware of the city councils and by asking questions to these individuals about the legal-administrative structure, the budget, the work areas of the city councils, it has been intended to measure to what extent they are knowledgable about the city councils.

3.2. The Importance of Research

Turkey which is in the process of full membership to EU since 2005, is supposed to adopt and internalize the EU legal system as a whole, and in this context to reorganize its own legislation towards adaptation to the EU acquis. This is a case that should be adopted by not only the central government but also all segments of the society especially the local governments and prepare themselves in this way.

The evaluations concerning the places and the functions of the local governments during the EU accession process are included in the Accession Partnership Document and the Progress Reports prepared by the EU. In the title of the Short-term Priorities of the 2005 Accession Partnership Document, the importance of the local governments having a structure of being more effective, transparent, participating is mentioned. And in the 2008 and 2012 Progress Reports prepared by the EU, the importance of “strenghtening the city councils in all of the cities in the country formed as a platform increasing tha participation of the citizens in the local government, and having the citizens

informed about this issue” is mentioned. In the Progress Reports, the city councils are emphasized and the importance of strengthening the civil society in the works of the city councils and broad-based involvement of the people in this process is mentioned.

One of the legislative amendments is the 'Municipality Law' enacted in 2005 in order to comply with the EU acquis under the title of The Local Governments in Turkey. In the Municipality Law, various legal arrangements and mechanisms have been developed in order to increase the people's participation to the administrative processes. The City Councils are also the most important ones among these mechanisms. But the City councils that will enable the improvement of local participation, transparency and accountability throughout the country, unfortunately, have not been established in all cities although their establishment is a legal obligation.

The Bursa City Council is one of the first established and actively operating city councils in Turkey. The investigation of the Bursa City Council will primarily serve as an example for the city councils in the other cities of the country. Then the suggestions to be presented related with the individuals living in Bursa and the improvement of the interaction will open up the ways for the mechanisms adaptive to the EU acquis because it will contribute to the increase of the local participation throughout the country.

3.3. The Universe and the Sampling of the Research

The study based on the field research in which the Awareness of the Bursa City Council is discussed was conducted in the dates of January – February 2015 in the city of BURSA. Within the scope of the research conducted, the questions to be included in the questionnaire are the original questions developed by the researchers considering the issues such as the working principles administrative structure mentioned in the clauses of the relevant laws and the regulations. In Turkey, a wide variety of graduate - doctoral thesis and articles with academic nature related with the city councils are available. But these studies currently are the ones prepared for the individuals having missions in the mechanisms operating within the body of the city council. Therefore, these individuals are the ones having sufficient information about the city council. For that reason, the questions used in the previously conducted field researches related with the city council in Turkey are not eligible for this study. For this study that will reveal the level of knowledge of the individuals living in Bursa related with the Bursa City Council, the preparation of original questions by the researchers has been accepted as the most accurate method.

The determination of the Awareness of the Bursa City Council as accurately as possible has been aimed. At this point, the size of the main body subject of the field study and the number of the sampling to be taken from the main body is quite important.

The population of the city of Bursa where the field study has been conducted is 2.787.539 according to the data of 2014. In the field study, the city of Bursa has been divided into 7 districts in

the basis of the central townships. Considering the population distribution of these 7 districts, the "laminar random sampling method" has been used. In the mentioned field study, with the aim of achieving the gender distribution, level of education and income which will reflect the general profile of the people living in the city of Bursa, the locations where the the study will be carried out have been determined by the researches. In the locations identified in the 7 central townships of Bursa, a field study has been conducted between the hours of 10.00 and 19.00. Thus, it has been aimed to reach all sections (students, housewives, etc.) both employed and unemployed. The questionnaire forms used in the research based on the field study dealing with the Awareness of the Bursa City Council have been filled out by face-to-face interview with 2915 subjects.

The reliability of the field study carried out with 2915 subjects has also been investigated. With SPSS 22 version, the Alpha Reliability Coefficient has been calculated for the reliability test of the face-to-face survey technique carried out within the field study. According to this, the Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the field study is 94,8%.

Following are the data on the field study with which the Awareness of the Bursa City Council has been investigated and which has been conducted with the method of face-to-face interview.

4. THE FINDINGS AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

The research for the "Awareness of the Bursa City Council" consists of four sections.

- Demographic characteristics of the people who participated in the field study,
- The rate of hearing about the City Council overall Turkey by the individuals who participated in the field study,
- The rate of hearing about the Bursa City Council in the peculiarity of the city of Bursa by the individuals participated in the field study,
- The level of knowledge of the individuals who participated in the field study about the legal-administrative structures and the missions of the City Councils.

The findings of the study based on the field research conducted with 2915 persons on the dates of January – February 2015 and in which the Awareness of the Bursa City Council is discussed are as follows.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The overall profile of the individuals who participated in the field study is as seen on Table 1. According to this, it is observed that 55,5% of the individuals who participated in the field studies are at the secondary school level, the 42,7% are students, of the 35,3% income changes from the minimum wage and 2000 TL, 60,4% are married, 92,8% are not members of any NGO.

Table 1. Profiles of Individuals Participating in the Survey

Gender	Frequency	%	Age	Frequency	%
Female	964	33,1	18-28	1773	59,5
Male	1951	66,9	29-38	416	14,3
Educational Status	Frequency	%	Age	Frequency	%
Illiterate	26	0,9	39-48	356	12,2
Primary education	478	16,4	49-58	286	9,8
Secondary school graduates	1618	55,5	59 years and over	124	4,3
Graduate	725	24,9	Monthly Income **	Frequency	%
Postgraduate	68	2,3	No revenue	947	32,5
Job	Frequency	%	Minimum wage	477	16,4
Worker	379	13,0	Minimum wage– 2000 TL	1028	35,3
Official	179	6,1	2001 – 3000 TL	311	10,7
Self Employed	184	6,3	3001 – 4000 TL	113	3,9
Student	1245	42,7	4001 TL and more	39	1,3
Retired	201	6,9	Marital Status	Frequency	%
Housewife	184	6,3	Married	1760	60,4
Farmer	7	0,2	Single	1084	37,2
Artisan	278	9,5	Widowed / Divorced	71	2,4
Industrialist	26	0,9	NGO Membership	Frequency	%
Unemployed	93	3,2	Yes	210	7,2
Other	139	4,8	No	2705	92,8
Total	2915	100,0	Total	2915	100,0

4.2. Familiarity of the name of the Bursa City Council

Issues such as various meetings, symposiums, cooperative activities carried out with other institutions in the city, projects etc. held by the Bursa City Council constantly take place in the local press. Considering this, the question whether or not they "follow any local TV, newspaper or publication" related with the city of Bursa with the aim of determining if the citizens living in Bursa know about the Bursa City Council in order to find out to what extent especially the individuals who participated in the field study follow the news related with the urban life. The answers of the individuals who responded to this question is as follows.

Table 2. Do you follow any local TV, newspaper or publication related with the city of Bursa?

	Frequency	%
Yes, I follow all (local TV- newspaper- radio)	635	21,8
I only watch TV	838	28,8
I only read local newspaper	508	17,4
I only listen to local radio	96	3,3
I follow non of them	1104	37,9
Toplam	2915	100,0

While the 37,9% of the individuals who participated in the field work does not follow any local publications related to the city of Bursa, the rest follows local TV-radio-newspaper.

** 1\$ = 2,58 Turkish Liras, 1 € =2,74 Turkish Liras

Table 3. Do you convey your complaints, suggestions or requests on the issues related with the urban life to the municipality?

	Frequency	%
Yes	941	32,3
No	1974	67,7
Toplam	2915	100,0

With the aim of determining to what extent the individuals participated in the field study are sensitive to the problems they encounter in the social structure they live in and to what extent they are in collaboration for the solution of these problems with the municipalities which are authoritative corporations, they were primarily asked whether or not they forward their complaints or requests to the municipalities. The ones who gave a "yes" answer to this question were asked by which means they forwarded their complaints, suggestions and requests. While the 78,5% of the persons who forwarded their complaints-suggestions-requests to the municipality conveyed by means of fax-email, the 3,6% conveyed by means of the City Councils.

Table 4. By which channel do you forward your complaints, suggestions or requests related with the urban life to the municipality.

	Frequency	%
I forward by means of telephone, fax, e-mail	738	78,5
I forward by means of the district headmen	184	19,6
I forward by means of the NGO's	61	6,5
I forward by means of the City Councils	34	3,6
I forward by means of public days-public meetings	55	5,9
Toplam	941	100,0

The persons who participated in the field study were asked whether or not they had heard of the name of an institution called the City Council before.

Table 5. Have you heard of the City Council?

	Frequency	%
Yes	2133	73,2
No	782	26,8
Total	2915	100,0

The 73,2's% of the individuals who participated in the study and responded this question gave a "yes" answer, and the 26,8% gave a "no" answer. Since all of the questions following this question in the questionnaire are related with the City Councils, by terminating field study with the ones who gave a "no" answer to this question and the survey has been continued with the ones who gave a "yes" answer. The questions included in the questionnaire after this question have been responded by 2132 persons who gave a "yes" answer.

Table 6. Have you heard of the Bursa City Council?

	Frequency	%
Yes	1841	86,4
No	291	13,6
Total	2132	100,0

The question "Have you heard of Bursa City Council?" has been asked in order to reveal to what extent the Bursa City Council, which is the fundamental subject of this research and has maintained its presence since 1995 being among the first city councils in Turkey in this sense, is known by the people who live in the city of Bursa. The 86,4% of the persons who responded this question replied "yes".

4.3. The Awareness of the Legal-Administrative Structure, the Budget and the Work Areas of the City Council

The second hypothesis of the study is about at which level is the knowledge level of the persons included in the field study both about the City Councils in general and also about the legal-administrative structure, study areas of the Bursa City Council. In order to investigate this hypothesis, various questions have been asked for the aim of measuring the knowledge of the persons in this direction.

Table 7. Is the establishment of the City Councils a legal obligation?

	Frequency	%
Legal obligation	400	18,8
Optional	1086	51
Have no idea	645	30,2
Total	2132	100,0

For the question asked in order to find out whether or not the persons who live in Bursa and included in the field study know that the establishment of the City Councils is a legal obligation, 51% of them think that the establishment of the city councils is optional and as an extension of this opinion, they state that the city councils do not exist in all cities in the country at the rate of 35,5% (see Table 8)

Table 8. Do the City Councils exist in all cities in Turkey?

	Frequency	%
Yes	514	24,1
No	757	35,5
Have no idea	862	40,4
Total	2132	100,0

Table 9. In your opinion, what is the administrative structure of the city council?

	Frequency	%
A Public Organization	171	8,0
A Non-Government Organization	692	32,4
A Private Sector Organization	81	3,8
A Municipality Organization	538	25,2
None	26	1,2
Have no idea	625	29,3
Total	2132	100,0

The question "what is the administrative structure of the city council?" has been replied as 32,4% a non-government organization, 29,3% have no idea, and 25,2% a municipality organization.

Another question included in the survey is in the form of " with whom is the General Assembly of City Council composed of? The 42,8% of persons who responded to this question replied as "Have no idea".

Table 10. With whom is the General Assembly of City Council composed of?

	Frequency	%
Public Organization and District Headmen Representatives	149	7,0
Political Party and NGO Representatives	241	11,3
University Representatives	47	2,2
Volunteer Representatives	351	16,5
All of them	471	22,1
Have no idea	912	42,8
Total	2132	100,0

One of the questions asked in order to measure the the knowlege of the persons living in Bursa about the legal-administrative structure of the City Councils is related with the budget of the City Council.

Table 11. What is the source of the budget that constitutes basis for the works and activities of the City Council?

	Frequency	%
Comes directly from the central government	81	3,8
Receives shares from the municipality budget	713	33,4
Obtained from donations and aids	192	9,0
Support is supplied from the Eu funds	68	3,2
Support is supplied from the governorship and other public organizations	101	4,7
Have no idea	977	45,8
Total	2132	100,0

The 45,8% of the persons who participated in the field study responded the question about the budget of the city council stated that they have no idea about this issue and the 33,4% stated that the city council receives shares from the municipality budget.

In the field study, a question in the form of "What are the work areas of the Bursa City Council?" has been asked.

Table 12. What are the work areas of the Bursa City Council?

	Frequency	%
Organizing the Works towards the woman-young disabled groups	184	8,6
Ensuring the development and creation of urban consciousness	195	9,2
Realizing the cultural- arts activities	194	9,1
Assisting to ensure the effectiveness of municipal activities	326	15,3
Becoming a platform where the city's priority issues are discussed	184	8,6
All of them	770	36,1
I have heard of its name but I don't know what it does	495	23,2
Total	2132	100,0

The persons who responded to this question, by stating with a ratio of 36,1% that they are performing works towards the disadvantaged groups, Ensuring the development and creation of urban consciousness, Realizing the cultural- arts activities, Assisting to ensure the effectiveness of municipal activities, becoming a platform where the city's priority issues are discussed, have pointed out that the city council performs activities in all of these work areas. The 23,2% of the ones who

responded to this question replied “I have no idea” about what the work area of the Bursa City Council is.

Within the context of the study finally a question in the form of “In your opinion which one of the following work areas should the Bursa City Council focus on?” has been asked

Table 13. In your opinion which one of the following work areas should the Bursa City

	Frekans	%
Organizing the Works towards the woman-young disabled groups	233	10,9
Ensuring the development and creation of urban consciousness	154	7,2
Realizing the cultural- arts activities	218	10,2
Assisting to ensure the effectiveness of municipal activities	256	12
Becoming a platform where the city's priority issues are discussed	246	11,5
All of them	827	38,8
All of them	399	18,7
Total	2132	100,0

Council focus on?

According to the 38,8% of the individuals who participated in the field study, the Bursa City Council should continue with its works towards performing works for the disadvantaged groups, ensuring creation of urban consciousness, realizing the cultural- arts activities, assisting to ensure the effectiveness of municipal activities and becoming a platform where the city's priority issues are discussed.

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There had been two hypothesis of this study dealing with the Awareness of the Bursa City Council. These are:

Hypothesis 1: The Bursa City Council being among the first city councils founded in Turkey is known by the people of Bursa through various activities conducted in the city of Bursa.

In order to investigate the accuracy of the Hypothesis 1, the citizens living in Bursa are asked whether or not they follow the local press in which the works of the Bursa City Council take place. While the 37,9% of the individuals who participated in the field study have replied “no”, the others have given a “yes” answer. When the individuals who participated in the field study are asked whether or not they have heard of the city council, they have given a “yes” answer at the ratio of 73,2%. The study has been terminated with the 782 persons who gave a “no” answer to this question. The reason for discontinuing the study with the ones who gave a “no” answer is that the questions included in the questionnaire form are composed of the issues related with the legal-administrative structure, the budget and the work areas of the city councils and that the persons who do not know the city councils are not eligible to respond these questions. In order to measure the awareness of the Bursa City Council which is the essential subject of the research, it has been asked whether they have heard of the Bursa City Council or not. The 86,4% of the ones who responded this question have given a “yes” answer.

Thus, it has been found out that the Bursa City Council is known by the citizens in the city of Bursa at a high rate. This indicates that the city council has been able to introduce itself to the people of Bursa through various activities performed so far. Therefore, the 1. hypothesis of the study has been confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: The people of Bursa have no information about the structure and work areas of the city councils in Turkey in general and in particular of the Bursa City Council.

One the questions asked to the persons to investigate the accuracy of the 2. Hypothesis is in the form of whether the establishment of the city councils is legal obligation or not. Only the 18,8% of the ones who replied this question has marked the right answer as “the establishment of them is a legal obligation”. When asked “Are there city councils in all of the cities in Turkey?”, the 35,5% of the persons have answered as “no”. Although the establishment of the city councils is a legal obligation, there is not such an establishment in all of the cities. To the question in the form of “What is the source of the budget that constitutes basis for the works and activities of the City Council?”, the 33,4% of the persons have been able reply as “the municipality” which is the correct answer. Another question included in the survey in order to measure the knowledge of the individuals who participated in the field study is in the form of " With whom is the General Assembly of City Council composed of? Only the 22,1% of the ones who replied this question have been able to give the correct answer.

Consequently, the data of the people who participated in the field study and answered the questions has indicated that the number of persons who have information about the structure and the work areas of the city councils is quite low in the social structure. Therefore, the 2. hypothesis of this study has also been confirmed.

In the context of the citizens being able to more actively participate in the urban management processes, to have a right to speak, to express their opinions on the issues concerning themselves, and where the diverse ideas are discussed, in other words, being the common mind of the city; how much are the City Councils known by the citizens in terms of either their legal-administrative structure or their working systems has been a neglected phenomenon. So far in Turkey, various administrative mechanisms, have been planned and established for the welfare, peace and "wellness" of the individuals in the direction of the determined objectives and priorities. But during this planning process, by switching the other side of the case that is the citizens side, an evaluation related with how the mentioned mechanisms are perceived has often been neglected. This study, in this sense, presents importance. Examination of the Bursa City Council which is one of the first city councils in Turkey should also be an example for the other city councils.

The main reason of the low number of people who have information about working structure, the legal-administrative status and function of the City Council is due to the fact that the City Councils are new institutions for Turkey. The introduction to the citizens of such an institution of which the

laga infrastructure has been planned with both laws and regulations, will contribute to the strengthening of the local democracy and the comprehension of governance.

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