

## **ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS: A CASE STUDY**

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### **—Abstract —**

*The purpose of this paper is to analyze e-participation level of municipalities in Ankara in regards to political participation by the method of web-site analyses. E-Participation is being regarded as a new and favored model for governing process. Recent developments in information and communication technologies bring about some innovations in the area of political participation in democratic systems. E-Voting as a new method in e-election process is one of these innovations in the area of political participation (Smith et al., 2003). E-Participation is also one of the parts of e-democracy subjects which come by depending on the improvements in information and communication technologies. Nowadays e-participation in relation to the notions of citizenship and democracy is being seen as a means to cause positive effects in citizens' participation in the political and managerial processes (Komito, 2005). It is thought that e-participation will be effective in democratic participations' being more and more widespread in every part of the society. E-Participation provides new opportunities from the viewpoint of political participation: it provides political decree more individually on the core level which is different from the traditional political behavior consisting of institutionalized political parties and periodical elections. E-Participation is also significant in the process of the realization of accountability, transparency and participation in terms of governance (OECD, 2003). E-Participation leads to new opportunities such as citizen's active participation in policy making process. This active participation makes the relationship both among citizens and between citizens and authorities more effective (Alonso, 2009). In this respect; e-participation comes out as a highly*

*significant instrument of democracy regarding the process of making and executing of public policies on municipality level and the process of resident's participation in these public issues.*

**Key Words:** *e-participation, e-municipality, governance, policy making, political participation*

**Jel Classification:** M14, M15.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Early 21th century witnessed the growing of a new understanding about governmental process in democratic states. It consists of cooperation, coordination and interaction in governmental processes rather than central and bureaucratic governmental process. Governance is a new perspective for government which depends on this new understanding on governmental process. Governance bases on citizens' active political participation. This is as important as effective and efficient government. However, governance required reformation of existing government structure. Contemporary studies suggest that recent developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) can provide important tools for these reformations. If ICT tools combine with political processes, reformation can take place. e-Democracy with its components like e-voting, e-election and e-participation is an example of this combination. This study focuses on e-participation as a tool to provide democratic, cooperative and interactive government process. e-Participation also has growing concern in contemporary discussions like crises of liberal representative democracy and implementation of deliberative or participatory democracy.

This study's main purpose is to determine the local municipalities' e-participation level and capacity with the help of a case study. In addition to this purpose, study attempts to explain some obstacles for citizens' online political participation. This study's methodology consists of web-site analyze. 25 web-sites of municipalities were sampled in term of analyze. In this study, national data used for determine to limits of e-participation. The framework of the study consists of two sections. In the first section, we tried to explore the developmental process of e-participation and e-participation understanding, basic components of e-participation process and the role of ICT. Also in this section, an indicator table was established for analyzing to web-sites. In the second section, local municipalities in Ankara were studied in context of e-participation level by means of their web-sites. Also difference between participation and opportunity of participation was stressed in terms of "digital divide" which is obstacles for online availability of citizens to

public services due to the lack of internet connection and PC capacity. This study shows some data on internet and PC usage rate of citizens in Turkey instead of local data. The reason of using data as country-wide is the lack of accessible data on internet and PC usage rates of citizens locally. It can be claimed that statistical information about citizens' internet and PC usage level and rate in local areas of Turkey is open to further research.

## **2. GROWING CONCERN FOR PARTICIPATION**

### **2.1. Governance and Democracy**

Government is a process in which progress is under control of governmental authorities and agencies. This process consists of such steps as decision making, implementation and regulation. There are different perspectives for governing process. Differences originate in various state theories and models. Despite of these differences democratic states of 21th century have a consensus for that governing process should be depend on interaction between citizens and government agencies. For example, deliberative democracy has been offered for democratization of governing process. It consists of interaction between citizens and government agencies with the help of citizen participation to public issues (Habermas, 2003). Governance as a new governmental model aims at transforming the governing process interactively, efficiently and effectively.

The term of governance was firstly used in a World Bank report which concerned with Africa, in 1989 (Güzelsarı, 2004: 117). Governance is similar with new public management (NPM) understanding but it distincts from NPM with its interactive position (Güzelsarı, 2004). Although there are different definitions for governance, it can be defined by means of its main components. These components are efficiency and effectiveness which came from NPM, interaction among state, business and civil society in governing process; cooperation and communication, participation, accountability, democratization of government structure, constitutional state, transparency, auditing of all processes and institutions, responsibility, strategic vision and consensus culture (Gündoğan, 2010: 34; World Bank,1992). Governance with these components is considered as a democratic government model against central and bureaucratic governmental structure. Therefore, the term of governance is called as also democratic governance.

Democratic governance is based on the distribution of central governmental power among business and civil organizations, on participation of social actors in policy making process and on using modern methods to getting information

(McMahon, 2010). Democratic or “good” governance process consists of decentralization of central power, political participation of civil society and suggestion to active citizenship and interactive relations instead of hierarchical ones (Wijkman, 1998). It is clear that local government level is more convenient to reform the governing process than national or regional level. Because of this reason there is growing concern for political participation on municipalities as local governments.

Political participation is an essential component of democracy. Participation consists of transferring citizens’ ideas, opinions, feelings, desires and critics to governing process in the stages that policy preparing, solution development, decision making and implementing about public issues (Gündoğan, 2010: 36). Citizens’ political activity is a basic requirement to impact public policies and political decisions (Verba et al., 1995). The aim of this participation activity is both using social capital in governing process and democratization of the government by engaging citizens from different social environments. Main tools in order to reach active political participation are establishing social networks, providing information network and setting communication and coordination among different social groups (Toprak, 2010: 76–78). In addition civil society organizations are emphasized as a main motivation tool for the participation of citizens to the decision making process (Lombardi et al. 2010: 6).

Considering regulations in direction to governance, especially local level of political participation is emphasized more than national level of participation (Maria & Rizzo, 2005: 89). For example, Local Agenda 21, which is an action plan to sustainable development that is accepted by member states of United Nation in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, emphasized the importance of local action. 28st part of Local Agenda 21 underlines special position of local governments in direction to transform the governing process as interactively. Furthermore, it underlines importance of decentralization of power. Importance of locality in terms of political participation has some particular reasons. Firstly, citizens usually interested in local issues concerning with their everyday life rather than national issues. Secondly, citizens have more opportunity for local participation. Thirdly, since political participation is open to conflict among different social groups, minimal scaled experiences of political participation have not more risk than large scaled participation experiences (Lombardi et al. 2010:5).

## **2.2. Information & Communication Technologies and Electronic Participation**

In the last quarter of the 20th century, development process of information and communication technology (ICT) began with the use of information technologies to provide organizational efficiency, effectiveness and to increase quality of public services (Moreno & Traverso, 2010: 40). Governments also used information technologies for new public management perspective. In the first decade of the 21th century, it was clear that regulations only for organizational efficiency and effectiveness were not sufficient to achieve governmental goals. Governance took into account social and economic impacts in governmental process rather NPM. Recent innovations in information and communication technologies (ICT) have created new opportunities to consideration of these impacts in governing process.

The attempt to make ICT usage widespread for providing political participation has developed especially in direction to participatory democracy approach which originated from European's democracy tradition (Toprak, 2010: 87). ICT is used to improve government efficiency, to increase government service provision capacity and quality, and to provide communication and interrelation canals between citizens and governmental agencies (Zobel, 2005: 7). Internet, as a prominent ICT, is a main tool to reach these purposes. Internet enhanced citizens' abilities to getting information and setting communication. Thus, internet became an essential tool to provide relation among civil society, businesses and other organizations (Moreno & Traverso, 2010: 40). Internet also promotes political participation potential by the way of extending information canals and simplifying communication process (Polat, 2005). It is clear that internet is a useful tool for active political participation. At the same time, it has an important role for the transformation of governmental and political processes in terms of governance and participatory democracy (Lombardi et al. 2010: 6; Maria & Rizzo, 2005: 74).

Active political participation requires active citizenship, suitable areas and tools for participative action. Active political participation model traces back to city states of Ancient Greek which is called as polis. In polis, direct democracy practiced in special places where areas for setting communication and interaction among citizens were. These areas are called as agora. Direct democracy experience in Athena is known as the best model of democratic representation. However, direct democracy was not found suitable for a long time due to the impossibility of active participation owing to great number of population in national states, diversity of social groups in a nation, the lack of large areas and

insufficient tools to set communication and to get in contact with citizens. This is the reason why representative democracy model has been used in modern national states (Dahl, 1993). In the first decade of this century, impacts of these limits have been reduced thanks to the online participation opportunities like e-democracy. e-Democracy is a new model in political participation theory. It provides communication and relation opportunities for great part of the citizens to participate actively. e-Democracy has some components to transform the process to a better degree. These components are e-participation, e-voting and e-transparency (Gil-Garcia & Miranda, 2010: 58). With the new opportunities for active participation the term of e-agora become a commonly-used term with reference to agora experience (Lombardi et al. 2010: 2; <http://www.epractice.eu/en/cases/eagora>, 27.02.2011). electronic democracy causes to increase in the importance of participatory democracy against representative democracy which has been evaluated as a poor model of democracy for a long time (Şaylan, 2008). Consequently, e-democracy is being thought as a contemporary model for direct participation by means of ICT tools and it has some solutions for the problems of traditional participation process.

e-Participation is one of the main components of e-democracy. It means that participation of citizens to policy making process concerning with public issues by on-line tools (Sanford & Rose, 2007: 407; Zizsis et al. 2009; Issa, 2009: 249; UN, 2010: 83). e-Participation provides for citizens active political participation opportunities in the policy making process. Therefore, e-participation is seen as an important tool by participatory democracy approach (Wright & Street, 2007; UN, 2008: 58). e-Participation can provide better communication and relation possibilities for civil society organizations, citizens and politicians. Thus, citizens' ideas and opinions can be reflecting in the governing process (Issa, 2009: 249; Wright & Street, 2007).

e-Participation process has three main parts. These are firstly, providing online information; secondly, online service provision and online communication between governors and citizens; thirdly, citizens participation to decision making process (OECD, 2001). Macintosh (2004: 3) characterized e-participation as e-enabling (accessible and understandable information for many audiences), e-engaging (deliberative debate on policies 'top-down' forms), e-empowering (take into citizens' suggestion in policy making process, citizens as policy producer). According to UN's reports (UN, 2008: 58-65; UN, 2010: 84), e-participation process operates in e-information, e-consultation and e-decision making steps. Some studies indicate e-voting as an additional step in the e-participation process (Parycek & Edelmann, 2009: 213).

### 2.3. Methodology of Web-Site Analysis

There are some methods to analyze institutional web-sites by means of their e-participation levels<sup>1</sup>. Generally in this method, e-participation is evaluated under the three steps which are e-information, e-consultation and e-decision making. There are some indicators to measure both each steps and all process of e-participation. In this study, the same classification is also used to separate all process. Similar indicators are used to measure municipalities' e-participation level. These indicators are determined both for each step and for complete process of e-participation. This part of the study is going to explain three steps of e-participation and determine indicators both for each step and complete process. Indicators are shown on the table 1.

e-Information means that publishing basic information by governmental institutions that are essential for citizens' participatory action (UN, 2008:62; 2010:86). These information tools are online official publications about government participation policy, calendar for online discussion forums, electronic notification system to inform citizens (UN, 2008; UN, 2010:86). Information about authorities, institutions, policies and governmental outcomes are also a part of this step. Electronic information process can be explained in the pro-active participation process which is before active participation. Information and communication flows are very important in this step as well as in other steps. These flows are provided by Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, chat rooms, discussion forums, postcards, blogs, video sharing etc. (Issa, 2009: 249-250; UN, 2008: 62; UN, 2010: 88).

e-Consultation consists of interaction among citizens and government agencies. In this step citizens' feelings, ideas, opinions, complaints are transmitting to governmental institutions by the way of online communication channels, informal polls, bulletin boards, chat rooms/instant messaging and weblogs, blogs, feedback forms (UN, 2008:63; 2010:88). Moreno and Traverso (2010) explained this process into two steps as top-down and bottom-up consultation. Main difference among them is that top-down consultation consists of government based consultation; bottom up consultation consists of citizen based consultation. In bottom-up consultation, consultation subject is determined by citizens. Communication in consultation process is also providing with Web 2.0 tools. e-

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<sup>1</sup> "UNPAN and APSA Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide Report" (Holzer & Kim, 2007) provide an outline to improvement municipalities' web-site. Garcia and Miranda's participation index which was formed with 10 variables also provide an example for quantitative measurement methods of participation. Besides of these, Moreno and Traverso's (2010) diagram seen as useful for governmental institutions' web-site analyses in respect to political participation which was prepared with referance to Macintosh and UN's studies (Moreno & Traverso, 2010:45; Macintosh, 2004).

Decision making is the last step of e-participation process. Citizens' active participation occurs in this step with transmission of their opinions to public policies (UN, 2008: 65). Citizens ideas, opinions, complaints have to directly impact on governmental decisions about public policies, plans and programs (Moreno & Traverso, 2010: 45). Citizens' participation practices in this step are provided by the way of Web 2.0 tools like other steps.

21 indicators are considered while evaluating e-participation level of municipalities by means of the three steps. e-Information indicators are determined in direction to Moreno and Traverso's (2010) study indicators of which refer to Macintosh and UN's studies. These indicators are information on e-participation policy or program, statistics, annual reports, documents, relevant information for laws and authorities. In addition to these indicators, some new indicators can be added to the table such as information about government agenda, political outcomes, participation process, financial issues, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and announcements. It is thought that all of these also have informative functions on participation process. e-Consultation indicators are determined in direction to UN's 2010 Report. Only indicators of e-services, blogs and social media are added to the indicators under this step. e-Services, blogs and social media are added due to their potential of motivation on citizens for participation. Decision making indicators are determined in direction to UN 2008 and UN 2010 reports. "Notice and/or publish citizen's inputs and results of their opinions" are obtained from UN's 2008 report and the rest of them are obtained from UN 2010. Results are presented in the tables for.

**Table 1: Indicators to measure e-participation level**

Providing e-Information for users	e-Participation policy, programme and process
	Authorities, structure of municipality, services
	Laws and regulations
	Financial informations
	Agenda, annual reports, outcomes and documents
	Announcements
	Really Simple Syndication (RSS)
Providing e-Consultation Mechanisms	Statistics
	Polls
	Surveys
	Claim, complaints and feedback
	Chat rooms or instant messaging
	Available e-mails of authorities or contact persons
	Web logs or blogs or links to blogs
e-Participation in Decision Making Process	e-Services
	Discussion forums
	Archive of past discussion forums
	Notice and/or publish citizen's inputs
	Notice results of inputs and citizens' opinions
	Petitions
Voting	

Source: Moreno & Traverso, 2010: 44; UN, 2010, UN, 2008; Macintosh, 2004



### **3. e-PARTICIPATION ON THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL**

In Turkey, while it is remarkable to observe the regular rising in the e-participation rates, electronic participation level is still too low in contrast to e-government rates. In the report of UN (2010), according to rates of institutional websites quality of e-participation, Turkey is on the 28th rank among 28 countries as having the quality rate of %30. Although it is not a high rate, it can be claimed that e-participation rate of Turkey is rising especially in local government level. This section of the study mainly purpose to research on e-participation level of 26 municipalities of Ankara by using the web-site analyze method. Also this study encompasses the strengths of e-participation by means of democratic representation in governing process of municipality and its weaknesses as obstacles to citizens' e-participation actions. This section begins with expressing advantages of e-participation on municipality level than continue with measuring e-participation levels of the local municipalities of Ankara and it finishes with explaining obstacles for electronic participation process.

#### **3.1. Advantages of e-Participation on Municipality Level**

e-Participation level is considered as local, regional and national (Macintosh, 2004:1). Importance of government process on local level is supported by approaches of governance and participatory democracy. Contemporary approaches suggest the changing of hierarchical structure of governmental process to the citizen-centered one. This reformation is seen clearly in local level rather than the national one. Local governments aims at active political participation of citizens on the public issues that are concerning with their everyday life (Maria & Rizzo, 2005: 73; UN, 2010: 96) since there are some important advantages of e-participation for the governments.

Most generally, these advantages can be stated as reforming the governmental structure and the process as effective, efficient and democratic. In particularly, advantages are providing accessible and understandable information for audiences, enabling feedback to governments, establishing close relationship between citizens and governments, improving service provision, making regulations to promote interactive relations, increasing quality of services, extending information canals for unexpected events and problems in local area, providing cost and time efficiency, using human and social capital efficiently, promoting trust for administration, increasing legitimacy of government, providing better communication in governing process among citizens, business and government agencies, providing a better coordination, attending civil society, transform to governing process as transparently, accountably and democratically

(Aikins, 2010: 229-230; Macintosh, 2004; Toprak, 2010; Parycek & Edelmann, 2009: 213). Municipalities use ICT tools like web-sites when carry out conditions to operating political participation process (Scott, 2006).

### **3.2. Research on Web-Sites of Local Municipalities in Terms of e-Participation**

This research focuses on web-sites of local municipalities in Ankara by means of e-participation level. There are 25 municipalities. 16 of them are situated in the border of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. 9 of them are situated out of this border. This border is regarded according to cycle of 50 km long which determined by the law of 5216 (10.07.2004). It is claimed that due to relatively new date of this law some differences can be observed in the developmental level of municipalities according to the distinction of centre- periphery. In this study e-Participation level of all the municipalities determined according to e-participation indicators. These indicators used to measure both each step and all of the process. There are 8 indicators for e-information, 7 indicators for e-consultation and 6 indicators for decision making step. Completely there are 21 indicators for e-participation process.

Municipalities indicated with their clipping. Clippings of these are such that Akyurt (Ak), Altındağ (Al), Ayaş (Ay), Bala (Ba), Çankaya (Ça), Çubuk (Çu), Elmadağ (El), Etimesgut (Et), Gölbaşı (Gö), Kalecik (Kl), Kazan (Kz), Keçiören (Ke), Mamak (Ma), Pursaklar (Pu), Sincan (Si), Yenimahalle (Ye), Beypazarı (Be), Çamlıdere (Çm), Evren (Ev), Güdül (Gü), Haymana (Ha), Kızılcahamam (Kı), Nallıhan (Na), Polatlı (Po), Şereflikoçhisar (Şe). Clippings used for the tables. Municipalities are ordered on the tables according to their number of voter which consists of the last referendum data in Turkey<sup>2</sup>. Results of this analysis show that Sincan and Akyurt municipalities are on the first rank among 16 municipalities by means of e-information level which are in the border of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Çankaya, Yenimahalle and Çubuk municipalities comes second. e-Information levels of Çankaya and Yenimahalle municipalities stay lower than Akyurt while they are equal to Çubuk; Akyurt and Çubuk have lower population than Yenimahalle and Çankaya. e-Information level of Ayaş and Kalecik municipalities come last on this list. On the other hand, e-information level of Beypazarı and Nallıhan municipalities reach to the highest point in contrast to Şereflikoçhisar, Çamlıdere and Evren which has the lowest level. Beypazarı and Nallıhan reach to almost high populated municipalities. Sincan comes first in regards to e-consultation level while Bala and Pursaklar come last

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/Referandum2010/ankara.pdf> (Accessed: 22.02.2011)

among 16 municipalities. Kızılcahamam municipality stands on the first place while Şereflikoçisar, Güdül and Evren stand on the last place among 9 municipalities. Eventually, e-decision making level of municipalities could not be measured because the municipalities have not any of the e-decision making indicators. E-participation level of municipalities are accounted also proportionally in direction to formula that is  $[X / 21 \times 100]$ . 21 show total number of indicators, X shows number of municipalities which own determined indicators. According to this formulation, rates of municipalities which are situated in the border of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality like Sincan which stands on the first place by means of e-participation level with the rate of % 52.38095238; e-participation levels of Çankaya and Yenimahalle municipalities come in the second place with the rate of % 42.85714286; e-participation of Bala, Kalecik and Ayaş stand on the last place with the rate of % 19.04761905. Rates of municipalities which are being out of the border of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality like Kızılcahamam which has the highest e-participation level with the rate of %42.85714286; Evren and Şereflikoçisar comes last with the rate of %14.28571429.

Municipalities, analyzed in this study, have none of the indicators determined for the process of e-decision making. This case shows that citizens have not got the chance of participating in the policy making process and making regulations about themselves. Results of this analysis show that e-information levels of the municipalities are higher than e-consultation levels. It is clear that the municipalities have not sufficient potential and capacity to achieving transformation of the governing process as interactively, effectively, efficiently and democratically yet. However, electronic information and e-consultation are seen as a part of the e-participation process and they are explained as “passive kinds of involvement” or engagement (Conwey, 2000: 3). Nevertheless, web-sites of municipalities have some deficient such as not having any accessible information about municipality’s e-participation policy or process. This case shows that e-information is not seen as a part of citizens’ active political participation by governments. Other lacks in electronic information process can be expressed in an order. First lack is statistics about socio-economic and demographic situations of towns. Second lack is budget information of municipalities. Third lack is accessible e-mail addresses of authorities and of the officers in responsible. Mostly, only minister of municipality or a municipality’s general e-mail address is accessible. In addition to these results, in all web-sites of these municipalities, picture of minister stands on the central place of the web-site. Minister’s pictures draw attention rather than institutions, service or other

documents. Mostly, minister is alone in these pictures. This situation leads to think that ministers seek to create an image like that their identity is the same with identity of municipality. It can be suggested that if interactive pictures are used in the design of municipalities' web-sites, than municipalities would be seen more democratic.

**Table 2: e-Participation Level of Ankara Sub-Provincial Municipalities**

Municipalities Ordered to Number of Voter and Border of Metropolitan Municipality		Municipalities in the Border of Metropolitan Municipality																Municipalities out of the Border of Metropolitan Municipality										
		Ça	Ke	Ye	Ma	Si	Al	Et	Pu	Gö	Çu	El	Kz	Ak	Ba	Kl	Ay	Po	Be	Şe	Na	Ha	Kı	Gü	Çm	Ev		
e-Information for Users	e-Participation policy, programme and process																											
	Structure of municipality, authorities, Services and Institutions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Laws and regulations			X		X		X							X	X					X							
	Financial information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X				X	X			
	Agenda, annual reports and outcomes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		X	X					
	Announcements	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	RSS	X				X								X														
	Statistics										X								X		X	X						
	Total	5	4	5	4	6	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	6	3	2	2	4	5	2	5	3	4	3	2	2		
e- Consultation Mechanisms	Polls																											
	Surveys			X						X	X	X	X									X	X		X			
	Claim, complaints and feedbacks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
	Chat rooms or instart messaging					X															X	X						
	Available e-mails of authorities or contact persons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
	Web logs or blogs or links to blogs	X			X	X	X					X	X											X				
	e-Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X																	
Total	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	1	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	5	1	3	1			
Decisi on Making Process	Discussion forums																											
	Archive of past discussion forums																											
	Notice and/or publish citizen's inputs																											
	Notice results of inputs or citizens' opinions																											
	Petitions																											
	Voting																											
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Scores of All Process		9	8	9	8	11	8	7	5	7	9	6	7	10	4	4	4	6	7	3	8	6	9	4	5	3		

**Table 3: Rates on e-Information**

e-Info.	Sub-provincial Municipalities in the Border of Metropolitan Municipality																Sub-provincial Municipalities out of the Border of Metropolitan Municipality								
Municip.	Çn	Ke	Ye	Ma	Si	Al	Et	Pu	Gö	Çu	El	Kz	Ak	Ba	Kl	Ay	Po	Be	Şe	Na	Ha	Kı	Gü	Ça	Ev
Score	5	4	5	4	6	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	6	3	2	2	4	5	2	5	3	4	3	2	2
Rates	62.5	50	62.5	50	75	50	50	50	50	62.5	37.5	50	75	37.5	25	25	50	62.5	25	62.5	37.5	50	37.5	25	25

Formulation for Rates: Score / number of e-information indicators x 100

**Table 4: Rates on e-Consultation**

e-Consult.	Sub-provincial Municipalities in the Border of Metropolitan Municipality																Sub-provincial Municipalities out of the Border of Metropolitan Municipality								
Municip.	Çn	Ke	Ye	Ma	Si	Al	Et	Pu	Gö	Çu	El	Kz	Ak	Ba	Kl	Ay	Po	Be	Şe	Na	Ha	Kı	Gü	Ça	Ev
Score	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	1	3	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	5	1	3	1
Rates	57.14 2867 14	57.14 2857 14	57.14 2857 14	57.14 28571 4	71.42 8571 43	57.1 4285 714	42.8 571 428 6	14.2 8571 429	42.85 7142 86	57.14 2857 14	42.8 571 428 6	42.85 7142 86	57.14 2857 14	14.2 8571 429	28.5 7142 857	28.57 1428 57	28.5 7142 857	28.5 7142 857	14.2 8571 429	42.85 7142 86	42.85 7142 86	71.4 2857 143	14.2 8571 429	42.8 571 428 6	14.2 8571 429

Formulation for Rates: Score / number of e-consultation indicators x 100

**Table 5: Rates on e-Participation Total Process**

e-Particip.	Sub-provincial Municipalities in the Border of Metropolitan Municipality																Sub-provincial Municipalities out of the Border of Metropolitan Municipality								
Municip.	Çn	Ke	Ye	Ma	Si	Al	Et	Pu	Gö	Çu	El	Kz	Ak	Ba	Kl	Ay	Po	Be	Şe	Na	Ha	Kı	Gü	Ça	Ev
Score	9	8	9	8	11	8	7	5	7	9	6	7	10	4	4	4	6	7	3	8	6	9	4	5	3
Rates	42.85 7142 86	38.09 5238 1	42.85 7142 86	38.09 5238 1	52.38 0952 38	38.0 9523 81	33.3 333 3	23.8 0952 381	33.33 3333 33	42.85 7142 86	28.5 714 285 7	33.33 3333 33	47.61 9047 62	19.0 4761 905	19.0 4761 905	19.04 7619 05	28.5 7142 857	33.3 3333 333	14.2 8571 429	38.09 5238 1	28.57 1428 57	42.8 5714 286	19.0 4761 905	23.8 095 238 1	14.2 8571 429

Formulation for Rates: Score / number of e-participation indicators x 100

### 3.3. Difference Between Participation and Participation Opportunity

Innovations in ICT have main impact on the operating of e-participation process. e-Participation process consists of e-participation capacity of citizens as well as e-participation capacity of local governments. Evolution of participation capacity concerning with the raises in the availability of ICT tools, number of users and computer usage ability of citizens. e-Democracy and electronic participation process requires “better distribution of resources among citizens; extending participation by involving all groups of citizens at the level considered and improving accessibility” (Maria & Rizzo, 2005: 88). If main conditions are not provided for citizens in order for participation, then availability and usability problems arise which are originated from defect of social and economic capacity and resources. This situation is called as “democratic divide” within the concept of digital divide (Norris, 2001; Kiesler et al. 2000; Zissis et al, 2009: 3).

Term of digital divide refers to the gaps among individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas arise from different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and use of the Internet capacity for a wide variety of activities (OECD, 2001:3). Socio-economic inequalities are stressed as the main obstacle for internet availability and usability. However, there are also other reasons on the gap such as inequalities in education, income, gender, age, religion, region (Saglie & Vabo, 2009; OECD, 2001:3). Privacy and security can be added to these gaps with its impacts on internet usage (Gökmen, 2009: 235). Kruger (2002) expresses that free time is also thought among main needs for the usage of ICT tools. Although citizens are seen primarily as significant in the issue of digital divide, political elites and officers also confront with the problems of digital divide (Saglie & Vabo, 2009: 386). Obstacles which are caused by the gap of internet availability and PC ownership, is so important in the e-participation process. These obstacles lead to damage on the process of e-participation. Low rates of usage and availability of the internet and PC are among the main problems in the process of e-participation in Turkey. Although there is a regular rise in the rates of internet and PC usage and access (individuals' computer usage rate is %38 in 2009 and %41 in 2010<sup>3</sup>; rate of households with internet access is %30 in 2009 and %42 in 2010<sup>4</sup>), these rates are still lower than the rates of the European states. Tables show individuals' internet and e-government usage rates in Turkey.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=isoc\\_ci\\_cfp\\_cu&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=isoc_ci_cfp_cu&lang=en) (Accessed: 24.02.11).

<sup>4</sup> [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=isoc\\_pi\\_a1&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=isoc_pi_a1&lang=en) (Accessed: 24.02.11)

**Table 9: Internet Usage (% in Turkey 2009 and 2010**

	Regularly using the Internet 2009	Regularly using the Internet 2010	Frequently using the Internet 2009	Frequently using the Internet 2010
All Individuals (16-74)	30	33	20	22
Individuals (16-24)			32	36
Individuals (25-54)			21	23
Individuals (55-74)			3	4
Males (16-74)	39	42	27	29
Females (16-74)	21	25	14	16

Source:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tin00092&language=en>

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tin00061&language=en> (24.02.11)

**Table 10: E-government usage by individuals by gender in Turkey 2009 and 2010**

Using the Internet for interaction with public authorities	2009	2010
Percentage of all Individuals (16-74)	8	9
Percentage of Males (16-74)	10	12
Percentage of Females (16-74)	5	6

Source:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tsiir130&language=en>

These rates show both rising in internet and PC usability year-to-year and rates of internet usage and availability are still too low in Turkey. Table shows that when the number of activity with using computer and internet increase, then usage rate of internet and computer reduces. Rates of regular usage of internet shows there is a high gap between man and woman to a rate of %17. These rates also show that internet is mostly used by young people among 16-24 years old while old people use internet at the lowest level. 2010 data shows that the gap between man and woman in frequently using the internet is %13 lower than the regularly usage rates. These rates prove that when the digital divide increases, e-participation level decreases. Consequently, it can be claimed that providing participation opportunities is as important as participation process itself.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Government process is sought to reform in direction to some principles such as efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability and democracy. e-Participation has a key role in this reforming process, especially on local level. E-participation can not be thought as different from ICT and citizens' availability and usability of ICT tools. e-Governance and e-government are approaches which have the aim of accomplishing the governing transformation in direction to the understanding of governance in Turkey. However, in Turkey, passive e-



participation tools are more advanced than active e-participation tools. Main function of passive or pro-active electronic participation tools are drawing attention to web-sites of municipality by sharing information with citizens and provision of some services like tax-payment instead of providing information to participate in policy making or to transform governing process interactively. This study suggests that local governments which are more suitable for performing e-participation process, should pay more attention to e-participation process and especially to the decision making process.

Furthermore, in making constructional regulations which have to be made by municipalities, there are some limits to the engagement action of citizens on e-participation process and these limits arise from insufficient financial sources to supply ICT tools, technical complements and in the promotion and motivation defects for the active participation of citizens. In addition to these, e-participation requires some regulations. These regulations consist of citizens' abilities to use ICT tools, officers' abilities to use of ICT tools, providing and controlling officers' use of ICT tools in respect of ethical circumstances additionally educated and informed service personnel. At the same time, it is necessary to promote ability of internet usage of ministers or political elites. Consequently, it should be stated that e-participation is not a complete mechanic solution in order to provide effective, efficient and democratic transformation of local governments or governing processes. E-participation can be evaluated as a tool to accomplish these aims or ideals.

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