

A Local Governance Experience in Turkey: From “Local Agenda 21”s to the City Councils

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Abstract

Local governance is a relatively new concept in Turkish administrative system where central structuralization is essential. Local Agenda 21 practices have been an important step on the way to local governance in Turkey. At this study, LA 21s which are the beginning point of local governance in Turkey are held with respect to its history and structure. Later, City Councils which are important steps, are examined. And lastly, suggestions which are made for making local governance more powerful and more sustainable in Turkey, take place.

Key words: Turkey, Governance, local governance, Local Agenda 21, City Councils,

Introduction

Governance is a relatively new concept at administrative sciences. In countries like Turkey, where a centralist State tradition exists, local governments are mostly under heavy control of central administration.

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So, in such countries like Turkey, it is not easy to establish and maintain local governance.

At this study, it is aimed to analyse local governance process in Turkey mainly in context of city councils. In accordance with this aim, first the concept of local governance will be held with respect to its main principles and actors. Then, Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) practises in the world and in Turkey will be held. Later, City Councils which are relatively new institutions in Turkish administrative system will be held with respect to its history, structure and functioning. And finally some suggestions will be developed in order to make city councils, in turn, local governance stronger in Turkey.

1. Local Governance

Classical approach for government and administration dominant at both academic and executive level was based on planning, organization and inclining of people to a specific aim (Bozkurt and Ergun 1998, 266). Beginning from 1970s the classical government perception was replaced with governance approach (Özer 2006, 61). Globalization and localization, changes in political participation attitudes, formation of new social classes and new social movements were the basic factors for the transformation from government to governance (Tesev 2008, 16). Governance is one of the most used concepts at both theoretical and practical level. Since it is used by variant social branches and also by variant organizations and institutions, there are variant descriptions of the concept. For example, World Bank which is one of the first institutions using the term makes description of governance as “consisting of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them” (info.worldbank.org). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) describes governance as the exercise of economic,

political, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their legal obligations, and mediate their differences. (<http://magnet.undp.org/policy/default.htm>)

The definition made by OECD defines governance as denoting the use of as political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. This broad definition encompasses the role of public authorities in establishing the environment in which economic operators function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/>).

Openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence are the main principles of governance (EC 2001, 10). Validity, transparency, rule of law, equality are other most commonly mentioned principles of governance. Governance is structurally rearranged constantly, rather than being a static manner. So, in such a process actors of the process should actively participate in the process. There are three main actors of governance: State, civil society and private sector. (Hancioğlu 2008, 14).

As it is the case for governance in general, at local government level there was also a shift from local government to local governance. Peter John (2001, 15-16) mentions four basic factors of the change towards local governance. The first factor is institutional reform. According to John there are two dimensions of institutional reform. The first one is institutional multiplication which is related to creation of new levels of elected sub-national government and special-purpose local, regional and central agencies. The second is institutional restructuring resulting from the adoption of New Public Management ideas and/or the move to decentralize power of the central state. The second factor is emergence of new networks. This factor also has two dimensions. The first one is emergence of stronger horizontal networks. With the greater institutional complexity at the local level and the stronger presence of the private sector, new policy networks can form to create links that build

trust and increase governing capacity. The second dimension is emergence of new cross-national networks. The implication of the reform of the nation state in the face of globalization and the growth in the power of the EU, is that local authorities have stronger cross-national links to Access resources and to influence policy. The third factor is emergence of new policy initiatives. This factor also has two dimensions. Since there is more opportunity for local innovation in sectors where the state has retreated or does not take so much of an interest as before, such as local and regional planning, there are more opportunities for local innovation and capacity building. The second is that as a consequence of retreat of the state, it becomes a less important actor in local politics. So, the state reinvents its role in some policy sectors rather than retreats; it becomes an actor and more prominent partner in the networks and central initiatives are revived. The fourth and the last factor is responses to dilemmas of coordination and accountability. The search for new mechanisms of control and accountability and more prominent forms of executive leadership are mentioned as two dimensions of this factor.

In light of the data mentioned above, now we can examine definitions of local governance. Local governance can simply be defined as formulation and execution of collective action at local level (Shah and Shah 2006, 1). A more comprehensive definition states that local governance refers to commissioning, organization and control of services such as health, education, policing, infrastructure and economic development within localities (Miller, Dixon and Stoker 2000, 1). At an other definition local governance is described as formulation and execution of collective action at local level. In addition to direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, roles of informal norms, Networks, community organizations and neighbourhood associations should also be included in decision making and delivery of local services (Shah and Shah 2006, 2). Local governance is based on many principles. Public participation, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, openness and transparency, rule of law, innovation and openness to change, competence and capacity, sustainability and long term orientation, sound financial management, human

rights and cultural diversity, consensus orientation, equity, legitimacy, resource prudence and ecological soundness are the most commonly accepted principles of local governance (Saito 2008; Shah and Shah 2006).

As it is the case in governance, local governance is a process based on multi-actors. Local governance involves actors such as mayors, local councils, NGOs, business associations etc.; formal and informal institutions such as municipal administration, local council(s), rules, rules, regulations etc.; and available means such as human resources, money, etc.

2. Local Government System and Local Governance in Turkey

2.1. Local Government System in Turkey

Turkey has a local government tradition in which central government is sovereign, central governments do not trust in local actors, and central government exercises administrative tutelage on local governments (Göymen 1999, 68). Under the domination of central administration, local government system and local governance experience in Turkey have been designed and developed as follows:

There exist two types of decentralization unit in Turkey. The first is the one which serves for a single issue (universities and state owned corporations) and these units are organized functionally. The other unit of decentralization is the one which serves for multi issue in a limited geographical area. These units are local governments.

Local governments are defined at Art. 127 of the Constitution as "public corporate bodies established to meet the common local needs of the inhabitants of provinces, municipal districts and villages, whose principles of constitution and decision-making organs elected by the electorate are determined by law."

Three types of local government are mentioned at the Constitution: provinces, municipalities and towns.

The local government unit for provinces is "Special Provincial Administration". (SPA). Reference law concerning special provincial

administration is Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administration, adopted on 22 February 2005. “Special provincial administration” means a public entity having administrative and financial autonomy which is established to meet the common local needs of the people in the province and whose decision-making body is elected by voters; “Organs of special provincial administration” means the general provincial council, the provincial executive committee, and the governor.

SPAs have authority to perform services which are under responsibility of central administration, in whole of the province; whereas it has authority to perform services which are local services in the areas out of municipal territories. It is clear that this arrangement tries to prevent a duty dispute between SPAs and municipalities. Yet, delegation of duties which are under responsibility of central administration also to SPAs is not an administratively consistent practice. This last legal arrangement confirms the critique that SPAs are not actually local government units. On the one hand SPAs are tried to be designed as municipality of the settlements which do not have municipalities, on the other hand SPAs are perceived as a service agent of central administration or governorship (kartal, Tuncel and Göktolga, 2015: 11).

Municipalities are primary organs within local government system in Turkey. Since main urban services have historically been dealt out by municipalities, municipalities have high rank of visibility and awareness in respect to the people. In Turkey, people actually refer to municipalities when they mention urban administration. Thus, municipalities are perceived as the responsible organ for needs of cities and commoners (Şengül, 2010: 69).

Municipal parliament, municipal board and mayor. Municipal parliaments are decision making organs of municipalities and their members are directly elected by the voters of locality. (Act 5393: Art. 17).

Municipal board comprises of a) In the provincial municipalities and municipalities with population more than 100.000; seven members three of whom are to be elected each year by balloting among the members of the municipal council and two members to be nominated

each year by the Mayor among the heads of units and among the chief of financial services, b) In other municipalities, five members, two of whom are to be elected each year among the members of the municipal council to serve for a period of one year and one member to be nominated each year by the Mayor among the heads of units and among the chief of financial services.

Mayor is head of municipal organization and representative of legal personality of municipality. Mayors are directly elected by voters in the location.

Some of the main duties and responsibilities of municipalities are as follows: (Act 5393: Art. 14); "providing services of urban infrastructure such as development of the region, water and sewage system and transportation; geographical and urban data systems; environment and environmental health, cleaning and solid waste; security forces, fire brigades, emergency aid, relief services and ambulance; city traffic; funeral and cemetery services; forestry, parks and green areas; housing, cultural and artworks, tourism and presentation, youth and sporting activities; social and aid services; marriage ceremonies, professional trainings; and services aimed at development of economy and commerce. The Greater City Municipalities and the municipalities having population more than 50.000 shall open houses for women and children welfare."

Municipalities may also provide following services: "Opening of pre-elementary school education centers; maintenance and repair of school buildings belonging to the Government; procurement of all kinds of equipment/material for this purpose; opening and operation of health facilities; protection of cultural and natural resource and places having historical value; repair and maintenance of such places; reconstruction of those ruined same as original. In case of need, providing equipment and support to students and amateur sports clubs, arranging amateur sports matches, giving awards upon decision of municipal council to sportsmen who have been successful in matches performed home or abroad or who have received a degree in matches. Being engaged in food banking."

Municipal services are provided in places closest to the citizens and with most suitable methods. In service providing, suitable methods for disabled, old, bound and poor should be carried out.

After formation of metropolitan municipalities after 1984, municipalities in Turkey have generally been classified into two main groups. However, with a more systematic perspective we can divide municipalities in Turkey into five groups: Metropolitan Municipalities; Metropolitan District Municipalities (District Municipalities within the territories of metropolitan municipalities), Provincial Municipalities; District Municipalities; Subdistrict Municipalities (Kartal, Tuncel, Göktolga, 2015: 12).

Towns, the third local government kind mentioned in the Constitution, are local government units located in rural areas with populations up to five thousand which have legal personality. There are about thirty-five thousand towns in Turkey. And the reference law on towns is the Town Law No: 442 of 1924.

2.2. Local Governance Practices in Turkey

As mentioned above, subsidiarity is one of the main principles of governance. In Turkey, Art. 127 of the Constitution sets that “the formation, duties and powers of the local administrations shall be regulated by law in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity”. Subsidiarity here refers to the local governments to be autonomous, democratic and having legal personality, without carrying any conflict with the rule that “unity of the administration of its foundation and duties” which is set at Art. 123 of the Constitution. As such, local governments serve for meeting local necessities of local community; their decision making and executive organs consist of elected people. They have their own budgets. They perform their duties and responsibilities given them by the Constitution in respect to laws and Constitution. In this context they take decisions and use initiative freely.

Another point related to central-local government relations is “administrative tutelage”. This principle is about regulatory power of the

central government on local governments. Art. 127 of the Constitution sets that the central administration has the power of administrative tutelage over the local administrations in the framework of principles and procedures set forth by law with the objective of ensuring the functioning of local services in conformity with the principle of the a) integrity of the administration, b)securing uniform public service, c) safeguarding the public interest and d) meeting local needs properly.

As mentioned above, public participation is one of the main principles of local governance. Beginning from the Late Ottoman Era, some legal, administrative and civil arrangements have been developed in order to increase public participation in local government process. Some of these regulations were made by central governments whereas others have been realized by initiatives of local governments. Peoples' assemblies, peoples' days, in which local governors listen to wishes and demands of people and moukhtar³ are common governance practises in Turkey (Hancioğlu 2008, 27-30).

Municipal Law issued in 2005 enacted in 2005 lays a significant emphasis on public participation. Article 77 of the Law sets that "In order to enable public participation in the services and to increase the efficiency and to carry out the activities in the most economic manner, the Municipality shall prepare programs for the volunteers who are willing to contribute health, training, sports, environmental, cultural and social services, formation of libraries, parks etc. and other services rendered to the old people, women and children, disabled, poor people and to those in destitute". Related to public administration Article 13 states that "everyone is a fellow-citizen of the county which he lives in. The fellow-citizens shall be entitled to participate in the decisions and services of the municipality, to acquire knowledge about the municipal activities and to benefit from the aids of the municipal administration. It is a

3 The head of town or neighbourhood legal personality. Its originally an Arabic word and means "elected person". Moukhtars are elected by electors of the town or the neighbourhood for five years.

basic principle to extend aid without hurting human feelings”. This article is also related to another principle of local governance: transparency.

Municipal Law of 2005 also lays emphasis on sound financial management, another principle of local governance. Article 61 states that The budget, which is prepared according to the strategic plan of the Municipality, shall indicate the estimations of income and expenditure of the municipality within the fiscal year and projection for the next two years; the budget shall also allow collection and distribution of income. Detailed expenditure programs and financial programs shall be attached to the budget. Budget year is the same with the State fiscal year. No expenditure shall be made beyond the budget. The Mayor and other authorities having the power to make expenditure shall be liable to ensure spending of money in the most profitable, reasonable and economic manner.

3. The Rise of Local Agenda 21s and Local Agenda 21 Practices in Turkey

LA 21s are rooted in Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Local Agenda 21 (LA 1) practices have been experienced in more than 140 countries and in more than thousands of cities.

3.1. Rise of Local Agenda 21s

LA 21 idea based on sustainable development has emerged at Earth Summit of United Nations Environment and Development Conference known also as “Earth Summit” held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Ergün 2006, 73). At this summit, sustainable development was stated as the common goal of whole humanity in the 21st century (Emrealp 2010, 8). Performing the growth, seeing a sustainable population level, treating economy and environment together at decision making process may be mentioned as basic characteristics of sustainable development (Hancıoğlu 2008, 32). In sum, sustainable development aims at reaching a balance between development and environment. *Agenda 21* which states necessary principles and action spheres in order to reach to sustainable

development which is the common target of humanity in the 21st century, is signed by all members of United Nations. With this document which is an action plan, all local governments in the world are invited to start a participatory process and site Local Agenda 21 of their localities in order to realize the targets maintained at Agenda 21 (Adıgüzel and Güneş 2005, 209). Issues and solutions mentioned at Agenda 21 were mostly dependent on actions at local level. So, participation and cooperation of local governments would be a determining factor in realization of the maintained targets. This fact was the main reason at formation of Local Agenda 21s. Local Agenda 21 programs which were formulated on the basis of participatory democratic local governance, were initially performed in 85 countries and then about 140 countries applied Local Agenda programs. (Hancıoğlu 2008, 34). Priorities of Local Agenda 21 practices were as follows: First of all, all local governments would implement a participatory process or the people living in the mentioned locality. Then, it is the task of local governments to make people square with Local Agenda 21 issues. Moreover, it is aimed to develop coordination and cooperation among local authorities in order to increase exchange of information and support cooperated actions among local authorities. Another priority is that, development of cooperation among local authorities at international level and to make local authorities participate in international organizations. Finally, in decision making and implementation processes roles of the young and the women should be increased at all the countries worldwide (Ergün 2006, 76).

3.2. LA 21 Practice in Turkey

LA 21 practice in Turkey was first experienced in 1997 as a project under the coordinatorship of United Cities and Local Governments Middle East-West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA) and financed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Emrealp 2010, 8). LA 21s in Turkey were established in cities and districts under the name of "Local Agenda 21 General Secretariat". Most of these secretariats were under pioneership of municipalities. These organizations were called by the

people as “Local Agenda 21” or just “Local Agenda”. When the first LA 21 organizations in Turkey were examined, it would be observed that LA 21s are mostly formed in Western cities and Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolian cities of Turkey. LA 21s were not intensively established in central parts of Turkey. Development and urbanization is relatively high in western parts of Turkey. And in eastern and especially southern eastern parts of Turkey, Kurdish population is high. It can be said that, LA 21s are seen as a part of solution to the problems of urbanization (in western parts) and as a means of identity politics (in eastern and southern eastern parts). And as a whole it can be said that, LA 21s were based on problem solving or identity politics or democratization demands rather than the aim of “sustainable development”.

LA 21s were composed of varied “working groups”. “Women’s Assembly”, Youth Assembly” and “Disableds’ Platform” were the most common working groups. LA 21s have helped development of consciousness at many fields such as urban environment, historical heritage, consumers’ rights, etc.

However, LA 21s faced with many problems, too. The most significant of these problems was that LA 21s had no place at Turkish Administrative structure and within written laws. Since they weren’t within the administrative structure and written laws, LA 21s had difficulties at recognition by other formal and informal institutions. Another related problem was that, because of its *de jure non-existence*, it was difficult to support LA 21s financially, especially for municipalities. Municipalities were the main sponsors of LA21s, but they had difficulties in finding a legal base for payments to LA21s. These mentioned difficulties have sometimes been used as a means of justification of non-existence of LA 21s in some cities. .

Another problem with LA 21s in Turkey was that, it was not obligatory for any public authority to establish LA 21s. In other words, establishment of LA 21s was not under responsibility of any institution. This has been resulted in lack of LA 21s at some parts of the country.

Another problem related to LA 21s was that, LA 21s were mostly established and financed by local governments (municipalities). This has been resulted in a situation for LA 21s to be a part of municipal organization, rather than being a governance instrument. Activities performed under LA 21s were used by local governments and local governors as means of public relations.

Another, and maybe the most important problem concerning LA 21s was that, decisions taken under LA 21s were not binding for local authorities. The decisions taken by LA 21s were just "advisory" for local authorities. Main reason for this is de jure non-existence of LA 21s in administrative organization structure and in written rules of Turkey.

4. Formation, Structure and Functions of City Councils

Absence of "buffer institutions" in social and political life is one of the main determining factors of Turkish political structuration (Mardin 1997, 23). LA 21 was a "buffer institution" experience in Turkish administrative structure. Even it was a "first experience" for Turkey, LA 21s gained such a success that, Turkish LA 21 experience was declared by United Nations as model experience. We can say that, LA 21 had gained success because it was corresponding to a necessity to buffer institutions in Turkey. In fact, in 1998 when LA 21 process had begun, at the Official Journal, it was mentioned that a participation mechanism at city level is necessary for determination and solution of local problems (Emrealp 2010, 14). Success of LA 21s resulted in establishment of "City Council"s which may be seen as a participation mechanism at city scale. It was a great success that such a "buffer institution" was taking place in Turkish administrative and legal sphere for the first time. City councils were initially established in 2005 in context of Act of Municipalities. City councils were mentioned at Article 76 of the mentioned Act. The article is as such:

City Councils

Article 76. - City Council shall be responsible from promotion of urbanization and fellow-citizenship vision, preservation of the rights of the inhabitants and materializing the rules stipulating developmental consistency, environmental care, social solidarity, transparency, participation in management and stable operation of control mechanism.

The Municipalities shall provide the necessary assistance and support to the City Council to enable performance of above listed activities effectively in cooperation with professional groups in the status of public institution, trade unions, notaries, universities (if any), concerned non-governmental organizations, political parties, public institutions and corporations, representatives of executive officers of parish and other authorized bodies taking part in the city council.

The opinions declared by the City Council shall be put on the agenda and assessed during the first meeting of the Municipal Council. Working principles and procedures of the city council shall be determined with a regulation to be prepared by the Ministry of Interior.

When the Article above is analysed, it is seen that LA 21 program and principles of governance have been influential at design of the text of the Article. Emphasis on sustainable development and responsibility against environment are indicators of effects of LA 21 Program on the text. Eventhough the concept of “governance” does not distinctly take place in the mentioned text, the main principles of governance like accountability, transparency, participation and subsidiarity are mentioned. As a matter of fact, even the concept of governance does not take place in the Act of Municipalities, at the 6th Article of Regulation of City Councils which states working principles of city councils, aims of City Councils are stated as follows: “providing dissemination of democratic participation at local level, development of consciousness on living together; and adoption of multi partner and multi actor governance comprehension”. As it is stated, concept of governance takes place in the Regulation and beyond that, providing adoption of governance comprehension has been mentioned among tasks of City Councils. Examination of the

rest of the mentioned article of the Regulation shows that mission of City Councils in Turkey has been stated as dissemination and development of local governance comprehension in Turkey.

As mentioned above, for the success of governance process, all the partners directly or indirectly related with the process should in a manner be included in the process. In designation of City Councils, partners of the process have been stated as follows in the “Paragraph a” of the 8th Article of Regulation of City Councils:

City councils intend bringing central government, local government, Professional associations and civil society all together under the comprehension of partnership and city councils are compsed of the following people, institutions and organizations.

Administrative chief of the place or his representative,

Mayor or his representative,

c) Representatives of public institutions. Number of the representatives will not exceed 10, and they will be selected by the Adinistrative Chief of the place,

d) All of the moukhtars in the municipalities where number of the neighbourhoods is under 20, in the municipalities where the number of the neighbourhoods is over 20, moukhtars corresponding to not more than %30 of the total number of the moukhtars. (Moukhtars themselves will select their representatives at their meeting).

d) Representatives of political parties which have been organized in the place,

e) Minimum one, maximum two representatives from university. If the number of universities is more than one, then one representative from each university,

f) Representatives of professional organizations, labor unions, notaries, bars, and related associations and endowments.

g) One representaive from each working group founded under City Council’s organizational structure,

As it can be seen from the Article, private sector has not been mentioned whereas public institutions and NGOs have been mentioned. This shows that, inclusion of private sector to local governance process in Turkey has not been a priority. Other side of the coin is that, even private sector has been legally included in local governance process in countries like Turkey where economic planning, decision making processes are substantially experienced in a centralist level, legal inclusion of private sector to local governance practice will not be satisfactory in active participation of private sector in local governance process. For a more active participation of private sector to local governance process, economic planning, decision making and implementation process should be localised at a reasonable level.

Another unfavorable factor at formation of City Councils is about members of the councils. Eighth Article of the Regulation says that “Representatives of ...related associations and endowments..” might be members of the Councils. The statement of “related” has taken place in the Article for a practical reason: to keep the number of members in a reasonable level. However, it may result in arbitrary practices of local governors or even of City Council General Secretary, while determining which associations and endowments are relevant or not.

5. Some Suggestions for Making City Councils More Efficiently Functioning Local Governance Agents

Even local governments as administrative institutions are first seen in Middle Ages, in our country history of local governments begins in second half of nineteenth century. (Görmez 1997, 83). Taking place of City Councils in Act of Municipalities should not be underestimated, in a society having a centralist administrative culture and history. As mentioned before, governance is a process which has a consistent development rather than being a static process. So, in order to make local governance permanent in Turkish administrative system, City Councils must be structurally strengthened.

From the perspective of accountability, city councils must be in a position that it may bring local governments to account. Regulation of City Councils states that City councils will be established under partnership of central government, local governments, Professional associations, and NGOs. However, this partnership does not proceed when cost of city councils are in question. Article 16 of the Regulation declares that "municipalities finance and support City Councils in the way of both financial aid and assistance in kind. As a consequence of this article, it is now easier to finance City Councils, compared with LA 21s. However, financial burden of City Councils are fully taken by municipalities. This results in municipalities' "ownership" of City Councils. And as an owner, municipalities would consider City Councils as a unit within municipal organization rather than being a separate governance entity. A solution for this problem may be sharing financial burden of City Councils by all partners of governance process. In this sense, in addition to local governments central government, professional associations and NGOs should donate City Councils. Regional Development Agencies, which are formed locally in order to increase the speed and intense of development, may be taken as an example. Budgets of Development Agencies consist of contributions of central government, relevant local governments, relevant Special Provincial Administrations and Chambers of Commerce and Trade. In case of financial contribution of other partners, City Councils would definitely be more independent from the local governments and would serve for practise of accountability principle more seriously.

Another way of strengthening city councils maybe as increasing the number of issues which are dealt at City Councils' meetings. Public housing projects, generation of new built up areas, urban transport are examples of issues which directly affect daily lives of the people in the relevant locality may initially be dealt in City Council's meetings with a single issue agenda. This will help for a more efficient participation of the related partners to decision making process. Moreover, it will increase legitimation level of the decisions which will be taken by local authorities. There is no impediment against meetings of city councils

with a single issue agenda. The Regulation of city councils states that city councils should make meeting at least twice a year.

Another issue which should be redeemed is that, decisions taken by city councils are equivalent to recommendation for local authorities. 76th Article of Act of Municipalities states that the opinions declared by the City Council shall be put on the agenda and assessed during the first meeting of the Municipal Council. This sentence is a progressive step on the way to local governance in Turkey since it makes clear that City Councils are taken much more seriously than of LA 21s. However a further step may be that the statement in the just mentioned sentence may change from “be assessed” to “be discussed and settled”.

As mentioned above, State, NGOs and private sector are main actors of governance. However, in Turkey where economic planning, decision making in area of economy and economical policies are designed and applied mostly at national level with a centralist understanding. It is difficult to say that when involved in local governance process, private sector will actively participate in economic decision making mechanism. Consequently, even in case that private sector will more intensively be involved in local governance in legal level, private sector will probably be reluctant for participating the mechanism. In order to maintain active participation of private sector in local governance mechanism in Turkey, at least some of decision making and policy implementations in the field of economy should be localized.

Conclusion

Turkey has a local government tradition in which central government is sovereign, central governments do not trust in local actors, and central government exercises administrative tutelage on local governments (Göymen 1999, 68). Local governments which are based on middle ages, have not been able to take place in Turkish administrative system until Tanzimat Fermanı⁴ in 1839. Beginning from the Late

4 Tanzimât Fermânı (*Imperial Edict of Reorganization*) was an 1839 proclamation by Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid I that launched the Tanzimât period of reforms and

Ottoman Era, some legal, administrative and civil arrangements have been developed in order to make local governments, and in turn local governance powerful. Some of these regulations were made by central governments whereas others have been realized by initiatives of local governments. Peoples' assemblies, peoples' days, in which local governors listen to wishes and demands of people and moukhtar are common governance practises in Turkey (Hancioğlu 2008, 27-30). However, these practises are not institutionally and functionally efficient, and are mostly dependent to local governors' initiatives.

LA 21 Programme, which had begun in 1997 is the most longlasting and most comprehensive -in both qualitative and quantitative terms- local governance practise in Turkey. Success of the programme has resulted in establishment of City Councils. These councils have their legal roots in Municipalities Act of 5393 and have been a part of Turkish administrative system since 2005.

"Local governments are primary institutions in which liberalization of individual and democratization of the society and governments begins. So, for a stronger democracy, a stronger local government structuration, and in turn perception of local governance should be preemptive in administrative perception. Since they are the first legally accepted local governance institutions, City Councils are important for local governance experience in Turkey. And since they are the first steps, they should both be heeded, protected and developed.

reorganization in the Ottoman Empire. It promised reforms such as the abolition of tax farming, reform of conscription, and guarantee of rights to all Ottoman citizens regardless of religion or ethnic group.

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Türkiye’de Bir Yerel Yönetişim Deneyimi: “Yerel Gündem 21”lerden Kent Konseylerine

Özet

Yerel yönetişim kavramı, merkezi yönetim anlayınının hakim olduğu Türkiye’de görece yeni bir kavramdır. Yerel Gündem 21 uygulamaları Türkiye’de yerel yönetişim algısının gelişmesinde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’de yerel yönetişimin gelişmesinde katkısı olduğu düşünülen Yerel Gündem 21’ler tarihsel ve yapısal bağlamlarında ele alınmıştır. Daha sonra, Türkiye’de yerel yönetişim lagısının gelişmesinde diğer bir önemli aşama olan Kent Konseyleri ele alınmıştır. Son olarak da, Türkiye’de yerel yönetişimin güçlendirilmesine ilişkin önerlere yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türkiye, Yerel yönetişim, Yerel Gündem 21, Kent Konseyi.