

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNANCE INSTRUMENTS: COMPARISON OF TURKIYE AND SPAIN

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Abstract

Local governments have two basic functions worldwide. The first is provision of local and common needs, and the second is to ensure democracy at the local level. One of the most important keys to ensuring democracy at the local level is governance tools. One of the many definitions of the concept of governance is the multi-actor, participatory decision-making process. Although what is the governance tools are and how they are used depends on the legal basis, local government policies also have a great impact on this.

This study aims to examine the current governance tools of local governments from a comparative perspective in the case of Turkiye and Spain. As an example, Kayseri/Melikgazi Municipality will be used for Turkiye and Granada Municipality will be used for Granada. In the study, both municipalities will be examined in terms of legal and municipal policies. Document analysis method which is the one of the qualitative analysis methods, will be used in the study.

Keywords: Local governments, Governance, Andalucia, Turkiye

Introduction

Although the concept of governance, an interdisciplinary subject from political, administrative, economic, and many other perspectives, has its origins in earlier times, it gained popularity in the 1980s when the World Bank advanced the concept and related formulas. Since then, it has been a frequently used and much-debated term at both academic and political levels. Many scholars and international organizations have defined the concept of governance and developed formulas related to it. This study approaches the concept of governance from a public administration perspective. It bases the definition on the European Commission's principles of governance, as outlined in the 2001 European Governance White Paper, which includes transparency, participation, and accountability.

Governance is considered to play a crucial role in achieving development and maintaining and protecting a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The importance of local governments in governance lies in their proximity to the people and their role as a bridge between the central state and the citizens. Additionally, local governments are functional institutions with appropriate tools for public participation in politics and administration. This study examines the governance tools of local governments through the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability. In this context, the study compares the

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Melikgazi Municipality in Turkiye and the Granada Municipality, part of the Andalusian Autonomous Region in Spain.

The comparative analysis of the two municipalities begins with the legal framework. Additionally, both municipalities' strategic plans and activity reports have helped understand the current governance tools. The study concludes that both Turkiye and Spain have numerous legal regulations at national, international, and local levels, but there are some deficiencies in implementation.

1. Local Governments and Governance

Local governments are institutions that represent the will of the people at the local level and have become increasingly important at local, national, and global levels today. Since the late 20th century, local governments have emerged as a significant force against central governments. Influenced by globalization, central governments are sometimes seen as obstacles between local and global matters. The increasing importance of local governments can be attributed to the rise of neoliberalism, which emphasizes individualism and sees local governments as the closest institutions to individuals. Additionally, the information and communication revolution has made societies more aware, questioning, and demanding accountability, thus enhancing the significance of local governments. The rise of democracy has further empowered local governments, as democracy points to institutions closest to the individual where their voice can be heard. Therefore, local governments are considered the cradle and practical field of democracy (Korkmaz, 2021, p. 106).

One of the intersections between local governments and governance is the environmental awareness that began in the 1970s under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), leading to the "Earth Summit" in Rio in 1992. At this summit, the concept of sustainable development (SD) was introduced, and necessary steps and formulas for achieving SD were established. It was emphasized that SD must start at the local level. Achieving the global goals indicated by SD is possible not only through global steps but also through sub-national and local actions. A participatory, transparent, and democratic governance process at the local level constitutes the first fundamental step of SD. Another intersection between the concept of governance and local governments is the alternative delivery of local services. Local governments are given the primary role among equals in delivering services in cities in an effective, efficient, economical, and participatory process (Göymen, 2000, p. 9).

The concept of governance, known as "kybernan" in Greek, "gubernare" in Latin, and "gouverner" in French, was first used by Harlan Cleveland in 1972 as an alternative to the term public administration or management. Cleveland introduced the term governance to the literature by stating, "what people want is less administration and more governance" (Fredrickson, 2005, p. 2; Iqbal and Lewis, 2009, p. 1-2). Another study suggests that the concept of governance first emerged in 17th century France, where efforts to reconcile government and civil society began to show the early signs of the governance model (Yüksel, 2000, p. 147). The concept of governance gained prominence in academic studies and national and international politics with the World Bank's research on Africa's development issues. The World Bank introduced the concept of "good governance" in its 1989 report "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Development." The first comprehensive definition and explanation of the concept appeared in the 1992 report

"Governance and Development," which defined good governance as "the way power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." Subsequent reports highlighted the roles of the state and other international institutions in good governance. The World Bank began formulating governance and providing quantitative data on good governance by evaluating countries within this framework in 1996 (Korkmaz, 2021, p. 96).

Today, the World Bank's specification of the concept of governance as "good governance" and its provision of formulas for good governance have positioned it as a dominant authority on the subject. However, many institutions and authors have also contributed to defining the concept of governance in different ways. For example, the European Commission has addressed the concept and defined the principles of governance as openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence in the 2001 European Governance White Paper (CEC, 2001, p.8; Dilaveroğlu, 2020, p. 47).

In this study, the governance tools of local governments in Türkiye and the Andalusian Autonomous Region of Spain will be comparatively explained based on the principles of participation, transparency (openness), and accountability outlined in the European Governance White Paper.

2. Methodology

This study examines the governance tools of local governments in the case of Türkiye and Spain. The main question of the study is: "What are the legal and administrative governance tools of local governments in Türkiye and Spain?" Within this scope, the Granada Municipality of the Andalusian Autonomous Region in Spain and the Melikgazi Municipality in Türkiye have been selected as samples. The governance tools of these two municipalities will be examined from both legal and administrative perspectives. The legal analysis will be conducted within the framework of national and local legislation. The administrative analysis will be carried out based on strategic plans and activity reports. Due to the need for limitation, the most recent strategic plans for both institutions have been considered. Accordingly, the activity reports aligned with the latest strategic plans have been examined. The study comparatively analyzes the two municipalities based on the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability.

The reason for choosing the comparative method is that it allows for a more objective view of phenomena, provides a methodology to understand, classify, and predict general outcomes related to the phenomena. Additionally, as a widely used scientific method in almost all fields of social sciences, comparison helps easily reveal the similarities and differences between the current situation and other situations (Caner, 2020, p. 271). In the study, document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, has been used. This analysis involves thoroughly reviewing written documents related to the subject and forming a new synthesis from this information (Creswell, 2002). This method not only saves the researcher time and resources but also facilitates the classification of data sources and the creation of new data sets (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p. 548; Baltacı, 2019, p. 376). The study does not require an ethics committee report.

3. Governance Tools of Local Governments in Türkiye

Türkiye is a unitary state with a national unicameral legislative body and is governed by a Presidential System. Since Türkiye is a unitary state, local governments exist within the framework of laws established by the national assembly. National and international regulations that Türkiye is a party to can be applicable to all local governments in Türkiye. The Turkish Constitution states that local governments have a legal personality separate from the state (T.C Constitution, Art. 127). Local governments have a mayor directly

elected by the local people and a council directly elected by the public. Although this provides local governments with a relatively autonomous structure, the power and authority of the central government in a unitary state can sometimes overshadow the autonomy of local governments. Local governments in Turkiye, and similar unitary states, can be autonomous within the boundaries drawn by the central administration and under the tutelage of the central government.

The establishment and development of governance tools in local governments in Turkiye have gained momentum since the 1980s. This momentum has been significantly influenced by the European Union accession process and agreements with other international organizations. Since the 1980s, international, national, and local legislation has gradually formed the legal basis for establishing governance in local governments. Many direct and indirect steps have been taken on this subject. Various arrangements, such as the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Rio Summit and Local Agenda 21 Project, the Habitat II Conference, agreements with the OECD, the UN, and the World Bank, have created a foundation for strengthening local governments and renewing them within the framework of governance in Turkiye (TESEV, 2008, p. 3; Güler, 2005, p. 38).

In the study, the governance tools of local governments in Turkiye will first be examined from a legal perspective. This will include prominent international and national legislation. Then, the institutional capacity and adequacy of the Melikgazi Municipality will be discussed.

3.1. Legal Status

The legal development, establishment, and reorganization of local governments in Turkiye within the framework of governance principles gained momentum in the 1980s. Many international and national regulations, both directly and indirectly, have been implemented in this regard, and local governments continue their development on the basis of these regulations. The study will examine the governance tools of local governments within the scope of the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation. In Turkiye, there are many laws and regulations that support the establishment of these principles. Primarily, the existence of the administrative judiciary system and the judicial oversight of all actions and procedures of public institutions are important for accountability. Additionally, many national laws are binding for local governments and other institutions in implementing the aforementioned principles. Prominent among these regulations are the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Earth Summit initiated under the auspices of the UN and the subsequent Habitat II Conference, the Right to Information Act No. 4982, the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018, and the Municipal Law No. 5393.

3.1.1. European Charter of Local Self-Government

The European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG), which Turkiye has also signed, is an agreement that contains significant democratic reforms concerning local governments and includes provisions that are consistent with governance principles. Although Turkiye placed reservations on some articles of the Charter, it signed the Charter in 1988, and it came into force in 1992 (Official Gazette, 1992 - 21364).

3.1.2. Law No. 4982 on the Right to Access Information

Another regulation that embraces the principles of governance such as transparency, accountability, and participation is Law No. 4982 on the Right to Access Information. The purpose of Article 1 of the Law is defined as follows (Law on the Right to Information, 2003):

Article 1 – “The purpose of this Law is to regulate the principles and procedures regarding the exercise of individuals' right to obtain information in accordance with the principles of equality, impartiality, and transparency, which are necessary for democratic and transparent governance.”

As clearly stated in this article, individuals have the right to request and obtain information from public institutions and organizations on matters relevant to them. This provision indicates that the Law can directly contribute to establishing governance principles such as transparency and accountability. Indeed, the right to request documents from an institution is a significant facilitator in a unitary, centralized, and bureaucratic state. Moreover, the direct relationship between a transparent and accountable system and direct democracy is also evident.

3.1.3. Law No. 5018 on Public Financial Management and Control

Law No. 5018 on Public Financial Management and Control (PFMC Law), which came into effect in 2003, represents a significant democratic step towards ensuring transparent, accountable, and participatory governance for public institutions, including local governments. Certain provisions within this law directly support governance principles. For example, the law incorporates strategic planning, which encompasses the future goals, capacities, financial transparency, and accountability of institutions as part of Türkiye's policy framework. Additionally, the aspects related to financial transparency in the law align with governance principles.

3.1.4. Law No. 5393 on Municipalities

Law No. 5393, which serves as the general law regulating local governments at the national level, came into effect in 2005. Developed within a democratic framework in light of international developments, this law incorporates many aspects closely tied to governance principles. These aspects are observed under headings such as "Council Meetings," "Agenda," "Finalization of Council Decisions," "Specialized Committees," "Citizenry Rights," and "City Council."

Looking at the legal framework concerning local governance tools in Türkiye, it becomes evident that numerous international and national regulations exist. However, these regulations do not necessarily guarantee that local governments possess or utilize governance tools effectively. In practice, there can be discrepancies between the legal provisions and their implementation, highlighting the gap between theory and practice. In other words, compliance with legal standards does not always translate into actual practice. Türkiye stands capable of achieving high marks in terms of legal frameworks related to local governance tools. The concrete manifestation of this is exemplified by the case of Melikgazi Municipality. An examination will be made into how effectively Melikgazi Municipality utilizes its strategic plans and activity reports as governance tools.

3.2. Administrative Situation and Melikgazi Municipality

Melikgazi district is located within the borders of Kayseri province in the Central Anatolia region of Turkiye. Known for its rich historical and cultural heritage, Melikgazi district attracts attention due to its increasing population and strategic location. The population of Melikgazi district is reported as 555,671 (TUIK, 2022). Melikgazi Municipality operates as a district municipality under the authority of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality. Although it has legal personality as a municipality, it is subject to oversight and supervision by Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality in certain matters.

This study aims to examine to what extent Melikgazi Municipality has implemented legal regulations that provide the groundwork for governance principles of municipalities. Specifically, the study will explore how Melikgazi Municipality applies principles of participation, transparency, and accountability through its strategic plans and activity reports.

3.2.1. Strategic Plan

When examining Melikgazi Municipality's strategic plan for the years 2020-2024, it is notable that concepts of participation, transparency, and accountability are frequently emphasized. For instance, it has been stated by the Mayor that the preparation process of the plan involved broad participation (SP, 2019, p. 7). At the core values of the institution, the principle of "Fair, transparent, and participatory governance" is prominently featured (SP, 2019, p. 9). Looking at the objectives and goals of the strategic plan, one objective directly linked to the governance principle of participation can be identified, with two corresponding goals aligned with this objective. These objectives and goals are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Melikgazi Municipality 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Strategic Purpose-Target		
Purpose-Target	No	Explanation
Strategic Purpose	2	To strengthen quality and accessible urban development and enhance a citizen-focused governance approach
Strategic Target	2.1	Enhancing participatory governance and effectively involving stakeholders in decision-making processes.
	2.1.4.	Stakeholders opinions will be prioritized to develop participatory governance.

Source (SP, 2019).

When examining the Melikgazi Municipality's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, while expressions related to participation, accountability, and transparency are found in various sections of the plan, it is observed that in the most crucial section comprising objectives and goals, only objectives and goals aligned with the principle of participation are defined. The strategic plan, which includes the institution's future objectives and goals, and mandates decision-making and implementation in accordance with these objectives and goals, holds significance as a policy document. The frequency of inclusion of governance principles in such an important plan is associated with the democratic nature of the institution. Another document of equal importance to the strategic plan is the activity reports. Below, the activity reports prepared in line with the Municipality's 2020-2024 strategic plan will be examined in terms of the aforementioned governance principles.

3.2.2. The Activity Report

The activity report is the concrete manifestation and implementation of the strategic plan. The objectives and goals formulated in the strategic plans are measured through activity reports. Activity reports prepared in line with Melikgazi Municipality's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan (2020-2021-2022-2023) have been examined through the principles of governance: transparency, accountability, and participation. While the reports express the institution's objectives, mission, and values, transparency, accountability, and participation have been emphasized multiple times. However, more important than mentioning these concepts is the implementation of activities that contribute to establishing them. Below is the table of activities related to governance tools.

Table 2: Governance Activities of Melikgazi Municipality

2020 Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing national and international visits, meetings, exhibitions, and various thematic trips for municipal activities 2. Activity for announcing tenders to the public 3. Conducting stakeholder meetings 4. Promotion of municipal services and informing citizens 5. Printing and purchasing books and magazines related to improving public relations 6. Preparing and sending press releases aimed at publishing municipal services in national and local press
2021 Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Printing and purchasing books and magazines related to improving public relations 2. Activity for announcing tenders to the public 3. Promotion of municipal services and informing citizens 4. Conducting stakeholder meetings 5. Measuring the opinions of stakeholders whose views are taken into account in decision-making processes 6. Organizing national and international visits, meetings, exhibitions, and various thematic trips for municipal activities 7. Public opinion research activity 8. Preparing and sending press releases aimed at publishing municipal services in national and local press
2022 Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Printing and purchasing books and magazines related to improving public relations 2. Activity for announcing tenders to the public 3. Promotion of municipal services and informing citizens 4. Conducting stakeholder meetings 5. Measuring the opinions of stakeholders whose views are taken into account in decision-making processes 6. Preparation and effective execution of Council and Committee agendas 7. Public opinion research activity 8. Preparation and sending of press releases aimed at publishing municipal services in national and local press
2023 Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publication and purchase of books and magazines related to improving public relations 2. Announcement of tenders to the public 3. Promotion of municipal services and informing citizens 4. Conducting stakeholder meetings 5. Measuring the views of stakeholders whose opinions are considered in decision-making processes 6. Preparation and effective management of Council and Committee agendas

Source: (FR, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023)

When looking at the table, it can be seen that activities have been implemented in line with the objectives and goals related to the participation principle of governance in the strategic plan. It can be said that many of these activities have an indirect rather than a direct relationship with the concept of participation. However, it has been observed that there is insufficient documentary evidence regarding these activities. For instance, there is no evidence provided regarding the content of stakeholder meetings, photographs, or which stakeholders attended these meetings. It is considered necessary that such corroborative information and documents should be included in activity reports accessible to the public via the website.

Upon reviewing the activity table for the four years, it is noticeable that the reports express nearly identical activities concerning the governance principle of participation. However, the absence of a city council within the municipality is seen as a significant deficiency in establishing governance. City councils play a crucial role in local governance by bringing local government closer to citizens and ensuring transparency, accountability, and participation.

4. Governance Tools of Local Governments in Spain

Spain is a unitary state governed by a parliamentary monarchy where the head of state is the king. The legislative branch is structured into two levels: the Senate and the Congress, and there is an independent judiciary (Tuna, 2003, p. 109). The Spanish Constitution of 1978 allocates public authority to four levels of government: Central Government, autonomous communities, provinces, and municipalities. Spain exemplifies a regional state model with unitary judicial unity, where some autonomous regions have privileged status in legislative and executive matters. Currently, there are 17 autonomous regions in Spain (Velasco Caballero, 2021, p. 1).

Each autonomous region has its own government and parliament, with intermediate levels of administration representing municipalities within regions. Andalusia, for example, comprises eight provinces (Almeria, Cadiz, Cordoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaen, Malaga, and Sevilla), with many municipalities, most of which are quite small. Sevilla is the regional capital. The central government coordinates with the Spanish central government offices in each regional capital and branches in other provinces through "government offices." Regional administration is managed by the Andalusian Regional Government (Junta de Andalucía) under regional government control. Moreover, each province has a provincial office (Diputación Provincial) directly elected by the public and managed by the office president (OECD, 2010, p. 46). Therefore, regulations concerning local governments fall within the jurisdiction of both the central government and autonomous communities (www.mpt.gob.es).

The Constitution includes two principles related to local government: the right to "local autonomy" from all public authorities, including the state legislative body, and legislative powers over local government are given to both the central government and autonomous communities. Recognizing the right to local autonomy in the Constitution (Article 137), it emphasizes that municipalities and provinces are not just internal divisions of autonomous communities but integral parts of the state (Caballero, 2021, p. 40). The legal system of local government falls within the shared jurisdiction of the state and autonomous communities. The state has the authority to establish the legal framework of public administrations. On the other hand, autonomy statutes provide complementary

powers to autonomous communities over local government. The Constitutional Court, interpreting the Constitution and autonomy statutes together, has concluded that the Spanish local system has a "two-way nature." The state is responsible for basic regulations, while autonomous communities are responsible for complementary regulations (STC 214/1989, FJ 4). Both state and autonomous community laws have broad discretion in regulating the functions and organizations of local governments. The state's basic regulations on local government are consolidated in the Basic Law of Local Government (LBRL) of 1985 and the Law on Local Tax Authorities of 2004. Since 1985, the Spanish local government system has made significant progress towards democratization and establishing participatory democracy (Caballero, 2021, p. 40).

4.1. Legal Framework

Granada Municipality, which forms the sample of this study, has numerous regulations at the international, national, and local levels supporting governance principles such as participation, accountability, and transparency. Some of these regulations are directly related to governance principles, while others are indirectly related.

At the international level, it is observed that Spain, like Türkiye, has accepted the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Since the texts related to governance mentioned in this document are examined in the Turkish part of the study, they will not be mentioned here to avoid repetition. The Charter also supports international regulations that promote governance tools in Spain. Furthermore, the principles outlined in the European Commission's White Paper on European Governance dated 25 July 2001 also serve as an example in this regard. The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on citizen participation in local public life dated 6 December 2001 is considered a key policy document in promoting a democratic participation culture, enhancing the sense of responsibility for contributing to and belonging to the life of the community, as well as the right to information access by citizens regarding important decisions affecting their future.

Looking at national regulations, first and foremost, Article 9(2) of the Spanish Constitution emphasizes that it is the duty of public authorities to promote conditions that will ensure freedom and equality for individuals and groups. Additionally, Article 23(1) states that citizens have the right to participate in public affairs directly or through their representatives, freely elected in periodic elections with universal suffrage (Spanish Constitution, 1978).

Under the Andalusian Transparency Law No. 1/2014 of 24 June, all public information is made accessible to the public, establishing a legal framework aimed at proactively facilitating citizen participation. The approval and implementation of this Law are significant because ensuring public access to information is essential for the democratic order of political, economic, cultural, and social affairs.

4.1.1. Access to Information Law

Under the Access to Information Law enacted in Spain in 2013, individuals have the right to access public information. The Law grants individuals the right to access information from public institutions on relevant matters, subject to certain exceptions (Access to Information Law, 2013).

4.1.2. Basic Law of Local Government (LBRL)

The Basic Law of Local Government (LBRL), published in 1985, includes provisions related to governance as a national regulation. Article 69 under the title "Information and participation of citizens" states the following regarding participation:

Article 69.1. "Local governments shall ensure the broadest information on their activities and the participation of all citizens in local life."

Article 70 of the Law also addresses participation and accountability issues:

Article 70.1. "The sessions of local government councils are public..."

"Decisions taken by local governments shall be published or notified in the manner prescribed by law..."

"All citizens have the right to obtain copies and certified documents related to decisions of local governments and to examine files and records." (Ley 7, 1985).

4.1.3. Andalusian Citizen Participation Law

In the rational design and evaluation of public policies, ensuring accountability and transparency, and in designing strategies within a multi-level governance framework, citizen participation is crucial. The Autonomous Region of Andalusia has regulated the "Andalusian Citizen Participation Law," aiming to provide a framework for the real and effective participation of local people in the development of public policies and government actions affecting their daily lives (Official Gazette of Andalusia, 2018).

4.1.4. Granada Municipality Citizen Participation Regulation

The purpose of the Granada Municipality Citizen Participation Regulation is to regulate subsidies for registered neighborhood associations in Granada Municipality to promote their sustainability. The subsidies and assistance specified in the regulation are as follows:

- Financing actions, activities, and campaigns developed by neighborhood associations.
- Sustainability of the neighborhood movement: covering maintenance costs of neighborhood association headquarters and general operating expenses incurred by activities conducted there (www.granada.org).

4.1.5. Granada Municipality Citizen Ombudsman Regulation

The Citizen Ombudsman Regulation, which came into effect in 2008, was created to provide mediation, advice, information, attention, and assistance services in administrative procedures with municipal administration and affiliated institutions according to established criteria. The political activities of the municipality are beyond the authority of the citizen ombudsman office. Local residents can request assistance from the ombudsman free of charge through the municipality's website (www.granada.org). It can be said that today, the institution of ombudsman has become widespread at the national level in many countries. For example, in Turkiye, the ombudsman institution was included in the constitutional framework in 2010. Currently, at the national level, it acts as a mediator role that provides amicable solutions in disputes between all public institutions and citizens.

4.2. Administrative Situation and Granada Municipality

Granada city, which has traces of both Eastern and Western civilizations and a deep and complex history, is one of the eight provinces of the Andalusian Autonomous Community (Seville, Cadiz, Malaga, Almeria, Cordoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaen). With a population of 230,595, Granada stands out from other provinces in terms of historical, religious, and cultural aspects (www.granada.org). Granada Municipality is governed by a council directly elected by the public and managed by a mayor. In this study, Granada Municipality's transparency, accountability, and participation tools have been examined through its strategic plan and website.

4.2.1. Granada Municipality's Strategic Plan

In this part of the study, the policies created in Granada Municipality's strategic plans regarding governance principles of participation, transparency, and accountability will be examined. It has been observed that multiple plans have been created on various subjects and topics when Granada Municipality's strategic plans are examined. Two plans stand out in relation to the theoretical subject of the study and future-oriented: Strategic Innovation and Smart City Plan (2023-2027) and Granada Childhood and Adolescence Plan (2023-2027).

4.2.1.1. Strategic Innovation and Smart City Plan (2023-2027)

A section of the Strategic Innovation and Smart City Plan prepared by Granada Municipality for the years 2023-2027 includes initiatives related to interaction between citizens and the administration. The aim of this section is stated as enhancing service quality and citizen satisfaction. In this section of the plan, it is emphasized that existing channels in local relations should be established and improved, with particular attention to vulnerable citizens who face difficulties in engaging with new technologies (SP, 2023, p. 27).

4.2.1.2. Granada Childhood and Adolescence Plan (2023-2027)

Prepared by Granada City Council, the 2023-2027 Granada Childhood and Adolescence Plan is structured around ambitious, concrete, and measurable commitments that will guide public policies in the years to come, encompassing all government areas concerning the interests of children in Granada. Therefore, the plan also includes measures related to team formation, legislative changes, governance, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. This plan is built upon the contributions of hundreds of children and adolescents through consultations and participatory actions (CPP, 2022, p. 66).

4.2.1. Granada City Council Activity Report

When we look at the activities of Granada City Council regarding participation, transparency, and accountability, first and foremost, it can be said that there is no comprehensive activity report readily accessible on the institution's website for the public and interested parties. However, it is observed that various application tools related to these issues are actively available on the city council's website. One of these tools is the participation portal of Granada City Council (decide.granada.org).

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

The findings and evaluations obtained from this study, which examines the governance tools of local governments in Turkiye (Melikgazi Municipality) and the Autonomous Region of Andalusia in Spain (Granada Municipality), are as follows:

While Melikgazi Municipality and Granada Municipality possess governance tools at a legal level that are quite similar and adequate in many respects, Granada Municipality can be said to be slightly ahead. It has been observed that certain legal frameworks existing in Granada Municipality are not present in Melikgazi Municipality. For example, the presence of a local ombudsman institution in Granada Municipality is an important element that strengthens local governance. Although there is a national ombudsman institution in Turkiye, there is no such institution within local governments. Additionally, the inclusion of children as local stakeholders and the preparation of a plan specifically for them represents an important democratic step that supports governance in Granada. In Melikgazi Municipality, however, such initiatives regarding children as local actors and the preparation of specific plans for them have not been observed. Furthermore, Granada Municipality's provision of financial and administrative support to civil society organizations and its support for the activities of a women's council within the municipality are important for governance. In contrast, the absence of tools such as a city council or municipal council that would facilitate public participation in governance is seen as a significant deficiency in Melikgazi Municipality.

When looking at international regulations, it is noticeable that both countries have a unitary structure and generally adhere to similar agreements. At the national level, both municipalities have strong legal foundations in transparency, participation, and accountability. While legal regulations provide a basis for many changes and transformations, it is often observed that they cannot be realized concretely or go beyond mere regulation, thus not translating into reality. In such cases, the importance of legal regulation diminishes.

Looking at the activities carried out in accordance with legal frameworks, it has been observed that neither municipality has a very satisfactory picture. It has been noted that Melikgazi Municipality regularly publishes its strategic plans and activity reports on its website, easily accessible to citizens. In contrast, organized and comprehensive strategic plans and activity reports for Granada Municipality could not be accessed. It has been observed that Granada Municipality has prepared strategic plans on a wide range of different topics. This situation could potentially lead to confusion among local residents. It is crucial for five-year plans to be consistently prepared and for activities related to these plans to be published in a way that individuals can easily access, which is important for participation, transparency and accountability.

This study fills an important gap in the literature by comparing local governments in two different countries. Legal and administrative data were used for the comparison in the study. It is recommended that other researchers conduct field research. Conducting field research to gather the opinions of the public and local administrators will provide an opportunity for a deeper investigation of the subject.

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