*Local Administrations and Social Media: During ODTÜ Protests Periods Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Example**

Yerel Yönetimler ve Sosyal Medya: ODTÜ Protestoları Sürecinde Ankara Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanı Örneği

*Adnan SÖYLEMEZ***

ABSTRACT

The aforethought project was began by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality to build a road between Anatolia Boulevard and the Konya Highway to help relieve traffic in the city. A group of students at Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in Ankara continued a protest against a construction project of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. The protesters at ODTÜ had been on guard duty to prevent the felling of trees on the campus for three days, saying they were not going to give up their protest until the municipality cancels its plan to build the highway. Local residents had criticized the municipality for building the road and claim that the project will be disruptive to the neighborhood. The Mayor of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Melih Gökçek, argued that the new road will relieve the traffic on Eskişehir Road. Ankara The Mayor of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, twitter social media platform was used as a continuously active during the event. In this study, while the mayor's events twitter use local services, and local citizen-state relations discussed in terms of the concept of democracy.

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KEYWORDS

Local Government, Social Media, The Mayor of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, ODTÜ Protests

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ÖZ

Anadolu Bulvarı ile Konya yolu arasında şehir trafiğini rahatlatmak amacıyla bir yol inşasını öngören proje Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi tarafından başlatıldı. Ankara'daki Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nden (ODTÜ) bir grup öğrenci, Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesinin bu yapım projesine karşı protestolarına devam ettiler. ODTÜ'deki protestocular, Büyükşehir Belediyesi yol yapım projesini iptal edinceye kadar protestolarından vazgeçmeyeceklerini söyleyerek kampüsteki ağaçların kesilmesini önlemek üzere üç gün nöbet tuttular. Yerel halk, yol inşaatı nedeniyle belediyeyi eleştirerek projenin çevreye zararlı olduğunu iddia ettiler. Ankara Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanı Melih Gökçek ise, yeni yolun Eskişehir yolundaki trafiği rahatlatacağını savunmaktaydı. Olay süresince sosyal medya platformu twitter, Ankara Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanı tarafından sürekli olarak aktif bir şekilde kullanıldı. Bu çalışmada belediye başkanının twitter kullanımı ve yerel halkla ilişkileri demokrasi kavramı altında ele alınmaktadır.

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ANAHTAR KELİMELER

Yerel Yönetimler, Sosyal Medya, Ankara Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanı, ODTÜ Protestoları

INTRODUCTION

Rapid modifications to the applicable nature of media have become a reality within last decade. Especially the shifting of internet technology to a media environment and intense use of it in mass communication incited this situation. The disciplines that mainly based on communication naturally noticed the rapid developments in this sector. On the other hand, the criticisms relating to the essence of communication at the beginning have been directed to the application of them nowadays due to the rapid increase in various usage techniques in the area.

The message bombardment due to new communication technologies is at the highest level nowadays and both institutions and people are getting desensitized to some activities either being aware of those developments or not. This desensitization brings different behaviors and directs people to new searches and to new communication media. Today internet is the main supporter of modern communication applications. The internet usage began in 1970's and increased rapidly after 1990. Web sites and portals become popular and the user number increased rapidly and come to a point in 2000's where every people has an interest in communication technologies since they become very effective (Vural&Bat 2010:3349).

Information technologies based on internet namely social media, or media has undertaken many tasks of conventional mass communication media (Akçay, 2011:138).

The usage of social media in social events unbelievably increased lately. İstanbul Gezi Park events that started when the local administration had planned to construct a hotel/shopping center in the park area has caused to many social events for all projects that are being planned without taking into account the views of people who live there. The Road Project of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in Middle East Technical University area that had been planned and approved many years ago also caused to protests of the students of this university. During this period, both the students and the metropolitan municipality mayor of Ankara used twitter effectively. This way of social media usage was mainly based on attracting and collecting as many supporters as it would be rather than providing information about developments of the project. The twitter usage and statements of Mayor Melih Gökçek during August 15th, 2013 and September 15th, 2013 has been studied in this review.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

Web 2.0 is a concept that brings people together, that brings a new dimension to the standard web design, that has more dynamic properties, that is 100% user-oriented, and that can change internet perception completely(Mestçi, 2009: 589).

An individual may design the content of social media applications and forms a continuous interaction with other people via those applications. In a word, this is a way of communication mainly based on sharing, interaction, and debating without any limitation within time and place (Erkul, 2009: 3).

Social media is an ideal medium since it may be steadily updated, open to multi usage, and provides virtual sharing possibilities. People may express their views, debate on them, and may explain their new ideas via social media. Moreover, they may share their personal data, various photos, videos, and search and find jobs, and live real world through virtual world without worrying. This situation attracts all attentions to this area and draws a conceptual framework to this virtual world (Vural & Bat 2010: 3349).

The main difference of sites that are designed within web 2.0 concepts is that each of them is a social medium and they address their users in user oriented and dressier design and they are high in quality of their service, and there is no limitation for them in Project development (Mestçi, 2009: 589).

2. GOVERNMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media subject generally entered into our agenda via individual usages and its significant examples can be aligned as follows: time to time our President contacts to folk directly through using twitter; Active ad efficient organizational twitter using of Istanbul Governor (Avşarbey, 2013: 54).

Resolution of public institution whether to make social media communication or not is very important. Especially some serious institutions like military forces, ministries cannot do something. In fact, the followings are valid for all firms and state institutions mustn't do the following (Eyidilli, 2012: shiftdelete.net):

1.The institution should compose a **social media guide** in its organization structure.

2.All employees must be made concern with existing of institution in social media and they should be applied an organizational training that will be given by concern specialist.

3.Strategy must be composed by not only a person but also a team. The designers within design period must get obtain specialist support to compose content.

4. The feedbacks for public institutions are valuable and important as it is at least in private sector. Reporting must be done well in this period and it must be commented by specialist.

5.Security measurements must be kept at highest level, especially data security of followers and employees must be provided their trust must be obtained.

6.The institution must accept its existence in social media and it must reflect all of its announcements, reminds to also social media channels.

3. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The term "new" added to the beginning of today's social movements indicates a comparison to the previous social movements rather than indicating a definite and a sharp difference between the movements of today and past. The definitions made with reference to the past offers the possibility of understanding the change during continuity. The social movements neither suddenly appears nor they have fixed patterns. If the change rapidly occurs, adding the attribution of "new" to the definitions of those social movements makes them analytically more understandable. However, the definitions indicating a definite break with the past may last to the missing or wrong results since the engagement with the past is broken. But the "new" is actually the result of past or built onto the past event. In this stage, trying to understand the "new" without breaking the links with the past assures getting better results (Tatar, 2013: 11).

The social movements with reference to the social upheavals that take place in all ages of modern times have been being conducted by the human groups who are trying to reach to the common targets in the context of preserving current order of society or due to all dissatisfactions for that society. Those movements sometimes arise as a bureaucratic organizational pattern with reference to the political perspective and sometimes used to define the

organizations that have been formed with illegal purposes (Çopuroğlu&Çetin, 2010: 69).

The movements that comprise the vital elements of life can only sustain as far as they keep the relations powerful with the daily life and with the demands of grassroots. Hence, this rapid cycle will be fed by the new movements that are formed by public demonstrations and social streams but not by the organizational policy makers. The Networks formed by rapidly streaming data and changing agenda will survive with the articulations that they will create. Therefore, the movement will reinforce its own founders by creating more fields for them to struggle and if those founders make more contacts with the other social subjects then they will be more powerful. This strength shall not be a constant construct but shall be created a loop that can reform itself in accordance with the changing events. The future of the social movements will be formed by a flexible structure that is not limiting the participation, that is assuring the stream of knowledge and experience, and that provides speech and acts are acting coordinative (Yıldırım, 2012: 234-235).

When the movements in ODTÜ are evaluated in a broader sense, they can be thought as the result or reflection of a wider social conflict. The different views that have aroused due to prominent social movements in the latest decade cannot stand each other in Turkey and they result in more disruptive social movements.

4. ODTU EVENTS

After initiated actions against to roadway that was planned to build through ODTÜ-100. Yıl-Çiğdem Region by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, protest shows were arranged in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Eskişehir up to late hours at night. The Gezi Park that was closed against to those actions was opened again at 02.00 a.m.

The group wanted to prevent building road passing through ODTU field because of excavation of trees and their action at 100.Yıl entrance of the university is still continuing. Last night, support from Kadıköy arrived to actions at ODTU. Upon callings over social media, nearly 500 people came together in front of Bull Monument at Altıyol at 21:30 p.m.

The group carrying banners "Stand ODTÜ Kadıköy is with you" performed a walking activity over street Bahariye to Kadıköy Bazaar. The group saying slogans like "ODTÜ stand" "This is only beginning, continue to

struggle" "Everywhere Taksim, everywhere standing" returned to Altıyol again and performed sit-in act.

The road from Altıyol to Kadıköy Portside was closed to traffic. Bus passengers got off at Altıyol and continued their travel through walking. After action continuing nearly 3 hours, the group was dispersed without any case.

The ODTU action protesters in Istanbul Kadıköy began to travel to Gezi Park then Police closed entrance and exits of the park. Waiting of police teams at the entrance of Taksim Square and Gezi Park with TOMA and Scorpions at Square and streets ended nearly 02.00 a.m.

Upon callings over social media, the police closed Taksim Square and Gezi Park was at night hours against to protest and actions that were begun against to Ankara Metropolitan Municipality's building road passing through Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) 100. Yıl-Çiğdem region. The Police located at entrance of Gezi Park and Taksim Square ended waiting together with TOMA and Scorpions at Boulevard and streets at nearly 02.00 a.m.

4. ANKARA MAYOR'S USING TWITTER

We can say that Ankara Mayor, Melih Gökçek is one of the users, who use social media networks efficiently, even the most efficient name among local administrators. The Mayor who is traced by more than one and half million followers either increased his number of followers upon ODTÜ cases during and after Gezi Park or he was exactly at the focus of all discussions implemented over social media.

While he was using the social media, it was seen that he was not only informing like other local administrators or politicians but also he composed ambient where he could interact mutually and also he had been adopting previously actualized project and hadn't withhold his support to them.

Melih Gökçek continued his leadership at Gezi Parkı event occurred in Istanbul, out of his service area and he was even out front of governor and mayor of mentioned province.

He shared so many twits such social and communal events were being supported by certainly different countries about since beginning from the first day of events and in the period leading to ODTÜ cases.

Beside students and academicians from ODTÜ, many residents living in mentioned region objected to build road over a field that can be assessed as

forest; on the other hand Ankara Metropolitan Municipality emphasized that the plans about this road had been approved nearly 30 years ago and this plan had been also approved by previous ODTÜ management.

CONCLUSION

The use of social media by the local authorities seems to have gone beyond the purpose of just submitting or informing their services. As it can be observed in ODTÜ events, a mayor just wants to execute a decision that had been taken years before instead of getting approval of the public by a plebiscite. As a result, this caused to a social movement in the eyes of local residents.

Social tension is increasingly going on due to this agitating and sharpening language, and with the wrong policy used in social media. Such a social movement does not remain in local level but getting broader to the national scale and has reflections in various social levels.

In case the local governors use more gentle language in social media rather than using the language of national politicians then this will help the discriminative policy to evolve into a peacemaking policy through peaceful language.

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