

Chapter 17

Governance-Based Regional Development and E-Government: The Turkish Case

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ABSTRACT

The notion of new regional development is built on the model of governance in Turkey. E-government has some serious potential of contributing to the implementation of this new notion of regional development. In this context, the aim of this chapter is to discuss the current state of the concept of regional development in Turkey and to analyze the contributions of e-government to the notion and applications of new regional development. Within this framework, initially, paradigmatic shift in regional development is analyzed. And then, the role and effect of e-government is explicated within the triangular relationship between development, good governance and e-government in socio-economic development. Subsequently, the notion of regional development in Turkey and its application is introduced from a historical perspective and the very recently adopted notion of new regional development is explained. Finally, the potential contributions of the e-government applications to this new notion of regional development in Turkey are analyzed.

INTRODUCTION

Development lies in the very heart of the trio of a strong state, strong economy and strong society. The critical value of development has taken on an essential and significant meaning in the new century

in a way that it has never happened before. The most important trump that the countries possess in their race of development is the human resource, and the most important instrument is the efficiency and functionality of public administration. In fact, it is not a coincidence that those countries where public administration works effective, efficient and dynamic stick out in the race of development.

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Especially since 1950s, public administration is considered to be the most important instrument of development and the facilitating and stabilizing impact of an efficiently functioning public administration on development is welcome. In fact, even though development administration, considered to be a branch of public administration (Hossain, 2007; Siffin, 2001), has lagged a little behind since 1980s, it has today once again gained importance through studies and researches done on economic globalization, governance, decentralization, and information and communication technologies, and even become more important.

As a result of the perception of the significance of an efficiently and rationally functioning public administration in terms of social and economic development, especially the last quarter of the twentieth century has become a restructuring period of public administration. One of the primary developments that has led the public administration into reform is the improvements experienced in information and communication technologies (Heeks, 1999). In this context, one of the most prominent elements of the administrative reforms performed is the e-government applications.

In the process of globalization, the notion and applications of development are currently undergoing a transformation. The new development model is based on a multi-agent, participatory, dynamic and efficient notion of development shaped around the concept of “good governance”. In this development model, a “multi-agent structure” in which such structures as local governments, regional organizations, public sector, NGOs and direct public support exist holds true. Central government is to function as a coordinator and catalyst in accordance with new public management in new development model. Therefore, “cooperation, coordination and monitoring” become all the more important. At this point, “the e-government facilities” have some serious potential in terms of facilitating the coordination and optimizing the cooperation. While e-government acts as “an integrator” among policies and their applications

of the agents to take a role in development, it, on the other hand, may contribute significantly to resource optimization and efficient resource utilization that are primarily important for the notion of development.

Within this framework, aim of this study is to analyze the current state of the concept of regional development in Turkey and to discuss the contributions that the e-government can make to the applications in this field. The basic hypothesis of this study is the idea that the new notion of region-focused development can help countries to materialize their development in a more dynamic, economical and democratic fashion and e-government can contribute to this. The facilitating potential of e-government in this development model has the capacity of offering functional possibilities that no other instrument possesses.

In this context, initially, the change in the paradigm of regional development is analyzed in this study. And then, the role and effect of e-government is explicated within the triangular relationship between development-good governance-e-government in socio-economic development. Subsequently, the notion of regional development in Turkey and its application is introduced from a historical perspective, and the problems regarding the existing structure are clarified. Then, the very recently adopted notion of new regional development is explained. Finally, the potential contributions of the e-government applications to this new notion of regional development in Turkey are analyzed.

PARADIGMATIC SHIFT IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM TOP-DOWN TO BOTTOM-UP

The notion of development is ambiguous one and varies from region to region or from country to country. The concept of development can only be identified with an economically-focused notion

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