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New Public Demands in Urban Transportation: Uber Effects on Taxi Regulation in Turkey

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Abstract

Public service activities which are regularly and constantly performed to meet the general needs of the public. In some cases, the administration performs the public service itself and in some cases, allows the private sector to offer and maintains them under its supervision. Taxis, which provide in-city transportation services, perform these services under the supervision of the administration. Transportation services by taxi are characteristically different from the public transportation service and meet the personal transportation needs of the individuals. The taxi service, especially in Istanbul, has become insufficient after the changes and developments in the needs of the society. Requests for alternative in-city transportation services have emerged due to the lack of necessary measures in accordance with the principle of adaptation in the public service by the administration. Thus, applications such as Uber that meet the need for comfort and security have emerged as a new system. Existing taxi owners and drivers were opposed to this system, filed a lawsuit to ban access to the Uber application and made public pressure on the administration to ban it. In the face of these events, the administration has introduced tax relief in taxi buying and selling activities, prevented the Uber activities and has taken measures to improve the taxi service. However, as the comfort and security needs of the public are not met, people continue to use Uber and similar applications. Therefore, in the face of these public demands, the administration has to amend the legal regime of taxi service and revise the taxi regulations. As a result, the development of technology to the individual benefits and the inability to meet the needs of the public force the administration to make changes in the public service regime and existing regulations.

Keywords: Public services, transportation services, taxi regulation, Uber.