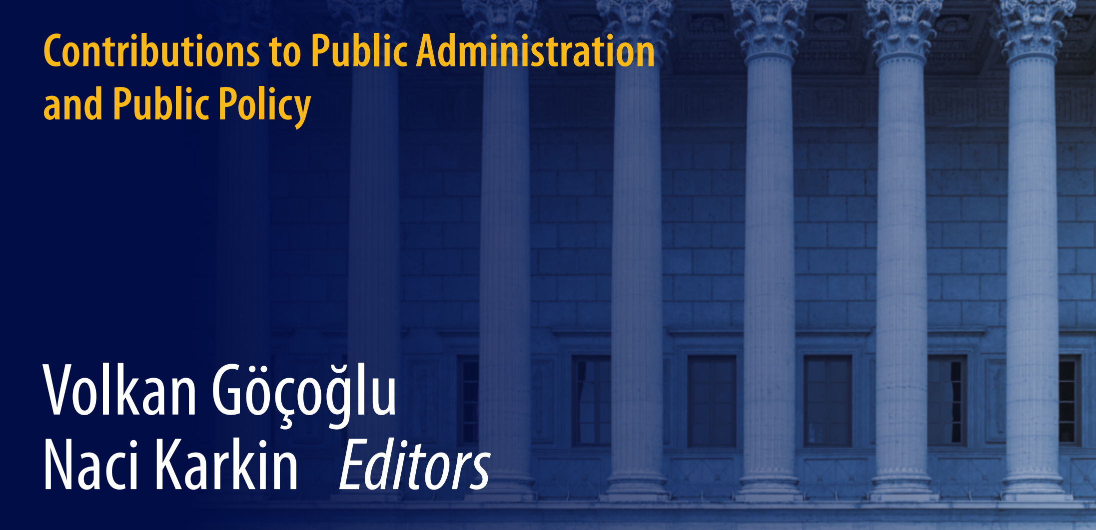

Contributions to Public Administration and Public Policy

Volkan Göçoğlu
Naci Karkin *Editors*

# Citizen-Centered Public Policy Making in Turkey

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Volkan Göçoğlu • Naci Karkin
Editors

# Citizen-Centered Public Policy Making in Turkey

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*To my family and dear parents,*
*for their patience and endless support,*
*grateful to*

*İpek Didem and Almila GÖÇOĞLU*
*Volkan Göçoğlu*

*To my family and dear parents,*
*for their patience and endless support,*
*grateful to*

*Dervis Ali, Tefide, Zehra,*
*Feyzanur and Ali Sefa KARKIN*
*Naci Karkin*

# Preface

Although public policy studies in the literature have reached certain saturation in quality and quantity, many aspects of this field are still open to exploration. Asserting that public policies primarily affect citizens beyond various actors and interest groups, "citizen-centricity" and "direct citizen participation" (DCP) appear as the most critical issues in public policy making lately. On the other hand, the public policy field seems to be extensively nourished by studies focusing on phases of public service design and implementation. Regarding the public policy actors, however, we see few studies promoting the stakeholders, particularly the citizens, as the service demanders. We believe that more room should be reserved for studies focusing on the DCP issue. DCP could be defined as the direct involvement of stakeholders, including residents, in designating or implementing public policies regarding the co-production of public services, not all public services definitely, as some public services require secrecy and confidentiality by default. Thus, the primary motivation that sprouts our book project is vital discussions such as the positioning of the citizens, the citizen-centric mechanisms, and the effects of citizens on the public policy making process since these dimensions are not adequately addressed through such specific perspectives.

Our book aims to advance the field of public policy by critically examining whether and how direct citizen participation could add value to government business. Structurally, the book focuses on designing and implementing public policies, citizens and networks, participation mechanisms, and local perspectives. In designing the book, we, as editors, broadly discussed the boundaries of the DCP and citizen participation in public policy through institutional actors that should not be blurred. To this end, we were attentive not to lose the "direct" emphasis of citizen participation by avoiding assuming citizens as the "sole" sub-component of non-governmental organizations and other institutional actors.

We have structured the book into three parts, comprising 24 chapters. The first part contains conceptual and theoretical chapters on public policy making in a new age. In addition to fundamental approaches, the authors present prominent issues such as public value management and nudging, the recent popular topics of citizen-centered and behavioral public policy making. The book's second part examines the

mechanisms of citizen-centered public policy making in terms of DCP. Naturally, the chapters in this part focus more on the issue of participation in a multidimensional way. In addition to DCP, aligned with the book's main line, various interesting chapters focus on current citizen participation mechanisms, such as Turkey-specific social networks, e-participation, and digital democracy. The chapters presenting different views on public policies' disadvantaged stakeholders, such as vulnerable groups, women, and ethnic minorities, enrich this part. The largest component of our book is the third part, which includes reflections on citizen-centered policy making from various policy fields. This part includes cases and discussions on citizen-centered public policies in general public services, education, health, economy, security, and housing policies pertaining solely to Turkey. Beyond this, the chapters focusing on DCP practices in local governments and the COVID-19 pandemic come to the fore, among others. Leaving the very content aside, we should note that the book contains contributions from academics with different backgrounds and views. In this context, 35 contributors from 8 disciplines and 17 universities from Turkey and other countries have contributed to this edited book project.

Our book primarily appeals to public policy and public administration-backgrounded readers. In this respect, it may provide a primary reference for academics, researchers, policymakers, and students in the field, presenting different perspectives on citizen-centered public policy making. Beyond that, it also embraces readers from other backgrounds, with policy cases spanning other disciplines such as education, health, economics, security, and urban planning. Although the nation-focused title, the book has the potential to contribute to the extant literature, as it is a pioneering study themed mainly on citizen-centricity and DCP in public policy making. Besides, as a reference for comparison, the book may inspire future studies in different country cases.

Afyonkarahisar, Turkey Volkan Göçoğlu
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# Part I
# Public Policy Making in the New Age

# Introduction to Citizen-Centered Public Policy Making

**Volkan Göçoğlu and Naci Karkin**

**Abstract** Recently, the public policy field seems to be extensively nourished by studies focusing on public service design and implementation phases. Regarding the public policy actors, however, few studies promote the stakeholders, particularly the citizens, as the service demanders. We believe more room should be reserved for studies focusing on direct citizen participation. The recent shifts in understanding in public administration and policy, as well as the internet and information technologies that have developed recently, can provide theoretical and practical inspiration for the upcoming studies focused on direct citizen participation. While the change in understanding has enriched the intellectual basis of participation and increased its political support, alternative channels such as e-participation and e-government have promoted citizens' participation in public policies easier, more straightforward, and more direct. This introductory chapter aims to build a baseline for the sprouting discussions in the citizen-centered public policy making issue by giving the audience a general perspective on the public policy process, actors, citizens as an actor, and direct citizen participation.

**Keywords** Public policy · Public policy process · Participation · Direct citizen participation · E-participation · E-government · Public administration · Alternative channels · Changing understandings · Introduction

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## 1 Introduction

Public policy is the study of government affairs that particularly and preferably affect the mission, vision and design, and implementation of government business. It is a wide-ranging and reflexive field primarily based in public administration but has deep connections with behavioral sciences, organization science, economics, and other disciplines of social sciences. On the other hand, public policy is a late re-emergent field prevalent across public security, energy, emergency, transportation, etc. Research in public policy mainly deals with the design and implementation of public policies in government business ranging from planning to producing or procuring public services, thus encompassing the interactions with all the stakeholders, including citizens and private and civil societal actors.

The public policy field has been extensively nourished by studies mainly focusing on public service design and implementation phases. Regarding the public policy actors, however, a few studies promote the stakeholders, particularly the citizens, as the service demanders. We believe more room should be reserved for studies focusing on direct citizen participation (DCP). DCP could be defined as the direct involvement of citizens in designating or implementing public policies regarding the generation of some public services, not all the public services definitely, as some public services require secrecy in default. This demand seems timely because of the paradigm change in the relationship between the government and its stakeholders due to the explosion of novel technologies and methods. Compared to the situation two or three decades ago, citizens and all other societal stakeholders are taken for granted having lots of information and news regarding government business. Thus, societal shareholders are equipped with the necessary information to get in interactions with their governments at all possible levels. They have new demands regarding the design and implementation of public services that were once assumed primarily as the government business executed by the bureaucrats under the command of the politically elected. New means and ways of technology provide all the shareholders, including the citizens, with the potential to interfere with their governments because the public is increasingly aware of what is possible and pushes for further when direct and indirect potentials are at stake.

This book aims to advance the field of public policy by critically examining whether and how direct citizen participation could add value to government business. Structurally, this book compasses the core topics of public administration, such as generating public services, designing and implementing public policies, citizens and networks, new business models, and local perspectives. Primarily paying attention to a developing country case, we aim to invite esteemed colleagues to contribute to this book by presenting chapters on DCP and public policy making about Turkey.

Thus, this book is about to engage some challenging questions from a diverse group of scholars to address some inquiries:

(a) *What are the boundaries for DCP in public policy making in Turkey?*
(b) *What are the challenges and barriers before DCP in public policy making?*

(c) *What are the participation mechanisms of other actors in different service areas, and how does this contribute and add value to the public policy making process?*
(d) *How do actors use technological potentials to interact with the governments?*
(e) *What are the best and lessons learned practices for participatory public policy making?*

Our book uses the lens of public policy and beyond that of different disciplines to seek answers to the questions listed above. Thus, this book helps the reader to look at this newly blooming subject in the literature from a broad perspective. Before proceeding further in this book, within the scope of this chapter, we would like to provide the reader with a basic overview of the policy making process and the actors. While preparing the reader for theoretical discussions that will deepen in the later chapters, the essential information in this direction may also provide a basis for examining policy cases and the place and influence of the citizen as an actor. Subsequently, conveying the key issues of DCP in the later parts of this chapter provides the reader with the building blocks of this book's central theme.

## 2 An Overview of the Public Policy Process

Public policy is a concept that emerges in meeting citizens' demands in the execution, improvement, and termination of services, also ensuring public order. To meet the citizen's demands for any issue or problem, finding a solution is made by making necessary and relevant public policies. The political power and the government agencies carry out this intervention on problems. The concept of public policy began to be conceptualized in the USA in the late 1960s and was promoted to provide a more effective, dynamic, and responsive public service. Although this concept has undergone various changes since then, it has been defined as an action close to government agencies (Belyaeva 2012: 126). In this respect, public policy can be considered as the action of a public institution or official who has authority on any subject where the state's authority from the laws is penetrated. Accordingly, a tax reduction that comes into force with the council of ministers' decision and affects all citizens or a decision made by the council of elders and headman in a small village about the village will express the concept of public policy (Akdoğan 2011: 75). Thus, the instructions given by the administrators, the policy articles and statements published by the governments, the administrative regulations, and the decisions made by the courts are the forms of expression and announcement of public policy. Therefore, this has a wide sphere of influence, from a national decision to a decision concerning the household in a village, containing a complex process and power relations in this respect.

Contrary to most of the public policy studies in the literature, Dye (1972: 2), in his book *Understanding Public Policy*, defined public policy in the first paragraph as "everything the state chooses to do or neglects to do." This definition has been

generally accepted, especially in the public administration literature. While Lasswell (1971: 71) defines public policy (or policy) as a projected program of goals, values , and practical practices, he also distinguishes this projected program as private or social. According to him, these programs can affect a person, audience, or relations with other people. Therefore, policies are formed and shaped due to the expectations of the people affected by them. At this point, public policy refers to a concept that affects a person or a mass and the interaction between them.

While other studies consider public policy as a set of actions (Akdoğan 2011: 75; Anderson 2003: 2), there are also studies examining public policy as a process (Jones 1977; Young 2006: 844). These models, developed within a rational approach to public policy analysis, were generally developed based on Lasswell's (1956) model, developed in 1956, and dealt with public policy as a process consisting of steps. This model consists of "intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation, application, termination, and appraisal" steps. Several different process models were built on this basis in the literature (Jenkins 1997: 30).

The model that considers public policy as a process is the cycle of steps, which Cochran et al. (2009: 9) put forward in two main parts: policy preparation and policy stages. The first stage in the cycle is the preliminary policy stage. There are three steps at this stage. In defining the problem, which is the first step, it is in question that a public problem becomes an objective to be solved by the relevant actors. This problem, which has become a goal, is now a public policy problem; thus, the process begins. The second step is the collection of alternative policy demands. Policy demands are actors' expectations from the decision-maker to take or not take action on an issue. (e.g., while a non-governmental organization with the theme of "protecting the environment and nature" requests a regulation that brings additional measures to the factories to reduce the emission of harmful gases, the investors or owners may request that the government not take any action as it will cause an additional cost).

The final step of the first phase is agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is a step in which policy demands compete. Not all policy requests from actors can always reach the decision-maker due to various situations. Reasons such as that some actors are unaware of the relevant policy making process and that the decision-maker does not reflect the demand for a policy alternative can be given as examples. Success in setting the agenda is significant as the actors know the relevant process and strongly reflect the policy demand to the decision-maker. While the decision-makers aim to set the agenda with the mass media (traditional media tools, internet, social media, etc.) to collect policy demands, the actors also aim to convey their policy demands.

On the other hand, even if policy requests reach the decision-maker, he can only consider the reasonable ones (Cochran et al. 2009: 9; Dye 1972: 343). After that, the second part (the policy stages) and the fourth step, policy adoption, come into play. In this step, the decision-maker chooses and adopts a policy among policy requests. Therefore, this is the most intense step of the public policy process regarding thinking and decision-making. A synthesis decision that comes to the fore among the solution proposals or covers a particular part of these solutions may be determined.

The fifth is the "implementation" step, which describes the execution of a policy by the decision-maker, that is, by the relevant institutions and organizations (usually by public institutions). The implementation step is a broader and more dynamic step where various options (i.e., making laws according to the adopted policy, using the existing authority, making public expenditures, and choosing and activating the policymakers) can be evaluated (Jann and Wegrich 2007: 52). With this policy implementation, policy effects will also begin to emerge (Cochran et al. 2009: 11). The step in which these effects are analyzed is the policy evaluation. As a result of the analysis, it is determined whether the intended solutions in the problem definition step have been achieved. It is revealed how and to what extent the goals have been achieved. As a result, moving to redefine the problem is necessary as an intermediate step between the two phases. The problem can be redefined by considering that the implemented policies do not reach the goals intended in the problem definition step or other problems caused by the implementation outputs.

## 3 Actors and Citizen Participation in the Public Policy Making Process

In public policy analysis, "actors," which do not take place as a title in the steps but have an impact and an essential role in the whole process, is a subject that should be especially emphasized. In his study, Anderson (2003) examined public policies by dividing them into several categories. These categories are substantive and procedural, distributive, regulatory, self-regulatory, and redistributive public policy categories. The characteristics of these policies vary according to the actors affected and participate in the policy's production.

Actors play a role in defining the problem, determining policy demands and alternatives, agenda-setting, adopting and implementing policies, and evaluating policy results with feedback. In the literature, it is seen that the actors are classified according to the main categories as formal and informal (Birkland 2010), institutional and non-institutional (Cahn 1995), community-centered, and state-centered (Keeley and Scoones 1999). In these classifications, one category generally includes the state and state-affiliated organizations, while the other includes various actors such as interest groups, political parties, media, and citizens. Congress, the executive branch, other state institutions, local governments, and courts can be included in the primary category defined as official, institutional, or state-centered. The influence rate of this leading actor on public policies in the country will vary according to the country's regime. At this point, the degree of influence on the public policy process, in which the state is the primary actor, is directly proportional to the intensity of intervention in social and economic life. Therefore, the role of a state, which has an intense intervention in social life and markets, and the public policy made in these fields, will also be significant. For instance, in a country where the state broadly owns the education and health system, it can be said that the influence of the

state will be more significant in the public policy to be formed in these areas. Public policy making is a process in which there is an "inter-organizational" interaction outside the state (Driessen et al. 2001: 323). At this point, opening parenthesis for political parties is necessary. Unlike other actors, political parties aim to influence public policies in a broader framework. Thus, political parties' primary goal is to come to power and implement their own domestic and foreign policy programs on all issues. As a secondary goal, they generally try to influence specific public policies with a critical attitude (Cahn 1995: 204). Interest groups, on the other hand, are qualitatively more general actors. These are groups of people who come together on various common issues and aim to influence public policies. The biggest feature distinguishing them from political parties is that the main business of interest groups is not politics. The main purpose of these groups is not to seize power as in political parties but to influence public policies in line with their interests by putting pressure on the government. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which can be confused with interest groups, have become influential actors in today's policy making process, increasing their role in administration since the 1980s (Lewis 2010: 3). What distinguishes NGOs from interest groups is their tendency to influence public policies in their fields of interest (e.g., environment, health, disadvantaged groups) for the public benefit. It is underlined here that NGOs can be characterized as separate actors because they aim to influence public policies for the public rather than their interests.

The media plays a significant role in setting the agenda in the public policy production process. Before social media became prominent in human life, traditional media was the most effective tool for setting the agenda. Traditional media tools such as newspapers, radio, and television were essential in determining the social and political agenda. In the 2000s, the increase in the use of computers and the internet worldwide and the fact that people can share information more easily have revealed new mass communication methods. The most important of these is social media. Therefore, traditional and social media should be considered both as a tool that increases the influence of actors on the public policy production process and as an actor in their own right. Interest groups or individuals use these platforms to influence public policies.

The actors discussed so far are groups of individuals. Since it is difficult for citizens to become individual public policy actors, they become members of these groups to pursue their interests linked to policy outcomes. It should be underlined here that citizens indirectly participate in public policies through the actors in question. Actors such as political parties, individuals (citizens), media, non-governmental organizations, universities, international organizations/supranational organizations, think tanks, and consultancy institutions are intermediary actors. Citizens strive to influence public policy toward a common goal by participating in these activities. The emphasis on common purpose here is essential as the potential effects of the public policies of these actors, in which citizens are involved for specific purposes, can only be mentioned within the framework of their areas of interest. For example, a citizen, or member of an environmental-themed non-governmental organization, can only influence public policies related to the

environment with the policy alternative on the actor's agenda through this actor. One of the points to be emphasized in this book is whether and how DCP in the public policy making process in all areas may be provided.

As Birkland (2011: 131) underlined, in many public policy studies, the individual participation of the citizen in the public policy production process is not given enough importance. Studies generally focus on the group dimension of participation, interest, influence, and power relationship framework. Birkland (2011) associates such a result with the low participation rate of citizens, especially in the elections in the USA. On the other hand, he points out that citizens may be more likely to participate in public policies regarding minor public problems as they want to keep their interests at optimum. He defines this as the mobilization of citizens to influence various sub-public issues. When we transfer the case from the USA to Turkey, it is thought that citizen participation in the public policy making process has more potential here. Based on Birkland's opinion, as the participation rate of citizens in both central and local elections in Turkey is around 85%, it is thought that the tendency of citizens to participate in public policies to solve specific public problems may be remarkable. At this point, the direct participation of citizens in the public policy making process constitutes an important focal point for us and our study.

Citizens' participation in public policy making can be classified as informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering (IAP2 2018). At the level of information, with the problem identification step, which is the beginning of the public policy production process, the information necessary for citizens to better understand and analyze the current problem is presented. At the consultation level, feedback is obtained from the public regarding the decisions taken, possible alternatives, or analysis. In inclusion, the policymaker works with the public, taking into account the concerns and wishes of the public in the decision-making process. At the cooperation level, direct cooperation is made with the public at various stages of public policy, while in the degree of empowerment; the decision-making action is left directly to the citizens. At this point, it is helpful to approach the participation of citizens in the public policy making process from the perspective of the concept of "DCP."

## 4 Conceptualizing the Direct Citizen Participation

As is known, it is a widespread administrative practice lately, thus a political one, to have the stakeholders, including the citizens and residents, as shareholders in phases of public policy design and implementation. Considering stakeholders as involving parties are there for various aims, reasons, and justifications ranging from the betterment of public services (Clarinval et al. 2021) to better design and implementation concerning public policies (Bryson et al. 2013) and increasing trust issues to government (Lee and Schachter 2019). Particularly it is an emergent and strong tendency that the stakeholders, including the citizens, are inclined to interfere and provide the actors with various resources in emergencies and disasters,

once-assumed government business through organizing the masses through non-governmental organizations or civil society (Karkin 2022).

Although DCP, like many other disciplinary conceptualizations, does not have a framework on which all segments (elected, appointed, and all other stakeholders) agree, it can be argued that the minimum common aspects of the concept in question have begun to become apparent. For example, in this framework, the acceptance of citizens as passive and merely governed, as predicted by classical public administration, is gradually moving away. Although it is accepted that citizens can be involved in the administration as a stakeholder and on an individual basis (rather than being the interlocutor on the organized basis of classical public administration), what this means, how far will it take place, or how it will be implemented is undoubtedly contextual. There are various reasons for such a situation. First, it is impossible to talk about a homogeneous public administration. Public administration or government is a fictitious/imaginary order, framing an environment where millions of public servants produce thousands and sometimes different services and commodities within a hierarchy. While this is the case for any country, cultural, geographical, and local differences between countries make it impossible to mean the same thing with public administration. For example, if evaluated in this context, what is meant or understood by public administration is only possible with the help of some framed conceptualization, institutions, and theories. With the help of the conceptualization, as mentioned earlier, theory and institutions, it may be possible to understand and explain public administration and comparison and measure between public administrations. Then, it is logical to ask how it is possible to have a common or unanimous conceptualization for a public administration perception that is remotely similar but becomes too different as it gets closer.

Citizen participation defines a thoughtful and framed policy design and implementation process in which individuals, organizations, and public officials interested in or affected by these processes are involved before making a political or administrative decision (European City Information Network - AKBA 2019).

It is possible to extract some elements from the definition in question. These elements can be defined as (AKBA 2019):

(a) *Citizen participation is an interactive process.*
(b) *This process consists of different stages.*
(c) *These stages start with information and listening, continue with dialogue, discussion, and analysis, and end with implementing consensus solutions.*
(d) *This process is a careful process involving the relevant or affected stakeholders.*

Based on this definition, DCP should not be understood as presenting the decisions taken by the administration to the interlocutors in an optional context and deciding on one of them. This process of citizen participation consists of different stages/levels. According to the AKBA (2019), these stages are access to information – without knowledge, there can be interest, but participation will be incomplete – consultation and active participation. Otherwise, for example, in the context of choosing one of the designs related to the city lines ferry, which the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality launched in 2006 as citizen participation, receiving the

contribution of the interlocutors via the website (Arkitera 2016), is not considered DCP. The direct addressees of such a preference are, in fact, not citizens but experts on the subject.

At first, it is noteworthy that there are some common aspects in the conceptualizations of DCP. There are critical dimensions among these issues. These dimensions can contribute to the discussions on the procedures and principles of DCP. First, DCP includes those directly affected by the process or other potential interlocutors (Baum 2015; Hansen and Prosperi 2005; Quick and Bryson 2016). Second, participation may involve some discrete and discursive types (such as contributing to public debates in city councils or expressing opinions on public services through surveys) and some active types (such as advising or providing opinions on the design and delivery of public services). Participation is mostly about actively contributing to administrative processes in the governance context (Quick and Bryson 2016: 158). Third, DCP makes room for more acceptable and legitimate services for the citizen (Baum 2015) and significantly better public service (Sobaci and Karkin 2013; Alibegović and Slijepčević 2018). What is meant by the increase in legitimacy is the design and production of the service produced, at least by asking the citizens and undergoing the process of interest and information for them.

Otherwise, every service the administration produces is legitimate because bureaucracy should be seen as a device, like a hand, arm, or even the whole body, commanded by the representatives elected by the citizens, like a brain. Within this framework, the mobilizers of the appointed are the citizens or their elected representatives. Nevertheless, we must understand and explain the decline of citizens' trust in government and politics (Wang and Van Wart 2007), especially the decline in legitimacy in recent years (Tsang et al. 2009). In this context, it is necessary to read together the decrease in trust and legitimacy of the citizen toward the administration and politics, the belief toward corruption, and the need for transparency (Morris and Klesner 2010). To state more clearly, while the administration recognizes the possible benefits of citizen participation, it has difficulties framing this conceptualization and explaining how it will be applied (Bryson et al. 2013). In this context, a contextual, service, or periodical framework should be drawn, besides identifying the possible benefits, obstacles, and resistance points of DCP. At this point, it is necessary to mention the existence of different tools and developments to overcome this problem. For example, information and communication technologies pose a serious challenge to the fact that the administrative function (in the context of the problem of increase in population, opportunity, opportunity, and occupation), which in a sense constitutes the primary rationale of representative democratic systems, is carried out by professional public officials, who are directed by proxies, not principals. Today, with the help of ICT, the design and implementation of almost all public services, if requested and supported, can be done with DCP. In this context, some of the preconceptions of the classical public administration toward DCP (such as being unprofessional, the separation between politics and administration, and impartiality) seem to be eliminated with the help of ICTs; DCP, which is possible at the theoretical level, is made even more applicable. Many studies in the literature discuss citizen

participation with the help of ICTs, partly related to e-participation (Milakovich 2010; White 1997; Robbins et al. 2008; Karkın 2012).

## 5 Conclusion

Direct citizen (stakeholder) participation is an increasingly important conceptualization in the context of today's public administration discipline and practice. This conceptualization has critical, substantive, and procedural dimensions in public administration. In its essential context, the citizen is not just a service recipient but also a stakeholder in the design and production of the service. In the context of procedure, issues such as where the boundaries of this start and where it ends, in which services citizen participation will be possible, and how this will be realized come to the fore in the literature.

The paradigm shifts in public administration and the developments in ICT in the last decades have also caused remarkable changes in the public policy making process, the actors' structure, and participation mechanisms. While most new paradigms question the conservative and cumbersome nature of traditional public administration that limits and perhaps prevents non-institutional actor participation, alternative channels for DCP in policies have emerged with the development of ICT. While the change in understanding has enriched the intellectual basis of participation and increased its political support, the alternative channels have made citizens' participation in public policies easier, more straightforward, and "direct." Thus, this idea, which has expanded in theory and gained a place in the literature, has become more applicable in practice, and perhaps new alternatives are coming. This chapter, therefore, provides an introduction to fundamentally tracing these understanding and practice-driven changes.

The following chapters of this book focus on whether and how theories of public administration deal with stakeholder participation in designing and implementing public policies. The evaluation will also include how the conceptualization of interest is reflected in practice based on how it is constructed in public administration. DCP, especially in classical public administration with an instrumentality-oriented approach, finds a response in both theory and practice in varying proportions and contexts. This response is considered to have an increasing reflection in the context of value-oriented public administration theories in recent years.

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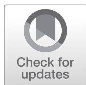
# Different Approaches to Public Policy Making




**Niyazi Karabulut**

**Abstract** Public policy is one of the most fundamental tasks of governments today. They carry out various social activities, such as preventing social conflicts, mobilizing public resources, organizing bureaucratic organizations, and collecting taxes from people. This chapter mentions different approaches to public policy making that have emerged so far. It first mentions theoretical approaches to public policy based on what public policy making is and how it was born. In this way, it explains the reasons for the emergence of different views on public policy making and these different approaches. It then explains the frameworks and perspectives put forward for the public policy making process. Thus, it mentions different ideas about how public policy making should be. In this sense, the purpose of this chapter is to draw a general framework for these approaches and to reveal the theoretical and conceptual background for public policy making. In this context, it presents a summary of the discussions on the public policy making process, both theoretically and practically.

**Keywords** Public policy · Policy making · Policy making process · Decision-making · Public policy making theories · Policy making models · General framework · Different views · Approaches · Perspectives

## 1 Introduction

As an academic field of study, public policy is not based on a single academic discipline. Although it is related to many different disciplines, it is very intertwined with political science, public administration, sociology, and economics (Parsons

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1995). Public policy is a discipline that seeks solutions to various problems through many different theories (Goodin et al. 2006). The activities of governments, the causes and consequences of these activities, and how political, social, and economic forces affect public policies are the main problems of public policy studies. In this context, public policy studies add a different dimension to political science and public administration fields.

Public policy is one of the most fundamental tasks of governments today. They carry out various social activities, such as preventing social conflicts, mobilizing public resources, organizing bureaucratic organizations, and collecting taxes from people. In this framework, all kinds of regulations made by the government should be handled within the framework of public policy (Dye 2016: 3–4). In addition to these issues, public policies cannot be considered separately from the social, economic, political, and cultural context. The dynamics of society also affect and transform public policies (Kraft and Furlong 2019: 10–11). Public policy making is not only a technical function of the government but also a complex and interactive process influenced by social, political, and other factors (Osman 1999: 15). These factors that make up the policy context lead to policy diversity and affect output and impact. Many political, social, and economic parameters can influence public policy making since they have a complex structure. This situation has led to the emergence of many different definitions, perspectives, and methodologies, making it difficult to understand the problems that are the subject of public policy making.

The most common definition of public policy is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" by Dye (2016, 1). However, although they have common features with this definition, there are many different definitions of the concept in the literature. For Heywood (2012: 54), public policies are official or announced decisions of governments. Also, according to Cochran and Malone (1995), public policies consist of political decisions for realizing policies to achieve social targets. From another point of view, Cochran et al. (2015) define the term as always referring to "the actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions." According to Birkland (2020), there are some agreed-upon features in the literature on public policy:

(i) "Policy is made in response to a problem requiring attention.
(ii) Policy is made on behalf of the 'Public.'
(iii) Policy is oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the solution to a problem.
(iv) Policy is ultimately made by the government, even if the ideas come from outside; the government or through the interaction of governmental and non-governmental actors.
(v) Policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors, who have different interpretations of problems, solutions, and their motivations."

There are three different views on the emergence of public policy studies (Yıldız and Sobacı 2015: 14–15). The first view argues that the birth of public policy coincided with the history of organized societies (Babaoğlu and Yıldız 2016). According to the second view, it emerged with the rise of the significance of information in the Enlightenment movement. The third view put forward that it emerged with the Second World War. The third view is based on the fact that the dynamic and complex

social structure created by the capitalist economic order increases the demands for public policy and the politicization of social demands (Bayırbağ 2013b). However, whatever the view, the emergence of public policy as a field of study is based on using the information to solve public problems. In fact, from the Enlightenment to the Second World War, the use of scientific methods in public policy making has become widespread (Akdoğan 2012). For this reason, the Second World War is a crucial turning point for the public policy discipline. This chapter evaluates different approaches to public policy making in this context.

Although public policy as an academic discipline is separate from political science, public administration, sociology, and other social sciences, it is difficult to deal with public policy alone. Public policy is a complex and interactive field intertwined with all these fields. As a result, there are various approaches to public policy making in the literature. This chapter handles these approaches from two different perspectives. First, it deals with the approaches based on who makes public policy, power relations, and the functioning of decision-making mechanisms. The rationale for public policy making is to make decisions about policies that will transform into action (Smith and Larimer 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss public policy decision-making models and understand how the government, together with other actors, makes these decisions. In the classical sense, reference is made to the decision-making process while discussing the issue of public policy making. Because classical public policy approaches placed decision-making at the center of public policy (Bayırbağ 2013a), at this point, the questions of the processes in which the decisions are made and how individual decisions connect throughout the administration come to the fore (Smith and Larimer 2018). As a result, various models and frameworks have emerged that seek to understand decisions in public policy making. In this context, this chapter discusses various theories. However, none of them was specifically developed for public policy making. For this reason, it is not possible to qualify any of these theories as the best for public policy (Dye 2016: 10).

Another perspective on policy making is about how policy is constructed in policy making. Since the issue is public policy, the government is a natural component of the process, but the question is how government and politics are involved. This question includes the extent to which official government institutions dominate the policy making process and, in turn, to what extent interest groups and other social actors influence the process. In addition, the extent to which non-political factors dominate policy making is another critical point. The policy making literature also raises the question of the extent to which the process shapes the policy outcomes produced. There are also several theories, models, and frameworks for policy making in the public policy literature (Cairney 2019; Petridou 2014; Sabatier and Weible 2014). While each makes different claims, all argue that it provides a resource for understanding and explaining how policy decisions are made. In this context, this chapter discusses some selected frameworks for public policy processes. They are not competing with each other, so it is not one of the purposes of this study to make an inference about which of these approaches is the best.

In summary, this chapter mentions different approaches to public policy making that have been put forward so far. The introduction briefly mentioned what public policy is and its emergence. The following section gives a theoretical background by explaining different approaches to public policy making based on the power relations, theories of the state, and sociological approaches. In this way, it elucidates different perspectives on public policy making and the reasons behind the emergence of these diverse perspectives. Then, this chapter mentions the theories, models, and frameworks put forward on how to make public policy and the policy making process in the third section. The aim here is to draw a general framework for the concepts and approaches frequently mentioned in the following parts of this book and to reveal the theoretical and conceptual background for public policy making.

## 2 A Theoretical Background: Approaches to Public Policy

Social scientists employ theories and models to explain phenomena. Theories often try to explain why certain things are the way they are. In contrast, models are more descriptive and do not go into too much detail. The theories covered in this chapter are relevant to the administration, politics, and public policy fields. There are various theories and models in the literature to explain the essence and nature of policy making and the resulting policies. This chapter covers the seven most prominent (Birkland 2020; Dye 2016) among these theories. In this respect, it also presents a comparative perspective by describing the many theories' approaches to public policy in a single body. They each offer a distinct perspective on the main decisive factors within government decision-making and the main forces shaping the content and essence of public policy.

### *2.1 Elite Theory*

Public policies, concerning the elite theory, are shaped by the preferences of the ruling (elite) class. This model assumes that policy decisions are the responsibility of only a small elite group. In other words, policies flow top-down from the elites to the masses; they do not arise from the demands of the masses (Lippman 1999). The emphasis of elite theory is on how the preferences and values of the ruling elites that differ from the public penetrate public policy making. Accordingly, the major emphasis of the elite theory is that the preferences and tendencies of the people are not as influential as the elite in shaping policy decisions (Dye 2001; Schubert et al. 2014). Different elite groups dominate in different policy areas so that no single power elite can stand alone at the center of all policy making activities (Lasswell 1936).

In short, according to this approach, society is divided into two: the powerful minority and the weak majority (Mosca 1939). According to Mosca (1939), this is

valid for all modern societies. The minority class always assumes all political functions and seeks to monopolize power. The minority rules the other group. However, as stated earlier, elites are not a monolithic group but different groups competing for power.

Dye and Zeigler (2004) summarized the approach of the elite theory to public policy as follows: (i) Society is divided into two: the minority with power and the majority without power. The masses do not decide on policies. (ii) The ruling does not belong to the governed people. They come from the upper socioeconomic classes of society. (iii) The elite share consensus on the core values of the social system and its preservation. (iv) Public policy only reflects the elite's superior values, not the public's demands. Policy changes should be gradual, not revolutionary. Indeed, gradual changes allow a response to events that endanger a societal system with minimal modification or liquidation of the system. (v) The elites affect the masses more than the masses do the elites.

As mentioned above, elite theory is far from a participatory understanding, as public policy making reflects only elites' preferences. It also envisions a stratified society (Kraft and Furlong 2019: 145).

## *2.2 Group Theory*

The struggle between different social groups results in public policy (Baumgartner and Beth 1998). In other words, group theory handles public policy as the result of a struggle between interest groups. Accordingly, various public policies reflect the activities of a certain group (Anderson 2015). Group struggle produces public policy (Cigler and Burdett 2015) since interest groups interact and exert pressure on policymakers. The government plays a role in creating and enforcing reconciliation situations between different conflicting interest groups in society. Official policy making actors also engage closely with organized interest groups to strengthen political agendas and generate support for their policy initiatives. For this reason, there is often a two-way interaction between interest groups and policymakers (Kraft and Kamieniecki 2007).

Contrary to elite theory, group theory argues that interest groups share the power in the political system, and each tries to engage in the policy making process. It argues that power is pluralistic and not concentrated in just a few elites. On this view, some groups lobby legislators while providing a balance with others. This balance ensures that no group has full control over the policy making process. However, it is also natural that groups with more financial resources, recognition, networks, and reputation have more effect on policy making (Kraft and Furlong 2019: 147–148). From the same perspective, groups that lack some political and social resources, are under-represented in the policy making process and are poorly organized, have low representation and impact.

Moreover, respected people in society can easily influence policymakers to promote their ideas. At this point, Dahl states that the positive point of pluralism

is that no group has absolute power over all these resources (Anderson 2015). Thus, the balance of power in society shifts as different groups, alone or with other groups that share common interests, manipulates these resources to turn public policy in their favor (Latham 1965). The fact that the role of people in the mentioned power competition is ignored can be expressed as the weakness of group theory.

## 2.3 *Institutional Theory*

The foundations of the institutional theory go back to the sociological writings of Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, and others (Scott 1991). According to those studies, the institutional theory is explained in terms of cultural norms, belief systems, and symbolic systems, in short, through social phenomena (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). The institutional theory focuses on the government's formal and legal aspects in public policy making. In short, it focuses on how governments are organized, their legal powers, and decision-making rules (Ostrom 2007). These rules include some key features, such as the degree of citizens' access to the policy process, information availability, and authority distribution between administrative units. The basic approach of institutionalism is to what extent structures and rules can be effective in policy processes. In this context, it refers to the rules employed to structure patterns of interaction both within and between institutions (Ostrom 2007: 22). Thus, it also encompasses the rules that shape how people in institutions relate to each other and those in other institutions in addition to focusing on institutional structures in public policy. Many institutions have the power and resources to affect public policy making: governments at the national and local level, markets and financial elites, firms or companies, interest groups, voluntary organizations, political parties, and so through (Ostrom et al. 2014). The focal point of institutional theory is how these different institutions play roles in the policy making process.

Institutions are necessary not only for policy making but also for policy formulation, content, and trends in similar or related policies. Indeed, public policies are designed and implemented through institutions. Public policies do not change significantly unless environmental factors change since the institutional structure and public policies are in an environment with its own culture, traditions, and values (March and Olsen 1996: 249–251).

However, institutional theory alone can provide only a little explanation for policy making (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). It examines government institutions' formal structures and functions to determine how public policy is shaped. It focuses on the organizational structure of the government. Nevertheless, the institutional theory did not show a significant concern about the links between an institution and the policy making that emanates from it (March and Olsen 1984: 747–748).

## 2.4 Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory has also been widely applied to public policy problems (Ostrom 2007) and assumes that individuals are rational when making decisions (Schneider and Ingram 1997). That is, they try to reach their preferences, increase their interests, and maximize them (Dowding and King 1995: 1). The theory asserts that individuals take into account what they value, how they perceive a particular situation, the knowledge they have about it, various ambiguities that may affect the outcome, and what the expectations of a particular context or others are like (Henry 2011a). Thus, rational choices emerge from actors' capacity to calculate and add costs and benefits to available policy options and choose the course of action that maximizes their utility (Dunleavy 1991: 2–4). The aim is to understand or predict how individuals will act under various conditions. The rational choice theory attempts to describe public policy making over the actions of self-seeking individuals, such as voters, market representatives, or financial officials (Elster 2000: 4–6). Policy actors are raised as selfish instrumental actors who choose how to act based on consequences for their well-being (Dunleavy 1991: 3). In this way, the rational choice theory has been widely discussed in terms of political science and public policy (Anderson 2015). Downs (1957), in his Theory of Economic Democracy, states that voters and political parties act as rational decision-makers who seek to maximize utility.

The rational choice theory focuses on three methodological principles:

1. Deductive reasoning (Hindmoor 2006): It is based on a few propositions and the logical analysis of connections between them.
2. Methodological individualism (Elster 1982: 452–454): Policies are the products of all actions of individuals and the interactions between them. Rational activities require to have preferences and beliefs.
3. Instrumental rationality: People protect their preferences in compliance with their beliefs about the most appropriate way to realize them. This is a deliberate explanation of behavior based on individuals' goals (Elster 2000: 8) rather than being motivated by habits, traditions, or social conformity (MacDonald 2003: 550–552).

The assumption that individuals are always determined to pursue their self-interests is the most criticized aspect of rational choice theory. Some scholars argue that the rational policy making process can come into being as a result of the knowledge of entire value preferences of society and their relative balance, all their alternatives, and prospective results (Lindblom 1964). Thus, a limitation of this rational choice theory is the demand for information that an individual would not have alone. Another criticism argues that the theory ignores the individuals' willingness to participate in public interest communities and similar collective actions for the public interest (Kraft and Furlong 2019: 149). However, the rational choice theory envisions political behaviors that can influence policy design. It is particularly useful to

estimate how public officials will respond to policy initiatives regarding goals, objectives, and policy actions (Schneider and Ingram 1997).

## 2.5 Incremental Theory

Lindblom (1964) emphasizes the constraints on public administration, such as time, cost, information, and policy. As Lindblom (1977) draws attention, public administrators' envisioned functions and constraints confine their attention to relatively few values and alternative policies and are likely to flow out of the fundamental distinction because they fear unforeseen consequences. Policymakers should begin with programs and budget allocations that already exist. Thus, it will allow them to add or replace what already exists. The incremental theory, therefore, puts forward an image of sequential bounded comparisons against the background of a historically developed past decision chain that cannot be set aside under practical conditions (Smith and Larimer 2018).

According to Lindblom, rational decision-making is impossible for most problems because of disagreement over aims and insufficient knowledge (Hayes 2017). The incremental approach can reduce the risks and costs of uncertainty as policymakers perform their tasks under conditions of uncertainty. The incremental theory is realistic since it accepts that policymakers do not have the necessary time, intelligence, and resources to analyze all alternative solutions to current problems comprehensively. In addition, individuals are intrinsically pragmatic, always looking for something to work with more humbly, not just one best way to solve a problem. In summary, incrementalism tries to make bounded, practical, and acceptable decisions (Majone 1998).

There are also many criticisms of incrementalism in the literature. First, it is criticized for being too conservative to focus on the existing order and therefore being closed to innovation. Another is that it has no guidelines for decision-making in crisis times (Hayes 2017: 2–3). Third, because incrementalism addresses past actions and current conditions and limits changes in them, it may hinder the discovery of other readily available alternatives (Anderson 2015).

## 2.6 Marxist Theory

In terms of social and political means, Marx argues that strong people in society ignore the demands and values of weak people and exploit them. The state is here an instrument of the ruling class. This approach, called the instrumentalist approach in Marxist understanding, focuses on the superficial levels of policy making. Miliband (1977) argues that in a capitalist society, the state is an instrument of the ruling class that governs at the will and direction of this class consisting of politicians, public officials, and the business and financial elite. Miliband (1969), in

his book *The State in Capitalist Society*, takes the economic mode of production, not the political process, as his starting point. In advanced industrialized societies, the capitalist mode of production dominates and gives rise to two main social classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. To examine the relationship between these two classes, Miliband explores the relationship between economic and political power. He and some other Marxist scholars, following Marx, argue that the state is not neutral and even an instrument of class domination. Marx and Engels (1967) have stated this view before in the Communist Manifesto "The executive organ of the modern state is nothing but a committee that manages the common affairs of the entire bourgeoisie" (McLellan 1971: 192). According to Miliband, there are three reasons why the state is an instrument of the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies (Hill and Varone 2021: 40–41). First, the bourgeoisie and government elites are identified with each other in the social background. Second, there is the opportunity for the bourgeoisie to use power as a pressure group through their networks and connections with the business elite. Third, the power of capital constrains the state in many activities. Miliband (1977) argues that for these reasons, the state becomes an instrument that serves the long-term interests of the entire bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, structuralists such as Poulantzas object to the argument that the state is an instrument of capitalism. According to Poulantzas (1973), it is the structural force of capitalism that eventually shapes the policy making process, not the ruling class. Poulantzas argued that the state engages in various activities in a capitalist society. It is involved in the process of protecting or governing different sections of society, and also it appears as a kind of referee or neutral force that serves the interests of capital and the capitalist class (Hill and Varone 2021: 41).

## 2.7 Political Systems Theory

Political systems theory is more comprehensive than other theories but more general. It concentrates on how the political system copes with popular demands and pressures from interest groups (Easton 1965). Systems theory focuses on the broader social, economic, and cultural context in which certain policy making activities (Anderson 2015). The basis of systems theory, as its name signifies, is to create a system for policy making. In this system, inputs into the political system come from demand and support. "Demands" are the claims put forward by individuals and groups within the political system who want to raise their interests and values. "Support" refers to the recognition and legitimacy of government actions by individuals and groups. Here, the political system deals with demands and support in the policy making process and produces policies that can, over time, create changes in the conditions that mobilize them (Hill and Varone 2021).

The positive aspect of systems theory in terms of policy making, policy formulation, and analysis is that it clarifies the process. At the same time, as Anderson (2015) points out, public policy affects the environment and demands action.

Environmental forces create demands on the political system, and the political system can transform demands into public policy. Political systems theory handles public policy as a set of interactions that occur within the environment but differ from a wider social environment.

Easton (1965) defines the political system as identifiable and interrelated institutions and activities that make binding societal decisions. According to this approach, public policy consists of the administrative allocation of values. Moreover, the feedback shows that a public policy can change the environment and the demands produced there. Policy outcomes may generate new demands that will lead to more policy outcomes. Thus, there is a never-ending stream of public policy making (Parsons 1995, 79). This is a highly generalized model of the political system used by political scientists to understand policy making processes. However, it does not contain enough explanations about how decisions are made in government (Kraft and Furlong 2019: 152–153).

In this context, political systems theory, the adapted form of the systems approach to public policy making, has been a source of valuable outputs in terms of public policy discipline. It often finds the basis of ideas in forming the policy cycle and policy process (Smith and Larimer 2018: 30–35).

## 3 Different Approaches on How to Make Public Policy

It is impossible to declare which of the mentioned theoretical approaches is the best or most satisfactory since each of them pays attention to different aspects of policy making, and it looks more beneficial for understanding some situations or events. Indeed, the main goal for the policymaker is the objective explanation of political behavior rather than justification of the theoretical approach. There are many approaches to the public policy making process based on the power relations, theories of the state, and sociological approaches mentioned above. These approaches have mostly designed a policy making process framework based on (aforementioned or other) theoretical foundations. Although each of these designs has unique values in itself, it is also possible to say that they have similar aspects. These public policy making models do not compete with each other, but there are approaches that try to falsify or replace the approach of one another. In this context, the approaches discussed below explain different clues, trends, frameworks, and capabilities for public policy making. The approaches selected to explain here are based on a scientific theory and have an ongoing impact on policy making process theory. This way, five distinct approaches were selected among many approaches. Below are summaries of these approaches to how to make public policy. The aim here is to present a summary of several influential approaches in public policy making, to illustrate how approaches to public policy making vary, and to explain them.

### 3.1 The Multiple Streams Framework

The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), developed by Kingdon (1984, 2011), is based on the logic of the Garbage Can (Cohen et al. 1972). It aims to explain how governments make policies in conditions of uncertainty (Zahariadis 2007: 65–66). The public policy lens in this approach has five components: policy, problems, and politics (as three streams), policy entrepreneurs, and policy windows. MSF argues that policy changes occur when policy entrepreneurs combine flows in short-term policy windows over time (Petridou 2014: 21–22). As a result, the basic assumptions of MSF are related to "ambiguity, time constraints, problematic preferences, unclear technology, fluid participation, and stream independence." These terms define what Cohen et al. (1972) call organized anarchies (Herweg et al. 2018: 25–26).

MSF assumes that there is no rational solution to a particular problem since it recognizes that policy making is not a rational problem-solving exercise. In contrast, it claims that there are multiple solutions to any problem due to ambiguity. Ambiguity means the existence of many ways of thinking about the same condition or phenomena (Feldman 1989). Due to time constraints, policymakers often do not have time to make decisions. Individuals can only focus on one subject due to biological and cognitive limitations. On the contrary, organizations and governments can deal with many problems simultaneously, thanks to the division of labor (Jones 2001). Problematic preferences mean policymakers do not have clear preferences for some policies. It does not mean they do not have any preferences. Tough policy choices arise in the presence of uncertainty and limited time. Unclear technology results from fluid participation, which means that decision-making bodies are subject to constant change. In other words, legislators come and go, and bureaucrats often move from the public service to the private sector (Herweg et al. 2018: 29).

In keeping with the Garbage Can model, MSF argues that independent processes or streams flow through the political system. In summary, it assumes that problem, policy, and political streams develop independently. Problems arise independently of political developments or existing policy solutions. Since consensus building takes different forms in and out of political currents, these movements also have their dynamics (Kingdon 2011; Herweg et al. 2018: 30).

### 3.2 The Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is based on actors' influences on public policies and decision-making processes in formulating public policies. It concentrates on the logic behind coalition formation, policy-oriented learning, policy change, and the role of policy intermediaries in policy making (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993; Sabatier and Weible 2007). The ACF is a framework that focuses on the belief systems of advocacy coalitions within policy subsystems by

examining them and understanding policy-centered learning and, thus, policy change. It seeks answers to changes in the complex subsystem that includes multiple actors and the policy process pervasive for 10 years or more (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993). Having strong beliefs about any policy is the main theme of ACF. As actors in the policy making environment, people form advocacy coalitions with others with the same perspectives. These coalitions are generally in competition with each other. Therefore, the policy making process involves various actors and units of government. ACF argues that the most appropriate way to deduce this complexity is to concentrate on policy actors' actions as a part of coalitions (Sabatier and Weible 2007: 196). Approaches of evaluating the cause and effect of policy problems and the government's role in resolving them are of interest to actors in coalitions. Accordingly, coalitions compete to achieve desired policy outcomes in line with their own beliefs. In this context, ACF also rejects the understanding that policy making is a process and accepts it as a multi-actor structure consisting of subsystems (Sabatier 1987).

A major goal of the ACF is contributing to the understanding of policy change and stability. That is, policy change is also a significant central concept for ACF. What triggers this focus is the repeated observation that many public policies do not change over long periods, while others are subject to periods of sudden changes (Sabatier 1987; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). The ACF concentrates on the versatility of policy change and clearly distinguishes between minor and major policy changes (Howlett and Cashore 2009). Since belief system categories differ in their propensity to change, achieving small policy change should not be as hard as major policy change (Sabatier 1987; Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994).

There are multiple possible sources of change in policy making, according to ACF. First, coalitions turn to policy-oriented learning to remain competitive and continually adapt to new developments in policy making environments. Understanding the belief systems and how they influence and form the coalitions is a crucial aspect of ACF (Ingold 2011); however, competition between coalitions is not the only driving force of policy changes. Albright (2011) advocates adjusting the framework to allow the integration of external and internal shocks to provide a driving force for policy change through policy-oriented learning. Therefore, internal and external shocks determine the coalitions' places within subsystems. In this regard, shocks combine new ideas and reactions to outside events and coalitions (Cairney 2019). Events may change drastically as members of a dominant coalition question their beliefs with new developments, or another coalition may adapt to the new policy atmosphere easier and take advantage of new developments to change its position within the subsystem (Weible et al. 2009, 2011).

The ACF proposes to analyze change in the context of a policy cycle but denies artificial distinctions between phases or separated phases of the policy making process (Sabatier 1987: 158, Majone 1980). The ACF literature continues to build on this proposal, and the framework is still in development since its initial formation. In this respect, the ACF continues to provide stronger theoretical foundations for the formation of coalitions and policy changes.

### 3.3 Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

Punctuated equilibrium theory (PET) describes the dynamics of public policy making and change by arguing that public policies tend to be stable for long periods, with only occasional and sudden changes, rather than a continuous process of gradual change. According to PET, public policies tend to be in a state of equilibrium, meaning that the various actors in the policy process have reached a stable balance of power and interests (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). This stability can persist for extended periods, with relatively little change in the policy itself. In other words, it tries to explain how a policy maintains its continuity for a long time without interruption. However, in the abovementioned situation, this stability can be disrupted by critical events or "policy windows" that can open up new opportunities for policy change. Because of these disruptions, factors affecting the system from outside can change the policy process. This situation, defined as external shocks in PET, causes sudden changes. Thus, the system explodes and creates a new equilibrium point and a positive feedback cycle (Breunig and Koski 2012). Here is PET's main argument that policy change will not be moderate in any system with a status quo bias. Somehow, an equilibrium point will surely be reached.

Another fundamental question PET seeks to answer is how policymakers address the issues and prioritize them relative to the information stream they are processing. In short, PET focuses on different aspects of the policy process and how changes can lead to major changes in policy making (Jones and Baumgartner 2012: 17–18). In this context, PET is a reaction to the rational and incremental theories of policy making, and it emphasizes their limitations. Prindle (2012) suggests renaming the framework as punctuated incrementalism. Howlett and Migone (2011) consider the incremental approach to be a prominent constituent of PET. There is a dual power in punctuated incrementalism because either incremental or sudden changes occupy its space.

While PET is often defined by incrementality and stability, policy processes sometimes produce substantial deviations from the past. Stability, not crisis, characterizes most policy areas, but crises happen in every field. Critical government programs are sometimes significantly modified, even though they often incrementally continue as they did in previous years (True et al. 2007). Almost all policy models are designed to explain either stability or change, although both are valuable elements for the policy making process. The punctuated equilibrium theory covers both. Neither incrementalism nor rational choice theories fit well with the PET approach's common observations of dual foci of stability and dramatic change. In conclusion, punctuated equilibrium theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the conditions that create opportunities for policy change and how different actors can shape and influence the policy making process. It suggests that the slow and gradual change often associated with the policy making process is more the exception than the rule and that change often occurs with major events and sudden policy shifts.

### *3.4 The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework*

The institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework provides a comprehensive and systematic way of analyzing the role of institutions in shaping policy outcomes (Ostrom 2007). The framework highlights the multiple self-directed decisions linked by interpenetration, the importance of rules in stimulating individuals' actions, the fallible nature of people, and the centrality of preference in organizations and policy making processes (Ostrom 2011). The IAD framework seeks to understand how formal and informal rules and norms influence the behavior of individuals and organizations in society, and how these rules and norms can be modified to achieve policy goals. Trust is a central issue for IAD, and there has been a great deal of research into various aspects of it. It emphasizes that research should be conducted in trust as a crucial aspect of sustainability discussions where trust in scientific knowledge is very important. At this point, IAD and ACD come together at this node as trust and belief systems come into play. Henry (2011b) has included research on belief systems in the analysis of the IAD by referencing the ACF literature to achieve a stronger trust theory.

The IAD framework conceptually focuses on seven key components: a state of action, actors, rules, community characteristics, physical and material characteristics, outcomes, and evaluation criteria (Ostrom 2007). By analyzing these seven components, it provides a way of understanding how institutions can facilitate or constrain policy change, and how they can be changed or reformed to improve policy outcomes. It is most useful in developing theories and models that attempt to explain institutional arrangements' logic, design, and performance (Ostrom et al. 2014, 269). Theories most compatible with the IAD seek to explain how the behavior of actors is directed and constrained by institutions and, thus, how human behavior shapes and creates institutional arrangements (Bento 2020). This means using variables representing different dimensions of the seven components that make up the framework to explain the interactions between institutional arrangements and human behavior. Therefore, the IAD framework has a problem-solving orientation.

The IAD framework allows scholars to explain and research how people benefit from institutional arrangements to address common issues and understand the rationale for institutional designs (Ostrom 1998). By understanding how and why corporate design happens, it is possible to develop informed recommendations to improve corporate performance. In short, the prerequisite for the implementation of the IAD framework is the issue of collective action. The outcomes of actors' actions depend not only on their preferences and actions but also on the preferences and actions of other actors. This interdependence in actions and outcomes shows that actors must take each other into account and cooperate or coordinate their preferences and actions to achieve desired outcomes (Petridou 2014). As noted, an institutional framework should identify the types of structural variables present to an extent in all institutional arrangements but with varying values for each (Ostrom 2007; Bento 2020).

### *3.5 The Narrative Policy Framework*

The narrative policy framework (NPF) is a theoretical framework that examines the role of narratives in shaping policy outcomes by analyzing how political actors use narratives to frame policy issues and influence public opinion. The NPF is based on the argument that narratives play a central role in the policy making process by providing a way for political actors to explain complex issues in policy making in an accessible and appealing way. Therefore, it suggests that policymakers should explore the power of policy narratives. There are two main reasons for this. First, policy discussions are necessarily conducted in both formal institutional spaces and informally constructed narratives. Second, narratives often affect the policy process at different points. Therefore, NPF argues that understanding the role of narratives is important to understand the policy making process in various fields and the multiple crossroads in this process (Petridou 2014). According to the NPF, policymakers can use narratives to frame policy issues in different ways, either as a problem to be solved, a threat to be addressed, or an opportunity to be seized. These frames can shape the public's understanding of the issue and influence their attitudes and preferences, thus impacting policy outcomes. It works at the small, medium, and large levels and is based on three key assumptions: (i) the centrality of policy narratives in policy making processes, particularly in the context of developments in new media; (ii) a wide variety of actors producing policy narratives, such as government officials, interest groups, and media organizations; and (iii) policies as beliefs conveyed as a means of organizing policy information (Shanahan et al. 2011: 540).

The exclusion of postpositivism favors more positivist-oriented policy theories such as the ACF and IAD (Ostrom 2007). The NPF was developed in reaction to these discussions, recognizing that narratives construct reality socially and can be measured empirically, designing the framework as a bridge between different policy process approaches (Shanahan et al. 2013: 455). The NPF is a continually growing framework applied in various policy contexts to advance knowledge of the policy process. It provides insight into how the way policymakers frame issues and communicate them to the public can affect policy change by analyzing the formation and distribution of narratives in the policy making process.

## 4 Conclusion

This chapter first discussed different theoretical foundations for public policy making. As a result of the discussion, the principles on which public policy making is based and opinions on the policy process have been revealed. The purpose of this chapter is to underline the different approaches to public policy making by explaining these principles and approaches. However, the perspectives of theoretical approaches to policy making formed the basis for the frameworks created for policy making.

These frameworks provide a more detailed view of the public policy making process. This chapter aims that these approaches, each of which has a different theoretical background, provide the reader with basic and summary information about the ways followed in public policy making. In this context, this chapter summarized the different approaches to public policy making and emphasized their distinctive aspects.

Depending on this path, the first part summarized the perspectives of elite, group, institutional, incremental, rational, Marxist, and system approaches to public policy making. Apart from these, other theories explain public policy making, either more comprehensive or narrower. For example, this title could mention the Pluralist approach or Garbage Can model. However, the aim is to explain theoretical approaches that can provide the most comprehensive summary of the theory of public policy making. Within the framework of this goal, the first part of this chapter presents the discussions on who carried out public policy making, to whom it is aimed, with which objectives, and by which methods from seven different perspectives.

The second part of this chapter mentioned different frameworks designed for public policy making and the public policy making process. Here, there are explanations for selected five approaches and their discussions on how, by whom, and under what conditions public policy making should be carried out. Social Construction and Design, Policy Diffusion, Institutional Grammar, Collective Learning, Robustness, and many other frameworks could not be included in this part. The aim is to provide an information flow toward the essence of the discussions on the policy making process by including frameworks, each of which has a different theoretical background. Within the scope of this aim, this chapter summarizes five policy frameworks and explains their views on public policy making. These explanations will provide the reader with clues as to which issues are brought to the fore in the discussions on the public policy making process. Based on this belief, this chapter can be a reference point for references to public policy making later in this book.

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# Normative Public Policy, the “Public Value,” and Value Conflicts

**Hüseyin Gül**

**Abstract** Ethics and values shape public policy processes and analysis. Public administration and policy have “normative” aspects, and normative public policy explores the role and relevancy of beliefs, interests, goals, values, and principles in public policy and management. The roots of normative discussions on efficiency, effectiveness, and economy go back to the early days of the field. After the mid-1960s, a discussion of ethics and values regained importance in public administration and policy, emphasizing diversity, equality, and fairness. Since the late 1970s, market-based approaches have become dominant with an increased focus on efficiency, economy, market, and customer-orientation. Yet, a critique of market-based approaches (especially the new public management [NPM]) and values has been developing since the 1990s. The public value management’s (PVM) new emphasis on the “public value” seems to challenge the NPM approach and some premises of the classical public administration. Based on a literature review and hermeneutics, this chapter first discusses normative public policy, public values, and principles. Second, a general review of the PVM, its comparison with the NPM and a discussion on the “public value” is presented. Finally, value conflicts in public policy processes are explored with specific reference to the case of justice and efficiency in welfare.

**Keywords** Normative public policy · Public value management · New public management · Public value · Value conflicts · Welfare · Justice · Efficiency · Approaches · Principles

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## 1 Introduction

A growing number of studies suggest that ethics and values are important variables shaping public decision- and policy making processes, public policy analysis, and public choices (Dollery and Worthington 1996; Fischer and Forester 1987; Ingram and Schneider 2006; Poama 2018; Surel 2000; Weimer 2002; West and Davis 2011). Public administration and public policy have "normative" aspects either as fields of study or as practices (Ömürgünülşen and Öktem 2009:218). The study of philosophical, social, and political ethics, values, and principles is the subject matter of normative public policy.[1] Weimer (2002, p 61) defines policy analysis as "the systematic comparison of alternative policies in terms of social values."

Normative public policy tries to explore the role and relevancy of values and principles in public policy and management processes; value choices underlining policy decisions; and the assessment of the impacts or outcomes of public policies (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:355–356; Robert and Zeckhauser 2011:615–616; Surel 2000:495–496). Besides, the relations among values, value conflicts, and trade-offs are also examined in normative public policy studies. Moreover, normative public policy questions who wins and losses due to policy decisions, implementations, and outcomes. Thus, normative public policy aims to understand what kind of beliefs, interests, values, and goals lies behind policy choices, whether or not some values and principles may involve trade-offs in realizing them together via one single policy and whether the impact of a policy or program aligns with its intended goals or outcomes.

Discussion on ethics, values, and principles in public administration and policy goes back to the early days of the field. Some of the basic values and principles that early studies focused on are hierarchy, merit, uniformity, political neutrality, legality, specialization, efficiency, economy, effectiveness, and division of labor (Downs and Larkey 1986; Frederickson 1997; Long 1954; White 1926; Wilson 1887; Zeybekoğlu 2021). Administrative neutrality in policy making and implementation processes has been widely acknowledged due to the separation of powers in democratic systems and the politics-administration dichotomy. Frederickson (1997:58) points out that the classic theory of public administration was influenced greatly by the politics-administration dichotomy, where "elected officials decide politically which programs the government will operate and administrators then carry out those programs."

After the mid-1960s, especially as a result of increased voices of women, organized labor, ethnic groups, etc., and the influence of welfare state consensus, debate on ethics and values regained importance in public administration and policy with

[1] Two other subfields of public policy are the study and science of public policy. The study of public policy specifies what the subject matter of the discipline is and focuses on what governments do (Dye 1987:2). The science of public policy is about how to systematically study and analyze the acts of governments and their causes or reasons, circumstances, methods of execution, and outcomes or impacts on the target population (Dye 1987:7).

an emphasis on diversity, equality, and justice (Harmon 1971; Kernaghan 2003:712; Özgür 2003; Özgür and Ciğeroğlu Öztepe 2015). Harmon (1971:179) suggested that the congruence of administrative and political areas had to be recognized despite the well-established dichotomy of separation of administration and politics or policy implementation and policy making. Ethics and values of public administration both describe and advocate "a form of public administration and policy implementation that provides considerable latitude and wide discretion in carrying out the daily affairs of public organizations" (Frederickson 1997:60). One of the main reasons for this is that ambiguity and uncertainty have become the basic conditions of administrative activity since social issues and systems have rapidly changed and become indeterminate and complex since the 1960s (Harmon 1971:81–182). Besides, public administrators were urged to assert their values in the political arena and better understand the relationship of their values and motives to public policy questions (Barth 1996; Frederickson 1997). Frederickson (1997:234) argues that public administration's dedication to the values of equity and fairness is as important as its commitment to the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness because "following standards of equity and fairness can bind the citizens together" and helps build public trust.

Profound changes such as globalization, neoliberal hegemony, marketization, the digital revolution, aging populations, social and environmental crises, among others, have taken place since the 1970s with important consequences for public administration and policy. In addition, fiscal and economic crises such as the 1973 oil and 2008 financial crises forced governments to consider greater austerity, efficiency, and control over public resources. As a result, market-based approaches such as the new public management (NPM) paradigm or public choice theory have dominated the field. This domination has meant an increased focus on the principles of efficiency, economy, economic man, smaller government, market-like or -based tools and incentives, customer-orientation, self-interest, competitiveness, and freedom of choice (Benington and Moore 2011:11; Frederickson 1997:43; Ömürgönülşen 2003; Sallan Gül 2006). Nevertheless, since the 1990s, a critique of the NPM and its values has been developed, and a new emphasis on public values, the "public value," and public service seems to challenge the NPM.

This chapter is based on a literature review and hermeneutics and discusses public values and principles, normative public policy, the public value management (PVM), and the NPM. For this purpose, a general discussion on ethics and values within the context of public policy is presented. Then, a discussion on the PVM and the concept of the "public value" is carried out to understand them better and to compare and contrast the PVM especially with the NPM. Finally, this chapter examines value conflicts in public policy processes with specific reference to the case of justice and efficiency in welfare.

## 2 A Discussion on Normative Public Policy, Ethics, and Values

Ethics involves a body of written and unwritten shared rules of conduct, morals, norms, standards, values, and principles of reasoning, weighing, acting, and behaving (Blake and Davis 1964:456). "Morals are traditional restraints placed on pursuing human pleasures" and interests (Hayek 1984:324). Ethics provides general guidance and criteria on what to do and what not to do while deciding or performing an action and reasons to criticize and justify why we decide or act one way or another (von der Pfordten 2012:450). It helps distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust, or the desired and the undesired in terms of human action (Britannica 2022; Kuçuradi 2003; Lynch and Lynch 2009:5).

According to Britannica (2022), normative ethics is concerned with moral norms, values, rules, and a moral course of action that "have direct implications for what human actions, institutions, and ways of life should be like." von der Pfordten (2012:449–450) also acknowledges that normative ethics considers individual concerns, needs, interests, goals, and desires for justification of values, and their pluralistic and changeable nature according to situations, decisions, or actions. Moreover, normative ethics helps mediate between conflicting interests and values based on evidence, and it enables the assessment of human actions and relations on social, personal, professional, or organizational levels.

Values and principles are the building blocks of ethics, theoretical frameworks, approaches, and belief systems (West and Davis 2011:227). They reflect philosophical, societal, personal, and managerial norms and rules of behavior, action, reasoning, and evaluation. de Graaf and Paanakker (2022:94) define values as "qualities appreciated for, contributing to or constituting what is good, right, beautiful or worthy of praise and admiration." They come attached to people, processes, decisions, and practices, expressing some traits. They impact both the choices or preferences we make among available ends and goals and the standards, means, or implementation tools to reach these desired ends and goals (DeForest Molina 2012:377; Kernaghan 2003:711). For Mayer (2018:110), values are about "doing good" such as justice and compassion (the normative aspect) rather than just "making a good" or providing a service such as efficiency and economy (the positive aspect).

Principles are concrete and tangible criteria or tenets, which may be the building blocks of values. They also serve as the foundation for reasoning, performance measurement, and policy analysis or assessment. For example, the principle of the equality of opportunity is an important criterion to understand and assess the value of equality. Yet, it may not always be easy to differentiate values and principles. For example, efficiency, accountability, deliberation, and participation could be both a value and principle. Participation may be taken as a value in a discussion on public governance, but it may be considered as a principle in a discussion on local council meetings or public gatherings. The context of the issue and discussion (e.g., reasoning, policy analysis, or impact assessment) may help differentiate values and

principles. Besides, some public values may inherently conflict with one another. Cohen (1996, cited in Rein 2006:395) argues that the values of "deliberation" and "participation" as the two basic pillars on which the theory of democracy rests can conflict in practice; and thus, "improving the quality of participation may come at the cost of public deliberation."

Ethics, values, and principles provide guidance and criteria in policy making, management, and service delivery (Frederickson 1997; Usta and Kocaoğlu 2015). Public values and principles in public administration and policy help determine and evaluate policy options and decisions; explain and justify the reasons for choosing an action or policy over others; evaluate the actions of public officials while performing public services; and assess the outcomes of policy implementation (Frederickson 1997:158). Public values and compliance with the legal rules, and regulations in carrying out public services and duties in public administration are among the most important elements of ethics and trust in public administration (Eryılmaz 2008; Frederickson 1997). They establish the normative, philosophical base of democracy, public administration, and policy, often related to governing elites and the informed and general public. Public philosophy and corresponding values are not only steady and durable but also shifting and evolving. Besides, they are built upon certain assumptions about human nature, understanding of what is wrong and right, and how to interpret reality and to reason with particular reference to politics and administration. Moreover, they inform us about politics, society, and democracy (Wamsley 1996:361).

The American tradition of public administration has generally considered ethics as the core element of good management and organizational leadership in terms of normative codes. Nevertheless, the European tradition tends to focus on the types of ethics codes that define present behaviors in terms of legalistic codes and rules, and thus, are much more interested in the present behaviors, activities, and actions of professional bureaucracy and the "rule of law" (Cox III et al. 2009:viii). Frederickson (1997:158) points out that the current government ethics movement serves to guard against or reduce public corruption. Thus, the new ethics movement emphasizes telephone hotlines for reporting corruption and ethics abuses; ethics boards and commissions; ethics for elected, appointed, and administrative officials; financial, political, or other conflict-of-interest disclosure systems; and professional codes of ethics.

Discussion on ethics in public administration and policy has a broad scope. Frederickson (1997:158) argues that public administration is a realm of decisions, policies, and action and should be guided by a broader view of ethics as a spirit consisting of ethics, values, and morals. In fact, "The spirit of public administration is dependent on a moral base of benevolence to all citizens" (Frederickson 1997:234). The ethics or spirit of public administration include, but are not limited, the balance between efficiency and equity, between representativeness and merit, and between the values of individual rights and citizenship, public interest, or patriotism (Frederickson 1997:2).

Public values are complex, context-dependent, and related to many areas of personal, social, democratic, and organizational life (Colglazier 1991; Paanakker and

Reynaers 2020; von der Pfordten 2012). Thus, there is a widespread recognition of and a rich literature on the importance of public values in public administration and policy (Benington and Moore 2011; Bozeman 2007; Espedal et al. 2022; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Kernaghan 2003). However, academic discussions on ethics are inconclusive, and there is much space for further discussions and progress. Thus, there does not seem to be a consensus on the meaning of public values or their role in public decision- or policy making processes.

The tasks of identifying and classifying public values in general or specific to an area, and their relations to one another have also proven to be difficult due mainly to an array of competing and sometimes conflicting values in public policy making processes (der Wal 2008; Dixit and Weibull 2007; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Robert and Zeckhauser 2011; Rutgers 2008; Wagenaar 1999; von der Pfordten 2012). As Van Wart (1998:xviii; cited in DeForest Molina 2012:376) points out, the challenge for public administrators and policymakers is "to achieve a mixture of values in a workable gestalt or whole" that, in turn, requires an ongoing discussion on competing values with changing priority. In order to deliberate between potentially conflicting values, one has to relate them to different interests and analyze the emphasis placed upon them by different people, organizations, or the public. The main reason for relating values to relevant interests is that value conflicts often arise from differences in individual (e.g., quality of life, personal respect, and honesty) and social or democratic preferences, needs, and concerns (e.g., the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, fair access to public services and opportunities) (von der Pfordten 2012:468–469).

Poama (2018:40) argues that normative public policy makes a more specific classification of values in public policy for practical purposes. Public administration and policies employ or relate to different types of societal, democratic, professional, or organizational ethics, public values, and principles. For example, in the welfare field, there has always been a hot debate on such values and principles as justice, equality of opportunities, human dignity, efficiency, economy, responsibility, and conflicts or trade-offs among them. According to Poama (2018:40), public policy ethics and values are specifically related to applied (e.g., Utilitarian and Rawlsian) and constructive ethics (ethical pragmatism, social, democratic, or institutional ethics and values).

Administrative, political, or democratic ethics and values often underline the discussion when dealing with policies that involve ethical and value-related controversies. Accordingly, if one wants to resort to social inquiry for ethical justification of specific policy choices, she or he might need to apply ethical reasoning and pragmatism (Poama 2018:40). For example, multilingualism may be a public value, requiring both the recognition of and respect for different local native languages in a multi-ethnic society in which several native languages are spoken. Thus, multilingualism as a public value or principle may be used to justify the recognition of more than one language as the official language and the use of a few other major native languages in addition to the official languages in the delivery of public services, advertisements, and announcements. To give another example, the issue of switching between winter and summer time may lead to a conflict of values

because ending daylight saving involves intense discussions due to varying conceptions of time as a tool for energy savings, a technology running our lives, an altruistic government service, a policy to keep society organized and efficient, a supplementary policy for increasing economic productivity, or a human affair with health and behavioral effects.

Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) acknowledge the difficulty of preparing an exclusive list and classification of values and principles used in policy analysis or for other purposes and point out the need for further research. They argue, "If there is any single item for a public values research agenda, it is developing approaches to sorting out values and making sense of their relationships" (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:376). Despite this difficulty, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007:376) offer a classification of values as prime values (e.g., general ethical, personal, and societal values) utilized for philosophical and moral inquiry and instrumental values (or principles) (e.g., democratic, professional, and managerial values) used for policy assessments, managerial decisions, or casual inquiry. The basic feature of a prime value is that it is a thing pursued for its own sake, valued for itself, and fully contained. Justice, equality, freedom, and trust are some examples of prime values. However, instrumental values are principles valued for their ability to achieve (or measure) other values (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:373). Quality, dialogue, timeliness, and participation are the examples of instrumental values.

Kernaghan (2003:712) offers another classification of values under four categories: ethical, democratic, professional, and personal. Ethical values refer to general ethical and societal values such as justice, accountability, responsibility, respect, loyalty, excellence, honesty, and probity. Democratic values are about politics, policy making, the behaviors or actions of citizens and groups, the way democratic institutions and mechanism functions, etc. Such values include the rule of law, responsiveness, representativeness, accountability, loyalty, solidarity, openness, and legality. One could also add the values and principles of equality, justice, participation, deliberation, compromise, advocacy, stability, majority rule, and local autonomy. Professional or managerial ethics, values, rules, and principles mainly concern the appropriate or desired to function of organizations or organizational behaviors such as effectiveness, efficiency, excellence, impartiality, accountability, merit, innovation, and neutrality. They are about how to behave in an organization, carry out specific public duties or activities, and deliver public services. They guide appointed or elected public officials, and shape criteria by which public officials' actions, policy options or the implementation of adopted public policies may be assessed. Societal and personal values are about the way how humans ought to behave in social and personal life, such as caring, tolerance, decency, honesty, solidarity, courage, altruism, integrity, and human dignity (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:377–378; Kernaghan 2003:712, 716).

No matter how values and principles are classified, they are applied to various public policies with different reasons or needs, and their meaning may be context-sensitive. Public values and principles may vary according to policy areas or specific policies and the characteristics of the target population. For instance, values, principles, and criteria applicable to welfare, education, health, and poverty may

differ from those applied to security, crime prevention, or economic development. To illustrate the point, several general and specific principles of urban policy presented by OECD/UN-HABITAT/UNOPS (2021:104–105) and UN-HABITAT (2014) include prosperity, well-being, interdependency, quality, accountability, opportunities for all, participation, innovation, policy coherence, and cooperation. Besides, some principles may be more policy specific to an area or the field of study. For example, the principles of "precaution," "intergenerational justice," "sustainability," "prevention at the source," and "polluter pays" are more specific to the field of environmental policy.

## 3 The Public Value Management (PVM)

Market-based approaches such as the NPM and public choice theory have dominated the field of public administration and policy after the 1970s and questioned traditional values of the field such as public interest, equity, and neutrality (Frederickson 1997:34; O'Flynn 2007:353–355; Soyocak Özalp 2020:258). The NPM promotes the free market and its principles such as choice, competition, and self-interest and opposes state intervention in the free market for the sake of public interest, equality of opportunities, income redistribution, and social justice (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Hood 1991:4–5). The main belief behind market-oriented focus is that private organizations and nonprofits can provide services better, more efficiently, and economically in a free market system than public sector organizations (Frederickson 1997:91). The NPM paradigm also underscores efficiency and economy as the critical performance measurement of government activity and sees citizens as customers (Ömürgönülşen 2003).

In market-based approaches, society is seen as the sum of atomistic individuals, and social welfare, as the sum of the utility of individuals. Such market-oriented approaches focus on personal utility, pleasure, and interest "without particular concern for community values and notions such as ethics, a 'greater good,' or the possibility of public interest. The self-interest assumption provides a view of the public as if it were a customer functioning in the marketplace" (Frederickson 1997:34). Hefetz and Warner (2004:174) assert that the market ideology does not properly address public values and principles. Yet, "serving the public interest is the fundamental mission of governments and public institutions," which are expected "to perform their duties with integrity, in a fair and unbiased way" (OECD 2005:95). For example, Frederickson (1997:171) maintains that citizens concerned with the issues of fairness and social justice are likely to see government as legitimate if social justice is taken satisfactorily into account in public policy issues.

Consequently, a need seems to have emerged to rethink the fundamental premises of the market-oriented NPM approach, especially since the 1990s (Benington and Moore 2011; Hefetz and Warner 2004; O'Flynn 2007; Williams and Shearer 2011). A paradigm shift for fostering public interest, common good, the "public value," public service, and citizen involvement has been taking place since the

1990s (Benington and Moore 2011; Fung 2015; Frederickson 1997). The PVM brought about this recent shift especially by challenging market-based perspectives and other classical top-down public administration and policy approaches (Bryson et al. 2014:446; Karkın 2015:251). It seems to be a balanced approach between public administration theory and the NPM (Karkın 2015:252) and provides a new means of thinking about government activity, policy making, and service delivery (Badia et al. 2014; Köseoğlu and Sobacı 2015; Moore 1995; Stoker 2006). The PVM changes its primary focus from market-, self-interest-, and profit-orientation toward the creation of the "public value" and the achievement of broader societal and public goals, such as trust, legitimacy, and the "public value" as well as service targets such as efficiency, effectiveness, and quality (O'Flynn 2007:258–360).

In the PVM, the core strategic functions of public administration and policy are redefined based on citizen and community values and needs (Moore 1995). Moore (1995:70–71) argues for a move away from strong market-based arguments and values and the dichotomy of the market versus state provision. Instead of "the private interest" of market-oriented approaches and the NPM model, he offers the "public value" as a basic criterion for the questions of legitimacy, resource allocation or reallocation, value creation, decision- or policy making, and impact assessment.

Stoker (2006:41) views the PVM as an alternative approach for a post-competitive collaborative era. Stoker's model also incorporates effective governance mechanisms for public and community organizations and citizens to participate, fostering government accountability, transparency, openness, and responsiveness. According to Frederickson (1997:224–225), public governance includes not only public institutions but also all organizational forms and manifestations of civic, private, or quasi-governmental collective public policy actions. Since citizens are affected by public policy decisions, they should be included in public policy making and public governance processes. Citizen participation and bureaucratic discretion and advocacy as a part of public governance and public policy process increase public trust and the fair and efficient distribution of public goods and services (Frederickson 1997:107).

The "public value" also guides decision-makers in assessing public value(s) created or the outcomes of policies implemented. Based on Moore's approach, it is argued that the PVM establishes a basis for public decision- and policy making and implementation, managerial activities, and public interest (Benington and Moore 2011; Horner and Hazel 2005; Kelly et al. 2002; Stoker 2006). For the PVM, public policies must be valuable to citizens, politically legitimate and sustainable, and operationally possible and practical (O'Flynn 2007:359).

Moore (1995) explains his public value perspective via a strategic triangle. Moore (1995:71) underlines the importance of the PVM's strategic triangle, which rests on the value circle, operational capacity, and authorizing environment. The "value circle" relates to the goals, desired results, and impact of public policies, programs, and services and enables the assessment of the level of success or performance in achieving these goals. The value circle addresses the revealed priorities, goals, desired services, and choices of society and indicates the normative importance of pursuing these goals to bring measurable benefit to the public.

As the second component, the "operational capacity" refers to means and assets that make the strategy operationally feasible, that is, expertise and capability. It delivers the "public value" through actual service provision, desirable outcomes, and other public values for citizens, such as quality services, public trust, efficiency, accountability, or the equal distribution of opportunities via the process of governance in which public managers play a critical role. The "operational capacity" informs us about the arrangement and operation of organization and the deployment of resources to achieve the desired ends and to create the "public value."

The "authorizing environment," as the third component of Moore's triangle, relates to legitimacy, confidence, trust, and involvement in government. Legitimacy and trust will effectively encourage citizens to take part in government activities (Yotawut 2018:172–173). The "authorizing environment" indicates that legal, governmental authorization and ongoing support from the key stakeholders, civic organizations, and citizens are needed to realize the declared goals and policy preferences and for the survival of representative government institutions (Frederickson 1997:37). Kelly, Mulgan, and Muers (2002:17) consider legitimacy as critical to the creation of the "public value" because a lack of trust or legitimacy would destroy public value even if service targets are met.

In short, Moore's triangle suggests that, to create the "public value," it is important to achieve the three components (setting and realizing social goals, delivering essential services, and maintaining trust and legitimacy) within the triangle or chain. The chain includes inputs in the forms of policies, programs, and activities to provide public services or outputs for citizens or beneficiaries so that social outcomes or the "public value" can be produced as the intended aim of public actions. In the PVM, the role of public management involves facilitating the smooth functioning of this entire chain and the production of the "public value" as an outcome performance measure rather than partially realizing inputs, outputs, economy, or productivity. The strategic triangle provides a useful tool for "public managers to create opportunities beyond the policy implementation role to value production for citizens." Besides, the PVM acknowledges public sector invention and the worth of managers in the public sector. In fact, "It is best viewed as a means by public managers to recognize and implement operational developments in the public sector organization" (Bojang 2021:8).

## *3.1 Defining the "Public Value"*

The PVM offers the "public value" as a basic measure to meet the challenges of the market-oriented NPM paradigm. It is "the most significant concept in administration discourse and policy studies" in recent decades (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:355). Public values in plural form are explained in detail above, referring to a range of values from honesty to loyalty, equity to efficiency, and responsiveness to neutrality. Nevertheless, the "public value" in its singular form is "the combined view of the public about what they regard as valuable" (Talbot 2006:7; cited in Meynhardt

2022:4). The "public value" may refer to a body of public values, principles, rights, prerogatives, benefits, and obligations that are produced and applied in public service delivery, management, and decision- and policy making process. It may involve anything valuable to citizens or users, such as equal opportunities or better public services delivered and received, an enhanced trust created and enjoyed, or diminished or prevented violent crime rates. According to Bozeman (2007:13), the "public value" may be related to three main areas: (i) the rights and benefits collectively defined by and entitled to citizens in democratic processes; (ii) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and, (iii) the values and principles on which governments and policies should be based. Bozeman's approach also acknowledges that the "public value" is not only created by public sector organizations or managers but also by civic or private individuals, organizations, or managers.

Meynhardt (2022) underlines the importance of basic needs in understanding the concept of the "public value" and argues that humans constantly evaluate their environment regarding basic need satisfaction. The value created is something more related to the subjective experiences of individuals accompanied by emotional-motivational states than something objective and measurable. Thus, "value resides in the relationship between a perceiving subject and a contributing entity." Public, civic, or private organizations and goods and services they produce must appeal to these needs to create public value. Public value is dynamic and determined by the subjective fulfillment of four basic needs: (1) gaining control and coherence over one's conceptual system, (2) positive relationships, (3) maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain, and (4) positive self-evaluation. Thus, "organizational behavior that is perceived by individuals as promoting stability, community, ethical conduct, and improving the overall quality of life holds (public value) for these individuals" (Meynhardt 2022:1).

The concept of the "public value" in its singular form does not deny the existence and interplay of multiple public values, preferences, and choices (Talbot 2008) and resembles the traditional concept of the "public interest." Both the "public value" and "public interest" have broad meanings and emphasize general societal good rather than personal interests (Meynhardt 2009:211). They are often defined, presumably, in a networked governance process or reasoned political discourse. Bozeman's approach seems to validate the similarity and overlap between the two concepts even though they have developed separately from each other in retrospect (Bozeman 2007:2; Köseoğlu and Tuncer 2014:149).

Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the two concepts despite similarities in their meanings. As one of the prime values in public administration and policy, public interest is what decision and policymakers aim to increase and, if possible, maximize as the general benefit or common good of society. Public interest refers to a set of claims related to citizens' collective needs, requiring the state's intervention to protect and realize public interest when needed or/and necessary. On the contrary, the "public value" concerns citizens' experiences from public policy implementations or actions. Unlike public interest, in the "public value," the focus is not only on how the actions and operations of public administration are carried

out but also on what kind of impact (value) these actions, regulations, or interventions will produce for citizens, beneficiaries, or stakeholders (Karkın 2018:399). It also focuses on collective value creation and overcoming public and market failures and on active rather than passive protection of private or public interests (Alford and O'Llynn 2009:176; Köseoğlu and Tuncer 2014:149; Soyocak Özalp 2020:256). Moreover, Bozeman (2007:12) argues that public interest and the "public value" differ because the former refers to extensive ideals difficult to measure, but the latter has a more specific, identifiable, and measurable content. However, especially protecting the public interest through public service provision, regulation, and intervention often involve the creation of public value for citizens or service users.

The concept of collective preferences is used in the PVM, distinguishing it from market-based approaches. The "public value" is more than a summation of the individual preferences of the users or beneficiaries of public services, not like private exchanges for profit in the market. It is rather created through not only "outcomes" but also "processes" such as participation in the policy process, policy deliberations, and social exchanges that generate trust or fairness in society (O'Flynn 2007:358). Its creation is based on the politically mediated expression of collectively determined preferences through deliberation involving citizens, elected and appointed officials, private and civic groups and organizations, and key stakeholders (Kelly et al. 2002; Moore 1995; Moore and Braga 2004; Stoker 2006). The "public value" is defined and redefined in this collective decision- and policy making process via legitimate platforms (Smith 2004). Thus, politics also plays a role in value judgments and the definition and creation of the "public value" (Rhodes and Wanna 2007). Smith (2004:69–70) claims that "Public officials must engage political authority, collaborate within and across institutional boundaries, manage efficiently and effectively, engage with communities and users of services and reflectively develop their sense of vocation and public duty." In addition to collectively forming and creating the "public value," citizens collectively consume it and both forming and consuming involve the creation of the "public value" for the public by the public, civic, private, and public organizations (Kelly et al. 2002:4). The "public value" is delivered to citizens via better services they receive and benefit, enhanced trust they value or social cohesion they enjoy, or diminished or prevented social problems they face (Alford and Hughes 2008:132; Horner and Hazel 2005:34; Köseoğlu and Tuncer 2014:150).

## *3.2 The "Public Value" in Public Governance*

The PVM aims to explore how public organizations can operationalize public values and principles, provide public officials and managers with simple tools to articulate the goals of their organizations, and assess the outcome of public actions or public services delivered. In this assessment, the "public value" is introduced as a criterion against which the performance of public organizations is evaluated, resource allocations or policy decisions are made, and appropriate systems of public

service delivery or policy implementation are determined and examined (Moore 1993:2–3). Moore (1995, 2013) underlines the need for a measurement system for pinpointing good and bad performance in creating public value and proposes a framework for measuring public value. Thus, the PVM is concerned with what is most valuable in public services delivered and how to increase effective management and policy processes to create better public value (Yotawut 2018:169). Moore's (1995:1) public value perspective involves helping public administrators to create public value by producing quality services and establishing public trust.

The PVM has many aspects resembling networked or public governance forms that involve the full range of public organizations – governmental, nongovernmental, for-profit, nonprofit, state, and proxies. Stoker (2006:47–49) proposes a collaborative networked model engaging many stakeholders for legitimacy and value creation. Thus, the domain of public administration seems to be considerably enlarged. In this larger domain, the distinctions between political and administrative realms are also blurred (Fredericson 1997:85; Meynhardt 2009:193). Frederickson (1997:58) points out that, in the classical view of public administration, elected officials would make political decisions and policies in classical public administration, and administrators then would carry out those policies. The scope of public administration and policy involves not only the implementation of public policy and the effective organization and management of public agencies but also the maintenance of regime values, social justice, and responsive leadership for all citizens (Frederickson 1997:228; Ingram and Schneider 2006:170). Frederickson (1997:227) claims that the task of public administration is "to efficiently, economically, and equitably organize and manage" a full range of governmental, quasi-governmental, and nongovernmental institutions. Public organizations and institutions should be managed "to enhance the prospects for change, responsiveness, and citizen involvement" (Frederickson 1997:231). Thus, the effectiveness of public administrators may be predicated on "an understanding of politics and the political process as well as an ability to manage public agencies in a political context" (Frederickson 1997:54). A range of leadership skills such as conflict moderation, information sharing, trust building, recognition of ambiguity, and critical and innovative thinking are needed for effective, efficient, and successful management (O'Flynn 2007:362), but "effective political skills make the spirit of public administration possible" (Frederickson 1997:77). In addition, public managers are required to develop a keen ability "to weigh up which governance structures will work best in what circumstances or which relationship form is most appropriate under what conditions" (O'Flynn 2007:362). Such views conflict with market-based approaches and the traditional hierarchical top-down models of public administration.

According to Moore (1995:71), creating public value is a public manager's main activity and ultimate aim. It provides a criterion for the assessment of the success of a public manager, and the PVM holds public managers responsible for providing public services that create public value for citizens (Karkın 2015:252). For this purpose, public managers are responsible for efficiently and effectively using resources to pursue substantive public value aims (Moore 1993:2). They have a strategic position in the intersection of value, legitimacy, and feasibility as the three

main aspects of Moore's triangle. In the PVM, public managers are supposed to "manage through networks, to be open to learning in different ways, and to draw in resources from a range of sources" (Stoker 2006:41). They have to coordinate both their own organizations and a set of civic, public, or private organizations with different and competing private or public interests. The goal here is to create public value(s) by developing policies according to public needs and demands (Benington and Moore 2011:3–4; Broussine 2003:175). Thus, in the PVM, the role of public managers goes beyond the constrained roles adopted in the traditional administration paradigm as implementers of grand political plans or in the NPM paradigm as pursuers of performance and efficiency gains, to a role as the advocates of public value. Moore (1995:299) argues that public managers are "explorers commissioned by society to search for public value." Frederickson (1997:58) joins this argument by claiming that public administration and policy implementation involve considerable discretion in carrying out the daily affairs of public organizations. Besides, embracing social equity as the third normative pillar of public administration, in addition to efficiency and economy, requires public servants to work toward achieving fairness, justice, public interest, or common good (Frederickson 1997:113) and to act as a facilitator (Barth 1996:179).

The creation of public value requires public managers to pursue multiple goals. They need not only to achieve organizational performance targets but also to be more broadly concerned with steering networks of providers in the quest for the creation of public value (e.g., needed quality services) and responding to the collective preferences of the citizenry or clients. In fact, as Hefetz and Warner (2004:171) argue, public administrators do more than steer market processes as their private counterparts do; they balance organizational and political concerns to secure public value in a political milieu interwoven by democratic values, citizen preferences, laws, and regulations. Similarly, Stoker (2006:46) points out that service delivery in the public sector is different than simply buying and selling goods for profit making in the free market. While private companies focus on efficiency, quality, security, and reliability, public managers combine these concerns with accountability, trust, justice, equal opportunities, and citizen participation.

## 4 Value Conflicts: The Case of Justice and Efficiency in Welfare

It is important to better understand the application of public value(s) in public policy making, and the conflicts and trade-offs involved in this application. According to Pill (2021:53), a policy making process almost always embodies conflicts or trade-offs among values, especially between efficiency and equity or justice, since this process is interwoven with social demands, needs, desires, or preferences, and social, political, and democratic values and principles. Market-oriented approaches use efficiency and economy as the basic measure to evaluate public policies or asses

their outcomes. Frederickson (1997:97–98) argues that these principles may be necessary "but not sufficient measures as guides for public administration. Social equity should be added as a third component of the theory to make the field responsive to the needs of the citizens." He maintains that "Efficiency and economy are primarily the theories of management, while social equity is primarily a theory of government" (Frederickson 1997:114).

Governments develop various policies and undertake many activities based on or devoted to promoting specific values and principles with an impact on efficiency and competitiveness in the market or social justice in society. For example, programs providing welfare services and social aid and tax policies are explicitly designed to influence social justice as a public value. Social security and aid programs and higher tax rates for the wealthy impact those people's incomes, their living standards, and their spending or investment decisions. Other policies (i.e., regulatory policies, specific programs for the disabled, the elderly, and other disadvantaged groups) or the actions of various local, regional, or civic organizations may also influence income distribution, social justice, efficiency, or economy.

Trade-offs, contradictions, and conflicts among values and principles underlying a public policy may arise since applying and realizing all pertinent values and principles in the same public policy to their optimal level may be difficult, if not impossible. While a policy may achieve efficiency to a great extent, it may fall short of accomplishing the same level of justice. There are many ways policymakers can go about balancing these conflicting values of justice and the principle of efficiency or promoting one over another. Examples may include such policies as redistributing income to protect public welfare (on the side of social justice) or protecting competitiveness and stimulating investment in the free market to maintain full employment and promote economic development (on the side of efficiency or productivity). Thus, it could be argued that a success measure for a policy may involve its ability to realize and reconcile competing principles and values.

Another reason for value conflicts and trade-offs in policy making processes is that people approach controversial public policy issues from different angles based on their conflicting or varying interests or different ethical stands, ideas, and values about how and why things are done. Personal value differences and conflicts of interests are frequently at the core of these disputes, requiring a discussion of how values are realized or what role or position individuals take in adapting or realizing these values and resolving conflicts. Another main cause of conflict of values or interests is related to the normative questions of whether or not governments should play any role at all or how much a role they should play. Conflicts of values or interests may be reconciled or mediated via effective implementation or democratic public governance mechanisms such as deliberation, citizen participation, and elections (Stone 1988:68).

It would enlighten the discussion of value conflicts in public policy processes if the trade-off between justice and efficiency is discussed in more detail. One of the main reasons for this trade-off between justice and efficiency is the zero-sum relationship between them. The more one has of one, and the less she or he tends to have of the other. Stone (1988:65–68) gives three reasons for a zero-sum relationship

between the two values. The first reason is the motivation argument, suggesting that equality eliminates the differential rewards necessary to inspire people to be productive. Any state intervention to equalize personal incomes through welfare grants, progressive taxation, or minimum wage regulations would stifle individual efforts, entrepreneurial activity, and productivity in society. Those with a market-based view have traditionally been interested in minimizing dependency and maximizing personal responsibility, and they have placed more emphasis on the free market mechanism, individual choices, capacities, responsibilities, and productivity to reduce poverty.

The second reason for the zero-sum relationship between the values of justice and efficiency is that to maintain equity or justice, the government needs to continuously interfere with individual choices about how to use resources, and doing so, jeopardizes individual freedoms, useful experimentation, productive innovation, and the competitive functioning of the free market. Hayek (1976:9) argued that any government activity deliberately trying to achieve material or substantive equality or a substantive ideal of distributive justice would destroy individual freedom to choose and to pursue one's own interest and utility in the marketplace. From a market-oriented view, attempting to create equality of results via redistribution of welfare services and restore social justice undermines and ultimately destroys the concept of the rule of law and expands the power of government at the expense of economic man and personal responsibility (Hayek 1976; Sowell 1987). Glazer (1988:42) openly rejects the idea that government programs would improve human conditions.

The third reason for the zero-sum relationship between two conflicting values is the waste and inefficiency that government intervention produces. Market-based approaches oppose excessive governmental interventions. Friedman and Friedman (1980) claims that most government activities constitute threats to the competitive and effective functioning of the free market. In their view, a normally functioning competitive free market would deliver just results, and the most efficient allocation of resources according to market rules would meet individuals' needs and ensure prosperity. Maintaining justice via redistributive policies and welfare programs requires large administrative machinery that uses up resources, increases alternative costs, represses competitiveness, and is counterproductive. Even if the state is to be involved in the market, this intervention must be designed to use the power of market incentives or market-mechanisms such as vouchers and competition (Friedman and Friedman 1980; Murray 1984).

Most of the arguments by market-based approaches are based on the assumptions that everybody is treated equally and that all the market functions efficiently and competitively. However, the market does not often work as theorized; individuals often do not have equal access to opportunities and resources; and they rarely make informed and rational decisions. Thus, the markets cannot allocate resources efficiently, especially when there are important externalities, monopolies, misinformation, inequalities, or irrational human behaviors involved. For instance, if there is imperfect competition and monopolies, prices and wages in the market would be determined according to the will of monopolies. This would create a

reason for government intervention in the market both to ensure its optimal functioning and to overcome its shortcomings. It may also require state regulations on protecting the public interest and social justice or providing accessibility to basic public services (Harris 1987; Hauptmann 1996). Moreover, markets may not provide some public goods and services with extensive externalities at price levels that many people cannot reach or purchase, such as education, health, and some insurance services. Such cases may lead to public funding or production of some public goods and services.

Richardson (1997) argues against zero-sum approach. When there are multiple conflicting values, the best solution may not be to opt only for one among them but rather to find a way that all the relevant and important values and goals could be achieved to a great extent simultaneously (Richardson 1997:28; cited in Winship 2012:114). However, there is the problem of a single individual deliberating about the goals and values that she or he would enjoy, and the more difficult problem of groups of individuals deliberating about shared ends and values society would enjoy. An integrative or coherent solution would be achieving win-win situations as opposed to zero-sum outcomes or finding areas of agreement or potential compatibility that would produce an "overlapping consensus" or "integrative solution" (Winship 2012:114–115). An integrative solution tends to turn a conflict into a win-win situation by facilitating to reach a situation where all the values and goals of competing parties are achieved simultaneously to a great extent.

Critical approaches question market-based approaches and their tolerance for high levels of inequalities in today's societies. The free market mechanism rests on the idea that differences of status and wealth among people help motive people and increase competitiveness and economic growth, but the existing income gap between the rich and the poor and inequalities are at unacceptably high levels and harm social justice. Thus, it cannot be defended as necessary to sustain motivation, competitiveness, and economic growth (Galbraith 1996:65). Harvey (1973) argued that jointly exploring efficiency and social justice would be most beneficial in the long run for any society. If efficiency was pursued at any cost and social costs were ignored in the short run, those bearing the costs are likely to be a source of long-run inefficiency either through a decline in motivation, cooperation, and participation in the social process of production or through forms of anti-social behavior. However, Harvey (1973:97) asserts that a single-minded pursuit of social justice may also be "counter-productive in the long run to device socially just distribution if the size of the product to be distributed shrinks markedly through inefficient use of scarce resources." Similarly, Frederickson (1997:117–119) argues that any universal scope for equality is impossible and undesirable. A compound or complex theory of social equity based on various types of individual equalities, block equalities, or equalities of opportunity would be relatively easy to apply to social issues and public policy making as well as to the process of deciding what is to be distributed equally (Walzer 1983:6).

Critical approaches also oppose the arguments of jeopardized innovation, experimentation, and freedom. According to them, the capitalist system needs regulation and intervention to overcome market failures and to ensure the optimal functioning

of the market. Besides, the market-oriented approaches tend to disregard the poor and disadvantaged groups in society. A person can function in the marketplace if she or he has the necessary resources to exchange in the market. However, if a person does not have the necessary resources, no such free choice and voluntary exchange may be available (Frederickson 1997:36). In some cases, the market distribution of income might be so unequal that it cannot be socially desirable and acceptable on account of social justice and, thus, creating a rationale for government redistribution programs (Levy 1995; Rawls 1971).

From the critical perspective, the welfare state is seen to have a responsibility to make sure that option rights – such as freedom of conscience, freedom of liberty, property rights, and so forth – are benefited by all citizens justly. Yet, these rights must be supplemented with welfare rights in order for citizens, especially the worst-off or the disadvantaged members of society, to enjoy a range of common opportunities and certain decent life chances fairly (Galbraith 1996:3–4; Moon 1993:98–99; Rawls 1971:3–4). The goals of state intervention may involve protecting competitiveness, regulating monopolies, lowering unemployment, and alleviating unjust market outcomes via guaranteeing minimum income and providing welfare aid. In this regard, Harvey argued that new patterns of governance structures such as decentralized planning, decision-, or policy making mechanisms would be needed in the capitalist societies so that deprivation, systematic or structural poverty, and degrading wage levels were eliminated wherever possible. This would help to protect and improve the total productive power and common good available to society (Harvey 1973:12, 115–116). Similarly, Galbraith (1996:65) offered a support system for the poor based on a progressive income tax, removal of the current tax and expenditure abatements to the rich, health insurance, unemployment compensation, and a socially adequate minimum wage. For example, enhancing access to such public services as sanitation, cooking fuel, electricity, health, employment, education, and social protection were key factors in reducing poverty levels in developing countries in the first two decades of the 2000s (UNDP and OPHI 2022).

Another characteristic of the state is that it delivers services, and distributes or redistributes resources not only to the needy or disadvantaged members of a society but also to those who went bankrupt, who gain interest on treasury securities, or who are the well-off or businessmen as the members of the same society. Galbraith (1992) maintains that social expenditures favorable to the fortunate such as financial rescue, military spending, and interest payments, often constitute the largest part of government budgets and have shown the greatest increase in recent times. However, these are not the main items targeted for reduction or elimination in an era of financial crisis, austerity, and retrenchment. During austerity times, spending for social services and education are the areas that first come on the agenda for governmental budget cuts (Galbraith 1996:3–4).

The PVM shifts focus from self-interest or individual utility and profit-orientation toward achieving broader public goals and offers the concept of the "public value" as a basic criterion for public decision- or policy making, resource allocation or reallocation, and the assessment of outcomes. Compared to the market-based

approaches, especially the NPM, the PVM pursues broader societal outcomes such as creating and maintaining public value, trust, legitimacy, and effectiveness (O'Flynn 2007:360). The market-based views fail to consider comprehensively and adequately the morally significant qualities, aspirations, and properties that society values such as ethics, a "greater good," or the possibility of a public interest (von der Pfordten 2012:455). Instead, the PVM emphasizes the fulfillment of citizen demands and needs and aims to improve public welfare by creating public value for citizens and beneficiaries (Bojang 2021:5). Public value created may include increased social welfare, inclusiveness, social acceptance, trust, self-respect, legitimacy as well as personal benefits from public value created and public service outcomes realized for citizens such as quality, security, fulfillment of citizen needs, and efficiency (Meynhardt 2022:1; O'Flynn 2007:358–360). For example, garbage collection services benefit citizens personally and publicly, such as collecting personal rubbish, protecting personal and public health, cleaner house and streets, and better personal and social welfare. This example indicates that the PVM provides ways of assessment of the outcomes of public services and their impact on citizens. It also makes it possible to differentiate between private value (collection of personal rubbish or protection of personal health) and public value (protection of public health and environment).

As opposed to both the NPM and classical public administration, the PVM advocates policy deliberations and social exchanges as well as goods and services produced for citizenry rather than fulfillment of individual self-interests in the market. The PVM envisions effective governance mechanisms for civic, private, public, and community organizations and citizens to participate, fostering government accountability, transparency, openness, and responsiveness, bringing it closer to public governance approach (Bozeman 2002:150; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:373; Meynhardt 2022:1). For the PVM, public policies should be publicly valuable, effectively participative for citizens, politically legitimate, and operationally feasible by public administration (O'Flynn 2007:359; Yotawut 2018:172–173). Thus, the creation of public value takes place in a far more complex, diffuse, delayed, and democratic public governance mechanisms, involving not only "outcomes" but also the politically mediated collective legitimate policy- or decision-making by elected and appointed government officials, citizens, and other public, private, and civic groups and organizations. Therefore, the PVM deviates from both the NPM and classical public administration especially by redefining the core strategic functions of public administration and policy based on citizen and community values and needs and by moving away from the dichotomies of the market versus state and of administration versus politics.

A last but not least important aspect that differentiates the PVM from the NPM or the classical public administration is the role of public management that involves facilitating the smooth functioning of pubic governance process, the delivery of public services, and the creation of public value. Public managers are urged to go beyond policy implementation role and facilitate the production of public value for citizens rather than only partially realize performance measures such as economy or productivity. In this respect, it resembles the new public administration movement

of the 1960s. However, the PVM does not expect that public managers specifically or primarily consider the outcomes of their actions or public policies on disadvantaged groups in society as opposed to the new public administration.

## 5 Conclusion

This chapter discusses public values, the "public value," value conflicts, and the basic characteristics of the PVM and compares and contrasts the PVM with market-based approaches. All the approaches discussed in this chapter seem to agree on a general understanding of the free and competitively functioning market and individual freedoms. Yet, they differ in their approach to public intervention in the market, common good or general welfare, creation or protection of public and personal interests or values, and the role of the civic sector. As a field of study, normative public policy has its roots going back to the birth of public administration studies but especially started to develop in the 1960s in the United States with a focus on diversity, equality, social justice, and effectiveness as the prime values along with efficiency and economy. After the 1970s, the NPM shifted focus to efficiency, economy, productivity, self-interest, and competitiveness. The PVM is a relatively new approach still evolving based on the critiques of the NPM and classical public administration. It seems to be influenced by the views of deliberative democracy and public governance with a focus on citizen participation, public deliberation, and the effective delivery of public value for citizens.

The PVM has a post-competitive and integrative view of the public, civic, and private sectors in creating and maintaining public value or public interest as opposed to the NPM approach's focus on market mechanism and values and classical public administration's focus on bureaucracy and hierarchy. Even though there are nuances among its prominent proponents, the PVM is a new perspective with a vision to move beyond the market versus the state approaches (O'Flynn 2007:353). Besides, Meynhardt (2009:193) argues that the PVM cannot be restricted only to the field of public administration because it relates to multiple sectors, goals, public values, citizen/user preferences, and the creation of public value for citizens via public governance mechanisms, processes, polices, and services. It gives a major role to the public sector and welcomes state intervention or regulation in creating and maintaining public value but welcomes contributions from the private and civic sectors.

The NPM redefines public managers' role in a proactive direction in creating public value, requiring them to develop new skills in the complex and political milieu of public governance and deliberation. Frederickson (1997:75) argues that the increased use of proxies in public service delivery raises questions about accountability and control because "government officials now have responsibility for programs that they do not control." Thus, there seems to be a need to give more attention to "co-alignment," participatory public deliberation, and good public governance. It is also necessary to focus on the development of effective public

administrators who could understand the "complex network of players and institutions over which they have only imperfect control, but on which they must depend to operate their agencies' programs" (Salamon 1989:20). Yet, Frederickson (1997:104–105) points out the problematic nature of administrative discretion and the powerful role given to a public managers and notices that it sometimes may also work for the benefit of the few. He cites the ideas of Lowi (1969) to illustrate the opposing viewpoint. Lowi was troubled by institutional connections between the administrative state and interest-group politics and claimed that the broad discretion of public managers and the influence of interest-group politics might violate the public interest and deny the rule of law. Lowi suggested the limitation of managerial discretion by restoring the rule of law and enacting new regulations. However, according to Frederickson (1997:105), the solution does not lie in enacting more laws and implementing them in a strict and narrow sense or in enlarging bureaucracy. Instead, he offers that administrative discretion is harnessed to the common good via the rule of law, public values, and skillful leadership.

The PVM also seems to enlarge the perspective on public values and principles. Bozeman (2007:13) sees the "public value" as related to public values, rules, rights, and obligations. Yet, Moore seems to be ambiguous about public goods, public services, public interest, or public domain (Oakley et al. 2006:3). According to Rhodes and Wanna (2007:408), Moore is also unclear whether the "public value" is a theoretical framework, a concept, or an operational tool for public management, but the two scholars argue that the ambiguous nature of the "public value" and its various applications increases its popularity. Besides, Bovaird (2008) claims the concept of the "public value" helps better understand the contribution of public services to people and society. However, the concept needs to be enhanced to highlight the different aspects of the "public value" created by public, civic, or private interventions (value added for users, wider groups, or the general public) in order for it to become more operational. If enhanced, the concept would be operationally more useful in assessing the outcomes of public policy implementations. In addition, it is also asserted that Moore's approach tends to ignore important power and value conflicts and to rebrand market-based approaches it claims to oppose and overcome. The NPM has the risk of leaving socioeconomic inequalities unnoticed and substitutes "managed democracy" for more democratic forms of ruling and good public governance based on shared power, genuine citizen participation, and such public values as justice and equality (Dahl and Soss 2014:497, cited in Meynhardt 2022:3).

The PVM seems to have the strength of challenging the premises of especially the NPM paradigm that tends to downgrade and marginalize notions of public interest, public value, and justice in its quest for the dominance of the free market and self-interest, efficiency, and economy. It provides a new way of understanding and a tool for gauging public interest, public service delivery, public management, and public policies. Despite its strong stand against market-based approaches, Bozeman (2007) and Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007:354) assert that the PVM needs to enhance its operational or analytical aspects, quantified assessment capacity, measurability, and applicability to policy issues because it may be considered as

weak compared to such market-based approaches. Measuring the "public value" as well as public interest or other public values such as equity or effectiveness remains problematic due to their elusiveness. Besides, the term "value" is relative and sensitive to changes in context or individual circumstances since the value position of citizens is subject to change with time (Bojang 2021:8).

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# Rethinking the Role of Nudge in Public Policy

**Sema Müge Özdemiray**

**Abstract** The view of achieving the desired results in public policies depends on steering individuals, with decisions and actions incompatible with rationality, in a predictable way has pushed policymakers to collaborate with psychology methods and theories. Accordingly, in the recent policy design of public authorities, there is an increasing interest in the nudge approach, which is considered a less costly, more liberal, more citizen-focused alternative to traditional policy instruments. Nudging, which has produced effective solutions for different social problems, has also brought with it many criticisms. These criticisms have led to questioning alternative and advanced new policy tools in the field of behavioral public policy. In this study, the "nudge-plus" approach is discussed as one of these policy tools, which was put forward by Peter John and Gerry Stoker and which argues that the criticisms directed to nudge can be overcome by incorporating a citizen-oriented perspective into the nudge approach. This study aims to draw attention to the prediction that the use of the nudge-plus method in public policy design can produce more effective results in line with today's participatory and collaborative administration approach.

**Keywords** Behavioral public policy · Nudge · Nudge-plus · Peter John · Gerry Stoker · Policy tools · Criticisms · Psychology · Decisions · Citizen-oriented

## 1 Introduction

The complex structure of human nature, diversifying demands and needs, conflicting social problems, etc., decisions made and public policies created by public organizations, which try to operate in an uncertain environment under the influence of many factors, are effective on all citizens. In the process of effectively developing such inclusive and binding policies, the rational human model of traditional economics has been taken as the basis, and the proposition that people's behavior is

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determined by their personal interests has been accepted for many years. This approach, which excludes moral behaviors of individuals, in other words, behaviors formed under the influence of psychological and sociological factors and incompatible with rationality started to be questioned due to its inability to explain the financial crises experienced. At the same time, in academic studies, it has begun to be examined that there may be a third way other than prohibition (punishment/stick) or incentive (reward/carrot) methods for public authorities to steer individuals to the desired behavior in the name of social benefit. In 2002, Daniel Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics he put forward the mistakes people make due to their cognitive limitations, prejudices, or biases, and that the rational human model loses its functionality due to these mistakes. He has worked extensively with Amos Tversky. They drew attention to psychological studies that focus on individuals' decision-making mechanisms.

Although distinguished theorists such as Herbert Simon, Dwight Waldo, and Robert Dahl established an essential bridge between the two disciplines in the early period with their studies[1] revealing the importance of psychological research for public administration from the twentieth century, the interaction of public administration academics and public authorities with psychology methods and theories has increased significantly just over the past two decades. Sunstein and Thaler's (2008) book titled *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, And Happiness*" has a vital role in this. The related study, which paved the way for Richard H. Thaler's Nobel Prize in Economics in 2017, caused the discipline of "behavioral insight," which deals with the decision-making processes of individuals and the factors affecting this process, to become the focus of academic and political discussions. Instead of a rational human model, who makes logical decisions and makes predictable mistakes, independent of their emotions, it is accepted that the limited or irrational human model, who decides under pressure and under the influence of many factors in a complex world, gives a new perspective to the existing principles and theories in every field today. Public policy that is formed as a result of a process involving many formal and informal actors, such as legislative, executive, and judicial organs, non-governmental organizations, international actors, social media, citizens (voters), and think tanks, is also one of these fields.

In public policies which are formed as a result of a process[2], it is essential to make decisions that will provide the highest possible added value with the least cost for both society and individuals. In this process, there are different decision mechanisms at every stage, from the determination of the problems in the society to

[1] Herbert Simon (1947) "Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization," Dwight Waldo (1947) "The Administrative State"; Robert Dahl (1947) "The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems."

[2] Many theorists have set out models of the "stages" of the policy process. (see, e.g., Simon (1947) "Administrative Behavior," Lasswell (1956) "The Decision Process," Mack (1971) "Planning and Uncertainty," Rose (1973) "Comparing Public Policy," Jenkins (1978) "Policy Analysis: A Political and Organizational Perspective," Hogwood and Gunn (1984) "Policy Analysis For The Real World," Dror (1989) "Public Policymaking Reexamined") (as cited in Hill and ve Hupe 2002: 5–6).

the creation of solution proposals, and from the selection of the most appropriate alternative to the implementation of the determined policy and the evaluation of the results. While the principles of good governance, which are accepted to ensure efficiency in the decision-making process, are an essential step toward the creation of citizen-oriented public policies, it is foreseen that the recent studies of social psychology and behavioral economics based on psycho-social people who cannot be placed in mathematical molds and the data acquired with the empirical tools they have used in these studies will bring new initiatives in terms of reaching the target of public policies. The rise of the behavioral public policy field reflects this situation.

Many public authorities today use behavioral insight, particularly nudge theory, to make public policies function better. The nudge approach argues that in order to achieve the desired results in public policies, individuals should be protected from the mistakes they make due to their existing cognitive limitations, biases, or habits. This can be achieved by the predictable steering of the behaviors, preferences, and decisions of the individuals by the choice architects (policymakers). The nudge approach focuses on individual responsibility in providing social benefit. There is increasing debate, both in academic studies and with governments and politicians, around the nudge approach. It predicts that the behavior of an individual, who smokes despite knowing that smoking is harmful to health, can be changed with a softer intervention tool such as presenting the information that the majority of the society does not smoke, instead of harsh interventions such as smoking penalties or increased taxes. There are also many criticisms of the nudge, which is presented as an effective policy tool that policymakers can use to replace traditional regulatory tools, bringing more remarkable results with less effort. Methodological, typological, and ethical criticisms, such as not having a long-term effect on individuals, the risk of being used for manipulation, not applying to all social problems, and taking away the freedom of individuals to choose, have led to the creation of alternative theories to the nudge theory. The study focuses on an alternative policy tool, conceptualized by Peter John and Gerry Stoker as the nudge-plus, which argues that criticism around nudge-type public policies and behavioral change initiatives can be overcome by taking citizen engagement as the basis.

Qualitative research method was used in this study, which aims to draw attention to the prediction that the use of the nudge-plus tool in public policy design can produce more effective results in line with today's participatory and collaborative management approach. In Web of Science, EBSCO, ProQuest, Scopus, JSTOR, Dergi Park, YOK (the council of higher education in Turkey) National Thesis Center databases, the information obtained from the literature review in English and Turkish with the keywords "behavioral economics," "behavioral public policies," "behavioral insight," "nudge," and "nudge-plus" has been used. In order to access the direct resources related to the concepts, the first examination was made in the title, abstract, and keywords of the studies. Among the references of the obtained sources, the sources that are thought to contribute to the purpose of the study were also included in the evaluation. Although both are current concepts, there are relatively few studies on the nudge-plus that entered the literature after 2018. For this reason, sources that are thought to be related to the concept and include the keywords "citizen

participation/citizen involvement/think" in addition to the word nudge in their full texts were also used.

In line with the information obtained, in the study, first of all, the interaction between psychology/behavioral science and public administration disciplines has been included and the conceptual framework of nudge is drawn. In addition, it has been evaluated that nudge has started to be accepted as an alternative tool to traditional policy tools in the process of creating public policy. Finally, criticisms of the nudge that emerged over time and the nudge-plus approach, which was developed based on this and presented as a more participatory, more ethical, and more advanced policy tool, are included. It is aimed to contribute to the efforts to expand and justify behavioral public policy tools by drawing attention to nudge-plus, which is predicted to produce more sustainable and effective results compared to nudges, but which has not attracted as much attention as poking in the literature and public policy design. The development of different policy tools to offer citizen-centered and result-oriented solutions to the chronic problems of public administrations will be possible with the increase in the number of evidence-based studies that focus on the critical perspective.

## 2 The Essence of Nudge

It is accepted in every period that the key to success in public policies is to analyze people (Straßheim 2020: 116; The Ministry of Economy 2018: 5–10). However, it can be said that the assumptions made about human behavior have been affected by the economic, social, and scientific developments and have undergone a significant transformation. Adam Smith contributed to the understanding of many features of human behavior, which also forms the basis of disciplines such as economy, politics, and sociology, and economics to become a systematic discipline by claiming that man is a selfish and self-interested creature and that his economic behavior is determined by his personal interests in his work *The Wealth of Nations* published in 1776 (Akyıldız 2008: 34). Although Smith's (1759) work titled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, just before his related work, including his analysis of the psychological principles of human behavior, he excluded psychological and sociological factors and discussed human behavior based on rationality and this being accepted as the dominant economic view in his work titled *The Wealth of Nations*, and thus it can be said that behind this lies the aim of giving a scientific status to economics (as cited in Ashraf et al. 2005: 1).

Oliver (2013: 690), in his study titled "From Nudging to Budging: Using Behavioral Economics to Inform Public Sector Policy" draws attention to Smith's finding in his work published in 1759 that "pain is, in almost all cases, a more pungent sensation than the opposite and correspondent pleasure." According to Oliver,

emphasizing the parallelism of this finding with the "loss aversion[3]" bias, which is one of the critical cognitive biases benefited by behavioral economics and behavioral public policy studies, which is of considerable interest today, the sentences of Machiavelli included in his work titled "The Prince" (1532) "…, and it must be considered that nothing is more difficult to transact, nor more dubious about succeeding, nor more dangerous to manage, than to make oneself chief to introduce new orders. Because the introducer has for enemies all those whom the old orders benefit, and has for lukewarm defenders all those who might benefit by the new orders …" can also be read in the same frame.

Although the "homo economicus[4]" assumption of neo-classical economics was the dominant thought for human behavior until the Second World War and the Cognitive Revolution, The Great Depression of 1929 and market failures (Erdoğan and Karagöl 2019: 3) caused this idea to be questioned and the psychological foundations of economic behavior to be re-examined (Yılmaz and Canbazer 2020: 1831). At the same time, this was a period in which the USA and its allies resorted to mathematical and statistical methods in order to win the war, and the systematic analysis of data on public administration in many countries gained importance with the increasing importance of these methods and central planning. The main planning units established in many countries after the Second World War; the preparation of long-term development plans based on scientific methods and quantitative data; and the developments such as the evaluation of projects, programs, and investments with economic models and analyses have led to the importance of being scientific in the field of public policy (Köseoğlu 2013: 7; Kuşseven 2022: 7).

The twentieth century was the period when the interaction of economics and public administration with psychology began to increase. The research subjects of the critical representatives[5] of Carnegie Mellon University and Michigan University in the USA, and Oxford University and Stirling University in England, who are referred to as antecedents of behavioral economists or first-generation behavioral economists, such as bounded rationality, satisfaction, simulation, consumer behavior, and uncertainty, and their works, in which they have included psychological-based criticisms of neo-classical economics and neo-classical economics, have an outstanding share in this (Sent 2004: 740; Eser and Toigonbaeva 2011: 296). However, the concept of "bounded rationality[6]" by Herbert Alexander Simon of

[3] "the magnitude of people's negative reaction to the loss of some amount is far greater than the magnitude of their positive reaction to the gain of that same amount" (Oliver 2013: 690).

[4] "Homo Economicus or economic man, which is the main postulate of classical and neo-classical theories indicate a rational person who makes decisions and pursues wealth for his self-interest" (Efeoğlu and Çalışkan 2018: 28). "Homo economicus, in simple terms, is an individual with interests and preferences and a rational capacity oriented to maximizing those preferences, which are usually considered as self-regarding" (Melé and Cantón 2014: 9).

[5] For detailed reading, please refer to Sent, M E (2004): 740–742.

[6] Herbert Simon first discusses "limits to rationality" in a book (1947/Administrative Behavior) and only later mentions "limited rationality" in an article (1955/A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice). The "bounded rationality" concept first appeared in print in Models of Man (1957)" (Klaes and Sent 2005: 11–13).

Carnegie Mellon University is considered to be a turning point for behavioral economics and behavioral public policies nourishing from this field (Eser and Toigonbaeva 2011: 296; Aydın et al. 2019: 531). Drawing attention to the diversity of psychological factors and forces that can be effective in the decision-making process with the concept of an individual who keeps the risk at a minimum level and aims to reach an acceptable (satisfying) level of economic variables, instead of the concept of individual seeking the highest return, in his work titled Administrative Behaviour published in 1947 Simon (as cited in Özer 2016: 171) made an essential contribution to the Cognitive Revolution (Sent 2004: 739). It spotlighted the necessity of integrating economics and public administration with psychology (Tummers 2019: 19).

Although Herbert Simon has made essential contributions to the theorizing of psychology as one of the crucial components of the discipline of public administration and the development of behavioral public policies inspired by the practical agenda of behavioral economics (Kuşseven 2022: 44), the influence of E. Marshall Dimock, Dwight Waldo, and Robert Dahl in the related process should not be forgotten (Akın Yalçın 2020: 42). E. Marshall Dimock (1937: 30) stated that management is both a social engineering and an applied psychology and emphasized the importance of collaboration with psychology in organizing and steering individuals working in large groups. With this emphasis, it can also be said that he was the first person to initiate the interaction between public administration and psychology. In his work, he argued that the spirit, morale, and atmosphere would produce extraordinary administrative results, which were psychology's main subjects.

R. Dahl (1947: 4), in his study titled *The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems*, criticizes the public administration for taking efficiency as the basis in its effort to become a science with universal principles, and states that public administration should be based on understanding human behavior. Dwight Waldo (2007: 25), who left his mark on public administration with his work titled *The Administrative State* (1948), stated that under the urge to be objective and scientific, some political science students turned their attention to the nature of human and social thought, and they concluded that only a small number of people are rational. Waldo argued that public administration was little affected by the idea of human proposition, whose mentally weak and inadequate, and who are likely to rush into extremes in the details of their own minor concerns with selfish impulses. He stated that public opinion is nothing more than a term expressing the results of irrational forces and the study of administration was in many ways the "last bastion" of rationalism. Although these early calls by eminent theorists such as Marshall Dimock, Robert Dahl, Herbert Simon, and Dwight Waldo for a connection between public administration and psychology, public administration academics and policymakers neglected psychology theories and methods until the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (Yılmaz and Canbazer 2020: 1847).

According to Halpern (2016: 45), the 2008 financial and banking crises have deepened the cracks in traditional economic and policy thinking and revealed that even financial experts in both academia and markets could make mistakes in thinking and judgment. According to Oliver (2013: 685–686), there are two reasons for

the increasing political interest in behavioral principles. First, in parallel with Halper's idea, alternative approaches to the standard economic policy began to be sought after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Second, liberal-minded politicians sought ways to motivate individuals to change their behaviors that harm themselves and society without resorting to further regulation or bans.

The field of behavioral economics, which started to emerge with the data presented by first-generation behavioral economists based on empirical data on human behavior deviating from rationality, was revived as a result of a second and new wave (Sent 2004: 742) in the 1970s, with especially Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's use of economic models in their work[7] (Eser and Toigonbaeva 2011: 298). With the related wave, studies on the idea that behavioral economics can be adapted to public policies have begun to be put forward. The article "Libertarian Paternalism[8]" presented by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein in 2003, and the article "Regulation for Conservatives: Behavioural Economics and the Case for Asymmetric Paternalism[9]" written by Colin Camerer, Samuel Issacharoff, George Loewenstein, Ted O'Donoghue, and Matthew Rabin are two important works in this field. Thaler and Sunstein (2008), who followed the path opened by these works, led to the ever-increasing widespread use of behavioral approaches in the public policy process worldwide with their book *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, And Happiness*. Many governments and international organizations have tried to align individual behavior with policy objectives using behavioral principles. Countries such as England, the United States, and Turkey have carried out many projects based upon their foresight that applying the information obtained from random control experiments performed by the behavioral insight teams (nudge teams) they have established rather than financial incentives or prohibitions in public policies will produce more effective results (Kılıç 2020).

[7] The theory they presented in 1979 on the effect of decision-making on human behavior under uncertainty is called the Prospect Theory. According to the prospect theory, while individuals avoid risk when they have a positive prospect (the prospect of absolute gain), they take risks when they have a negative prospect (the prospect of absolute loss) (Kahneman and Tversky 1979: 268–269). At the same time, Kahneman and Tversky suggested that people are more sensitive to negative effects or losses compared to positive effects or gains with the concept of loss aversion they applied (Avineri 2012: 515). For detailed reading, see Kahneman D and Tversky A (1979): 263–291.

[8] Thaler and Sunstein (2003: 179) defined liberal paternalism as an approach that "preserves individuals' freedom of choice but empowers both the private sector and public authorities to steer people to choices and decisions that improve their well-being." For detailed reading, see Thaler R and Sunstein C (2003).

[9] Camerer et al. (2003: 1212) expressed asymmetric paternalism as an arrangement in which a policy benefits people with bounded rationality by preventing them from making mistakes while doing almost no harm to fully rational people.

## 3 Nudging in Public Policy

Richard H. Thaler and Cass Sunstein (2008: 4–7), in their work titled *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, And Happiness*, describe nudging, which they consider as a liberal paternalistic method, as "a choice architecture that predictably steers human behaviour, without prohibiting options or without over-changing the economic incentives received by people." According to them, when looking at economics books, it is seen that rational people can "think like Albert Einstein, have a memory as big as IBM's Big Blue and a will like Mahatma Gandhi." In contrast, honest people cannot do complex calculations without a calculator or forget their spouse's birthdays. Thaler and Sunstein, who distinguishes between "humans (homo sapiens)" and "economic man (homo economicus)" with many examples in their works, caused their assumptions about the decision-making processes of individuals and the factors affecting this process to become the focus of both academic and political discussions (Özdemir 2017: 1).

Thaler and Sunstein (2019: 33–37) explained the working principle of the human brain through the theory they called Dual Process Theory by arguing that individuals use their automatic (intuitive) systems that represent the spontaneous, uncontrolled, associative, or fast side of their brains in some decisions, actions, and preferences as in the examples of people smiling when they see a smiling child or taking out earthquake insurance right after an earthquake, whereas their intellectual (rational) systems that represent the more controlled, conscious, slow, or inferential side of their brains are active in some decisions, preferences and actions, as in the examples of filling out a doctoral graduation form, multiplying two-digit numbers, and participating in private pension plans. Peksevim and Peksevim (2020) also noted that real "people" prioritize their short-term wishes under the influence of their automatic systems. However, they know that smoking and alcohol are harmful, that sports guarantee a healthy life, and that saving will secure them and their children. Nudge theorists argue that the brain's automatic system, which is considered as System 1, is responsible for individuals' making wrong choices that will lead to a destructive lifestyle, and that the nudge interventions targeting positive behavioral change should also target System 1, which operates through various prejudices and mental shortcuts (Sunstein 2016; Thaler and Sunstein 2008: 21; Lin et al. 2017: 2).

Today, many public authorities also benefit from behavioral insight, particularly the nudge theory created by targeting System 1, to improve public policies. It is essential to be able to answer the following three questions in determining in which areas the nudge method (The Ministry of Economy 2018: 96), which refers to the systematic analysis of the processes underlying human behavior, and the use of behavioral principles derived from disciplines such as psychology, economics, and neuroscience while performing this analysis in order to design and implement better and easily adaptable public policies (Kuşseven and Yıldız 2021: 1), will lead to promising results:

- "Do we have the necessary control over the system in question to implement the envisaged changes?

- Is the target behaviour critical to outcomes in this area, and will it affect many people?
- Can the target behaviour be measured with ready-to-use and open data?"

After selecting a policy area where it is anticipated that a positive answer can be given to the relevant questions, a nudge intervention is designed with four separate and interconnected stages, abbreviated as "TEST," and named as target-explore-solution and trial. In the target stage, which is the first stage, a social problem is defined, and the target behaviors to be encouraged or deterred from solving this problem are described. In the Explore stage, the reasons behind the target behavior causing the problem are tried to be understood through the available data. In the solution phase, the intervention to be carried out is designed, which is predicted to steer the target behavior to the "right" in the light of behavioral principles. In the trial phase, which is the final phase, the effects of the designed intervention are tested in small groups. One of the most fundamental features of behavioral public policy tools, particularly nudge, is that it is evidence-based. For this purpose, random control experiments are mainly used. Still, the effect of intervention with semi-experimental and qualitative methods in problematic problem areas is evaluated empirically (The Ministry of Economy 2018: 96–100).

Thaler and Sunstein (2008: 6) stated that instead of banning unhealthy foods in the cafeteria in order to steer individuals to a healthy diet, nudging them toward the desired behavior by paying attention to the arrangement and positioning of the dishes, in other words, by placing vegetables and fruits at eye level, is an intervention easy to be avoided and inexpensive, and argued that it would yield effective results. It is thought that it is easier, less costly, and more contemporary for policymakers to resort to the nudge tool that gently steers individuals to make the most appropriate decision serving their own and society's interests, rather than traditional policy tools (laws, sanctions, incentives, etc.), and it will create a more positive perception in society because it gives people the option to decide with their free will (Voyer 2015: 3; Özdemir 2017: 184). According to Hansen and Jespersen (2013: 7), this will also reduce the risk of public authorities conflicting with existing political ideologies. Thaler and Sunstein (2008: 14) argue that the replacement of traditional policy measures by nudge will make governments smaller and more modest, which in turn will result in better governance due to the elimination of cumbersome processes in public administration and offering the opportunity of a more liberal choice with a less restrictive government.

## 4 Assessing the Criticisms of Nudge Theory

Although nudging as a behavioral intervention method, which is frequently used by public authorities in public policy design recently, has produced effective results in many areas, it has some limitations and problems that need to be addressed and resolved (Rathi and Chunekar 2015: 80). While the main focus of criticisms directed

to the nudge approach is ethical principles, the methodology used and the typological differences between behavioral science and public policy areas are other areas of criticism. The nudge approach that aims to produce evidence-based data may not have effective results for all policy problems. Considering the large number of stimuli that individuals encounter in their daily lives or the existence of laws and regulations that cannot be tested, it can be predicted that the effectiveness of nudge interventions planned with the data obtained from empirical studies focused on only one cause of the current problem will be limited. For this reason, it is predicted that using behavioral and traditional tools together in public policy design will be more beneficial (Amir et al. 2005: 447; Kuşseven 2022: 120; Selinger and Whyte 2012: 31).

While the focus of traditional behavioral sciences in solving a public problem is analyzing human nature and investigating its general principles, the field of public policy focuses on the solution of the problem. In other words, there is an essential difference between finding general principles for human behavior and using these principles. Although the general principles and theory produced by behavioral scientists are guiding for policymakers, it is predicted that they will not do the necessary research to transform the theory created by behavioral scientists into policy. It is thought that behavioral scientists will play an essential role in closing this gap between theory and practice. Still, in this case, they may not understand the critical situational nuances, such as legal limitations in policy areas that require particular expertise, such as savings, education, tax, health, policy-affected parties, which need to be taken into account. They may miss some critical policy aspects (Amir et al. 2005: 447).

On the other hand, it is seen that the focus of ethical criticisms directed at nudging is autonomy, well-being, dignity, and the risk of manipulation associated with these issues (Sunstein 2015a: 433). It can be said that most of the ethical concerns about nudging are related to the concept of autonomy. In the nudge method, which is criticized on the idea that individuals' actions should reflect their preferences and desires, it is argued that individuals reflect the priorities of choice architects, who are also people with cognitive biases, instead of their own preferences, and this harms autonomy. It is also claimed that nudging deprives people of the freedom to make wrong choices and learn from them. It erodes their responsibility to make choices, thus hindering the development of their decision-making capacity (Schmidth and Engelen 2020: 4–7). Dignity requires respect for people as individuals. Treating a person as a "thing" subject to another's supreme authority undermines his dignity. Although nudging is defended as a respectful and non-coercive approach to autonomy, it is considered as an intervention that damages dignity due to the passive role it assigns to individuals. For example, when it is thought that a manager gives a free choice to employees but talks to them as if he is communicating with children, it is claimed that this can humiliate people. If people feel humiliated or think that they are treated disrespectfully, they will suffer a welfare loss (Sunstein 2015a: 440). It is assumed that it would be utopian to imagine the existence of an external authority devising a perfect nudge for creating public policies that would increase the welfare of individuals and societies. As a matter of fact, it is

argued that it would not be a realistic approach to claim that this external power will direct human behavior per their own evaluations (Schubert 2016: 21) and that this will always result in individual welfare.

Another strong criticism directed at nudging is that it is a method open to manipulation. It is argued that the lack of awareness of individuals of the nudge intervention, which was developed by focusing on their own cognitive biases and shortcomings, contradicts the principles of openness and transparency. At the same time, there is a risk that it can be used for manipulative purposes because policymakers design it with relative power, knowledge, and awareness (John and Stoker 2017). When the difficulties of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the positive effects of nudges on the individual are added to these criticisms[10] of the nudge intervention, alternative policy tools have begun to be questioned in the behavioral public policy literature.

## 5 Moving Beyond the Nudge for More Participatory Public Policy: Nudge-Plus

According to Pykett (2020), public officials should seek answers to the following three fundamental questions in order to decide whether the relevant policy is appropriate for citizens when designing a public policy based on behavioral principles:

- When is it appropriate to use behavioral principles?
- How will they shape power relations?
- Will individuals trust the decisions taken?

While seeking answers to questions, it should not be ignored that unequal power relations are at the center of any public policy intervention. The rapid spread of misinformation in recent years and the idea that we live in a "post-truth" world where expertise is not trusted make it challenging to find answers to these questions. It can be said that the way to overcome this situation is through the phenomenon of participation/engagement and the fact that the effects of the intervention are empowering for the parties. Openness, transparency, negotiation, and citizen participation/engagement are the main topics in increasing confidence in behavioral interventions and designing an ethical public policy (Pykett 2020).

Peter John (2018: 16–17) has drawn attention to a paradox for behavioral public policies. According to John, behavioral public policies are based on the classical ideal of a rational politician or bureaucrat who follows the best course of action by carefully weighing the individuals' cognitive biases, prejudices, etc. But what behavioral science says does not happen is the rational human assumption. John, as a solution to this situation, which he described as "the case of the blind leading the

[10] For Sunstein's response to ethical criticism directed to nudge approach, see: Sunstein, C. R. (2015b).

blind," proposed that the use of behavioral principles should be extended beyond policymakers. Those citizens, bureaucrats, and politicians should be actively involved in decision-making. He predicted that this proposal would also respond to the criticism directed at the current nudging policies that nudging is actually a paternalistic intervention due to the restriction of the citizens' freedom of choice. Parallel to this proposal, Pykett (2020) stated that the "nudge-plus" approach should be adopted in the field of behavioral public policies, which is more transparent than a nudge, and has an autonomy-enhancing effect, and argues that people's decision-making abilities are not flawed; on the contrary, their existing intuitions and mental shortcuts are a way of facilitating the decision-making process.

The nudge approach is based on two different classifications of cognitive processes as System 1 and System 2, as stated in the study under the heading "Nudging in Public Policy." Explanation of judgment and judicial processes with System 1is fast-intuitive and System 2, which is thinking-rational, is also a method used by the nudge-plus approach. While both aim to change and steer the behavior of individuals by taking advantage of this dual structure, nudging does it once; nudge-plus does it twice. The first occurs by applying nudges, in other words, by making use of the prejudices that govern System 1 of individuals, and the second occurs when the individual is given autonomy to consider nudging and decide whether he wants to reinstate the behavioral change caused by the nudge (Mihaila 2021).

The nudge-plus approach can be exemplified through the commitment process as follows. A person can be signed up for a gym membership using the nudge method. However, if, after a while, the individual realizes that he has enrolled in the wrong period, this will not annul his contract. Based on this drawback, the nudge-plus is based on asking the individual if they wish to continue their gym membership enrollment sometimes after signing up for the gym so that they can think about their future goals. Individuals are now expected to consider their choices well enough and continue to the gym as long as necessary (Mihaila 2021).

In another intervention that is shown as an example of the nudge-plus approach, outpatients in the health system were sent a mobile phone message stating the cost of missing their appointments for the health system. As a result, it was determined that fewer people missed their appointments. In this example, the engagement phenomenon is enabled, as the nudge-plus suggests. The individual, who was allowed to understand the argument that missed appointments are costly, changed his behavior in the desired direction. While doing this, citizens were "assisted in understanding how the system works, rather than being treated like idiots." Nudge-plus recognizes that an effective nudge requires the participation/engagement of citizens as capable thinkers (John and Stoker 2019).

It is also possible to explain the nudge-plus as a "perspective transformation," which requires the process of updating individuals' beliefs and perspectives (Banerjee and John 2021: 10). When individuals are allowed to consider the validity of this commitment after committing to a gym membership – by weighing all the pros and cons of which they are aware of recently – it is predicted that a more transparent process will be carried out and that individuals will change their perspectives as they become conscious of their prejudices (Mihaila 2021). According to John and

Stoker (2019), instead of nudging – somewhat exaggerating – that is leading to an assessment such as "people tend to be stupid and need to be saved from themselves by patriarchal experts," the proposition of nudge-plus that "people are not always cognitive misers, but also capable thinkers" would yield more effective results.

It appears that the nudge-plus response to criticisms of the nudge approach with its the potential to offer more lasting changes in an individual's behavior, giving the individual autonomy to decide on the point of reinstatement of behavior change, alleviating the policymaker's concern for reduced well-being if suffering from cognitive limitations, and reducing the risk of manipulation. In the nudge-plus method, although choice architects (policymakers) can sometimes be prone to error, this is not doomsday. However, all these predictions also depend on the motivation and competence of the individual (Mihaila 2021).

The nudge-plus approach is also thought to bring policymakers closer to citizens. It is envisaged that the development of policies in which citizens, public officials, and experts work together to solve current problems in society will both be compatible with the idea of a self-governing society and, considering the questions that public officials should seek answers to in the title of this section, citizens will trust the decisions taken and have an empowering effect on both sides (citizens-public officials). It is thought that providing simple rules for pensioners who are included in the savings system by using the nudge method to interpret their financial investment decisions will expand the competencies of both pensioners and experts and create a different kind of trust-based relationship between them (John and Stoker 2019). From this point of view, it can be said that nudge-plus will strengthen the nudge method and make it look democratic with more deliberative, participation-oriented policies (John 2018: 13).

## 6 Some Implications

The current century forces public authorities to apply different public policy tools and cooperate with different actors for effective political solutions for complex social problems. It is seen that the nudge technique, which draws attention to the irrational preferences and behaviors of individuals and is presented as a more practical, less costly, and more modern new policy tool compared to traditional tools, dominates the field both in theory and in practice. However, today's understanding of management predicts that an action style based on participation, cooperation, and interaction rather than a unilateral action style in public policies will provide many benefits for citizens, society, and government. The idea that individuals should be protected from the mistakes they make due to their own limitations for social and individual benefit, on which the nudge is based, is likely to reinforce the absolute dominance of public officials in policy design. In addition, it can be said that the healthiest way is joint responsibility in policy development, considering that policymakers with limited rationality, as the architects of elections, guide the decisions of individuals, which may lead to conflicting results with individual and social benefits.

From this point of view, in this study, it is aimed to draw the conceptual framework of the nudge-plus, which has not received as much attention as nudge in theory and practice. However, nudge-plus assigns a more active role to the citizen in public policies compared to nudge and it is considered as a nudge that embraces the phenomenon of participation and to change the attention from nudge to nudge-plus. The nudge-plus, which is based on giving autonomy to individuals to reconsider their decisions under the influence of policymakers' guidance (nudges), attaches importance to citizens having a voice in decisions that affect them, in line with the understanding of governance. It is thought that this will have an educational aspect in improving the decision-making abilities of individuals. At the same time, public policies in which citizens take an active role have many advantages such as contributing to the progress of societies, increasing the legitimacy of the decisions taken, and reinforcing the sense of trust between the parties (Saylam et al. 2020).

As John (2018: 132) states, considering the existence of a long-term relationship between the individual and public authorities, it is necessary to reflect on public policies and to take into account the feedback of citizens as a requirement of shared responsibility. The most important contribution of this study is based on the fact that nudge-plus, which is thought to produce more sustainable and effective results than nudge, does not attract as much attention as nudge in the academic literature. In addition, there is very little empirical evidence about nudge-plus (Ewert 2020: 354) so as to draw attention to efforts to expand and justify behavioral public policy tools other than nudge. For further studies, it is recommended to conduct theoretical and especially empirical research based on alternative tools such as nudge-plus in the field of behavioral public policies.

## 7 Conclusion

Recently, after questioning a rational individual that wants to maximize its benefits, policymakers began to look for new ones by evaluating their policy tools in detail. In this quest, the data presented by behavioral economics, which focuses on analyzing the psychological factors underlying the economic behavior of individuals with empirical methods and serves as a bridge between the fields of economics, behavioral science, and psychology, attracted the attention of policymakers.

In the historical process, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, although theorists tried to integrate the disciplines of public administration and psychology, policymakers neglected the theory and methods of psychology. They have taken the "rational human" proposition of neo-classical economics as the basis, which provides a coherent framework for examining the impact of policy interventions and predicting their consequences. However, the failure to achieve the desired results with the traditional policy tools based on this proposition has pushed policymakers to collaborate with disciplines trying to understand the behavior of individuals. At this point, social psychology and behavioral economics provided significant findings and tools to policymakers in order to develop effective policies in many

areas such as health, education, savings, finance, employment, environment, and consumer protection. The most popular of these is the "nudge" theory presented in 2008 as a liberal paternalist approach by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein.

Nudge aims to encourage (steer or motivate) individuals who make "mistakes" in their choices, and who are not fully rational, by choice architects (policymakers) so that they can take decisions that will produce positive results for the society and for themselves. The nudge approach is based on changing the way choices are presented so that individuals can make rational decisions by overcoming their current limitations without prohibiting existing choices or options in the decision-making process or without offering any economic incentives to individuals. It has begun to be seen as a more liberal, less costly new way of designing public policies, instead of sanctions, prohibitions, or incentives. Although this situation has attracted the attention of many public authorities, many criticisms are directed to the nudge in theory. Some of these are the possibility of policymakers having limited rationality; not being long lasting impact of the nudge on the individual, and cannot be applied to all social problems, the risk of manipulation due to the differences in power and awareness between the parties of the nudge, and the deprivation of freedom of not making a choice or making the wrong choice.

Alternative policy tools have begun to be produced in the field of behavioral public policies with criticisms directed to nudges. Based on the view that the nudge theory causes individuals to be perceived as passive, limited rational parts of a government led by reasonable experts, John and Stoker argue that this perception can be overcome by taking citizen participation as the basis in nudge. It may provide a solution to the criticisms directed to nudge, proposing a new policy tool they conceptualized as nudge-plus. While nudge focuses on changing individuals' behavior by using their more automatic systems (System 1); nudge-plus refers to giving autonomy to individuals to reconsider their decisions going in a specific particular direction based on their intellectual system (System 2). Nudge-plus, with this aspect, is considered a more sustainable method to be applied in behavioral public policies as a relatively ethical policy tool compared to nudge, which has the potential to protect individuals from the possible cognitive limitations or possible manipulations of policymakers, who are also "human." It is thought that the citizen-centered nudge-plus approach will make a significant contribution to positioning individuals as important stakeholders in the policy process, rather than being the target audience affected by the policy at the end of a public policy design process that is operated unilaterally, and allow citizens to make permanent changes in their lives.

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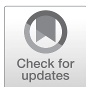
# Civil Society and Public Policy in Turkey



**Büke Boşnak**

**Abstract** In the neo-Tocquevillian tradition, the participation of civil society in public policy has been considered an essential pillar of democracy and participatory governance. This chapter reviews factors that influence civil society participation in the public policy processes in Turkey. Academic scholarship indicates that political opportunities, the nature of policies, the characteristics of civil society, and the networks of actors determine the access of civil society to public policies. Using this multidisciplinary framework, I argue that shifting political opportunity structures, statist policy style, scant resources of civil society, and polarization in the civic sphere have left little room for civil society participation in public policies in Turkey. Understanding the nexus between civil society and public policy in Turkey highlights how civil society in a closed system with limited opportunities remained at the periphery of policy making and the inclusion and exclusion of civil society from the policy processes. Thus, this chapter contributes to civil society and public policy debates by outlining the factors determining civil society access to policy processes in the country.

**Keywords** Civil society · Public policy · Policy process · Collective action · Political participation · Social movement theory · Turkey

## 1 Introduction

The academic development of civil society, participatory democracy, and public policy is now rich and expanding. Departing a conception of democratic governance as essentially participatory, direct citizen participation via civil society has been considered paramount to enhancing accountability, legitimacy, transparency, and

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effectiveness in public policies. Nevertheless, the inclusion of civil society in policy circles and its connection to democracy has been criticized (Kaldor 2003) as their effectiveness in the policy processes is difficult to define and assess. Despite the criticism, throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, civil society participation in policies attracted widespread attention among scholars and policymakers; however, scholarly investigation of the factors shaping civil society involvement in policy processes still needs to be explored in Turkey.

This chapter contributes to civil society and public policy debates by outlining the factors determining civil society access to policy processes in Turkey. In doing so, it extensively identifies and maps the current state of civil society in public policy. I argue that shifting political opportunity structures, statist policy style, scant resources of society, and polarization in the civic sphere have restrained civil society participation in public policies in Turkey. Civil society in Turkey is an interesting case to illustrate how civil society in a closed system with limited opportunities remained at the periphery of policy making. This chapter relies on secondary literature and scrutinizes primary sources, including the European Commission's annual reports on Turkey, civil society documents, and public policy documents, to identify the factors that influence civil society participation in public policies in Turkey.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I engage with civil society and policy scholarship to follow a framework that outlines the factors of the participation of civil society in the policy processes. This section points to different sub-factors in political opportunity structures, the nature of policy, the characteristics of civil society, and the networks of civil society actors. Next, I focus on the "new" history of civil society and policy making in Turkey. This section also shows the shifting opportunities for civil society. The empirical section explores factors that affect the interaction between civil society and public policy in Turkey. I conclude this chapter by summarizing the main findings of this study and discussing its implications for the field.

## 2 The Civil Society and Public Policy Nexus: Theory and Practice

Despite the theoretical and empirical connections, civil society studies and studies on public policy rarely interacted with each other for so long. Theoretically, both scholarships focus on the agenda-setting processes of collective action and mobilizations in public policies (Casey 2004; Ertan 2020; Meyer et al. 2005). However, scholars of social movements treat the policy process as undifferentiated and focus on dimensions of the public policy making environment, whereas scholars of public policy neglect the political opportunity structures, diverse strategies, resources, and coalitions of civil society (Ertan 2020: 70–71). Moreover, both pieces of literature assess the different aspects of policy outcomes. On the one hand, public policy literature highlights the short-term policy outcomes of such mobilization and direct policy effect. On the other hand, social movement theories have demonstrated

long-term policy outcomes; thus, civil society can influence culture, values, and participants and change the composition of the political setting in the long term (Meyer 2005: 16).

The theoretical division between the two fields of study has reflected the majority of empirical work on public policy and civil society in Turkey. Academic literature on civil society has assessed the interaction between civil society and numerous public policy areas in Turkey, ranging from migration (Boşnak 2021) to human rights (Boşnak 2022a, b) to the environment (Paker et al. 2013) and gender (Marshall 2013). This strand of literature has analyzed political opportunity structures (Boşnak 2021; Marshall 2013), strategies of civil society (Boşnak 2021, 2022b), resources (Boşnak 2016; Paker et al. 2013), and coalitions within and across civil society (Boşnak 2016; Ertan 2020; Rumelili and Boşnak 2015) and their influence in respective policy fields. Public policy studies have also underlined the role of civil society in policy processes (Bolukbasi and Ertugal 2019), policy analysis (Ertan 2018), and in different phases of the policy process such as policy formulation and implementation (Bolukbasi and Ertugal 2019: 365–369) in Turkey. These studies also highlight the dynamic interaction between civil society and the state and the difficulties in drawing boundaries between two actors as independent policy making entities. This characteristic of policy making becomes more complex under anti-democratic tendencies (Ertugal 2022). While the civil society and public policy literature assign essential roles to civil society, the synthesis of factors from civil society and public policy scholarship remained relatively understudied in Turkey.

The contemporary political discussions on civil society, public policy, and democracy highlight the importance of integrating these distant works of literature into empirical analyses. Casey (2004) synthesizes vital theoretical approaches to generate an analytical framework to evaluate the participation of civil society in the policy process. Drawing on social movement theories and theories of public policy, Casey (2004) has identified four main factors that may determine civil society's influence in the policy process: the political opportunity structures, the nature of the policy in question, the characteristics of civil society organizations, and the network of actors. This multidisciplinary framework is helpful on two grounds. Casey shed insight into the reciprocal influence of and analyzing the web of interactions between civil society and the public policies they target. At the same time, this framework moves beyond the mainstream literature on social movements to identify broader factors that matter for policy participation. Accordingly, civil society can influence public policy through a variety of mechanisms and can bring citizen-centered participation forefront. Utilizing this framework, I examine these factors to understand the interaction between civil society and public policy in Turkey. The following is a brief explanation of each factor used in this chapter.

*The political opportunity structures* entail the differences in contextual factors that influence the operation of civil society organizations and shape mobilization outcomes. These contextual factors include, but are not limited to, the degree of openness of key political institutions, the institutional policy structures, and the configuration of the principal actors in the political system, and the repertoire of collective action (Casey 2004; Kreisi 2004; Meyer 2005; Tilly 1978). The research

has shown that the state's existence is necessary for the emergence of social movements (Tilly 1978), and the variance in the welfare state and third-sector policy traditions affected civil society outcomes (Arts and Gelissen 2010; Esping-Andersen 1990). The state's characterization as "strong versus weak" influenced the capacity of civil society, its strategies, and its effects on policies. According to the classical dichotomy, strong states are defined by corporatist political structures and close and hierarchical state-society relations; instead, weak states are conceptualized by pluralist political structures and open and cooperative state-society relations (Casey 2004). The nature of the state and the type of citizen participation can create openings and closings that influence the mobilization strategies and the configuration of the actors in the policy processes.

This is also connected with the institutional policy structures, such as the legal framework, which could alter the operation of civil society, the relationship between state and society, their interactions, and access to the policy processes. For example, based on the comparative analysis of the third sector in Europe, Pape et al. (2020) have illustrated that regulations and public funding policies can affect civil society, their responses, and the resiliency in diverse European countries. The institutional policy structures, particularly the legal framework that empowers participatory channels, enable civil society's operation. The international political opportunity structures may also positively influence the participatory practices of policy making. The EU, as a political opportunity structure as an alternative venue, presents various opportunities to civil society actors to influence the policies. Accordingly, civil society actors utilize a "boomerang pattern of action" to bypass the blockage in their domestic settings, shift to the international level, and activate global networks to overcome policy obstacles (Boşnak 2021: 303; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Furthermore, the EU pressure through membership conditionality induced changes in the legal framework (Rumelili and Boşnak 2015).

*The policy in question* underlines the nature of policy conflict and the stage of the policy cycle to comprehend the variance in collective action (Casey 2004). Civil society, specifically non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has become recognized in the policy landscape. Studying policy processes enables us to understand their targets, strategies, and instruments to influence policy and their impact on policies. The nature of the policy conflict is an important dimension, where different policy areas offer diverse ways of participation, and civil society actors employ various strategies to influence the policy processes (Casey 2004: 248). In this sense, we might expect them to adapt their strategy to the specific characteristics of various policy fields. At the domestic and international levels, numerous NGOs are involved in public policies as diverse as the environment, education, gender, human rights, foreign policy, and humanitarian aid. In civil society, NGOs also play different roles in different phases of the policy processes, such as agenda setting, policy implementation, and service delivery (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Joachim 2007; Zimmer and Freise 2008; Wong 2012). Joachim (2007) demonstrates that NGOs use different tactics to push women's rights issues into the United Nations (UN) agenda and offer insights into the conditions that affect NGO influence in the international context. This analysis is useful for understanding how NGOs have become principal

participants in making policies in domestic politics and international institutions. In their lucid and important analysis, Meyer and Imig (1993) offer a cyclic process of issue emergence, resource mobilization, and administrative building to show cycles of the growth and decline in mobilization and public policy, thus pointing to the importance of phases in policy cycles.

*The characteristics of civil society*, such as ideology, organizational structure, resources, and status, may affect civil society's participation in policy processes. Ideology is an important factor in engaging in policy making. The following section describes how ideology shapes the policy access of societal actors in Turkey. Academic scholarship has documented the significance of organizational structure in evaluating the role of civil society in influencing policy processes and enhancing citizen-centered involvement in public policies (Klüver 2012; Kriesi 1996; Wong 2012). To analyze the human rights advocacy campaigns of international human rights NGOs, Wong (2012) suggests that the organizational structures of human rights NGOs and their campaigning is vital in understanding organizations' success or policy failure. In explaining the importance of organizational structure, she takes into account the centralization of agenda setting and decentralization of implementation in influencing international norms about human rights.

Additionally, social movement studies have revealed that civil society actors mobilize resources and strategically allocate them to achieve their goals (McCarthy et al. 1996). The capacity to influence public policies has been linked to various characteristics of civil society and the availability of material resources. Klüver (2012) has demonstrated that resources (staff and money) and organizational structure (functional differentiation, professionalization, and decentralization) play an essential role in successful lobbying at the EU level. Furthermore, civil society actors and social movements creatively use new channels of digital communication (Della Porta and Mosca 2005) to access the policy processes. In particular, digital technologies have triggered discussions about the potential of digital activism to open a new space for dialogue and political participation.

*The network of actors* can influence public policy by altering the alliances and the balance of power in the policy process. The terms "networks," "coalitions," and "alliances" are widely used synonymously in the social movement literature. Networks or alliances emerge as a consequence of voluntary interactions and involve various actors and diverse network models of collective action (Casey 2004: 253). Research has demonstrated that factors that facilitate the coalitions, such as resources, opportunities, and threats, are important for mobilization (Diani and McAdam 2003). Networks or alliances can act as an instrument of coordination to involve the different political actors and exchange knowledge to develop social ties and thus induce cognitive changes and identification (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). Networks or alliances have also emerged as a crucial dimension of collective action in accessing public policies and influencing policy outcomes. In a recent study, Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) have illustrated that women's rights groups and their supporters formed alliances to fight violence against women in Central and Eastern Europe and influenced the Istanbul Convention outcomes. In this vein, Krizsán and Roggeband (2021) make clear that attack on Istanbul Convention

brought together diverse women's rights groups and broad pro-democracy coalitions to resist the backsliding in gender equality policies. This, in turn, created policy successes and gains in gender equality policies.

## 3 The "New" History of Civil Society in Turkey

Civil society has been highly controversial in academic and policy fields in the last few decades. The post-1980 period not only brought civil society as an actor in democratization but also post-1980s emerged as a distinct period in formulating public policies where civil society designated a central role. In this new style of policy making, civil society has become a partner in new public governance. In Turkish studies, analyses have differentiated between the "new" history of civil society and a long history of associational life (İçduygu 2011: 382; Kuzmanovic 2012: 11–12). On the one hand, the new history of civil society refers to the civil society dynamism after the 1980s and the understanding of civil society as an autonomous actor in shaping politics and policies. On the other hand, the long history of civil society describes associational life and established tradition of philanthropy since the Ottoman period. This section focuses on the "new" history of civil society in Turkey.

Scholars of Turkish politics have widely agreed that Turkey inherited a strong state tradition and control of the bureaucratic elite from the Ottoman Empire that induced a weak civil society (Grigoriadis 2009: 43; Heper 2000; Mardin 1969; Özbudun 1996). As Heper (2000: 78) puts it:

> The absence of civil society in Turkey was an inheritance from the Ottoman Empire, where political, economic and social power coalesced in the center. Within the upper strata, status and wealth were attached to offices lineages or families. Bureaucratic position, thus, had the greatest weight in determining policy. The elite justified its appropriation of policy making based on its presumed cultural and superior knowledge.

Mardin (1969: 269) also argued that "by refusing to allow existing social groups to become differentiated and to attain social autonomy, the state made these structures dependent upon it for support," indicating the dominance of the state and its impact in constraining the development of autonomous intermediary structures. Consequently, the strong state tradition and bureaucratic elites distinctly shaped society and policy making in the subsequent periods of Turkish political history. In Turkey, policies have not been developed through participatory mechanisms as the state tradition has silenced different voices and their participation in policy making.

In the 1990s, international opportunity structures that influenced civil society and policy processes started penetrating Turkish society. According to Keyman and İçduygu (2003), alternative modernity, the crisis of the strong state tradition, the EU accession process, and globalization facilitated social and political changes in Turkey. Another significant development was the 1996 UN Habitat II conference in Istanbul. The UN Habitat Conference opened an alternative space for Turkish civil society mobilization at the international level and increased awareness of societal

actors in different issues (TUSEV 2006: 14). In this way, it linked Turkish civil society and their counterparts in various countries.

In the 2000s, diverse trends and significant transformations impacted civil society development in Turkey. In the first decade of the 2000s, the EU accession process and the Helsinki decision created an enabling environment for the operation and mobilization of civil society. The Europeanization of civil society has expanded the civic sphere due to the intensive EU reforms, improved state and society relations, and the legitimacy and visibility of civil society (Rumelili and Boşnak 2015). Moreover, the EU's civil society policy intended to develop European governance practices in Turkey. At the same time, since the 2000s, government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs) have expanded significantly in areas such as youth, women, education, and family (Yabancı 2019: 287), while the contentious relationship between critical NGOs and the state continues (Doyle 2017; Yabancı 2019). While the civic space shrunk after the Gezi protests in 2013 (Yabancı 2019), there were transformations in civic participation and active citizenship practices (Bee and Kaya 2017). After the coup attempt in 2016, a state of emergency was declared, and the activities of NGOs were restricted by discouraging political participation (Yabancı 2019, 2022).

Moreover, Bodur Ün and Arıkan (2022) have shown that de-Europeanization, administrative centralization, and exclusion of civil society organizations from policy making processes induced gender policy reversals in Turkey and withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. The shift in the regime has influenced the policy making and reconfigured the key actors. For example, Neset et al. (2019) have demonstrated that the President has become the foremost authority in foreign policy making. Even though Turkish foreign policy decision-making is divided within and between different entities, these entities have limited power in decision-making. As Neset et al. (2019) put it, "the decisions are taken within the Presidency in a highly compartmentalized and personalized fashion." In short, while civil society and democratic governance have been on the agenda in the early 2000s, the consolidation of power, global democratic backsliding, and de-Europeanization have shrunk civil society space in Turkey. The next section provides empirical examples from Turkey to illustrate how those factors may facilitate or inhibit civil society organizations from influencing policy processes.

## 4 Factors Shaping Civil Society Participation in Public Policies in Turkey

Drawing on Casey (2004), this section explores the political opportunity structures, the nature of the policy in question, the characteristics of civil society organizations, and the networks of actors in Turkey.

*The political opportunity structures* concentrate on the degree of openness of key political institutions, the institutional policy structures, and the configuration of the principal actors in the political system, and the repertoire of collective action. How

do these factors manifest in Turkey? Policy style can structure interaction between the critical policy actors in policy making. Bolukbasi and Ertugal (2019: 359) have characterized Turkish policy styles as a statist model, where government actors, particularly the executive, are superior to other actors and lead all phases of policy making. In this model, the societal actors have been selectively included in the policy processes, and the executive dominates all stages of policy making.

The global developments in the 1980s and the rise of governance practices and discourses have attributed a significant role to civil society as a partner in inclusive policy making. Furthermore, the UN and the EU have promoted civil society participation in their policies and supported civil society as a strategy of good and democratic governance worldwide. In the 1990s, globalization and Europeanization centered civil society at the core of the discussions in Turkey. Consequently, two main societal actors – public professional organizations (e.g., bar associations and medical associations) and hybrid bodies (e.g., regional development agencies) – have emerged as policy actors in Turkey (Bolukbasi and Ertugal 2019). While the public professional organizations consulted and gained regulatory and disciplinary powers until the 2000s, governors monopolized the regional development agencies (Bolukbasi and Ertugal 2019; Yıldızcan and Bayraktar 2019).

Despite the Europeanization dynamics where civil society participation in public policies has become a prerequisite for the EU financial assistance and the EU accession process, civil society has played a marginal role in policy making. In a study on the Europeanization of civil society, Rumelili and Boşnak (2015) have argued that the EU has influenced civil society in Turkey through its membership conditionality regime, funding policies, the networks formed between Turkish and European civil society organizations, and legitimizing civil society activities and policies. Yet, these policies have involved a limited set of NGOs and have experienced problems with sustainability. EU country reports and civil society documents have also stressed that civil society is engaged in consultation on an ad hoc basis, and in the implementation process, civil society participation has been sidelined. This is reflected in several policy areas ranging from human rights and non-discrimination (Boşnak 2022a) to the environment to gender equality policy to migration policy. Boşnak (2022b) examines the role and strategies of human rights NGOs in various fields of public policies, demonstrating that domestic human rights organizations' function has been disputed in lawmaking. In the process of the draft Law for establishing an anti-discrimination and equality board in 2010, the government consulted with civil society, and civil society submitted a draft law to Parliament to establish the Turkish Independent Human Rights Institution (Boşnak 2022a). However, in the implementation process, the government excludes civil society from the policy processes. In a similar vein, in migration policy, despite the intensive consultation process with civil society in the agenda-setting process, in the implementation process of the 2013 Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, civil society recommendations are not included in the policy output (Boşnak 2022b). These examples reveal that even though some NGOs have the resources and capacity to access policy making, a statist policy

style in Turkey and limited access points in policies jeopardize civil society inclusion in Turkey.

The successive military coups in Turkish political history led to restrictive institutional policy structures for the mobilization and operation of civil society. Most notably, the authoritarian 1982 Constitution limited and controlled the freedom of assembly in Turkey. In addition, the financial structure of civil society remains problematic where the state intervenes in civil society and strictly regulates the financial system. At the beginning of the 2000s, EU-induced legislative reforms created an enabling environment for civil society. The new Law on Associations (2004) and the Law on Foundations (2008) eased the bureaucratic procedures and sanctions and altered the functioning and field of civil society (Rumelili and Boşnak 2015). According to a reputable international NGO, International Center for Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL) Turkey report (ICNL 2022), even though constitutional regulations are in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights, the legal framework is not entirely in line with international standards, and problems persist in the implementation.

Diverse sets of events, such as institutional changes that empowered the executive, the Gezi protests, and the state of emergency declared following the failed coup attempt in July 2016, curtailed the civic space limiting the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly (Esen and Esen ve Gümüşcü 2016; Somer 2016; Yabancı 2019). The Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV 2020) prepared the *Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019 Turkey Report* in an EU-funded project titled Monitoring and Enhancing Civil Society Development Project. This report has shown that the shrinking space of civil society and the lack of policy and legal framework in Turkey further inhibited the role of civil society in policy processes (TUSEV 2020). The National Development Plan and the Annual Presidential Programme repeatedly outline the importance of the participation of civil society in policy processes (European Commission 2020; ICNL 2022). However, Turkey has not adopted any policy or legal framework to define, structure, and enhance the role of civil society in policy making (TUSEV 2020: 9). The Regulation on the Procedures and Principles of Drafting Legislation involves provisions about the consultation with civil society, yet these consultations are not mandatory (TUSEV 2020: 11).

Furthermore, at the local level, municipal law highlights the engagement with civil society. However, as of 2022, citizens' assemblies remained inactive in most provinces (European Commission 2022: 15). The EU country report (2022: 16) emphasizes, "The legal framework regulating the work of civil society organizations lacks clarity and carries the risk of arbitrariness during implementation." Thus, the restrictive institutional policy structures were prevalent and impeded the conductive environment for civil society in Turkey.

*The policy in question* suggests that the nature of policy conflict and the stage of the policy cycle are important factors in understanding policy access (Casey 2004: 248–249). As stated, the transition to a presidential system has consolidated power, with extensive reliance on the executive. For example, "following the amendment of the Parliament's rules of procedure in 2018, civil society was excluded from the

legislative consultation process at parliamentary committees" (European Commission 2019: 4). Presidential decrees have reconfigured the policy fields. These reconfigurations of policy fields have direct implications for the functioning of civil society. According to YADA Foundation (2022: 28) survey, 78% of participants note that it is very difficult to access the institutions of the Presidency and participate in public policies. In 2018, Presidential Decree No. 17 (Turkish Republic Official Gazette 2018) replaced the Department of Associations and established a Directorate-General for Relations with Civil Society under the Ministry of Interior. This new unit comprised a Civil Society Consultation Council involving civil society representatives, public officials, and academicians. However, a point of criticism regarding the council was that organizations with a close relationship with the government dominated it (ICNL 2022). The European Commission (2019: 15) also emphasized the visibility of GONGOs and opportunities for representation while pointing out the closing space for autonomous NGOs in Turkey.

Similarly, the new Civil Society Strategy Document and Action Plan have not been broadly consulted with diverse civil society actors. These tendencies, which resulted in the centralization of the executive, created a powerful executive across the various policy areas where civil society either co-opted or excluded from the policy processes (Doyle 2017). This is evident in gender equality policies (Bodur Ün 2019), human rights (Boşnak 2022a, b), and the environment (Paker et al. 2013). The reconfiguration of the policy arena further limited the role of independent civil society organizations at different stages of public policies. These examples demonstrate that policy access is very limited for civil society actors, and systemic and inclusive mechanisms for participation, including a wide array of organizations, do not prevail in Turkey.

*The characteristics of civil society*, such as ideology, organizational structure, resources, and status, may affect civil society's participation in policy processes. It is widely acknowledged that civil society is underfunded in Turkey. In Turkey, no regular public funding schemes support the sustainability and infrastructure of civil society. There is no standardized approach or legislation, which regulates the public funding mechanisms to support the capacities and activities of CSOs. "The status of public benefit for associations and tax exemptions for foundations is vaguely defined and granted by the President" (European Commission 2020: 15). Overall, the lack of resources constitutes an impediment for civil society access to public policies.

As a characteristic of civil society, ideology is one of the important determinants of policy participation. Recent trends in Turkish civil society have shown that in various policy areas (Doyle 2017; Yabancı 2019), a close relationship with the government has opened the policy space for conservative organizations. In her study of the gender equality regime in Turkey, Bodur Ün (2019) shows the inclusion of conservative women's organizations, which shares an ideological position with the government, and the participation of civil society actors in policy making processes. While the government creates policy accesses for these organizations, conservative civil society that aligns with the government supports government and creates legitimacy and accountability. Yet, ideology is necessary but not sufficient to open the venues of participation. In particular, not all conservative civil societies were

included in the public policies. The political legitimacy of the government – the way they conceive civil society organizations – has also influenced policy participation in Turkey.

*The network of actors* has specific characteristics in Turkey. Research has shown low levels of interpersonal social trust (Aytaç et al. 2017; Ertan 2018: 203) and confidence in civil society. Kalaycıoğlu (2002: 74) argues, "the Turkish experience with democracy seems to be well founded in a culture of primordial ties and bonds, such as regional solidarity networks, lineage ties, religious orders and the like, rather than rooted in a web of voluntarily established associations of individuals who act as autonomous actors." Therefore, Kalaycıoğlu (2002) points out the predominance of hierarchical ties, the fragmented nature of civil society, and the lack of cooperation between the networks of actors in Turkish civil society. Similarly, Ertan (2018: 204) found that the lack of social trust in the broader society is also reflected in the networks of civil society in Turkey. High-level polarization is one of the peculiarities of civil society in Turkey (Ertan 2018; Özler and Sarkissian 2011). Several studies have indicated that cooperation among societal actors was weak and limited (YADA Foundation 2015; 2021). In Turkey, traditionally civil society tends to reflect broader partisan polarization (Erdoğan and Uyan-Semerci 2022: 32; Özler and Sarkissian 2011). *Dialogue Mapping Research 2021* (YADA Foundation 2021) has also identified three dichotomies in understanding how civil society organizations recognize and interact with each other in Turkey. Accordingly, (1) rights-based-aid-based dichotomy, (2) conservatism-secularity dichotomy, and (3) bias-neutrality dichotomy (political dichotomy) shape interaction between civil society, where civil society organizations alongside the continuum have rarely interacted with each other (YADA Foundation 2021). Therefore, high-level polarization in civil society made it difficult to form alliances with diverse actors. As exemplified by the reform of the Turkish Civil Code in 2001 and the Turkish Penal Code in 2004–2005, adversary coalitions by different segments of civil society led to successful policy change.

## 5 Conclusion

Using a multidisciplinary framework that integrates social movement theories and public policy theories, this chapter evaluates different factors that shape civil society participation in public policies. I argue that shifting political opportunity structures, statist policy style, insufficient resources of civil society, and high-level polarization in the civic sphere have limited the capacity of civil society to access and influence the public policy processes. Casey (2004) postulates that civil society interacts with public policy through various mechanisms. This chapter looks at the political opportunity structures, the nature of the policy in question, and the characteristics of civil society organizations and networks of actors. The political opportunity structures, such as strong state tradition, the restrictive legal framework, and the reconfiguration of the policy domain in favor of the executive, have given civil society little

maneuver to influence public policies in Turkey. In this sense, Turkey is an example to illustrate how civil society in a closed system with limited opportunities for civil society intervention in the policy process through centralized power remained at the periphery in the policy domains. In the case of the nature of the policy, the authoritarian turn in Turkish politics indicates that the executive dominates diverse policy areas ranging from economy to migration to environment to gender. When we look at the phase of the policy cycle, we can observe that, similar to other closed systems in the policy initiation processes, there are consultations with civil society actors. Yet, in the implementation stage, policy processes have sidelined civil society. Only GONGOs are allowed to participate in various policies. Therefore, studying participation in policy processes will enable us to understand the inclusion and exclusion of civil society in public policies. This, in turn, highlights the meaning of organizational legitimacy as well as political legitimacy in Turkey. Finally, the low interpersonal trust and high-level polarization in civil society make alliances and dialogue very difficult. Most notably, the EU process has not been able to change these interactions between civil society and public policies.

For further research, theoretical and empirical studies are needed to perceive the linkage between the civil society and the public policy. In Turkey, civil society participation in public policies and outcomes of this mobilization is not systematically analyzed. We still do not know how civil society participates in different policy fields, where we lack information about the strategies of civil to access the policy, specifically, during the times of democratic backsliding. Studies, therefore, would expand our understanding of participation of civil society in the policy making processes during the times of democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space of civil society.

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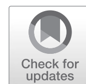
# Part II
# Approaches on Citizen-Centered Public Policy Making

# Social Networks of/for Citizen Participation in Turkey




**Hulya Agcasulu**

**Abstract** While some social networks might purposefully be established for participation, in some cases, social networks might already exist and possess the potential to contribute to citizen participation. This chapter aims to introduce the latter and identify *sui generis* social networks of citizen participation practices in Turkey. The main arguments of this chapter are as follows: (a) social networks already exist in social and political spheres and (b) one cannot comprehend the one-of-a-kind "potential" networking structures merely from a legal-administrative viewpoint, a thorough evaluation shall include a broader socio-cultural and historical perspective. In the first part, *hemşehri* (hometown fellowship) ties, their associations, and their contribution to participatory democracy are elaborated from the network perspective. In the second part, *mahalle* (neighborhood of Turkey) and *mukhtar* (headmen of *mahalle*) are assessed, focusing on the network characteristics, their role in citizen-state relations, and their potential to contribute to local citizen participation. Finally, city councils, a quasi-institutionalized network for local participatory democracy, are discussed. The main findings for all network structures are needs of (a) empowerment of those enabling networks for citizen participation, (b) provision of legal basis to fully fulfill their role in participation, and (c) emphasizing their role in participation rather than service provision.

**Keywords** Social networks · Structures · Roles · Citizen participation · Turkey · Mahalle · Hemşehri · City councils · Participatory democracy · Characteristics

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## 1 Introduction

According to Mitchell (1974), a social network is a metaphorical and conceptual statement about social relations in social situations. Indeed, an individual's social ties in a society ramify through that society. Similarly, the study of social networks prioritizes interpersonal relationships, assuming that social ties facilitate the exchange of information and power and that actors are interdependent (Wasserman and Faust 1994).

Social networks are intertwined with the social capital concept. This type of capital is different from economic or human capital. It is identified that social networks, norms, and sanctions are valued for their potential to individuals or communities, especially through solving collective problems (Halpern 2005). When we imagine the whole political and public field as a network, citizens are considered network actors which can shape the network at actor level. However, citizens' social power to shape is an interactive process. Hence while changing the dynamics at actor level, they can also affect the dyadic level. Finally, these dynamics determine the composition of networks at the network level. In the last instance, while actors change and shape the network nature, symbiotic and constantly evolving relations are formed at three different levels, that is, actor level, dyad level, and network level. Hence, citizens are considered powerful social forces and their power to shape network by participation – along with various actors – might be the reason behind the political actions. Their position within the network and their degree of participation are determinants in democratic decision-making and policy making.

We encounter different types of social networks, such as the dominant existence of virtual communities, online platforms, or institutionalized networks. This study seeks to identify the means and mechanisms of the real life, not structured or institutionalized social networks in Turkey that enable citizen participation, specifically in the political domain. In that sense, the study focuses on informal ties/networks and their penetrations and repercussions on formal life/networks. It introduces *sui generis* ties, relations, and social networks of Turkey's political and public life. The study also identifies the role and influence of informal structure on formally organized modern society.

Turkish society has one-of-a-kind relations and social networks, which can be considered mechanisms that enable public participation. In this sense, this chapter aims to compile the daily life socio-cultural and governance practices channeling direct citizen participation in public policy and politics. In the international literature, there are both theoretical and empirical studies that contextualize participation through networks. However, to the best of my knowledge, I have not encountered any study describing the specific types of social networks that contribute to participation in Turkey. One exception shall be Kurtoglu's writings (2005, 2012) on *hemşehri*, Arikboga's (1999, 2018) and Alada's (2008) writings on *mahalle*, assessment of it as a relational concept and social phenomena closest to network understanding. Although they are insightful studies, they are in Turkish. Hence,

bringing together and the introduction of diverse social networks of participation, unique to Turkish administrative and political structure and rarely known in the international literature, are the intended added values of this study. It is a descriptive research aiming to identify network structures of Turkey enabling participation, and their historical evolution, types, characteristics, and shortcomings. In terms of data collection, the study is a literature review. Literature reviews are the most appropriate data type in descriptive research since they systematically research, read, analyze, evaluate, and summarize the academic literature.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. In the first part, I introduced *hemşehri, hemşehrilik,* and *hemşehri associations,* that is, the regrouping of people from the same place (village, town, county) and their solidarity networks. The uses of these as a medium of citizen participation and their evolution over time are discussed. Then in the second part, I assessed the *mahalle* (the neighborhood in Turkish) and the bridging role of the *mukhtar* (headmen of the mahalle) as an intermediary between citizen/local governments. Finally, in the third part, I briefly mention a quasi-institutionalized type of social network facilitating direct citizen participation in local politics: city councils.

## *1.1* Hemşehri *Relations and Its Macro-Level Evolution in Urban Life*

In Turkey, we usually ask, *"where are you from, my hemşehri?"* right after introducing ourselves to warm up the conversation. It is a particular type of relationship infused into daily life. In order to understand *hemşehri* relations, we need to know what *hemşehri* denotes in Turkish society and culture. According to Kurtoglu (2005), *hemşehri* is an adjective used by immigrants from the same village, town, county, or city. At least two people must be present for the definition of *hemşehri*. In other words, it is by definition "relational," and this trait perfectly fits the network approach.

The individuals or groups that usually migrate from rural to urban areas use this term, which means somebody from the 'same town' (Gunes-Ayata 1990: 97; Erder 2000). Similarly, *hemşehrilik* means an informal link involving mutual assistance, but the term has the principal function of providing a means of identification to others in daily life. It is also a collective identity based on hometown fiction. In this respect, it is about how daily life is maintained from the micro-sociological perspective (Kurtoglu 2005). It defines a social relationship based on belonging to the same geographical area.

Although originating from everyday life practices, it is also an administrative-legal concept, passing in the current Municipal Code of Turkey (The Code numbered 5393). Article 13 states that everyone is a *hemşehri* of the place in which they

reside, and they possess the rights to benefit from the support of the local administration, to *participate in municipal decisions and services*, and to be informed about municipal decisions and services (italics added). This article connects the citizens with their current residential places. However, in its original use, *hemşehri* refers to the ties before the current residence. This semantic shift possesses homogenizing impact to sustain solidarity and social support. *Hemşehri*s are entitled to participation right in local decisions. In this sense, the *hemşehri* title serves as a medium to direct citizen participation by denoting a legal status to residents.

In order to understand the nature of *hemşehri* relations, one needs to have an idea of their emergence and proliferation. It is interrelated with domestic migrations, urbanization, and *gecekondu.*[1] The urbanization process and migrations from rural to urban started in the 1940s and increased in the 1950s in Turkey. The person who migrates from the rural needed to find a job in a high unemployment environment as an unskilled labor force lacking education and skills, find a house, do bureaucratic procedures, do shopping, in short, have intense relations with foreigners and use institutions.

During the social change periods due to migration waves to urban areas and urbanization, the state did not have a fair housing policy and could not solve the accommodation problems in urban areas mainly due to lack of finance. In the absence of policies, the immigrants find their solutions. So, poor rural people started building *gecekondu* in the peripheries of cities. By the time, these *gecekondu* houses began to be a neighborhood without urban infrastructure.

The first-generation migrants paved the way for others who are *hemşehri*, so *gecekondu* settlements started to be designated areas. So by the time each *gecekondu* settlement was dominated by only one *hemşehri* group. Somewhere between kinship and friendship with others, *hemşehrilik* served as the second step in the expansion of personal networks. It provided the opportunity to develop joint action in line with common interests in relations with others. In that sense, *hemşehrilik* is also metaphorically linked with the *gecekondu* phenomenon. In other words, it is seen as a relationship entered by those who go through the integration process with urban life (Kose 2008).

*Hemşehrilik*, one of many solidarity networks since the 1950s, helped the burgeoning urban population. On the other hand, *hemşehri,* in essence, bears a paradox within itself; although it is related to the modernization process and part of urban life, it refers and locates itself to the traditional ties of rural life. Indeed, hemşehri relations are expected to possess intangible aspects, such as the need for trust, reciprocity, and a sense of belonging and social support seen in the primary relations (Kurtoglu 2005). Apart from that, since Kiray's (1982) writings, the phrase "buffer

[1] *Gecekondu* are the shantytowns of Turkey and literally mean "built in a night." They are very small, only one or two rooms, cheap material, flexible houses, built by collective efforts of hemşehri without operational costs. They also lack of electricity, sewage system, water, and sanitary conditions in the beginnings.

mechanism" has been used frequently in research on *hemşehri* and is only used to refer to the transitional stage of migratory behavior and urban development (Hersant and Toumarkine 2005).

The network approach can also assess *hemşehri* ties. These ties form social capital. Micro-sociological *hemşehri* networks carry "network closure" characteristics in which dense relations with strong ties are maintained, resulting in a high level of solidarity among the actors within the network. The closure in a network ensures obligations and expectations, depending on the social environment's trustworthiness, the social structure's information-flow capability, and norms accompanied by sanctions (Coleman 1988).

On the other hand, *hemşehri* is not only related to interpersonal ties; it is also related person's attachment to a certain place. Some of the social practices are constructed in direct connection with the physical space. It is seen that spatiality constitutes the main theme of *hemşehri* relations, such as immigration belonging to *gecekondu* (Kose 2008). Agnew's fundamental argument was that political behavior is inevitably geographical and that, as a result, a place-based viewpoint is necessary to comprehend political activity. In his words, "place is not just locale, as setting for activity or social interaction, but also location." Hence for him, the place is a context for interaction, but this setting must be identified. The reproduction and transformation of social relations must take place somewhere (Agnew 2014: 27). Three interconnected components make up Agnew's multifaceted definition of place: locale refers to the settings (informal or institutional) where social relationships are formed; location refers to the interaction between a place and other places; and sense of place refers to the subjective orientation created by residing in a place (Agnew et al. 2003). *Hemşehri* ties are one of this type, along with person-to-person relations, which are person-to-place relations. In Agnew's terms, the locale is the *hemşehri* networks, location is the gecekondu in urban areas, and sense of place is the sense of *hemşehri* relations.

Particularly for Turkish academicians (Kiray 1982) specialized in the first wave of migrations and urbanization in Turkey, *hemşehri* relations were assumed to disappear when the urbanization process was completed, and immigrants become a part of urban life. Let alone disappearance, *hemşehri* networks evolved and adapted to urban life in a new institutionalized form. *Hemşehri* networks gained a new dimension by changing their function and meaning for people who migrated and grouped around geographical references to hold on to their initial hometowns. It is possible to see this situation clearly in local politics. Today, *hemşehri* associations have become non-governmental organizations with different functions in urban life.

### 1.2 The Transition from Micro-Sociological Nature to Macro-Political Institutions: **Hemşehri** Associations

According to the report of the General Directorate of NGO Relations of the Ministry of Interior (2022) there are 16,606 *hemşehri* associations[2] in Turkey as of 2022. In contemporary Turkey, *hemşehri* networks are institutionalized at the macro-political level, bearing some characteristics closer to NGOs. The *hemşehri* associations are founded based on a possible link from a common geographical origin. They function as the intersection of political and social networks, creating a channel for connection with the political-institutional system rather than merely a gathering place for promoting pre-existing community solidarity (Hersant and Toumarkine 2005).

Their status, nature, and working principles were critics' points for a long time in Turkey. Legally they are considered NGOs. Even if they are NGOs, they do not possess the traits of modern "Western- type NGOs", since they rely on the primary relations. In that sense, they function as charity organizations by providing fiscal and material aid to their members, providing scholarships to their *hemşehri* students, and organizing collective circumcision ceremonies for the poor *hemşehri*. However, this explains only a part of their services. They are also regarded as the "buffer institution" linking the individual with political life.

They are also important in establishing networks with the state and political institutions. Although they are not political entities, they constitute one of the most important parts of the political network observed in metropolitan cities, especially during election periods. They are building ties with political parties to protect the interests of their members and provide political input by contacting the parliamentary candidates. In this context, it is possible to characterize the association-party network as continually temporal ties where material, symbolic, personal, and common interests are at the forefront. In short, pre-election bargains are the most important elements of associations' role within the national political networks (Kose 2008).

The *hemşehri* associations are also established to participate in political decisions concerning their own lives and social solidarity. Since *hemşehri*s demand

[2] An important reason of their skyrocketing is the political environment of the 1980s. Turkey has experienced coup d'état on September 12, 1980. The political and ideological organizations that were common in the 1970s were replaced by non-governmental organizations aimed at social aid/solidarity, due to the strict measures aiming to depoliticize Turkish society. Accordingly, it is observed that hemşehri associations, which were founded on the basis of cooperation and solidarity, have developed to represent a large part of the understanding of organization in Turkey (Kose 2008). In this respect, a depoliticized society played a distinctive role as one of the channels of participation. They do not represent a dialectical relationship in this sense; rather, they are simply the actors' adaptation to the state's structures (Navaro-Yashin 1998). Another reason of their proliferation is related with the social welfare state and social policies in Turkey. The existence of social inequalities and insufficient development of social policies to eliminate these inequalities are the main reasons for the establishment and/or prevalence of such organizations.

from the political system through their associations, they have gained an intermediary institution function that establishes links between the political system and the individual. They began to be utilized in transferring the individual's demands and discontent to the system (Harald 1999: 47–51). In other words, involvement in the decisions and public policies by establishing associations became a way of political participation.

In network terms, they have a bridging role within the political networks. The bridging role corresponds to Burt's (2001) structural holes theory; they are powerful due to their position in the network since they fill the structural holes within the network. Associations bridge two separate components, that is, society/state or, more exactly, *hemşehri*s/politics. Their bridging social capital is institutionally high within the network. They are key to understanding the links between the state and the society, as every state-centered power system needs established bodies to act as intermediaries (Hersant and Toumarkine 2005).

At the macro-political level, Coleman's network closure partially explains *hemşehri* associations as social capital. When we talk about institutionalized *hemşehri* associations, Bourdieu's theoretical perspective on social capital can better enlighten some dimensions. Unlike Coleman, he seeks to explain social capital's meaning within the social structure and power struggles. Bourdieu (1986) argues that to comprehend social networks – and consequently social inequality – analyses must be done to show how these relationships relate to economic and structural links. For him, "social capital is the sum of all the existing or potential resources that are part of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition and that can be used to achieve goals" (Bourdieu 1986: 51). Some groups disproportionately collect social capital over others, and this serves as the foundation for structural limitations and creates unequal access to networks (Akkaymak 2016).

Although Coleman's network closure explains the micro-sociological foundations of *hemşehri* ties, Bourdieu's social capital fits better to understand the *raison d'être* of associations at the macro-political level of actors. In the political networks, they provide social capital to utilize the embedded resources within the networks to get benefits and optimize their members' interests. They compete to locate themselves in a better position to access decisions, public policies, and public resources.

## 2 *Mahalle*: Neighborhood Ties and Networks for Participation

The directness of the relationships established between the citizens and the public administration at different levels ensures qualified relations and effective participation in urban governance (Cilgin and Yirmibesoglu 2019). The neighborhood is a fundamental component of multi-level and multi-actor governance in

terms of its contribution to decision-making mechanisms (Wagenaar 2007; Lowndes and Sullivan 2008). It is one of the key dimensions of governance, as a space where the changing boundaries between the state and the civil society can be explored. Farrelly and Sullivan (2010) argued that neighborhood governance concerning collective decision-making and local public service delivery contributes to the local governments at higher levels. Some academicians claim that the neighborhood can influence local governments and services, which are expected to attain its public and civic nature, act together, accurately direct public functions, and provide an interface to collective decision-making mechanisms (Arisoy 2019; Bayraktar 2019).

In Turkey, the neighborhood is called *mahalle,*[3] a one-of-a-kind settlement due to its historical, cultural, and sociological context blended with Turkish-Islamic administrative culture. The history of *mahalle* as a local service provider is indeed older than the municipalities, an administrative unit and community-based settlement carried over from the Ottoman Empire (Palabiyik and Atak 2002: 334). *Mahalle* has roots in the Ottoman Empire and is a self-sufficient economic, social, and political unit. Along with these features, it is also a social fabric and a descriptive collective identity (Bulut 2001; Alada n.d.). Yildirim (1994: 31–32) tends to identify these two definitions, considers *mahalle* as a small-scale local spatiality and the smallest urban governance unit in terms of administration, and states that definition of community better explains its social functionality.

In order to understand its role in citizen participation, one needs to explore the historical and sociological evolution of *mahalle.* It is perceived as a local government unit in the Ottoman Classical Period. While neighborhood often expresses a spatial distinction for Western cities, it expresses a rich unity of meaning and community feeling that covers daily life in all aspects of Islamic cities (Alada 2008). In the history of Turkish public administration, it is considered an intermediary institution organized for both central governments' duties and local service purposes.

The reform process for local governments in Turkey began in the 2000s with a subsidiary rule and democratic values of the European Charter of Local Governments to ensure transparency, participation, and accountability in local governments of Turkey. In this context, 5393 N° Municipal Code was accepted in 2005, and *mahalle* has legally become a local unit and associated with municipalities; 5393 N° Municipal Code defines *mahalle* as the administrative unit with similar needs and priorities and a neighborhood relationship between its residents within the municipality's borders. As seen from the article, even the legal-administrative definition refers to the social relations and homophily of its residents in network terms.

In practice, most *mahalle* carry these features even though the city's social spaces have changed radically in the last several decades due to rapid urbanization and emigration. It keeps its traditional bonds and is considered a space of belonging and collectivity (Mills 2007).

In order to understand the social network of *mahalle* and its functionality in participation, we need to elaborate on *mukhtar*, the headman of *mahalle. Mukhtar* is the

[3] As of 2022, there are 32,206 *mahalle*s in Turkey (Ministry of Interior of Turkey 2022).

key actor in the interaction of local citizens/residents and public administration, indirectly facilitating public participation in decision-making processes and public policies.

## *2.1* **Mukhtar*: Bridging Social Capital in Participation and Its Role in Citizen-State Relations***

The administrative structure of Turkey includes a *sui generis* unit called *mukhtar*. The residents of mahalle elect them; at the same time, they are the paid civil servants of central administration. *Mukhtarlık (headmanship)* is considered a hybrid institution with a mainly mediating role.

5393 N° Municipal Code regulates *mahalle*. According to Article 9, it is governed by *mukhtar,* who is responsible for determining the common needs with the participation of the residents, improving the quality of life, conducting relations with the municipality and other public institutions, expressing opinions on issues related to mahalle and cooperating with other institutions. We can understand from the legal description and spheres of competence that *mukhtar* has a mediating key role in terms of networking between citizens and public institutions. They voice the *mahalle* residents' demands and opinions. They are regarded as bridging social capital that fills the structural holes in the network.

*Mukhtarlık* originates in the late Ottoman Empire, established in 1829 as a part of the modernization process of state administration. Initially, they were appointed as channels of communication between the local people and the government, particularly in rural areas (Arikboga 2018; Sahin and Turan 2022). According to Massicard (2016: 263), when *mukhtarlık* was established, the intention was not to create a brand new administrative level; instead, they were settled in the center of the already existing social ties and established an administrative tie upon them. In other words, they utilized existing social ties to administer community-based *mahalle*.

However, *mukhtarlık*'s locus and foci within the administrative structure of Turkey have been ambiguous. Almost three centuries of existence, including the collapse of the Empire and the foundation of the republic, contributed to blurry boundaries (Sahin and Turan 2022). Indeed, it is one of the main reasons why *mukhtar* is defined. According to Arikboga (2018: 24), *mukhtarlık* is a "buffer institution" between central and local administrations and the people of *mahalle*. Its hybrid structure seeks to meet official expectations and social demands, provide a smooth transition of the social change processes, and compensate for disruptions that might arise within *mahalle.* In this context, it is an interesting institution with substitute and mediator roles. In another conceptualization, Massicard (2016: 259–265) defines *mukhtarlık* as an "institutionalized intermediary." On the one hand, they ensure the penetration of the state into the society, and on the other hand,

the penetration of the society into the state. In this respect, *mukhtar* has both an official and a social role.

Regarding their duties and functional areas, *mukhtar*s are located at the intersection of local and central government areas today, as they were yesterday. This location has the potential to be a resolution mechanism with flexible functionality, as well as it might also witness common situations that can lead to uncertainties, overauthorization, or irresponsibility (Alada n.d.: 5).

Apart from the nature and legal/official duties of *mukhtars*, two different de facto functions are related to participation. The first originates from the governing institutions. Especially in the neighborhoods formed by immigration, the lack of public institutions is filled by them. They provide resources/services to the neighborhood using various local and supra-local (both public and civil) relations networks. The second concerns the residents of the neighborhood. Especially in the neighborhoods where the rural emigrants are intense, *mukhtars* have undertaken functions such as patronage, intermediary, business follower, and guidance before various public institutions. They carried the demands and problems of the neighborhood to the relevant institutions. For this, it tries to maintain a good and balanced relationship with the relevant institutions (Arikboga 2018).

Direct participation is also a right of *mukhtars* restored by law. According to N° 5393 Municipal Code Article 24, they can participate in municipal commissions without the right to vote and express their opinions. Article 76 states that the representatives of *mukhtars* can participate in city councils. Although the degree of participation is questionable, they were seen as a crucial element for the growth of democratic values and citizen participation in a circular letter published in 2015. Meetings of President Erdogan with *mukhtars,* which are frequently prominent in the country's agenda, are a good example. Nearly 50 *mukhtars* meetings have been held in the presidency since 2015. They show how the government's "New Turkey" approach has restored participation and democracy in these units. In recent politics, these values are associated with *mukhtars* and constantly find a voice in its mediating role of the direct citizen's participation between the center and the local. However, the problems, in practice, have not been strengthened legally and administratively. *Mahalle* and *mukhtarlık* could not possess public legal entity status and were not considered a local government unit (Cilgin and Yirmibesoglu 2019: 107–110).

In addition to the networking and bridging role of *mukhtars*, some improvements to increase democratic value and participation are also important. In order to increase the functionality of *mukhtars,* a model is proposed by Bulut (2001: 48–49) that enables them to be members of municipal councils with a right to vote. Besides, there are some suggestions to ensure *mukhtarlıks* as public legal personality function as a school to improve the socio-cultural level of *mahalle*, thus increasing their efficiency and capacity (Kizilboga-Ozaslan and Eryigit 2017). Kanli (2016: 25–26), on the other hand, proposes *mahalle* cooperative networks emphasizing the execution of local economic-social-education-cultural and technical services.

Despite deficiencies, there are some improvements worth mentioning. In recent years, the "Mukhtar Information System" has been implemented in the Ministry of Interior to monitor and effectively finalize the demands of *mukhtars* to provide

effective public services and quickly report the problems to the competent authorities to increase the efficiency and functions of *mukhtars*. Additionally, to increase this efficiency, *mukhtar* departments or directorates are established within the organizational structure of all municipalities (Cilgin and Yirmibesoglu 2019: 109; Kizilboga-Ozaslan and Eryigit 2017).

Arikboga (2018) asserts that most *mukhtars'* duties are transformed into e-state services in contemporary Turkey. The main factor that enables *mukhtars* to withstand time and survive is "networking power" or "relationship with his locality." It is spatially accessible and the closest democratic institution to the *mahalle* (Cilgin and Yirmibesoglu 2019: 107). In other words, they have a great role in the execution of public services, as they are the closest administrative level where citizens can easily and quickly reach and express their problems (Kizilboga-Ozaslan and Eryigit 2017). In conclusion, the strong participatory nature of *mukhtarlık,* as a crucial part of the traditional Turkish values of a collaborative support system, is a highly promising local resource that cannot be created in an artificial setting. As participation relies on negotiation, mediation, and communicative interactions scattered throughout the policy process, *mukhtarlık* becomes a key component (Sahin and Turan 2022).

## 3 City Councils: Quasi-Institutionalized Network for Local Participatory Democracy

The Agenda 21 launched in 1992 UN Rio Summit was transferred to Turkey in the form of Local Agenda 21 (LA21), leading to the establishment of city councils (Gokce-Kizilkaya and Onursal-Besgul 2017). It owed its existence to certain local reform initiatives and promoters ranging from international to national institutions such as 5393 N° Municipal Code, European Urban Charter, European Charter of Local Self-Government, Agenda 21, and Habitat II (Bursa City Council 2011).

City councils of Turkey, in the broadest sense, can be identified legal-official public mechanisms which prioritize civil society and develop mechanisms that will ensure the participation and public control within the framework of the administration and encourage local citizens to own their problems based on participatory democracy based on governance and prioritizing civil society (Bursa City Council 2011). Additionally, according to Emrealp (2005), city councils, which are defined as a partnership model, aim to disseminate democratic participation at the local level, develop citizenship awareness, and promote multi-actor local governance. They carry a sustainable city vision in the integrity of the principles of owning the city, active participation, and partnership in the solution. In line with this definition, Article 6 of the City Council By-law (2006) states the promotion of democratic participation at the local level, the development of the awareness of *hemşehri* law and public life, and the adoption of a multi-partner and multi-actor governance approach are the duties of city councils.

Turkey LA21 Program enabled the city councils, which do not have a public legal entity, to be seen as a legitimate participatory platform in Turkey (Emrealp 2005: 74). In other words, city councils had already been established and operating in numerous Turkish cities since 1997 voluntarily, in comparison to other participatory methods introduced by 5393 Nº Municipal Code (Yalcin-Riollet 2019: 349; Akay 2016).

Between 1997 and 2005, promoters of LA21s organized numerous seminars and training sessions to help implement participatory mechanisms. More than 60 municipalities voluntarily implemented city councils, which regularly bring residents and organizations (associations, foundations, professional chambers, the private sector, universities, etc.) together with representatives of the municipalities and provinces to discuss local issues and policies. To encourage the exchange of experience, regional and national events with representatives of local governments and NGOs are held in addition to local meetings. Through publications, conferences, and media campaigns, information on local participatory practices is also available to citizens, academics, legislators, and government representatives (Yalcin-Riollet 2019: 349). Additionally, the central government encouraged local governments to form their city councils to promote community involvement and increase public representation in LA21, which was exceptional at the time (Varol et al. 2011). Indeed, these international and national promotions have also found correspondence at the local level. They have acknowledged that LA21 has encouraged a participatory process with their local citizens who are interested in and sensitive to their cities' problems.

However, the functioning of city councils has some problems and is subject to critics. First and the foremost criticism is the nature of membership criteria that is "institutional membership." Second criticism is related with its competencies and the nature of its decisions. The final criticism is related with the autonomy and their interrelations with the local governments.

According to the City Council By-law, only the institutional representatives rather than individual citizens shall be the members. For this reason, institutional participation comes to the fore, and individual participation is directed to either women or youth assemblies or working groups (Emrealp 2005). According to Yalcin-Riollet (2019: 350), this rule on membership distorted direct citizen participation since membership became a power struggle and subject to the intervention of multiple public and private actors having diverse motives and interests.

Working groups on various topics are the participatory platforms at the city scale, operating by focusing on their priority issues and problem areas. They consist of volunteer citizens from different sectors, organizations, and disciplines who have the time and experience to conduct in-depth studies on the identified priority issues (Emrealp 2005: 77). Apart from this, the establishment of women and youth assemblies is legally obligatory. These assemblies allow all local women and youth to participate and work voluntarily. For these reasons, assemblies and working groups are of great importance to increase participation, especially in terms of social networking.

Therefore, the first criticism is refused by some scholars, since city councils are not limited to the institutionalized members of the city. They act as a platform, including working groups, women's and youth assemblies, special interest groups, and individual citizens without a public legal entity (Emrealp 2005). Councils invite citizens and force them to participate in decision-making mechanisms. In this respect, it can be said that city councils function as a network of citizen participation (Kutlu 2005). Besides, although citizens cannot be directly individual members, representatives of central government organizations and municipalities constitute approximately one-third of the city councils, while the remaining two-thirds are representatives of non-governmental organizations. This feature highlights civil society's predominant position and function (Emrealp 2005: 67).

The second criticism stems from the nature of their decisions. According to N° 5393 Code, city councils' decisions are *advisory* for local decision-makers. Hence, it is up to local leaders, particularly the mayors, to take this advice seriously and transform them into policies. Even the board of city councils does not have voting rights in local decision-making (Emrealp 2005; Ozdemir 2011; Bozkurt 2014). In general, while many municipalities embrace the so-called superficial participation, there is a great concern that the city councils' participation is limited, especially regarding key areas such as urban plans and financial issues.

The final criticism mainly includes concerns on administrative and fiscal autonomy. In practice, mayors, deputy mayors, or an appointed civil servant is the head of the council, preventing the representation of citizens. Presidential status hold by local government leaders also leads to councils acting as an institution of the municipality rather than being a voice of local citizens (Bozkurt 2014; Ozdemir 2011). Finally, according to the by-law, the city councils' budgets will be allocated by municipalities conditionally depending on the availability of fiscal situation. Since fiscal autonomy cannot be sustained, city councils cannot reverse the perception of an affiliated organization (Ozdemir 2011).

## 4 Discussion

Arikboga (1999: 122) states that studies on local governments of Turkey often stress the weakness of these structures due to "lack of tradition" or "rootlessness." However, most of the studies on how local services are provided during these times are dismissed. They start from the first Western type of municipality established in Istanbul in 1855. Indeed, academicians treat local government practices mainly within the framework of administration rather than history and sociology. This assumption is also valid for the issues and structures of participation. Although Turkey's participatory structures do not fit into the patterns of the West, various participation mechanisms consisting of sui generis social relations/networks exist in Turkey. At least we can assert that they have the potential to improve the degree of citizen participation. This study aimed to revive and introduce these social network forms present in modern Turkish society and political life.

First, hemşehri ties are elaborated stressing their evolution from micro-sociological relations to macro-political units. I believe to better comprehend these structures we shall interpret *hemşehri* from the lens of the West. It is a community *(Gemeinschaft)* type of society in Tönies' conceptualization, relying on the primary relations formed based on geographical homophily. According to Kurtoglu (2005), when we approach *hemşehri* with the modern dichotomies, as in the case of *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*, we can situate *hemşehrilik* closer to traditional (non-modern), unchanged (authentic), and closer to the emotional one in the emotional-rational dichotomy.

Additionally, *hemşehri* relations' functional roles resemble Durkheim's thoughts on religion. He claimed that religion served as a form of identity and solidarity for modern urban people, acknowledging the social foundations of religion. It provided a sense of social order, unity, and purpose as well as a channel of interaction and gathering assisting in upholding social norms (Bellah 1973). When we consider *hemşehri* emergence in an unprecedented pace of urbanization and its objectives within the process, just like religion, it provided a secure place, enhanced social control and cohesion, and produced social codes. In that sense, *hemşehri* networks appeal to similar sentiments and play a functional role in the religion in social practices.

It should be noted that every social network contains a dark side, and so do *hemşehri* associations. They can be instrumental in the political sphere and resource allocation. The pragmatic relations with political centers cause these associations to have clientelist characteristics. These associations show symptoms of patronage as much as they get closer to political life and political parties. For this reason, *hemşehri* associations contradict the principles of "the rule of law" and cause unequal distribution of public resources (Kurtoglu 2012). According to Powell's (1970) model of clientelist politics, patron-client ties are the fundamental building blocks of networks – vertical clusters – that extend from rural to urban areas and serve as bridges between the local and national political spheres. Similarly, *hemşehri* associations favor their *hemşehri* by using their networks in public services (Kose 2008).

However, the type of clientelism created by associations in the political life of Turkey has brought both positive and negative impacts. For some, clientelism has contributed to developing a multiparty system in Turkey and political participation in the electoral processes. Many of the association's leaders, who had previously supported the traditional patron-client ties, helped their *hemşehri*s by bridging social capital. This helped them deal with life's struggles, particularly with government authorities. The political parties' efforts to gain *gecekondu* votes turned out to be extremely vital for the gecekondu residents in their new urban life (Sayari 2014; Kalaycioglu 2001). For some, on the other hand, politics of clientelism had negative impacts on democratic processes; they claim that the use of public funds for political patronage has hampered "rational policy making" and has instead made party competitiveness mostly centered on huge spoils systems (Heper and Keyman 1998).

Second, *mahalle* and its "potential" role in participation focusing on the network characteristics are identified. *Mahalle* is seen as the most appropriate unit for public participation and public control since it is libertarian, participatory, transparent, and democratic (Geray 1995: 38); however, the assessments on *mahalle* administrations state *mahalle*'s real potential for democracy and participation is not appreciated in practice. Until the 2000s, the functional effectiveness of local service provision rather than the democratic values has been the priority of *mahalle* in Turkey.

Neighborhood governance of West has a long history of civil society and participatory democracy, such as participation and decentralization. In Turkey, on the other hand, *mahalle* is mostly associated with public policy (Çılgın and Yirmibeşoğlu 2019: 102). Although the improvements are gradual, *mahalle* is at the center of social and political relations and urban life. It is a promising participation mechanism for the urban area residents, ensuring that the decisions regarding planning and local public services are taken at the lowest level possible (Cilgin and Yirmibesoglu 2019: 112). As a result, we can state that since Turkey's administrative structure naturally has a *mahalle* network, it also has the power to mobilize participation and local democracy. Governments, national and local, should support their functional role and encourage citizens to use those networks to facilitate participation. Not only this but also citizens and NGOs shall own and make use of these structures.

Despite all its shortcomings, the city councils are acknowledged quasi-institutionalized network mechanisms to expand democratic participation, contribute to the development of civil society, and implement direct public participation. They are the dynamic social networks operating nationwide and enabling direct citizen participation. In line with these thoughts, Yalcin-Riollet (2019) states that participatory mechanisms, such as city councils, have been created by both domestic players and the political environment, although none of the parties involved in their creation have complete control over them. They are not at the disposal of anyone. Their operation must be viewed as a non-linear process with interacting players who engage, each with a distinct rationale, and who bargain with and influence the others in ways that greatly enhance direct public participation.

In conclusion, it is essential to support each social networks covered above to strengthen participation and local democracy. Additionally, the empowerment of these networks by providing legal basis is particularly needed to expand their capabilities, and to focus on their role in enhancing participation opportunities rather than service delivery.

## 5 Conclusion

In Turkey's political and administrative history, certain community types of social networks can serve as a medium for citizen participation. In order to facilitate citizen participation, namely in the political sphere, this study aimed to discover the means and mechanisms of Turkey's social networks, which are neither institutionalized nor structured. This chapter focused on daily informal ties and

networks and how they affect formal life and networks. It described unique linkages, connections, and social networks in Turkish politics and public life. Hence, without ignoring the shortcomings of these structures, their development and legal basis are also elaborated. In that sense, *hemşehri* and its related concepts are explored in terms of social capital, how they might be used as a citizen participation tool, and how they have changed from micro-sociological foundations into macro-political structures. Then *mahalle* as social network type and *mukhtar* as network actor are introduced by their historical, socio-cultural and administrative traits. Finally, city councils are assessed as self-assembled structures and quasi-institutionalized social networks enforced to enable direct citizen participation in local politics.

It should be noted that the empowerment of direct citizen participation can be achieved by focusing on the local structures. Local structures are the unique common trait of *hemşehri*, *mahalle*, *mukhtar*, and city councils. Hence, it is clear that enhancing citizen participation through social networks is conditional to improvements in decentralization, autonomy, and subsidiarity.

Finally, social media are also the online networks with the potential power of citizen participation. It is a fact that, nowadays, one cannot ignore the power of social media and its role in direct citizen participation. Many cases experienced in social media strengthen citizen participation and public policy making. However, they are beyond the scope of this chapter. Future empirical studies regarding the role and functioning of social media along with its effectiveness in the citizen participation of Turkey can be valuable for the field.

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# Digital Divide and Citizen Participation in Public Policy Making

**Nilay Yavuz**

**Abstract** While e-participation methods have become widespread and strengthened the two-way interaction between governments and citizens in public policy making, the inclusion of the technology dimension in the citizen participation process has also brought new challenges. The digital divide literature suggests that due to the disparities in access, skills, motivation, usage context, and usage opportunities related to the ICTs, there can be additional disadvantages for certain segments of society who cannot evenly make use of the opportunities provided by the digital world because of their socioeconomic status, race, age, gender, and geography. This inequality may also concern political participation, particularly citizen participation in policy making. The aim of this chapter is to describe the relationship between electronic citizen participation and the digital divide and explain the implications of the digital divide for citizen participation in public policy making. It first characterizes the process of e-participation in policy making for citizens, along with a discussion on the tools of e-participation. Next, the digital divide issue is reviewed using different literature conceptualizations. Following this, the relationship between e-participation and the digital divide and the implications of the digital divide for citizen involvement in public policy making are discussed.

**Keywords** Digital divide · Citizen participation · E-participation · Methods · Concepts · Policy making · Technology · ICTs · Relationship · Governments

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## 1 Introduction

As a well-known practice, political participation usually involves interactions through the regular political mechanisms, such as elections or becoming a political party member. In addition, engagements with "the less formally organized politics (e.g., opinion formation and engagement with political issues outside of formal political structures and parties)" have recently become prevalent (Van Deursen and Helsper 2015: 35). As governments increasingly need greater involvement of citizens to achieve effective democratic governance, public participation in policy making has become a desirable practice (Fung 2006). Public participation, which can be defined as "any process that engages the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make better decisions" (International Association for Public Participation 2017), has emerged as a strategy to inform and enable citizens to influence the public policy making process. Citizens may collaborate with governments in many areas, such as community policing, neighborhood planning, education services, and participatory budgeting (Cho et al. 2021). Nabatchi and Amsler (2014: 3) argue that participation "allows members of the public (i.e., those who do not hold administrative positions in government institutions) to have their voices, ideas, and concerns heard personally and actively through in-person and online processes." Therefore, the public's direct participation in policy making is an important tool for communicating citizens' choices and needs to the government and for sharing power between the government and the citizens (Kocaoğlu and Phillips 2017).

Public participation practices can provide various benefits for both citizens and governments. For example, asking citizens' opinions in local government decisions may facilitate adopting and implementing these decisions. In addition, sharing ideas by the stakeholders in the participation process increases their solidarity and cooperation and ensures more efficient and effective use of public resources (Gökçe 1999; Aydın 2007). Indeed, the direct participation of citizens in the administration allows administrators to better define public priorities and to strengthen decision-making consequences accordingly (Nabatchi 2010).

Although public involvement has the potential to improve the effectiveness of democratic governance, prior studies demonstrate that there is a persistent decline in citizen participation (Tai et al. 2020). However, with the developments in information and communication technologies, citizens have increased opportunities to shape public policies today. Technological applications including social media, online forums, online surveys, online participatory platforms, and websites are utilized to enable broader and more accessible citizen engagement, which is potentially more productive than ever before. As Karkın (2021) argues, these developments have contributed to the consideration of the electronic participation (e-participation) concept in the public participation literature.

With the explosion of information and communication technologies, e-participation has emerged as a useful practice and led to the development of additional online opportunities for participation that are different from conventional methods of

citizen participation (Porumbescu 2016). It is possible to come across numerous examples of e-participation applications in several parts of the world. "Your Voice in Europe" in the European Union, "We the People" and "e-rulemaking initiative" in the USA, "Reach" in Singapore, "e-People" in South Korea, "petitions initiative" and "online forum" in Sweden, and "CIMER" in Turkey are among these initiatives (Karkin and Janssen 2020; Gündoğdu 2018). With these e-participation activities that characterize participatory governance, citizens can express their views on various public services and policies or contribute to the planning of their cities (Sirianni 2010). In line with this, research suggests that e-participation might complement offline forms of citizen participation and may help compensate for the decline in public participation (Bertot et al. 2010; Mergel 2013).

While e-participation methods have become widespread and strengthened the two-way interaction between governments and citizens in public policy making, the inclusion of the technology dimension in the citizen participation process has also brought new challenges. Although e-participation aims to promote equal and fair engagement opportunities for citizens (Schejter et al. 2015), research shows that inequalities in citizens' access to ICTs such as computers, Internet, smartphones, and the lack of digital skills or experience (digital literacy) are among the major reasons that limit electronic citizen participation in public policy making (Brown et al. 2020). This disparity, also referred to as the digital divide, is explained in the literature by various factors such as race, income level, education level, gender, and age (Mossberger et al. 2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the relationship between electronic citizen participation and the digital divide and discuss the implications of the digital divide for citizen participation in public policy making. The organization of this chapter is as follows. It will first characterize the process of electronic citizen participation in policy making, along with a discussion on the tools of e-participation. Next, the digital divide issue will be reviewed using different literature conceptualizations. Following this, the relationship between e-participation and digital divide and the implications of the digital divide for citizen involvement in policy making will be discussed.

## 2 Electronic Citizen Participation in Public Policy Making

In order to describe the role of electronic citizen participation in public policy making, it is crucial to understand the policy making process. Anderson et al. (2022: 8) define policy as "a purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern." As proposed by Lasswell (1957), public policy making includes agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation stages. Agenda setting can be defined as "the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention" (Birkland 2016: 200). Identifying an issue as a public problem is the first step that leads to the development of public policies. On the

other hand, policy formulation is concerned with "analyzing policy goals and means, and the creation or identification of explicit alternative action recommendations to resolve or at least ameliorate, the public problem identified" (Clemons and McBeth 2020: 139). Once policy alternatives are formulated, a decision is made to pursue a particular policy, and then administrative bureaucracies carry it out by allocating financial and human resources in the implementation phase. Finally, in the policy cycle's evaluation stage, a policy's consequences and impact can be assessed.

Citizens may participate in any of these policy cycle stages. In participatory policy making, the aim is to ask citizens' opinions or allow them to actively cooperate with the government in decision-making (Michels 2012). Participation initiatives are currently more common in the agenda setting, policy formulation, or in the implementation stages and aim "to enhance public provision in planning, health, education, social services, etc., as well as to recover the perceived slowing down of legitimacy toward political representatives and institutions" (Falanga and Ferrao 2021: 1).

In the first stage, agenda setting, citizens might participate in the problem definition process. Next, in the analysis stage, citizens might consider various policy alternatives and evaluate their potential benefits and challenges. In the policy formulation stage, citizens might be formally consulted to develop a feasible policy. After creating a policy, citizens might also participate in the actual implementation by developing related legislation and regulations. Finally, citizens might assist the government in monitoring by evaluating and providing policy feedback.

Empowered by ICTs, the nature of public participation in policy making has evolved into a new era called e-participation. E-participation refers to "the process of involving citizens in policy and decision-making processes through information and communication technologies in order to make public administration participatory, inclusive, collaborative and deliberative" (UN 2014: 61). Using ICTs in policy making process supports governments in achieving wider and more diverse citizen involvement, through effective information provision to the public and opportunities for discussion (OECD 2004: 11). In line with this, Pruin (2022: 210) asserts that e-participation also contributes to improving democratic legitimacy "by utilizing the everyday knowledge of citizens or 'the wisdom of the crowds', especially regarding their respective living environments". Indeed, any information that citizens can provide as a policy process input can inform policy-makers and may consequently improve the effectiveness of the policies (Kim and Lee 2012).

Saebo et al. (2009) argued that there are two types of e-participation: one is initiated by the government, where the government assumes the whole responsibility, and the other is citizen-initiated engagement, where it is "a social movement made driven by citizens and enabled by network" (Al-Dalou and Abu-Shanab 2013: 8).

In the e-participation context, citizens can participate directly or indirectly in the governmental decision-making processes through technological tools, including government websites, mobile applications, government social media accounts, e-mail or online chat applications, short messages (SMs), online forums or meetings, online participatory platforms, online surveys, and artificial intelligence-based

chatbots (Yavuz 2021). While some technological opportunities provide one-way communication between government and citizens, others allow two-way interaction. They are generally used for sharing information, collecting information about citizens' demands, complaints, needs, preferences, and values, producing ideas/projects/policies, and getting feedback on services and policies (Saylam 2020).

To describe and explore the function of e-participation in policy making, a useful framework to characterize these processes of citizen e-participation in public policy making has been developed by Macintosh (2004), which includes a description of the e-participation levels, policy making stages, key stakeholders, and technological tools.

Macintosh (2004: 3) categorizes e-participation into three levels as e-enabling, e-engaging, and e-empowering. E-enabling refers to government utilization of technology to facilitate participation through enabling users to access information. At this level, governments use ICTs to deliver significant information to the citizens in a format that is both more accessible and more comprehensible so that they can be informed about policy issues. Research suggests that providing the information is an important prerequisite for the effectiveness of public participation (Farina et al. 2014; Nabatchi 2012). It is important that citizens can interactively search for online information through digital platforms (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010) in order to "enhance accessibility, understanding, attention, and interest" (Cho et al. 2021: 769).

The second level of e-participation is e-engagement, which refers to calling for a larger audience to provide more input and encourage deliberative debates on public problems. The nature of e-participation at this level is in the form of top-down consultation of citizens, and e-participation practices are usually characterized as reactions to government-led initiatives. Consultation can be easily conducted by ranking or voting online, as these tools can technically aggregate data and publish it to the participants (Cho et al. 2021).

The third e-participation level is concerned with the empowerment of citizens, where active participation is encouraged to affect the policy making process. As a bottom-up participation practice, citizens become actual policy developers in this process.

These e-participation levels can also be considered based on the stages of the public policy making process (Macintosh 2004). As an e-participation model applicable to all these stages, governments use ICT-enabled crowdsourcing to collectively develop effective solutions to public problems, gather information about a certain public policy, and evaluate different policy alternatives through citizen input (Yavuz et al. 2020; Saylam 2021).

Another dimension of e-participation concerns the type of technologies used. Government websites are one of the technological tools that stand out in the citizens' interaction with the government for all the stages of the policy making process. Sharing information about public services and related policies is one of the main functions of these technological applications; for example, reports and statistics on government budget expenditures can be published on these websites, which can assist citizens in monitoring policy implementation and outcomes (Yavuz and Welch

2014). Although they appear to be less interactive tools of e-participation, besides governments' one-way information provision, citizens may also visit governmental websites to provide feedback on services or policies (Karkin and Janssen 2014). Some websites have online forms for submitting such requests and complaints or sending messages to public administrators.

Similarly, public agencies may publish online surveys on their websites from time to time to receive feedback from citizens or to enable them to participate in the decisions to be taken. This also helps with using public resources more efficiently and effectively by determining the primary needs of the citizens. For example, "participatory budgeting" practices are undertaken in various parts of the world through governmental websites or other online platforms (Gilman 2016).

Similar to government websites, governments increasingly utilize online platforms specifically designed to get citizen input on a policy issue, which can be technology-enabled or digital participatory environments hosted by civic organizations or governments (Falco and Kleinhans 2018; Desouza and Bhagwatwar 2014; Cho et al. 2021). As the invited spaces built for two-way interaction with citizens through feedback, ideas, or discussions (Kersting 2012), these platforms are explicitly developed for enabling citizen contributions on an issue and often involve a range of functions to receive citizen input, including data mapping tools and synthesis of public opinion (Cho et al. 2021). Similarly, Falco and Kleinhans (2018: 3) emphasize that these tools differ from social media platforms as they offer additional capabilities such as "analytics, map-based and geolocated input, importing and exporting of data, and ranking of ideas."

Citizens can also participate in the governmental processes by communicating directly with administrative units via e-mail or online chat programs. Moreover, mobile applications are commonly offered to citizens for more convenient access to information and services compared to governmental websites and to participate more actively in governance by increasing their interaction. In addition, such mobile applications and online platforms are frequently used by governments to improve coordination and collaborations among citizens, civil society organizations, the private sector, and public institutions in managing emergencies, such as pandemics or natural disasters (Yildiz et al. 2021).

In addition to these, with the new technological developments such as artificial intelligence (AI), AI-based chatbots are also utilized as a participation tool (Väänänen et al. 2020). This technology allows citizens to communicate with artificial intelligence by submitting online questions, opinions, suggestions, requests, and complaints. Through automation, citizens' problems can be resolved more quickly or transferred to the relevant authorities. In addition, their feedback can be more easily integrated into the policy making process.

Social media platforms constitute another primary tool for electronic citizen participation, especially in local governments (Feeney and Brown 2017; Aydın and Göçoğlu 2015). Social media is web-based information and communication technology tool that allows users to create, edit, evaluate (e.g., like, comment, share), associate with other content, or connect with other users (Rodrigues 2020). Today, in addition to websites and online participation platforms, many governments

benefit from social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook which provide real-time and up-to-date information to the public and enable two-way interaction. Social media tools are particularly useful in reducing traditional barriers to citizen participation, such as time, distance, and social pressure, and they tend to create a participatory environment open to everyone (Sobaci and Karkin 2013).

Research suggests that online tools may offer increased convenience to citizens for various reasons to participate in policy making (Cho et al. 2021). First, they provide more flexibility for participation due to the reduced need to leave home physically to attend a meeting. This can be advantageous in terms of time and participation costs. Second, they can draw younger citizens' interest and those who are more reluctant to participate in face-to-face public meetings (Monnoyer-Smith 2011). Third, some practices of online participation can be as easy as voting or ranking.

In brief, several tools are available for the e-participation of citizens and various opportunities in the policy making cycle. With various technical features, these online tools offer several advantages for governments in enhancing the public policy making process by facilitating citizen input and interaction with government agencies.

However, regarding the impact of e-participation on political participation, there are mixed findings. Mobilization Theory and Reinforcement Theory proposed by Norris (2001) are two perspectives that are commonly used to discuss this issue. According to Reinforcement Theory, e-participation may result in greater involvement in formal and informal politics, especially for those individuals who already have various social networks and thus readily contribute more actively to political processes (Son and Lin 2008). However, the caveat is that this might lead to greater disparities in who participates because the opportunity to use the Internet for participation might help this group to participate even more (Norris 2001; Mossberger et al. 2008). Therefore, according to this view, e-participation will not improve the diversity of the participants. Tai et al. (2020: 281) explain the rationale behind this argument by emphasizing the socioeconomic disparities that cannot be addressed by the Internet: "currently inactive individuals will not become more motivated to participate or more interested in politics simply because a new medium of participation, the Internet, has emerged" (Albrecht 2006; Best and Krueger 2005; Di Gennaro and Dutton 2006; Margolis and Resnick 2000; Tang and Lee 2013)."

Unlike Reinforcement Theory, Mobilization Theory posits that because the Internet facilitates the exchange of information and also reduces the cost of participation, increasingly studies indicate that a broad range of individuals utilizes online forums to involve in discussing policy issues; thus, it has the potential to boost political participation, both online and offline (Tai et al. 2020; Oser et al. 2013).

Although research confirms the positive impact of e-participation on political participation, Steinbach et al. (2019) suggest that there can be important barriers for governments to utilize e-participation. Particularly, in terms of the organizational and institutional factors (Pruin 2022; Toots 2019), research shows that there can be enablers or barriers related to organizational complexity (Medaglia 2012), cultural

factors (Voorberg et al. 2015), lack of motivation for change (De Vries et al. 2016), lack of political support (Panopoulou et al. 2014), regulation and policies (Sarantis et al. 2010), and unawareness of citizens about the existence of e-participation opportunities (Glencross 2009).

In addition to these organizational factors, for the effectiveness of e-participation, an important consideration becomes ensuring equality in the citizens' electronic participation in the policy making processes, as there might be disparities in who participates/can participate online and who does/cannot, pointing to the digital divide problem, due to the complexity and cost of the technologies as well as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the individuals which might inhibit their ICT access and usage opportunities. The concept of the digital divide will be explained in the next section.

## 3 Digital Divide

The digital divide is a phenomenon with various understandings throughout history due to the evolution of the issue and technological developments. In fact, the phenomenon has been characterized as a "moving target" (Hilbert 2012). When it first emerged in the mid-1990s, the digital divide referred to the disparities between individuals or households about Internet access (Gunkel 2003). Similarly, OECD defined the digital divide as "the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard both to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities" (OECD 2001).

Over time, the conceptualization of the digital divide has evolved due to three main developments (Korovkin et al. 2022: 4). First, the understanding of the Internet has developed into a more complex general-purpose technology. Second, it has been recognized that there exists disparities not only about physical access to the technologies but also regarding the skills needed to utilize them, and on the purposes of use. Third, studies were also conducted on the broader socioeconomic effects of ICT use, including cross-country comparisons.

Currently, the discussions on the digital divide in the literature are grouped into three, indicating the disparities that might exist in three distinct levels (Korovkin et al. 2022). At the first level, digital divide is about the level of access to the technologies, particularly the Internet, and focuses on who has access to the Internet and who has not. While this gap has started to close over time with more people gaining access, additional challenges with ICT use have emerged, creating new disparities, including the technology maintenance issue (Gonzales 2016). In addition, studies indicated that Internet access does not address the digital divide problem due to the differences in individuals' online skills and competencies in using ICTs and how it affects what people can do online. These disparities in skills may also include those related to "algorithm awareness" (Korovkin et al. 2022; Gran et al. 2021). Referred to as the "second-level" divide (Hargittai 2002), differences in online skills also lead

to disparities in time spent online, content explored, and the overall benefits of Internet access (Ragnedda and Muschert 2013: 2). Individuals have varied patterns of accessing and utilizing ICTs, which is explained by demographic and socioeconomic factors, psychological and physical barriers, and cultural influences (Norris 2001).

DiMaggio and Hargittai (2001) summarize the dimensions of the digital divide that correspond to the first- and second-level divide as technical means (software, hardware, and Internet connection speed, etc.), convenience of the Internet use location, frequency and purposes of Internet usage, availability of social assistance regarding ICT use), and the availability of technical skills (Min 2010).

Finally, another level of the digital divide concerns the social and economic offline impacts of using digital technologies also called the "third-level" divide. Van Deursen and Helsper (2015) explain that disparities in access to the Internet may affect individuals' ability to get effective healthcare services, get a job, improve their social network, or participate in policy making.

In addition to the conceptualization of the digital divide, it is significant to identify the factors that relate to it. First, research has suggested that demographic and socioeconomic factors, including income, age, gender, ethnicity, and education, explain variation in Internet access and usage (van Deursen and van Dijk 2014; Mossberger et al. 2003; Dimaggio et al. 2004). Besides these factors, disability, retirement, and unemployment are among the other correlates of lower Internet adoption and use (Dobransky and Hargittai 2006). In addition to these individual-level factors, studies suggest that spatial disparities might also exist concerning Internet access, usage, and related skills. For example, Mossberger et al. (2012) found that neighborhood segregation and spatially concentrated poverty lessen Internet access and use opportunities and increase barriers to it. Similarly, Hale et al. (2010) highlighted that broadband Internet access tends to be lower among citizens living in rural locations.

As indicated by the third-level digital divide discussion, research regarding the issue pointed out that digital inequalities lead to disparities in offline activities and opportunities, including "political participation, educational attainment, and employment outcomes" (van Deursen and Helsper 2015: 30). The next section elaborates on the relationship between digital divide and citizen participation in policy making by taking into consideration the digital divide framework as well as the e-participation framework presented above.

## 4 Relationship Between Digital Divide and Citizen Participation in Public Policy Making

The digital divide literature overall proposes that due to the disparities in access, skills, motivation, usage context, and usage opportunities related to the ICTs, there can be additional disadvantages for certain segments of society who cannot equally

make use of the opportunities provided by the digital world because of their socioeconomic status, race, age, gender, and geography (Van Dijk 2005). This inequality may also concern political participation (Norris 2001), particularly citizen participation in policy making.

Although ICTs offer several opportunities for citizens' participation in policy making in various policy cycle stages and using various technologies, any disparity in citizens' usage of these online platforms for political purposes may imply that the democratic potential of digitalization may be significantly challenged. Norris (2001: 4) explains this issue with the concept of the "democratic divide," which refers to "the differences between those who do and do not use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life." She also points out that the "democratic divide" may lead to political marginalization. Confirming this, research has found that using the Internet for political purposes is associated with being male, white, and having higher education and income (Min 2010). Research also indicates that citizens' online political participation may relate to their motivations and interests in political engagement (Norris 2001). Thus, for those citizens who are already interested in political participation, there may be greater opportunities to affect public policies, deepening the democratic divide.

Looking from a different perspective, Fung (2006) and Nabatchi (2012) underline that while online tools may facilitate the participation of some citizens, they may also become a disadvantage for others. The disadvantages may result from inequalities in Internet access, usage patterns, and skills among older, lower-income, less educated, and minority citizens (Cho et al. 2021). Hargittai (2002) suggests that citizens with higher digital skills tend to use the Internet better, including its use for political activities. On the other hand, Mossberger et al. (2017) argue that those Internet users who depend on smartphones are less likely to use the Internet for political activities.

To sum up, these disparities in using the Internet for political purposes have important consequences for the democratic character of the policy making process. Because one of the aims of enabling citizen involvement in policy making is to realize the ideal of participative democracy and promote collective decision-making, citizens are expected to be equally represented in these online participation practices. On the other hand, if the characteristics of those individuals who participate/can participate in policy making through ICTs are different from those who do not/cannot participate, the policies that develop as an outcome of the online participation of citizens may not reflect the preferences and opinions of all that are affected by the related policies.

## 5 Conclusion

As discussed in the earlier sections, policy making and the digital divide are both multidimensional concepts. Therefore, it is necessary to consider various aspects in analyzing their relationship and develop policies to reduce the negative impacts of inequalities resulting from digitalizing political participation. First, the effects of

the digital divide may be examined in terms of the different characteristics of the technologies that can be used in participative policy making. While some technologies used in public participation may be more costly and require more complex skills to adopt, others may be more available and simpler in their features. This may imply that to address the negative effects of the digital divide on citizen participation in policy making and encourage broader participation, online participation platforms can be designed to appeal to more people in terms of their availability, accessibility, and ease of use characteristics. For example, mobile applications or social media tools are increasingly utilized for this purpose.

In addition, free broadband Internet access or citizen participation kiosks can be provided by governments in various parts of the city, where citizens can access the Internet and conveniently participate online in policy matters related to them.

More broadly, citizens' digital literacy or skills in using ICTs, as well as their awareness and interest in politics, also need to be enhanced by the government policies so that they can be more familiar and comfortable with interacting with the government online and particularly with the use of online platforms for participation in policy making.

Besides addressing the access, skills, and usage divide, it is also crucial for governments to approach the issue of citizen participation in policy making more systematically to improve the effectiveness of e-participation. As discussed earlier, the policy making cycle includes various stages to which citizens can provide input. For each stage, the need for and the feasibility of citizen participation may vary. Considering the different features and strengths of the various ICT tools and the potential of citizen input to policy making, it may be beneficial to analyze which technologies may be more appropriate for public participation at which stages of the policy making cycle.

Likewise, it may be helpful to analyze the profiles of the citizens related to a particular policy domain (e.g., elderly, citizens with disabilities) considering their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, interests, skills, and experiences with ICT use, so that appropriate online platforms may be tailored accordingly and they can be encouraged to participate electronically in policy making related to their concerns.

Finally, given the multidimensional conceptualization of the digital divide issue, involving not only disparities in the quality of access to the Internet but also in the capacity to use ICTs and the consequences of ICT use, it may be necessary for governments to adopt multiple channels of public participation in policy making to ensure broader public involvement.

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# Conceptual Complexities and Frameworks to Analyze Digital Transformation and Citizen-Centric E-Participation in Public Administration

**Kamil Demirhan**

**Abstract** The concepts of citizen-centricity and e-participation have gained importance in studies on e-government and e-governance regarding citizens' new position in politics as influencers of public policies. However, complexities within the concepts of e-government, e-governance, citizen-centricity, and e-participation prevent realizing systematic and substantial analyses of digital transformation in the public sector. This chapter defines the conceptual complexities of e-government, e-governance, citizen-centricity, and e-participation. The study, first, deals with e-government and e-governance mainly used to explain digital transformation and reform in the public sector. Then, it explains different approaches and frames in the literature as well as the categories of centricity concerning different approaches to e-government and e-governance. The study also illustrates the top-down and bottom-up processes to centricity. Finally, it explains the complexities of e-participation and its different types with the help of top-down and bottom-up approaches. The study contributes to the field by presenting conceptual complexities and confusion, thus providing a better understanding of e-government and e-governance in the era of interactive digital platforms with the help of powerful frames in the literature, and also proposes a schema on the different forms of e-participation.

**Keywords** E-government · E-governance · Citizen-centricity · E-participation · Complexities · Frameworks · Digital transformation · Public administration · Approaches · Processes

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## 1 Introduction

The spread of interactive digital platforms has challenged the fields of e-government and e-governance. The theoretical backgrounds of e-government and e-governance require continuity across the new demands for change in the flow of information and communication as well as change in the major influence of governments on platforms. The concepts of citizen-centricity and e-participation have gained importance in studies on e-government and e-governance regarding citizens' new position in politics as influencers of public policies. However, complexities within the concepts of e-government, e-governance, citizen-centricity, and e-participation prevent realizing systematic and substantial analyses of digital transformation in the public sector. These complexities are the main focus of this study.
In terms of conceptual complexities, one of the problems is the lack of a commonly accepted theoretical background, which results in the use of the same concepts to explain different cases or other concepts to address the same situations. Another problem is the absence of connections between the main fields and the concepts developed parallel to the new issues. For instance, the relationship between e-government and e-participation should be connected with the former literature on e-government. This conceptual "vagueness" (Yildiz 2007) causes handicaps and confusion in these fields (Rawat 2020; Bannister and Connolly 2012: 4; Orihuela and Obi 2007: 27; Jeager 2003: 323; Marche and McNiven 2003: 75; Aldrich et al. 2002: 351).

This chapter presents conceptual complexities and confusion, emphasizes the importance of conceptual consistency in the fields of e-government and e-governance, and focuses on the studies which define and use the main concepts in different contexts. It presents the frameworks with the potential to decrease these complexities. The explanations for these frameworks differ from each other but they maintain their logical consistency. The study considers these frameworks in relation to each other and develops clearer connections among them. This approach may contribute to building connections between the main fields and the concepts related to the new issues of citizen-centricity and e-participation.

This study utilizes literature reviews and meta-analyses on e-government and e-governance categorizing the cases, processes, and concepts and reviews the various usages of citizen-centricity and top-down and bottom-up e-participation. It explores the different meanings of these concepts and their controversial usages in the literature as well as integrating these frameworks analytically, organizing concepts, and providing better conceptual understanding. This study provides a schema illustrating the different forms of e-participation that proposes a descriptive typology integrating the perspectives of e-government and e-governance on e-participation regarding citizen-centricity. It also develops an aspect of the top-down and bottom-up approaches considering both the flow of communication and control on the platform of communication.

## 2 The Difference Between E-Government and E-Governance

### *2.1 E-Government*

E-government is defined "simply" as "the application of the tools and techniques of e-commerce to the work of government" (Howard 2001: 6). E-government works mainly by the provision of online information and services by the government to citizens, businesses, and the government (Jeager 2003: 323). It is characterized by the functions of cost and time efficiency, the improvement of service delivery, the increase in information accessibility, and participation in the decision-making process (Aldrich et al. 2002: 350; Howard 2001: 6). The main expectations from e-government implementations are accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, interaction among policy actors, and participation (Jeager 2003: 324).
In the conceptualization of e-government, many components intersect with other fields, such as e-governance, e-democracy, or e-participation. This conceptualization has many normative claims related to accountability, "decentralization," "democratization," "global integration," and "interaction" which are beyond the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by governments for transaction or service delivery (Yildiz 2007: 651). This situation makes this concept so comprehensive, and e-government requires a border.

Yildiz's (2007) study is one of the most cited articles presenting a detailed categorization of e-government. The author provides a meta-analysis investigating different definitions of e-government, deals with the limitations of this concept, and offers some critical problems related to the conceptual "vagueness." In this study, e-governance is explained as a sub-category of e-government. This categorization classifies e-governance in a different context within an interaction between "government-to-civil-society" (G2CS) and "government-to-citizens" (C2C) as the "parties of communication," and it is characterized by the features of "communication, coordination, transparency, accountability, grassroots organization" (Yildiz 2007: 651). These are the same as the characters of e-government in this schema, indicating that e-government is more comprehensive than e-governance.

### *2.2 E-Governance*

The definitions of e-governance have intersections with e-government. Examples represent the use of these terms interchangeably (Allen et al. 2001: 94). Dawes (2008: 86, 93) explains e-governance as the use of ICTs to reach a set of governance objectives as "a policy framework, enhanced public services, high-quality and cost-effective government operations, citizen and civil society engagement in democratic processes, and administrative and institutional reform." Holzer and Kim (2007) explain the components of e-governance as information availability, service

provision, realizing online transactions, interaction, websites' privacy and usability, and citizen participation. These are so similar to the matters of e-government. Contrary to similar definitions, some of conceptualizations emphasize specific features of e-governance different from e-government. In these researches, e-governance focuses on power relations, rule-making, and citizen participation in policy making. In this direction, e-governance is explained as "the new patterns of decision making, power sharing and coordination … by the advent of IT" (Allen et al. 2001: 95). The main emphasis in e-governance is public deliberation in the rule-making process that is different from "government to citizen sector" (G2C) in e-government focusing on the online provision of services and transactions (Carlitz and Gunn 2002: 389).

Normatively, e-governance is characterized by accountability, collaboration, democratization, transparency, and structurally horizontal organization of power relations and decision-making processes. The main functions are presented as "consultation with stakeholders," "integration of external users with sources and systems," "flexibility across government" (Allen et al. 2001: 97), and equal participation of well-informed citizens in "moderated, interactive and asynchronous" discussions (Carlitz and Gunn 2002: 395). In this literature, e-governance has a broad context, covering e-government as a sub-category. The conceptual infiniteness is an issue for e-governance as well as e-government.

### 2.3 Frameworks for Decreasing Conceptual Complexities

A small number of studies provide a systematic approach to the difference between e-government and e-governance. Nevertheless, several studies have attempted to differentiate these concepts from each other. Carlits and Gunn's (2002) conceptualization emphasizes a specific difference through "interaction." The study claims that e-government mainly focuses on interaction at the stage of service provision, while e-governance focuses on interaction at the stage of participation in the process of rule-making. United Nations (2008: 15) explains e-governance as "connected or networked governance" and as the challenge of e-government. It is defined as "governmental collective action to advance the public good by engaging the creative efforts of all segments of society" (United Nations 2008: 15). In these explanations, it is claimed that e-governance has a broader context concerning its context, including government and citizens, and all stakeholders' interaction in an extensive spectrum while e-government is limited with the issues related to the use of information systems by governments especially for online service provision to citizens (Orihuela and Obi 2007: 28; Sheridan and Riley 2010). The issues explained around the conceptual complexities in this chapter can be summarized as "all-inclusiveness" in the definitions of concepts, the high level of intersections between e-government and e-governance, the use of concepts interchangeably to each other, and the issue of comprehensiveness. The following frameworks have potential to decrease these complexities.

Marche and McNiven (2003) conceptualize e-government and e-governance separately using the dimensions of "focus" and "centricity." The authors (2003: 75) define e-government as "the provision of routine government information and transactions using electronic means" and e-governance as "a technology-mediated relationship between citizens and their government from the perspective of potential electronic deliberation over civic communication, over policy evaluation, and in democratic expressions of citizen will." In this conceptualization, the main focuses of e-governance are power relations and decision-making mechanisms. In contrast, e-government focuses on administration, efficiency, and effectiveness in the provision of routine services and transactions. Information systems have a primary position due to the administrative concerns of e-government. At the same time, the main issues for e-governance are interaction and participation in agenda setting and the policy making process (Marche and McNiven 2003: 75–79).

The second dimension, "centricity," is divided into organization-centricity and citizen-centricity. Organizational needs are more important than citizen needs in service provision in terms of organization-centricity. Citizen-centricity means making citizens' tendencies and choices first in policy making rather than the tendencies of authorities (Marche and McNiven 2003: 77). The conceptualization creates four models: (i) "E-government/citizen-centric," (ii) "E-governance/citizen-centric," (iii) "E-government/organization-centric," and (iv) "E-governance/organization-centric." The first model means "improving the value proposition of government to its citizens … and increasing site effectiveness" (Marche and McNiven 2003: 79). The second model addresses a mediated consultation with citizens, sets relations with online communities, and improves access to ICTs. The third model is related to the reform efforts in the public sector emphasizing ICTs' potential for the efficiency and effectiveness of government at the organizational level. The fourth model is related to governments' responses to the new demands of connected citizens (Marche and McNiven 2003: 79–82).

Marche and McNiven's (2003) framework categorizes e-governance and e-government as separate but not in competition. Moreover, comprehensiveness is not an issue in this frame that may provide a better viewpoint for analyzing cases, policies, and research. This approach differs from all-inclusive and comprehensive explanations of e-governance and e-government. Therefore, it provides a robust framework for researchers or policy analysts in this field.

The other framework, provided by Yildiz (2007), offers a viewpoint from the context of e-government that includes e-governance and does not use these terms interchangeably. This frame is helpful if it is desired to handle e-governance in contrast to the literature that describes e-governance broadly including the interaction networks in a global context beyond the government and the national state. Instead of the studies explaining e-governance in a wider context, this frame can be more functional to explain the digital transformation in developing countries or attempts to contextualize this process from a more technical or neutral perspective staying the outside of the ideological reflections of e-governance which is well defined in political science.

Bannister and Connolly's (2012: 3) frame is helpful to decrease the conceptual complexities considering differences between e-government and e-governance in terms of change in the structure, process, and governance norms. The authors (2012: 12) support that e-government does not include a structural change or a change in the process different from the government without "e." The development of web 2.0 and the rise of online interactive tools challenge e-government. Bannister and Connolly's (2012: 12) approach signifies a new stage in e-government. The authors use the terms "virtual government" and "e-government 2.0" explained as the new forms of e-governance. Virtual government means the transfer of government activity to machines using automated systems that causes a change in the structure and process, and norms by improving "efficiency," "economy," and "effectiveness." E-government 2.0 means a bottom-up model of e-governance that insists on the participation of citizens in the policy making process using ICTs (Bannister and Connolly 2012: 19). The authors (2012: 19) emphasize "the emergence of the virtual world" has a different meaning from "the use of ICTs" in the traditional context, and criticize the use of e-governance simply as governance with the use of ICTs (2012: 4) called as just e-government: "No new services are offered nor are any new flexibilities or features provided. The law has not been changed. The stakeholders remain the same" (2012: 12). This approach specifies e-governance as an independent field and addresses the technology-dependent challenge in traditional structures and processes beyond the use of ICTs. E-governance gains new meaning in this study, and "virtual government" and "e-government 2.0" replace the explanatory potential of e-government in the new virtual environment.

These three frameworks help decrease the conceptual complexities by differentiating the concepts from each other and providing systematic approaches to overcoming them. These frameworks can be evaluated in a scope that may be functional to analyze and conceptualize single or different cases in different contexts within consistency. This chapter also discusses the complexities of two related concepts: centricity and e-participation. The importance of these concepts has increased in the last few years, and this chapter contributes to previous attempts to clarify these concepts and provides a context for them in connection with the backgrounds of e-government and e-governance.

## 3 Complexities on the Concept of "Centricity"

### *3.1 "The Dichotomy" Between Organization-Centricity and Citizen-Centricity*

Is "centricity" a function of e-government and e-governance determining priority in policies and services, or is it a position indicating resistance or support toward digital transformation and reform in the public sector? One of the claims regarding centricity is that the transformation in the public sector through the Internet

revolution was blocked by administrative culture. The conflict is between vertical power structures of decision-making – still holding power in the digital era – and horizontal governance networks in a connected world (Allen et al. 2001: 93, 97). Allen et al. (2001: 97) explain that digital transformation fosters new delivery potentials, provides alternative ways to consult with stakeholders in policy making, and challenges traditional bureaucratic structures. This new situation results in the government's use of new mechanisms to realize control of this transformation process from the administration-centered approach. The authors (2001: 103) supposed that this transformation needs to progress under the collaboration between the new governance patterns and traditional administrative and political frameworks to succeed.

In e-government literature, the issue of centricity is mainly explained in a competition between organization-centricity and citizen-centricity. Bentzen (2013) uses three variables to compare differences and explains conflicts between these aspects: "organization of information on websites," "the method of e-forms submission," and "the variety of channels for communicating with citizens."

From an administrative perspective,

(i) Information is organized as hierarchical and focuses on organizational needs.
(ii) The method of e-forms submission emerged according to the civil servants' needs.
(iii) Limited options are provided for communication with citizens and are settled according to the primary administrative purposes.

From a citizen perspective,

(i) Organization of information on websites is flexible, and citizen needs are the first.
(ii) The method of e-forms submission emerged according to citizen needs.
(iii) More options are provided for setting a better communication and interaction between citizens and government (Bentzen 2013: 14).

There are differences between these aspects, but organization-centricity is not compulsorily a resistance to the transformation and reform in public administration, and citizen-centricity does not have to be contextualized as the rival of organization-centricity. It is related to the organization of structure and processes, primarily arranged according to organizational needs, while citizen-centricity is related to the design of structure and processes primarily arranged according to citizens' needs. These two approaches are the common parts of this process. Aldrich et al. (2002: 351) emphasize the balance and synchronization between organizational needs and citizens' needs. Outcomes realize both "horizontal and vertical integration" in information and service provision, and citizens' access to resources. This approach regards citizen-centricity as a new perspective in e-government and e-governance having a complementary function.

The concept of citizen-centricity also addresses a weaknesses in the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm aiming at reform in the public sector. The aspects of public management as an alternative to public administration date back to the

transformation of public administration in the 1980s. Transformation toward the private sector principles is called New Public Management (NPM). However, ignoring public values, and regarding citizens totally as customers did not solve the problems related to the efficiency and effectiveness of governments. In e-government, public value management provides a transformative aspect to the management perspective "aimed at solving the deficiencies of the NPM paradigm and the inadequacies of Weberian bureaucracy," and "tries to set a couple of criteria as transparency, citizen engagement in policy making, interaction, and equality" (Karkın and Janssen 2013: 352). This approach involves citizens as the main subjects of policy making on the demand side as the producers of public values.

The functions of citizen-centricity are extensively explained concerning e-government rather than e-governance. It is mainly handled with the design of government according to citizen needs in terms of access to information and the provision of services and transactions. This perspective is also called the demand side of e-government (Karkın 2012: 51). The idea is mentioned that the citizen-centric perspective is incompatible with e-governance. Rawat (2020: 8) claims that citizen-centricity is usable for e-government and e-participation, it is not functional for e-governance due to the "multiple partners and process." However, the multiple partners of communication in e-government, such as G2B, G2C, C2C, and C2CS, are indicated in the definitions of e-government (Yildiz 2007: 8). Nevertheless, with regard to this caution, the term "stakeholder-centric" can be used as a more comprehensive term than citizens in terms of e-governance.

In literature, citizen-centricity is also used in e-governance and considered citizens' involvement in policy making. The model of Alshibly and Chiong (2015) conceptualizes citizens as customers and draws attention to the challenges of e-government initiatives according to the citizens' demands instead of administrators' preferences. This approach includes the components such as improving "customer's subjective experience," "individual satisfaction," and "improving customers' empowerment" (Alshibly and Chiong 2015: 395). This opposition to administrative or provider-vision works to enlighten the power of the demand side, customers hold the main power on their needs, and they can find the way to their satisfaction, which means autonomy. Empowerment is an essential concept in this perspective, improving autonomy, and the other concept that personalization consists of forecasting behaviors and determining "preferences and characteristics of customers" using the information in a real-time environment in secure portals (Alshibly and Chiong 2015: 395–397).

The studies focus on citizen-centricity and consider this concept in competition with organization-centricity. However, systematic explanations of the differences between citizen-centricity and organization-centricity and their relation to e-government and e-governance are not well discussed in the literature. Marche and McNiven's (2003) classification explained above has a different frame regarding organization-centricity and citizen-centricity within less conflict and in a scope setting their connection with the concepts of e-government and e-governance.

### 3.2 Citizen-Centricity: Top Down or Bottom Up?

Another confusion in centricity is the use of organization-centricity as a top-down arrangement of services, and the use of citizen-centricity as a bottom-up arrangement. Lee and Lee (2014) draw a picture of a dichotomy between the provider-centric and citizen-centric approaches around e-government services in terms of smart cities. This research (Lee and Lee 2014) uses the private sector approach to improve e-government and explains the provider-centric view as the top-down arrangement of citizen services in smart cities by the administration in a bureaucratic nature. However, the top-down and bottom-up arrangement of citizen services can be the forms of arrangements in citizen-centric approach and organization-centricity. Lee and Lee (2014) claim that citizens' views should determine services and goods' form, function, and content. Furthermore, the authors recommend that the arrangements of e-government should consist of citizens' engagement in the decision-making process from a proper bottom-up perspective. Another study emphasizes the importance of a bottom-up model for e-government success and suggests that e-government initiatives should be arranged according to citizens' needs and demands instead of administrators' or providers' preferences (Alshibly and Chiong 2015). Should it be the government providing these initiatives according to citizens' needs? This question is essential in characterizing the arrangement process.
The literature on citizen-centricity commonly emphasizes the importance of citizen participation using ICTs in determining citizen needs and designing services and policies. These studies explain citizen-centricity as a bottom-up arrangement of services; however, citizen-centricity is not limited by the bottom-up process and also includes top-down processes. Top-down and bottom-up approaches are related to communication and the organization of interaction on platforms instead of centricity.

Top-down initiatives aim to consult citizens about government policies and try to get feedback from citizens under government-led web platforms such as blogs, websites, or online forums (Bruns and Wilson 2010). With the development of social media platforms, links to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are integrated into government websites (Naranjo-Zolotov et al. 2019: 537). These initiatives have the potential to learn citizens' views on policies and get public input in the policy making process. However, they are limited by the one-way flow of communication and the organization of interaction due to the control of public servants on the communication platforms mostly, the topics and attendees of discussions are determined and moderated by the government. Top-down initiatives are faced with limitations related to censorship, the design of platforms, the relevancy of topics with citizen needs, and registration options. Conversely, bottom-up initiatives try to influence policies and political processes by engaging citizens, NGOs, or other policy actors with civil society-led or user-led independent initiatives. These motivate "communities of interest debating current policy challenges amongst themselves" (Bruns and Wilson 2010: 333).

Both approaches aim to get or include citizen feedback to lead the government's policies. In contrast to top-down initiatives, bottom-up initiatives provide a broader

sense of community participation and network opportunity. However, it does not result in the practice of two-way communication when policy actors disregard the bottom-up attempts. Nevertheless, it has more potential to set up mutual communication than the top-down model because of its potential to "attracting a critical mass of community" (Bruns and Wilson 2010: 340). As a result, the bottom-up approach is not a single type of citizen-centricity that the citizen-centricity includes top-down initiatives too.

A new conceptual complexity becomes apparent here. How can these two types of interactions between citizens and government be framed? Next part of this chapter focuses on the e-participation literature, analyzing different types of e-participation frames explaining citizen involvement in policy making from top-down and bottom-up approaches. It uses the top-down and bottom-up approaches to explain the types of e-participation rather than citizen-centricity.

## 4 Framing Differences in E-Participation Employing Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches

Researches on e-participation have a broad spectrum from computer science to political philosophy (Sanford and Rose 2007). This chapter focuses on the research in administration sciences related to e-government and e-governance (Machintosh 2004; Komito 2005; Sæbø et al. 2008; Fedotova et al. 2012; Susha and Grönlund 2012; Karkın 2012) and partially in political science related to the participatory politics and digital democracy (Krueger 2002; Wells and Moy 2012; Cantijoch and Gibson 2011). Approaches to e-participation vary according to the context of their standing-points. Confusions are explained by the absence of common theoretical background, and the eclectic structure of concept (Sæbø et al. 2008: 415; Cantijoch and Gibson 2011). Conceptual complexities in the literature arise due to the use of the same concept to explain different types of interactions (such as using e-participation both as a form of "direct citizen participation" and to explain "e-forms in government websites") (Carlitz and Gunn 2002: 391), and due to the use of different terms to indicate same conditions such as the use of e-engagement and e-participation interchangeably to explain the use of ICTs to involve citizens in the decision-making process (Aham-Anyanwu and Li 2015: 5; Le Blanc 2020; Stratu-Strelet et al. 2021). Macintosh (2004: 3) defines e-engagement as "top-down consultation by government" contrary to e-empowerment as bottom-up citizens' participation. E-participation has an inclusionary character over e-engagement in this reference article, but there is no systematic background differing these terms; even e-engagement is used on the opposite side as more comprehensive in other research (OECD 2003).

E-participation is related to interaction between citizens and the government through technology. Regarding e-government, the focus is on the interaction between citizens and the government concerning services and government reform

(Sæbø et al. 2008: 403). Sanford and Rose's (2007: 408) definition focuses on government services and political processes. E-governance is mainly explained in relation to power and citizens' participation in policy making. However, the types of e-participation in both e-government and e-governance fields have a limited context in comparison to broader sense of political activities including "extra-representational" and "voice-based" forms of participation beyond "representational" and "exit-based" forms of participation (Cantijoch and Gibson 2011: 1). This is a different categorization of e-participation, "extra-representational participation" covers a broader form of e-participation such as the use of ICTs in collective actions, protests, and anti-movements. Exit-based is "one-off" participation while voice-based is ongoing participation (Cantijoch and Gibson 2011: 2).

The e-governance perspective includes political activities within the borders of representative and deliberative democracy approaches. In this perspective, interaction among local or global actors through horizontal networks aims to reach a consensus among differences within the structures, the bodies, and the principles of liberal representative democracy. The approach of governance does not include political activism or contestation politics. Nevertheless, e-governance is borrowing some approaches from political science to improve the interaction between citizens and policy actors.

The e-government perspective also tends to differ from e-governance in terms of e-participation. Some views from the e-government side explain the e-participation outside of both political science and e-governance: "citizen participation in virtually any public service and not necessarily in the political, or governance-related field" (Susha and Grönlund 2012: 374). This tendency addresses only the design and the provision of government portals and services.

E-participation is a way of getting public input and feedback about the services or policies of the government. It has essential advantages for governments to improve policies and services. Interaction between citizens and government also provides better communication influencing the level of trust in government and increasing the legitimacy of decisions through deliberation. It provides new resources for governments through collaboration (Fedotova et al. 2012: 153). E-participation makes citizens or stakeholders the agents of government when the government concentrates on solving social, economic, and political problems. However, a problem is the lack of mutuality in the communication process, which means the absence of interaction. Looking at the categorization of e-participation can help illustrate this problem and produce thoughts on a solution.

In literature, e-participation is categorized on a scale between "less" and "more" or "passive" and "active" e-participation (Macintosh 2004: 3; Fedotova et al. 2012; Le Blanc 2020; Cantijoch and Gibson 2011; Stratu-Strelet et al. 2021). The most common categorization of e-participation is suggested by Macintosh (2004: 3). This categorization has three steps (i) "e-enabling" available information online, (ii) "e-engaging" consultation with citizens, and (iii) "e-empowering" citizens' participation in decision-making. In these categorizations, e-participation varies as top-down and bottom-up according to the flow of information/messages concerning government's position as supply or demand side (Macintosh 2004; Karkın 2012;

Porwol et al. 2016). E-information step is explained as the top-down arrangement of e-participation because the information supplier is government. The second step, e-consultation, is also explained as a top-down process. The third step, e-empowering, is explained as a bottom-up process because "citizens are emerging as producers rather than just consumers of policy" (Macintosh 2004: 3). Similarly, Aham-Anyanwu and Li (2015: 5–6) define e-decision-making as government-driven initiatives to engage citizens in the decision-making process by ICTs. E-information is classified as the one-way flow of information from government to citizens. Furthermore, e-consultation is explained from both forms, including one-way (from the government) and two-way flow of information (as the public response) between citizens and the government. The context of e-participation from an e-government perspective is mainly explained as a top-down process regarding the flow of communication.

Another categorization relates to the organization of interaction on platforms as government-led and citizen-led initiatives (Porwol et al. 2016; Aham-Anyanwu and Li 2015). Online discussion forums, as "issue-based forums" are organized by the government, and topics are determined from a top-down perspective. On the other hand, the e-empowerment is explained as a bottom-up process providing two main ways of getting citizens' views as e-petitions and e-referenda (Macintosh 2004: 4). The studies in the field of e-government have difficulty explaining the organization of e-participation platforms from bottom-up perspectives. In the example of Macintosh (2004), if the referenda have a plebiscite character or topics are determined by the government, then the bottom-up character of participation would be restricted. In the definition of e-participation from the e-government context, it has a top-down character and primarily consists of a government-led process in terms of the platform and the flow of information (Naranjo-Zolotov et al. 2019: 537). An online discussion can be characterized by a "citizen-initiated nature" if the opinions originated from citizens (Naranjo-Zolotov et al. 2019: 537). However, it is not enough to characterize a platform organized or government-sponsored as "citizen-initiated." Such an initiative can be considered with the difference between the flow of communication and the organization of platforms.

Regarding the organization of interaction, social media platforms cover both citizen-led and government-led participation initiatives. For instance, politicians use social media to send their messages and receive opinions from citizens providing more potential for interaction (Burns and Wilson 2010: 342; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia 2012). However, the lack of mutuality can be continued on interactive platforms due to the lack of feedback by government officials who may not monitor the inputs or there may not be a mechanism to get these inputs into the policy making process (Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia 2012: 75). Nevertheless, social media has a potential to realize bottom-up, mutual, and citizen-led participation, for this reason, monitoring and evaluating citizens' participation activities on social media should be an integral part of e-participation (Porwol et al. 2016: 584). This attention to social media use indicates its potential as a source of information, opinions, and new resources. Furthermore, the monitoring of social media communication by policy actors has many advantages in developing a bottom-up citizen-led

process in e-government and e-governance. However, this process requires some caution regarding the quality of information produced by the citizens who use these platforms, which can be affected in the form of manipulation, disinformation, or misinformation.

## 5 Discussion

The main issue of e-participation in e-government and e-governance is obtaining input or response from citizens or the public. This input can occur in the form of feedback via e-forms or citizen participation in policy making through deliberation in online forums or social media. All types of citizen participation do not have the same characteristics. A top-down or bottom-up character can be separated by considering the flow of information and communication and the organization or design of interaction on online platforms. In this chapter, the classification of a top-down or bottom-up character of e-participation is associated with the flow of communication and the organization of the platform. Thus, the process of e-participation is classified as government-led e-participation and citizen-led e-participation. This distinction is related to which actor has the primary influence on the process of e-participation but is not directly related to the issue of centricity. Both of these flows can be citizen-centric. This finding differs from the studies explaining citizen-centricity as a bottom-up process (Lee and Lee 2014; Alshibly and Chiong 2015). In this situation, government-led e-participation is a top-down form of e-participation and primarily results in a weak level of interaction, a lack of mutuality, and less feedback from citizens. Citizens will not be informed about their role in policies and decisions. The source of communication is the government, which determines the topics and rules of discussion and has a significant influence on the platform.
Citizen-led e-participation is a bottom-up form of e-participation resulting in more effective interaction, and it provides more initiative and autonomy for citizens in the process of communication. Online forums organized by citizens or social media platforms allow bottom-up citizen-led organization of interactions. However, when government agents or public officials do not respond to citizens, there is one-way communication. Nevertheless, the sources of communication are citizens or stakeholders, and their messages are received through networks beyond public officials.

This chapter explains the top-down and bottom-up forms of e-participation (Bruns and Wilson 2010) together with the consideration of e-government and e-governance and citizen-centricity. This study provides a schema for improving the view of these differences and various types of e-participation concerning the top-down and bottom-up approaches with regard to citizen-centricity and the different contexts of e-government and e-governance, as shown in Fig. 1.

The schema presents eight models to explain different types of e-participation and provides continuity with the previous frames in the literature. In this schema, the e-participation axis is divided into two parts: the flow of information and communication and the organization or design of interaction on platforms. Each of

**Fig. 1** The contexts of e-participation. (Source: Designed by the author)

these parts is also divided into top-down and bottom-up categories according to the source of information and the influence of actors on the platform.

The horizontal axis is separated into e-government and e-governance; both include citizen-centricity but differ according to their focuses. E-government focuses on information and service delivery, and e-governance focuses on power and policy issues. The top-down type of e-participation is explained as government-led participation due to the top-down flow of information and communication. The bottom-up type of e-participation is explained as citizen-led and stakeholder-led due to the bottom-up flow of information and communication. In terms of organization or design of interaction on platforms, e-participation is categorized as citizen-led and stakeholder-led e-participation due to the bottom-up organization of interaction on online platforms. The top-down organization of interaction on platforms is explained as government-led e-participation.

For example, stakeholders' participation was expected by the government in a policy making process, the government organized an online discussion forum for this aim, and public officials or managers determined the topics and moderated the discussion. In the condition of citizens' participation in discussion, this case can be categorized as citizen-centric e-governance and government-led e-participation in terms of the organization of interaction and citizen-centric e-governance and stakeholder-led participation in terms of the flow of communication. The schema has a curve, and the area widens toward bottom-up forms of e-participation, which signifies an increase in the potential of interaction. This interaction addresses mutual communication as a result of the bottom-up flow of information and the organization of interactive online platforms by citizens.

## 6 Conclusion

In the literature, conceptual complexities in e-government and e-governance prevent the analysis of cases and the development of conceptual consistency. However, different frames in the literature have the potential to decrease these complexities

and explain cases concerning digital transformation and reform in the public sector, instead of determining the strongest one among them to conceptualize all cases. This chapter explains the conceptual complexities of e-government and e-governance, in the context of frameworks meant to decrease this problem. It presents systematic approaches considering differences between e-government and e-governance, assesses their potential decreasing conceptual complexities, and classifies the forms of e-participation better.

This chapter also discusses the complexities of the concepts of citizen-centricity and e-participation, elucidates some of the confusion regarding the use of centricity in terms of top-down and bottom-up processes, and shows that the top-down and bottom-up approaches help classify e-participation more than centricity. It also explains centricity beyond the dichotomy of organization-centricity and citizen-centricity and pays attention to the conceptual complexities concerning e-participation. It provides a classification of the different types of e-participation using these approaches to propose a schema integrating citizen-centricity and the frames of e-government and e-governance. The schema provides a typology of e-participation that can be used to classify different features of cases.

This chapter contributes to the literature by presenting the potentially confusing usages of the main concepts in the field and emphasizes the importance of connections between the main fields and the new concepts' increasing importance through digital transformation. This study has the potential to help public officials design e-participation initiatives and researchers to improve the analysis of cases concerning e-participation, which in turn will provide a better understanding of digital transformation and reform in the public sector.

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# Active Citizenship and Disadvantaged Groups: The Roma in Turkey

**Canan Ugur-Rizzi**

**Abstract** Equal access to citizenship is an important part of democracy. Yet, many disadvantaged groups do not enjoy their citizenship rights. This study therefore asks the question of why some groups are unable to exercise the rights conferred by citizenship, focusing on a qualitative case study of the Roma in Turkey. Even though the Roma population in Turkey is one of the highest in Europe, studies on the Roma in Turkey are limited. In addition, this research presents a citizen-centered analysis based not only on ordinary citizens but also on the disadvantaged ones. Drawing from active citizenship theory, this chapter discusses whether (i) an active participation helps disadvantaged groups to solve their problems and benefit from citizenship opportunities, and whether (ii) the lack of social capital hinders active participation for the disadvantaged groups. The findings illustrate that the lack of social capital precludes the Roma in Turkey from enjoying active citizenship.

**Keywords** Active citizenship · Theory · Disadvantaged groups · Inclusion · The Roma · Gypsies · Citizen-centered analysis · Active participation · Social capital · Case study

## 1 Introduction

In its most general definition, citizenship shows the relationship that an individual establishes with the state. This relationship varies with time and state. Yet, there are two general approaches of citizenship: the liberal style and the civic republican style (Heater 2013: 1). The former emphasizes rights. Social contract theories accept the natural rights of citizens and give the state the responsibility to protect the natural rights of its citizens. The scope of a citizen's rights under the protection of the state

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has expanded over time. As Marshall proposes, citizenship consists of three elements: civil, political, and social. The civil element includes "the rights necessary for individual freedom," the political element comprises "the right to participate in the exercise of political power" and the social element entails "the right to… economic welfare and security" (Marshall 1992: 8). Even if Marshall is one of the most authoritative authors in citizenship studies, he receives criticism because of implicitly blaming States (Turner 1990). Today both the State and the people share the responsibility of citizenship.

The civic republican style emphasizes the duties of citizens. Citizens are encouraged to participate in a broad range of activities, which would help them to promote and sustain democracy. Moreover, citizens should engage in their community through education and advocacy organizations. That is why civic engagement has a strong connection with active citizenship (Putnam et al. 1993). Whereas in the neoliberal perspective, citizens would represent passive receivers of rights, in the civic republican perspective, citizens would have reciprocal responsibilities towards each other and should have civic engagement and political participation. Active citizenship, therefore, is strongly connected with "democratization, integration, participation in public policy making and accountability" (Bee 2017: 60). According to active citizenship, there would be a balance between rights and responsibilities. In fact, civil society activities, such as "protesting and collecting petitions, community activities, such as volunteering and conventional political engagement such as voting or campaigning for elections" (Hoskins 2014: 14) identify active citizenship.

Active citizenship can offer a solution to various problems in a world of cultural diversity and inequality. Disadvantaged groups could speak on behalf of themselves and support their community through active citizenship. They can parlay active citizenship into political and social inclusion. The Roma as an excluded group, therefore, offer a case to understand how active citizenship works for disadvantaged groups.

The Roma have been excluded from social and political life regardless of the country they live in. They cannot access political, social, and civil rights. Their exclusion raises many concerns regarding citizenship. The Roma suffer multiple discriminations, which require an argument on their access to citizenship.

This study offers an interpretative case study by examining the active citizenship of the Roma in Turkey. Their case is of particular interest because of its representability as the Roma tend to be disadvantaged regardless of the country they live in. While Turkey has one of the highest Roma population in Europe, there are still very few studies about them. The case of the Roma in Turkey, therefore, offers an example of how citizen-centered policies work for disadvantaged groups. The study aims to contribute to theoretical arguments by employing active citizenship theory for citizen-centered approaches focusing on the Roma in Turkey.

The chapter is organized as follows. The first section describes the differences between rights-based citizenship and responsibility-based citizenship. It argues that citizenship evolves in a way to give more responsibility to people. The following section discusses the relationship between active citizenship and social capital. It indicates that responsibility-based citizenship cannot be achieved without having

social capital. The third section discusses the Roma in Turkey from an active citizenship perspective, and the last section provides some concluding remarks. Drawing on active citizenship, the study concludes that if marginalized groups cannot reach social capital, they cannot engage actively within the society they live in.

## 2 From Liberal Citizenship to Active Citizenship

Historically, citizenship has offered to its holder a privileged status. For instance, only Greek men were accepted as citizens in ancient Greece. If a simple correlation would be established between the right to vote and citizenship, women and some racial or ethnic groups were and still are effectively excluded from their citizenship rights for a long time. Marshall states that citizenship status is achieved through access to three fundamental rights: civil rights (individual rights such as freedom of speech and equality before the law), political rights (the right to vote), and social rights (to reach fundamental socio-economic well-being) (Marshall 1992). Citizenship status would entitle people to various rights, namely the right to freedom of speech, equality before the law, the right to vote, education, housing, and health. The given rights also create a discriminatory relationship between citizens and non-citizens. Accordingly, the state does not have any responsibility against non-citizens regarding these rights.

In the last century, this approach has had three significant changes. First, non-citizens increased their power thanks to the recognition of human rights after World War II. Today, at least in theory, everyone has basic human rights because of being human, which makes immigrants part of the human rights discourse. Secondly, the unequal relationship within society among various groups, such as minorities, youth, and women, draws attention to the rights of minority groups. Third, the relationship between the state and its citizens is evolving. Today, there is a distance between legal and actual citizenship (Szeman 2017). Citizens are not only passive receivers of rights anymore but are also responsible for any change (Lawson 2001).

Active citizenship means “participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and under human rights and democracy” (Hoskins and Mascherini 2009: 468). The term is associated with various activities, such as education, volunteering, and participation. Each of these activities indicates a shift from a rights-based approach to mutual obligation.

Citizenship education for instance gives rise to arguments about the rights and responsibilities of citizens and provides an intention of the government to create a socially inclusive society (Lawson 2001). It also helps citizens to address how to exercise their rights and relate themselves with the rest of society (Jansen et al. 2006). However, it focuses mostly on youth. That is why later studies (Martin 2019; Annette 2009) emphasize lifelong learning, as well as formal education. A lifelong learning perspective that relates formal citizen education to informal experiences revitalizes the public sphere and creates social integration.

Another dimension of active citizenship is voluntary and community organization. Voluntary organizations help to create a good society through their efforts to reduce poverty and increase equality. These community organizations encourage the community to achieve social, economic, and political progress. People come together voluntarily, and the activities of civil society organizations create a sense of belonging.

However, it is difficult to measure active citizenship. According to Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002), active citizenship could be measured through participation in political life, civil society, community life, and values such as recognizing the importance of human rights, democracy, and intercultural understanding. Active citizenship covers political and civic participation (Guagnano and Santini 2020). Active citizenship needs to be free from any pressure. So, a person should involve in both political processes, policy making, and political institutions, together with voluntary activities such as "helping others, achieving a public good or solving a community problem, including work undertaken either alone or in co-operation with others" (Barrett and Zani 2015: 4).

Active citizenship could be used as a tool to increase social cohesion and well-being of people by reducing disparities, marginalization, and the democratic deficit (Guagnano and Santini 2020: 81). Disadvantaged groups may support their communities through voluntary activities. They can also speak on behalf of their community through active participation. Thus, active citizenship helps disadvantaged groups to participate in the mainstream society. However, active citizenship does not occur by itself. It has some pre-conditions.

## 3 Social Capital as a Condition for Active Citizenship

There appears to be a mutual relationship between active citizenship and social capital. Yet, social capital does not have a sole meaning. The concept may differ according to ideologies. While neoliberal ideologies try to preserve and promote individual liberty "by enhancing a sense of utilitarian responsibility toward the community," social democrats try to defend the public life "against encroachment by the market" (Bee 2017: 59). Some groups use active citizenship to make them heard, and this attempt could contribute to the common good of the whole society (Lawson 2001).

The concept social capital has vertical and horizontal characteristics (Gelderblom 2018). Horizontally, social capital indicates the contribution of individuals in the community. It refers to "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks" (Putnam et al. 1993: 167) and comprises structural networks and normative values, especially trust within the society (Van Deth 2010). Civic engagement is vital to build social capital, which can be defined as "the institutions, relationships, attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development" (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002: 2).

Putnam analyzes the social capital by participating in volunteering activities, which exemplify the horizontal dimension of social capital. Accordingly, if there are institutions, networks, and relationships among people, active citizenship works. He claims that the reduced number of voluntary organizations in the United States is a threat to the republican characteristics of the United States (Putnam 2015). Similarly, the economic and political differences between the north and south of Italy exist because of differences in the civic community (Putnam et al. 1993). Active citizenship has civic and political components (Bee 2017). Participation requires a behavioral engagement rather than cognitive interest (Barrett and Zani 2015; Bee 2017). Civic engagement is "a policy response to various social and public problems and is part of public policies aiming at stimulating active citizenship" and it is necessary for community building and "for the enhancement of the social capital" (Bee 2017: 66). If citizens have social networks, equal political relations, political participation, and mutual co-operation, there would be a functioning economic and political process. Active citizenship thus requires social capital, namely a general trust within society. Without the network of relationships, active citizenship cannot occur. Civil society organizations favor the creation of a network of relationships in the society. Local governments can also strengthen the community.

On the other hand, there would also be a vertical definition of social capital. According to Bourdieu, social capital shows the unequal relationship among people, similar to economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Bourdieu's definition of social capital covers the power relationships among groups. People or groups with social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital dominate other groups that has no capital. Economic capital shows economic possessions, which could be directly convertible into money. Cultural capital can be institutionalized as the long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, cultural goods, and educational qualifications (Bourdieu 1997: 243). Social capital instead indicates being part of a group and social network. Social capital would have a multiplication effect (Tzanakis 2013) because even if people's economic and cultural capital is the same, the social capital could still create a difference.

"Active citizenship could be enhanced by promoting 'desirable' aspects of social capital through specific policies addressed to raise people's civic and political awareness, active solidarity and connectedness and co-operation between individuals within the communities for their benefit." Formal education from schools and lifelong learning process also enhance active citizenship by helping citizens to acquire necessary skills for active citizenship (Guagnano and Santini 2020). Citizenship education could be another way to encourage active citizenship (Davies and Evans 2002). People learn to volunteer, protest, and contribute to their society in their early ages, thanks to citizenship education. Yet, Putnam (Putnam 2015; Putnam et al. 1993) accepts society as a whole and ignores the conflict between interests (Siisiäinen 2000). However, associations try to protect the interests of their members rather than the whole society. Social capital covers more than the economic benefits. It indicates "upward social mobility, better education outcomes, a higher labour market participation and better jobs" (Guagnano and Santini 2020: 81).

Hence, not only social capital as defined vertically by Putnam but also the horizontal definition would help to understand active citizenship.

## 4 Roma and Citizenship

Roma are a European minority (Liegeois and Gheorghe 1995) which immigrated almost 1000 years ago (Hancock 1999) from India to Europe (Kalaydjieva et al. 2005). After the occupation of India by Mahmud of Ghazni, the Roma migrated away from India to Europe through Persia and Anatolia (Hancock 1999). The migration brought the Roma into Anatolia and Byzantium (McGarry 2011: 9). The Roma remained in Byzantium for several centuries. While some of the Roma moved from Byzantium because of the military conquest of Istanbul by Mehmet II (McGarry 2011), the rest continued to live under the rule of Ottoman Empire. The ones who arrived in Europe, firstly, at the end of thirteenth century (Hancock 2002) have lived in many different countries, from the Balkans to Eastern Europe. The rest, who stayed under the rule of Ottoman Empire, still live in Turkey today. This Romani population is the focus of this study.

When it comes to the Roma, there is a tension between citizenship, integration, and ethnic diversity. Regardless of where they live, Roma could not access rights given to citizens. Studies on discrimination against the Roma (Erjavec 2001; O'Higgins 2010; O'Nions 2011) indicate that the Roma cannot benefit from civil rights. Besides, there is a vast literature on the Roma's lack of access to social policies, such as health (Ádány 2014; Földes and Covaci 2012; McFadden et al. 2018), housing (Berescu et al. 2012; O'Donovan 2016), education (Kyuchukov and New 2017; Lauritzen and Nodeland 2018; Ugur Rizzi 2021), and employment (Hyde 2006; O'Higgins and Brüggemann 2014). All these studies perceive the citizenship of Roma from the rights-based relationship perspective. They discuss whether the Roma are able to access the rights granted to them by citizenship. That is why studies also focus on whether the Roma could access the entitlement of citizenship as an immigrant community. This question is also practical for understanding the contradicting relationship between EU citizenship and national citizenship regarding the Roma. The exclusion of the Roma from being considered a "European minority" goes along with the fact that they are entitled to a European citizenship. There would be a contradicting relationship between "an ordinary EU citizen" and "an extraordinary threat of the Roma" (Parker 2012: 477). The EU citizenship is expected to affect the Roma positively thanks to the free movement, but individual member countries securitized the Roma (Parker 2012; Van Baar et al. 2019). Thus, despite all the liberty that the European citizenship brings to its members, the Roma are still excluded from its full benefits. Whereas national politicians construct a language that tries to securitize the Roma, the EU highlights European citizenship. This supra-national citizenship approach helps the Roma (Parker 2012).

McGarry argues that the Roma are represented by non-Romani actors, "including international organizations, national governments and the majority" most of the time (McGarry 2014: 765). One of the reasons behind the lack of political representation of the Roma would be the lack of Romani political organizations (Vassilev 2004). Kovats (2003) emphasizes that the Roma are represented from the top-down, which indicates that non-Roma are speaking on behalf of the Roma. The lack of political representation of the Roma shows the importance of active citizenship for the Roma to access basic rights. On the other hand, the unequal relationship between the Roma and non-Roma is maintained through the denigration of the Roma culture. There are material, symbolic, and emotional dimensions of Romani exclusions from citizenship (Nordberg 2006). Self-representation helps the Roma to have equal opportunities with the rest of society. Therefore, the existence of NGOs and their relationship with the state authorities improve the social situation of the Roma.

In short, there are two contradicting approaches regarding the citizenship rights of the Roma. The first one focuses on the national definition of citizenship and explains why the Roma cannot access citizenship rights. The second one focuses on the EU's supra-national characteristics and analyzes what European citizenship offers to the Roma. The Roma are perceived as a European minority. Turkey has one of the highest Roma population, but since it is not part of the European Union, the inclusion of the Roma in Turkey is understudied. In Turkey, rather than external motivations such as the EU membership, domestic motivations affect the situation of the Roma.

## *4.1 The Roma in Turkey*

The Roma, estimated to be around two million in Turkey (International Romani Studies Network 2005), face many political and civic participation problems. Even if there are specific Lom, Dom, and Rom communities in Turkey (Kolukirik 2009; Onen 2013), for the sake of the study, the term is used as a comprehensive concept. Ethnicity becomes a barrier for Roma to benefit from full citizenship right. Onen compares the Roma in Edirne to the Dom community in Diyarbakır. In her comparative study, she argues that even if both communities cannot benefit from citizenship rights properly, the Dom struggles more compared to the Roma in Edirne. This is so because the Roma community normally live with the Turkish ethnic majority and the Dom community lives with Kurds, another minority in Turkey (Onen 2013). It shows a stratification within the society between minorities. The study of Onen is the only research that focuses directly on the citizenship of the Roma in Turkey. It discusses the rights of citizens and how ethnicity affects the ability to access citizenship rights.

Other studies on the exclusion of the Roma analyze citizenship as a status that provides rights. Most of the time, citizenship is linked to the threefold citizenship

dimension. Accordingly, the Roma could reach the civil and political components of citizenship, not the social one. Studies that show the economic exclusion (Bedard 2004; The ERRC 2012) and the lack of access to education (Tuna et al. 2006; Ugur Rizzi 2021) indirectly associate citizenship with rights.

When the Justice and Development Party (AKP) started a democratization move in 2009, the Roma were among the groups that the party wanted to integrate into mainstream society. At that time, Erdogan, as a Prime Minister, apologized to the Roma community by saying "Romani citizens are my citizens, and they could not benefit from citizenship rights for decades in Turkey. If somebody should receive an apology, it is the Romani citizens, and I apologize to them in the name of the State" (Radikal 2010). The meetings with the Roma have become a cornerstone, at least to identify that the exclusion of the Roma is a unique case, and the exclusion of the Roma can terminate by giving them access to citizenship rights. The leaders' approach, such as the apology of Erdogan to the Roma, and the meetings with the representatives of the state, created an interest in political participation.

After this meeting, representatives from various ministries came together with the Roma NGOs. The Family and Social Policies Ministry and the Ministry of Education organized many workshops. While the workshops singled out the unique case of Romani exclusion, the results were only advisory. Meetings with the Romani NGOs have continued through the years, producing one policy document and one Roma-specific project. The policy document is the Roma Strategy Document, accepted in 2016 (Vardar 2016), and the project is "Supporting Social Inclusion in Places with the dominant Romani population," which started in 2015. The project covers the 12 Turkish cities (Ankara, Adana, Balikesir, Hatay, Edirne, Eskisehir, Istanbul, Izmir, Kirklareli, Manisa, Mersin, and Tekirdag) with the highest Roma population. This project is based on the co-operation of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFS), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Still, the project could not improve the access of the Roma to their rights.

In 2022, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies initiated a new Strategy document (2022–2030) which covers education, employment, health, housing, social aids, and social services (The Family and Social Policies Ministry 2022). The document aims to increase the living standard of the Roma through comprehensive policies and support of the Roma. The Ministry established social solidarity centers (SODAM) in the Roma neighborhoods. These centers are planned to increase in number from 35 to 47 (The Family and Social Policies Ministry 2022). The centers' main targets are women who are excluded from economic life. These policies have been embraced by the Roma, yet they have had a limited impact on the existing situation of the Roma. The policies failed because they were organized in a top-to-down manner. The Roma are only considered as receivers of policies. The failure of these policies brings back the active citizenship argument into play.

## 5 Active Citizenship of the Roma in Turkey

Thanks to the "democratization" and "Europeanization" process of Turkey started in the 2000s, the Roma have begun to organize themselves in civil society organizations to become more politically active. While there were no registered Romani organizations in 2004, there exists now 336 Romani NGOs (Sayan and Duygulu 2022: 419). These NGOs have a strong relationship with policymakers. Many events aim to bring representatives from the Romani NGOs. In fact, despite the failure of meetings with all other ethnic groups such as Kurdish and Alawite people, meetings with the Roma have been maintained.

Besides, two Roma actively taking part in NGOs were elected as Members of Parliaments in Turkey for the first time. The first one, Ozcan Purcu, was elected in 2015 and was re-elected for the second time in 2018 in the main opposition party, namely the Republican People's Party (CHP) in Izmir. He founded the first Roma organization – the Romani Culture Solidarity Association – in Izmir. Later, he became the head of the first Romani Association Federation, which was established again in Izmir. On the other hand, the AKP had their first Romani advisor in 2015, again in Izmir. After the previous Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu resigned, the advisor lost his power. Since 2018, the AKP has had a Romani Member of Parliament, Cemal Bekle, from Izmir as well. Cemal Bekle was the head of the İzmir Modern Romani Association between 2006 and 2009. Afterward, he was the founding president of the İzmir Roma Federation of Associations. Afterward, he worked as the Executive Committee Member of the Roma Workshop organized by the AKP. Between 2016 and 2018, he was part of the Strategy and Action Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. Few of the Roma have attained political power at the national level in this way.

Roma deputies who openly declared their identities were elected for the first time. On the other hand, the limited representation in the parliament did not spread to different political areas. The number of Roma in local governments, which have a direct relationship with the community, is still deficient compared to the proportion of Roma population in society. There is no Roma mayor and there are only very few Roma in the town council in some cities, such as Edirne and Izmir. The Roma are still under-represented in the local government. Even if there were meetings with the Roma, the Roma civil society is not involved systematically and transparently (European Commission 2021).

Civil society organizations, as mentioned earlier, would be one of the leading actors of active citizenship. They could actively engage in their community. The Roma civil society organizations create solidarity among the Roma, showing civic participation. The Roma are in solidarity with the group members but "are isolated from the other components of the society" (Genç et al. 2015). The Roma display solidarity among themselves, which could be considered as a part of active citizenship. Still, they isolate themselves from the rest of the society (Dural 2014; Genç et al. 2015). Voluntary activities for mutual help are part of civic participation, as well (Bee 2017: 69). The Roma neighborhoods have become a place for solidarity where people support each other economically. However, in the harsh stigmatized

communities, the Roma suffer from social exclusion (Akkan et al. 2011). In these extreme conditions, mutual trust is lost among people, besides every household struggle to support their family. However, the solidarity is limited to the Roma neighborhoods rather than solidarity with the whole society. That is why leaving the neighborhood is perceived as rejecting the Roma community (Akkan et al. 2011: 45). After individuals get out of their neighborhood, they lose their solidarity with the neighborhood, which shows that there is a parallel civic engagement.

The most recent progress report (European Commission 2021) emphasizes that the Roma are still excluded from formal jobs, and their living conditions have been deteriorating. The Roma Strategy expired in 2021 but did not have remarkable results.

## 6 Explaining the Failure of the Roma's Active Participation

The government's efforts and the changing political organization of the Roma show trust between the Roma and non-Roma regarding basic principles. The Roma always emphasize their similarities with the rest of society. Standard Turkish citizen tasks such as joining the army and serving the country are vital for the Roma to identify themselves (Ugur Rizzi 2021). Furthermore, the Turkish flag symbolizes the feeling of being part of the Turkish society for the Roma. So, the Roma could have social capital, regarding the definition of Putnam. They organized a number of civil society organizations that not only participate in politics but also act together with the government in encouraging people to accept the general rules of society. These societies also encourage civic participation as they organize donation activities, visits to the neighborhoods, and provide scholarships for students.[1]

Nevertheless, their civic and political participation cannot fulfill the definition of active citizenship. The social, economic, and cultural structures hinder the active citizenship of the Roma. Economic-wise, the Roma are one of the poorest groups in the society and their poverty forces them to prioritize their access to the labor market. The Roma tend to work in odd jobs, such as paper, scrap, and plastic collections. For the Roma, participating in the society means having a job with a social security and a regular income. The lack of economic power of the Roma goes hand in hand with their stigmatization. The Roma tend to live in segregated neighborhoods that are considered dangerous and filled with crime and illegality. The poor housing conditions in these neighborhoods effectively turn these neighborhoods into ghettos (Akkan et al. 2011).

Additionally, the Roma could not build a cultural capital. The stigmatization of the Roma associates them with criminality. Both the media and society have end up

[1] On the webpages of Roma NGOs such as https://www.marromfed.com/projeler, https://www.akromfed.org/, and http://www.sifirayrimcilik.org/, the activities of Roma NGOs are listed as donation activities, visits to the neighborhoods, provide scholarships, which shows an economic support.

reproducing stereotypes about Roma. Whereas the press links the Roma culture as an inferior culture, which deserves to be represented by music and dance, the society believes that Roma neighborhoods are a social threat. The Roma neighborhood are primarily associated with criminality and illegality. Because of this, the Roma internalize the stigmatizing language constructed by outsiders. The poverty and social exclusion of the Roma are "Romanized." The people in the Roma neighborhoods cannot gain access to networks of formal employment because of their identity cards that identifies them as belonging to the Roma. They are working most of the time in "unqualified, unstable and insecure jobs" (Akkan et al. 2011: 50–52) so that reaching basic rights of citizenship, such as social security, is still troublesome for them. Most of the Roma do not have a job with social security, and poverty has become their identity.

The Roma NGOs, in fact, engage in civic participation primarily within these confined neighborhoods. The stereotypes about the Roma hinder the Roma from accessing basic rights. The Roma cannot reach basic citizenship rights because they are linked to crimes, from destroying public property to kidnapping kids (Akkan et al. 2011). The fundamental rights of the Roma living in these neighborhoods are not fulfilled.

In short, the case of the Roma in Turkey highlights two important points about the impact of active citizenship on disadvantaged groups. Firstly, active citizenship help excluded groups reach citizenship rights. The Roma in Turkey have just started to participate in the mainstream society, but it is a long process before they fully benefit from active citizenship. Civil society organizations participate actively in politics, volunteering and providing lifelong education. In addition, for the first time two Roma member of parliaments have been elected in Turkey. Active citizenship creates solidarity not only within the Roma community but also with the rest of society. The characteristics of active citizenship such as participation, volunteering, and lifelong education make disadvantaged people be heard and act on behalf of themselves. Thus, citizenship gives responsibility, in addition to rights to individuals.

The case of Turkey shows that active citizenship cannot occur without social capital. A combination of horizontal and vertical social capital is required for active citizenship. Various groups should have shared values (horizontal social capital), but they also need social networks (vertical social capital), in addition to economic and social capital. Stigmatization in the society and the lack of economic resources maintain the inequality in the system. The Roma cannot change their situation without challenging the vertical social capital.

## 7 Conclusion

Citizenship is an enlarging concept that covers minorities and excluded communities, as well as ordinary citizens. The chapter discusses how the concept of citizenship is transforming from a rights-based approach to a responsibility-based approach, in which citizens are expected to participate in political and civic

processes. Active citizenship shows this transformation and can help excluded groups to participate in the mainstream society, as the case of the Roma in Turkey shows.

Active citizenship requires a shared trust and set of values within the society as well as the presence of networks, supported by economic and cultural capitals. The Roma in Turkey share a sense of common value and trust with the rest of the society. The increasing civil society organizations and the elections of the Roma member of parliaments show this trust.

On the other hand, the Roma still have problems accessing the labor market, mainly because of the "Romanization of poverty." The Roma, especially those living in poor neighborhoods, cannot eliminate the stigmatization despite their best efforts. The stratification in society trivializes the efforts of the Roma in political participation. The social capital intermingled with cultural and economic capital leads to the inability of the Roma to have equal relations with the rest of the community.

As a result, the Roma in Turkey show that active citizenship help disadvantaged groups to have solidarity within the community and with the rest of the society. Thus, the study aims to contribute to theory by discussing the scope of active citizenship for disadvantaged groups in citizen-oriented policies. It also empirically enriches the literature with the case of the Roma in Turkey.

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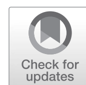
# Women, Nationalism, and Political Participation in Turkey




**Elif Gençkal Eroler**

**Abstract** Considering the women's crucial role in state nationalism, this study focuses on the relationship between increasing women's participation in politics and producing effective policies for women in the case of contemporary Turkey. To unpack this relationship, the number of women elected to the Turkish National Assembly in the AKP era—which is called *descriptive representation*—is focused on the one hand, and the AKP's viewpoint on women's participation in politics and the effects of women's presence in the Parliament—which is called *substantive representation*—is examined on the other hand. The result of a discourse analysis of the illustrative samples of party programs, government programs, and speeches of political elites shows that AKP's women's policies are based on imagining women in the family, and this breeds the inactive political participation of women. Although Turkish women during the AKP rule have had the highest proportion of representation in the Parliament throughout the national history, descriptive representation could not transform into substantive representation.

**Keywords** Descriptive/substantive representation · Political participation of women · Family-oriented policies · Gender equality · Gender justice · Nationalism · Patriarchy · Turkey

## 1 Introduction

Throughout Turkish political history, women have always been given a central role by political leaders. The conflict on modernization, which already started during the nineteenth century of the Ottoman empire between Islamists and Westernists and continued in the early years of the Republican era and even today, takes place on the

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axis of women issue. There has been a common agreement in Turkish society that women are primarily mothers and wives and obliged to raise the "ideal youth," which constitutes the bases of the "ideal citizen" (Kılıç Oğuz 2007). Therefore, Turkish women have been given a reproduction role which made women a tool of masculine state nationalism and undermined their individuality. One of the most important results of this disadvantaged position of women is low political representation.

After very low rates of women in Parliament throughout the multiparty period of Turkey, progress has been made in the participation of women in politics during the AKP (Justice and Development Party—Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) rule, in terms of the fact that at least one female minister has taken place in all the governments established since the AKP came to power in 2002 and nearly half of the women ministers who took office in the history of the Republic were appointed during the long period of AKP rule which continues today. On the other hand, after the first ruling period between 2002 and 2007, AKP's political discourse has been gradually in line with the globally rising conservative patriarchy in the world in the sense of its family policies, anti-gender sentiments, and opposition to gender equality. After 2007, reforms toward women's issues which have been made in the first period left its place to an attitude that ignored the women's movement and did not respond to its demands; after 2010, this attitude completely turned into exclusion and hostility (Öztan 2014). This regression in women's policies can be linked with the global "obsession with gender," which has resulted in common policies among the right-wing populist powers in the world, such as promoting heteronormative nuclear family and reproducing the biologically understood differences between men and women (Gabriale and Roth 2020). As in many other parts of the world, there has been a regression or a "masculine restoration" (Kandiyoti 2016) in the field of gender equality in Turkey, which has been defended on cultural and religious grounds. The AKP has taken an anti-feminist stance since 2007 by operating along the interweavings of pro-Islamism, neoliberalism, authoritarianism, and conservatism (Cindoglu and Unal 2016) and utilized the women morality and sexuality to consolidate the conservative gender regime (Altunok 2016).

The research on political representation indicates a direct relationship between women's political participation and the strengthening of a democratic society (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007). Although the increasing role of women in decision-making is crucial, it is at least as important as to what extent this will bring about policy making toward women. Therefore, there is a debate on whether female politicians always work to contribute to women's interests and gender equality. This study focuses on examining the relationship between increasing women's participation in politics and producing effective policies for women in the case of Turkey. Adopting a reflexive approach, this chapter aims to evaluate the relative increase of the number of female MPs in the light of women's policy in this era. For this evaluation, the number of women elected to the Turkish National Assembly—which is called *descriptive representation*—will be revealed on the one hand, and the AKP's viewpoint on women's participation in politics and the effects of women's presence in the Parliament—which will be called *substantive representation*—will be examined on the other hand. For examining the substantive representation of

women in politics, both primary and secondary data were used. For the primary data, I made a discourse analysis of the illustrative samples of party programs, government programs, and speeches of political elites; for the secondary data, I used academic publications and news stories. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature on *descriptive* and *substantive* representation and sheds light on the transitivity in the symbolization of women between various modernizations between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Turkey. It will be shown that in line with the global rise of conservative patriarchies, AKP used gender and women as the medium of the construction of its conservative (religious) nationalistic values, and the increasing number of female MPs in the AKP era has neither resulted in the active participation of women in politics nor the empowerment of women.

## 2 Theoretical Part: Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Women Within the Light of the Ties Between Nationalism and Patriarchy

When looking at the nation and nationalism from a gender perspective, it is obvious that gender relations and women are ignored. Not only the primordialists who accept the nation as given or natural but also the modernists who consider nations social constructs (Gellner 2009; Anderson 1991) ignore that gender roles within nations are a part of the ideological-based social constructions.

According to George Mosse (1998), the modern nation-state emerged and developed in parallel with modern masculinity, which thus became central to all forms of modern male nationalism, while the woman, on the other hand, is passive and symbolic. Illustrating this situation, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (1989) identify that women's participation in national processes is usually as reproducers (mothers) of members of the ethnic community and as transmitters of culture in the ideological reproduction of the community. Therefore, the nation is not a genderless, neutral self-state but a concept established by men, embodied in the image of family and gendered with masculinity (Najmabadi 2009). In this context, family is the most used concept in nationalist narratives in which the woman is symbolized as the land where the "man," which represents the nation, fights for the woman who needs protection and ownership. Therefore, as Enloe (2000) indicates, the protective male type of masculinity brings along the protected female construct and the gender roles based on them. This is also the case in today's masculinized populists, such as Hungary, Poland, and Turkey; they are claiming to defend "their women" by guarding national sovereignty on the one hand, but they are, on the other hand, undermining women's security with various policies. This is very much related to the remarkable adaptability of patriarchy to different ideologies, thanks to those who have a vested interest in privileging the particular forms of masculinity, who are quite creative and also working hard to make the patriarchy sustainable (Enloe 2014). At the end of this effort, the forms of masculinity appear as the "modern" or even "cutting edge," while most women are kept in their subordinate positions.

The low number of women in politics maybe the clearest appearance of women's subordinate positions. There are various hindrances to female politicians, among which, as Lovenduski (2005) emphasizes, the deeply embedded culture of masculinity in political institutions is the biggest obstacle, and this masculine culture introduces gender biases in political organizations. Descriptive representation and substantive representation are two main concepts regarding the link between women and politics. The former focuses on the number of women in Parliament and tries to explain why so few women are elected to legislative bodies (Lovenduski and Norris 1993). The latter seeks to answer whether elected women make a difference in political life (Thomas 1994).

According to the theory of the politics of presence (Phillips 1995), female politicians can represent the interest of women; thus, there is a link between descriptive and substantive representation. Phillips argued that female politicians, at least to some extent, share the experiences of other women, which are different from those of men; therefore, they are not only aware of but also experience gender-related differences. On the other hand, producing an effect for women in male-dominated politics is not easy. Considering the rigidity in political institutions, Phillips (1995: 83) likens expectations for female politicians to affect politics in any specific way to a "shot in the dark." Therefore, it is important to ask this question: what do women do in Parliament, and to what extent are they able and willing to change the male-oriented political practices? Phillips (1995: 47) argues that gender equality among those elected to Parliament is desirable because it may bring such change or "it aims to subvert or add or transform." Therefore, the distinction between descriptive and substantive representation corresponds with whether the focus is on the number of women elected or on the effects of women's presence in the Parliament (Waengnerud 2009: 52). The studies on substantive representation focus on the concepts of "women's interests" and "gender equality." The main idea behind this focus is that the women's interests and concerns arising from their experiences will not be expressed adequately in a men-dominated political arena.

## 3 The Basis of the Gender Regime in Turkey

From the beginning of the republican era, women have always occupied an important place in the debates of nationalism and modernization. The republican political elites perceived that the traditional or religious character of Ottoman rule had resulted in the empire's collapse and tried to build a secular nation-state based on Western modernization. The transformation of the political regime from a sultanate to a Republic, the adoption of the Latin alphabet, and the abolition of the caliphate were the leading reforms of the top-down socio-political transformation which aims a total break from the Ottoman past. This modernizing vision has provided women to gain crucial public rights. The adoption of the Swiss Civil Code instead of Shariah laws has given equal civil rights to women in the areas such as family, marriage, and inheritance. Also, they gained political visibility through the right to participate

in local (1930) and general elections (1934). After gaining the right to vote and be elected in Turkey, the first election that women participated in was held on February 8, 1935. According to the election results of 1935 (TÜİK 2011), 17 female deputies were entitled to enter the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and the number increased to 18 with the addition of a female deputy in the by-elections that took place a year later. During this period, the representation rate of women in Parliament was 4.5%. These developments were undoubtedly very important and positive for women; however, it is suspicious whether they were enough for women's emancipation as it was emphasized, in other words, if the descriptive representation of women could provide substantive representation.

This period, which is also expressed as "state feminism" (Tekeli 1998: 337–346), since women's public rights were not won as a result of their demands, but were given to them by the state, liberated women institutionally, but not as individuals. The scholars argued that the rights given to women did not aim to develop the individual consciousness of women, but they were a tool for national development (Arat 1994; Kandiyoti 1991; Kadıoğlu 1998). The women were considered important players in republican modernization, and they were expected to have taken their share of modernity with "given rights" and their dress which is considered to symbolize modernity. Therefore, the modernization vision of the new Republic resulted in the instrumentalization of women as one of the most important—perhaps the most important—symbols of modernization. According to some scholars, Kemalist reforms did not aim to dissolve the patriarchal structure but to "transform the mode of patriarchy from sultanic to republican texture" (Berktay 2003; Coşar 2007). Within this structure, the "new woman" is idealized and defined as an "enlightened mother" who is supposed to raise the future citizens and carry out works such as caring for, raising, and feeding the family, and these jobs are handled in the context of love, gratitude, and sacrifice. Besides, the ideal republican woman is defined as a "masculinized social actor" (Kandiyoti 1995) whose sexual identity was "re-conceptualized by the modernizing male elite" (Coşar 2007). While the homeland is feminized as in need of protection, envisioning the nationalist movement as a male hero who will "liberate" it by rescuing it is the feminization of the national cause, which is frequently seen in nationalisms. Coşar (2007: 118) argues that Kemalist discourse of the ideal republican woman resulted in double subordination for women: confining them—their femininity—"within the limits of wifehood and motherhood" and devoiding of their femininity if they want to be visible in the public sphere. Modernization brought women some legal guarantees, but it led women to become instruments of the family and population policies of the state. Berktay (2020: 560) states that the family, which used to be within the scope of the "private" sphere in the past in the process of nation-stabilization, is "publicized" and directed toward the "national family."

The cautious attitude of Kemalists gave women public rights, on the one hand, and limited them to the roles of motherhood and companionship. On the other hand, it turns out that it envisages a reconciliation between the modern and the traditional. According to Sancar (2017: 120), such a preference, which envisages a measured understanding of equality in which the West's perspective of women's rights is

blended/softened with nationalist-conservative elements, has formed the basis of reconciliation between Turkists, modernist Islamists, nationalists, modernist cadres, and conservatives. Therefore, as Tekeli (1982) argued, there is not a "founding will" that believes in the equality of men and women. On the contrary, by seeing that a perspective that includes certain gender discrimination has been articulated at every point of the Turkish modernization process, they showed how the discriminations that women are exposed to today are fed from a deep-rooted past (Arat 1998).

The rates of women's presence in the Turkish Parliament reveal that male-dominated gender regime in which opportunities for participation in politics are unequal for women and men. Although Turkey is one of the earliest countries to grant women the right to vote and be elected, the rate of women in Parliament decreased rather than increased in the following years. The rate of female deputies who entered the Parliament between 1935 and 1990 followed a fluctuating course, and the rate in 1935 could not be exceeded and remained below it. Arat (1998) noted that the women deputies who entered the Parliament during these years initially defined themselves as the representatives of women, but over time they saw themselves as the nation's representatives. Kandiyoti, on the other hand, argued that female deputies, leaving aside their feminine identities, perform their public roles with a "non-male" identity. In other words, it was believed that it was necessary to draw a masculine image for women to exist in the "men's world" and to be respected (Kandiyoti 2011: 338–339). The first time women were included at the ministerial level was in the 33rd government in 1971. In 1993, a female prime minister was elected for the first time, and four female ministers were included in the 50th government she established. The women's rate in Parliament, around 1% for the long years until 1990, increased slightly between 2% and 4% during the 1990s (TÜİK 2011).

Despite this picture emerging due to gender norms, a new form of feminism in the 1980s was awakened with a discourse of "the private is political," and as a result of women's movements and the process of Europeanisation process, women politicians could become more active in the 1990s (Uzgören 2021). Therefore, both the domestic factors (women's movement) and the international factors (candidacy in the EU) have had a positive effect on gender equality, and this brought with it a number of regulations and alterations regarding gender equality in the Turkish Constitution (Müftüler-Baç 2005). These efforts in the late 1990s and early 2000s have had a role in the increase in the number of female members of Parliament since 2002.

## 4 The Rising Political Participation of Women in an Environment of "Gender Obsession"

When compared to previous periods, it is clear that there has been a relatively large increase in women's representation in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey after 2002, and the AKP governments have made a positive contribution to this process.

In the 2002 elections, when the AKP came to power, 24 women entered the Parliament, and the representation rate of women was 4.4 for the first time, reaching the rate in the first elections in 1935. In the following 2007 elections, the number of women in the Parliament increased to 50 and the representation rate to 9.1%. This rate regularly increased throughout the AKP government, 14.4% in the 2011 elections, 16.1% in the 2015 elections, and 17.1% in the 2018 elections (YSK 2022).

Despite this positive increase in the presence of women in the Parliament, Turkey ranks far below the world average as one of the countries with the lowest female representation in politics. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index report (2022), Turkey ranks 124th among 146 countries and 112th in terms of political participation. According to the data of the "Women in Politics 2021" map published by the United Nations Women's Unit (UN Women) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Turkey ranks 129th among 191 countries with the number of women deputies in the Parliament (IPU 2021). Therefore, Turkey is far behind the UN targets regarding women's political representation and representation rates in developed countries. When the AKP's position as the dominant party in politics is considered, it also plays a role not only in the relatively low representation of women in the Parliament in Turkey, but also in the question of empowerment of women.

Regarding its political identity, the AKP is defined as a nationalist-conservative and neo-liberal center-right party with Islamist roots (Uzgel 2013; Coşar and Yücesan-Özdemir 2014; Dedeoğlu 2015). AKP, founded in 2001, came to power in 2002 and has been the first party in all elections held since then, and it has been in power for the longest time in the history of Turkey. AKP defined its party identity as conservative democrat during its establishment and first ruling period (Akdoğan 2004). During its 20-year rule, the AKP's understanding of citizenship and the public policies that form the basis of its policies toward women show great differences periodically. During the first period of power, under the influence of the EU membership process and the legitimacy crisis that had to be overcome, there was a democratic perspective in which citizenship policies followed a reformist and liberal line, and the traditional ethnic-secular Turkish political discourse has been challenged in various ways (Tombuş and Aygenç 2017). However, especially starting with the 2007 elections, the democratic perspective was transformed into an authoritarian perspective with Islamist overtones (Başer and Öztürk 2017). These contradictions and transitions become evident in women's politics. The policy orientation of the AKP government regarding the social status of women and their participation in politics will be examined on two main lines: family-oriented women policies and the issue of gender equality and (in)active political participation of women.

### *4.1 Family-Oriented Women Policies*

Women's policies of AKP government have differed remarkably throughout the long rule of AKP. In the early 2000s, policies which encourage the emancipation of women by challenging the women's traditional position that confines them within

family as mothers and wives can be identified in government policies. Especially in the first two periods of its rule, AKP enacted some of the most egalitarian changes in the history of the Republic. Sexual crimes, which were previously considered crimes against the family and social order in the penal code, were included in the scope of crimes against the individual, marital rape and sexual harassment were included in the law, virginity checks were subject to a judicial decision, the status of the head of the family was abolished, the property regime in marriage was changed in favor of women, and in the labor law, the principle of equal pay for equal work was introduced (Bora 2012: 59). Also, the period of paid maternity leave for working women was increased to 16 weeks, the provision stating that the crime would be eliminated if the raped woman married the person who attacked her was abolished, and it was accepted that marriage would not eliminate the crime, and the municipalities with a population of more than 50,000 were charged with opening shelters for women and children (Tür and Çıtak 2013: 615).

In contrast to these policies promoting the individual freedom of women, with the rise of religious conservatism since 2010, the AKP government has increasingly emphasized family-centered discourse and policies. In parallel with the identification of women with family, the name of the Women and Family Ministry was transformed into the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2011 and became the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services in 2018. The removal of women from the ministry's name was not only a symbolic move, but also marked the rise of family-centered politics, which constructs "the marriage and the family as the natural course for women" (Kaya 2015: 15).

In this era, the family is considered the carrier of tradition and social values and the basic institution of society. While women are handled together with the traditional roles they undertake as mother and wife, women's traditional roles within the family were glorified. The importance of the family institution, which is often considered together with the role of women as mothers, forms the backbone of the AKP's official texts. Looking at the AKP's party program (2022), women are almost nonexistent, except for the section titled "Woman," which begins with the words that they are put in the role of mothers-trainers:

> It is a priority of our party to deal with all kinds of problems accumulated due to years of neglect, not only because women constitute half of our society, but above all, because they are primarily active in raising individuals and healthy generations.

The family-centered women policies is based on the emphasis on the difference in nature (fıtrat) of men and women. According to Erdoğan, men and women are not by nature equal:

> You cannot make men and women equal. It is against nature. Because their natures are different. You cannot subject a pregnant woman to the same conditions as a man in business. You cannot equate a mother who has to breastfeed her child with a man who does not have such obligations.

It is also important to note that the exaltation of traditional roles of women is associated with religious values. The religiously based sanctity of the motherhood role of women can be best illustrated with Erdoğan's—the founding leader of the

party—following words: "Our religion has given women a rank, the rank of motherhood. It gave the mother another authority. Heaven was put under her feet. It puts it under the feet of the mother, not the father." Moreover, he addresses violence against women and femicide with religious references, saying, "a believer does not inflict violence on women" (BBC 2021).

Although the traditional roles attributed to men and women are desired to be drawn to the level of religious discourse, it is important to remember that this discourse is a part of ideological hegemony because "the link between religious discourse and gender is not direct, but is mediated by politics and the state" (Berktay 2020: 571). Saraçoğlu (2011) indicates that AKP's vested interests on "strong Turkish family" were not only due to the cultural reasons based on its conservative views, but also its instrumentalization as a "problem-solver" in the sense of decreasing the harmful consequences of AKP's neoliberal policies. By strengthening the family, AKP reduced the social policy to family policy (Yazıcı 2012), making the family a significant aspect of AKP's hegemony.

Also, it should be noted that the stance of the AKP on women's issues stems from its Islamist roots and, perhaps more, from a patriarchal mentality that permeates almost all political tendencies in Turkey. For the patriarchal mentality, in which the power of men is equated with controlling women and ensuring their obedience, it is of central importance that women and their bodies be controlled within the family. The prevalence of the mentality that sees women other than mothers and sisters has not appeared with the AKP era, but the patriarchal mentality which symbolizes women and their bodies for the sake of the nation has existed since the foundation of the Republic. While women are modern but genderless in the founding Kemalist mentality, women are reduced to religious and gendered in AKP discourse (Mutluer 2019: 15).

The AKP government's negative attitude toward the LGBTI individuals can be evaluated within the government's family-based policies. While the government aims to sharpen the gender boundaries with the family-based women policies especially since 2010, the very existence of LGBTI individuals blurs these boundaries. The AKP government officials' speeches which regard homosexuality as a "disease" or "abnormality" that threatens to destroy society can be evaluated within this context (Hürriyet 2010). The government has not only refused to make any references to sexual orientation and gender identity in the Constitution, but state actors also targeted the LGBTI community in different ways. The proposals of other parties in the Parliament about discrimination and violent abuse against LGBTI people were left out of the debate by AKP and MHP representatives with the justification of "it is incompatible with our traditional values and customs and damaging for our society." The termination of Istanbul Convention, which is the first international agreement that determines the basic standards and the obligations of states in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence by the decision of President Tayyip Erdoğan, has been widely discussed in the axis of the existence of LGBTI individuals and the Turkish family structure. During the period of the termination between February 2020 and March 2021, some representatives of government and some foundations and associations close to

power argued that the contract was "contradictory to the Turkish family structure and opened the door to homosexual associations."

## *4.2 The Issue of Gender Equality and (In)Active Political Participation of Women*

The most prominent feature of family-oriented women's policy is the rejection of gender equality because of the different natures (fıtrat) of men and women. According to party leaders, men and women are not by nature equal, "what women need is not equality, but justice" (BBC 2021). Therefore, the concept of equality is opened to the discussion by AKP and replaced by the concept of "justice" in official documents.

In parallel with the replacement of gender equality with the concept of gender justice, AKP does not include the problem of gender inequality in political representation among women's issues in its official documents. Similarly, in the AKP's ally Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi—MHP) documents, women are often referred to as auxiliary-secondary elements of women's branches. Women's rights are rarely mentioned both in AKP and MHP party documents. Along with the AKP, the other two political parties with the highest number of female MPs in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). Of the 104 deputies who entered the Parliament at the end of the 2018 general elections, 53 are members of the AK Party, 26 HDP, and 18 CHP. Gender equality is frequently mentioned in CHP (2022) documents, unlike AKP and MHP. Although the CHP's program is written in a heteronormative language, far from the principle of gender mainstreaming, it includes gender equality as a goal. On the other hand, the HDP program, which emphasizes gender inequality very oft, is the only party that speaks openly about the LGBTI community and uses the word patriarchy, and the emphasis on women is seen in various places (HDP 2022).

Likewise, the AKP does not define female under-representation as a prior problem. Therefore, it does not favor the quota application[1] developed for the solution of under-representation at the global level (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Yaraman 2015). A quota system[2] has frequently been proposed to encourage female

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[1] Measures taken by political parties to support women's representation varies in form such as internal directives on women's participation (AKP), application fee reduction for female candidates (AKP, CHP, IYI Party), quota allocation (CHP, HDP) and co-chairmanship (HDP). While the quota application is not found in the AKP, a one-third women quota is applied in the CHP to ensure equality between men and women. In addition to the equal participation and equal representation quota, HDP has also adopted the policy of co-chairmanship.

[2] The quota system underlined that women should have a presence of around 30% in parliament in order to have an impact in politics; 15% is required for female politicians to change the political agenda, and 40% is required as a condition for producing policies toward women. As a result of

participation in a male-dominated regime and finally abolish the patriarchal domain of the parliaments. Therefore, women may be less representative not because they do not have sufficient qualifications but because mainly of prevailing gender norms and stereotypes (Dahlerup et al. 2013: 20). However, it is remarkable not only that the rejection of quota is legitimized because it will create the impression that the woman does not deserve it but also that women members of the AKP support this argument. The founding president of women's branches expresses her opposition as follows:

> We do not lean to the quota issue. We want (the woman) to come up from the bottom by gaining strength in the process. They say you did not deserve it; you came from the quota… The target is to increase the representation of women with a qualified majority. So-and-so's wife and daughter would not be symbolic there. She will actively participate and strive. Be a woman; let her feel the responsibility.

The basic approach of the AKP regarding women's political representation is stated as the active participation of women in politics on the basis of equal opportunities. Therefore, the AKP aims at the participation and representation of women in politics based on equality of opportunity, not gender equality. To achieve this goal, however, a detailed strategy to replace the globally adopted positive discrimination practices has not been determined. Instead, abstract and general goals such as "increasing participation" have been specified. For example, the statement "all necessary measures will be taken to encourage women's participation in public life" in the party program is followed by the claim that "women will be encouraged to become members of our party and play an active role in politics." It is also important to note that the limit of active participation of women in social life is conditional on not disrupting the roles and duties in the family. For example, after the party program states that "gender discrimination will be prevented in working life and the principle of equal pay and merit for equal work will prevail," the following statements are included: "Women's working life, considering their child and family responsibilities, improvements will be made in social security and working conditions." Therefore, in line with the identification of women with the family by the roles of mother and wife, the women's public participation has been conditioned to fulfilling family-related responsibilities.

The literature on women's participation in politics suggests that there are possibilities that women are not just "standing as" women but also "acting for" women as a group (Phillips 1995; Lovenduski 1997). Although women's branches are at the forefront of the mechanisms created for increasing women's political participation, this structure does not fulfill the function of "acting for women." The women's branches were created with the aim of women taking an active role in internal party activities and catching the opportunity to participate in politics actively, such as recruiting new members to the party, carrying out activities to increase the voting potential by making propaganda activities, carrying out social aid activities with

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these efforts, the proportion of women in world parliaments, which was 10% in 1995, increased to over 25% in 2021 (IPU 2021).

trips, bazaar commemorations, etc., rather than determining the basic policies of the party (Yaraman 2015: 79). Therefore, it focuses more on the activities of the party to create its showcase. Moreover, women's existence in the Parliament can be considered ineffective in representing the interest of women in the sense that only 8% of their parliamentary work relates to women's issues, such as violence against women, exploitation of domestic labor, empowerment of women in economic and social life, etc. (Taşkın 2021: 140).

The presentation of the written question given to the Parliament can also be seen as a sign of the activity of a member of Parliament. When the number of written questions presented by female representatives is explored, it is seen that the number of written questions given by AKP's female MPs and MHP's female MPs are much fewer than those of CHP and HDP (Taşkın 2021: 149–150). Therefore, it seems that the secular left-wing parties are more effective in Parliament regarding women's rights than the conservative nationalist alliance. Also, the pious women quit the struggle for women's rights when they come to power (Turam 2008).

However, a general assessment which can be made that covers both right and left political stances is that male-dominated political and social structure is the main reason behind both descriptive and substantive representation. It is important to remember that in the election race, the conditions are not the same between men and women. For the case of Turkey, political and social culture that assumes politics to be more specific to men (Kalaycıoğlu 1983) can be identified as the basis of the factors[3] that play role in the low representation of women. As a matter of fact, during the history of Turkish Republic, the existence of women in politics not as individuals but as carriers of symbolic meanings is repeated in different ways. The woman, highlighted with her public rights and modern dressing style as the symbol of Turkey's adaptation to Western modernity in the single-party period, is the carrier of the conservative identity symbolized by the headscarf during the AKP era.[4]

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[3] Electoral system (Norris 2004), policies of political parties regarding women and candidate nomination methods, and their preferences in creating election lists (Sancar 2018: 77), and women's relative indifference to politics (Kalaycıoğlu and Binnaz 2004).

[4] An important dimension of the AKP's women's policy is the headscarf, symbolized by the Islamist conservative approach. In addition to the lack of a clear statement on this issue in the party program, it was emphasized that the headscarf would not be made a political priority and that the issue would be resolved by social consensus. However, the headscarf ban, which had an important place on the public agenda in the late 1990s and early 2000s and the cause of real discrimination against many Muslim women (Göle 1997), has led to a loss of rights for women in various fields. As a matter of fact, as a result of the change made in the dress code for the first time in 2013, the headscarf ban was lifted in public institutions except for the military, police, and judiciary, and in 2017, the headscarf was completely free for women working in public institutions. Right after the change in 2013, four female MPs from the Party, wearing headscarves, started to participate in the work of the Parliament's general assembly. This trend continued to increase in the following years, and in the last general elections held in 2018, nearly half of the women deputies elected from the AKP wore headscarves.

## 5 Conclusion

AKP, which has been in power for 20 years in Turkey, has been decisive in the representation of women in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and in shaping the gender composition of the Parliament. Consolidating its conservative political identity through the morality and sexuality of women, the AKP idealizes women within the traditional gender roles and envisages their participation in social and political life only within the limits of these roles. In this context, AKP emphasizes equality of opportunity instead of gender equality because men and women have different natures and reject quotas and similar positive discrimination mechanisms that aim to increase women's representation in politics.

Considering the historical course of the representation of women in the Parliament in Turkey, during the AKP governments, the representation of women in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey increased gradually. On the other hand, this cannot be considered a success compared to UN targets, and the women representation rates of developed countries are far above the female representation rate in Turkey. Regarding substantive representation, female AKP deputies in the Parliament cannot produce effective policies for women due to the male-oriented political culture and party discipline. As the literature on substantive representation suggested, the increase in women's representation in the local and national assemblies in the 2000s in Turkey is significant but insufficient. Although Turkish women have had the highest proportion of representation in the Parliament throughout national history, descriptive representation could not transform into substantive representation. In a political environment that overshadows the individuality of women by identifying them with family, the participation of women in politics, especially of the conservative right-wing parties such as AKP and MHP, can only be inactive or ineffective. It is important to remember that the problem of women's political participation, both in terms of number and effectiveness, is very much related to the Republic's embedded patriarchal mentality, which is the main commonality for the different nationalist projects that utilize women in various ways.

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# Rising Expectations: How Digital Democracy Don't Mean More Participation for Vulnerable Groups

**Emre Erdoğan**

**Abstract** Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, the democracy we recognize has been under crisis. According to the Regimes of War (RoW) classification, more than five billion people live under authoritarian governments. Exclusionary considerations are a defining characteristic of democracies. The rise of authoritarian governments, populist regimes, and technocratic government has opened up new opportunities for citizen participation. These pathways contribute to the institutionalization of social inequality based on gender roles, low education levels, rurality, and immigration. Digital democracy is viewed as a solution to this problem of inefficiency, and it is expected that technological advancement would increase citizen engagement opportunities. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that digital democracy does not directly reduce social exclusion and institutionalizes social inequality. My multivariate findings show that demographic and socioeconomic variables play significant roles as predictors of political participation, particularly in non-conventional, social, and online dimensions. Political engagement and membership in CSOs are two crucial factors influencing citizens' decisions; more politically engaged and experienced citizens prefer new ways of participation over voting. Intriguingly, internet participation is positively connected with confidence in political institutions. Education has both indirect and direct benefits, although a greater socioeconomic status is connected with lower civic participation levels than political participation levels.

**Keywords** Digital democracy · Political participation · Vulnerabilities · Conventional political participation · Unconventional political participation · Social participation · Online participation · Technology · Citizens · Decisions

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## 1 Introduction

The democracy we know has been in crisis since the last quarter of the twentieth century. Recent studies showed that the number of autocratic countries equals the number of liberal countries. More than five billion world citizens live in authoritarian regimes according to the Regimes of War (RoW) classification. According to the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project, the average level of democracy in the globe declined during the last decade (Coppedge et al. 2021; Diamond 2021; Herre 2022; Lührmann et al. 2018). Several studies show citizens' interest, and confidence in political institutions has reduced. Younger generations don't vote and don't believe in democracy (Foa et al. 2020; Solijonov 2016). Brady and Kent (2022) show that confidence in American political institutions decreased during the last 50 years. This decrease is global and valid for different geographies (Dassonneville and McAllister 2021; Norris 2017; Perry 2021; Torcal 2017; Torcal and Christmann 2021). Political polarization poisoned the political scene and led to the rise of partisan animosity everywhere so that the United Nations Development Programme described it as one of the critical crises humanity suffers (Carothers and O'Donohue 2019; UNDP 2022; McCoy et al. 2018).

The reasons for the democratic decline are numerous. Economic factors such as rising inequality and the failure of democratic regimes to the resentment of the masses are located at the top of the list (Cordero and Simón 2016; Morlino and Quaranta 2016). The existence of non-democratic role models such as China and Russia and their support of illiberal regimes may also be accounted for the democratic decline (Walker 2022; Wigell 2019). The unfavorable international environment also helped the rise of illiberal regimes, and the rising global terrorist threat pushed countries to tolerate illiberal actors who can fight against terrorism. Moreover, the civil war in Syria and the war in Ukraine created a suitable environment for authoritarian leaders (Diamond 2021; Hyde 2020). The weaknesses of democratic institutions or the lack of checks and balances is listed among the factors leading to democratic erosion (Diamond 2021). On the other hand, there are some works relating the decline of democracies to the rise of populism, the rising polarization, the popularity of authoritarian leaders, and the cultural cleavages within the society intensified with the polycrises of the time (Diamond 2021; Haggard and Kaufman 2021; Norris and Inglehart 2019).

Apart from the above-listed structural and conjectural explanations of the decline of democracies, some perspectives focus on the ontological crisis of democracy. From this perspective, the crisis is the crisis of the representative democracy which seemed superior to its alternatives. The unfeasibility of direct democracy led to the rise of representative democracy as the dominant mode of governance in the twentieth century. With the rise of the bureaucratic state, it is accepted that citizens don't possess sufficient knowledge, time, and personal motivation to exercise their political wills directly. In the age of societal complexity, ordinary citizens don't have the necessary administrative, technical, and political skills to deal with problems (Callahan 2007). These assumptions led to the rise of the technocratic approach in

the government. Although citizens were accepted as the ultimate source of legitimacy through elections, their role was limited to producing a government. The masses' involvement has been taken as a threat of authoritarianism (Michels and De Graaf 2010). The rise of the Welfare State in the western world and the active role given to the developmental state in the rest of the world, from Latin America to Southeastern Asia, led to the emergence of powerful elites and the alienation of the masses from politics. Moreover, the European integration process created a supranational bureaucratic elite imposing their political preferences on localities. The decline of mass political parties and the withdrawal of civil society were examples of the degradation of intermediary institutions (Mair 2005).

The rise of the technocratic government as an alternative to direct democracy created some crucial reactions. Especially in the West, the emergence of a new demanding generation, postmaterialists of Inglehart and "critical citizens" of Norris led to increased dissatisfaction with the representative government, and these citizens asked for more "say" in the government affairs (Cain et al. 2006; Inglehart 2015; Norris 2011). This demand has been crystallized in different ways in the modern world.

First, intertwined mainly with the polycrisis of today – financial crisis, refugee flow, and the failure of the EU – the rise of populism in Europe and elsewhere is associated with bringing the control of the government to the pure people by taking away from the corrupt elites. The relationship between the people and the government would be established through the charisma of a charismatic leader, and the role of intermediary institutions would be eliminated. This relationship would provide transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to government, all of which are currently hampered by the technocratic elite (Canovan 2004; Kaltwasser 2012; Kriesi 2014; Taggart 2004). This "thin" reaction of the masses to representative democracy gave rise to populist groups in Europe and abroad, which were accepted as a necessary threat to democracy (Dzur and Hendriks 2018).

The challenge of representative democracy is not solely addressed by populism. Even in the earliest days of the crisis, proponents of participatory democracy emphasized the engagement of citizens in the decision-making process in an effort to decrease their alienation. Participation serves not only to voice preferences, but also as an educational and integrative tool. Citizens develop their talents and a sense of responsibility through participation. Participatory practices increase political transparency and accountability (Arnstein 1969; Barber 2003; Dacombe and Parvin 2021).

Participatory democracy has various instruments, from consultations, committee hearings, and participatory budgeting sessions to protests and civic activities. Moreover, participatory politics became very attractive to government agencies, civil society organizations, and social movements (Barber 2003; Bherer et al. 2016). In addition to well-known participatory democracy examples such as Porto Alegre of Brazil, supranational organizations such as the OECD and the EU supported participatory practices in policy making. OECD (2022) developed a toolbox for Citizen Participation Processes. The EU supported more than 4500 participatory

budgeting experiments and hosted an online forum to integrate European citizens into policy making (Greenwood 2019).

At this point, the widespread development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) created some avenues for facilitating citizen participation. Digital democracy, defined as the extension of democratic practices to the digital world, is perceived as a solution to the crisis of representative democracy. Digital democracy facilitates access to information for citizens, creates platforms for deliberation, and opens avenues for their participation (Hindman 2008; Kneuer 2016; Van Dijk 2012).

The essential concept of digital democracy is the inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process, hence providing previously excluded persons a voice. The digitalization of participation may be recognized as a reaction to the challenges of technocratic politics, populism, and representative democracy, which all provide voters a passive role in policy making. Although this novel method of involvement appears to be more equal than the alternatives, it inherits practices that exclude vulnerable populations. This chapter will demonstrate that digital or online involvement does not alleviate the problem of exclusion directly and institutionalizes social inequality. Using a large comparative dataset, I will show that many aspects of participation are interrelated and share certain exclusionary characteristics, and it is impossible to conduct better politics without changing them. My analyses will demonstrate that any attempt to offer the citizen a voice has the potential to produce a new inequity; hence, new participatory politics must account for current and potential disparities.

## 2 Different Modes of Participation, Same Determinants

My analyses are based on a large-scale dataset provided by the World Values Survey Association conducted between 2017 and 2020 as the seventh wave of the World Values Survey. The dataset covers 48 countries and is open to researchers' analyses; it can be downloaded from the World Values Survey Association website.[1]

The dataset is composed of 69,578 cases; the average sample size is 1440 and changes between 1000 and 3200. The data includes a set of different weights to balance differences in population and sample sizes of the participant countries. In my analyses, I preferred to use Equilibrated Weight or Senate Weight, which gives equal weight to each participant country and prevents suppression of the dataset by larger countries.

[1] The dataset is available at https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp.

## *2.1 Different Dimensions of Participation*

The dataset includes a set of variables measuring different dimensions of political participation. I calculated different indices using the methodology described in the annex to represent the situation better.

### 2.1.1 Conventional Political Participation

The first dimension of political participation is conventional political participation. Political participation is all voluntary activities of individual citizens targeting to influence political choices (Kaase and Marsh 1979: 42). Traditional political participation is defined as institutionalized participation, such as voting, being a political party member, and participating in party meetings and demonstrations.

The dataset includes questions about participants' previous political experience in voting in local and national elections. Questions quantify the frequency of election involvement on a scale from "always" to "never" and include "not allowed" as an option for unregistered participants. My index is comprised of the number of "always" responses and ranges from 0 to 2, representing regular engagement in both elections.

The countries' average scores in this dimension of political participation are presented above. Figure 1 shows that the South American countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil and the Oceanic countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand have relatively higher average scores changing between 1.77 and 1.43. Two neighboring countries, Turkey and Greece, have very similar averages of 1.37 and 1.41. With this score, Turkey's rank is 13th among the 48 countries. Turkey's electoral turnout rates are generally high, especially after introducing compulsory voting after the Coup d'Etat of 1980. Turnout rates fluctuated between 80% and 92% in the parliamentary elections and 70% and 90% in the municipal elections, and this situation is attributed to different factors such as education and party competition (Akarca and Tansel 2015; Kama et al. 2022). The lowest participation scores are observed in China, Macedonia, Egypt, and Kazakhstan.

### 2.1.2 Unconventional Political Participation

The second dimension I will try to analyze is unconventional political participation. This type of political participation, often defined as elite-challenging, is composed of political acts such as protests, boycotts, strikes, and peaceful demonstrations. With the decline of conventional political participation in western countries, these different modes of political participation became popular and attracted the attention of the experts. For some, these protests were the extension of politics to the non-formal sphere, and citizens dissatisfied with the existing political structure

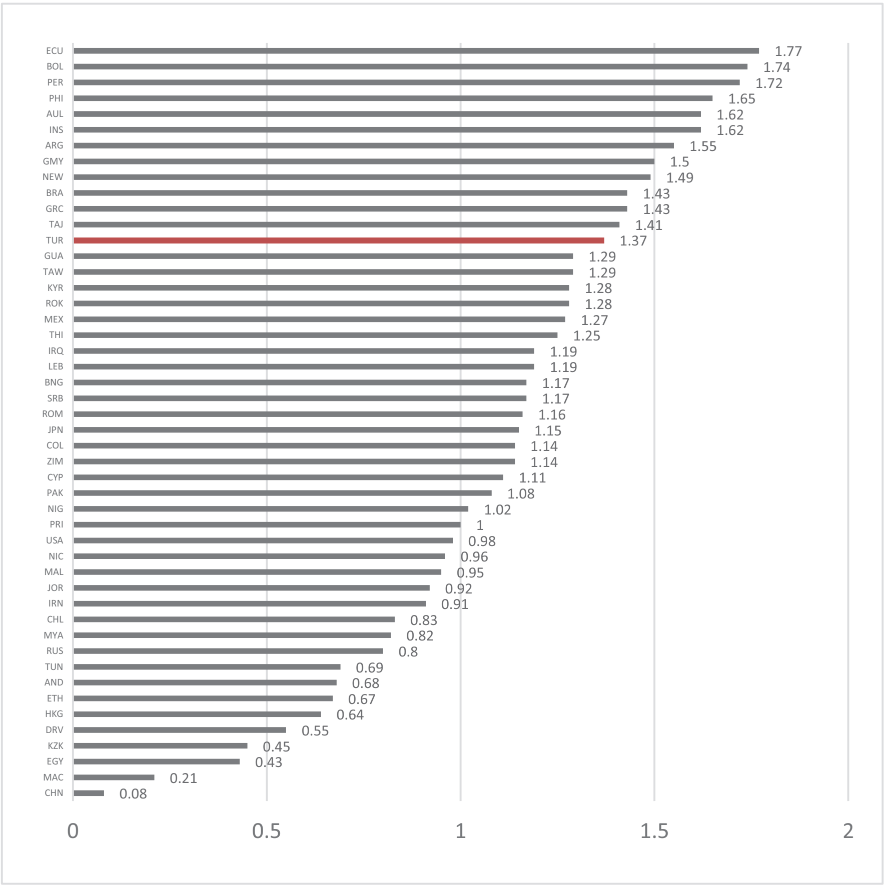


**Fig. 1** Index of conventional political participation

channeled their voices to more potent and brutal ways of expression. This dimension of political participation has been perceived as correlated with the rising post-materialism in developed countries (Barnes and Kaase 1979; Inglehart and Catterberg 2002; Norris 1999).

The dataset includes four specific questions about different modes of unconventional political participation: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations, and joining unofficial strikes. Respondents answer these questions by saying, “I have done,” “I might,” and “I would never do.” To focus on behavioral responses rather than intentions, I calculated an index by counting “I have done” responses. This index of unconventional political participation changes between 0 and 4. The highest score shows the respondent participated in all different modes.

According to Fig. 2, the highest average is observed in New Zealand, Australia, Germany, and the USA changing between 1.37 and 1.06. Brazil, Colombia, and Puerto Rico are South American countries with relatively higher scores of unconventional political participation. Turkey's rank is 39th, with an average of 0.22. Research focusing on different dimensions of political participation in Turkey showed that despite the clear differentiation of these dimensions, protest behavior is not common among the Turkish population. Erdoğan and Uyan-Semerci (2017) state that less than 10% of the adult population had any experience in unconventional politics, and even younger members of the society preferred conventional methods. Figure 2 shows that unconventional political participation is not popular in Central Asian and Asian countries such as Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Myanmar, Tajikistan, and Egypt.

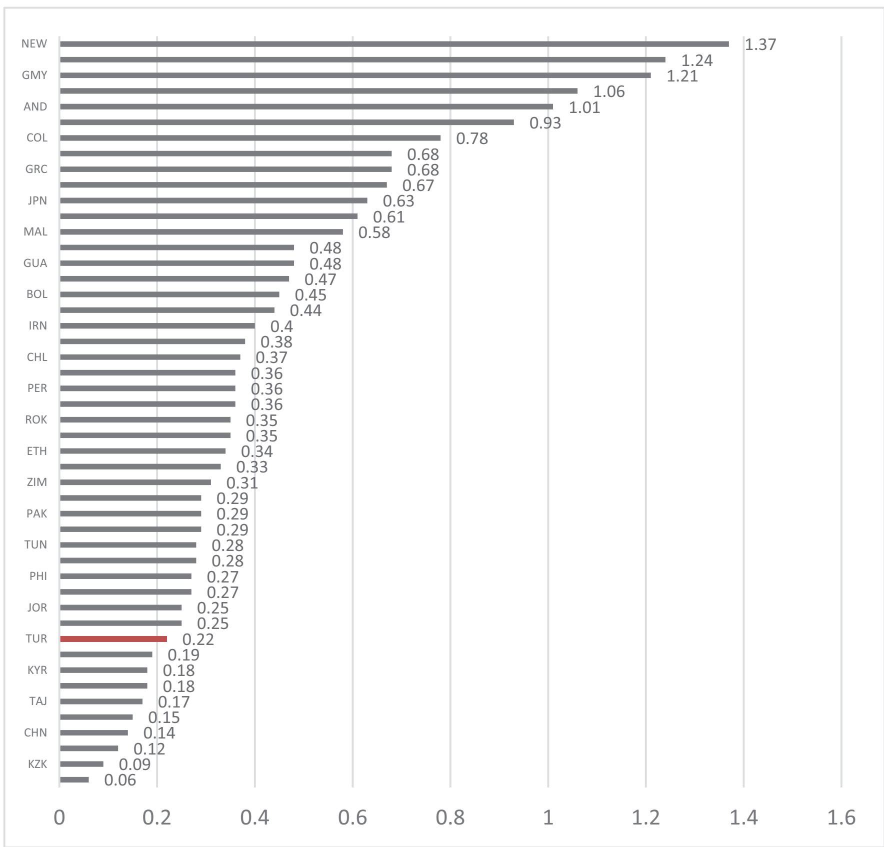


**Fig. 2** Index of unconventional political participation

### 2.1.3 Social Activism

Another dimension of political participation, which I will include in my analyses, is social activism. Social activism is defined as an intention to bring change into society through different means. Civic activities such as donating to a group or campaign or having a leadership role in society by mobilizing other people are actions related to social activism. The dataset has four questions about respondents' social activism practices: donating to a group or campaign, contacting a government official, encouraging others to take action about political issues, and encouraging others to vote. These questions have similar response sets to the previous one, and respondents can answer these questions by saying, "I have done," "I might," and "I would never do." I counted "I have done" answers to measure respondents' experience and constructed a scale change between 0 and 4. The highest score shows the participation of the respondent in each activity.

Countries' averages of social activism are presented above. According to Fig. 3, Germany has the highest average (1.91), followed by Andorra, New Zealand,

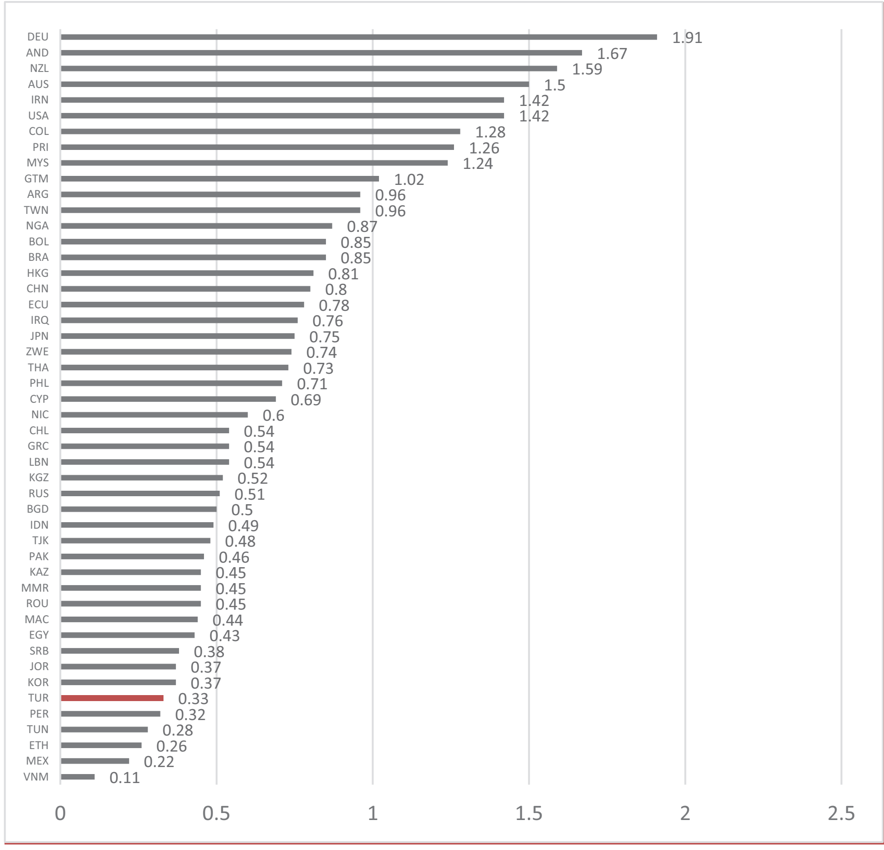


**Fig. 3** Index of social activism

Australia, Iran, and the USA. These countries have been followed by a group of South American countries such as Colombia, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Argentina; all these countries' averages are higher than one. Turkey's score is 0.33, and its position is 43rd among 48 countries. The lowest averages belong to Vietnam, Mexico, Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Peru. Previous studies showed that charity activities are not common in Turkish society. According to Çarkoğlu and coauthors, the percentage of individuals donating to civil society organizations is lower than 15%, and it is attributed to the weakness of social capital and the lack of trust of individuals in civil society organizations and intermediary institutions (Campbell and Çarkoğlu 2019; Çarkoğlu et al. 2017).

The above findings also show that Turkish society is passive about engaging in civic activities compared to other societies.

### 2.1.4 Online Activism

The dataset includes another four questions to measure the online activism experience of respondents. The battery has the same response options with the above questions, a scale changing from "I have done," "I might," and "I would never do." Online activities listed in the battery are as follows: searching for information about politics and political events; signing an electronic petition; encouraging other people to take any form of political action; and organizing political activities, events, and protests. All these items are related to the previous conventional, non-conventional, and social activities. The index of online activism changes between 0 and 4 as I counted "I have done" answers within the set.

According to Fig. 4, the highest level of online activism is observed in the USA, with an average of 1.22, followed by Andorra, Germany, and Austria. South East Asian countries Myanmar, Vietnam, and Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have the lowest score. Turkey's average is 0.30, and its rank is 23rd, a relatively better position vis-à-vis other dimension. As discussed above, Turkey's digital divide may be accounted for in this situation (Table 1).

As presented above, all four dimensions of participation are correlated with each other. The correlation coefficient between unconventional and online participation is about 0.50; this coefficient is almost the same for the relationship between unconventional and social dimensions of participation. Social and online participation are also correlated with a coefficient of 0.54. The relationships between conventional participation and the other three dimensions are relatively weak, and coefficients vary between 0.10 and 0.17. This situation shows that participation is multidimensional and cascading.

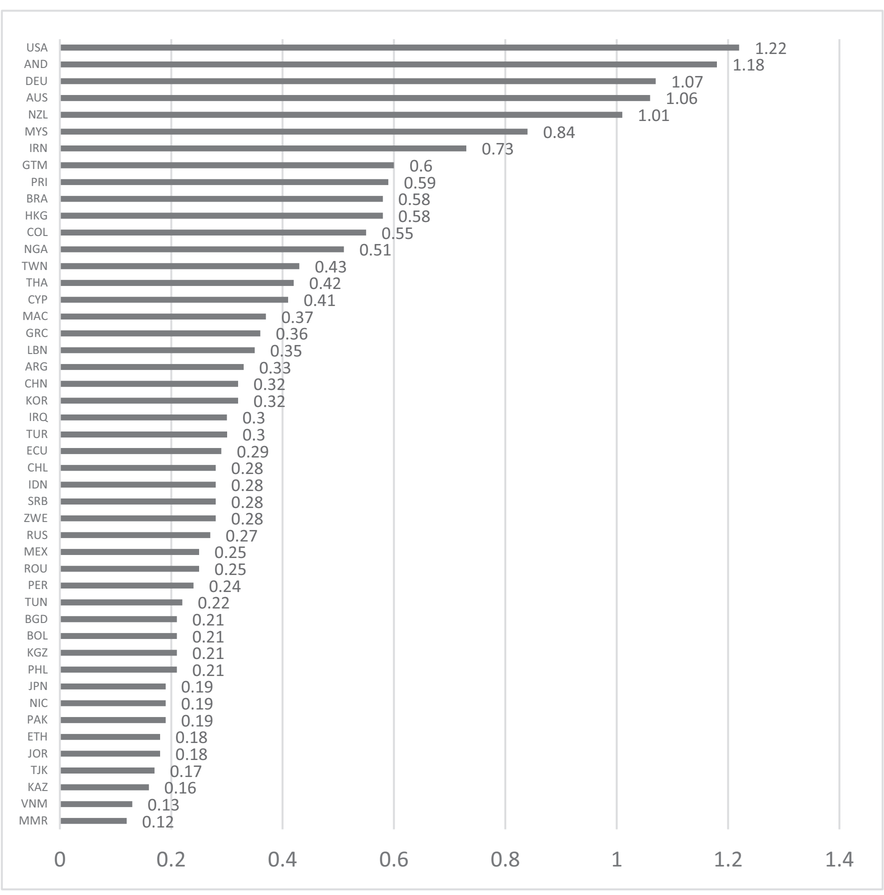


**Fig. 4** Index of online activism

**Table 1** Correlation matrix of dimensions of participation

| | Unconventional participation | Online participation | Conventional participation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Online participation | 0.49 | | |
| Social participation | 0.50 | 0.53 | |
| Conventional participation | 0.14 | 0.10 | 0.17 |

## 2.2 *Determinants of Participation*

I ran a series of multivariate studies that included a number of independent variables in order to establish which characteristics, when compared, determine the engagement of persons in different dimensions. These variables include demographic and socioeconomic data, such as gender and socioeconomic status, as well as political

variables, including left-right orientation and political interest. In addition, I included macro-level variables to comprehend the influence of political and social circumstances.

### 2.2.1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables

***Gender*** It is known that women are excluded from politics, and despite the efforts spent to provide equal opportunities, women are not visible in political and social life. This problem has been perceived as a side effect of late development because comparative indices show a positive correlation between political participation rates and the level of development of countries (Desposato and Norrander 2009). Women have lower resources (i.e., money, time, connections) compared to men; there are socially assigned gender roles to women who restrict their political activities, and there are cultural barriers that play the "glass ceiling" function (Cotter et al. 2001; Dalton 2008; Desposato and Norrander 2009).

Moreover, a digital gender gap also exists. Increased digitalization created new opportunities for everyone. However, there are significant differences between men and women, especially in low-income countries. Women have limited resources to exploit the advantages of the digital world, are less experienced in technology usage, and have limited opportunities. Education seems to be an equalizing variable. However, traditional gender roles still prevent equality in the digital World (Mariscal et al. 2019; Pisker et al. 2022). The gender gap is also visible in terms of the use of opportunities of digital government; women's tendency to use e-government services is relatively low compared to men (Bélanger and Carter 2009; Erdoğan 2017; Macaya et al. 2021).

***Age*** Another significant divide in participation is related to age. Different studies showed youth political participation is quantitatively and qualitatively other than that of adults. Youngsters don't prefer to participate in conventional politics and are more interested in unconventional modes of political participation. Similar to the gender gap, young citizens have limited resources to participate and face the cultural challenges of traditional societies, which undermine the role of youth in everyday life. The relationship between age and participation is curvilinear, meaning that citizens tend to participate in their middle ages, and this tendency decreases in their older years (Weiss 2020).

Moreover, they have a different understanding of politics, leading them to enjoy the advantages of new modes of political participation. The "elite-challenging" activities such as boycotts, protests, strikes, and occupations are more attractive to the younger generations. The rising postmaterialism has explained this difference in Western societies (Dalton 2015; Inglehart 2015; Kitanova 2020; Norris 2011). Another explanation of the youth's decline in interest in conventional politics is their orientation toward "cause-" based politics. Younger citizens don't prefer the hierarchical structure of organizations. They like versatile and spontaneous

platforms to express their opinions using the new participation repertoires, such as volunteering, donating money, and political participation (Hustinx et al. 2012; Soler-i-Martí 2015).

Another factor affecting the different patterns of political participation among the youth is the rise of digital technologies. As younger generations are more affiliated with digital tools, they tend to use them to express their opinions and affect politics. Digital avenues provide more opportunity space for the youth as the masters of the digital world. The Arab Spring and other protests worldwide are accepted as evidence of the changing political landscape. Moreover, new social movements exploited the advantages of new tools such as Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok and used them to mobilize young citizens for their causes (Allagui and Kuebler 2011; Howard and Hussain 2013; Madison and Klang 2020). Meanwhile, there are still inequalities within the youth, and gender roles, economic opportunities, class, race, and other factors create another digital divide (Earl et al. 2017; Schradie 2018).

***Education*** Education is presented as one of the primary drivers of political participation. Since the earlier works of Verba and Nie (Verba et al. 1995; Verba and Nie 1987), and Dalton (2008), several studies presented a strong relationship between the level of education and the tendency to participate. Education has direct and indirect effects on participation. As a socialization stage, education contributes to civic skills and political knowledge and shapes the political identity of citizens (Persson 2015). Moreover, education contributes to the cognitive mobilization of citizens and improves their ability to deal with the complex problems of politics (Dalton 1984). Moreover, as Persson states (2015), education contributes to the social positioning of an individual in the societal hierarchy.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the level of education and political participation is not linear. As education increases, individuals tend to prefer elite-challenging political activities as they can access required resources. Conventional political activities imposing a strict hierarchy and division of labor within the party don't satisfy them. Consequently, they target more autonomous ways of participation (Marien et al. 2010; Norris 2011).

Another effect of education on participation is related to digital literacy. More educated citizens' access to digital tools is relatively higher, leading them to use new platforms actively. Then more educated citizens tend to participate online more than other citizens.

***Income and Socioeconomic Status*** Political participation is related to the available resources. Having skills, time, and money facilitate access to political opportunities. Education, revenue, and family background are firmly connected and form different dimensions of socioeconomic status (Brady et al. 1995).

Meanwhile, a lack of necessary income may lead to participating in protests. Economic grievances and the relative deprivation of individuals attract citizens to first alienation from the political system and then the rise of anger and resentment against the elites. Consequently, citizens may focus on non-institutionalized

political activities. The recent rise of radical populist parties in western countries and the support for Trump in the 2016 presidential elections are explained by the rising anger and resentment in society as a reaction to the austerity measures and the financial crises (Betz 1993; Capelos and Demertzis 2022; Gurr 2015; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013; Walker and Pettigrew 1984).

In the case of digital participation, it is clear that higher income levels contribute to ownership of technological infrastructure and more opportunities.

***Urban/Rural Divide*** For many years, political participation has been associated with economic development and urbanization, namely modernization. The lack of political participation is an indicator of political backwardness. Economic development leads to the development of complex political structures, the emergence of a sizeable middle class, increased educational opportunities, and exposure to the mass media. Economic development means urbanization and the rise of horizontal organizations, which attracts citizens to participate (Lerner 1958; Nie et al. 1969). Rural areas are associated with a lack of political participation or the hegemony of conventional political involvement, whereas urban places are the ideal places for protests. Rural areas are generally under the control of traditional authorities, and clientelism is widely observed. However, the anonymity of the city allows the rise of dissent and protest movements (Sawyer et al. 2022).

***Migration Background*** Another essential variable I included in my analyses has a migrant background. Any political participation is accepted as an indicator of the integration of immigrants into the country, as the right to vote is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to immigrants. Immigrants' participation is related to the country's legal structure, opportunities provided to immigrants, local policies, and the openness of formal bodies and public authorities (Martiniello 2005; Morales and Giugni 2011). The tendency to participate is a function of the immigrant's capital, such as having an extensive network of friends, being capable of speaking the host country's language, and having monetary resources to be used. All these interrelated factors are related to the above-discussed determinants of political participation (Zapata-Barrero et al. 2013). Without institutionalized participation channels, immigrants may prefer unconventional methods to communicate their demands to policymakers, especially when immigrants don't possess citizenship or political rights. Moreover, the digitalization of politics supports immigrants to voice their demands which they cannot communicate through conventional methods (Tyler and Marciniak 2013).

### 2.2.2 Political Variables

The second set of variables is composed of political variables, which may directly or indirectly affect the tendency of an individual to participate in different modes. These variables are interrelated, and some are connected to demographic and socioeconomic variables, which we discussed in detail.

***Political Interest*** The classical view on the determinants of political participation relies on a simple assumption that citizens seek ways to participate in politics to influence politicians' decisions. Citizens interested in politics tend to participate and gain experience and influence over time. This variable has a mediating role because it is determined by other factors such as age, gender, education, and socio-economic status, and it is directly connected to every dimension of political participation (Brady et al. 1995; Melo and Stockemer 2014; Verba and Nie 1987).

***Left Right Divide*** Citizens' ideologies affect their choices of political participation. Leftist citizens are associated with unconventional politics, whereas the conservative standing of the rightist individuals is visible in their tendency to use conventional ways of participating in politics. Moreover, it is also observed protest movements became very attractive for the radicals on both ends of the political spectrum, especially after the economic crises of the 2000s (Dalton 2008; Della Porta 2015; Grasso and Giugni 2016; Heath et al. 2022; Norris 2011).

***Confidence in Institutions*** Confidence in institutions is highly related to the tendency of citizens to participate in politics. As citizens believe that their voices will be heard and echoed by politicians, they prefer elite-driven conventional methods of political participation. Meanwhile, alienation from the political system indicated by declining confidence in institutions leads to investing in more challenging modes of political participation (Almond and Verba 2015; Brady et al. 1995; Hooghe and Marien 2013; Katsanidou and Eder 2018).

***Membership in Civil Society Organizations*** Civic engagement or associational involvement has been perceived as an essential step toward political participation. Civil society organizations provide opportunities to their members to "apprentice" political practices and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to be helpful in political life (Ekman and Amnå 2012; Norris et al. 2002; Putnam 2015; Van Der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; van Stekelenburg et al. 2016).

***Satisfaction with Democracy*** Satisfaction with democracy has been accepted as the indicator of a "healthy" regime that gives its citizens sufficient opportunities to determine their life. Moreover, the recent rise of authoritarian and populist parties is attributed to declining satisfaction with democratic practices. Satisfaction with democracy is correlated with confidence in institutions and is affected by institutional factors such as the electoral system and the government's political and economic performance. Meanwhile, it is expected that a higher level of satisfaction with democracy leads to conventional political participation, and dissatisfaction contributes to the tendency to participate in protests and similar activities (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Dalton 2008, 2015; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2016; Norris 1999).

#### 2.2.3 Contextual Variables

Citizens' political participation is highly related to the context in which they make these choices. Hence, I included some macro-level variables measured at the country level as control variables, provided by the World Values Survey dataset.

- Global Freedom Status
- GDP per capita, PPP
- Income inequality, GINI Coefficient
- Urbanization
- Internet penetration

### *2.3 Findings*

#### 2.3.1 Multilevel Ordered Logit

By incorporating macro-level variables, I conducted a series of multilevel regression analyses to understand the determinants of different dimensions at the individual level. In each multilevel model, I employed the various dependent variables described above, with all independent variables being standardized to facilitate the comparison of their effects.

Table 2 presents the results of multilevel ordered logit analysis where different dimensions of participation are dependent, demographic and socioeconomic variables are independent variables. Coefficients show the increase in the probability of higher scores in the dependent variable if independent variables move up one standard deviation. For example, in the first column, the age coefficient is 1.07, meaning that one standard deviation increase in age (16 years) leads to a 7% increase in the probability of a higher score in conventional political participation. In other words, age positively affects the traditional tendency of participation of citizens.

By using these figures, it is possible to observe the relationship between age and conventional participation, meaning that older citizens have higher tendencies to participate using conventional methods. The same table shows that as education increases, this tendency also increases, but socioeconomic status has the opposite effect. Citizens with higher socioeconomic status don't prefer this mode of political participation. Another important finding is the negative relationship between migration background and conventional participation, confirming theoretical discussions. Another interesting finding is the lack of a gender gap after controlling for other variables.

The second column shows the results of the same analysis in which unconventional political participation is dependent variable. In this dimension of political participation, it is possible to observe the gender gap. Women's tendency to use this political participation mode is lower than men's. As age increases, this tendency

**Table 2** Determinants of four dimensions of participation (demographic and socioeconomic factors)

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conventional | Unconventional | Social | Online |
| Gender = Female | 0.948 | 0.811*** | 0.908* | 0.750*** |
| | (−1.43) | (−4.02) | (−2.08) | (−5.72) |
| Age | 1.079*** | 1.032*** | 1.026*** | 1.017 |
| | (6.88) | (3.33) | (3.85) | (1.89) |
| Age-square | 1.000*** | 1.000** | 1.000** | 1.000*** |
| | (−4.03) | (−2.68) | (−2.70) | (−3.53) |
| Residence = Rural | 1.173 | 0.905 | 0.943 | 0.851* |
| | (1.73) | (−1.26) | (−1.06) | (−2.06) |
| Socioeconomic status | 0.942* | 1.098*** | 1.042 | 1.142*** |
| | (−2.18) | (4.15) | (1.53) | (5.34) |
| Income | 1.023 | 1.014 | 1.036** | 1.042*** |
| | (1.61) | (1.26) | (3.07) | (3.47) |
| Education | 1.124*** | 1.215*** | 1.200*** | 1.270*** |
| | (7.40) | (9.23) | (12.84) | (11.14) |
| Immigrant background | 0.761*** | 0.892** | 0.939 | 0.956 |
| | (−3.30) | (−2.59) | (−1.66) | (−1.62) |
| cut1 | 1.563*** | 1.639*** | 0.990*** | 1.075*** |
| | (7.09) | (8.054) | (5.039) | (4.896) |
| cut2 | 9.13*** | 2.906*** | 2.246*** | 2.344*** |
| | (9.11) | (13.53) | (11.32) | (10.83) |
| cut3 | | 3.927*** | 3.339*** | 3.437*** |
| | | (15.32) | (16.01) | (15.05) |
| cut4 | | 5.145*** | 4.437*** | 4.721*** |
| | | (16.65) | (22.27) | (19.34) |
| var(_cons[B_COUNTRY]) | 0.680*** | 0.563*** | 0.707*** | 0.560*** |
| | (4.418) | (3.864) | (4.785) | (3.884) |
| *N* | 36,463 | 36,463 | 36,463 | 36,463 |

Exponentiated coefficients; *t* statistics in parentheses
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

also increases, and the positive coefficient of the square of age shows the U-shaped relationship between age and unconventional political participation. Socioeconomic status and education have positive and statistically significant coefficients, which leads us to think that unconventional political participation is the habitude of more prosperous citizens. Similar to the previous table, citizens with a migration background have lower tendencies to participate using unconventional modes.

In the third column, social participation is the dependent variable. Gender is also valid for this dimension of political participation; meanwhile, the positive relationship effect of age is also observable. As income and the level of education increase, individuals' tendency to use this mode of participation also increases. The table shows that migrants don't behave differently than their local counterparts.

The fourth column provides important information. There is a gender gap in the tendency to use online participation tools; women's tendencies are 25% lower than men's after controlling for all variables. Similarly, citizens living in rural areas also don't prefer that mode of participation. The in-equalizing characteristics of online participation are visible above: the effects of education, income, and socioeconomic status are positive, meaning that citizens have more opportunities to participate significantly than the rest of the population. These findings confirm that this mode of participation is reserved for more prosperous urban men.

Table 3 presents determinants of different modes of participation by using demographic, socioeconomic, and political variables: satisfaction with democracy, satisfaction with the regime, self-positioning in the ideological spectrum, confidence in institutions, membership to the CSOs, and political interest. In the first column, the

**Table 3** Determinants of four dimensions of participation (demographic, socioeconomic, and political factors)

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conventional | Unconventional | Social | Online |
| Gender = Female | 1.009 | 0.879* | 1.020 | 0.867* |
| | (0.26) | (−2.32) | (0.36) | (−2.52) |
| Age | 1.036*** | 1.006*** | 1.008*** | 0.984*** |
| | (14.50) | (3.35) | (5.53) | (−6.08) |
| Age-square | 0.999*** | 1.000*** | 1.000*** | 1.000*** |
| | (−4.90) | (−3.81) | (−4.72) | (−5.14) |
| Residence = Rural | 1.136 | 0.864* | 0.924 | 0.808*** |
| | (1.23) | (−2.04) | (−1.62) | (−3.45) |
| Socioeconomic status | 0.937* | 1.090*** | 1.023 | 1.149*** |
| | (−2.15) | (3.47) | (0.78) | (4.87) |
| Income | 1.012 | 1.009 | 1.026* | 1.030* |
| | (0.84) | (0.79) | (2.34) | (2.57) |
| Education | 1.102*** | 1.162*** | 1.161*** | 1.226*** |
| | (6.02) | (7.77) | (10.56) | (9.66) |
| Immigrant background | 0.758*** | 0.910* | 0.947 | 0.995 |
| | (−3.56) | (−2.38) | (−1.38) | (−0.20) |
| Satisfaction with democracy | 1.016 | 0.985 | 0.994 | 0.989 |
| | (1.41) | (−1.79) | (−0.78) | (−1.09) |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 0.983 | 0.954*** | 0.967*** | 0.944*** |
| | (−1.50) | (−5.18) | (−4.16) | (−5.55) |
| Left-right | 1.005 | 0.952*** | 0.989 | 0.969** |
| | (0.62) | (−3.83) | (−0.99) | (−2.59) |
| Left-right square | 1.014*** | 1.017*** | 1.019*** | 1.020*** |
| | (3.52) | (4.46) | (5.83) | (4.46) |
| Confidence in political institutions | 1.080* | 0.926* | 1.034 | 1.023 |
| | (2.26) | (−2.31) | (1.17) | (0.48) |
| Confidence in media | 1.035 | 0.969 | 0.957* | 0.971 |
| | (1.11) | (−0.91) | (−2.15) | (−0.92) |

(continued)

**Table 3** (continued)

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conventional | Unconventional | Social | Online |
| Confidence in judiciary | 1.040 | 0.911* | 0.931* | 0.883*** |
| | (1.12) | (−2.36) | (−2.34) | (−3.40) |
| Membership to CSOs | 0.918 | 1.595*** | 1.594*** | 1.537*** |
| | (−1.04) | (8.26) | (8.52) | (6.23) |
| Political interest | 1.454*** | 1.585*** | 1.635*** | 2.041*** |
| | (10.26) | (15.41) | (16.59) | (21.43) |
| cut1 | 1.687*** | 1.759*** | 1.185*** | 1.263*** |
| | (7.023) | (9.109) | (6.440) | (5.901) |
| cut2 | 2.248*** | 3.044*** | 2.479*** | 2.597*** |
| | (9.265) | (14.43) | (12.87) | (12.49) |
| cut3 | | 4.096*** | 3.623*** | 3.724*** |
| | | (15.99) | (24.88) | (19.85) |
| cut4 | | 5.283*** | 4.726*** | 5.034*** |
| | | (16.97) | (24.88) | (19.85) |
| var(_cons[B_COUNTRY]) | 0.733*** | 0.472*** | 0.121*** | 0.407*** |
| | (4.127) | (3.903) | (4.913) | (4.129) |
| *N* | 31,838 | 31,838 | 31,838 | 31,838 |

Exponentiated coefficients; *t* statistics in parentheses
$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

conventional mode of political participation is the dependent variable, showing no gender divide in this dimension after including political variables. Age and education have a positive effect, whereas the tendency to participate in conventional modes decreases as socioeconomic status increases. The inclusion of the political variables didn't change the relationship between immigrant background and tendency to participate, the conventional modes of political participation function as an exclusionary instrument.

When we focus on political variables, we observe that ideology has an effect. The square of left-right positioning positively impacts the tendency to use conventional methods, meaning that radicals from both poles prefer them. Confidence in political institutions also has a positive coefficient. The most robust variable affecting conventional political participation is political interest, with a coefficient of 1.54. These findings show that conventional political participation correlates with the system's justification.

The determinants of unconventional political participation are presented in the second column of the table, showing that the gender gap still exists even after including political variables. The positive relationship between age, education, socioeconomic status, and the tendency to participate in unconventional political activities also didn't change. Having an immigrant background has a negative effect. Among the political variables, the strongest ones are civic activity and political interest, with coefficients greater than 1.5. It may be accepted as evidence of the educational function of civic activities; meanwhile, as satisfaction with the regime

and confidence in political institutions increase, the tendency to use unconventional modes decreases, showing its elite-challenging nature. Both poles' rightists and radicals have a higher tendency to participate as foreseen.

In the case of social participation, this dimension is related to age, income, and education after including political variables. Both memberships in civil society organizations and political interest have very high and significant coefficients, whereas radicals also prefer that mode of participation. There is a negative relationship between confidence in media and the judiciary. This situation may be attributed to the elite-challenging nature of social activism as the relationship between satisfaction with the regime and participation is also negative.

The fourth column presents the effects of demographic, socioeconomic, and political variables on the tendency to use online participation channels. First, the gender gap and the rural/urban divide still exist. Meanwhile, the positive effects of income, education, and socioeconomic status indicate the existence of social gaps related to citizens' opportunities. Not surprisingly, political interest and membership in civil society organizations strongly affect participation. Those positioned at the right end of the political spectrum don't prefer this mode of participation. In contrast, it is a good opportunity for radicals from the left and the right. As confidence in the judiciary increases, this tendency decreases.

To understand the effects of contextual variables on different dimensions of participation, I included the above-discussed macro-level variables such as the Global Freedom Status, GDP per capita, income inequality, urbanization, and internet penetration. Table 4 presents the results of this multilevel analysis.

Including contextual variables didn't affect the impact of individual-level variables. In conventional political participation, the positive effects of age and education are still observable, as socioeconomic status increases, this type of participation decreases. Similarly, citizens with immigrant backgrounds are excluded. Political interest is the most powerful determinant, with a coefficient of 1.42, whereas the rightist voters' tendency to participate in conventional ways is higher. Among the macro-level variables, the Global Freedom Status has a positive effect, as internet penetration increases, this tendency decreases.

When we focus on unconventional political participation as a dependent variable, we observe that including macro-level variables didn't remove the gender gap problem in this dimension of participation. As socioeconomic status and education increase, the tendency to use these unconventional modes increases. The negative coefficients of satisfaction with the regime and left-right scale show the elite-challenging nature of unconventional political participation. Like the previous models, membership in CSOs and political interest are the most powerful determinants of unconventional political participation tendencies. The level of freedom in a country increases the likelihood of participation in unconventional politics.

In the case of social participation, the level of education positively affects the tendency, whereas the level of satisfaction with the regime has an inverse effect. The radicals of both ideologies prefer to use this method. Being active in civic life and political interest is the most powerful factor. At the macro level, internet penetration has a negative effect; meanwhile, as income inequality increases, the tendency to

**Table 4** Determinants of four dimensions of participation (demographic, socioeconomic, political, and contextual factors)

| | (1) Conventional | (2) Unconventional | (3) Social | (4) Online |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender = Female | 1.012 | 0.872* | 0.991 | 0.847** |
| | (0.33) | (−2.44) | (−0.17) | (−2.79) |
| Age | 1.036*** | 1.006** | 1.007*** | 0.985*** |
| | (12.80) | (2.72) | (5.11) | (−5.16) |
| Age-square | 0.999*** | 1.000** | 1.000*** | 1.000*** |
| | (−4.64) | (−2.99) | (−3.58) | (−4.50) |
| Residence = Rural | 1.137 | 0.874 | 0.921 | 0.801** |
| | (1.11) | (−1.65) | (−1.49) | (−3.21) |
| Socioeconomic status | 0.928** | 1.082** | 1.004 | 1.138*** |
| | (−2.92) | (3.18) | (0.12) | (4.40) |
| Income | 1.013 | 1.008 | 1.021 | 1.034* |
| | (0.73) | (0.58) | (1.87) | (2.39) |
| Education | 1.112*** | 1.144*** | 1.147*** | 1.199*** |
| | (6.32) | (6.70) | (10.01) | (7.67) |
| Immigrant background | 0.644*** | 0.901 | 0.988 | 1.024 |
| | (−4.26) | (−1.48) | (−0.16) | (0.61) |
| Satisfaction with democracy | 1.018 | 0.983 | 0.998 | 0.993 |
| | (1.33) | (−1.83) | (−0.19) | (−0.66) |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 0.986 | 0.954*** | 0.964*** | 0.946*** |
| | (−1.17) | (−4.64) | (−4.12) | (−4.78) |
| Left-right | 1.002 | 0.947*** | 0.987 | 0.961** |
| | (0.24) | (−4.04) | (−1.21) | (−2.65) |
| Left-right square | 1.014** | 1.021*** | 1.020*** | 1.022*** |
| | (2.90) | (6.48) | (4.83) | (4.34) |
| Confidence in political institutions | 1.073 | 0.948 | 1.028 | 1.051 |
| | (1.70) | (−1.39) | (0.77) | (0.86) |
| Confidence in media | 1.053 | 0.986 | 0.944** | 0.969 |
| | (1.41) | (−0.38) | (−3.08) | (−0.86) |
| Confidence in judiciary | 1.051 | 0.893** | 0.909** | 0.869*** |
| | (1.22) | (−2.62) | (−2.78) | (−3.37) |
| Membership to CSOs | 0.908 | 1.585*** | 1.643*** | 1.667*** |
| | (−0.96) | (6.59) | (7.50) | (6.61) |
| Political interest | 1.417*** | 1.552*** | 1.602*** | 1.991*** |
| | (8.35) | (14.28) | (14.51) | (17.86) |
| Global Freedom Status | 1.023*** | 1.017** | 1.011 | 1.008 |
| | (3.60) | (3.24) | (1.60) | (1.43) |
| GDP per capita | 1.000 | 1.000** | 1.000*** | 1.000** |
| | (0.94) | (3.26) | (3.74) | (2.70) |
| Income inequality | 1.055 | 1.036 | 1.073** | 1.037 |
| | (1.67) | (1.62) | (3.26) | (1.61) |

(continued)

**Table 4** (continued)

| | (1) Conventional | (2) Unconventional | (3) Social | (4) Online |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Urbanization | 1.005 | 0.998 | 0.999 | 0.999 |
| | (0.37) | (−0.21) | (−0.07) | (−0.11) |
| Internet penetration | 0.969* | 0.984* | 0.971*** | 0.988 |
| | (−2.55) | (−2.30) | (−3.34) | (−1.31) |
| cut1 | 1.869*** | 1.835*** | 1.198*** | 1.396*** |
| | (6.455) | (7.537) | (5.643) | (5.967) |
| cut2 | 2.368*** | 3.113*** | 2.470*** | 2.732*** |
| | (8.322) | (11.09) | (10.79) | (11.79) |
| cut3 | | 4.177*** | 3.600*** | 3.876*** |
| | | (13.25) | (15.23) | (15.12) |
| cut4 | | 5.360*** | 4.708*** | 5.176*** |
| | | (13.25) | (20.29) | (18.43) |
| var(_cons[B_COUNTRY]) | 0.403*** | 0.186*** | 0.362*** | 0.216*** |
| | (4.776) | (4.783) | (3.469) | (4.089) |
| *N* | 26,459 | 26,459 | 26,459 | 26,459 |

Exponentiated coefficients; *t* statistics in parentheses
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

participate also increases. It may be a result of the priority of citizens to help others in these countries. The negative situation of internet penetration requires further analysis.

The last column of Table 4 presents determinants of online participation. This table shows a gap between men and women, young and elderly. People living in rural areas use this mode of participation less frequently, and leftist voters and radicals tend to use this method more frequently. Including macro-level variables contributed to the power of civil society experience and political interest. However, none of these variables significantly affect the tendency of participation.

Table 5 presents our model by restricting the dataset to Turkey and allows us to understand the determinants of different modes of political participation in Turkey. As the dataset has been restricted to one country, macro-level variables are not included in the model.

The first column shows that the elderly and rural residents prefer conventional political participation. As education increases, the tendency to use this mode of political participation also increases, but the respondents' income has the inverse effect, and left-right positioning doesn't have any effect. However, the table shows that radicals' tendency is higher. An interesting finding is that as confidence in political institutions increases, the tendency to use conventional modes of political participation decreases, and this situation is contrary to theoretical expectations. Meanwhile, confidence in the judiciary has a positive coefficient and may be accepted as the indicator of how this mode of participation is related to the system justification. As expected, the members of the CSOs don't prefer conventional political participation.

**Table 5** Determinants of four dimensions of participation (the case of Turkey)

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conventional | Unconventional | Social | Online |
| Gender = Female | 1.154 | 0.962 | 0.897 | 0.952 |
| | (1.29) | (−0.26) | (−0.91) | (−0.39) |
| Age | 1.015** | 0.986* | 0.998 | 0.990 |
| | (2.92) | (−2.11) | (−0.42) | (−1.48) |
| Age-Square | 0.999* | 0.999 | 0.999** | 1.000 |
| | (−2.23) | (−1.41) | (−2.61) | (−0.64) |
| Residence = Rural | 1.850*** | 0.594** | 0.853 | 1.027 |
| | (4.79) | (−2.80) | (−1.14) | (0.19) |
| Socioeconomic status | 1.016 | 0.958 | 0.928 | 0.914 |
| | (0.21) | (−0.44) | (−0.95) | (−1.07) |
| Income | 0.824*** | 1.066 | 1.041 | 1.057 |
| | (−5.43) | (1.30) | (1.07) | (1.40) |
| Education | 1.090** | 1.030 | 1.039 | 1.047 |
| | (3.16) | (0.81) | (1.39) | (1.56) |
| Immigrant background | 0.790 | 1.278 | 1.108 | 1.015 |
| | (−0.89) | (0.49) | (0.38) | (0.04) |
| Satisfaction with democracy | 1.015 | 0.986 | 0.983 | 0.996 |
| | (0.36) | (−0.24) | (−0.42) | (−0.08) |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 1.035 | 1.086 | 1.078 | 1.043 |
| | (0.75) | (1.41) | (1.82) | (0.88) |
| Left-right | 0.955 | 0.846*** | 0.915*** | 0.910*** |
| | (−1.32) | (−5.24) | (−3.45) | (−3.55) |
| Left-right square | 1.076*** | 1.036*** | 1.044*** | 1.038*** |
| | (7.56) | (3.65) | (5.37) | (4.65) |
| Confidence in political institutions | 0.671*** | 1.024 | 1.093 | 1.227* |
| | (−5.04) | (0.27) | (1.16) | (2.49) |
| Confidence in media | 0.991 | 1.188 | 0.855 | 1.070 |
| | (−0.11) | (1.70) | (−1.86) | (0.75) |
| Confidence in judiciary | 1.302** | 0.484*** | 0.562*** | 0.585*** |
| | (2.89) | (−5.85) | (−5.69) | (−5.09) |
| Membership to CSOs | 0.671** | 1.690*** | 2.220*** | 2.253*** |
| | (−3.14) | (3.30) | (6.16) | (6.02) |
| Political interest | 1.102 | 1.805*** | 1.548*** | 2.068*** |
| | (1.41) | (5.58) | (5.33) | (8.11) |
| cut1 | 1.46*** | 2.43*** | 1.91*** | 5.39*** |
| | (2.66) | (3.23) | (2.26) | (8.73) |
| cut2 | 1.71*** | 3.55*** | 3.05*** | 6.33*** |
| | (3.11) | (4.69) | (3.60) | (9.93) |
| cut3 | | 4.21*** | 4.25*** | 5.39*** |
| | | (5.59) | (4.97) | (8.73) |
| cut4 | | 5.12*** | 5.65*** | 6.33*** |
| | | (6.70) | (6.42) | (9.93) |
| *Pseudo* $R^2$ | 0.08 | 0.10 | 0.07 | 0.09 |
| *N* | 1853 | 1853 | 1853 | 1853 |

In the case of unconventional political participation, the table shows that urban residents prefer this mode, and other demographic and socioeconomic factors don't have any significant direct effect. Although citizens located toward the right of the political center don't prefer this mode, it seems attractive to the radicals. On the other hand, as confidence in the judiciary increases, the tendency to participate in unconventional political activities decreases. This confirms my speculation that the system justification of citizens of Turkey is related to attitudes toward the judiciary. The members of CSOs and those who have political interests tend to participate more.

None of the demographic or socioeconomic variables has a significant direct effect on the social participation dimension in Turkey. However, determinants of this mode of participation are similar to unconventional political participation, namely being a rightist and having confidence in the judiciary reduces the tendency to participate in this mode, whereas being a radical, being a member of a CSO, and having political interest increases.

The fourth column presents the model in which online participation is the dependent variable. Not surprisingly, this mode has similar determinants with other dimensions. Ideological positioning and confidence in the judiciary decrease the tendency to use online channels for participation and being radical. Civic society activism and political interest have positive effects. An interesting table finding is that as confidence in political institutions increases, the tendency to use online tools increases, contrary to theoretical discussions.

### 2.3.2 Structural Equation Models

The above analyses showed the importance of demographic and socioeconomic variables on different dimensions of political participation, especially gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, residence, and having an immigrant background are not. Many of them have significant relationships with my dependent variables. Meanwhile, the same analyses showed that political variables such as political interest and civic activism are the most important determinants of participation in almost all dimensions. These variables are also related to the above-listed demographic and socioeconomic variables and act as mediating variables. In such a situation, it is possible to undermine the effects of demographic and socioeconomic variables, as multilevel analyses only provide direct effects and hinder the indirect effects of independent variables on the dependent variables.

Consequently, I conducted a series of Structural Equation Model (SEM) analyses to present a more coherent picture of the situation. SEM is a statistical method that allows researchers to analyze relationships between variables in their theoretical model by converting them into equations. SEM is useful for testing hypotheses and discovering complex relationships (Ullman and Bentler 2012).

In a typical SEM, dependent variables are linked to independent variables through causal links, independent variables are connected through covariance, or some are accepted as intermediary variables. In our analyses, different dimensions

of participation are used as dependent variables. Gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, income, immigrant background, and residence are independent variables. Satisfaction with the political system, political interest, membership in CSOs, and confidence in political institutions are intermediary variables. In the following pages, I will present these variables' total, direct, and indirect effects for each dimension of participation.

Table 6 presents the relationship between demographic and socioeconomic, political variables, and coefficients are standardized to allow us to compare them. Female citizens' political interest and membership in CSOs are relatively low compared to their male counterparts. The participant's socioeconomic status doesn't affect them, but as their level of education increases, political interest and membership in CSOs increase. Age has a positive effect on political interest and satisfaction with the regime. Moreover, having an immigrant background leads to confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with the regime. According to this table, the residents of the rural areas have higher levels of political interest, higher confidence in political institutions, and higher satisfaction with the country's regime.

Table 7 presents the decomposition of total effects into direct and indirect effects for each dimension of political participation. Age has the highest direct effect on conventional political participation, with a coefficient of 0.21, and having an immigrant background reduces this mode of political participation. These two variables have the same power with their total effects, followed by political interest with a total effect of 0.14. Education has a positive total effect; about half comes from its effect on mediating variables. Confidence in political institutions has a direct negative effect. Gender and socioeconomic status are two variables with a negative total effect, whereas the effect of gender is indirect.

In the case of unconventional political participation, political interest and membership in CSOs have a negative direct effect and positive effects on confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with the regime. Among the demographic and socioeconomic variables, the level of education has the highest positive total effect, followed by age (positive) and place of residence (negative).

**Table 6** Demographic and socioeconomic variables and political variables (beta coefficients)

| | Political interest | Membership in CSOs | Confidence in political institutions | Satisfaction with the regime |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender = Female | **−0.23** | **−0.04** | −0.01 | 0.04 |
| SES | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.06 |
| Income | **0.02** | 0.00 | **0.03** | **0.16** |
| Education | **0.06** | **0.02** | −0.02 | **−0.05** |
| Age | **0.01** | 0.00 | 0.00 | **0.01** |
| Having immigrant background | −0.02 | −0.01 | **0.09** | **0.16** |
| Place of residence = Rural | **0.12** | 0.01 | **0.37** | **0.66** |

Bold coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$

**Table 7** Decomposition of total, direct, and indirect effects (beta coefficients)

| | *Conventional* | | | *Unconventional* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* |
| Political interest | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.14 | 0.20 | 0.00 | 0.20 |
| Membership in CSOs | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.11 |
| Confidence in political institutions | −0.06 | 0.00 | −0.06 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.07 |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.07 |
| Gender = Female | 0.00 | −0.02 | −0.02 | −0.03 | −0.03 | −0.06 |
| SES | −0.03 | 0.00 | −0.02 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.06 |
| Income | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Education | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.04 | 0.16 |
| Age | 0.21 | 0.01 | 0.22 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.09 |
| Having immigrant background | −0.15 | −0.01 | −0.16 | 0.02 | −0.01 | 0.01 |
| Place of residence | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.01 | −0.06 | −0.01 | −0.07 |
| | *Social* | | | *Online* | | |
| | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* |
| Political interest | 0.242 | 0.000 | 0.242 | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.25 |
| Membership in CSOs | 0.141 | 0.000 | 0.141 | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.11 |
| Confidence in political institutions | −0.014 | 0.000 | −0.014 | −0.02 | 0.00 | −0.02 |
| Satisfaction with the regime | −0.050 | 0.000 | −0.050 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.07 |
| Gender = Female | −0.008 | −0.035 | −0.043 | −0.02 | −0.03 | −0.06 |
| SES | 0.026 | 0.006 | 0.032 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 0.06 |
| Income | 0.032 | 0.004 | 0.036 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.03 |
| Education | 0.122 | 0.043 | 0.165 | 0.14 | 0.04 | 0.18 |
| Age | 0.078 | 0.019 | 0.097 | −0.04 | 0.02 | −0.02 |
| Having immigrant background | 0.033 | −0.009 | 0.025 | 0.06 | −0.01 | 0.05 |
| Place of residence | −0.061 | 0.008 | −0.053 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.06 |

Gender has a negative effect on unconventional participation; half of this effect is indirect through mediating variables.

Political interest and membership in CSOs have positive effects on social participation, and satisfaction with the regime has a direct inverse relationship. As education and age increase, the tendency to participate in this dimension increases, whereas people living in rural areas don't prefer it. Gender has a negative effect, and socioeconomic status and income of citizens have positive total effects.

When we focus on the online dimension of political participation, we observe that political interest and membership in CSOs have positive direct effects. In contrast, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with the regime have

**Table 8** Demographic and socioeconomic variables and political variables in Turkey (beta coefficients)

| | Political interest | Membership in CSOs | Confidence in political institutions | Satisfaction with the regime |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender = Female | −0.24 | −0.01 | 0.01 | −0.01 |
| SES | 0.01 | −0.05 | −0.02 | −0.07 |
| Income | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.16 |
| Education | 0.05 | 0.10 | −0.05 | −0.04 |
| Age | 0.13 | 0.03 | −0.02 | 0.00 |
| Having immigrant background | −0.06 | 0.02 | −0.05 | −0.01 |
| Place of residence | 0.04 | −0.10 | −0.08 | −0.02 |

negative effects. Education has a total effect of 0.18, including an indirect effect of 0.04; gender has a negative effect, and half of them comes from its indirect effect. Socioeconomic status and income have total positive effects. Similarly, citizens with immigrant backgrounds also have higher scores, and rural residence has a total negative effect.

Table 8 presents the direct effects of demographic and socioeconomic variables on political variables in the dataset of Turkey. Being a female has a negative effect on political interest, whereas higher levels of income and education are positively related to political interest. Having an immigrant background has a negative effect, and people living in rural places have a higher political interest. In the case of membership in CSOS, the table shows that as education and income increase, citizens tend to have a membership, whereas this practice is not common in rural areas. Income is the only variable positively affecting confidence in political institutions, and immigrants and more educated citizens have lower confidence levels. Finally, income is the most important determinant of satisfaction with the regime, whereas as socioeconomic status increases, satisfaction with the regime decreases.

Results of the SEM analyses based on the dataset of Turkey are presented in Table 9. According to Table 9, political interest and confidence in political institutions are two important variables determining conventional political participation with inverse effects. Satisfaction with the regime also has a positive effect, whereas membership in CSOs' effect is negative. Age, rural residence, and education are two variables with larger positive total effects, and both variables have considerable indirect effects. As income increases, conventional political participation decreases, and citizens with an immigrant background have lower tendencies. The impact of gender is complicated, despite a positive direct effect; indirect negative effects suppress it.

Political interest has the highest direct effect on the unconventional dimension of political participation, followed by membership in CSOS. Moreover, it is negatively related to confidence in political institutions, presenting its elite-challenging nature. When we focus on the impact of demographic and socioeconomic variables, we observe that education and income have large positive total effects, and the place of

**Table 9** Decomposition of total, direct, and indirect effects, Turkey (beta coefficients)

| | *Conventional* | | | *Unconventional* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* |
| Political interest | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.11 | 0.17 | 0.00 | 0.17 |
| Membership in CSOs | −0.04 | 0.00 | −0.04 | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.11 |
| Confidence in political institutions | −0.12 | 0.00 | −0.12 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.07 |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.07 | −0.05 | 0.00 | −0.05 |
| Gender = Female | 0.04 | −0.03 | 0.01 | 0.04 | −0.04 | 0.00 |
| SES | −0.01 | 0.00 | −0.01 | −0.03 | 0.00 | −0.03 |
| Income | −0.10 | 0.01 | −0.09 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.02 |
| Education | 0.10 | 0.00 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.08 |
| Age | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.13 | −0.01 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| Having immigrant background | −0.05 | 0.00 | −0.05 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Place of residence | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.12 | −0.07 | 0.00 | −0.07 |
| | *Social* | | | *Online* | | |
| | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* | *Direct effects* | *Indirect effect* | *Total effects* |
| Political interest | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.14 | 0.22 | 0.00 | 0.22 |
| Membership in CSOs | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.14 |
| Confidence in political institutions | −0.05 | 0.00 | −0.05 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Satisfaction with the regime | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Gender = Female | 0.00 | −0.04 | −0.03 | 0.02 | −0.05 | −0.03 |
| SES | −0.04 | −0.01 | −0.05 | −0.02 | 0.00 | −0.03 |
| Income | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Education | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.10 |
| Age | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.06 | −0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| Having immigrant background | −0.02 | 0.00 | −0.03 | 0.00 | −0.01 | −0.01 |
| Place of residence | −0.05 | −0.01 | −0.06 | −0.02 | −0.01 | −0.03 |

residence has a negative one. The positive total effect of gender has been suppressed by its indirect effect, namely, the lack of political interest.

Social participation has been affected by political interest and membership in CSOs with almost equal coefficients, and confidence in political institutions has a negative effect. Education, age, and income are variables with positive total effects. Living in rural places, socioeconomic status, having an immigrant background, and being female have negative total effects. The effect of gender comes through its negative effect on mediating variables such as political interest.

Finally, political interest and civic activism are two important variables that positively affect online participation. Other political variables don't affect this behavior. Age and income have total positive effects as gender and socioeconomic status affects them inversely. Gender's effect is highly mediated by its negative effect on political interest.

## 3 Conclusion

We are witnessing a crisis of democratic regimes, and there is a challenge by authoritarian governments, populist regimes, and technocratic governance. Citizen participation may form a more viable alternative and be accepted as a return to the basics of democratic practice. Including citizens' opinions in the policy making process has several virtues, from providing the basis for legitimacy to producing more effective policies. The shift to representative democracy was an outcome of a feasibility problem. The enfranchisement of the masses and the complexity of the problems of today's society were unsuitable for using the tools of direct democracy. Digital democracy is presented as a solution to this problem of ineffectiveness, and it is assumed that the development of technology would create new avenues of participation for ordinary citizens.

We need to accept that digitalization of democracy is a fact of today, and there are several attempts to establish tools for digital democracy. It is almost certain that these tools will lead to a quantitative change in the supply side of the problem. Meanwhile, suppose we focus on the demand side. In that case, it is not easy to state that opportunities provided by new technologies will erase societal differences, and new avenues will be employed by everyone equally.

In this chapter, I tried to answer this simple question of who benefits more from these new modes of political participation. Based on the large dataset of the World Values Survey, I tried to show that the existing inequalities within the society are still valid regarding different political participation.

My multivariate analyses showed that demographic and socioeconomic variables play vital roles as determinants of modes of participation. All modes of participation – conventional, unconventional, social, and online – discriminate against women compared to men. Two other groups excluded from the participation opportunities is citizen living in rural areas and immigrants. Less educated members of society are also excluded. Meanwhile, socioeconomic status and income play essential roles: conventional political participation is reserved for those from the lower socioeconomic classes, whereas citizens at the higher steps of society prefer unconventional and social modes of participation.

Another important finding of my analysis is that the citizens' current political and social capital matters. Higher interest in politics and membership in CSOs are powerful determinants of participation, especially in unconventional, social, and online dimensions, meaning that these avenues attract those who are already

interested in politics and have civic participation experience prefer to participate. Another finding I will underline is that conventional political participation is for the system justifying citizens as it is related to political confidence, opposite to unconventional political participation. Ideology also matters, the rightist voters don't prefer new modes of political participation, but they are very attractive to radicals of both poles. At the macro level, the country's freedom and economic development encourage participation.

When I focused on the case of Turkey, where citizens prefer conventional political participation and other modes of participation attract a limited number of citizens, I observed that the global picture is valid to a degree. Political interest and membership in the CSOs are two critical variables affecting citizens' choices; more interested and experienced citizens prefer new modes of participation instead of voting. The ideology plays a similar role. Interestingly, confidence in political institutions is positively correlated with online involvement.

These findings led me to interrogate the indirect effects of demographic and socioeconomic variables on different modes of participation. Gender discrimination is observable in every dimension of participation, mediated by the lack of political interest and civic experience. Education has direct and indirect effects on participation, similar to having immigrant background. In the case of Turkey, the role of gender is important; a significant difference is that the lack of political interest among women inhibits the direct positive effect of this variable. Education has both indirect and direct effects, whereas a higher level of socioeconomic status is associated with lower levels of civic participation than political participation.

All these findings show that the supply-side improvement of participation channels is insufficient to trigger participation equality. These new avenues contribute to the institutionalization of social inequalities based on gender roles, low levels of education, rurality, and immigration. Any enlargement of opportunities without improving the situation of vulnerable groups does not serve more than repeating and fortifying existing social cleavages.

# Appendix

**Table 10** Operationalization of variables

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Gender of the respondent | 1 = male<br>2 = female | 47.5%<br>52.5% |
| Age | Age of the respondent | | Average = 42.6<br>Std. dev = 16.3 |
| Education | Highest level of education, ISCED 2011 | 1 = lowest<br>8 = highest | Average = 3.4<br>Std. dev = 2.0 |
| Income | Household income | 1 = lowest<br>10 = highest | Average = 4.8<br>Std. dev = 2.1 |
| Socioeconomic status | Average of level of education of respondent's parents | 1 = lowest<br>4 = highest | Average = 1.8<br>Std. dev = 0.9 |
| Urban/rural | Place of residence of the respondent | 1 = urban<br>2 = rural | 65.5%<br>34.5% |
| Migration | Migration background of respondent, mother, father | 0 = none<br>3 = all of them | Average = 0.22<br>Std. dev = 0.66 |
| Political interest | Political interest | 1 = lowest<br>4 = highest | Average = 2.3<br>Std. dev = 0.9 |
| Left-right | Left-right self-positioning | 1 = left<br>10 = right | Average = 5.7<br>Std. dev = 2.5 |
| Confidence in institutions | Three dimensions of factor analysis:<br>Confidence in political institutions<br>Confidence in media<br>Confidence in judiciary | −3 = lowest<br>3 = highest | Average = 0.0<br>Std. dev = 1 |
| Satisfaction with democracy | Degree of satisfaction with the democracy of the country | 1 = lowest<br>10 = highest | Average = 6.5<br>Std. dev = 2.6 |
| Satisfaction with the political system performance | Degree of satisfaction with the performance of the political system | 1 = lowest<br>10 = highest | Average = 5.3<br>Std. dev = 2.7 |
| Membership to CSOs | Active membership to a CSO | 0 = no<br>1 = yes | 59.4%<br>40.6% |
| Voice | | | Average = 0.35<br>Std. dev = 0.38 |
| Global Freedom Status (Freedom House, 2020) | Global Freedom Status | 0 = lowest<br>100 = highest | Average = 54.6<br>Std. dev = 27.1 |
| GDP per capita, PPP | (constant 2017 international $) [World Bank, 2019] | Lowest = 2219.7<br>Highest = 123,965.7 | Average = 23,447.5<br>Std. dev = 21,107.4 |
| Income inequality | GINI index (latest available) [World Bank, 2012–2019] | Lowest = 27.5<br>Highest = 53.9 | Average = 38.3<br>Std. dev = 6.2 |
| Urbanization | Urban population (% of the total population) [World Bank, 2019] | Lowest = 21.3<br>Highest = 100 | Average = 67.3<br>Std. dev = 20.2 |
| Internet penetration | Internet users, total (% of the population) [ITU, 2017–2018] | Lowest = 15<br>Highest = 95.9 | Average = 61.8<br>Std. dev = 22.2 |

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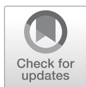
# Challenges for Direct Citizen Participation in Public Policy Making




**Belgin Uçar Kocaoğlu and Niyazi Karabulut**

**Abstract** The transforming administrative approach in public administration after the 1980s made the citizen more visible and made it possible to include the ideas and wishes of the citizens at every stage of the public policy process. In addition to the changing approach, the crisis in the field of representative democracy has also made it common for citizens to participate in the public policy process through direct citizen participation tools. Although the benefits of direct citizen participation for the administrations are too crucial to ignore, it also contains some challenges. The goal of this chapter is to analyze the challenges of direct citizen participation under three headings: "the challenges arising from the nature of citizen participation," "the difficulties arising from the design of the citizen participation process," and "other challenges," and then point out some suggestions for effective citizen participation. As a result, this chapter suggests increasing and supporting e-participation opportunities, designing scientific research to overcome the challenges in front of direct citizen participation, and increasing the examples in the literature regarding the design of the direct citizen participation process in different countries.

**Keywords** Direct citizen participation · Citizen participation · Challenges · Policy making · Policy making process · democracy · Challenges · Difficulties · E-participation · Administration

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## 1 Introduction

Today, governments face global problems that affect all countries, such as climate change, pandemics, terrorism, and energy needs. Administrations must reorganize their institutional capacities to cope with these problems and adapt to various challenges (Lodge and Wegrich 2014). Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) also mentioned that climate change, terrorism, financial instability, and other difficulties are big problems, but the ability to address these problems is more developed than ever. According to scholars, the citizen is the most significant element of a developed problem-solving ability. In this respect, the issue of citizen participation maintains and even increases its significance in the context of citizens' inclusion in public policy processes.

Although the history of citizen participation goes back a long way, it would be good to first refer to Arnstein (1969) to provide a comprehensive explanation of the theoretical background of the concept. The problems and challenges encountered before played a critical role in forming its theoretical foundations. Arnstein contributed to a new grounding of the theory by defining these problems and classifying citizen participation in an order he called "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." Changes in the understanding of management have also been influential here. The transition of the citizen figure, which started in the 1960s from the position of a passive service recipient to an actor of public policy, can be considered a significant turning point. In the traditional understanding of public administration, in which citizens are described as individuals subject to the public authority, there was a management approach in which they had no function other than being voters and taxpayers in terms of participation (Sobacı and Köseoğlu 2015: 240). The phenomenon of citizenship, which gradually assumed other functions within the understanding of public administration in the following process, started to come together with participation, with the expression of the lack of citizen participation by the New Public Administration Movement since the 1960s (Waldo 1968). Citizens included in the system as customers by the New Public Management (NPM) have become an essential element of democratic management forms as active participants after NPM. Citizen power, which Arnstein mentioned on the participation ladder, has thus become one of the cornerstones of approaches such as New Public Governance (NPG), New Public Service (NPS), and Public Value (Dunleavy et al. 2005). It can be stated that citizens have an active role in today's public administrations (Reiter and Klenk 2019). In this role, co-production, which includes participation in public policy and decision-making processes and the production of public services, citizens are active stakeholders in all public administration processes.

Involving citizens in the public policy process builds trust, educates and trains citizens, contributes to the formation of accountable and responsive states for a better understanding of problems and effective public policy, provides more ideas on how to solve the problems, reduces the risk of the dominance of interests or special interest groups, and helps to understand the priorities of citizens (International Peacebuilding Advisory Team 2015). This situation helps to strengthen democracy

by strengthening government-citizen relations and enabling citizens to be active in the public sphere (OECD 2001: 18–19). Citizen participation, considered a complement rather than an alternative to representative democracy (Fung 2006), contains challenges or disadvantages as well as its potential benefits.

The main goal of this chapter is to analyze the challenges of direct citizen participation (DCP) in the public policy process and to point out suggestions for effective citizen participation. Such an analysis will enable administrators and researchers studying in this field to see the various challenges in front of citizen participation and suggestions for effective citizen participation and provide them with valuable clues. In this chapter, the concept of citizen participation refers to the influence of people's ideas, demands, and needs in the public policy process (public decision-making and implementation processes). At this point, Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015: 15) characterize such participation as direct citizen participation and distinguish it from indirect citizen participation, such as voting and monetary donation. In this section, the terms "direct citizen participation" and "citizen participation" are used interchangeably and do not include indirect participation like voting or monetary donation.

This chapter has followed a qualitative research method by making use of the literature review. In this context, the concepts of "direct citizen participation" and "challenges" were first reviewed in the EBSCO, ISI, Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and Jstor databases, both in the title and the abstracts, but limited resources were obtained. Then, the keywords "citizen participation" and "challenges" were scanned again, and the abstracts and contents of the obtained sources were examined. Since the concept of citizen participation can also be used to express voting or political participation, the texts were examined one by one in terms of summary and content, and then a selection was made. Finally, the concepts of "citizen participation," "direct citizen participation," "public participation," "public engagement," and "citizen engagement" were examined together with the concepts of "boundaries," "limitations," "barriers," "obstacles," "disadvantages," "drawback," "handicaps," and "pros and cons." Various sources were obtained by making use of the bibliographies of the sources, and the articles, books, book chapters, journals, reports, and papers were read and analyzed in depth. Within this framework, the challenges of citizen participation are analyzed under three headings: (a) the challenges arising from the nature of citizen participation, (b) the difficulties arising from the design of the citizen participation process, and (c) other challenges. Some recommendations are made for effective citizen participation in the following part of the study.

## 2 Direct Citizen Participation: Conceptual Background

The classical administration's approach to perceive the citizen as an actor who only gets services has transformed with the changes in the administrative approach toward the end of the 1960s. The new approach, also called the New Public

Administration movement, aimed to include citizens in the public decision-making and implementation processes and to be citizen oriented. In the following years, especially with approaches such as Governance, NPS, and Public Value, citizens have become visible and active actors who are included in the public decision-making processes. With the development of globalization and information technologies and the increase in the discourse of democracy, citizens' demands to participate in public decision-making and implementation processes have increased.

There is no compromised definition of the content and scope of the direct citizen participation (DCP). One of the most widely used definitions of the concept of DCP was made by Roberts (2008), who stated that there was a change toward DCP in the last part of the twentieth century. According to Roberts (2008: 7), participation is "the process by which members of a society (those not holding offices or administrative positions in government) share power with public officials in making substantive decisions and taking actions related to the community." Nabatchi (2012a) also defines citizen participation "as actions that allow people to move their interests, needs, and values to the decisions and actions related to public issues." She stated that indirect participation occurs when citizens elect their representatives through elections, and direct participation occurs when they personally and actively participate.

In addition to various definitions of DCP, some researchers have explained the content and scope of the concept under the name of typology, model, and level instead of making a direct definition (Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001; IAP2 2007; Davidson 1998; Pretty 1994; Wilcox 2003; Seçkiner Bingöl 2019, 2021). Although there are many definitions and typologies of citizen participation, the common point of these definitions is the sharing of power between citizens and the state in the process of public decision-making and implementation.

Studies on the concept of DCP, which has attracted the attention of both academics and practitioners, have led to an increase in the relevant literature in recent years. In this context, studies on citizen participation can be categorized under four headings (Uçar Kocaoğlu and Phillips 2017): Advantages and disadvantages of citizen participation on the axis of direct democracy, representative democracy, or deliberative democracy; conceptual framework and levels of citizen participation; citizen participation tools and their effectiveness; and the design of the citizen participation process and its outputs and results. With the development of information and communication technologies, electronic citizen participation (e-participation) and studies on e-participation tools can be added to these four categories as the fifth heading. E-participation, which emerged as a separate work area, allows citizens to participate anywhere and anytime (Sæbø et al. 2011).

The sharing of power in the public decision-making process, in other words, citizen participation, has significant benefits for both governments and citizens. DCP promotes openness and accountability and ensures fairness and justice in participation. As a result, citizen participation constitutes collaborative action and develops relations of trust and mutual understanding between citizens, decision-makers, and public institutions (Callahan, 2007a: 158). Lukensmeyer and Jacobson (2013: 3), on the other hand, stated that DCP educates and mobilizes citizens, improves the

quality of government decisions with information from those affected by the policies, increases citizens' trust in public institutions, their personnel, and practices of public institutions, and can provide the citizens with the opportunity to direct the actions of the state and to make decisions on some issues. Stewart (2009: 72) stated the benefits of DCP as bringing different ideas together, improving the flow of information, providing early warning of problems, benefiting from community resources, and improving the problem-solving capacity of the state. Marzuki (2015: 21) also emphasized that citizen participation is crucial for meeting public needs, better planning, and democratizing social values. Creighton (2005: 18–19) also stated that participation increases the quality of decisions, reduces costs and delays, provides legitimacy by reducing political discussions, provides an estimate of citizens' concerns and attitudes, and facilitates implementation. Finally, Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015: 33–36) mentioned the benefits of DCP as informing citizens about public issues, increasing the accountability of elected employees, mobilizing citizens to solve problems, generating new ideas, and providing spaces for new leaders to emerge.

There has been an increase in the benefits of participation and the development of electronic participation. In this context, the objectives of e-participation are expanding participation by reaching wider audiences, improving the digital literacy of citizens by providing accessible data, ensuring more conscious participation, and communicating more effectively with the masses to strengthen democratic negotiations (Macintosh 2004). Uçar Kocaoğlu and Saylam (2022: 73) examined the possible benefits of e-participation under two headings as "democratic value-creating benefits" and "value-creating benefits in terms of economic and administrative decisions." The democratic value-creating benefits of e-participation are strengthening administrative legitimacy, providing trust in the administration, providing accountable management, and providing a transparent administration. Then, the value-creating benefits in terms of economic and administrative decisions are to use the resources correctly and appropriately; to obtain new information at a lower cost, to store existing and further details at a lower cost; to develop public services and policies at less cost, with higher quality and faster; and to develop leadership qualities (Uçar Kocaoğlu and Saylam 2022: 73–74). Although DCP has many online or face-to-face benefits, it also includes some challenges (Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Callahan 2007b; OECD 2001; Roberts 2008; Denhardt et al. 2009; Özdemiray 2020) that require administrative units to be careful.

## 3 Challenges of Direct Citizen Participation

DCP, which acts as a bridge in closing the gap between the citizen and the state, also includes some challenges. Irvin and Stansbury (2004: 58) categorized the disadvantages of citizen participation in two ways in terms of citizens and states and the decision process and results. The disadvantages of citizen participation for the citizens in the decision process are that it is time-consuming and meaningless if the decisions

are not considered. In terms of the state, it was determined as being time-consuming, costly, and creating more reaction against the state by a backfire. Disadvantages of citizen participation can negatively affect citizens by making bad policy decisions in terms of consequences if the decisions are heavily influenced by opposing interest groups. Disadvantages for the state, on the other hand, are the possibility of losing control over the decision-making process, bad decision-making that cannot be politically ignored, and less budget allocation for the implementation of real projects. The disadvantages of citizen participation are also stated by Callahan (2007a, b: 1183) as being ineffective and costly, unrealistic, and not having high representative power. Pretending to listen to citizens' opinions and not putting them into practice can backfire and reduce trust in government and democracy (OECD 2001: 23). On the other hand, the impact of tokenism can be felt at all levels of citizen participation. Observing tokenism practices at all stages of active participation processes, from one-way information flow to citizen-state interaction, may weaken the citizen-state relationship in terms of its reflections on public policies and public services. The most critical problem in Arnstein's (1969: 217–218) examples of tokenism located in the middle of the ladder of participation is that even if participation takes place, citizens do not have the power to influence policies and cannot gain any achievement at the end of the process. According to the classic statement, "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process" (Arnstein 1969: 216).

The challenges of DCP have become more diversified with its transfer to the electronic environment. E-participation has challenges that come from traditional citizen participation background and arise with its nature (Karabulut 2022). Spreading the problem areas already mentioned above to a broader scope and capacity through ICT facilities is the first challenge that stands out. In this way, it is possible to say that the current problems of citizen participation can be observed even stronger in e-participation. On the other hand, although the costs encountered in infrastructure and implementation phases decrease over time, it remains a problem area. It is also known that e-participation, independent from citizen participation, has many problems arising from technological, organizational, legal, and political infrastructure (Karkın 2014), information security, digital divide (van Dijk 2012), cyber security, and so through. In this context, it should be stated that the difficulties encountered are also diverse, as well as the variety of opportunities offered for the smooth realization of DCP in the electronic environment (Karabulut 2022).

Challenges related to DCP can be handled under three headings: challenges arising from the nature of DCP, challenges arising from the design of the DCP process, and other challenges.

## *3.1 Challenges Arising from the Nature of DCP*

The challenges arising from the nature of the DCP are mainly discussed under direct democracy, representative democracy, or collaborative democracy (Cupps 1977; Callahan 2007b; Berner et al. 2011; Doberstein 2022). These dilemmas or

challenges are problems that all developed, developing, or underdeveloped countries that want to include DCP in their public policy making process must deal with.

Barriers to participation are listed by Roberts (2008: 13–14) as "size (the inability to offer everyone the opportunity to participate in the society), excluded or oppressed groups (will it be possible to include relevant groups?), risk, technology and expertise, time and crises, and the common good." Demirci (2010: 25–29) describes the opposing arguments for citizen participation as "participation is a new tyranny, the elite is reluctant to participate, participation is an ambiguous concept open to various interpretations, there is no justice in participation, there is no ideal condition for participation, most of the people are unwilling to participate, participation increases social conflicts, and participation makes accountability ambiguous." The mentioned problems may arise in different ways in the context of the points where direct democracy is insufficient in today's society, crises of representative democracy, and dilemmas of deliberative democracy. In this sense, the representative democracy approach, which emerged in the face of the difficulties of implementing direct democracy in modern society, also restricts citizen participation (Holden 2007: 55) linked the hope of direct citizen participation to the understanding of deliberative democracy. One of the most significant sources of the legitimacy crisis of representative democracy is the limited participation of citizens (Heywood 2012: 241–242). In the deliberative democracy approach, which is based on participatory and consensus practices, both restructuring the participation processes and increasing the quality of direct citizen participation take place (Benhabib 1996). However, from the very first days of its introduction, it has been in a dilemma, including Habermas's and Arendt's divisions of the public and private spheres. Keeping aside the difficulties of its implementation, realizing DCP by ensuring transparency, inclusiveness, and equality has caused deliberative democracy to receive theoretical criticism (Benhabib 1996; Mouffe 1999). At the beginning of these criticisms are the applicability of the decisions, the conditions of the environment where participation will take place, and the difficulties of ensuring public consensus as in representative democracy. In this sense, it can be observed from democracy theories that DCP carries specific problems and dilemmas due to its nature. The proposals to solve these problems continue to be developed and discussed today. Since the design and implementation processes of citizen participation determine the nature of the discussions and solution proposals, that aspect of the issue is also critical.

### *3.2 Challenges Arising from the Design of the DCP Process*

While the dilemmas arising from the nature of direct democracy mentioned above are the problems faced by every administration, today, the necessity of citizens to participate in the decision-making and implementation process beyond voting is expressed by many administrations. At this point, the question of what kind of participation process should be designed so that the best results regarding participation

can be obtained has started to attract the attention of researchers. The design of the citizen participation process includes questions of why (Why involve the public?), when (When should citizens be involved?), who (Who should be involved?), how (How should citizens participate?), and what extent (What is the extent of citizens' involvement in the participation process?) (Knowlton 2013: 13; Stewart 2009; Fung 2006; Thomas 1995: 13; Nabatchi and Leighninger 2015: 244; Callahan 2007a: 149; Crosby 2012).

Fung (2006: 66) stated that three main topics are essential in the design of the participation process, although they include similar issues in the design of the participation processes: "Who will participate?" "How will the participants communicate with each other and how will they decide together?" and "How will the results affect policies and activities?" On the other hand, Thomas (1995: 10–15) likened the citizen participation process to a puzzle and stated that the participation process consisted of four parts. The first is the extent of power that rulers will share with citizens. The second is whom the governments will involve in the participation process. The third is which participation tool or tools will be utilized by the governments. The last piece of the puzzle is how administrators will communicate with citizens. Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015: 244) also state that the following four basic questions are crucial in the design of the participatory process: "(a) Who should participate, and how will the participants be selected?; (b) How can participants communicate with each other and decision-makers?; (c) What information do the participants need?; (d) To what extent will participation affect government decision-making, problem-solving, or other activities?"

One of the most significant issues to be considered in the design of the citizen participation process emerges at the point of "who will participate." Which citizens with what qualifications, age, or occupations are included in the DCP process? For the participant selection, Fung mentioned some selection methods (2006: 66–68): Allowing everyone who wants to participate, choosing participants, choosing participants randomly, and inviting interested parties or interest groups. There is no such method as the best method for selecting participants. Those who design the participation process need to determine well which method or methods will be more beneficial for the relevant subject (Uçar Kocaoğlu 2017: 49). Some problems at the point of representation in the participation process can negatively affect the participation process (International Peacebuilding Advisory Team 2015: 5–6): Not Everyone attend since meetings related to citizen participation are usually held in large centers, the time of citizen participation is for many people because they are at work or it is not suitable because it is the busiest time at home, the language of the topic to be discussed is complex, only those who are invited participate (the state invites its supporters rather than the opposite view), the participants are usually elite, and it does not appeal to the poor. Smith (2009: 15) also mentioned some disadvantages of citizen participation: Inclusiveness may not be realized due to different participation rates among social groups, very few citizens are interested in political issues, and such activities may be related to time, education, income, and welfare. Finally, the barriers mentioned by Sheedy et al. (2008) regarding the participation process are as follows: The issue of participation is problematic for those

who work three jobs to support their families, those from different classes or places in society, those with low socio-economic status who have less experience in civic participation, those who do not have economic resources for transportation, etc., those whose first language is not the language in which participation takes place, and those who are non-citizens living in that region who are excluded from the participation process.

Another critical issue in the design of the citizen participation process is which participation tool will be used when including the participants in the participation process. Participation tools have diversified in recent years. Today, there are many participation tools, either face-to-face or online (Action Planning, Act Create Experience, Choices Method, Citizens Juries, Community Appraisals, Community Indicators, Imagine, Local Sustainability Model, Open Space, Parish Maps, Participatory Appraisal, Participatory Strategic Planning, and so through). The diversity in participation tools has led to an increase in studies on choosing the best participation tool and evaluating the effectiveness of participation tools (Rosener 1978, 1981; Thomas 1993; Rowe and Frewer 2000, 2004, 2005; Berner et al. 2011; Webler et al. 2001; Nabatchi 2012b; Jo and Nabatchi 2022). At this point, choosing an appropriate participation tool for the subject and situation in the design of the participation process plays a crucial role in the success of the participation process. A poorly selected participation tool may cause the whole participation process to fail.

Further, the extent to which participants will affect the processes of creating or implementing public policies is another critical issue in the design of the participation process. The impact levels of participation on the public decision-making and implementation processes have been classified in several ways (Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001; Rowe and Frewer 2005; Waheduzzaman and Mphande 2014; IAP2 2007; Pretty 1994). It can be said that the typologies of citizen participation most frequently used in the literature are those created by Arnstein, OECD, and IAP2. Citizen participation levels were grouped under eight titles by Arnstein (1969): Manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. On the other hand, OECD (2001) discussed the levels of citizen participation in three groups: information-sharing, consultation, and active participation. Besides, IAP2 (2007) categorized the citizen participation levels into five levels: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering. Whether citizen participation will be realized to inform citizens, consult them, or involve them in collaborative decision-making and policy implementation needs to be determined within the objectives. Then, citizens should be included in the participation process accordingly. Although citizens are willing and able to participate, the impact of participation on political decisions may be little or no, as politicians may prioritize their interests. At this point, there may be a decrease in citizens' trust in the state and their participation in their subsequent activities (Smith 2009: 17).

How to communicate with citizens and decision-makers also affects the participation process. If there is a flow of information from the state to the citizen, there is a one-way communication; if there is also a flow of data from the citizen to the state, there is a two-way communication; and if the communication flow between the

citizens and decision-makers is deliberate, it is a deliberative communication (Fung 2006; Nabatchi and Leighninger 2015: 244; Thomas 1995: 10–15).

It can be said that each of the titles mentioned above regarding the design of the citizen participation process is of great importance in terms of participation results. Missing one of them will negatively affect the success of the participation process. The design of the participation process may also be affected by some issues independent of the participation process, which are covered under the other challenges in this study. No matter how well the participation process is designed, some political, economic, administrative, and cultural factors may prevent participation from producing positive results. In this context, although the design of the participation process has a critical value, the success of the involvement will increase by providing other necessary conditions for participation (Uçar Kocaoğlu 2017).

### *3.3 Other Challenges*

The DCP may produce different results in some countries than others or at different levels or regions of the same country, regardless of the design of the process. Denhardt et al. (2009) stated that although some countries follow the same participation process, different results can be observed. It can be explained by some barriers to participation, specific to countries or societies that can be harder to overcome than other barriers to participation. According to Denhardt et al. (2009: 1272–1281), developing countries must deal with some obstacles in addition to the problems arising from the nature of DCP. The first of these obstacles is that external incentives made to developing countries by organizations such as the European Union and the World Bank negatively affect their citizen participation process. The second obstacle is the absence of democratic culture. Specifically, since democratic culture cannot be established immediately, it may take a long time to solve this problem in developing countries. The third obstacle is profound poverty. Although there is poverty in developed countries, according to the authors, poverty can be much more severe in developing countries. The fourth obstacle is time pressures and demands for immediate results. The last and perhaps the most crucial obstacle is the lack of institutional infrastructure. Although the mechanisms that allow citizens to participate in developing countries are increasing daily, they are still constrained. When institutional infrastructure is lacking, participation may not be achieved even if all other obstacles are overcome. Denhardt et al. (2009) emphasized that the obstacles in front of DCP may vary from country to country and from culture to culture. They stated that governments should first identify these obstacles and solve them by considering the experiences of developed countries.

AbouAssi et al. (2013: 1033–1041) identified the obstacles to citizen participation in the Lebanese Public Administration and grouped the barriers to citizen participation under four headings:

(a) Political (centralized public administration structure)
(b) Social (citizens are more skeptical of the state)

(c) Economic (economic conditions are not sufficient to ensure citizen participation)

(d) Administrative (Administrative obstacles can be categorized under four headings. The first is that the administrative decision-making process may be highly centralized, and the regulations that allow citizen participation may not be explicitly included. Second, public institutions may have technological, structural, and budget-related problems. The third obstacle is the lack of citizens' knowledge of participation. The last one is the government's (or governor's) thoughts on whether citizen participation is necessary).

In the study, the researchers suggested providing strong leadership to solve related problems and develop DCP applications, prioritizing small-scale participation practices to meet the cost of participation due to resource shortages, and raising awareness of both administrators and citizens about DCP (AbouAssi et al. 2013: 1041).

Saylam et al. (2020), on the other hand, examined the obstacles in front of DCP in Turkish Public Administration from the point of view of administrators who are implementers of public policies within the framework of their research in public institutions in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Social Policies). In this context, they conducted interviews with the administrators who are the implementers of public policies by using content analysis. They asked the question, "What are the obstacles before direct citizen participation in Turkish public administration?" and as a result of the analysis of the data obtained, they reached the answers of "insufficient level of citizen knowledge, participation culture, bureaucratic elite, unconscious administrators for citizen participation, underdeveloped NGOs, legal arrangements, poverty, disadvantages of the centralized structure, and lack of trust in bureaucrats." Under the "insufficient level of citizen knowledge," there are two sub-categories: "lack of education" and "lack of expertise." Other sub-categories, such as "difficulty in access," "failure in equal and fair distribution of sources," "failure to identify needs," and "clumsiness" were listed under the notion of "disadvantages of the centralized structure."

Royo et al. (2011) tried to analyze the primary purposes and actual practices of citizen participation activities in their study of local governments in Germany and Spain. As a result of the research, while they find that financial inadequacies and lack of human resources are the most significant obstacles to citizen participation in Germany, the lack of citizens' interest, lack of human resources, and resistance to change are the most crucial obstacles in Spain. Based on the research findings, it can be argued that the bureaucratic and legal framework to which the local governments in these two countries are subjected hinders the development of participation (in both countries, local governments are highly dependent on legal conditions). Again, as a result of the study, it has been seen that local governments in both countries use it only to increase the perceived legitimacy level or to fulfill the legal requirements at the lowest level instead of benefiting from the citizen participation in the decision-making process (2011: 147–149).

Doberstein (2022), on the other hand, investigated the dilemmas faced by public officials (663) working in this field in Canada regarding time pressure, inclusion,

representation, and public resistance while implementing citizen participation. As a result of the research, while the responses to time pressure and inclusion/exclusion of the most common dilemmas related to citizen participation by the officials working in this field showed a clear pattern, there was a split in the representation and public resistance points on how to solve the dilemmas. In addition, a more sensitive approach to pressure and inclusion/exclusion dilemmas were observed, while a more reactive approach was seen at representation and public resistance points. Thus, they concluded that practitioners are more likely to make decisions on issues that do not have an optimal solution in citizen participation practices and in situations where political polarization occurs.

## 4 An Effective Direct Citizen Participation

Scholars have realized that the abovementioned theoretical foundations and practical experiences must be reinterpreted for DCP to be effectively provided under today's conditions. Many academic studies have been carried out in this context in recent years. The number of current debates in the context of the obstacles and challenges and the dilemmas it contains is increasing, and the issue remains topical and significant. Especially in the twenty-first century, the number of participatory governance experiences has gradually increased. The increasing demand for citizen participation in many societies combined with ICT opportunities paved the way for innovations in participation opportunities. However, there are still challenges to efforts to provide democratic understanding and social justice through citizen participation (Fung, 2015: 513–514). Fung (2015: 513–515) lists these challenges under three headings: lack of systematic leadership, lack of consensus on the place of DCP, and limitations of new participation opportunities. The suggestions for solutions to these problems are that the practitioners create broader opportunities for citizens to participate and offer different empowerment levels, define the objectives of participation clearly, present a clear image of the benefits of the results, and ensure continuity to make the citizen an organic element of participation processes. In addition, he proposed a method called the "democracy cube" that includes these suggestions and the ways that should be applied during the implementation phase.

Taking a more comprehensive approach, OECD (2022), on the other hand, focuses on two main headings, "Creating Opportunities for Inclusive Public Participation and Deliberation" and "Strengthening Democratic Representation" in its report "Action Plan on Enhancing Representation, Participation and Openness in Public Life." For creating opportunities for inclusive public participation and deliberation, it is asserted that governments should promote a more institutionalized approach to participation:

> "By identifying opportunities, encouraging the involvement of citizens and stakeholders, designing citizen participation and deliberation processes in a way that breaks down barriers to participation, fostering a culture of participation and deliberation, providing up to date, useful and reliable data to citizens, and communicating with and listening to citizens

> through online and offline channels." They also should "protect and promote civic space as a precondition for public participation and deliberation." (OECD 2022: 40–61)

Moreover, for strengthening democratic participation, it is stated by the OECD that governments should "make executives and elected bodies more diverse and representative of the population, promote integrity in democratic institutions and elected officials, foster a diverse, representative, and responsive civil service, and deliver on the promise of more inclusive policies" (OECD 2022: 61–75).

Almost everyone agrees that the inclusion of citizens is essential to ensure legitimacy, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public administrations that are transforming with the impact of technological developments. Many innovative approaches can be mentioned in this context, especially crowdsourcing, co-production, and different e-participation methods. It is frequently repeated in the literature that offering comprehensive solutions to the problems faced by these innovative approaches is the key to effective citizen participation (Smith and Dalakiouridou 2009; Saylam 2021a, b; Karabulut 2022). Crowdsourcing, co-production, and e-participation applications, which allow citizens to play a role not only in the consumption but also in the production of public services or public value, have come to the fore in public administration, especially with the NPS and New Public Value Approach.

The new generation facilities, which are seen as a solution to the theoretical and practical problems that DCP is currently facing, also have their challenges (Pestoff 2006). The shaping of the infrastructure, culture, legal legislation, usage opportunities, and skills for these applications according to the development levels of the countries again emerges as significant factors. On the other hand, in addition to the level of development, administrative style, democratic quality, and socio-economic conditions continue to pose a challenge as crucial determinants. For this reason, first, solution-oriented proposals should be developed. Then the planning for the implementation phase of solution proposals should be done precisely according to each different example.

The facilities obtained thanks to ICT have brought many benefits to DCP from various aspects. The expectations for public administrations to be more effective, accountable, transparent, and participatory have also been strengthened due to this benefit. However, although examples of e-participation have increased, it is also argued in the literature that empowerment processes should be more focused and sustainable to be able to mention citizen-state cooperation. In this context, strengthening e-participation infrastructures and reaching a certain standard appears as a prerequisite. For an effective DCP, it is necessary and helpful to benefit from ICT infrastructure in today's conditions. In this context, to achieve an effective DCP, countries must first strengthen their ICT infrastructures, provide equal digital access opportunities to citizens, reform the legal and administrative structure, and ensure that the level of knowledge of the citizens is sufficient (Karabulut 2022). After this stage, an effective DCP will be reached only through crowdsourcing, voting, participation applications, and portals that can be specifically designed for the country's conditions (Saylam 2021a, b). On the other hand, the continuous development of machine learning, artificial intelligence, big data, and smart city concepts also

creates new opportunities for citizen participation in public policy. When all these concepts are associated with e-participation, numerous possibilities can be obtained for citizen participation in modern public administrations, although each has its challenges.

## 5 Conclusion

This study mentions the obstacles and challenges in front of direct citizen participation. First, the challenges arising from the nature of the DCP do not vary according to political, administrative, and cultural conditions and developed, developing, or underdeveloped countries but are generally associated with crises of democracy. The problems arising from the nature of DCP are discussed because "citizens are reluctant to participate, participation is an ambiguous concept that is open to different interpretations, there is no justice and equality in participation, the ideal conditions for participation cannot be determined, participation increases social conflicts, and it harms accountability." Second, the challenges arising from the design of the DCP process are discussed over the questions of "who will participate, how the participants will communicate with each other, how they will make decisions together, how the administrators will communicate with the citizens, which participation tools will be used, and how the results will affect policies and activities." Finally, under the title of other challenges, social, political, economic, and administrative problems were discussed in the context of "external incentives, the absence of democratic culture, profound poverty, time pressures and demands for immediate results, and the lack of institutional infrastructure." In addition, the transformation of participation and e-participation with the development of ICTs is discussed in the final part. The challenges of DCP that were transferred to the electronic environment through e-participation and the new challenges that took place in the electronic environment were discussed on the grounds of the digital divide, lack of ICT infrastructure, compliance with legal regulations, the prevalence of ICT access and usage opportunities, and democratic quality.

Considering the relevant challenges regarding citizen participation, it is increasingly crucial to develop various proposals for a more effective DCP. Unsurprisingly, these proposals are mainly designed based on developing e-participation opportunities based on both the conjuncture and current conditions. Because today, the majority of developed countries have brought their electronic infrastructure to a sufficient level and have reached the necessary capacity to offer e-participation opportunities. However, it has been observed from the literature that they need improvements in the design of participation processes to present different channels and tools. In this context, it is believed that developing countries will be able to overcome the challenges in front of DCP by providing the necessary conditions for e-participation in the future process by benefiting from the experiences of developed countries. Designing scientific research to overcome the challenges in front of DCP and increasing the examples in the literature regarding the design of the DCP process in

different countries can provide valuable clues in overcoming the obstacles of DCP. In addition, it can be stated that developing countries need scientific studies to determine and analyze their current DCP status and e-participation development levels and to develop proposals for their future. In this way, it will be a realistic goal to reach more democratic societies by accelerating the steps to overcome the obstacles in front of DCP.

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# Part III
# Reflections from Various Policy Fields in Turkey

# Citizen-Oriented Participation Mechanisms in Turkey: The Case of the Ministry of Interior

**Hasan Engin Şener**

**Abstract** In this chapter, the citizen-oriented mechanisms of the Turkish Ministry of Interior (MoI) will be discussed according to the OECD's public engagement classification. The MoI aims to ensure citizen-focused provision of local services and to increase citizen satisfaction. Through citizen satisfaction surveys, numerous efforts have been made to measure citizens' expectations. With the use of crucial mechanisms such as open offices, Local Prevention and Security Boards, and a Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission, citizens' needs, demands, and complaints are ascertained. The majority of the services offered by the MoI are now digitalized thanks to information and communication technologies including online e-government portals. Through performance evaluation and monitoring systems, performance indicators are gathered, assessed, and evaluated for ongoing improvement. However, although there is one significant example of an active participation mechanism in the internal security field, namely Local Prevention and Security Boards, the Turkish MoI mostly employs information and consultation procedures. In this chapter, the public is defined as citizens instead of customers or clients, because citizens are not passive service receivers. Citizens take part actively in service provision by evaluating services, and they also take part in the formulation of public policy making processes as partners.

**Keywords** Public as citizens · Governance · Citizen orientation · Ministry of Interior · Participation · Public policy · Public policy making · Public policy process · Digitalization · Services

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# 1 Introduction

While the concept of "customers" was brought to the fore with the effects of public management reforms, the emphasis on the concept of "citizens" shows that the citizen-oriented approach should go beyond the managerial approach. Although citizen orientation seems to be the melting pot of many perspectives, its content is either emptied or narrowed down by the concept of "customers." The managerial approach to public administration is popular, but it is just one possible perspective. Similarly, limiting the public to being customers should be seen as just one of the possible approaches to public administration. Citizen participation is similarly multidimensional. It can reduce the citizen to a passive recipient or make the citizen a partner of the government in democratic societies with active participation. In this chapter, it will be argued that citizen orientation deserves a multi-perspective view.

In this theoretical framework, this chapter aims to shed light on the citizen-oriented policies of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) as one of the most basic service ministries in Turkey. It will be investigated whether good practices in the context of the MoI in Turkey encourage citizens to participate passively or actively. In order to do so, the OECD (2001) classification of public engagement will be employed.

In this chapter, in the literature review, the "public as citizens" concept will be explained with reference to Frederickson. Understandings of the public, including citizen orientation, will then be contextualized with reference to Rosenbloom's taxonomy, which classifies public administration approaches as managerial, political, or legal. Subsequently, governance will be presented as a synthesis of those three types of approaches to public administration. Finally, the case of the MoI will be explained.

# 2 Conceptual Framework

According to Karkın (2019), citizen participation can be examined in two dimensions. The first dimension is related to the "essence," while the second is related to the "procedure." In terms of the essence, the citizen is not a passive recipient but rather an essential part of the design and production of services. In the procedural dimension, achieving this is one of the key issues. Considering the OECD's public engagement classification, it can be stated that there is a continuum between procedure and essence from information to active participation. While information is a one-way process, consultation is "a two-way relationship between the government and citizens" (OECD 2001). Active participation constitutes a partnership of citizens with the government or vice versa. This chapter discusses citizen orientation in the context of the Turkish MoI, particularly based on the OECD's classification.

Citizen orientation is a specific approach to the "public"; therefore, Frederickson's classification of the term "public" will be discussed in this literature review. Rosenbloom's approaches to public administration will then be referred to with the

aim of offering different contextual definitions of the "public." Furthermore, "governance" will be defined as a synthesis of all three approaches to public administration. Finally, the citizen-oriented policies of the MoI will be classified based on the good governance principles of the World Bank, values of the approaches to public administration, and the OECD's classification of engaging citizens in public policy making.

### *2.1 Public as Citizens*

As Frederickson (1997; also cited by Ventriss 2001) explains, the etymological meaning of "public" comes from two ancient Greek words. The first is *pubes*, which in this context refers not only to physical but also to emotional and intellectual maturity. Such an understanding of maturity promotes a move away from selfish concerns toward an understanding of others' interests. It suggests the capacity to comprehend how one's behaviors affect other people. This meaning of "public" is in line with the Kantian definition of enlightenment: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without another's guidance" (Kant 1784). Therefore, "public" in this context connotes enlightened individuals who are physically, mentally, and intellectually mature.

The second etymological origin of "public," as mentioned by Frederickson (1997; also cited by Ventriss 2001: 264–265), is the Greek word *koinon*, or "common," which is a derivative of the term *komm-ois*, meaning "to care with." The words "common" and "to care" both allude to the value of relationships. As a result, being in the public sphere necessitates caring for others. This second component connotes citizenship. The individual here is not selfish or self-benefit-oriented but social. Individuals are aware of the obligations of living in a society. Subsequently, the formulation of *pubes* (maturity) plus *koinon* or *komm-ois* (to care in common with others) provides an understanding of the term "public." This formulation is important in understanding the "public as citizens," which is the basis of this chapter.

Citizen-oriented public administration perspectives should be based on an understanding of the public as citizens. In order to explain this in more detail, Frederickson's classification will be used. Frederickson (1997: 30–43) classified understandings of the public into five perspectives:

1. The public as interest groups: The "public" is a member of a competitive group seeking advantages with other members having the same interests.
2. The public as rational choosers: The "public" is a rational individual trying to maximize his or her benefits.
3. The public as represented: The "public" is a voter casting a ballot.
4. The public as customers: The "public" is a customer served by street-level bureaucrats.

5. The public as citizens: The "public" is an informed, active, tolerant, and virtuous citizen who can understand basic legal documents and has democratic values such as non-discrimination and freedom of speech.

Taking these five perspectives of the public into account, it can be stated that the public cannot be simply defined as "all of the people," as in its standard dictionary meaning. Furthermore, the public as citizens is only one of the possible meanings of the public. Therefore, citizen orientation is an unconventional approach to the public.

At this point, it is also important to consider why the term "citizen" is used instead of "customer" or "client." A customer is a person who can afford to buy goods and services by paying specified prices in the market. This definition first of all assumes that goods and services must have a price, so, by definition, it rejects the fundamental notion of public goods, which are non-excludable and non-rivalry. Second, such a formulation would narrow citizenship into the two groups of those who can afford to buy and those who cannot.

Another important point is related to the political essence and meaning of the citizen. As Borgmann (cited by Box et al. 2011: 613) argues, "when consumers begin to act, the fundamental decisions have already been made," and, therefore, "to extoll the customer is to deny the citizen." Defining a customer as a client receiving goods and services is not equivalent to the definition of a citizen because citizens are not passive receivers of goods and services. They are (or are supposed to be) active in public policy making. Thus, the term "citizen" is equal to neither "customer" nor "client." That is why, although Frederickson defines "public as customers" as "clients served by street-level bureaucrats," the dictionary meaning of a customer should also be added: the public is a sum of self-interested customers purchasing goods and services.

## 2.2 Approaches to Public Administration

Rosenbloom (1983) classifies approaches to public administration into three categories: managerial, political, and legal. These approaches differ from each other because they share different values, proposed structures, and views of the individual. This section will focus on the core values of these approaches.

The managerial approach supports the maximization of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, or the 3Es. In this context, the public as rational choosers and the public as customers can be seen as parts of the managerial perspective. As a rational chooser, an individual is a self-interested maximizer of benefits. By the same token, the customer is a self-interested maximizer of utility. This context deteriorates citizen orientation by replacing the public interest with the private interest. However, from another point of view, performance auditing of the 3Es of public institutions and the public dissemination of these audit results can be seen as tools to ensure accountability, which is an important value of the political approach.

As for the political approach, incorporating the public as interest groups and the public as citizens, individuals are seen as part of a society based on representation, responsiveness, and accountability. Rosenbloom likens bureaucracy to a political party platform. It reflects different interests, but those differences in interests should be reconciled (Rosenbloom 1983: 222). As for accountability, according to the European Principles for Public Administration of the OECD (1999: 12), it reflects the requirement that people or authorities explain and justify their acts. It should be underlined here that accountability "goes beyond hierarchical control" (Acar et al. 2008: 9). "Any administrative body should be answerable for its actions to other administrative, legislative, or judicial authorities" (OECD 1999: 12). Finally, according to Stivers, responsiveness is a democratic requirement of an administrator toward citizens through legislatures and politicians: "A responsive bureaucrat must be reactive, sympathetic, sensitive and capable of feeling the public's needs and opinions" (Stivers 1994: 364–365). Thomas and Palfrey (1996: 135) explain responsiveness with reference to two key words: speed and accuracy. While "speed can refer to the waiting time" of citizens, accuracy is "the extent to which the response of the provider is appropriate to the needs or wishes of the service user."

Finally, the public as represented can be seen as part of the legal approach because civil and political rights, as substantive rights, involve the right to participation and right to vote. In the legal approach, constitutional integrity and procedural due process are also important values according to Rosenbloom (1983). No one can be deprived of their constitutional rights without fair treatment because every citizen has the right of access to fair and impartial tribunals.

## *2.3 Governance*

In the social sciences, there may be multiple meanings for terms, as we have seen here for "public." "Governance" is no exception. According to Rhodes (1996: 562), "the term 'governance' is popular but imprecise. It has at least six uses, referring to: the minimal state; corporate governance; the new public management; 'good governance'; socio-cybernetic systems; and self-organizing networks." Although Rhodes prefers to consider governance as "self-organizing networks," in this chapter the term "good governance," or more precisely the administrative use of governance, will be considered. In this context, governance is "an efficient, open, accountable, and audited public service" (Lefwich 1993: 610–611; also cited by Rhodes 1996).

The administrative use of governance is not only in line with managerial reforms of competition, marketization, and privatization but also in line with citizen-oriented policies. In this sense, governance includes not only managerial reforms but also political and legal reforms. Therefore, governance can be explained as a synthesis of managerial, political, and legal approaches to public administration whose core is citizen orientation. Although Rosenbloom (2013: 383) considers governance within the framework of the managerial approach, he does not reject the possibility that governance can serve all three approaches: "It should be immediately evident

from the multiple purposes governance can serve that management, politics, and law are relevant to collaboration in the provision of public services and constraints" (Rosenbloom 2013: 389).

One of the prevalent examples of the administrative use of governance is the World Bank's formulation. The World Bank's governance indicators[1] comprise the following six principles: "1. Voice and Accountability, 2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, 3. Government Effectiveness, 4. Regulatory Quality, 5. Rule of Law, and 6. Control of Corruption." Combining those six principles with the different approaches to public administration, it is possible to argue first of all that "government effectiveness" and "regulatory quality" are drawn from the managerial approach. Second, "voice and accountability" and "political stability and absence of violence" are principles that can be drawn from the political approach. Finally, "the rule of law" and "control of corruption" are relevant to the legal approach. Subsequently, different contrasting values of approaches to public administration can be combined in the understanding of the term "governance."

Although citizen-oriented policies are mainly part of the political approach, they are also relevant to managerial reforms, as well, under the following assumption: "The assumption here is that, by paying more attention to clients, public service organizations will learn to deliver better results, and that clients will notice the change and experience increased satisfaction" (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2002: 116). Furthermore, according to the OECD, "public engagement is a condition for effective governance" (OECD 2009).

## 3 The Ministry of Interior

In this section, the MoI's citizen orientation will be explained in light of its strategic documents, namely, the strategic plan, performance program, and activity report based on the OECD's public engagement classification (i.e., information, consultation, and active participation). Meetings with citizens are organized at the levels of both neighborhoods and local administrations, citizen feedback is obtained through either qualitative methods or quantitative surveys, and citizen satisfaction is measured. The MoI understands citizen orientation to include de-bureaucratization, reducing the excessive documents acquired by citizens, shortening the time spent on ministerial services, and digitalization of paperwork. Accountability is sustained by employing various mechanisms. Accountability mechanisms include internal and external controls. However, citizens can directly complain about the administration or public personnel via various platforms. These mechanisms are monitored effectively. The Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (Turkish acronym: PERDİS) is one of the good practices because it incorporates quantitative and

[1] Worldwide Governance Indicators are measured by the World Bank: https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/

qualitative methods to gather and measure citizen demands and expectations. Some other innovative citizen-oriented mechanisms, such as Local Prevention and Security Boards and the Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission, are also applied in the realm of internal security.

### *3.1 Strategic Plan with a Citizen-Oriented Focus*

Taking the strategic documents into account, it is clear that one of the basic aims of the MoI is to increase citizen satisfaction. In the strategic plan, it is explicitly underlined that the MoI will target citizen-oriented services. Some governance principles such as effectiveness, transparency, and accountability are also mentioned (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2019: 23).

It can be seen in the MoI's strategy document that one of the dimensions of citizen orientation envisioned by this ministry entails the reduction of paperwork and the increased digitalization of services. "In the Ministry, great importance has been attached to a citizen-oriented approach, reducing bureaucracy and digital transformation in the delivery of services" (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2019: 24). For this purpose, according to the strategic plan, 1135 of 2185 documents were removed from use, and 121 services are now offered to citizens via the online e-government portal (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2019: 24). The second key dimension entails increasing the satisfaction levels of citizens.

As can be seen from the second and fourth specified goals, "ensuring citizen-focused provision" of local services and "improving citizen satisfaction" are at the center of the citizen-oriented perspective of the MoI. Apart from the physical improvement of governorships, two main mechanisms have been envisioned, as seen in Table 1: open-door offices in governorates and district governorates, and digitalization.

Accordingly, the performance report of the MoI includes citizen-oriented strategies introduced in the strategic plan. Under the title of the "Citizenship and Civil Society Program," a sub-program goal is explained as follows: "Ensuring quality increase in the provision of civil registration and citizenship services" (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022: 31). The aim of that sub-goal is to facilitate the achievement of the fourth strategic goal: "Increasing citizen satisfaction by providing civil registration and citizenship services quickly and effectively."

According to the OECD (2001), passive (catalogues) or active (reports) provision of information may be part of the "information" category of public engagement. Since these kinds of strategic documents are examples of one-way relationships in which the government produces and delivers, the strategic plans and performance programs of the MoI can be mentioned within the category of "information."

Strategic documents can also be seen as examples of the managerial approach to public administration because they measure the effectiveness of the MoI and include performance indicators related to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

**Table 1** Citizen-oriented goals and targets of the Turkish MoI

| Goal 2: Ensuring Citizen-Focused Provision of General Administrative Services at the Provincial and District Levels, Improving Speed and Quality, Fostering Participation, and Conducting More Effective Tutelage Audits of Local Administrations |
|---|
| TARGET 2.1: Service quality will be increased by enhancing the physical environment of government buildings. |
| TARGET 2.2: The effectiveness of open-door offices will be increased to improve service satisfaction by accelerating the collection of information on citizens' needs and expectations and the completion of their applications. |
| TARGET 2.3: The planning and coordination capacity of governorships will be boosted. |
| TARGET 2.4: It will be ensured that rural infrastructure services are delivered effectively and efficiently. |
| TARGET 2.5: All municipalities will be integrated into the e-Municipal Information System. |
| Goal 4: Improving Citizen Satisfaction by Providing Civil Registration and Citizenship Services Quickly and Effectively |
| TARGET 4.1: Old population registrations and associated documents will be converted to electronic media. |
| TARGET 4.2: The delivery of Republic of Turkey identity cards to citizens will be completed. |
| TARGET 4.3: Authorized administrations whose collection and control of spatial address data are finished shall be handed off to the Spatial Address Registration System. |
| TARGET 4.4: It will be ensured that the supporting documents of marriage and death events and court decisions can be sent electronically by the pertinent institutions. |

*Source*: Generated from the Turkish Ministry of Interior (İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2019)

### *3.2 Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System*

The MoI launched PERDİS (*Performans Değerlendirme ve İzleme Sistemi*: Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System), an online system for tracking organizational and individual performance, in 2018. For the MoI to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of work conducted within the scope of its vision and strategic goals, ministerial units and other units linked with the ministry must submit their projects and activities via this system. A citizen-focused strategy, including surveys and the İZDES project (*İzleme ve Değerlendirme Sistemi*: Monitoring and Evaluation System), is applied to support PERDİS. Surveys of citizen satisfaction gauge how satisfied citizens are with ministerial services. The Deputy Minister and accompanying bureaucrats privately visit residents of the provinces as part of the İZDES program. This initiative collects information about the needs for ministerial services and the outcomes are assessed. Data-driven performance measurement is at the core of this software system. According to PERDİS Governorship User Guide (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2018), the system includes the sections listed in Table 2.

According to the MoI's project website (https://icisleri.gov.tr/strateji/perdis), the PERDİS system automatically calculated the 2021 general performance score of the MoI as 86.85 based on a total of 42,080 performance indicators from all units within the MoI. The data gathered and measured in this regard include transactions finalized following the Right to Information Act, the response rate for applications to

**Table 2** Main sections for governorships in PERDİS

| |
|---|
| 1. Main activity score (40%) |
| 1.1. Governorship services (25%) |
| 1.1.1. Provincial administration and control (25%) |
| 1.1.2. Population and citizenship (25%) |
| 1.1.3. Associations (25%) |
| 1.1.4. Other services (25%) |
| 1.2. Security (50%) |
| 1.3. Migration management (50%) |
| 2. Provincial investment tracking system and open-door offices (30%) |
| 2.1. Open-door offices (50%) |
| 2.2. Provincial investment tracking system (50%) |
| 3. Monitoring and Evaluation System (İZDES) findings and perceptions of satisfaction (20%) |
| 3.1. İZDES findings (50%) |
| 3.2. Citizen and personnel satisfaction rates (50%) |
| 4. Instructions from higher authorities (10%) |

*Source*: Generated from the Turkish Ministry of Interior (İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2018)

CİMER (*T.C Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Merkezi*: Presidency's Communication Center), and the number of public meetings with citizens held by governors and district governors to directly reach all segments of society as per the MoI instruction dated 05.11.2016 and numbered 8154. According to the MoI's calculations, the main activity score is 91.56 out of 100. The score for the second section is 90.08. The score is 76.69 for the third section, which includes İZDES findings and satisfaction levels. Finally, executive instructions received a score of 96.49.

### 3.2.1 Citizen Satisfaction Surveys

Citizen satisfaction surveys are one of the main tools of PERDİS and thus also of the MoI. According to the 2020 Administration Activity Report (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2020), a survey of citizen satisfaction was conducted by the MoI in 2019 with 40,009 participants via public institutions affiliated with the MoI including the Directorate General of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs (12,007 surveys), Directorate of General Migration Management (10,320 surveys), and the Turkish National Police (8813 surveys).

According to the 2021 Administration Activity Report (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2021: 165), an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Voice Survey Robot was used to conduct surveys and results were obtained as presented in Table 3. Integration of the IVR Voice Survey Robot was achieved with the Gendarmerie Command, Directorate General of Migration Management, Turkish National Police, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, and Directorate General of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs.

**Table 3** IVR Voice Survey Robot results

| Survey | Participants | Percentage of satisfaction |
|---|---|---|
| General services | 413,593 | 79.97 |
| Policies | 183,356 | 72.79 |
| Theft, fraud, extortion, looting | 86,265 | 60.59 |
| App for support of women (KADES) | 1013 | 83.76 |
| Total | 684,227 | |

*Source*: Generated from the Turkish Ministry of Interior (İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2022)

It is an important development that the MoI has begun sharing the results of these satisfaction surveys and PERDİS scores. Furthermore, the number of participants increased from 40,009 to 684,227. However, it remains to be seen how the results of these surveys will be used to improve the services provided.

### 3.2.2 İZDES: Monitoring and Evaluation System

İZDES stands for *İzleme ve Değerlendirme Sistemi* or Monitoring and Evaluation System. According to the MoI, it is part of the "Citizen-Focused Service Mobilization." It was launched in 2017 with visits conducted by 40 ex-governors and civil inspectors. In the first year, 3600 personnel were consulted to determine whether the activities conducted by provincial administrations were being carried out in line with the vision, strategies, goals, objectives, and targets of the MoI. In 2018–2019, 79 of 81 Turkish provinces were visited. From then on, visits were extended to districts throughout the provinces to identify examples of good practice in the districts and spread them throughout the country. Visits are not limited to provincial administrators and also include nongovernmental organizations' representatives, trade associations, schools, citizens, and immigrants (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022: 181).

### 3.2.3 Open-Door Offices

The aims of the Open-Door Project were to improve communication and trust between the government and its citizens, to collect data on citizens' needs and expectations to provide a basis for policy development, to raise citizens' satisfaction with services, and to identify problems and their solutions. Every application made by citizens should be answered by the legal due date. For example, some types of documents and petitions must be answered promptly within 7 days, applications related to the Right to Information Act within 15 days, and applications regarding allegations of violations of human rights within 30 days. Open-door offices are one of the good examples of public service provision. According to the "Regulation Regarding the Procedures and Principles to be followed in the Provision of Public Services" (published on 31/7/2009 in the Official Gazette), public services should be provided at the local level and in a place as close to citizens as possible, public

services should be delivered electronically, and citizens should be informed. All three of these conditions are met by open-door offices. Open-door offices can be seen as one-stop offices of the MoI. Through this one-stop service delivery, citizens can easily access the services they need via the channels of their choice without extra effort to determine which specific unit offers the service.

Finally, the strategic plan has four performance indicators for open-door offices. Their 2021 realization scores are provided in the performance program. The MoI also completed the integration of an open-door internet service into its e-government system, and the rate of positive closures of applications submitted to the open-door system was found to be 99.82%. According to its report, the MoI has established 241 open-door offices for district governorates (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2021: 217–218).

As explained above, PERDİS includes three important citizen-oriented tools: satisfaction surveys, İZDES, and open-door offices. According to the OECD (2001), as part of consultation, governments use a variety of tools to seek feedback on policy issues, including “opinion polls, public hearings, focus groups, and citizen panels” with smaller citizen groups. In this case, the three instruments of the MoI can be categorized as tools for consultation because citizens provide feedback to the government.

Like the strategic documents of the MoI, PERDİS can be seen as an example of the managerial approach to public administration. However, the abovementioned citizen-oriented tools can be seen as reflections of the political approach. In line with the principles of responsiveness and accountability, the administration solicits feedback from citizens. These practices are also good examples of the good governance principles of voice and accountability.

## *3.3 Best Practices from Internal Security Services*

The MoI is also responsible for internal security and uses its powers accordingly through law enforcement agencies.

### 3.3.1 Trust Desks

Similar to the open-door offices of governorates and district governorates, the Turkish National Police has “Trust Desks” in police stations. The idea behind this practice is to offer citizens a first and friendly encounter with the police. For this purpose, female police officers are employed at these desks and they are expected to do nothing but listen, receive applications, and orient citizens. Trust Desks were put into practice on September 1, 2019, with 2862 female police officers working in 1297 police stations throughout Turkey. The Turkish National Police reported that 320,905 of a total of 335,469 applications were submitted to Trust Desks within 5 months in 2021. In other words, 95.66% of applications were resolved at police stations (Bulur 2021).

### 3.3.2 Local Prevention and Security Boards

For the first time in Turkey, local strategic plans for internal security concerns were created and implemented in four locations in 2009 as a pilot application. This public policy perceives citizens as "management partners" and can be presented as one of the best examples of governance based on co-management (Akıncı 2018: 226, 232).

A total of 19 Local Prevention and Security Boards were established as of 2022, located among 17 districts of two provinces. Representatives from the police, municipal offices, relevant government agencies, business associations, universities, and nongovernmental groups participate in these boards. The boards assess local security requirements and problems. Based on the data obtained, the boards create, carry out, and evaluate security and crime prevention programs on an annual basis. Creating local boards leads to a more organized process of consultation with civil society. These boards enable the public administration system to become more sensitive to citizens' requirements and represent their priorities in local decision-making processes. They appear to be the sole consistent avenue for citizens and NGOs to engage in decision-making processes actively (Lapprand and Şener 2021: 21–22, 33). The novelty of this tool lies in the fact that it facilitates relationships based on partnership with the government; thus, these boards can be grouped within the "active participation" category of the OECD (2001).

### 3.3.3 Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission

The Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission was established primarily to gather and monitor complaints from the public about law enforcement agencies and their employees. The commission and its activities are seen as an example of "fundamental rights-oriented oversight guidance" and were found to be highly effective with regard to 80,000 complaints registered in 2020 and 2021 (Lapprand and Şener 2021: 11, 39).

However, according to Akyılmaz et al. (2019: 609), from an organizational point of view, "it is not possible for the commission to be accepted as an independent law enforcement oversight unit that will provide civil and independent monitoring of the law enforcement. [This is because] in the formation of the commission, non-governmental organizations and the legislative body were excluded." Those who control and those who are controlled should not be subject to the same hierarchy. Furthermore, the commission does not have executive powers. It only supervises and monitors (Akyılmaz et al. 2019: 608–609). This is why one of the recommendations of the UNDP's strategy report for Turkey was to "establish progressively the LEMC [Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission] as an independent body with its own staff coming from the MoI, the ISFs [internal security forces] and from the civil society" (Lapprand and Şener 2021: 11). In this context, the Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission cannot be seen as an example of "active participation." However, it can be seen as a tool for receiving positive or

negative feedback from citizens about public personnel performing their duties. Subsequently, this is an effective practice regarding the legal approach to public administration and good governance principles such as the rule of law and control of corruption.

## 4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the case of the Turkish MoI has been analyzed in terms of its citizen-oriented policies. It has been demonstrated here that multiple steps have been made toward citizen-oriented policies. Citizens' satisfaction levels are measured with large samples through citizen satisfaction surveys. Citizens' needs, demands, and complaints are learned via important mechanisms such as open offices, İZDES, Local Prevention and Security Boards, and the Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission. Information and communication technologies are being used to digitalize most of the services provided by the MoI. Most services are available from either one-stop offices or e-government web portals. Performance indicators are collected, measured, and evaluated for continuous improvement via PERDİS.

The citizen-oriented practices of the MoI reflect all three approaches to public administration, namely, managerial (such as strategic plans and PERDİS), political (Local Prevention and Security Boards), and legal (Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission) approaches. Furthermore, those policies can also be evaluated as good practices of good governance.

From another perspective, it can be concluded that the Turkish MoI primarily uses information and consultation mechanisms rather than active participation, as seen in Table 4. Since strategic plans and PERDİS tools provide one-way communication with the public, they can be categorized under the heading of "information." Surveys, İZDES, open offices, Trust Desks, and the Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission necessitate citizens' feedback; therefore, two-way communication is needed. Hence, those tools can be classified as "consultation." Finally, as far as the Local Prevention and Security Boards are concerned, since they constitute an innovative partnership model implemented by the MoI, they can be classified as an example of "active participation."

**Table 4** Matrix of OECD government-citizen relations and MoI good practices

| OECD | Information | Consultation | Active participation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Good practice in the MoI | Strategic plan, PERDİS | Surveys, İZDES, open offices, Trust Desks, Law Enforcement Monitoring Commission | Local Prevention and Security Boards |

*Source*: Generated by the author from OECD (2001) and MoI practices

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# Citizen-Centered Public Policy making Through Social Media in Local Governments: A Research on Twitter Accounts of Metropolitan Municipalities in Turkey

**Fatih Gürses, Erkan Arslan, and İbrahim Çelik**

**Abstract** This chapter aims to reveal the extent to which the local governments in Turkey benefit from social media in citizen-centered policy making processes. In this chapter, a two-stage study was designed on the use of citizen-centered social media in local governments in Turkey. In this context, the engagement analysis was applied in the first stage of the study, and content analysis was implemented in the second stage. We selected Twitter as the social media tool in this chapter. Within the scope of the study, we examined the Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey. According to the findings of the engagement analysis, it was found that the engagement scores of the metropolitan municipalities were generally low. On the other hand, according to the content analysis findings, it was concluded that metropolitan municipalities mainly used the social media for one-way information-sharing purposes such as events, announcements, and news. It was clear that the findings of both analyses were compatible with the relevant literature. Consequently, it is explicit that the metropolitan municipalities in Turkey cannot effectively use the social media to create citizen-centered policies.

**Keywords** Public policies · Local governments · Social media · Engagement analysis · Content analysis · Twitter · Social media · Metropolitan municipalities · Purposes · Turkey

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## 1 Introduction

Citizen-centered policy making is an important issue emphasized by many public administration theories, especially the modern and post-modern public administration theories (Karkin 2019). This emphasis in local governments especially is more common (Yavuz and Keleş 1983; Gürses 2015). Therefore, this chapter specifically focuses on the citizen-centered policy making processes in local governments.

Public institutions widely use the information technologies in each and every field (administrative, service, political, public policy, etc.). Therefore, it is almost a necessity to consider the citizen-centered policy making processes in terms of information technologies. On the other hand, social media is virtual platform that is becoming increasingly common, and the citizens are actively involved in it on a daily basis. Social media seems to be a good platform where public administrations can get in touch and interact with the citizens. In this context, this chapter essentially aims to reveal the extent to which the local governments in Turkey benefit from social media in the citizen-centered policy making processes.

As far as this point of view is concerned, this study which focuses on the use of citizen-centered social media in the local governments in Turkey, is composed of two stages: the engagement analysis and content analysis. With the engagement analysis, it is possible to reveal the awareness level of the citizens regarding the social media assets of the metropolitan municipalities. Moreover, the engagement analyses reveal the level of interaction of citizens with the local governments on social media. On the other hand, the content analysis provides the opportunity to make inferences about what kind of strategies the local governments adopt in the use of social media. Against this background, we conducted the study analyzing the Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities, which are the prominent local government units in Turkey. Findings to be obtained will be significant for the local governments that utilize the social media in Turkey as well as for the countries with similar local government traditions as in Turkey.

In this chapter, theoretical discussions were carried out under theoretical background, in terms of public policy, political participation, local governments, and social media. Under the literature review title, empirical studies focusing on local governments' use of social media were examined; especially the engagement and content analysis studies were focused on. Under the methodology title, information about the social media platform to be examined within the scope of the research, the municipalities included in the research, how the social media accounts of the relevant municipalities are determined and what analyzes are made are given. The findings of engagement and content analysis, two different types of analyses carried out within the scope of this chapter, are presented under the title of the findings. Finally, under the title of discussion and conclusion, the findings were evaluated in comparison with the relevant literature, and the results were explicated about how the metropolitan municipalities used social media in Turkey.

## 2 Theoretical Background

Every initiative of public administration in an attempt to address the social expectations, needs, and problems is an example of public policy. The diversity of social needs and problems led to the emergence of many different public policy areas. While the demands of society are prioritized, public policies, on the other hand, are generated, especially in democratic countries. This is directly related to the concepts of citizen-centeredness and political participation.

The underlying phenomenon of citizen-centered policy making is political participation. Political participation refers to the involvement of stakeholders directly and/or indirectly, having been affected by the public policies in the policy making processes at various levels and domains. The process involves several simple to complicated activities, including information sharing, communication, interaction, consultation, cooperation, and active engagement. Citizen participation through these activities is also related to the values such as openness, transparency, accountability, and trust in the government (Engin and Gürses 2014; Gürses 2015). Moreover, it also has many functions, such as improving the legitimacy and acceptability of public administration decisions, ensuring that the administrative actions and processes are supervised by the public, and increasing the quality of decisions of public administrations.

Citizen-centeredness and political participation are important issues emphasized by many public administration theories such as new public management, governance, and public value approach (see Karkin 2019). This emphasis is more common, especially in the domain of local governments. Today, local governments are among the prominent democratic institutions. In this sense, local governments are democratic and autonomous institutions managed through elected representatives functioning to meet citizens' needs and expectations. However, the establishment of decision-making bodies through elections is not the only condition of democratic local governments. By ensuring the participation of citizens in decision-making processes, it will be possible for the local governments to achieve a truly democratic identity (Engin and Gürses 2014; Gürses 2015). In this context, many methods and tools have, especially recently, emerged that will enable the participation of citizens in the decision-making processes at the local level. At this point, information technologies seem to be an important tool for implementing and disseminating these participatory methods. Therefore, considering the citizen-centered policy making processes in terms of information technologies will be functional and useful.

Today, public institutions widely use information technologies in every field (administrative, service, political, public policy, etc.). The emergence and spread of the internet first and then web 2.0, which means interactive web, has forced the public institutions to exist on these platforms. Particularly in the last 10–15 years, social media,[1] especially the social networking sites, have influenced large masses

[1] Although social networks are primarily understood when it comes to social media, the scope of the concept of social media is essentially broader. In this respect, it should be noted that social media also includes interaction platforms such as blogs, microblogs (Twitter), wikis (Wikipedia), podcasts (Apple iTunes), forums, and content communities (Flickr, del.icio.us, YouTube).

worldwide and have become platforms that citizens use actively for a significant part of the day.[2] These social media usage habits of citizens create important opportunities for public institutions in the context of processes and values such as interaction, encouraging participation, transparency, accountability, governance, and public policy making. Therefore, public institutions that want to reach their stakeholders and establish a dialogue with them have to use social media effectively.

Social media, by its nature, contains platforms that allow everyone to communicate, participate online, and disseminate their content (Harsono and Suryana 2014). Social media appears to be a new type of online platform that incorporates most features such as participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness (Mayfield 2008). At the same time, thanks to social media, public institutions can directly communicate with their stakeholders at a lower cost and higher efficiency level than the traditional communication tools (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 67). Based on all these features, social media use in the public sector has become a worldwide trend (Criado et al. 2013, p. 319).

The adoption of social media applications by the public institutions can be perceived as a new wave of the e-Government era and a result of the efforts of public institutions to digitize their services and processes (Mergel 2013, p. 328). In this context, it is clear that public institutions try to use these platforms effectively in order to improve the service delivery and strengthen their communication (Kavanaugh et al. 2012, p. 480). Broadly speaking, using social media provides the following potential benefits for public institutions (Bertot et al. 2010, 2012):

- Encouraging citizens to engage in dialogue and democratic participation in policy development and implementation.
- Consulting the knowledge and opinion of the public by sharing data of public institutions to produce innovative solutions on wide-ranging social issues.
- Increasing openness and transparency in administrative activities.
- Contributing to the reduction of corruption.
- Providing crowdsourced solutions to problems and bringing innovations.
- Facilitating the collaborative design of services between the institutions and the public.
- Reducing the service costs of institutions, increasing the efficiency of service delivery, and optimizing the existing resources.
- Increasing the channels available for citizens to communicate with government institutions.

Considering its potential, as mentioned earlier, social media has an important place in the future of public administrations in terms of creating citizen-centered

[2] In this context, according to the 2021 report of We Are Social Digital, which includes global and country-based analyses within the framework of main metrics such as internet, social media, e-commerce, prepared by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there are 4.20 billion social media users worldwide. This rate represents more than 53% of the global population. In Turkey, 70.8% of the population actively uses social media. It is clear that this rate is much higher than the world average. On the other hand, a social media user in Turkey spends about 2 hours and 57 minutes on social media platforms, which is above the world average.

policy in the final evaluation. Indeed, the academic literature has addressed this topic as well. Especially for the local governments, the number of social media analysis studies on social media-stakeholder engagement and the development of social media participation have been increasing gradually.

Social media analyses reveal some indicators that will contribute to individuals and institutions using different methods and measurement sets. The tool, method, and measurement set preferred in social media analysis may vary depending on the type of the account (personal or corporate), the purpose of the analysis, and the indicators that can be obtained from the preferred social media platform (Agostino and Sidorova 2016). Correspondingly, different analyses such as financial analysis (Fisher 2009; Lloret Romero 2011; Powell et al. 2011; Kaske et al. 2012; Jobs and Gilfoil 2014; Crumpton 2014), social network analysis (Coulter and Roggeveen 2012; Ellison and Boyd 2013; Kane et al. 2014; Li et al. 2014; Bernabé-Moreno et al. 2015), sentiment analysis (Asur and Huberman 2010; Zhang et al. 2012), content analysis (Waters et al. 2009; Herring 2010; Diakopoulos et al. 2010), and engagement analysis (Hoffman and Fodor 2010; Bonsón and Ratkai 2013; Agostino 2013) can be performed with the social media measurement sets in the relevant literature. The following section presents a literature review on social media analysis.

## 3 Literature Review on Engagement and Content Analysis Studies in Social Media

In this chapter, in which citizen-centered policy making and participation processes through social media in local governments are discussed, engagement and content analysis are the types of analysis suitable for this chapter. In this context, the studies, including social media engagement and content analysis in local governments, are examined under this title. When the relevant literature is examined, clearly both analysis methods are frequently used in the studies related to the subject.

With the engagement analysis, which is the first of these analysis methods, an account's ability to publish information, its ability to communicate with its followers, the virality of shared posts, and the acceptability level of a user by their followers can be measured (Agostino and Sidorova 2016). Engagement analysis is a suitable method for the public institutions to analyze citizen communication, participation, and loyalty as well as develop brand awareness, loyalty, and various marketing strategies. Thus, Agostino (2013) investigated the potential contribution of social media use to the interaction between the local government and citizens. A previous study found that the subject was directly related to the citizens' awareness regarding the municipalities' social media assets. Accordingly, the most important indicator in the context of awareness is the number of followers of municipalities on social media. In contrast, the most important indicator of citizen participation is the number of actions (e.g., talk about for Facebook, Tweet for Twitter, comment for YouTube) taken by the citizens on the relevant social media platform.

**Table 1** Studies using the Bonsón and Ratkai's (2013) engagement analysis measurement set

| Author(s), year | Platforms | Countries |
|---|---|---|
| Bonsón et al. (2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), Agostino and Arnaboldi (2015), De Rosario et al. (2016), Andrijasevic (2017), Sobacı and Hatipoğlu (2017), Sáez-Martín et al. (2018), Haro-de-Rosario et al. (2018), Szmigiel-Rawska et al. (2018), Gálvez-Rodríguez et al. (2018), del Mar Gálvez-Rodríhuez et al. (2019), Silva et al. (2019), Molinillo et al. (2019), Hatipoğlu et al. (2020), Metallo et al. (2020), Stone and Can (2020, 2021), Perea et al. (2021), Henisa and Wilantika (2021), Gürses and Çelik (2022), and Faber (2022) | Facebook (18) Twitter (9) Instagram (4) LinkedIn | Spain (8), Turkey (3), USA (2), Western European Countries (2), Italy (2), Portugal, Poland, Croatia, South American Countries, North American Countries, Holland, Indonesia, European Union Countries |

*Source*: Generated by the authors

It is transparent that the measurement set of Bonsón and Ratkai (2013) is frequently used in studies where local government-citizen engagement is analyzed through social media. The studies in which this measurement set is used are illustrated in Table 1. When Table 1 is examined, it is explicit that Facebook (18) was examined the most in the engagement analysis studies in the context of local governments, and then Twitter (9) was the second most-examined one. When analyzed based on countries, understandably, this scale was mostly applied in Spain (8) in the context of local governments, and those studies were generally carried out for European countries (20). It is comprehensible that the popularity, commitment, virality, and engagement levels of local governments were compared in the majority of studies. The common finding of the studies in question was that the engagement levels were generally lower than expected.

When the content analysis, another analysis method, is examined, apparently, the studies carried out in this field have a great variety. For example, in some content analysis studies, the social media contents of the institutions were categorized according to the public policy area to which they belonged, and it was investigated which public policy areas the institutions mostly focused on (such as culture, health, sports, and education). In some studies, content analysis was conducted with the help of tools such as hashtags related to a selected topic, such as sustainable development, disaster management, and democracy. In some other studies, the content was evaluated by categorizing it according to the purpose of its creation (such as congratulations and celebration, event invitation, location notification, informing, transparency, and cooperation).

Additionally, various coding techniques were used in content analysis studies. In some studies, the categories were subjected to content analysis with the support of computer programs (see Svidroňová et al. 2018; Bingöl 2019; Stone and Can 2020; Eryeşil et al. 2021; Lin and Kant 2021), while in some other studies, the contents were evaluated manually by the authors (see Tarhan 2012; Memiş 2015; Yaman 2018; Špaček 2018; Kaya and Demirdöven 2019; Küçükşen and Firidin 2021). Moreover, in some studies, content analysis categories were based on the previous literature (see Sobaci and Karkin 2013; Zavattaro et al. 2015; Haro-de-Rosario et al. 2018; Lappas et al. 2018; Çavuş 2019; Bonsón et al. 2019; Stone and Can 2021),

**Table 2** Content analysis studies

| Author(s), year | Platform | Country |
|---|---|---|
| Tarhan (2012), Sobaci and Karkin (2013), Memiş (2015), Zavattaro et al. (2015), Yaman (2018), Haro-de-Rosario et al. (2018), Szmigiel-Rawska et al. (2018), Lappas et al. (2018, 2022), Sayılganoğlu (2018), Špaček (2018), Svidroňová et al. (2018), Çavuş (2019), Bonsón et al. (2019), Bingöl (2019), Kaya and Demirdöven (2019), Göçoğlu (2020), Stone and Can (2020, 2021), Çalhan (2021), Eryeşil et al. (2021), Lin and Kant (2021), Küçükşen and Firidin (2021), and Alam et al. (2022) | Twitter (17) Facebook (12) YouTube Instagram | Turkey (12), USA (3), Spain (2), Greece (2), Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Holland, New Zealand |

*Source*: Generated by the authors

while in some others, the categories were created by the authors of the study (see Göçoğlu 2020; Çalhan 2021; Lappas et al. 2022).

Table 2 shows the studies investigating citizen participation and social media relationship with the content analysis method. When the table is examined, it is transparent that Twitter (17) was examined the most among the social media platforms, followed by Facebook (12). In content analysis studies, it is possible to say that researchers in Turkey (12) have shown relatively more interest in the subject. On the other hand, similar to the engagement analysis studies, content analysis studies seem to focus more on the European countries. Furthermore, it unambiguously appears that these studies have significantly increased in number since 2018. The common finding of content analysis studies is that local governments use social media for activities such as information, announcement, and promotion rather than increasing the citizen participation and creating public policy.

## 4 Methodology

In this chapter, two-stage research was designed on the use of citizen-centered social media in the local governments in Turkey. In this context, engagement analysis was applied in the first stage of the study, and content analysis was applied in the second stage. In this study, Twitter was selected as the object of this chapter, and consequently, the Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey were examined.

Twitter is a social media platform in the category of microblogging, where users post messages known as "tweets" and interact with each other. Therefore, Twitter seems to be a good platform for local governments to actively involve the citizens in public policy making processes. In this context, this chapter started by identifying the Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities. At this stage, it is necessary to verify whether the accounts of metropolitan municipalities identified are the official accounts. The first method for this is to check whether the accounts have the blue tick, which indicates that they are the official accounts approved by Twitter. Since all the official accounts should have blue ticks, all the identified accounts were verified with this method. Table 3 illustrates the Twitter account names of the metropolitan municipalities included in this study.

**Table 3** Metropolitan municipalities and their Twitter accounts

| Metropolitan municipality | Account name | Metropolitan municipality | Account name |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adana | @adana_bld | Kayseri | @kayseribsb |
| Ankara | @ankarabbld | Kocaeli | @kocaelibld |
| Antalya | @antalyabb | Konya | @konyabuyuksehir |
| Aydın | @aydinbuyuksehir | Malatya | @malatyabeltr |
| Balıkesir | @balikesirbld | Manisa | @manisabsb |
| Bursa | @bursabuyuksehir | Mardin | @mardinbuyukshr |
| Denizli | @denizlibld | Mersin | @mersin_bld |
| Diyarbakır | @diyarbakirbld | Muğla | @muglabsb |
| Erzurum | @erzurumbld | Ordu | @ordubbld |
| Eskişehir | @eskisehirbb | Sakarya | @sakaryabld |
| Gaziantep | @gaziantepbeld | Samsun | @samsunbsb |
| Hatay | @hataybsb | Şanlıurfa | @sanliurfabld |
| İstanbul | @istanbulbld | Tekirdağ | @tdagbld |
| İzmir | @izmirbld | Trabzon | @trabzonbeltr |
| Kahramanmaraş | @buyuksehirkm | Van | @vanbuyuksehirbb |

*Source*: Generated by the authors

After identifying the Twitter accounts used in the study, the measurement set used in the engagement analysis was established. In this context, the measurement set developed by Bonsón and Ratkai (2013) for Facebook was used in the study. This measurement tool was later also used by Bonsón et al. (2019) as well in an attempt to investigate the municipality-citizen engagement on Twitter. This measurement set has been widely accepted in the studies focusing on the municipality-citizen engagement in social media. Engagement is calculated based on popularity, commitment, and virality criteria within this measurement set. With the engagement analysis, it is possible to reveal the level of engagement of the metropolitan municipalities and citizens through social media. In the engagement analysis, the score is calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Engagement Score} = \frac{\left(\text{Like} + \text{Comment} + \text{Retweet}\right) / \text{Total Tweet}}{\text{Number of Followers}} \times 10{,}000$$

After the accounts and measurement set were established, the data collection process was started on Twitter. First, a Twitter developer account was created to access the data to be used in the study. The data of the accounts included in this chapter were obtained from the developer account with the help of the "Postman" application. The data obtained in "JSON" format via Postman was made available for analysis. This data includes the tweets in a month backward from 27.09.2022 (except the day of 27.09.2022) and the number of likes, comments, retweets, and followers of these tweets. The number of followers was obtained on 26.09.2022 at 23:59, and the other data were obtained on 27.09.2022 between 00:10 and 00:16. While identifying the number of tweets shared by the accounts, only the tweets created by the user of the account were included, and the posts retweeted by that account were not included in this chapter.

As a result of the findings based on the analysis, the metropolitan municipalities were ranked according to their engagement scores. Afterward, the first three metropolitan municipalities with the highest engagement score were included in the content analysis stage, which was the second stage of the study. Accordingly, the municipalities with the highest engagement score and included in the content analysis were the Balıkesir, Konya, and Van Metropolitan Municipalities.

The literature review proved that content analysis studies could be carried out using different methods and measurement sets. This chapter aims to evaluate the twitter content of metropolitan municipalities from a participatory perspective. For instance, Lappas et al. (2022) considered the most appropriate measurement set, which was taken as a reference in this chapter. Table 4 illustrates the coding scheme developed by Lappas et al. (2022) to categorize the tweets according to their content.

**Table 4** Coding scheme

| Strategy | Content type | Content |
|---|---|---|
| Informative | General information | Posts about current and new services, campaigns/programs and activities of the municipality, job announcements, weather announcements, announcements about the mayor's program, competition announcements, and other general informative posts shared by the municipality and/or from other sources |
| | Transparency | Posts about municipal decisions and regulations, projects, e-procurements, decisions made by the mayor or council, and council's agenda |
| | Brand image and public relations | (a) Posts promoting events (e.g., concerts, festivals) organized by the municipality and other institutions<br>(b) Information sharing of the municipality for domestic and foreign tourists<br>(c) The attitudes/comments of the municipality and the mayor regarding political issues or government decisions<br>(d) Sharing about social responsibility activities and environmentally friendly activities<br>(e) Maintaining a positive image of the municipality through congratulations or well wishes<br>(f) A positive image of the mayor or councillors (e.g., photos from events involving the mayor or councillors) |
| Participant | Calls for offline participatory activities | Posts inviting the citizens to participate and volunteer in offline activities and events.<br>For example, non-online council meetings, participatory budgeting, offline discussions with councillors, fundraisers, protests, or actions |
| | Calls for online participatory activities | Posts about involving citizens in various online activities. For example, a call to like, follow, share, comment on a web page, a post, or an app. Encouraging or recommending activities such as participation in online surveys, online signature campaigns, online petition signing, and online voting. Advice on downloading or using apps. Call to watch the council meeting online |
| | Responsiveness | Responses from a municipal official or employee to a user's comment or post |

*Source*: Adapted from Lappas et al. (2022)

According to Lappas et al. (2022), when the relevant literature is examined, it appears that the content of local governments in social media can be divided into six broad categories. Eventually, the local governments want to achieve the goals in the following categories with their social media posts (Lappas et al. 2022):

1. *Communicating general information about a municipality*
2. *Cultivating transparency*
3. *Enhancing the municipality's brand image and public relations*
4. *Triggering citizens' online participatory activities*
5. *Encouraging citizens' offline participatory activities*
6. *Increasing the municipality's responsiveness to citizens*

It is possible to argue that the first three of these categories are for information purposes, while the last three categories aim to enhance the participation of citizens and their dialogues with the municipality. In this context, the last 100 tweets sent by those mentioned earlier, three metropolitan municipalities before 27.09.2022, were examined in the content analysis.[3]

# 5 Findings

Under this title, the findings of engagement analysis and then those of the content analysis findings will be included.

## *5.1 Engagement Analysis Findings*

In this section, the interaction performance of the Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities will be explicated; first of all, the raw data required for the engagement analysis (the number of followers, tweets, likes, comments, and retweets) and then the findings on the engagement levels of metropolitan municipalities will be present. Table 5 shows the number of followers, tweets, likes, comments, and retweets of the Twitter accounts of the metropolitan municipalities in Turkey included in this chapter.

Considering the number of followers, it is explicit that the average number of followers of all metropolitan municipalities was 181.546. The Twitter account with the highest number of followers belonged to the İstanbul Metropolitan

[3] In the content analysis, we wanted each municipality to be included in the analysis with an equal number of tweets. For this, we did not select a date range for the tweets to be reviewed. As it will be remembered, we focused on the tweets of the last month in engagement analysis. The average number of tweets sent by metropolitan municipalities in the last month was 112. So, focusing on the last 100 tweets means that the content analysis has covered roughly the last month.

**Table 5** Number of followers, tweets, likes, comments, and retweets of metropolitan municipalities

| Metropolitan municipalities | Followers | Tweets | Likes | Comments | Retweets | Total engagement[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ankara | 1,037,441 | 265 | 55,238 | 1499 | 6801 | 63,538 |
| Antalya | 334,333 | 111 | 2205 | 214 | 205 | 2624 |
| Adana | 119,511 | 62 | 3719 | 119 | 455 | 4293 |
| Aydın | 67,317 | 57 | 6265 | 68 | 2070 | 8403 |
| Balıkesir | 38,244 | 63 | 11,816 | 57 | 1250 | 13,123 |
| Bursa | 305,776 | 151 | 33,256 | 1139 | 4887 | 39,282 |
| Denizli | 36,854 | 44 | 875 | 72 | 137 | 1084 |
| Diyarbakır | 73,157 | 195 | 19,563 | 512 | 2513 | 22,588 |
| Erzurum | 44,506 | 13 | 349 | 45 | 54 | 448 |
| Eskişehir | 125,251 | 57 | 11,236 | 104 | 694 | 12,034 |
| Gaziantep | 209,271 | 231 | 118,345 | 1560 | 43,384 | 163,289 |
| Hatay | 71,055 | 84 | 2309 | 177 | 240 | 2726 |
| İstanbul | 1,702,205 | 84 | 50,932 | 1439 | 6324 | 58,695 |
| İzmir | 509,283 | 47 | 6699 | 329 | 810 | 7838 |
| Kahramanmaraş | 29,613 | 151 | 3268 | 115 | 347 | 3730 |
| Kayseri | 62,803 | 18 | 858 | 126 | 152 | 1136 |
| Kocaeli | 107,958 | 197 | 13,700 | 502 | 1539 | 15,741 |
| Konya | 29,613 | 106 | 12,935 | 220 | 1801 | 14,956 |
| Malatya | 37,970 | 41 | 1141 | 29 | 379 | 1549 |
| Manisa | 20,080 | 202 | 1397 | 32 | 109 | 1538 |
| Mardin | 33,843 | 92 | 3246 | 63 | 613 | 3922 |
| Mersin | 71,475 | 68 | 3070 | 60 | 285 | 3415 |
| Muğla | 61,622 | 70 | 3001 | 76 | 379 | 3456 |
| Ordu | 39,882 | 145 | 7037 | 65 | 2338 | 9440 |
| Sakarya | 35,488 | 155 | 10,579 | 158 | 2538 | 13,275 |
| Samsun | 26,280 | 17 | 490 | 25 | 81 | 596 |
| Şanlıurfa | 75,128 | 434 | 24,432 | 334 | 14,060 | 38,826 |
| Tekirdağ | 36,349 | 49 | 642 | 57 | 182 | 881 |
| Trabzon | 60,303 | 60 | 11,068 | 319 | 588 | 11,975 |
| Van | 43,767 | 86 | 15,291 | 63 | 3492 | 18,846 |
| Total | 5,446,378 | 3355 | 434,962 | 9578 | 98,707 | 543,247 |
| Average | 181.546 | 112 | 14.499 | 319 | 3.290 | 18.108 |

*Source*: Generated by the authors
[a]Total engagement = Like + Comment + Retweet

Municipality. Ankara, İzmir, and Bursa, respectively, followed the Metropolitan Municipality of İstanbul.

When it comes to the number of tweets sent from the accounts of metropolitan municipalities, it is clear that the tweet average of the whole group in the relevant period was 112. Ten municipalities with many tweets posted above the group average. The three most tweeted accounts in the period analyzed were the municipalities of Şanlıurfa, Ankara, and Gaziantep, respectively.

When evaluating likes for the tweets posted by the metropolitan municipalities, it is explicit that the average number of likes was 14.499. As mentioned earlier, the number of metropolitan municipalities that received likes above the average was 7. The three most liked accounts were the municipalities of Gaziantep, Ankara, and İstanbul, respectively.

When the number of comments is evaluated, it is clear that the average number of comments was 319. Regarding the number of comments, eight municipalities received comments above the specified average, and one municipality (Trabzon) received the same number of comments with the average number of comments. The municipalities that received the most comments were the municipalities of Gaziantep, Ankara, İstanbul, and Bursa, respectively.

Finally, if the number of retweets is evaluated, it is seen that the average number of retweets was 3.290. There were six municipalities whose number of retweets was above the group average. Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality was far ahead of the other municipalities. Other municipalities with the number of retweets received above the group average were Şanlıurfa, Ankara, İstanbul, Bursa, and Van, respectively.

The next part of this chapter includes the engagement scores of the metropolitan municipalities. The engagement scores of metropolitan municipalities per 10,000 followers are given in Table 6. Accordingly, the average engagement score of all metropolitan municipalities was 15.16. There were ten municipalities whose engagement score was above the group average.

The Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality had the highest interaction score. The municipalities of Van, Konya, Gaziantep, and Trabzon, respectively, followed the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality. The municipality with the lowest engagement score was the Antalya Metropolitan Municipality.

**Table 6** Findings of the engagement analysis

| No | Metropolitan municipality | Engagement score | No | Metropolitan municipality | Engagement score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Balıkesir | 54.47 | 16 | Bursa | 8.51 |
| 2 | Van | 50.07 | 17 | Kahramanmaraş | 8.34 |
| 3 | Konya | 47.64 | 18 | Muğla | 8.01 |
| 4 | Gaziantep | 33.78 | 19 | Erzurum | 7.74 |
| 5 | Trabzon | 33.1 | 20 | Kocaeli | 7.4 |
| 6 | Sakarya | 24.13 | 21 | Mersin | 7.03 |
| 7 | Aydın | 21.9 | 22 | Denizli | 6.68 |
| 8 | Eskişehir | 16.86 | 23 | Adana | 5.79 |
| 9 | Ordu | 16.32 | 24 | Tekirdağ | 4.95 |
| 10 | Diyarbakır | 15.83 | 25 | Hatay | 4.57 |
| 11 | Samsun | 13.34 | 26 | İstanbul | 4.1 |
| 12 | Mardin | 12.6 | 27 | Manisa | 3.8 |
| 13 | Şanlıurfa | 11.91 | 28 | İzmir | 3.27 |
| 14 | Kayseri | 10.05 | 29 | Ankara | 2.07 |
| 15 | Malatya | 9.95 | 30 | Antalya | 0.71 |
| | | | | Engagement average | 15.16 |

*Source*: Generated by the authors

### 5.2 *Content Analysis Findings*

The content analysis examined the last 100 tweets sent before 27.09.2022 of the three municipalities with the highest engagement analysis scores. Therefore, the findings of the content analysis are given in Table 7.

In the content analysis, the most frequently sent tweet format in all tweet categories was the general information tweets. It was followed by the brand image and public relations tweets follow this. The third most common tweet content was related to the calls for online participatory activities. All the other tweets outside of these categories were 1% or less. Therefore, when evaluated in terms of communication strategies, almost 90% of the tweets posted by metropolitan municipalities were created by adopting an informative strategy; the rate of tweets created with a participatory strategy barely exceeded 10%. When the municipalities were evaluated specifically, the municipality with the most tweets created with the information strategy was that of Van, while the municipality with the most tweets created with the participatory strategy was Balıkesir. On the other hand, the most neglected tweet format in the information strategy was tweeting about transparency. The most neglected tweet format within the participatory strategy was the tweets aimed at increasing online participation and dialogue/sensitivity.

## 6 Discussion

In this chapter, which focused on the use of citizen-centered social media in local governments, first of all, engagement analysis and then content analysis were carried out. As far as the findings of the engagement analysis are concerned, it was found that the engagement scores of the metropolitan municipalities were generally low. These findings are also compatible with the relevant literature. When the engagement scores are compared with other studies in the literature, it is possible to

**Table 7** Findings of the content analysis

| | Informational strategies | | | Participatory strategies | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | General information | Transparency | Brand image and public relations | Calls for offline participatory activities | Calls for online participatory activities | Responsiveness |
| Balıkesir | 24 | 0 | 53 | 20 | 1 | 2 |
| Konya | 46 | 0 | 47 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Van | 66 | 3 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Average in total (%) | 45.3 | 1 | 43.3 | 9.3 | 0.3 | 0.7 |

*Source*: Generated by the authors

say that the level of engagement was quite low, as it is the case in all studies illustrated in Table 1.

On the other hand, in the study of Sobacı and Hatipoğlu (2017), which focused on the same municipalities in Turkey but was carried out on Facebook, it was clear that the Van and Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipalities emerged as the municipalities with high interaction scores among the other municipalities.[4] It is explicit that the Konya Metropolitan Municipality, which ranked 3rd among municipalities in our chapter, was in last place in the study of Sobacı and Hatipoğlu (2017).

Furthermore, in this chapter, while the municipalities such as İstanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Bursa were prominent in terms of the number of followers, likes, comments, and retweets, they were not in the top ranks in terms of engagement scores. The biggest factor in this was that the relevant municipalities could not receive likes, comments, and retweets in proportion to the number of followers. In other words, the high number of followers in these municipalities emerged as a factor that negatively affected the engagement score. Hence, it is possible to state that the previous finding is in parallel in this sense with the findings of the studies in the relevant literature (see Bonsón et al. 2013, 2017, 2019; Molinillo et al. 2019).

Arguably, the content analysis findings are also similar to the literature. Many studies in the literature have stated that local governments use social media unilaterally for purposes such as events, announcements, news, and information sharing, and they are insufficient in ensuring citizen participation (see Tarhan 2012; Sobaci and Karkin 2013; Memiş 2015; Yaman 2018; Lappas et al. 2018, 2022; Sayılganoğlu 2018; Špaček 2018; Bingöl 2019; Kaya and Demirdöven 2019; Göçoğlu 2020; Eryeşil et al. 2021; Stone and Can 2021; Küçükşen and Firidin 2021; Alam et al. 2022). As far as the relevant literature is concerned, there are relatively few sharings of transparency in informative strategies, as has been demonstrated in this chapter (see Sobaci and Karkin 2013; Lappas et al. 2018).

Explicitly, the Balıkesir, Konya, and Van Metropolitan Municipalities, which are included in the content analysis, have also taken part in other content analysis studies carried out in Turkey. One of these studies is the study of Kaya and Demirdöven (2019) on metropolitan municipalities on both Facebook and Twitter. According to the findings of their study, the municipalities of Balıkesir, Konya, and Van mostly used Facebook and Twitter to promote service projects, create public opinion, and provide information, and there were almost no posts about citizen participation. In the study of Göçoğlu (2020), which was also a study on metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, it was found that municipalities used Twitter for institutional information (Balıkesir M.M. 52%, Van M.M. 72%, Konya M.M. 75%) rather than direct citizen participation.

[4] In the study of Sobacı and Hatipoğlu (2017), Van M.M. ranks 3rd and Balıkesir M.M. 5th.

## 7 Conclusion

Consequently, it is clear that the local governments, in general, and the metropolitan municipalities, in particular, fail to use social media as effectively as they should and cannot benefit from the opportunities the social media offers. Undoubtedly, according to the findings of engagement analysis, although local governments could reach a significant number of followers, that is, they got themselves noticed on the relevant platforms, they could not encourage the citizens to interact with them with the content they publish on social media. The reason for this is the content strategy implemented by the local governments. Local governments do not share, nor do they prefer to do so on these platforms that will encourage the public to have a dialogue.

In essence, the social media are platforms that people use to have lots of fun, speak their minds, and acquire information. On Twitter, these reasons concentrate on topics such as expressing oneself, being informed, and following the agenda. Therefore, the local governments should use Twitter in a way that meets these expectations of its users. Therefore, the local governments that wish to have a good interaction with their stakeholders on the social media platforms in general and Twitter in particular need to use the relevant platforms correctly (Çelik et al. 2022).

Accordingly, it would be beneficial for local governments to watch out the following points when using the Twitter (Çelik et al. 2022):

- Tweets should be as short and concise as possible.
- It is necessary to follow the agenda and tweet appropriately to the agenda.
- While tweeting about the agenda, it is necessary to be as objective as possible and not to take an overly political attitude.
- Hashtags (#) should be used to make tweets easily accessible.
- A tweeting routine should be established to create a follower habit. Before doing this, experiments should be made for the ideal sharing frequency.
- Sharing hours should be set well, the hours when the interaction will be highest should be determined, and care should be taken in order to share during those hours.
- In order to improve the dialogue with the stakeholders, questions should be asked to the followers and opinions should be sought from the followers.
- Tweets from followers should be responded to.
- Tweets should be supplemented with non-text elements (such as emoji, GIFs, photos, and videos) to increase interest.

On the other hand, there are some limitations of this study as well. The first limitation of the study is that it was conducted only in one country (Turkey) and only with the metropolitan municipalities in this country. Another limitation is that the study was conducted only for Twitter, one of the social media platforms. In the context of content analysis, examining only the three metropolitan municipalities with the highest interaction is another limitation of the study.

Despite all its limitations, it is also possible to mention some potential contributions of this study to the field. Although the study was carried out in Turkey, it is important in terms of giving an idea about the use of social media by the local governments of countries with similar administrative traditions as Turkey. In this respect, the study can be generalized for other countries that consider social media as a one-way communication channel rather than a tool for dialogue and interaction. The suggestions developed within the scope of the study may be valuable for the local government social media managers in countries with similar social media usage models.

At this point, the future studies that are expected to contribute to the relevant literature should have some features. As can be seen in the literature review above, it is explicit that the studies on social media in local governments are mostly done in relation to Twitter and then to Facebook platforms. At this point, first of all, the social media platforms should be diversified, and the platforms such as Instagram and YouTube should be studied more comprehensively. On the other hand, we witnessed that the studies carried out in this field were mainly carried out for a single country. At this point, the number of comparative studies involving more than one country should be increased. Furthermore, it will be functional to organize academic events such as symposiums and workshops in this field.

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# Citizen-Centric Smart City Practices of Local Governments During COVID-19: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Case

**Ezgi Seçkiner Bingöl**

**Abstract** Smart cities are based on the idea of creating more liveable and sustainable cities through the information and communication technologies (ICT) for their services. The ultimate goal of a smart city is to make cities healthier and sustainable for its residents, remove bureaucratic barriers before access to public services, introduce innovative solutions to city-related problems, and consider citizens' wishes and expectations. Smart cities that involve citizens in the service delivery process and implement many participatory principles and institutional mechanisms for this can be defined as citizen-centric smart cities. In this chapter, citizen-centric smart city practices of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the time of COVID-19 are addressed, and these practices are categorized under six groups. These are smart transportation, e-municipality practices, voluntary participation, crowdfunding, open government data, and free internet access - support for distance learning. This chapter concludes that it is essential for local communities to develop collective behavior to cope with a pandemic, and as technology users citizens roles are critical. Further developing digital healthcare practices and distance education and channelizing resources toward these practices become a prominent field in the post-pandemic stage.

**Keywords** Smart city · Citizen-centric smart city · Citizen-oriented smart city · COVID-19 · Pandemic · Crisis management · Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality · Local communities · City-related problems · Technology

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## 1 Introduction

Many critiques targeted studies for merely focusing on the technology aspect of smart cities and emphasized the importance of comprehensively tackling environmental, human, social, and cultural dimensions of smart cities, and within time, there has been an extensive consensus in the smart city literature (see Hollands 2008; Giffinger et al. 2007; Lim et al. 2018; Malek et al. 2021; Bibri 2021; Seçkiner Bingöl 2021a). Various researchers underline the contribution of social capital owned by residents of cities, technology users, citizens, and the city itself in growing, developing, and sustaining smart cities as a whole (see Hollands 2008; Simonofski et al. 2019a; Caragliu et al. 2011; Granier and Kudo 2016; Seçkiner Bingöl 2021c).

Smart cities are based on the idea of creating more liveable and sustainable cities through the information and communication technologies (ICT) for their services. The ultimate goal of a smart city is to make cities healthier and sustainable for its residents, remove bureaucratic barriers before access to public services, introduce innovative solutions to city-related problems, and consider citizens' wishes and expectations.

Smart cities have different aspects such as technology, environment, human, transportation, and economy. Although there is extensive literature on technology, sustainable environment, sustainable transportation, and economy-related aspects of smart cities, cities' human aspects have been included in this discussion relatively later (see Seçkiner Bingöl 2021c). Smart cities that intend to become citizen-centric smart cities should ask and elaborate on these questions "How do residents of cities contribute to smart cities? What are their roles in developing smart cities? Are smart cities sustainable without citizens' contributions?"

The citizen-centric smart city draws attention to the responsibilities of the citizen in the smart city and conceptualizes the smart city from the perspective of citizenship (Malek et al. 2021). According to this understanding, instead of the traditional view of meeting only the needs of citizens, citizens should jointly produce and contribute to the construction of the flow city together with the rulers (https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/6360). As stated above, most of the research on smart cities focuses on dimensions such as technology, economy, environment, and sustainability. Mostly, the social dimension, citizen dimension, and citizen participation dimension of smart cities are neglected. Studies on the citizen-centric approach in the construction of smart cities are limited. On the other hand, the citizen-centric approach to smart city or citizen-centric smart city concept has been the subject of some recent studies and European Commission projects (see Lim et al. 2018; Gao et al. 2020; Oh and Seo 2021; EU 2021).

This chapter concentrates on the citizen-centric smart city concept and discusses citizen-centric practices of smart cities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM), whose smart city practices are among the pioneers of the smart city concept in Turkey, is analyzed as a case study. Hereby, the study aims to contribute to the citizen-centric smart city literature with the case of

Istanbul. This chapter employs the document review method as the primary methodology; thus, activity reports of the Municipality and its website are taken as primary sources. First, the citizen-centric smart city concept is given by discussing the citizens' roles in smart cities. Second, an outline of citizen-centric practices and smart cities' COVID-19 coping strategies are drawn. Finally, citizen-centric smart city practices of IMM during the COVID-19 period are analyzed under six categories.

## 2 Citizen-Centric Smart Cities

Citizen-centric smart city can be defined as an urban management approach that puts citizens in the center of the provision of urban services, takes into account the contribution of citizens in the provision of these services, and includes citizens in the service delivery process. It also implements many institutional mechanisms and detailed participation principles to achieve citizen centrity. Unlike new public management, new public governance pays attention to citizens' satisfaction and participation (see Vigoda 2002; Karkın 2019; Çolak 2021). Several discussions over good governance and participation concentrate on citizens' contribution to governance, particularly their involvement in service production processes. Citizens are now a subject of governance processes. In the post-new public management, citizens are not passive objects for whom policies are produced but are active subjects of policies that concern them (Kutlu et al. 2009; Çolak 2021).

Smart city management employing such an approach allows citizens to become stakeholders in the provision of urban services and participate in projects. Thus, "citizen participation in smart cities" is a topic that merits a separate discussion. Citizen participation in smart cities requires citizens to participate in mechanisms such as public meetings or assemblies, electronic participation, virtual summits and meetings, crowdsourcing, participant-budgeting, and volunteering activities, and in the design of smart city projects as stakeholders. Citizen-centric smart cities build mechanisms and institutional arrangements that actively pave the way for citizens to participate in city management processes.

Another topic regarding citizens' participation in smart cities is their roles. There are numerous studies on citizens' roles in smart cities. For instance, Lim et al. (2018: 49) discuss two types of citizens in smart cities, namely. the ideal type (or the active type) and the depressive type (or the passive type). Ataç (2020) states that well-educated citizens with language skills and technology competencies are vital for smart cities. Berntzen and Johannessen (2016) elaborate on citizens' roles in smart cities in three categories: experienced citizens, data collectors, and democratic participants. Simonofski et al. (2019b: 50–54) introduce three citizen types in smart cities: democratic participants, co-creators, and ICT users. To achieve strategic success in smart cities, the citizen-centric approach suggests a direct proportion with citizens' education levels, ability to use technological tools, and knowledge of

**Table 1** Citizens' roles in smart cities

| Active (ideal type) | Passive (depressive type) |
|---|---|
| Democratic participants | ICT users |
| Co-creators | Data collectors (sensors) |
| Experienced citizens | Consumers |

Seçkiner Bingöl (2021a: 1950)

foreign languages (see Ataç 2020). Seçkiner Bingöl (2021a) introduced the following classification for citizens' roles using the existing literature:

According to Table 1, citizens have different roles in smart cities. These roles are classified in different ways. City managers need to know the types of roles to which citizens belong. City managers can only know how they could expect citizens' contribution to their projects based on the role groups to which the citizens belong. According to Lim et al. (2018: 50), active citizens are those equipped with awareness and education and who can participate in public life and create public value. Passive citizens, meanwhile, are described as technology users, consumers, who feedback on technology, and who complain (Lim et al. 2018).

Democratic participants participate in city-related decision-making processes; co-creators help test technologies through participation mechanisms such as public meetings and share their comments and recommendations. ICT users experience various new technologies and learn; data collectors provide feedback through technology and mobile communication devices; consumers use the technology and try to adapt to technology (Simonofski et al. 2019b).

## 3 Citizen-Centric Smart Cities During COVID-19 Pandemic

Local governments have public health-related duties, including providing basic infrastructure and delivering cleaning, environmental, and recycling services for smart cities. Additionally, local governments should plan cities considering public health needs to create a healthy physical environment (Seçkiner Bingöl 2022b). They have also wide roles and responsibilities in improving infrastructure elements such as green areas, water quality, and air quality (Karataş and Gördeles Beser 2021).

Since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries have started implementing measures to fight the pandemic, both at central and local government levels. Contracting through social contacts, the virus mostly affected highly populated cities (Seçkiner Bingöl 2022b). Local governments took over significant tasks in fighting against the pandemic and resorted to innovative tools in their service provision, primarily technological ones.

It is of great importance for local governments to implement effective strategies in times of any crisis, including a pandemic since these administrations are the closest units of management for citizens and directly affect the daily lives of their residents. By closely observing and understanding the needs and demands of the local people, local governments can own various leading practices.

On the other hand, local governments can be seen as secondary institutions during disasters and pandemics in many countries. This may lead to coordination problems between central and local governments, as central governments may fail to allocate sufficient resources, capacity, and authority to local governments (Yeşildal 2020). Local governments are critical stakeholders in minimizing the risks of disasters and pandemics, as historically, the bottom-up approach has been more successful in disaster management (Yeşildal 2020; Bimay and Kaypak 2022; also see Uçar Kocaoğlu 2021; Uçar Kocaoğlu et al. 2023).

It is highlighted that smart cities are essential actors in coping with global crises (Troisi et al. 2022). Smart cities were known to contribute to adapting to global crises even before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. On the other hand, although technology plays a transforming role in smart cities, smart tools alone are not automatically leading to an organized transformation (Troisi et al. 2022). There is an emphasis, therefore, on the users of smart technologies. In the end, a smart society is one that has developed the ability to collectively work in implementing disaster coping strategies (Rachmawati et al. 2021: 2).

Developing collective coping methods against the challenges residents faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and building local wisdom through this practice of collective work was one of the fundamental requirements of creating smart local communities (Rachmawati et al. 2021). Developing a hygienic living culture, increasing environmental awareness, developing cleaning habits at home (i.e., use of disinfectants), and wearing masks are signs of the significance of individuals forming a smart community (Rachmawati et al. 2021: 2).

The ability of citizens to adapt to various technologic changes during the pandemic was one of the factors affecting the success of the fight against it (Troisi et al. 2022). Citizens' attitudes toward technology, susceptibility, and perceptions are among the points that should be considered. Identifying barriers before using technology and participating in technology can effectively make coping with future crises easier (Troisi et al. 2022). For instance, citizens accepting the effective use of distance learning and digital healthcare applications are essential in adopting these practices.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, smart cities worldwide put numerous innovative applications into practice. Offering ICT-based services was vital in facing the COVID-19 pandemic (Rachmawati et al. 2021). Some of the well-known examples are navigation and camera systems to monitor and measure crowds, technologic innovations to establish social distancing (crowd forecast cameras, wearable distance calculators), GPS devices used to manage traffic, COVID-19 test kits and test locations, digitalized municipal services (to the greatest possible extent), e-government and e-municipality applications, disinfection spraying stands in public transportation and other crowded common use areas, social distancing floor marks at parks and shopping malls, thermal cameras used to measure body temperatures, developing mobile phone applications which can be used to monitor the locations of positive cases, deliver distance learning and learning applications, as well applications for remote social interaction (online concerts, online chats, online events), remote healthcare, for hotels in touristic regions to sustain social distancing

measures, and professional disinfection practices (Seçkiner Bingöl 2022a). Although there are similar applications in different smart cities of the world, each city has a different local population and environmental dynamics.

The following section will study the smart city applications of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the COVID-19 pandemic and examine citizen-centric ones.

## 4 Citizen-Centric Smart City Applications of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality During the COVID-19 Pandemic

With a population of 16 million, Istanbul is one of the pioneers of implementing smart city applications in Turkey. A highly dense urban population, and ongoing rapid urbanization, led Istanbul to face various issues related to the use of resources (Seçkiner Bingöl 2021b). Hence, in Istanbul, the first smart city initiative started with the launch of the Smart City Project Phase I Services Contract in May 2016. ISBAK A.Ş (Istanbul IT and Smart City Technologies Inc.) was awarded the contract and it launched the smart city implementation plan through its "Smart City Project Office" (Ataç 2020: 278). In 2017, the Smart City Directorate began following up on smart city practices. To implement them, Istanbul followed these five steps in the first phase: literature screening and review of best practices in the world, analysis of the existing situation, setting the vision and strategy, developing a detailed infrastructure design and prioritization, and devising governance principles and performance indicators (IBB 2017: 50; Seçkiner Bingöl 2021b). After this stage, many smart city projects were carried out in Istanbul; IMM hosted approximately 120 smart city projects between 2008 and 2019 (Seçkiner Bingöl 2021b).

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate change produced the Istanbul Smart City Road Map within the framework of the National Action Plan and revised the road map to allow local governments to create city-specific smart city strategies. As part of the given revision work, Smart City Project Inventory was developed in June 2019. An analysis of citizens' needs, studies, and surveys have been used to identify and prioritize the projects. A Preliminary Workshop on Setting up the Smart City Vision and Mission for Istanbul was organized with 259 participants. During the following Workshop, smart city governance infrastructures were created in nine thematic areas: mobility, energy, environment, life, security, human, economy-finance, governance, and ICT. Four hundred citizen surveys were filled, and 60 interviews were conducted to represent different citizen profiles (immigrant, disabled, tourist) living in the city. Fourteen different smart cities' ecosystems and detailed governance structures, such as London, Paris, Birmingham, Barcelona, were analyzed (IBB 2021: 113).

Like in many cities, Istanbul also developed various strategies and implemented measures to cope with COVID-19. Studies on local governments during the

COVID-19 pandemic municipalities took over many roles, including informing the public, providing social aid and assistance, enabling access to healthcare services and digital education, supplying medications, forming call lines for health services, and providing transportation and transfer services (Kavas Bilgiç 2020). In their study analyzing five districts of Istanbul for their activities during COVID-19, Urhan and Arslankoç (2021) refer to municipal activities such as street disinfection, support for distance learning, protection mask production, psychologic counseling, feeding stray animals, organizing mini concerts, producing and distributing informative brochures, flyers, billboards, and videos, assistance for refugees, in addition to social welfare assistance they have provided. Peker and Köseoğlu (2021) listed Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's work for informing the public on COVID-19 and awareness raising; providing shelter, cleaning, and hygiene control services; and distributing protective masks and other cleaning substances, as well as other various social welfare services provided. In their study on Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Bek and Bek (2021) categorized municipal activities as awareness raising, social welfare assistance, healthcare services, education, and culture services. Koronavirus.ibb.istanbul web page was created in Istanbul, and screens on public transportation such as trams, subway, billboards, and flyers were used to inform people about COVID-19. In the sociocultural sphere, online panels were held with physicians as panelists, online workout classes for residents, online bookstores were created, and online chess tournaments were organized, as an example of activities provided by the municipalities (Bek and Bek 2021). Based on these studies, we can conclude that municipalities carried out activities to inform the public, produce masks and other protective equipment, disinfect and secure hygiene, feed stray animals, provide in-kind and in-cash social welfare aids. On the other hand, municipalities organize social life, offer smart city apps, support healthcare services, support distance learning, and offer participatory practices (Seçkiner Bingöl 2022b). Besides these citizen-related services, there are also citizen-centric policies during COVID-19 which some municipalities conduct. As Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is one of them, following section will consider Istanbul's citizen-centric activities during COVID-19.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's citizen-centric activities during COVID-19 can be divided into six categories: smart transportation, e-municipality work, volunteering participation, crowdfunding, open government data, and free internet access-supporting distance learning.

### *4.1 Smart Public Transportation*

As it is known, with the breakout of COVID-19, one of the cities most affected systems was public transportation. Public transportation became limited and kept under control. The use of public transportation was reduced significantly in many countries. The use of public transportation was reduced by 83% in Istanbul (IBB 2020a). One of the first practices launched in Istanbul to promote healthy

transportation was the mobile transportation app with square code. This application used a mobile phone-based application using a square code to cross tilts at public transportation. Hence, the increasing effects of using cash and personal belongings could be alleviated. The first pilot trials of this application started at 35 locations in Istanbul in April 2020 and offered the opportunity to make contact-free payments (IBB 2020a). The second practice Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality launched was Traffic Jam Mobile App (İBB YolGösteren). This app helped citizens to view traffic density on the road, avoid jammed roads, and help reduce traffic. Users of this app could also feed in data by using the notification menu in the app, notifying road works, jams, road incidents, and other traffic issues on their routes, allowing the other users to be informed.[1] Third, using the HES Code (The Code for the abbreviation for Life fits Home) became required to use public transportation, limiting individuals with COVID-19 or those who have contact with the infected from using public transportation.

Technically integrated with the Ministry of Health, this application reported individuals using public transportation who are COVID-positive or possibly contacted the Ministry of Interior.[2] Another practice introduced within the scope of smart transportation and citizen-centric practices is contact-free pedestrian buttons at pedestrian crossings. This practice used photocells to prevent the use of press-on pedestrian buttons.[3] Smart city practices subsidiary ISBAK equipped traffic lights with contact-free pedestrian buttons using remote sensing technology, allowing pedestrians to cross roads touch-free. Seven hundred eighty-one pedestrian buttons have been replaced with contact-free ones throughout the city. Additionally, 60 buttons were replaced with "accessible" buttons. In 2021, a total of 997 accessible pedestrian buttons (contact and contact-free) were installed at intersections (IBB 2021: 145).

Besides standard measures such as extensive disinfection at public transportation, increasing the number of trips based on flexible working hours, and reducing the number of passengers per trip, a cycling and walking campaign was launched to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. The project promoted walking and cycling for short distances and was implemented under WRI Turkey Sustainable Cities Cooperation and The Partnership for Healthy Cities initiative. It aims to promote confidence in public transportation and minimize personal automobile use.[4] As a part of this project, IMM displayed campaign visuals on billboards and overpasses, reminding the necessity of preserving social distancing and respecting hygiene

[1] For detailed information see: https://uym.ibb.gov.tr/kurumsal/haberler-ve-duyurular/ibb-yolgosteren-1#:~:text=%C4%B0stanbul%20B%C3%BCy%C3%BCk%C5%9Fehir%20Belediyesi%20taraf%C4%B1ndan%20geli%C5%9Ftirilen,hedefinize%20ula%C5%9Ft%C4%B1ran%20canl%C4%B1%20navigasyon%20uygulamas%C4%B1d%C4%B1r

[2] https://www.ibb.istanbul/arsiv/37286/ibb-ulasimda-hes-kodu-calismalarina-basladi

[3] https://www.ibb.istanbul/arsiv/36743/ibbden-covid%2D%2D19a-karsi-temassiz-yaya-butonu

[4] https://www.ibb.istanbul/arsiv/37160/ibb-covid-19a-karsi-bisiklet-ve-yurume-kampan

measures at public transportation and emphasizing alternative transportation forms through its slogans such as “Move for your health.”[5]

As can be seen, all citizen-centric applications introduced for the transportation system can be implemented by citizens using, adopting, and participating in the use of these applications. For instance, the HES Code application works with citizens installing this application on their phones and learning how to use it. Similarly, the use of non-contact pedestrian buttons may become operational with the use of citizens. Reducing the density in public transportation becomes sustainable with the use of the abovementioned IBB Yol Gösteren application by the citizens. Similarly, the widespread use of bicycles is only possible if citizens adopt the use of bicycles for the short distances.

### *4.2 E-Municipality Services Application*

The COVID-19 pandemic helped the advancement of e-municipality services. Municipalities launched new practices such as developing informative webpages for citizens and online social welfare assistance services (see Bostancı and Yıldırım 2021). Municipalities carried out services online during the pandemic to the greatest extent possible. One of the first responses of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality as a part of e-municipality services during the pandemic was launching the “https://koronavirus.ibb.istanbul/” website, which was used to inform the public, organize online events, and build online volunteering platforms. This webpage contained information regarding COVID-19, vaccination against it, municipalities’ measures against COVID-19, COVID-19-themed interviews, an interactive map locating cases, COVID-19-related social media accounts, interactive bulletins, municipality activity reports, and brochures. Through the website, citizens could remain informed about COVID-related measures and the municipality’s response, participate in volunteering works, and listen to discussions and interviews on the pandemic. The webpage also presented daily statistics on coronavirus, the highest number of cases per city, and vaccination rates on a map.

Municipalities website “www.ibb.istanbul” is available both in Turkish and English languages and offers 41 different e-municipality applications (IBB 2020b: 60). Thirteen online training programs produced under UN’s Making Cities Resilient Campaign, considered to be the reference for building resilient cities during COVID-19, were also delivered by IMM. These training dealt with raising disaster awareness and improving institutional capacities (IBB 2020b: 72).

> “Creating a Control Centre, Central Software, and installing Vehicle Tracking Systems, GPS trackers, and camera systems inside public vehicles is ongoing. The Control Centre is designed to be fully integrated with 153 Call Centers and aims to enable effective and central supervision and management of public vehicles, minimize safety problems, and

[5] https://www.ibb.istanbul/arsiv/37293/ibbden-daha-saglikli-kentsel-hareketlilik-ici

> transform the transportation system to become proactive and citizen-centric" (IBB 2020b: 109).[6]

Many e-municipality services of IMM were already active before the pandemic, and these services, such as e-info, e-payment, e-statement, and e-inquiry, were fully functional. However, e-municipality services are provided under social assistance, except for koronavirus.ibb.istanbul website, notably launched for COVID-19, seemed to be product of the pandemic period. Online delivery of social welfare assistance services became possible; different online platforms, including Suspended Bills, Family Support Package, Mother-Child Support Package, and Education Support Package, bringing those in need with benevolent citizens, were created and used effectively.

"Istanbul is Yours" (*İstanbul Senin*) mobile application[7] is another service offered for citizens to access all necessary municipal applications through one platform. This new-generation application hosts a secure joint payment infrastructure that can be downloaded from the Google store or App store and works through digital ID details. The application aims for transparency and participation in city services. Citizens can access accurate information regarding the recent developments in their city and express their thoughts and opinions on the management of the city. The application contains the inclusive democracy and interaction platform "Söz Senin" (It is Your Word), complaints and requests platform "Çözüm Merkezi" (Solution Centre) and "Suspending Bill" as well as "Live Help" which have been developed during COVID-19. Additionally, the "Halk Bakkal" (People's Mini Market) solidarity platform developed to protect craftsmen and neighborhood minimarkets, Emergency Numbers, Where is My Bus app, Career Istanbul app, City Map app, and Disaster Information systems are a part of this comprehensive application (IBB 2021). Citizens can also use square codes to make payments on the application and follow up on their filed complaints.[8]

E-municipal applications are unthinkable without citizen use and citizen participation. E-municipality is sustainable only with e-participation of citizens and citizen interaction. Therefore, it is very important for citizens to use electronic services, learn how to use them, and adopt these practices. In the COVID-19 process, the development of e-municipal services increased the interaction between the citizens and the administrators, enabling the citizens to follow the process closely, to be informed about the process, and to participate actively in the process. For example, citizens have contributed to the establishment of social distance by adopting e-municipal practices, participated in activities that contribute to the process through voluntary platforms, contributed to social solidarity with applications such as Suspended Bills (Askıda Fatura), and shared their views and suggestions on city management with the Istanbul is Yours application. Accordingly, we can say that the development of e-municipal services in the COVID-19 process has contributed to

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[6] See https://askidafatura.ibb.gov.tr/

[7] See https://istanbulsenin.istanbul/hakkimizda/

[8] See https://istanbulsenin.istanbul/hakkimizda/

the improvement of the process by increasing the participatory interaction between the citizens and the administration.

### *4.3 Voluntary Participation Activities*

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality carries out voluntary participation activities in disasters. Voluntary participation activities for COVID-19 are also among those. To start with, the Municipality delivered COVID-19 training to its volunteers. Voluntary production of protective masks and distribution of those followed the series of COVID-19 voluntary activities. Under the Collective Production Movement in Istanbul Initiative, citizens who owned workshops produced protective masks, and those with 3D printers produced other protective equipment besides protective masks (Koronavirus Istanbul 2021).[9]

The Disaster Volunteers Project aimed to train and group volunteers of 35–40 people informed on disaster preparedness in every neighborhood.[10] The Municipality organized a series of events under this Project. The project's goal was to train and build teams of 25–30 disaster volunteers in each neighborhood to carry out disaster preparedness responsibilities. Individuals from every age group received disaster awareness training and various pieces of training on first aid, climbing knot techniques, station techniques, making stretchers and moving injured on stretchers, rope climbing, and building reels. The ultimate goal is to equip them with skills that may be necessary in the case of a disaster and improve their first-response capacities. The comprehensive work included search and rescue training for dogs and planning these training centers for each district to ensure joint efforts of district municipalities and residents during disasters (Seçkiner Bingöl 2021d).

Animal lover volunteers in each municipality took an active role in feeding the strays. Directorate of Museums and Libraries in Istanbul worked with volunteering celebrities to readout books for the hearing and vision impaired.[11] Volunteering psychologists provided counseling and attended online chats. Collective Production Movement produced masks. Volunteers were organized to discuss vaccination-related concerns; citizens participated in online social events, including online chats (Koronavirus Istanbul 2021).

The active role of volunteers in the management of the COVID-19 process shows how important the contribution of citizens is in the management of crisises. As mentioned above, the participation of voluntary citizens in the feeding of stray animals has facilitated the work of the municipality administration. Volunteers who participated in the disaster trainings learned to act together with the management in case of disaster and gained an important advantage for the next crisis situation. The

[9] See https://koronavirus.ibb.istanbul

[10] https://akom.ibb.istanbul/afet-gonulluleri/

[11] https://seslikutuphane.ibb.gov.tr/tr/gonullu-seslendiren-islemleri.html

realization of mask production with the participation of citizens, the elimination of vaccine hesitance, and the revitalization of social life with the participation of volunteers in online chats show how important the contribution of citizens is in the management of the process.

### 4.4 Crowdfunding Activities

The relevant literature on crowdfunding shows the relation of the concept with crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is roughly defined as getting the crowd's opinions regarding a problem solution or improvement of any institutional activities and using these opinions to solve these problems (Çağlar 2019; Atsan and Erdoğan 2015). In crowdfunding, crowds come together and tip in small amounts of money to collect funds (Çubukçu 2017).

Crowdfunding is becoming more popular with the increased use of technology. Local governments have developed methods suitable for crowdfunding during COVID-19. The pandemic paralyzed many sectors, citizens working without insurance became unable to meet their basic needs, and applications for social welfare assistance increased significantly. Municipalities, unable to cover up for the economic damage led by the pandemic due to their limited budget and capacities, introduced crowdfunding and used this new method to meet the social welfare assistance requests of the people (Saylam and Ünal 2022).

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality also developed crowdfunding activities for social welfare assistance during this process. It created social media platforms that bring those in need with benevolent citizens. Crowdfunding activities that started with the #Birliktebaşaracağız (together we will succeed) hashtag were grouped under Suspending Bill, Family Support Package, Mother-Child Support Package, and Education Support Package. Suspending Bill was planned for those in need and unable to pay their water and natural gas bills; Mother-Child Support for mothers with children of 0–4 ages; Family Support Package for families in need of aid-in-cash; and Education Support Package for students in need of aid-in-cash.

Table 2 presents the number and amounts of aid spent under Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Crowdfunding Campaign. According to this table, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality collected approximately 88.984.324 TL (approx.

**Table 2** Istanbul metropolitan municipality's crowdfunding campaigns

| Support package | Matched package (number of aid) | Total aid in TL |
|---|---|---|
| Suspending Bill | 366,099 | 60,036,424 |
| Family Support | 73,330 | 12,898,950 |
| Mother-Child Support | 50,288 | 9,224,700 |
| Education Support | 270,297 | 6,824,250 |

Source: Generated by the author from https://askidafatura.ibb.gov.tr/fatura-listesi

$4.943, 000) and brought it to aid those in need. The donations were collected online and directed to those in need in the form of aid-in-cash, payments of bills, and support aids; this is remarkable in terms of being citizen-centric; personal data of the ones in need remain confidential.

Crowdfunding practices realized with the contribution of citizens have significantly supported the social aid activities of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the COVID-19 process. This shows us that citizen-centric practices such as crowdfunding are effective in the provision of social aid services, which have a critic role in mitigating crises'effect on citizens.

### *4.5 Open Government Data Portals*

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality serves in 10 different categories (environment, human, mobility, governance, energy, safety/security, disaster management, economy, information, and communication technologies) through its open government data portal on https://data.ibb.gov.tr address. Twenty-eight of those are online, while there are 190 datasets in total. The portal was visited 15 million times in 2021. Three hundred twenty-one data requests were submitted by users (IBB 2021). While the available data sets included data on medical home services, measures against vectors, disaster management, and data on healthcare and medical institutions, citizens can also file requests to ask for additional data or new data sets.

In the COVID-19 process, open data has been effective in providing information about health services. Open data portals contribute to the transparency of services offered to citizens. In addition, the ability of citizens to evaluate open data and request data from the management enables citizens to participate in the city administration. Data sets on traffic density, public transportation hours, different information on transportation, bicycle paths, and data sets published in the form of maps have been effective in maintaining the purposes of citizens such as sustaining social distance and reducing crowds during the COVID-19 process.

### *4.6 Free Internet Access and Support for Distance Learning*

Free access service (IBB Wi-Fi) is the municipality's step toward popular MuniWiFi (Municipal Wi-Fi) practice worldwide. This service aims to provide free internet access in busy public areas and public transportation and expand free coverage throughout the city. As of 2021, free Wi-Fi service is available in many social areas such as the metro, museums, libraries, city squares, parks, and tourist attraction centers (IBB 2021). Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality also supported young people with computers and free internet, mainly due to distance learning implemented during COVID-19. A total of 35 BELNET centers (muni-wifi) operating in 21 districts under the Provincial Directorate of Ministry of Youth and Sports kept their

doors open for students receiving distance learning, allowing them to connect to free internet. In-house computers in those centers provided internet access with harmful content filters. The centers respected hygiene and social distancing measures while being able to host 328 students at once.[12]

The spread of free internet access is undoubtedly of vital importance in the implementation of citizen-centered policies, such as benefiting from e-municipal services, using open data sets, interactive information about the COVID-19 process, participating in online platforms, quick access to vital information, having information about community movements in times of crisis, and being able to organize quickly.

More importantly, the widespread use of free internet is indispensable for citizens to transition to distance education, work remotely, and participate in remote health practices during the COVID-19 process.

## 5 Conclusion

Citizen-centric smart city can be defined as cities that put both techonolgy and citizens in the center of the provision of urban services, take into account the contribution of citizens in the provision of these services, and implement various institutional mechanisms to become citizen-centric. With the development of the new public governance approach, citizens are no longer passive objects of public service provision processes but are active subjects of the process. Smart city management implementing this approach allows citizens to become stakeholders in the provision of urban services, participate in projects, and participate in decisions that affect them. Hence the question of "how citizens should participate in smart cities" is the main topic for discussion. While discussing, one should consider various participation mechanisms in place, such as public meetings, participatory budgeting, and voluntary participation, as well as the roles of citizens in smart cities. Citizens in smart cities may belong to different role groups, such as consumers or co-creators, and city administrators need to understand to which processes citizens can actively contribute.

It is highlighted that smart cities are essential actors in coping with global crises (see Troisi et al. 2022). Although technology plays a transforming role in smart cities, smart tools alone do not automatically lead to an organized transformation (Troisi et al. 2022). There is the emphasis, therefore, on the users of those smart technologies; a smart society is one that has developed the ability to collectively work in implementing disaster coping strategies (Rachmawati et al. 2021: 2). For instance, to build healthy environments, society should develop environmental awareness and develop habits of wearing masks and minding their hygiene.

[12] https://belhabelediye.com.tr/istanbul-buyuksehir-belediyesinden-ogrencilere-uzaktan-egitim-destegi/

The COVID-19 pandemic showed how important it is to provide technology-based services in smart cities and people's adaptation to technology and ability to develop collective behaviors.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, smart cities in countries put numerous innovative applications into practice while every city worked with its dynamics of population, environment, and citizens to overcome this pandemic.

In many countries, we have seen examples of COVID-19 measures, which include navigation and camera systems to monitor and measure crowds, technological innovations to establish social distancing (crowd forecast cameras, wearable distance calculators), GPS devices used to manage traffic, e-government, and e-municipality applications. In addition, it is seen that there are applications such as temperature measurement with thermal cameras, phone applications that allow you to see the locations of infected people, applications to support distance education, online social activities, and online health applications (Seçkiner Bingöl 2022a, b).

Researches analyzing metropolitan municipalities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey, on the other hand, conclude that municipalities carried out activities to inform the public, produce masks and other protective equipment, disinfect and secure hygiene, feed stray animals, provide in-kind and in-cash social welfare aids, organize social life, offer smart city apps, support healthcare services, support distance learning, and participatory practices (see Kavas Bilgiç 2020; Bek and Bek 2021; Urhan and Arslankoç 2021; Seçkiner Bingöl 2021e).

With a population of 16 million, Istanbul is one of the pioneers of implementing smart city applications in Turkey. Strategically implementing smart city practices since 2016, the city has built its Smart City Project Inventory as of June 2019 and utilized needs analysis and survey methods to identify and prioritize the projects (IBB 2021). This study focusing on citizen-centric smart city practices of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the time of COVID-19 classified them under six categories: smart transportation, e-municipality, voluntary participation, crowdfunding, open government data, and free internet access - support for digital education.

Mobile apps for transportation, GPS applications showing traffic jams, HES code practice showing whether there are COVID-19 contacted individuals on public transportation, and touch-free pedestrian crossing buttons are among citizen-centric practices adopted by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the pandemic. It is seen that all citizen-centric applications introduced for the transportation system can be implemented by citizens using and participating in these applications.

As a part of e-municipality services, the "https://koronavirus.ibb.istanbul/" website was launched and used to inform the public, and online events were organized, and online volunteering platforms were built. "İstanbul Senin" (*Istanbul is Yours*) mobile application was developed to preserve transparency and participation in city services; live support and Suspending Bill services were offered. The development of e-municipal services in the COVID-19 process has increased the interaction between citizens and administrators, enabling the citizens to closely monitor the process, to be informed about the process, and to participate actively in the process. We can say that the development of e-municipal services in this process has contributed to the improvement of the process by increasing the participatory interaction between the citizens and the administration.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality also developed crowdfunding activities for social welfare assistance during this process. It created social media platforms that bring those in need with benevolent citizens. Crowdfunding activities that started with the #Birliktebaşaracağız (together we will succeed) hashtag were grouped under Suspending Bill, Family Support Package, Mother-Child Support Package, and Education Support Package. Crowdfunding practices realized with the contribution of citizens significantly supported the social aid activities of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the COVID-19 process. It shows that citizen-centered practices such as crowdfunding are effective in the sustainability of social assistance practices, which have an important role in alleviating crises.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's open government data portal "https://data.ibb.gov.tr" serves as ten different categories (environment, human, mobility, governance, energy, safety/security, disaster management, economy, information, and communication technologies). The ability of citizens to evaluate open data and request data from the administration enables citizens to participate in the administration. Datasets on traffic density and public transportation hours; different information about transportation and bicycle paths; and data sets published in the form of maps have been effective in maintaining the purposes of citizens such as maintaining social distance and reducing crowds during the COVID-19 process.

With distance learning introduced during the pandemic, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality supported young people with computers and free internet. Undoubtedly the spread of internet access has a vital importance in the implementation of citizen-centered policies. Thus, citizens benefit from e-municipal services, use open data sets, learn interactive information about the Covid-19 process, participate in online platforms, access vital information quickly, have information about community movements in times of crisis, and organize quickly. More importantly, the widespread use of free internet is indispensable for citizens' transition to distance education, remote working, and participation in online health applications.

In conclusion, it is seen that Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality provides many citizen-centric services during the COVID-19 process. The contribution of citizens is important in ensuring social distance; reducing traffic density; using e-municipality; and providing crowdfunding, voluntary participation, and social assistance. It is seen that it is important for citizens as technology users and the society as a whole to develop common behaviors in order to maintain citizen-centric practices in pandemics. Free Wi-Fi offered by local governments and support for distance learning is becoming more common. On the other hand, developing digital healthcare applications and efforts spared for those are the topics that should be studied for the post-pandemic period.

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# Data Wars During COVID-19 Pandemic in Turkey: Regulatory Science, Trust, Risk, and Citizen Science

**Ali O. Ilhan and Arsev Umur Aydınoğlu**

**Abstract** There is a growing body of research in the democratization of science, participatory governance, and citizen science within the extant Science and Technology Studies (STS) literature. The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge not only in the medical sense but also for public policy due to limited data availability and deliberation process in policy making. This study focuses on the role of data activists in citizen-centered public policy making during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey. We examine two cases to argue that there was a data vacuum and data activists got extremely creative with the available data to satisfy the public's hunger for information and to facilitate the deliberation process through Twitter. In each case, data activists challenged the official discourse and provided their data analysis in a clear and concise manner that could be understood by the public easily. Twitter's growing importance in the democratization of science became obvious, as it was the medium where most interaction happened.

**Keywords** Citizen science · Citizen-centered · COVID-19 · Turkey · Democratization of science · Twitter · Policy making · Cases · Data activists · Data vacuum

## 1 Introduction

Nature abhors a vacuum. Aristotle

There is a growing interest in broad concepts of democratization of science and citizen science within the extant Science and Technology Studies (STS) literature

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(Kimura and Kinchy 2016). This interest parallels larger trends, such as the increasing importance of participatory governance (Krick 2022) and rising distrust in certain forms of expert knowledge (Eyal 2019).

During acute crises such as pandemics, disasters, or economic recessions, policymakers must act rapidly, typically lacking full "situational awareness" due to scarce, potentially erroneous, and sometimes non-existing data. These situations are essentially "wicked problems" (Rittel and Webber 1973) where numerous stakeholders have conflicting interests, and there is not one right or optimum answer but a complex landscape of bitter tradeoffs, compromises, and alliances. Citizen science and lay-expert collaborations become even more crucial during such episodes.

Part of a larger investigation that analyzes citizen science during the acute phase of COVID-19 in Turkey, this chapter discusses and highlights some key takeaways from this vast body of scholarship against the backdrop of citizen-centered public policy making (or lack thereof). We specifically focus on the data-sharing policies of the Turkish Ministry of Health and focus on two prominent examples: lay people challenging the official pandemic narrative, especially over Twitter. As such, we pave the way toward a large investigation of citizen science and data activism in the Turkish context during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study's contributions are two-fold. First, by using Turkish case empirically, we test this the limits of this body of literature which derives most of its examples from Western cases. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we show the vast potential of citizen-expert collaborations in the context of democratic participation for the future policy makers.

## 2 Citizen Science and Social Movements That Challenge the Epistemic Authority of Science

While the concept of citizen science is very broad, it can be explored under two categories[1] (Kimura and Kinchy 2016: 335). The first strand of citizen science involves people without scientific credentials volunteering to help "actual" scientists in various scientific activities. As a form of crowdsourcing, examples of this type of citizen science exhibit enormous variety, from crowdsourcing oceanographic (Lauro et al. 2014) to ornithological data collection (Greenwood 2007)—e.g., utilizing volunteers to play a game to solve complex protein folding structures. Citizens are largely passive in this form of collaboration. They do not actively participate in the process of knowledge-making after the data is collected and handed over to the scientists.

The second strand of citizen science—our real interest—can be understood within the larger context of contentious politics (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Tarrow 1996), and this type of citizen science aims to democratize science and

[1] We are aware that there is an immense variation in participatory/citizen science activities that cannot be neatly captured into these ideal types.

science-making (McCormick 2007, 2009). As such, they typically challenge dominant forms of scientific authority for "social justice, normative change, improved democratic practice, altering public perception" by "contesting expert knowledge, re-framing science, making political claims, mobilizing scientific resources and democratizing knowledge production" (McCormick 2007: 611).

STS scholars have extensively studied this brand of citizen science. While this literature is vast[2] (for some comprehensive reviews, see Breyman et al. 2017; Brown et al. 2004; Kimura and Kinchy 2016), some prominent examples include Allen's (2003) study of Louisiana's chemical corridor disputes; Brown and Mikkelsen's (1997) analysis of community action, toxic waste, and leukemia; Epstein's (1996) investigation of AIDS activism; McCormick et al.'s (2003) and Klawiter's (2008) work on the breast cancer movement; and Moore's (2008) inquiry of American scientists and social movements.

There are complex reasons behind the rise of citizen science almost concurrently around the globe, especially after the 1980s, but for our purposes, three stand out: (1) David Hess's conception of "epistemic modernization," (2) neoliberalization of science and science-making (Kimura and Kinchy 2016), and (3) scientization of governance and decision-making processes (Habermas 1971).

Epistemic modernization is

> …the process by which the agendas, concepts, and methods of scientific research are opened up to the scrutiny, influence and participation of users, patients, non-governmental organizations, social movements, ethnic minority groups, women, and other social groups that represent perspectives on knowledge that may be different from those of economic and political elites and those of mainstream scientists (Hess 2007: 47).

While epistemic modernization materializes in myriad ways, collaborations between experts and laypeople play a predominant role (McCormick 2009), particularly when activists target "regulatory science" (Eyal 2019), which we delineate in the following section. This is so because enrolling scientist-activists can help activists produce "legitimate" scientific knowledge that conforms to the epistemic standards erected by mainstream science and is taken seriously (Allen 2004; Frickel 2010).

Neoliberalization of science (Lave et al. 2010), on the other hand, creates a two-way dynamic that feeds both the first type of citizen science we mentioned at the beginning of this section and contentious citizen science (Vohland et al. 2019). Because the neoliberalization of science drastically alters the funding landscape, cash-strapped scientists and organizations may employ volunteers to cut back on data collection and analysis costs. A hyper-commercial and neoliberal knowledge regime also creates its discontents when market forces and corporate actors enroll scientists to further their interests, often perceived as against the public good (Vohland et al. 2019).

Finally, scientization, initially coined by Habermas (1971), refers to the rapidly expanding role of technocrats in regulatory processes and policy making (Brown 2007; Kimura and Kinchy 2016; McCormick 2007). Scientization inevitably pushes

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[2] Because of limited space, we only included a few examples here.

citizens and local pieces of knowledge out of the calculus, "focusing on collecting scientific data tends to depoliticize environmental problems, reducing socio-economic problems to technical ones and obfuscating distributive and sociocultural issues" (Kimura and Kinchy 2016: 337). Citizen science and related social movements can also be seen as a counter-trend, which seeks to challenge scientization and its top-down knowledge regime.

## 3 Expertise, Science, and its Discontents

Expertise is a largely contested concept, especially in the public arena. Eyal (2019: 7) notes that distrust in science/experts and scientization and over-reliance on expertise are dialectical twins. However, designations like "assault on science or expertise" are, at best, misnomers. There is not a single and unified scientific or expertise or all-encompassing scientific method, but a variety of sciences with their own distinct epistemic cultures, expertise regimes, and methods that are geared toward different ends (Knorr-Cetina 1999).

For example, not many people openly challenge and question quantum mechanics, astrophysics, or materials science. What people are skeptical or openly disdainful about is typically what Eyal (2019: 7) calls "regulatory science" and "policy science." Regulatory science is the type of science that is needed to support policy decisions. It is quite different from its distant cousin, basic science. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two is their distinct temporalities (Eyal 2019). For basic science, the goal is uncovering the underlying realities. Nobody expects that long-standing mysteries of the universe can be solved overnight. It is an open-ended, iterative enterprise that moves relatively slowly. Regulatory science, however, needs to act fast typically producing "closed facts." When a pandemic such as COVID-19 strikes, nobody has the luxury of waiting for scientists to hone and perfect their policy recommendations for a couple of years. Policy science, by definition, is messy, border-transgressing, and interdisciplinary and produces regulatory facts which "take the form of cutoffs, thresholds, guidelines, surrogate endpoints, acceptable risk levels" (Eyal 2019: 8).

Trust and risk are two key points in Eyal's conceptualization of policy science. These are inherently tied to the larger debates in STS and sociology about the nature of expertise and expert knowledge (e.g., see Abbott 1988; Brint 1996; Collins and Evans 2002, 2007; Larson 1979).

Expert knowledge always implies trust, yet trust is never stable: It needs to be actively constructed and reconstructed. Despite all the credentials, standards, licensure, and similar social closure mechanisms, there is no golden Turing Test for demarcating experts from non-experts. This simple fact becomes even more glaring during acute crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as many equally "respectable," "credentialed," or "published" experts can give completely different recommendations about seemingly simple things like masks, distancing requirements, or vitamins. Furthermore, there is ample evidence showing that scientists, like all other

individuals, are not always selfless, truth-seeking paragons of virtue but can be swayed by incentives such as power, fame, and income (Eyal 2019: 43).

Compounding this trust problem is the "messy" nature of the scientific processes. In a Latourian (Latour 1987) sense, facts never speak for themselves. "At multiple points, trained judgment is called upon to make decisions about how the data needs to be corrected, missing values included or not, curves smoothed, and weights applied" (Eyal 2019: 45). This interpretative process is not fully codified as formulating expert judgments requires vast amounts of tacit knowledge and implicit disciplinary norms (Collins 1974; Sismondo 2004). The lack of a well-defined set of rules makes it even more confusing for non-scientists, who try to make sense of often-conflicting expert decisions. This problem is not as obvious in basic science because of long-termism and lack of intense contact "outside academia." Unlike Anthony Fauci,[3] who had to defend some of their decisions in front of the cameras, most basic science projects and the scientists working on them are isolated from the public.

A case in point is the development of vaccines against COVID-19, which has happened in record time in multiple countries. Developers utilized various techniques (i.e., gene vaccines of Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna, viral vector vaccines of Oxford/AstraZeneca and Sputnik, whole virus vaccines of CoronaVac-Sinovac) (ACRO Biosystems 2022). One would assume anyone with a problem with one technique or country can easily find an alternative among available vaccines. Nevertheless, vaccine criticism (a spectrum between vaccine hesitancy to anti-vaccination) has risen again.

This is an old debate that goes back to 1796. Back then, the biological mechanism of how vaccines were protected was unclear, and germ theory was unknown. However, current vaccine criticism builds on the "unnaturalness" of vaccines supported by the anti-scientism movement that started around the 1970s—along with the antinuclear movement and environmentalism. It is no surprise as "For vaccine critics, this connection with wider political forces (e.g., cultural trends, social movements, political parties) is often crucial to grow and gain visibility" (Dubé et al. 2021: 180). Conspiracy theories about big pharma and the state fuel this movement. These are often justified as the denial of the legitimacy of state intervention under faux libertarianism, vaccine critics trust neither the science nor the state.

A prominent approach to address this is open communication. Transparency increases trust in science and restrains the spread of conspiracy theories (Petersen et al. 2021; WHO 2017). A strong positive correlation is found in the countries between the trust in science and scientists and vaccine confidence (Sturgis et al. 2021), whereas the opposite may also be true, as Albrecht (2022: 1) found that "in counties with a high percentage of Republican voters, vaccination rates were significantly lower" with deadlier results.

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[3] Anthony Stephen Fauci is an American physician-scientist and immunologist serving as the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) since 1984 and the Chief Medical Advisor to the President. He has become a celebrity during the pandemic in multiple controversies supporting science.

The second leg of Eyal's conceptualization of regulatory science, risk, is even more convoluted. Beck famously observes that "there are no experts on risk" (Beck 1992: 29), yet the concept of risk is the locus of regulatory science. There are no experts on risk because trying to operationalize and measure risk is an interdisciplinary problem that cannot be easily captured within the epistemic boundaries of a single discipline. Each discipline, however, has a different way of approaching the same issue, which is often contested and incompatible. These between-discipline differences become more pronounced during acute crises, leading to many clashes, disputes, and turf wars. This becomes a vicious cycle that feeds the erosion of trust. Also, perceptions of risk differ immensely between experts and lay people, and experts typically cannot operate at the same level of detail as ordinary people who face these risks daily.

## 4 Data and Democracy

One underestimated component of the citizens' participation in the democratic process is that they must have attitudes and opinions and sometimes must act upon them. Regarding science, health, and technology matters, for an ordinary person, it is hard to keep up with the advances. As a result, they are most often mis- or ill-informed or have no information. For democracy to function, access to information is critical (Harrison and Sayogo 2014); thus, good governance requires government transparency (Roberts 2006). The underlying belief is that informed citizens would be the agents of a functioning democratic system. The key to being informed has accessible data. Consequently, open data is considered a public good (Uhlir and Schröder 2007), and access and sharing of research data would enable science (i.e., through creating bigger and better datasets, facilitating collaboration, checking each other's findings), empower citizens, and benefit society (Arzberger et al. 2006).

There are different perspectives on democracy. Although the role of citizens can be different in each of the three democratic perspectives of Meijer (2012), open data is crucial for each of them. The first perspective is monitorial democracy, in which the citizens monitor the government and approve or disapprove of its actions. Both parties can be active in this approach (i.e., the government disclosing information or the citizens demanding information, such as via certain access to information laws). The second perspective is deliberative democracy, which sees the democratic process as a communicative process (Habermas 1991) via argumentation and deliberation by citizens where consensus is built. The deliberations should be built upon information for this process to be sound. Finally, in participatory democracy, the citizens can participate in collaborative action to address societal issues by creating and implementing policies and programs (Meijer 2012). Here, again, access to data is a vital component.

The international community acknowledged the importance of public access to information. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) reads as: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide

access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and inclusive societies." The second indicator for SDG 16 is the "number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information."[4] This is not normative but empirical, as multiple studies found that democratic regimes or countries with higher developmental indicators are more transparent (Brun-Martos and Lapsley 2017; Chen and Xu 2017; Magee and Doces 2015). The common underlying theme in this vast scholarship is that open government data benefits society in myriad ways.

The importance of access to information has been acknowledged as a critical factor in "rebuilding communities and strengthening public institutions" after the pandemic (Ayoubi et al. 2022: 35). The advances in information and communication technologies provide new opportunities. Virtual research environments are deemed to be tools for public policy making through e-infrastructures, heterogeneous data, software, and collaboration tools; however, there are also challenges, such as data context, heterogeneity, and quality issues (Beno et al. 2017); data skills (Ruijer and Martinius 2017). Privacy issues are also a growing problem, such as the infamous COVID-19 tracer app in South Korea that was banned from the app stores (Park et al. 2021). Furthermore, the different types of data create unique challenges (Skaaning 2018).

Data is stored and shared in open government data platforms (e.g., for the USA, https://data.gov/; the UK, https://www.data.gov.uk/; and for India, https://www.nic.in/products/open-government-data-ogd-platform-india/) which have received considerable attention from the researchers. Governments are big data producers, and by opening their data to the public through government data platforms, they facilitate the participation of its "informed" citizens in public discussions, policy making, decision-making, and addressing societal problems (Attard et al. 2015; Janssen 2011). However, it is also argued that commercial platforms may cause political scandals by utilizing sensitive personal data (such as Cambridge Analytica) and negatively impact political processes during political campaigns through digital marketing (Hankey et al. 2018). Decentralizing data may be a solution to some of the privacy and access concerns. The Digital Democracy and Data Commons pilot project, for instance, aims to enable a participatory process among the experts, citizens, and local authority in Barcelona through a decentralized data system (Calleja López 2018), which is wise considering that the Korean and Singaporean COVID-19 tracing apps met some criticism due to their centralized data structure (Park et al. 2021; Stevens and Haines 2020).

There are other issues for an open government data platform to facilitate democratic processes. Ruijer et al. (2017) showed that open data platforms could facilitate collective meaning construction only if public servants and citizens worked together. Moreover, the level of engagement differs due to the provision and quality of data.

[4] Please see, https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/sdg-16/

Of course, civic society creates some data platforms, which can be important for activists. They can break governments' monopoly on data and allow multiple and diverse interpretations, increase political participation, and develop better data literacy and skills that enable civic technologies (Baack 2015). Increased data literacy and skills mean not only better-informed citizens but also citizens with better social media literacy.

## 5 Twitter and the Democratization of Science

Where does Twitter land in this complex picture? Twitter is an American social media company that provides microblogging and social networking services. Due to its simplicity and wide reach, it has quickly become influential as a tool for information sharing and public debate.

When it first came out, Twitter was acknowledged to have great potential for online campaigning and deliberation through engaging citizens that had not been active before (Castells 2007; Jansen et al. 2009) and was welcomed as the medium of e-democracy. Since then, the research on Twitter has been progressing rapidly. To name a few, Larsson and Moe (2012) looked at Twitter users in the 2010 Swedish elections; Ernst et al. (2017) investigated populist communication strategies in Europe and the USA; Wilson (2011) reframed political engagement via Twitter; Best and Meng (2015) examined the use of Twitter in African politics. Early on, the primary function of Twitter was informing, but deliberation and reporting were rare (Small 2011). Even the politicians were using it reluctantly. The candidates in the European Parliament elections in 2009 only used it for electoral campaigning but not much for continuous campaigning (Vergeer et al. 2013). This has changed. Today, it is the main communication tool for any political communication strategy of contemporary parties and politicians[5] (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan 2013). Twitter facilitates engagement between citizens and politicians (Tromble 2018).

One reason to explain the power and reach of Twitter is its ability to facilitate the co-creation of meaning with the public through hashtags (Small 2011; Xiong et al. 2019). As an indexing system for social media content, hashtags engage users in online conversations, debates, and even action (Yang 2016). The term "hashtag activism" is coined to explain how "fighting for or supporting a cause with the use of hashtags as the primary channel to raise awareness of an issue and encourage debate via social media" (Tombleson and Wolf 2017: 15) (or cyberactivism 2.0 to highlight the use of social media in social protests (Sandoval-Almazan and Ramon Gil-Garcia 2014). These emergent social movements are cost-effective, have potentially infinite reach, and are impactful thanks to Twitter and other social media. The actions are not limited to the social media realm only. The real-life protests are also

[5] Unless they are permanently banned after repeated violations of the community guidelines such as the former US president Donald Trump.

fueled or organized via Twitter. The Arab Spring protests between 2010 and 2013 took the Middle East and the West by surprise. The discontent public organized via Twitter toppled the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt but met violent pushbacks from the governments of Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria, leading to years of deadly civil wars and instability in the region. The activists in the West also used Twitter. The indignados, or 15 M in Spain in 2011, led to the occupation of the streets of Madrid by 30,000 people in 3 days (Postill 2014). It inspired many protests in other democratic countries and was collectively named the Occupy Movement. #occupywallstreet has become a famous motto and quite influential in the USA and a decade later led to the infamous storming of the Capitol building in Washington, DC. All these events relied heavily on social media, specifically Twitter, to share information and self-organize the public (Conover et al. 2013; Kim 2022; Reese and Chen 2022).

On the other hand, Twitter, like other social media companies, is for-profit, and to operate globally, sometimes (or most often), it must comply with the governments' requests at the expense of its users. It is common for authoritarian or democratic governments to ask for user information from social media companies. Twitter and Google publicly disclose illegal or extralegal requests from governments on user data and content removal in their transparency reports (Youmans and York 2012) but not the other companies. Some authoritarian regimes allow citizens to voice their opinions on social media to divide and misdirect the momentum. Most of them have their botnet armies to conduct their propaganda. Twitter is also a hub for the spread of partisan or fake news (Allcott et al. 2019; Bastos and Mercea 2019) and misinformation not only in politics (Grinberg et al. 2019) but also in everything from disaster news to public health (Ahmed et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2019).

Moreover, through the echo chamber, which is selective exposure that results in ideological segregation, deliberative processes may not happen and reinforce the divisions among communities (Barberá et al. 2015; Cinelli et al. 2021; Colleoni et al. 2014). The expected facilitating role of Twitter to support democratic processes through information sharing and deliberation does not happen as misinformation, and fake news is spread, and users engage only with like-minded users. Furthermore, Twitter has become a hotbed for extreme ideologies to meet online and/or physically and get into collaborative action (Kim et al. 2021; Reese and Chen 2022; Uyheng and Carley 2021). Simply put, Twitter is a double-edged sword—one edge to foster democratic processes by creating a digital space for information sharing, deliberation, and collective action and another edge to undo all.

## 6 Data (or Lack Thereof) and COVID-19 Pandemic in Turkey: A Brief Background

During the pandemic, academics and pundits mostly talked about how disinformation spread through social media, but our case is a counter-example.

Although AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi- Justice and Development Party) has been in power since 2002, especially after 2015, the political regime in Turkey evolved into what a growing number of scholars define as competitive or electoral authoritarianism (see, e.g., the seminal article from Esen and Gumuscu 2016). The effects of this authoritarian turn on civil liberties are well documented (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Turam 2012).

Esen and Gumuscu (2016) discuss the rise of authoritarianism in Turkey by employing the concept of an "uneven playing field" with a particular emphasis on violating civil liberties. An uneven playing field comprises three components: "(1) politicized state institutions; (2) uneven access to media; and (3) uneven access to resources" (Esen and Gumuscu 2016: 1587). Coupled with a "frequent harassment of media, restrictions on freedom of political association and speech, and suppression of opposition figures or other government critics" (Esen and Gumuscu 2016: 1590), an uneven playing field is especially relevant to understand the actions of scientists and activists who tried to challenge the official discourse about the COVID-19 data.

Like the rest of the world, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been multifaceted, and it was shaped, to a great degree, by the populist/autocratic tendencies of the Turkish government (Balta and Ozel 2022). We will not recount the full story here but instead concentrate on the data-sharing policies of the Turkish Government and how official figures were reported, especially during the acute phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies were salient as they created a feedback loop with the regulatory science efforts that formed the backbone of the Turkish COVID response.[6]

Around the 10th of January 2020, before the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the Turkish Ministry of Health created a scientific committee (*Bilim Kurulu* in Turkish) comprising 26 scientists, who are overwhelmingly MDs (i.e., epidemiologists virologists, clinical microbiologists, and specialists from chest diseases, infectious diseases, and intensive care). By April 2020, the Committee had 38 members (Karatas 2020). Initially, decisions related to containment measures were made concerning a scientific committee that had been recently established. During the early stages of the pandemic, the president of Turkey did not often publicly announce figures or government measures. Instead, the health minister, Fahrettin Koca, served as the spokesperson for the scientific committee (Balta and Ozel 2022). Koca became the face of the government response through the pandemic on Twitter. His Twitter following also swelled during the pandemic, as he used the medium to communicate statistics, public health messages, and certain key policies such as the mask mandates or vaccination regime. Koca announced the first official COVID case in Turkey in a press conference on the

[6] It should also be noted that unlike cases like Italy and India, the Turkish health care system never completely collapsed (see Balta and Ozel 2022 for more details).

11th of March, 2020, and the first official COVID death came soon after, on the 17th of March. Within a month, the reported cases rose to over 23 K.[7]

Throughout the pandemic, the Turkish government tried to create a success story, and official figures and statistics were a part of this discursive strategy (Balta and Ozel 2022). Despite complete central control, the Ministry of Health was never completely transparent about sharing data during the pandemic. This has been critiqued by civil society, including journalists, NGOs, and prominent opposition figures, time and again. Until the 25th of March, Minister Koca actively used Twitter. However, from this date on, the Ministry of Health created a dedicated web portal and the now (in)famous "turquoise table." The turquoise table, in the beginning, included total cases, total tests, total deaths, total intubated patients, the total number of daily tests, total recovered cases, daily cases, daily tests, and daily deaths that are officially attributed to COVID. Minister Koca started sharing these tables every day. The Ministry never released individual-level raw data. Key variables such as age breakdowns and gender were almost always missing, except in rare cases where the Ministry aggregated the data.

As Balta and Ozel (2022) also argue, the Turkish Government initially only reported cases of COVID-19 that tested positive and excluded those cases who were test-negative yet diagnosed with the disease based on clinical history and imaging. Initially, testing capacity was rather low, but a widespread testing policy was never implemented even as it increased. Even more problematic was the constantly changing eligibility criteria for testing. Balta and Ozel (2022) assert that even as early as the summer of 2020, whistleblower reports emerged from hospitals, alleging a change in the protocol, which effectively precluded asymptomatic contacts from testing. Patients without severe symptoms also had difficulties getting tested unless they went to private hospitals and paid out of pocket (Demir and Kılıç 2020).

Perhaps the most controversial move came in July 2020. After the 29th of July, official reporting started using the word "patient" instead of "case." This move came rather quietly without any public explanation, and Turkey reported very low "patient" numbers compared to similar-sized countries throughout the summer. Civil society challenged inconsistencies and the official narrative, yet the Ministry of Health did not budge. On the 30th of September, Minister Koca made the following, now-(in)famous explanation in a press conference: "Not every case is a patient. Because some do not show any symptoms even though the test is positive, they make up the vast majority."[8] Thus the government implicitly acknowledged that Turkey came up with its own definition of a "case," which was inconsistent with WHO guidelines. This made it impossible to make cross-country comparisons.[9] During late summer, whistleblowers kept reporting from the hospitals regarding a

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[7] Case numbers are correlated with testing capacity and implementation, and Turkey's response on both fronts was less than stellar.

[8] For Koca's original tweet see (translation by the authors): https://twitter.com/drfahrettinkoca/status/1311589273997631489?lang=en

[9] It should be noted that it is notoriously difficult to make cross-country comparisons, even if the data is compatible because of different testing capacities, population density, etc.

surge in COVID-19, yet daily "new patient" numbers were stable, hovering around 1400–1600. Despite mounting pressure and increasing deaths, the Ministry of Health did not reverse its policy till the fall. Finally, on the 25th of November 2021, Minister Koca made a U-turn, saying that the ministry will restart reporting the asymptomatic cases, and announced over 28000 new "cases" and around 7000 new "patients."

Around the same time, two publication scandals resulted in the erosion of public trust in the government. The first article was published in the *Journal of Population Therapeutics and Clinical Pharmacology*[10] by five coauthors, one of whom is deputy Health minister Şuayip Birinci on the 3rd of June 2020. The problem was that the study was done with coronavirus patients in Turkey in February, 1 month before the Ministry announced the first coronavirus case in Turkey. It could have been considered another academic fraud case, but having the deputy Health minister as a coauthor was confusing. Birinci tweeted that they made an error with the study dates and location. The paper was retracted.

Moreover, none of the coauthors were MDs and did not have permission to conduct such a study. The second one, coauthored by 16 researchers with some familiar names from the first article, including the deputy Health minister, was posted on a shady research repository promoting alternative medicine in COVID-19 treatment. It was retracted as well. These two instances lead to more trust issues.

Another point of contention between the government and the civil society was the official death figures. Various figures from the opposition parties, NGOs, and professional medical associations openly challenged the official narrative, but perhaps the most significant figure was the newly elected Mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoglu. Istanbul, with a population of over 15 million, is the largest city in Turkey, and Imamoglu is the first opposition candidate who won the mayoral election in Istanbul since AKP came to power in 2002.

Again, in November, Imamoglu demanded a full lockdown for Istanbul and started to announce daily deaths from "infectious diseases" which he had taken from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Cemeteries (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Mezarlıklar Daire Başkanlığı). The death figures he reported were only for Istanbul, but at times were more than twice the numbers officially reported for the whole country.

## 7 Data, Risk, Trust, and Activism: Two Examples

Against the backdrop we laid out in the previous sections, here we utilize two prominent examples of citizen science to show how laypeople challenged the government discourse and the accompanying regulatory, scientific enterprise.

[10] This journal is also known to have some predatory publishing practices.

The scientific committee's role had been limited to an advisory capacity. Some of their recommendations included the return of citizens from abroad in a controlled manner, parameters of curfews, closing of borders, suspending education, quarantine times, and passenger transformation. However, in practice, even some of these recommendations were not followed, such as continuing some public meetings and violating quarantine protocol for the pilgrimages. The Committee had not responded to public criticism on many issues. Furthermore, the many abrupt changes in the policies and implementations were not explained or justified by them. They were holding a responsibility that was not fulfilled. Instead of discussing with the public, they favored whatever the government did. This was not a deliberative process. By doing so, they lost public trust, and the public started to look for different information sources and deliberation partners. Without reliable data and information that was supposed to be communicated, official risk projections created a trust vacuum.

Another vacuum was about data. One of the main problems was the low quality of data. It was also so limited that it was impossible to make a trend analysis of how COVID-19 is progressing in Turkey. The Ministry's website lets any data neither be downloaded nor shared electronically. However, even under these circumstances, certain activists effectively utilized official data to challenge the prevailing narrative about low risk.

Zeki Berk, a retired industrial engineer with no medical or public health expertise, started to create graphics about cases and death numbers. People with different backgrounds (especially MDs, public health experts, and one notable epidemiologist) collaborated with him, especially over Twitter. The public was hungry for information, and his easy-to-understand graphics, which he again shared over Twitter, started attracting attention. He started with less than 200 followers; as of November 2022, he has more than 38,000 followers. One of Berk's main contributions was exposing the quality of the data and the undercounting of cases (Kartoğlu and Kayım Yıldız 2021).

Countries similar in size to Turkey were having much higher numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths related to it. Berk ingeniously tackled this problem with Benford's Law (Benford 1938) which says that "in listings, tables of statistics, etc., the digit 1 tends to occur with probability, much greater than the expected 11.1% (i.e., one digit out of 9)" (Benford Distribution—Wolfram Language Documentation 2022). If a string of numbers is made up, Benford's Law does not work. Because of this, for instance, it is used to understand whether a tax declaration is real. Berk applied the Law to case and death numbers of 84 countries, and only in a few of the countries Benford's Law did not work. One of them was Turkey.

In Fig. 1, the upper right quadrant (Belarus, Russia and Turkey) shows the countries that do not conform to Benford's Law.

The findings brought considerable attention to Berk and other activists overnight. Although, the recent literature focuses on social media over traditional media, it does not fully ignore the latter. In this case, Berk also started to appear in

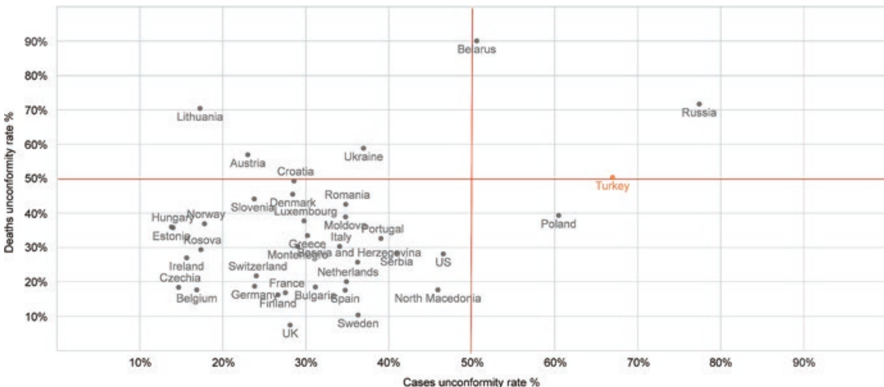


**Fig. 1** Benford's Law applied to the number of cases and deaths by country. (*Source*: Adapted from Zeki Berk, see: https://twitter.com/zekib/status/1298270195245408257/photo/1)

traditional media. He gave interviews, was invited to TV shows, and even started to write for a newspaper[11] (Kartoğlu and Kayım Yıldız 2021).

The number of deaths that the Ministry of Health announced was another issue that drew much skepticism. There were whistleblower reports and rampant rumors about full ICUs and morgues. There was a spike in the overall deaths in Turkey; however, the ones related to COVID-19 were relatively low compared to the other countries. As the government was portraying its efforts as a success story, the explanation for low death numbers was attributed to certain factors, such as Turkey's relatively young population and the strong public healthcare system.

Güçlü Yaman, a software developer, also challenged the official narrative with data. Every municipality in Turkey used to announce daily death records, with details such as the cause of death, age, and name. With his homegrown script, Yaman collected data from the municipality websites and analyzed them. He found that many more not-so-old people had died compared to the previous years. The cause of these deaths was recorded as an infectious disease, not COVID-19. Shortly after, age and the cause of death were deleted from the electronic death certificates. Some of the municipalities took precautions to prevent automated systems from downloading data, and Yaman reciprocated with newer iterations of his code. In the end, though, the genie was out of the bottle. Yaman gave the public new information to think about and act on; in the process, he became a social media sensation (Fig. 2).

Data that was shared with the public was limited and had certain factual errors. In some cases, it was a minor error, such as writing the number of patients or total test numbers wrong; in some cases, it was different such as having a negative number for active cases (Fig. 3) or having the same number of tests from the previous

[11] For a detailed account of how Benford's Law is applied to daily case and death rates in 84 countries, please see the Medyascope interview with Burak Tatari at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O9y74eXVPA. For all of Berk's study see his YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@ZekiBerk

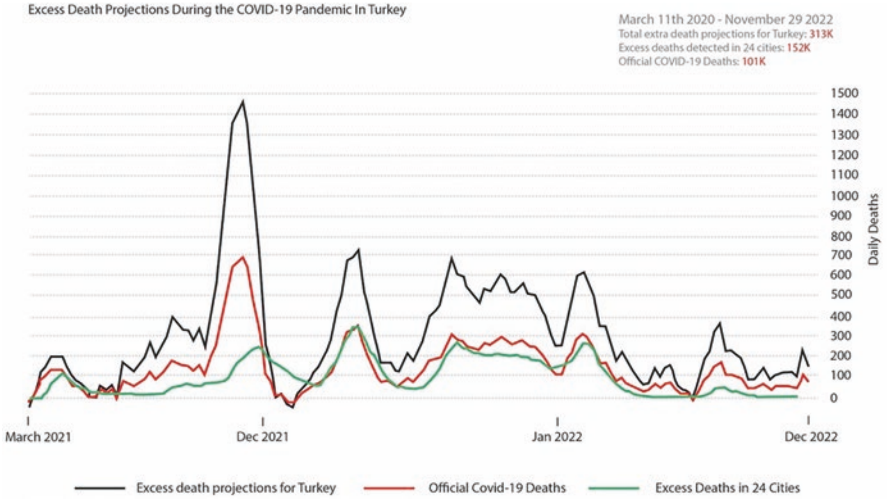


**Fig. 2** The number of projected excess deaths during the pandemic. (*Source*: Adapted from Guclu Yaman, see: https://mobile.twitter.com/GucluYaman/status/1598758750965334031/photo/1)

day or week or changing the number of deaths in a region. All the errors were collected by Berk day by day in the Turquoise Table Error Log with explanations and easy-to-understand graphics. Again, the vacuum left by the government was filled by the activists.

Berk and Yaman started to follow each other on Twitter[12], but they were not the only ones. An open data community or interest group has formed that consists of people with a relevant background (such as a medical doctor, biostatistician, graphic designer, or data visualizer) and not-so-much relevant background (such as business consultant, software developer, and industrial designer). They exchanged ideas, collaborated, and critiqued each other's work, sometimes privately and sometimes through social media. When they did it through social media, others became part of the discussion (Kartoğlu and Kayım Yıldız 2021). Moreover, it helped spread out the information in the absence of reliable information.

## 8 Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to lay the groundwork for analyzing citizen science during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey. To do so, we blended different strands of literature with a specific focus on citizen science, expertise (especially trust and risk), the relationship between data and democracy, and Twitter's growing

[12] Please see Acik Radyo for details at https://acikradyogunlugu.wordpress.com/2021/03/04/4-mart-2021-persembe-617-hafta/

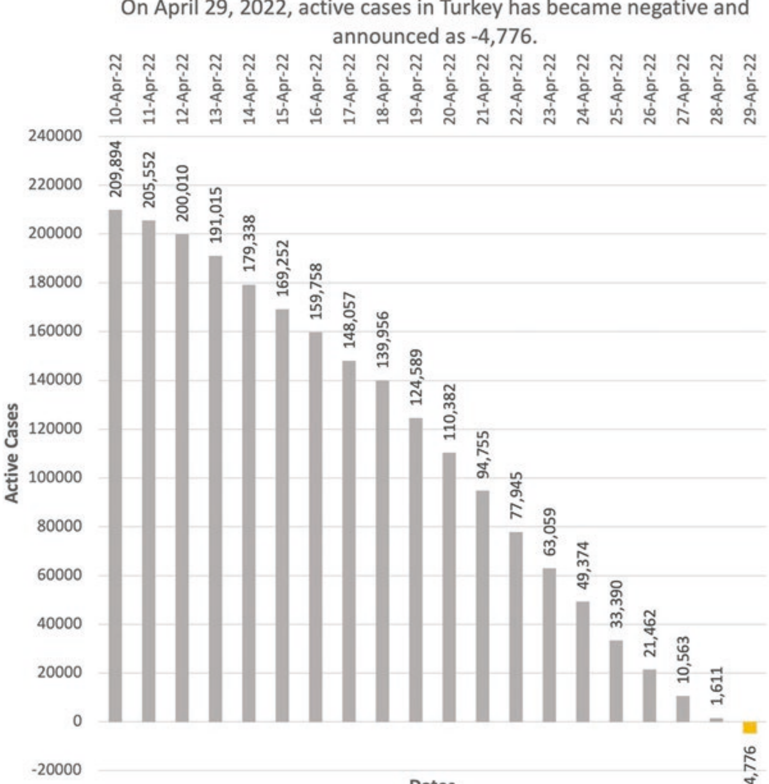


**Fig. 3** The number of active cases. (*Source*: Adapted from Zeki Berk, see Kartoğlu and Kayım Yıldız (2021))

importance in the democratization of science. We support our narrative with two cases taken from the Turkish context.

While a significant chunk of the literature focuses on the negative effects of social media on democracy and science (e.g., science denial, disinformation, and the spread of conspiracy theories), we show that social media, especially Twitter, can play a prominent role in citizen science, especially in populist/autocratic regimes where the playing field is not even. In the case we examined, the pandemic created a very risky situation, and due to several mishaps, the trust in the government and partly toward science in Turkey had eroded. The vacuum was filled with data activists, an emerging role with people from diverse backgrounds. By providing and disseminating easily consumable and reliable information on Twitter, they informed the public and supported democratic deliberation processes, and indirectly had a part in policy making during the pandemic times.

Our study creates many new questions and paves the way toward a much larger study of the heterogeneous networks of activists and scientists during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey. In the trust vacuum that formed, these

mostly spontaneously emerging networks challenged the official narratives, provided risk estimations, and engaged in citizen science. For future work, we plan to conduct a series of interviews with activists and experts who collaborated with them. Also, we are planning to support these interviews with an extensive computational analysis of Twitter data. As such, we will validate our study with a large sample within the context of larger policy making implications.

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# Citizen-Centered Environmental Policy making in Turkey: The Struggle of Unheard Voices

**Gökhan Orhan**

**Abstract** Citizen-centered approaches in policy making and implementation have become widespread in the past decades. Various instruments have been developed to ensure citizen involvement in policy processes. There is a rich repertoire of policy instruments to ensure citizen involvement in the environmental policy making process. Yet again, there are several barriers to realizing citizen involvement in policy processes in different parts of the world. Turkey is not an exception, and there are few opportunities and venues for citizen-centered environmental policy making in Turkey. In that respect, efforts toward citizen involvement in the environmental policy process is a struggle of unheard voices to make themselves heard in the policy process. This chapter will start with a brief introduction to the use of citizen-centered environmental policy making. In this context, theoretical issues on citizen involvement will be discussed concerning relevant literature. In the next section, the barriers to citizen-centered environmental policy making in Turkey will be summarized, and finally, the citizens' struggles and tactics in making their voices heard will be analyzed.

**Keywords** Turkey · Environmental policy · Environmental movements · Citizen-centered policy making · Policy process · Citizen involvement · Efforts · Barriers · Struggles · Voices

## 1 Introduction

Public policies are about actions and inactions of governments, and Dye defines public policies as "anything a government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye 2017: 1). Governments perform many functions in the form of public policies ranging

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from regulation of conflict to the distribution of symbolic rewards and material services and extraction of money in the form of taxes (Dye 2017: 2). Governments also respond to public problems through public policies. Governments are under the influence of a multitude of factors in the policy making and implementation process. Competing models aim to explain policy change concerning various variables in policy analysis. The societal demands, the changes in certain indicators, the available solutions, the impact of epistemic communities, and the transfer of certain policy ideas and instruments all play various roles in policy change. The literature on policy transfer focuses on different transfer degrees, like policy learning and diffusion. At the end of the day, there is a visible transfer process and widespread policy convergence, especially regarding policy approaches and instruments.

Citizen-centered approaches in policy making and implementation have been a good example of the diffusion of policy approaches and instruments. They have become widespread in the past four decades. Indeed, ideas on the merits of citizen participation became mainstream, and we could speak of a policy convergence on instruments developed to ensure citizen involvement and participation in policy processes. This chapter will focus on the use of citizen-centered approaches to environmental policies. Since citizen involvement in the environmental policy making process is highly recommended, there is a rich repertoire of policy instruments to ensure citizen involvement in environmental policy making processes. As the existing arrangements for environmental policy did not let stakeholders in the policy process, participation was thought to have provided an opportunity for voices unheard. Although it was endorsed in several international and national policy documents, there are serious barriers to realize citizen involvement in the policy process in different parts of the world. Institutional traditions and informal mechanisms of countries and discourses embedded in organizations pose challenges to implement major policy ideas in individual countries.

Turkey is not an exception to this rule because already existing institutional arrangements pose a major obstacle to implementing citizen-centered environmental policies. As underlined in previous studies, there are few opportunities and venues for realizing citizen-centered environmental policy making in Turkey. Although limited, there is a legal and an institutional framework for participatory environmental policy in Turkey. Yet again, there are a number of barriers to the realization of participatory mechanisms. The efforts toward citizen involvement in the environmental policy process is a struggle of unheard voices to make themselves heard in the policy process through several extra-institutional mechanisms and direct action. Limited avenues of participation necessitate extra-institutional strategies and direct action for environmentally conscious citizens and environmentalist groups. Some of those efforts make their case visible and achieve tangible results for protecting environmental assets or eliminating pollution. Nevertheless, certain cases of citizen involvement have not produced the desired outcomes due to other priorities of public authorities. Public authorities and investors also have followed a number of indirect strategies to bypass environmental opposition.

This chapter will discuss theoretical issues on citizen involvement in the policy process with reference to the relevant literature. The following section will focus on the evolution of environmental policy approaches from a historical perspective, set the rationale for citizen-centered environmental policies, and summarize the varieties of citizen-centered instruments in environmental policy making. Turkey's experience in citizen-centered environmental policies will be analyzed regarding legal and institutional context and environmental policy process. The barriers to citizen-centered environmental policy making in Turkey will be summarized, and finally, citizens' struggles and tactics in making their voices heard will be analyzed. This chapter demonstrates that the introduction of new environmental policy instruments through policy transfer is necessary, but not sufficient for successful adaptation. Certain citizen-centered environmental policy instruments exist in Turkey's legal and institutional framework; however, they have not been institutionalized as such. Citizen-centered environmental policy instruments should be a part of the standard operating procedures for the successful institutionalization of the environmental policy instruments. On the contrary, implementation of the citizen-centered policy instruments necessitates activation of societal pressures and direct action for sound outcomes.

## 2 Citizen-Centered Policy making and Environmental Policy: A Review of the Literature

There are several available classifications for policy approaches and policy instruments. For some commentators, there are three major categories of policy instruments, "carrots, sticks, and sermons," that correspond to economic incentives, legal instruments, and informative instruments (Bemelmans-Videc et al. 1998). Legal instruments, also called command and control instruments, are the first-generation policy instruments and use administrative regulations to alter players' behavior in respective public policy areas. Economic incentives also aim to alter players' behavior by creating or using markets and incurring extra costs to deter players from unwanted behavior. The third category is about informing people through education and awareness-raising mechanisms. In the meantime, this category was called "engaging the public," and all sorts of participatory mechanisms were covered under this category. The main theme of this volume, citizen-centered policy making, is about engaging the public, and several mechanisms ranging from education to awareness raising and participation could be covered under this category.

In this context, public participation or citizen participation is about the direct or indirect involvement of the public and stakeholders in societal governance and decision-making about policies, programs, or plans that influence or affect their interests (Baum 2015: 625; Quick and Bryson 2016).

There are some justifications for citizen involvement in the policy process. According to Baum, the normative justification for citizen participation is about the

basic requirements of democracy (Baum 2015: 626). For Coenen, "most of the arguments in favor of citizen participation in the environmental policy process are functional, as a means to an end. First of all, participation is likely to increase the legitimacy of decisions taken and to reduce conflict. Participation contributes to the quality of decisions since it supplies the governments with information on problems and alternatives. Finally, participation contributes to the enlightenment of people on problems and changes their behavior" (Coenen 2009: 1).

The use of citizen-centered mechanisms in environmental policy is quite common. The following section will describe the evolution of environmental policies from a historical perspective.

## 2.1 Environmental Policy Process: Evolution of Policy Instruments

Environmental and ecological problems are as old as the history of humanity, though environmental policies are a new addition to the repertoire of public policies. They have increased rapidly and diversified due to the changing nature of human activities following the industrial revolution. Environmental problems have posed substantial challenges to institutions of modern societies due to their interdependent character. Policymakers resort to a number of mechanisms to develop and implement environmental policies. There are various classifications for environmental policy approaches, and categories in those classifications are not mutually exclusive and contain elements of other approaches. When the environmental policy approaches are examined, the regulatory, market, and participatory approaches come to the fore. In this chapter, awareness raising and education, as well as participatory approaches, will be taken under the "engaging the public" category.

Some policy approaches and tools have a periodicity, become widespread in certain periods, and show significant changes over time. In the early stages, the regulatory approach relied on command and control type administrative regulations. The administrative regulation approach proposed creating new institutions and enacting new legal regulations to solve environmental problems and prevent and eliminate pollution. According to Vig and Faure, the first generation of environmental policies "relied heavily on central government imposition of emissions limits and installations of standard control technologies for large classes of the industry to clean up the major point sources of air and water pollution." In order to change the behavior of the players to a more environmentally friendly direction, the threat of fines or legal prosecution and arrest were employed to deter potential violators (Vig and Faure 2004: 5). Administrative regulation approach tended to see problems as administrative problems and new environmental agencies, and novel environmental regulations and standards were introduced to tackle rising pollution and resource depletion problems. This approach was widespread throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

However, from the 1980s onward, a new environmental policy approach, the market approach, started to become widespread. The market approach was

developed on the assumption that administrative regulations alone were insufficient and inflexible enough to solve environmental problems. As Wig and Faure pointed out, the traditional form of regulation was economically inefficient, difficult to enforce, and inappropriate for small-scale, dispersed, or nonpoint pollution sources (Vig and Faure 2004: 5). The market approach assumed that the problems could be solved through market mechanisms like economic incentives or other noncoercive mechanisms and economic and financial environmental policy instruments. In this process, led by the OECD, instruments like ecological taxes, environmental fees, carbon-trading schemes, environmental duties and levies, and tax differentiation are proposed to direct producer and consumer behavior in a more environmentally friendly direction.

The third environmental policy approach is the participatory approach, also labeled as engaging the public. The participatory approach, which was developed in parallel with the governance paradigm and especially highlighted in Agenda 21, saw the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation processes as a solution to environmental problems. The inclusion of environmental concerns in decision-making and implementation processes through mechanisms like referendums and information meetings has been seen as a tool for the solution of the problem. In the following section, rationale for citizen-centered environmental policies will be discussed.

## 3 The Rationale for Citizen-Centered Environmental Policy Process

Environmental issues have taken a significant place on the agendas of countries and international organizations during the second part of the twentieth century. The increasing awareness of environmental problems and rising concerns about pollution and environmental degradation have brought questions about the acceptability of conventional growth objectives, strategies, and policies to the forefront of public debate (Baker et al. 1997: 2). The emerging environmental problems, the rise of environmentalism, and changing conception of human–nature relationships led to major confrontations with the institutions of industrial society and opened the door for significant governmental interventions (Jansen et al. 1998: 281).

Environmental movements demanded institutional changes to solve the environmental problems created by the top-down and centralized policy making process. There has been widespread support and backing for a citizen-centered environmental policy with the involvement of the most interested stakeholders in the decision-making process. Such ideas have many proponents, including eco-socialists, deep ecologists, eco-anarchists, and the Greens. Defenders of citizen-centered and participatory environmental policies tend to blame centralized environmental policies for the majority of environmental problems and reject the conventional view of administrative rationality. According to critics, the centralized institutional

rationality, which encourages order, control, and specialization, generated environmental problems. In addition to ignoring local knowledge and failing to recognize the interdependencies between various elements contributing to environmental problems, these institutions serve the interests of the most powerful organizations. Since a central authority cannot foresee the complex nature of problems, interdependencies, and side effects, they suggest a decentralized environmental policy that involves the most interested and impacted stakeholders (Orhan 2003).

The defenders of citizen-centered and participatory environmental policies criticize centralized public bureaucracies that exclude stakeholders from the decision-making process. Furthermore, their priorities, like economic growth, place a heavy reliance on capital and give capital (as polluters) significant control over environmental regulation (Orhan 2003: 84).

Decentralized environmental policy proponents contend that expanding and empowering of current administrative institutions cannot be suggested as a remedy, since they have already contributed to the current environmental issues. Instead, they advocate a radical decentralization of environmental policy making – participation of the most affected, interested, and local people in the decision-making process. Additionally, involvement in the development of environmental policies is intended to lead to a democratic opening and a genuine democracy free from the dominance of technocratic concerns (Paehlke 1989, 1990; Torgerson, 1990; Fischer 1993; Orhan 2003: 84).

International organizations have also promoted citizen-centered approaches to environmental policy. The Brundtland Report, Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals all highlight the merit of citizen involvement and democratic participation in environmental policy processes. As it was stated in the Brundtland Report, the integrated and interdependent character of the new challenges and difficulties stands in stark contrast to the nature of the institutions that are now in place. Challenges are interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches and popular participation (WCED 1987: 9, 310).

Again, it has been argued in the Brundtland Report that

> [t]he law alone cannot enforce the common interest. It principally needs community knowledge and support, which entails greater public participation in the decisions that affect the environment. This is best secured by decentralizing the management of the resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources. It will also require promoting citizen's initiatives, empowering people's organizations, and strengthening local democracy.
>
> Some large-scale projects, however, require participation on a different basis. Public inquiries and hearings on the development and environment impacts can help greatly in drawing attention to different points of view. Free access to relevant information and the availability of alternative sources of technical expertise can provide an informed basis for public discussion. When the environmental impact of a proposed project is particularly high, public scrutiny of the case should be mandatory and, whenever feasible, the decision should be subject to prior approval, perhaps by referendum. (WCED 1987: 63–64)

The Brundtland Report defends a participatory environmental policy as opposed to a nonparticipatory one, which is defined and imposed by the elites in the central government. The Brundtland Report also requires a coordinated environmental

policy, which takes several dimensions of the environmental problems into account, as opposed to a disjointed and fragmented one. In that sense, the Brundtland Report favors a participatory and coordinated environmental policy. This issue is highlighted in Rio Principles:

> Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided (Rio Principle 10)

Agenda 21 highlighted the importance of participation even more (UN 1992: 217–245). According to Agenda 21, there is a need for the participation of individuals, groups, and organizations in environmental impact assessment procedures. Decisions that may have an impact on the communities where people live and work should be made transparent to the public and open to participation.

The public should have access to information relevant to the environment and development held by national authorities. Public authorities should provide details on goods and practices that have or are anticipated to have an important impact on the environment, as well as details on environmental safety precautions. Agenda 21 addresses the ways of achieving true social cooperation in support of coordinated efforts for sustainable development (UN 1992: 219).

*The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*, also known as the Aarhus Convention (1998), also facilitates access to environmental information and involvement. Overall, the Brundtland Report, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the Aarhus Convention all support proposals for the participation of stakeholders and the introduction of decentralized forms of environmental policy. The following section will focus on the practical applications of policy proposals on citizen-centered environmental policies, namely policy instruments for citizen-centered environmental policy.

### *3.1 Citizen-Centered Environmental Policy Instruments: Engaging the Public*

Citizen-centered environmental policies fall into the category of "engaging the public" in the classification of policy instruments. Those instruments include environmental policy instruments of information disclosure, participatory planning, labeling and certification, community participation in environmental or natural resources management, education, awareness raising, and voluntary agreements. Dialogue and collaboration among the environmental protection agency, the public, and the polluters may lead to voluntary agreements between polluters and

governments, which have become a popular instrument recently (Sterner and Coria 2012: 59).

Community participation in environmental or natural resources management has risen parallel to increasing salience of governance approaches following the 1980s. As summarized above, Our Common Future suggested the participation of major groups in environmental policy making and implementation for a sustainability transition. Agenda 21 has strengthened the participatory approaches and dialogue in environmental policy making and implementation.

Government labeling requirements allow for the identification of goods produced in accordance with specified environmental criteria that may be valuable to consumers. National certification requirements guarantee that consumers receive accurate and consistent information about the goods bearing certain labels, like organic produce. Although participation is optional, producers must adhere to minimal requirements in order to utilize certain brands (USDA-ERS 2022). These certification programs are available for organic products, sustainably harvested forest products, and timber and seafood products like dolphin-safe tuna. For instance, more than 800 tuna companies in 76 different countries currently display the Dolphin Safe label for canned tuna, which was created by the International Marine Mammal Project (IMMP) in 1990. Dolphin Safe tuna was defined by IMMP as being obtained without purposefully encircling any dolphins with tuna nets throughout the whole trip of the tuna vessel (Palmer 2018).

Public disclosure requirements, education, extension, and awareness raising involve a broad category of instruments that provide relevant stakeholders information to use in their activities to improve environmental quality. The Slow Food movement is a relevant example of an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the interrelationship among food and culture, politics, agriculture, and the environment. The Slow Food initiative is a good example of awareness-raising mechanisms. It is a global, grassroots movement that was established in 1989 to stop the loss of regional food cultures and traditions, to fight the spread of fast living, and to combat people's waning interest in the food they consume by providing information about the origins of their food and explaining how their their dietary decisions influence the globe. Since its inception, Slow Food has expanded into a worldwide movement with millions of supporters in more than 160 nations, aiming to ensure that everyone has access to wholesome, ethical, and sustainable food. According to the Slow Food movement, there are numerous ties between agriculture, politics, culture, and the environment and other facets of existence. We may collectively transform the globe by influencing the cultivation, production, and distribution of food through our food choices (Slow Food International 2022).

## 4 The Case of Turkey: The Struggle of Unheard Voices

Turkey experienced several environmental problems, and Turkish environmental policy cannot be considered a success story. Turkey ranks 172nd out of 180 countries in Yale University's Environmental Performance Index, with serious problems in various categories (Yale-EPI 2022). Although there is a legal and institutional framework for environmental policy in Turkey, the country faces serious environmental problems. It will likely experience even more problems given the pace of investment decisions envisaged for the near future and implementation problems as a whole (Orhan 2019: 99). Although Turkey's negotiations with the EU have resulted in the harmonization of certain parts of Turkish environmental legislation with the EU acquis and created optimism, there are major problems in implementation clearly reflected in environmental indicators.

Turkey's issues with citizen involvement in environmental policy have specific institutional characteristics. One of the most significant characteristics of the Turkish state is centralization and the tradition of centralized government, where only a limited degree of authority is given to the local level (Heper 1985). Turkish politics and administration are centralized, there are limited opportunities for public participation in decision-making and implementation, and strong vertical bureaucratic links prevail. Turkey's dominant policy style frequently excludes local governments from participation in the decision-making process (Danielson and Keleş 1985: 9). Ersoy describes the interactions between the national and local governments as centralistic, authoritarian, and paternalistic, despite some changes. He claims that local governments were never permitted to create their own autonomous policies without being under the direct authority of the central government (Ersoy 1992: 340).

As stated in Turkish Environment Law, "*The right to participate is essential in the formation of environmental policies. The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and local governments are obliged to create an environment of participation for professional chambers, unions, non-governmental organizations and citizens to exercise their right to the environment*" (Environment Law -5491/3-e). Although the growing impact of environmentalist discourse and the environmentalist challenge have provided some chances for opening up the environmental policy process, the prevalent exclusionary style of politics is still in place. There are certain avenues for participation, but they were not effectively institutionalized and operationalized (Orhan 2007: 57).

Given the limited participation opportunities in Turkey, there are many examples of confrontations on the environmental consequences of developmental projects. Overall, large-scale dam projects, energy installations, large-scale mining projects, the conversion of urban green spaces, and development of new industrial estates have been major topics of contestation in Turkey. On these contestations, public authorities have implemented centrally planned developments in a top-down manner with political and economic concerns. The authorities have resorted to discourses on expertise, science, rationality, and economic development and progress in

legitimizing their policy choices. Groups that have opposed government programs were swiftly branded as “irrational and emotional,” “traitors and agents of foreign powers,” “ideological, short-sided, and biased,” and even “traitors.” There is not a rational speech situation where parties take their turn in voicing their concerns over the issues under consideration (Orhan 2018). In the rest of this section, available avenues for citizen-centered environmental policy in Turkey will be summarized and obstacles against participation will be detailed.

### *4.1 Councils as a Citizen-Centered Environmental Policy Instrument*

Councils are examples of participatory mechanisms of the policy making process in Turkey. They are required by law and regulated through directives. Yet again, they are not examples of full participation. Rather they function as consultation and advice mechanisms that aim to bring stakeholders together to discuss future trajectories in certain policy areas and develop recommendations. Education, environment, urbanization, and climate councils are major examples of councils. Councils are convened to conduct investigations, develop medium- and long-term strategies and policies, and identify problems stemming from implementation and offer solutions to existing problems.

Environment-related councils are the Environment Council (convened in 1991, 1994, 1996, and 2000) and later renamed after the changes in the Ministry of Environment status. Following the Environment Ministry and Forestry Ministry merger, the council was renamed as the Environment and Forestry Council (convened in 2005). In 2011, it was named the Environment and Urbanization Council. Finally, in 2017, the Urbanization Council and, in 2022, the Climate Council were convened, respectively, to discuss Turkey’s urbanization and climate-related problems and recommended policies for the future.

Climate Council aimed to create Turkey’s roadmap for combating and adapting to climate change with the active participation of all stakeholders. Invitation of 209 Climate Envoys from universities has been a breakthrough toward considering the youth perspective. Commission meetings have been organized on six topics: science and technology, local governments, adaptation to climate change, greenhouse gas reduction, green financing and carbon pricing, migration, just transition, and other social policies.

In line with Turkey’s 2053 Net Zero Emission and Green Development Revolution targets, proposals were put forward to develop policy proposals for the draft Climate Law and other legislation. Climate Council aimed to determine the strategic targets of the sectors in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change, and the priority actions of institutions (ÇŞIDB 2022).

Along with nationwide environment-related councils, there are some local environmental councils. For instance, in 2021, Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality

convened an Environment Council to carry out studies to prepare the Kocaeli Province Sustainable Environment Action Plan. It was aimed to discuss past experiences, current situations, plans, and good practice examples of environmental management by meeting with stakeholders on this matter (KBŞB 2021).

Likewise, İstanbul Bağcılar Municipality has also organized a series of 22 meetings titled Environment Councils with the active participation of local stakeholders. In those meetings, students from high schools are encouraged to present their papers and projects on environmental issues to the attending public (Bağcılar Belediyesi, 2022).

### *4.2 Public Participation and Information Meetings in the Environmental Impact Assessment Process*

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the first and foremost participatory environmental policy instrument in Turkey. EIA is a regulatory instrument and has occupied a crucial place in Turkish environmental legislation since 1993, though modified several times. According to EIA Regulation (Mevzuat 2022), EIA is an ex-ante study to determine the positive and negative effects of planned projects on the environment. In this way, public authorities can determine and evaluate the measures to prevent or minimize the negative effects to a degree that will not harm the environment. EIA studies also determine and evaluate the selected location and technology alternatives and specify monitoring and control mechanisms during the implementation of the projects.

Public participation and information meetings in the EIA process aim to inform the public about the investment and to receive opinions and suggestions from the local people who are likely to be the most affected by the project. This meeting, organized by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change in the vicinity of the planned project location, advertised well in advance, with the participation of investors, local people, and representatives of the provincial branch of the Ministry. In this meeting, project owners and consultant firm officials provide information about the project. Opinions, suggestions, and objections expressed by the public are taken in minutes and sent to the Ministry with written appeals on the project.

The Ministry could authorize a consultancy firm to prepare a stakeholder participation plan to inform the public about the project and its impacts and to receive the opinions and suggestions of individuals regarding the project. If necessary, the Ministry could authorize the consultancy firm to do additional work, such as distributing information, conducting surveys and seminars, or sharing information by preparing a website related to the project.

This mechanism is the sole participation mechanism in Turkish environmental policy. On some occasions, local people's objections against planned projects were considered, and their participation in the process contributed to negative EIA results.

However, in most instances, there are positive EIA results for investments. The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change received 6310 EIA applications from 1993 to 2020, and only 559 out of 6310 applications received negative results, which correspond to 8.8% negative responses for EIA applications compared to 91.2% positive results (Ceylan 2022: 91). Actually, both EIA positive and negative decisions have been subjected to legal challenges, and court decisions had the final say on the fate of planned projects.

For instance, EIA Report for Dilek-Güroluk Hydroelectric Power Plant (HEP) Project was submitted in May 1997, and the public participation and information meeting was held in March 1998. The participating public members were completely against the project and raised their objections in a well-organized manner. Despite a court decision on the archaeological character of the site and objections from the people, the Ministry issued an EIA positive decision in June 1998, and certain permits were issued from the Ministry of Forestry. Local people took those decisions to court, and in February 1999, the court stopped the Project. In 2001, the EIA positive decision was canceled, and the Project was permanently stopped (Albayrak and Turan 2016). In this case, although there was a clear violation of protection zones, the Ministry allowed the process to continue, and in the end, a court decision halted this project due to a clear violation of existing conservation rules.

A similar dispute took place in the Bandırma Şirinçavuş Coal Power Plant project in 2015. Local people, environmental groups, professional associations, and local governments voiced their concerns about the location of the power plant's and demonstrated their will against the project. In the public participation and information meeting, the opposition voiced their concerns about the location of the proposed power plant, a natural, archeological, and agricultural protection site next to a fish reproduction habitat and wetland. Objections were introduced in minutes, and some participants submitted written reports on the legal status of the project site. Finally, the Ministry took an EIA negative decision and halted the project.

If properly implemented EIA process is a perfect example of a citizen-centered environmental policy. However, the Turkish legal and institutional framework of environmental policies is subject to frequent alterations. For example, the EIA Regulation has been altered several times. Public authorities keep amending the regulation, though courts have overturned some provisions of the Regulation. In recent amendments, several new exemptions and new thresholds were introduced to accelerate investment processes. Exemptions from environmental impact assessments are examples of changes in a legal framework to bypass environmental movements' opposition to environmentally risky projects. Along with the arbitrary exemption of large infrastructural projects, information was and is not shared with the public, deadlines are changed, meetings are held in secret, and civil society is kept out of decision boards and public hearings while at the same time investing companies are dominating the meetings (Orhan 2019: 105; HBST 2016).

### 4.3 *Citizens' Appeals Against the Administration: the Right to Petition and Access to Information Act*

As detailed above, the Environment Law obliges the Ministry (of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change) and local governments to create an environment of participation for professional chambers, unions, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens to exercise their right to the environment. Public participation and information meetings in the EIA process are formal mechanisms for participating in environmental policy making.

The right to Petition is safeguarded in Article 74 of the Turkish Constitution, and "Citizens and foreigners resident considering the principle of reciprocity have the right to apply in writing to the competent authorities and the Turkish Grand National Assembly concerning the requests and complaints concerning themselves or the public. The result of the application concerning himself shall be made known to the petitioner in writing without delay."

The Right to Information Law (Mevzuat, 2003) and its regulations regulate citizens' information demands from public authorities. Overall, based on the principles of equality, impartiality, and openness, individuals' right to apply to the administrative authorities about their wishes and complaints related to the public and to exercise their right to obtain information on issues related to themselves or their fields of activity is a requirement for a democratic and transparent administration.[1] In parallel to the provisions in the constitution, "Right to Information and Application" measures are regulated in Article 30 of the Environment Law. "Anyone who is harmed or aware of an activity that pollutes or disrupts the environment may apply to the relevant authorities and request that the necessary measures be taken or that the activity be stopped."

### 4.4 *Recourse to Judicial Review*

Citizens could get involved in the environmental policy process through several mechanisms. Citizens could file their grievances toward petitions and demand reparations. What happens when public authorities reject applications and requests through petitions or do not consider them?

According to Article 125 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, "Recourse to judicial review shall be available against all actions and acts of administration." "If the implementation of an administrative act should result in damages, which are difficult or impossible to compensate for, and at the same time, this act is unlawful, then a stay of execution may be decided upon, stating why."

Since there are limited mechanisms for participation in the policy process, and conventional mechanisms for appeals do not meet demands, recourse to judicial

[1] Circular issued in Official Gazette No 25356 dated January, 24 2004.

review is a widely used instrument for the participation of parties. Acts of administration, EIA positive decisions, EIA not required decisions, licenses, and permits issued by relevant sectoral ministries and regulatory boards are all subject to judicial review. Parties apply for the annulment of decisions and a stay of execution decision to prevent damages which are difficult or impossible to compensate for.

Turkish courts give verdicts on environmental disputes, and the legal process is quite time consuming and costly for citizens. There is no available meta-study summarizing the results of court verdicts, but it is possible to sketch out certain strategies and tactics employed by public authorities in intervening judicial review process. For instance, increased trial and expert fees are a major example of limiting environmental movement options. This is an important issue for environmental movements because it is rather costly for movements to pay rising trial fees and expert fees. An environmentalist who sold his cattle to pay for trial expenses, Kazım Dellal, made the headlines. There are also many crowdfunding campaigns in environmental circles to raise funds to pay for trial and expert fees (Artvinden 2015; Orhan 2019).

Law No. 6545 brought the procedure for urgent proceedings to the Turkish legal system in 2014 that speeded up the trial process in "…court decisions in tendering processes excluding the preclusion from participating in tenders, urgent expropriation, verdicts given by the High Board of Privatization, sale, appropriation and lease processes for the promotion of tourism, decisions made as a result of environmental impact analysis, and excluding administrative sanctions and Cabinet Decrees for the Transformation of Areas under Disaster Risk" (Araalan and Çakır 2015: 29). According to commentators, this procedure is a clear violation of the right to a fair trial and limit the citizens' options for defending their position against the administration (Özlüer 2014). Furthermore, "putting the issues concerning public welfare such as expropriation, privatization, and environmental hazard risk issues into the scope of the new procedure might result in the de-potentiation of the position of the individuals against the administration by limiting their right to legal remedies" (Araalan and Çakır 2015: 29).

The Turkish governments have used emergency expropriation mechanisms frequently to overcome and bypass local resistance to large-scale energy, mining, urban renewal, and energy transmission projects. If the landowners do not volunteer to sell their land plots, administrative courts take decisions in favor of the landowners. The emergency expropriation mechanism has been employed to bypass the legal process. Although this mechanism is supposed to be used in special emergencies and was used very rarely between 1957 and 1983, there has been a surge in emergency expropriation decisions by the Turkish cabinet between 2003 and 2016. Especially after the changes in the legal framework concerning emergency expropriation, disasters and disaster prone areas could be subject to emergency expropriation; a cabinet decision is suffices if it is for the public good (Orhan 2019: 105).

### 4.5 What If the Executive Does Not Implement Court Decisions?

In the Turkish administrative system, the executive branch has supremacy; sometimes, this power could be exercised arbitrarily by bypassing court decisions (Çoban et al. 2015). From the Bergama gold mine dispute to the İstanbul Airport, the Turkish judiciary has done its job. It has taken a substantial number of decisions in favor of the demands of environmental movement for protecting the environment and maintaining ecological balance. However, either those decisions have been too late to reverse de facto acts of government agencies and investors or the government did not obey those decisions.

The Bergama anti-gold mine movement perfectly illustrates the arbitrariness of public authorities in Turkey. Despite several court decisions that annulled the project due to certain administrative irregularities, the mine continued its operations with a new cabinet decisions. The new decisions of the public authorities to avoid court verdicts necessitated starting a legal process from scratch, which resulted in consecutive court hearings with substantial burdens on plaintiffs (Orhan 2006).

One of the recent cases concerning Turkish arbitrariness is about the Yırca village in Western Turkey. Despite clear legal provisions on the siting of power plants, an area covered by olive yards was subjected to an emergency expropriation decision by the Turkish cabinet and delivered to a private company to build a power plant. The company tried to create a de facto situation by cutting down hundreds of olive trees after delays in the judicial process, as in the case of a number of other projects in which verdicts have been too late to reverse the destruction (Orhan 2019).

Sometimes public authorities introduce new plan notes to continue business as usual and even make alterations in land registries to mislead the opposition and make their appeals useless, as observed in the Validebağ Park (Kocaaslan 2014). After all, direct action and extra-institutional mechanisms remain the only alternative for environmental groups and local people.

### 4.6 Direct Action: Blocking Public Participation and Information Meetings in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process

Direct environmental action may take several forms, and there is a visible tendency for local environmental groups to block public participation and information meetings. As reported in Birgün Daily, in 2022, almost all projects that went through the EIA process were approved. Of the 5263 projects, only four were rejected. While 4176 projects were given “EIA is not required,” 463 projects were given “EIA positive” decisions. The number of projects with “EIA negative” decisions was only four. EIA was given to 97 projects. While the number of approved projects increased by 836 compared to last year, the number of projects with negative EIA

decisions increased by only two. Energy and mines has taken the lion's share of the projects approved by the EIA. While 1022 mining, 961 energy, and 672 industrial projects have been approved, four were rejected in the mining sector (Birgün 2022).

Although people participate in public participation and information meetings and raise their concerns and objections over certain planned projects, the rising percentage of EIA positive decisions by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and long legal battles against the EIA positive process have produced disillusionment on local people.

The rising pace of extractivist investments, especially in mining and energy projects, has provoked local discontent in several cases. The rise of environmental discontent and complaints about the attitudes of public authorities and security forces sometimes resulted in blocking public participation and information meetings to halt the environmental impact assessment process and the rest of the investment procedure.

On some occasions, this is a planned move by local people and environmental groups, but other confrontations between investors and local people made meeting impossible. In 2022, there was a certain increase in those attempts, possibly due to increasing numbers of positive EIA decisions. In Mersin Anamur, Hatay Arsuz Huyuk, and Kurtbağı villages, Muğla Bodrum, Marmaris and Köyceğiz, Kocaeli Körfez and Kartepe, and Sivas local people prevented the conduct of public participation and information meetings in a number of projects ranging from energy to mining. Under normal conditions, officials could proceed with the procedure, but a mass mobilization against the projects is a sign of local discontent, and public authorities take note of these changes.

## *4.7 Direct Action: Individual Citizens as Agents of Change*

The structure and agency dichotomy has been one of the major dilemmas of the social sciences. While the structure represents continuity and persistence and the agency acts within the parameters of the structure, the agency has always had an opportunity to challenge the status quo through deliberation. On some occasions, single individuals' attitudes and leadership have the potential to trigger change.

For instance, in Edirne, the civil disobedience of Kıymet Peker (82) prevented the demolition of a playground and sparked a protest movement. In 2014, a green area used as a children's playground in Edirne was opened for construction for commercial purposes following a local council zoning decision and alterations in planning documents. Kıymet Peker, a local who saw the building activity went down to the green area, sat in front of the bucket with her chair, and prevented buckets from working. The resistance started by Peker soon received the support of the locals, and as a result, buckets were pulled back. The Administrative Court later overturned the zoning decision taken by the City Council, and after years of litigation, the municipality appropriated the land and established the "Aunty Kıymet Park" in the region (Evrensel 2021; Karaman and Akçagündüz 2022: 130).

### *4.8 Direct Action for the Environment: Marches, Petitions, Protests, Road Blocks, and Vigils*

Environmental movements use a variety of mechanisms in their struggle to conserve natural resources and environmental assets. Protection of urban green areas and parks and the conservation of forests necessitates institutional and extra-institutional efforts to resist unlawful attempts by public authorities and investors. Almost every environmental movement resorts to the institutional mechanisms mentioned above, use their appeal rights, and resort to judicial processes. This is almost standard in almost all environmental contestations.

However, extra-institutional mechanisms like marches, protests, campaigns, protests, and vigils are the sine qua non for environmental movements to make their case visible and their voices heard. Marches and petitions are important mechanisms to receive public attention, make themselves visible, and make their voices heard. Bergama movement made their case visible through their marches on the Bosporus Bridge and other high-profile places.

Vigils are complementary mechanisms for environmental movements to safeguard the environmental assets they defend. The history of vigils by environmental activists dates back to India, and in Turkey, environmental activists also resort to similar tactics. In Köyceğiz Yuvarlakçay, the months-long struggle of locals is a prominent example. Based on the law enacted in 2001, the water usage rights of the Yuvarlakçay stream were leased for 49 years to make tunnel-type hydroelectric power. In this process, at least 1000 red pine trees, including monumental trees, were cut down overnight in the area where the hydroelectric power plant will be built. Locals started a month-long vigil around cutting down trees with the support of environmental activists from nearby Dalyan. The decision to halt the project was taken in 2010 because of the struggle that started both actively and legally, and the company withdrew from Yuvarlakçay (2023).

## 5 Conclusion

Proponents of citizen-centered environmental policies recommend a participatory environmental policy to solve environmental problems since a participatory environmental policy will be more effective in environmental problem-solving. There is a policy convergence of citizen-centered and participatory environmental policy mechanisms in different parts of the world. However, a participatory environmental policy is particularly challenging in a centralized political system, with limited mechanisms of popular participation in the policy process. Realizing meaningful participation in policy making may be challenging under a centralized administrative structure in which decisions are taken in a top-down manner without the involvement of stakeholders (Orhan 2003: 225).

This chapter demonstrates that the introduction of new environmental policy instruments through policy transfer is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for successful adaptation. Although certain citizen-centered environmental policy instruments exist in Turkey's legal and institutional framework, they have not been institutionalized as such. In other words, the popular participation in environmental policy-making has not been institutionalized in Turkey. For institutionalization, the use of citizen-centered environmental policy instruments should be a part of the standard operating procedures and the daily routine of policy process in Turkey. On the contrary, the use and implementation of the citizen-centered policy instruments necessitate activation of societal pressures and direct action for sound outcomes. This does not mean that popular action is unimportant, but it is often local and requires the support of elite agents, or is limited to an "oppositional" form.

Despite the absence of a significant environmentalist movement, internationally renowned environmental policy principles have played a significant role during the initial stages of the institutionalization of environmental policies in Turkey. However, these new policies and policy discourses have clashed with the existing policy ideas about the environment and development. Particularly, the predominance of strong sectoral ministries in Turkey make the institutionalization of new environmental policy ideas difficult. Furthermore, problems stemming from the tradition of centralized government hinder the participation of people in the environmental policy process. The institutionalization of new environmental policy ideas are hampered by preexisting ideas about development that define it in terms of economic development and industrialization and view environmental protection and economic development as mutually exclusive (Orhan 2007: 58).

Overall, the increasing pace of extractivist activities has resulted in clashes between the public authorities and investors on the one hand and environmentalist groups and local people on the other. The opposition resort to administrative and judicial mechanisms in almost all cases to prevent unwanted projects and use formal participation mechanisms. However, using extra-institutional mechanisms became a sine qua non for environmental movements. In the end, we cannot speak of an institutionalized mechanism for the citizen-centered environmental policy process in Turkey, but it is the struggle of unheard voices to make themselves heard.

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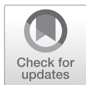
# Housing Affordability in Turkey: How Big Is It and Who Are the Most Vulnerable?




**M. Ozan Yıldırım**

**Abstract** In line with global trends, housing affordability has once again emerged as a worrying problem of housing policy in Turkey in recent years. Although the strong housing production process in the Turkish economy, low housing affordability is an ever-increasing concern in many areas and various household groups, such as low-income citizens or tenants. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding and information by addressing the reasons behind the housing affordability problem from both the supply and demand aspects. In addition, the study details how the 2018/19 economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the deepening of the housing affordability crisis for citizen with different socio-economic characteristics. Using descriptive analysis, changes in housing permits, house prices, mortgage rates, and homeownership rates are discussed as they relate to housing affordability for low- and middle-income citizens. The findings of the study show that housing affordability is deteriorating especially for low- and middle-income citizens in Turkey. Finally, the study presents suggestions on how a social housing policy should be in the interest of the low-income groups and vulnerable citizens comprehensively in addressing the housing affordability problem.

**Keywords** Housing market · Housing affordability · House prices · Citizens · Household groups · Descriptive analysis · Low-middle income citizens · Vulnerable citizens · Housing policy · Turkey

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## 1 Introduction

The concept of housing affordability, which has been studied by economists for decades, has become an increasingly important issue around the world (Wetzstein 2017; Coupe 2021). Unfortunately, housing affordability has been on the decline globally in recent years, particularly in the developed world. The statement represents a rising tendency in which housing-related household spending grows quicker than wages and salaries in a lot of urban areas worldwide. Although a substantial number of homeowners, investors, and speculators have utilized financially from these situations, growing numbers of households in both developed and developing countries are faced with depressing conditions (Lee et al. 2022). While housing affordability is specifically based on the relationship between the home and its occupants, the risks associated with housing affordability issues affect the whole community. Housing affordability therefore negatively affects households and the country's economic performance. Consequently, policymakers need to establish a reliable and effective measure of housing affordability (Emekçi 2020). However, there is no agreement on how to define and measure housing affordability, despite growing concerns regarding this concern. Moreover, there is no single certain definition of the term, as it encompasses several issues, such as housing affordability, income distribution, housing costs, household borrowing capacity, housing policy, housing supply, and household demand and preferences (Özdemir-Sarı and Aksoy 2016).

Hulchanski (1995) initially expressed "*one week's salary for one month's rent*" as a rule for the ratio of household expenditure to income. The comparison of house prices or rents with household income is the most common way of measuring "housing affordability" used in the literature. As a rule of thumb, rental costs (or housing expenditures for landlord-occupants) should not exceed 30% of gross household income (Hilber and Schöni 2022). Therefore, spending up to 30% of household income on both owned and rented housing can cover housing costs. Households burdened with housing costs spend a higher proportion of their income on housing (Anthony 2018). Households that are cost-burdened tend to maintain a lower quality of life as they have to reduce another basic living expense, such as health, food, or education, in order to manage their homes (Wood et al. 2008).

There is a rapidly expanding body of literature about housing affordability that addresses the global nature of the current crisis in urban housing affordability. It shows that low- and middle-income households are finding it increasingly difficult to access housing (Wetzstein 2017; Lee et al. 2022). The growing shortage of "affordable housing" around the world is a major political concern, particularly in popular cities such as London, Hong Kong, and San Francisco, as well as tourist destinations. It increased social unrest in several cities and led to the development of a list of economic and social policies addressing the "housing affordability crisis" (Hilber and Schöni 2022). This social housing program requires the motivation of

sustainable urban development and social order in the country, with a focus on citizen participation in decision-making, program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

In addition, the problem of housing affordability is now more widespread than it is in large metropolitan areas or among low-income households. It has become more common for households to save several times their annual income to make a down payment and for tenants to spend a significant fraction of their income on rent (UN-Habitat 2021). Decent and affordable housing should be a human right, as advocated by the United Nations, yet the commodification and financialization of housing over the last 30 years has moved rich countries such as England, New Zealand, and Australia away from this goal (Ryan-Collins 2022). Since housing is a necessary need that complements other social assets of people in order to lead productive lives, the government must provide support mechanisms to ensure decent and affordable housing to its citizens.

Furthermore, the lack of affordable housing can increasingly lead to homelessness problems for households. The number of homeless people on the streets is likely to increase as the worst-case scenario materializes, where households are excluded from urban housing markets, forcibly evicted, or threatened with eviction (Wetzstein 2017). This creates an environment where adequate rental housing is not available, and households are forced to live in cramped and unsafe conditions (Ryan-Collins 2022). The social impact of the decline in housing affordability is significant, but there are also economic consequences. Intergenerational inequality deepens as housing affordability falls due to rising house prices. The financial impact of housing affordability pressures may exacerbate the demographic pressures associated with low birth rates, leading to delays or restrictions in household formation for younger generations. Life-cycle effects may put pressure on the government as the current generation of young adults may retire with less savings than the value of their homes. Social cohesion can be weakened as the exclusion of younger generations from their neighborhoods cuts off social support networks for the elderly, young children, and families in need of care. Worryingly, around half a billion of the world's urban population are expected to be living in overcrowded and substandard housing in the next decade, due to the cost of housing in metropolitan areas and household income disparities (McKinsey Global Institute 2014).

The Turkish housing market has carried out an extraordinary warming over the past decade due to rising income/wealth, easy access to housing loans and short-term profit motives of market agents on the supply/demand side. Governments have been very supportive of this market dynamic due to the potential for favorable macroeconomic externalities. However, house prices kept rising, and the boom ended in overvalued houses and fear of a serious housing bubble. The upward trend in the housing market has brought with it significant problems from the point of housing affordability. Recent increases in housing supply and declining homeownership rates suggest that the housing market in Turkey is also in a crisis. Considering that only 10% of the population had the opportunity to buy mortgaged houses even

during the best economic period in Turkey, the housing affordability crisis in the Turkish economy is one of the main reasons that fueled the recent macroeconomic crisis (Coşkun 2021). Similarly, difficulties in acquiring land, the lack of access to long-term mortgage finance, and the high cost of building materials are some of the factors contributing to the lack of affordability of housing in Turkey.

On the other hand, Turkey's post-2002 housing policy has overemphasized the economic functions of housing investment and its contribution to economic growth, while largely ignoring the housing needs of low-income households. Given the high proportion of minimum wage earners in Turkey, affordable housing policy is indeed a citizen-oriented policy with high public benefits. For this reason, it seems imperative that policies to increase housing affordability take into account the needs of low-income households and that this process is carried out in a citizen-centered manner. From this point of view, basic research questions are structured as follows: In the Turkish economy, which has a new macroeconomic structure after 2002, the housing market has been identified as the dominant sector of economic growth and has developed within this framework. How does the level of housing affordability change within the framework of the basic housing market indicators during the period of redefining the dynamics of the housing market? In addition, the impact of a COVID-19 pandemic on housing affordability is one of the questions to be answered by the study.

This chapter first intends to analyze the effect of housing market variables on the housing affordability problem, especially in the economic turbulence that the Turkish economy has experienced in recent years. The study also aims to provide a comprehensive understanding and information by addressing the reasons behind the housing affordability problem/crisis with regards to both supply and demand. In addition, the study details how the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the deepening of the housing affordability crisis regarding housing market-related indicators. Finally, the study suggests how a social housing policy in the interest of low-income groups and the urban poor should comprehensively address the problem of housing affordability. The methodology of the chapter relies on a descriptive analysis in general over the last two decades. Several housing-related variables are obtained to represent housing supply, housing demand, and house prices developments in analyzing housing affordability problem. As the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) and the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) publish the relevant official data, such indicators are routinely calculated and examined by the authors. The analysis of all aspects of the housing affordability problem discussed in the study ensures the well-being and satisfaction of citizens. As a result, the recent developments in homeownership and housing affordability, commonly discussed as a constitutional right, can be a guide to the success of public policy.

This chapter involves four main sections. Section 2 briefly reviews the literature on housing affordability studies in Turkey. The third section analyses housing affordability in Turkey using data on the housing market over the last few decades. The fourth section evaluates the adverse effect of COVID-19 pandemic on development of housing affordability. The final section concludes the study with a general assessment and recommendations for social policy.

## 2 Literature Review

The literature presented in this section refers to the findings of the most recent studies on the housing affordability in the Turkish economy. The problems of housing affordability in Turkey have drawn less consideration in the literature in the past, but the number of studies on the subject is now growing rapidly. In addition, an expanding body of literature concentrates on the role of economic policy in worsening housing affordability in low- and middle-income groups.

In one of the earliest studies on affordability, Asici et al. (2011) show that housing was unaffordable for households with the average income in Turkey for the period 2007:6 to 2009:12. Türel and Koç (2015) examine the role of the Housing Development Administration (HDA) in terms of housing production and housing affordability. They show that the affordability problem for low and middle-income households is mitigated by the supply of housing at a wide range of prices on the housing market and by the production of owner-occupied housing by the HDA. Similarly, Özdemir-Sarı and Aksoy-Khurami (2018) find that high housing production and steady increases in per capita income have contributed positively to housing affordability in Turkey.

Alkay and Övenç (2019) show that it is not possible for low-income groups to buy a house according to their needs in five different regions in Turkey, despite the increasing supply of housing. In addition, the fact that housing affordability in Istanbul and the Aegean region is lower for all income groups compared to other regions is important to show that spatial differences need to be considered when developing housing policies. Coşkun (2021) argues that declining housing affordability and homeownership rates can be translated into increasing housing inequality and a lack of confidence among Turkish households. In addition, high-income groups with better affordability perpetuate existing inequalities, social stratification and consequent social tensions between high- and low-income groups. The authors propose social policy measures to reduce income and wealth inequality and increase the supply of affordable housing. Similarly, Coşkun (2021) also reports that housing is not affordable in Turkey and in three major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, except for the highest income groups. The study suggests that the high cost of homeownership, low/unequal income levels and adverse market conditions have an effect on the current affordability crisis as evidence of the unavailability of housing. There is also evidence that the affordability crisis is on the rise, particularly in low-income groups and in urban areas.

Coşkun (2022a) demonstrates that housing is not affordable in Turkey and that unequal income distribution contributes to the affordability crisis of vulnerable social groups (VSGs). According to various affordability criteria, the finding strongly shows that housing in Turkey is not affordable for VSGs. Therefore, the study also argues that the serious downward trend in the homeownership rate among low-income groups in Turkey can also be evaluated in the situation of the concept of “accumulation through dispossession”. Coşkun (2022b) argues that the reliance on neoliberal housing market practices appears to be at the root of the ongoing

housing affordability crisis and the lack of adequate policy responses. From a policy perspective, the study suggests that the policy measures needed to address the housing affordability crisis could place particular emphasis on housing rents, mortgage volumes and construction costs as the main components of the crisis.

Aksoy-Khurami and Özdemir-Sarı (2019) show that HDA has failed to make a significant contribution to the low- and middle-income groups in terms of housing supply and housing affordability. Aksoy-Khurami and Özdemir-Sarı (2022) examine the recent global economic crisis and the impact of the pandemic on trends in the Turkish housing market. The study notes that there has been a shift in demand for detached houses and that the price gap between detached houses and flats has widened since the start of the pandemic. As a result of high inflation during the pandemic, housing is in demand as an investment for wealthy households. The evidence that the housing market has exacerbated social inequalities during the current pandemic is one of the key conclusions of this study. Recently, Emekçi (2021) showed that the problem of current housing affordability in the Turkish housing market has reached alarming proportions with the COVID-19 pandemic due to incomplete and wrong policies of the past.

## 3 Housing Affordability in the Turkish Housing Market

Since the mid-2000s, Turkey has had a highly speculative housing market driven by supply and demand. The Turkish economy also has a housing supply mechanism driven entirely by the free market, with few social policies. The changes that Turkey has experienced, such as demographic and socio-cultural change, migration, and urbanization, have contributed significantly to the need for housing. When housing affordability problems are created by such a dynamic process, combined with the shrinking credit market conditions, it becomes inevitable to experience a housing crisis, as Turkey has recently. Moreover, the housing affordability crisis in the Turkish economy is deepening as house prices rise. In addition, the existing distributional problems and the poverty in urban areas add to the severity of this crisis. Influenced by factors such as income inequality and inefficiencies in the mortgage market, the affordable housing crisis in Turkey has had a significant impact on housing oversupply, increased housing unaffordability and reduced home ownership.

Since 2002, the public sector has come to play a dominant role in producing housing in Turkey. Over the past two decades, continued support for the construction sector and the direct government involvement in housing production through the Housing Development Administration (HDA) have increased housing production across the country (Özdemir-Sarı 2022). Figure 1 shows the number of constructions, and the number of occupancies permit for which production has started in Turkey between 2002 and 2021. As noted above, the upward trend in completions over the past two decades reflects recent legislative changes that have forced builders and owners to apply for occupancy permits.

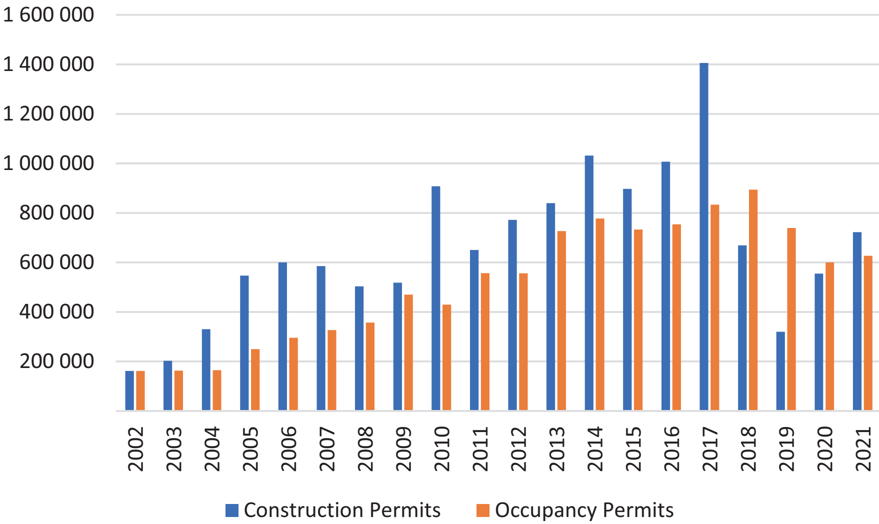


**Fig. 1** Annual housing starts in Turkey (Source: Generated from TURKSTAT (2022a))

As a result, a more realistic way of assessing the country's annual housing production is to look at housing starts (construction permits).

Falling inflation as a result of the favorable economic environment in the early 2000s led commercial banks to reduce their interest rates on housing loans. This has led to a rapid increase in housing production in the context of high economic growth, a low inflation environment, and low borrowing costs. The slight decline in the years 2008 and 2009 can be interpreted as reflection of the global financial crisis. However, the level of production quickly recovered, and the annual number of buildings permits reached a record high of one million new homes in 2014. However, 2017 set a new record with 1.4 million new starts. Between 2010 and 2018, the production of residential buildings has never been less than 600,000 units. However, when the Turkish economy went through a major crisis that started with the currency crisis in 2018 and continued with the subsequent COVID-19 Pandemic, things changed for housing production. The rapid increase in housing production has been replaced by a significant decline in the number of building permits and occupancy permits. Housing production, which fell to 300,000 in 2019, accelerated upwards again thanks to the significant reduction in interest rates and the housing sales campaign announced by the government during the pandemic.

It is crucial to analyze homeownership in order to understand the contribution of the level of production in the housing market to solving the problem of housing affordability. Figure 2 shows the direction of homeownership rates in Turkey in terms of home ownership and tenant status over the period 2006–2021. The homeownership rate, which was 60.9% in 2006, declined continuously until 2011, falling to 59.6%. Over the next 3 years, it rose to 61.1%. There is a sharp decline from 2011 onward to 57.5% in 2021. Against this trend in homeownership rates, the share of

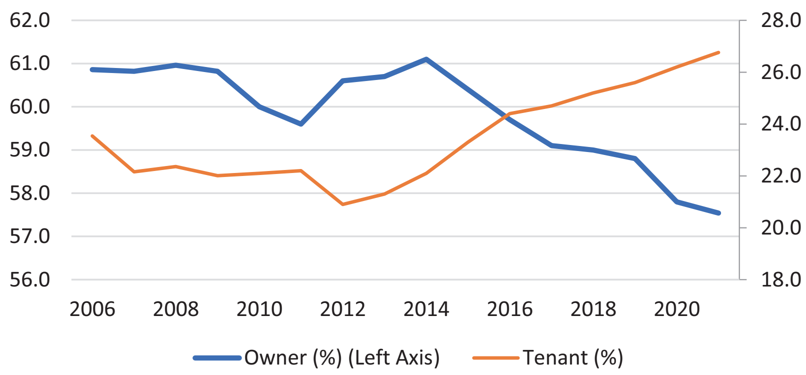


**Fig. 2** Homeownership rate in Turkey (Source: Generated from TURKSTAT (2022b))

tenants increased from 23.5% in 2006 to 26.8% in 2021. When this analysis is carried out for those below 60% of the median income, the homeownership rate of 59.3% in 2006 falls rapidly to 49.4% in 2021. On the other hand, tenant rates increased from 25% in 2006 to 32.3% in 2021.

The share outside these two categories of tenure (other) (not shown in the figure) represents the share of households that are neither owner-occupied nor tenant occupied. These households live with relatives, paying below market rent or no rent at all. This category also shows those who have more than one place of residence. In other words, the housing policy of empowering low-income households to become homeowners has increased multiple ownership in the community for those who already own a home and has provided new opportunities to purchase additional homes (Özdemir-Sarı 2022). As a sign of the affordability crisis, this aspect means that Turkey's fully market-based housing finance structure has led to a shift in ownership with a gradual dense market rental design for low-income households (Coşkun 2022a).

These rates show that the production of houses only reach households with houses. Households prefer to buy a house as an investment rather than as an alternative financial instrument (Emekçi 2020). Therefore, these houses have not helped to solve the problem of affordability for those on low incomes. Urban transformation with a focus on housing is one of the goals set for 2023. However, there is evidence that urban transformation activities across the country are part of a profit-making process. For this reason, urban transformation stories, which have been seen as a solution to the problem of housing affordability, have not solved the problem of affordability for low-income groups. As a result, the issue of housing affordability, which is crucial for Turkey, has not been adequately addressed (Emekçi 2020).

As the House Price Index (HPI) published by the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) is derived from appraisals of housing loan applications, it may not fully reflect the Turkish housing market. However, the HPI is the only officially published source of data on house prices. Figure 3 shows the year-on-year changes in the index of house prices in both nominal and real terms. With the exception of a

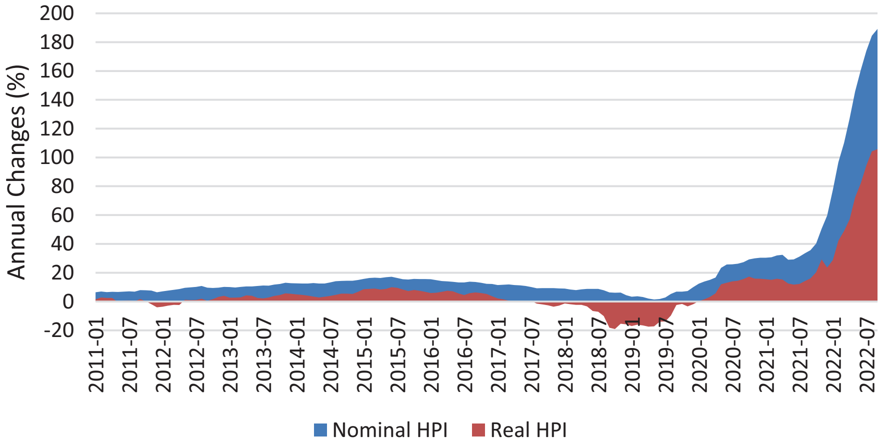


**Fig. 3** Annual changes in house prices (Source: Generated by the author based on CBRT (2022a))

short period in 2012, real house prices rose continuously until the beginning of 2017. However, after the second half of 2017, real house prices started to fall until the beginning of 2020. This negative trend came after the housing bubble debates in the country, by reason of the boom in housing production in 2014–2017 and an IMF note that pointed to the existence of a housing bubble. Moreover, the decline in real house prices coincides with the domestic economic crisis, which started with the depreciation of the Turkish lira after the tension with the US in August 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in March 2020, has been a turning point for the course of house prices. The upswing of the housing demand of the households, together with the expansionary monetary and credit policies implemented to eliminate the negative effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, is one of the most important reasons that increase the rise in house prices. However, the need for more data makes it difficult to examine these trends. In addition, the uncertainty of monetary policy in recent years has increased the return on home ownership among alternative investment instruments, both domestically and internationally. Mortgage interest rate cuts and a lack of supply on the housing market are among the main factors that have a positive impact on real house price growth from 2020 onward. The astronomical increases in nominal and real house prices since the last months of 2021 reflect a high inflation period in the housing market, in which expectations and all price dynamics deteriorated with the monetary policy implemented. The significant depreciation of the exchange rate and the rapid increase in construction costs, especially labor costs, ensure the continuity of the increase in nominal and real house prices. Rising house prices and overvaluation of housing increase the risk to financial stability, but also worsen the qualification of the median household to own a home, as income growth cannot coincide with dynamic house prices (Frayne et al. 2022). As the problem of deteriorating housing affordability due to house price booms often occurs in metropolitan areas, it also limits labor mobility for high-skilled jobs in these cities.

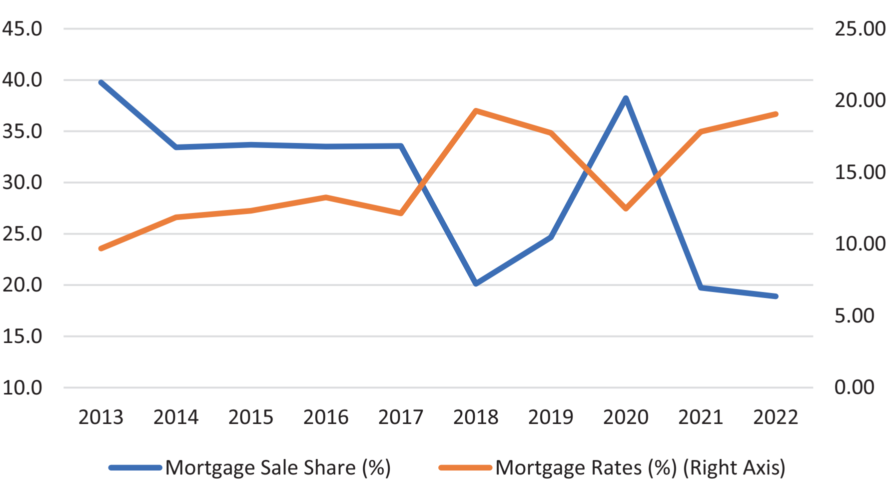


**Fig. 4** Mortgage sales and mortgage rates (Source: Generated by the author based on CBRT (2022b))

The financial regulation in the Mortgage law, which was enacted in 2007 to enable the affordability of housing in Turkey, focuses on middle- and high-income groups. Against such a background, where the supply of housing is limited to market housing, it has become almost impossible for low-income groups to obtain mortgage loans under the conditions required by law to purchase housing. A key indicator about the affordability of housing is the interest rate on mortgage loans. The rise in interest rates is expected to have a negative impact on housing affordability.

Figure 4 shows the mortgage interest rates obtained from the CBRT and the ratio of mortgage sales to total sales. Apart from the extraordinary interest rate cut against COVID-19 in 2020, mortgage interest rates on the market tend to rise rapidly. On the other hand, the share of mortgaged sales as a proportion of total sales has fallen dramatically over this period. While almost two out of every five houses sold in 2020 were sold on mortgage loans, this rate has decreased to one in five by 2022. As a result, wage earners who want to become homeowners by paying loans over many years are unable to buy a home on the market.

## 4 The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Housing Affordability in Turkey

The COVID-19 outbreak, which started as a public health crisis, became an economic crisis affecting supply and demand conditions. However, the progression of the pandemic through self-isolation, social distancing, and travel restrictions has increased uncertainty in the housing sector. As a result, there was a decline in

investment in housing due to the increased risks in the first period of the pandemic. At the same time, many countries pursued expansionary fiscal policies and active economic policies, together with monetary policies of various interest rate cuts and credit expansion (Yağcıbaşı and Yıldırım 2022). Such policies have affected the supply and demand structures in housing markets and, consequently, house prices (Subaşı and Baycan 2022).

On the other hand, the production of housing and the volume of transactions remained negative throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, price levels have fluctuated in line with changes in the demand structure. As a result, housing affordability has become a bottleneck. In addition, the high cost of housing has put pressure on household budgets due to loss of livelihoods during closures and increased time spent at home (Emekçi 2021).

In contrast to previous crises, the fact that there was no fall in demand for housing during the pandemic was an unexpected development. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the expectation was that there would be a fall in demand as a result of the reduction in economic activity and thus a fall in house prices. Despite the fall in GDP, the most important factor is the direct household income that was supported by governments during the pandemic. The fact that this did not happen may have been due to the reduced consumption possibilities due to the closures and the opportunity for households to use their income for other purposes. In addition, some structural changes have been observed, such as working from home, living in larger houses, and moving to different regions as a result of the pandemic. Although house prices have generally tracked income growth closely for some time, the relationship has broken down, especially since the pandemic, with house prices rising much faster than incomes. Low-income citizens are highly vulnerable to changing market conditions and soaring house prices in Turkey in consequence of inadequate government support and mismanagement of the affordability issue. The pandemic has had an impact on the current affordability problem through increases in income inequality, unemployment, and housing insecurity (Aksoy-Khurami and Özdemir-Sarı 2022). As a result, the national house price index rose rapidly to record highs. While the CBRT house price index increased by an average of 171% from January 2010 to March 2020, the post-pandemic house price increase from June 2020 to October 2022 was 334%. Hence, the astronomical rise in house prices has made it significantly more difficult for low-income citizens to access affordable housing.

Figure 5 shows from a different perspective how difficult it has been for low- and middle-income citizens to access housing since the pandemic period in the Turkish economy. The selling price of 100 square meters of housing is based on the median square meter price across the country, published by the CBRT. The multiplier 100 $m^2$ of the house price to the minimum wage shows the ratio of the calculated house price to the 12-month minimum wage in the period in question. Over the period considered, an annualized minimum wage of 14.82 is needed to own an average house of 100-square-metres. In 2019, when the housing market was in a state of stagnation, an average home of 100 $m^2$ would be affordable with a minimum wage of 12 years. However, from this period onward, with the negative impact of the pandemic, an average of 100 square meters of housing can be purchased with more

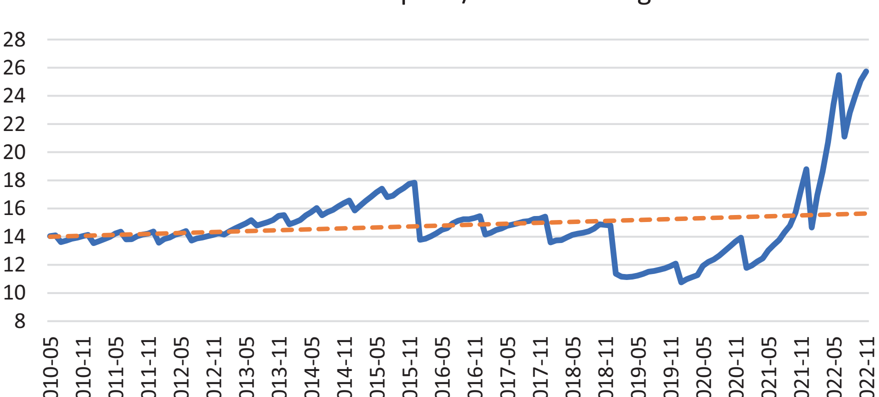


**Fig. 5** House price to minimum wage ratio (Source: Generated from CBRT (2022c))

and more minimum wage and annual savings. This rate increased dramatically to 25.73 in the final months of 2022.

In recent years, the government has not implemented an explicit policy to eliminate the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the housing market and tenants. As a result, the rental housing market in Turkey shows how rental prices have been affected by a global pandemic in the absence of any regulatory policy (Subaşı and Baycan 2022). Moreover, the fact that some features of the Turkish housing system are different from those of other developing countries has led to a worsening of the housing affordability problem as macroeconomic conditions have deteriorated with the pandemic. It should be emphasized that in the impact area of this mechanism, social housing for low- and middle-income citizen in Turkey is produced exclusively by the public sector through the HDA. The HDA builds homes for owner-occupiers at subsidized prices. The private construction sector does not play an important role in the production of social housing by prioritizing commercial concerns. In addition, many Turkish households do not rely on mortgage loans to purchase housing. Instead, private savings are the main source of capital for house purchases.

Most of the households that buy a house from the HDA increase their debt to the HDA instead of paying a mortgage to a bank. Beneficiaries of HDA social housing pays their down payment at the beginning of the construction period before occupancy of their homes. They make their monthly payments in accordance with the HDA's repayment schedules. The lowest public sector wage index, domestic producer price index, or consumer price index plays a role in determining the monthly installments that lower-income groups must pay. HDA takes the lowest of these rates and the monthly installments are updated twice a year. It includes only a payment arising from the purchase of a house. Especially after the pandemic, the increase in monthly installments, updated with the rapidly rising inflation, contributed to aggravating the housing accessibility problem of households. When other

costs associated with housing are included, there is a serious housing affordability problem for middle- and low-income citizens (Emekçi 2021). Private investment under free market conditions creates the housing stock in the Turkish economy; approximately 98.5% of the urban housing buildings (both owner-occupied and rented) is privately owned. In contrary to the mass housing structures like those in Europe, the housing production structure in Turkey has continued with little or no public intervention, except in recent years. Governments encourage households to become homeowners through the support packages they issue from time to time. However, households also prefer to own a home to preserve the value of their investments in the country's high inflation and unstable macroeconomic environment.

The housing policy, which has been aiming to increase the housing affordability based on housing loans for many years in Turkey, has reached its target level within its own framework. However, the rise in mortgage interest rates in the wake of macroeconomic instability shows that the number of houses bought with the help of mortgage loans has started to fall. Therefore, a reduction in mortgage rates that is not supported by real income growth will not lead to a significant increase in housing affordability. This is because borrowers with a moderate income will not have the means to meet other needs after they have made their mortgage payments. Therefore, the development of a mortgage loan will not be a solution to the housing problem for citizens with low and middle income (Kosareva and Polidi 2021). However, subsidizing mortgage interest rates can also bring higher risks in the housing market. A reduction in interest rates can have an impact on housing affordability, but the effects are complex. On the one hand, cheaper loans can make the home buying more affordable. Nonetheless, on the other hand, low-interest rates can also increase the demand for housing and raise house prices, reducing the overall affordability of housing.

In light of the above discussions, Turkey requires the development of different and cheap housing opportunities for its low- and middle-income citizens. However, there is a need to increase investment in social housing in order to improve affordability for low-income citizen and to help address housing shortages. Social housing projects create an opportunity for the government to provide cheap and reliable housing for low-income citizens. This generally takes the form of rented accommodation at a regulated price but may also include properties sold at less than market value and subject to restrictions. The development of social housing will provide housing for vulnerable groups without increasing the demand for housing, regardless of market conditions. More important, social housing allows the state to capture the economic rent that accrues to landlords and use it for economic efficiencies and redistribution. The provision of social housing can have a positive impact on job mobility and economic growth, depending on the extent to which it is provided and the way in which it is allocated. On the other hand, flexible access to social housing can be a source of productivity gains. This aspect of housing policy may therefore be crucial in the post-COVID-19 era.

## 5 Conclusion

Shelter is both a need and a commodity that has a significant impact on many aspects of a household. High housing costs are a long-standing public policy concern as they reduce the quality of life and access to opportunities for cost-burdened households. It also undermines community development efforts and prevents many tenants from acquiring housing, the most valuable financial asset of the average Turkish household. In addition, this housing affordability pressure influences the poor and vulnerable groups and middle-income citizens living in Turkey's three largest provinces (Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir).

This chapter has briefly reviewed the concept and measurement of housing affordability as it relates mainly to low- and middle-income citizens. It has illustrated this through affordability analyses, using recent changes in housing market data in Turkey. The findings show that despite the relatively high-income growth, moderate inflation, and ample credit opportunities, the homeownership rate has declined since the early 2000s. The findings also clearly show that economic conditions, which are left entirely to market dynamics, are ineffective in addressing the shortage of affordable housing. This requires a greater involvement of Turkey's reputable and well-established non-profit organizations in public policy. In addition, the sharp rise in house prices has increased the wealth of homeowners, making it more difficult for tenants or low-income citizens to become homeowners.

There are several policy recommendations for the improvement of the housing affordability policy in Turkey. First, there needs to be a housing affordability policy that addresses the institutional aspect of affordable housing. The affordability of housing has never been addressed as a broad and urgent concern in the housing policy of Turkey. Even though the housing market in the Turkish economy is considered to be a pioneer of economic growth, increasing housing production is far from solving the problem of housing affordability. In addition, the number of studies drawing attention to this problem in Turkey could be much higher. Housing affordability should be an integral part of Turkey's housing policy and should be addressed as a matter of urgency. A comprehensive housing policy needs to be put in place to improve access to affordable housing that is more efficient and of better quality. Moreover, the implementation of a citizen participation process in the formulation of public housing policy can lead to a more effective, inclusive, and higher quality outcome at both regional and national levels. It should be noted that housing affordability should be an ongoing priority for citizens in Turkey, as it is in many developed countries, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Affordable housing should be developed taking into account the principles of affordable housing and community well-being to acquire new targets, together with economic well-being for citizens.

Secondly, the main factors affecting the decline in housing affordability in Turkey are rising house prices, falling household incomes, and high volatility in mortgage interest rates. Policymakers can therefore give priority to lowering income inequalities, raising the income levels of middle-/low-income groups, restricting

extreme house price increases in urban areas and developing an effective assistance plan to increase low-income home ownership. One step in the solution is the normalization of the monetary policy in a way that is in line with the scientific facts. As a natural consequence of exchange rate movements caused by interest rate cuts and rising inflation, house prices are rising at a rate that cannot keep pace with wages. Therefore, the balance to be achieved in monetary policy and macroeconomic policy in general, and the normalization process to be implemented, will also have an impact on house prices.

Thirdly, there is a need for more measures to clarify the matter of housing affordability, which is considered a major issue in the Turkish economy, notably in recent years. However, the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problems that remain unresolved. This crisis has hit low-income citizens harder, who are more vulnerable during economic crisis. Post-pandemic housing market solutions were both short-term and ineffective because they were designed independently of the country's general macroeconomic structure. Since low-income citizens are severely vulnerable to unstable market dynamics and rising house prices in Turkey, public policy should provide affordable housing to all citizens, especially to this group. Accordingly, the inclusion of citizens' opinions in the policy making process has several advantages, ranging from providing a basis for legitimacy to leading to more effective policies.

The determinants of the new housing affordability crisis are discussed in their broader context in this introductory study. It is clear from the above overview that these factors are miscellaneous, complicated, and deeply rooted. It encompasses demographic, economic, and financial aspects that go far beyond the constrains of housing policy and make it difficult to find a solution to the crisis. Attempts to alleviate the housing cost burden are also likely to have financial and distributional implications and are likely to be the subject of political debate and contention. These reasons suggest that housing affordability is likely to remain an important issue in academic research and debate.

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# Educational Policy Making in Turkey: Citizen-Centered or Window-Dressing?

**Merve Zayim-Kurtay, Sevgi Kaya-Kasikci, and Yasar Kondakci**

**Abstract** This chapter addresses the state of Citizen-centered policy making (CPM) in the Turkish Education System (TES) by drawing and theorizing on the policy making cycle. Once elaborating on key approaches for CPM and describing the key challenges in CPM, the chapter discusses CPM approaches and practices in education. The chapter argues that over-centralization, overpopulation, and resulting change inflation are the key characteristics of TES, which fundamentally reduce the capacity of the system to demonstrate CPM in educational policy making. These characteristics result in a culture of "non-participation" in educational policies in TES, where the key constituencies in the system mostly fail to contribute to educational policies. National Education Council (NEC) conventions were used as showcases to demonstrate the lack of active citizen participation in educational policy making in TES. According to prominent results of the study, although there are several attempts of the government to include citizens in the educational policy making process, this has not been accomplished in each step of the policy process, which results in not only a lack of participation of the stakeholders in some steps but also illusory stakeholder involvement in others.

**Keywords** Educational policy making · Centralization · Citizen participation · Educational change · Citizen-centered policy making · Turkish education system · Over-Centralization · National Education Council · Attempts · Turkey

## 1 Introduction

Policies are key in organizing public services with a set of decisions, although their nature recalls complexity, ambiguity, and contested terrain (Hill 2005). There is ample literature on the policy definition that could be piled up under the statements

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of future directions, processes, and/or outcomes. In its pure form, the policy is defined as a "piece of paper, a statement of intentions or of practice" (Trowler 2003; p. 95). Such definitions treat the policy as a text with a set of goal-oriented decisions and somehow overlook the agency of the discourse and the grassroots who steer the implementation process. Beyond these reductionist definitions, others highlight policy as coupled processes (Bell and Stevenson 2006) that include text and discourse, power and negotiation, and multiple parties with different agendas. More precisely, policies are not only actions or texts but also unanticipated consequences (Taylor et al. 1997), various interpretations of different actors (Colebatch 2009), and living mechanisms that are reconceptualized in each setting (Bell and Stevenson 2006). Similarly, Ball (2006) indicated that policies are dynamic processes and outcomes formed by both texts that refer to the actions and discourse that reflect how the policy is handled.

As one of the key public services, education policy is no different from public policy, with a similarly controversial and contested nature (Hoy 1994) and a distinctly politicized character (Olssen et al. 2004). In other words, education policy is no longer a statement of intention defined by policy-makers (Ball 2006); instead, it is the negotiation process shaped by the values and the interpretation of the interest parties on the one hand and by the socio-political environment on the other. Such a definition reflects a continuum from agenda setting and formulating policy decisions to implementation with an interaction and communication pattern (Berkhout and Wielemans 1999).

As several definitions highlighted, policy making in every public service, including education, is a dynamic, unpredictable, controversial, collective, and political process (Cairney 2012; Colebatch 2009; Heck 2004; Trowler 2003). Despite the contested nature of policy making, there are several commonly agreed perspectives in the current scholarship on the fact that policy making comprises a set of elements; it is a conflicting and bargaining process surrounded by power and ideology and includes multiple stakeholders with their agenda, although it is a state activity (Cairney 2012; Trowler 2003). In order to simplify the policy making processes and analysis, the policy process model, defined as a "chronological sequence of events" (Berkovich 2021, p. 21), is proposed, which classifies policy making into stages named problem identification and agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, and evaluation (Cairney 2012; Berkovich 2021; Fowler 2009; Trowler 2003).

As one of the most critical stages of the process, problem identification and agenda-setting refer to a starting point at which an issue is identified and put into the agenda, which takes considerable political attention. This stage is dominantly steered by the government, elites, or politicians (Fowler 2009), who aim to shape the policy by their ideologies and values, meaning that some groups are more influential than others in this process (Taylor et al. 1997). Fowler (2009) listed four types of agenda; systematic, which means professional agenda as educational experts and education associations point out the issues; media agenda, which refers to problems highlighted by the communication network; public agenda, which refers to the issues highlighted by the general public; and finally, governmental agenda that

covers the problems identified at the government level. Hence, any issue offered by several interested parties with different agendas needs to be reached to the government agenda to be an educational policy (Heck 2004). In other words, the government could be called a steering body of the agenda-setting process and should balance the needs and requests of different stakeholders.

Second, policy formulation, as both a technical and political process (Kraft and Furlong 2004), indicates making a set of decisions about a problem and refers to the written form of the policy text. This stage does not solely indicate a governmental activity; instead, it is a consensual and political process that several government officials and non-governmental stakeholders and interests negotiate to set objectives, choose among the alternatives, formulate a policy, and define structures (Colebatch 2009; Stein 2004). Policy adoption is the after stage of policy formulation in which the government body endorses formulated policies.

Third, policy implementation is the process of getting the actions into gear (Mitchell et al. 2011) or the process in which educational leaders, as the key actors in the field, are actively engaged to put the policy into practice (Fowler 2009). Among the stages mentioned above, this could be referred to as the stepchild of the policy making process as the utmost attention is given, and the major fight takes place at the policy formulation phase (Barkenbus 1998).

Lastly, policy evaluation means the assessment of the success of the policy by evaluating whether it reaches pre-determined objectives or smoothly works (Cairney 2012). Barkenbus (1998) asserted that this is the forgotten element of the policy cycle, as policy-makers hardly face or are unwilling to see the reality of the policy outcomes.

Policy making is an ongoing process and displays a cyclic nature, suggesting that as new concerns arise at different stages, the process recurs itself. That is to say, while values and ideologies are the main triggers of the policy formulation phase, practical issues are at the stage in the implementation process (Scott 1996). Further, there is a stark dispute between education policy-makers and implementers, school leaders, and teachers, as they interpret policies from their perspectives resulting in various forms of one policy (Trowler 2003). On the other hand, Berkhout and Wielemans (1999) remarked that the values of dominant groups are majorly given a place in education policy documents while overlooking the expectations of the implementers. Moreover, practitioners are the neglected parts of policy making as their inputs are often not included in the policy formulation stage (Ball 2015). However, the policy making process in education should not be the monopoly of governmental officials and elites but rather be inclusive as it is a "dialectic process" in essence (Bell and Stevenson 2006, p. 2). Also, as Apple (1999) puts it, education policy making is not exclusive to top-level bureaucrats but also to grassroots who interpret the policies formulated by others and make their own. Hence, to achieve a successful and well-grounded policy in education, there needs to be an alignment or low discrepancy as much as possible between what is intended by the policy-makers and what is implemented by practitioners, school leaders, and teachers at schools. In so doing, all stakeholders affected by the education policy should be involved in forming the policy by providing insight and varied perspectives (Bell and Stevenson 2006).

Against this backdrop, this chapter gives a snapshot of educational policy making in Turkey and discusses whether the policy making process enables active citizenship participation democratically. There are three main sections: the first addresses the definition of concepts concerning policy making and citizen-centered policy making (CPM), the second describes the structural characteristics of the Turkish education system (TES) and how they turn out to be impediments to enacting CPM, and the last provides a case analysis of how CPM is experienced in Turkey through National Education Councils (NECs).

## 2 Citizen-Centered Policy Making

Several macro- and micro-level triggers shake the ground for the governments' paternalist position in the policy making process. Thus, the state's desire to "fly-solo" (Green, 1997, as cited in Hudson 2010, p. 57) was challenged in the policy arena, including education policy making. The impact of globalization and neoliberal values for macro-level triggers results in privatization, a shift from the government to governance, and increased representativeness of the policy making process (Lingard et al. 2013). Correspondingly, these dynamisms give rise to a heightened interest of the public to take an active role in the policies that affect their lives. Taken together, the impact of neoliberal values and the pressure of the public push governments to create alternative participation mechanisms to represent and include the perspectives of not only the experts but also all strata of the society that give rise to the post-bureaucratic model in educational policy making.

As one form of the post-bureaucratic model, citizen-centered policy making is the bedrock of democracy (Arnstein 1969; OECD 2001) and defined as distributing power to the citizens, including the ones excluded from the political process, to be actively involved in each decision-making phases of the policies that will affect their lives (Arnstein 1969; Karkın 2019; Saylam et al. 2020). In citizen-centered policy making, citizens are regarded as stakeholders rather than the only subjects responsible for implementing top-level-driven policies (Saylam et al. 2020). From the education perspective, citizen-centered policy making remarks families, students, teachers, and ordinary citizens that have a stake, in addition to non-governmental organizations and teacher unions, as the actors of the policy making process.

Various approaches classify different forms of citizen-centered participation in policy making. For instance, Arnstein (1969) proposed a ladder of citizen participation model with three forms: non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power. The model represents eight rungs that grade the citizen participation from the bottom rungs referring to lower participation to the top ones featuring the power and actualization of citizen participation. These eight steps are manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Manipulation and therapy are the rungs of non-participation, and it is a delusive form of participation as citizens have no power to control or influence the policy. For the former, citizens believe that they are given a voice in the process, yet the

main focus is to educate the citizens, while the latter highlights that the issues are derived from the citizen so that they are the ones to be cured and educated. Informing, consultation, and placation are the degrees of tokenism. At informing stage, citizens are given a voice in the policy making process, but the policy-makers do not recognize their ideas. It is a one-way communication process aiming to inform citizens. At the consultation stage, citizens are invited to give their opinions. However, this stage gives the policy-makers a legitimate power to demonstrate that they include citizens in the policy making process, yet they are no more than numbers to show how many participants are involved (Arnstein 1969). The last rung, placation, represents tokenism as well, and although participants are included in the process, it is highly potential that the majority could dominate them. Lastly, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control represent citizen power and have a proper place in the decision process through negotiation. Citizens have the authority to control the decision-making.

In addition to this typology, recently, OECD (2001) indicated three forms of participation to strengthen the government's relations with citizens: information, consultation, and active participation. First information suggests one-way relationship between the government and citizens. Information is typically shared through official documents. Secondly, consultation is a form of both-side relationship, but a very limited one, as the citizens give feedback on the draft policy documents through varied communication channels, such as public opinion surveys. Lastly, active participation is the most participative stage and is beyond illusory participation as citizens engage in decision-making through open working groups and panels.

As indicated earlier, citizen-centered policy making aims to engage citizens to take an active role in the process rather than being only passive subjects, and this approach supplies several advantages not only for the citizens but also for the nations. That is to say, citizen-centered policy making yields better public policy, enhances greater trust in government through being more transparent and accountable, and ensures rich democracy and more engaged citizens (Karkın 2019; Kiaei and Daneshfard 2016; OECD 2001). On the other hand, this approach also has some disadvantages. For instance, there are costs of utilizing citizen-centered policy making, such as time, funding, and effort. It could also be abused by some groups who specifically put forward their agenda and values, and not every citizen has adequate knowledge and skills to be involved in the process (Coombs and Merritt 1977). Further, if meaningful participation cannot be ensured, it may result in less trust in government and less representative decisions (Karkın 2019; Kiaei and Daneshfard 2016; OECD 2001) as well as turn into a window-dressing ritual rather than being representative.

## 3 Citizen-Centered Policy Making in Education

Citizen-centered policy making in education refers to the inclusion of every individual, not only governmental and non-governmental organizations but also families, children, and interested citizens, in the decision- and policy making process.

The public has been growing interested at a global scale in being involved in the process; as education consumers (Coombs and Merritt 1977), they are directly affected by the outcomes of the formulated policies. On the other hand, from the government's perspective, with the pressure of neoliberal values, there are attempts to become decentralized in education by involving various stakeholders in the policy making process. More specifically, parent associations, teacher unions, non-governmental organizations, families, teachers, administrators, and students (Perry 2009) are some actors that have a democratic right to participate in policy making in education. According to Coombs and Merritt (1977), even earlier, there were small and official attempts to include citizens in educational policy making through organizational decentralization, voting and collecting public opinion, school councils, parent associations, and public protests. These mechanisms mostly restrict participation at the school level, are limited in enhancing public participation, and are open to being under the control of governmental bodies, excluding public protests.

Nowadays, digital spaces with e-participation and protests supported by media coverage are other forms of integrating citizens into education policy making that have several examples worldwide. In other words, various countries utilize a bunch of strategies to open the policy making process to citizens; yet, they should be interpreted cautiously as it is doubtful whether these attempts ensure the democratization of education policy making through ensuring representation of all strata of society (Exley 2021; Young 2000). For instance, in Israel, there were pressures from parents to participate in education policy making not only at the school level but also at the local level. The Strollers Protest of 2011 and the Sardines Protests of 2014 are the ones in which families protested against the government's education policies, and they, as digital activists, voiced their demands through these protests by actively using social media, which ended up with success for the families (Avigur-Eshel and Berkovich 2017). These protests showed that families are not passive subjects or receivers of educational policy (Chiong and Lim 2022) but are policy actors (Avigur-Eshel and Berkovich 2017).

Considering the education policy making in China, Han and Ye (2017) indicated a shift from the exercise of power by one party to the central government and the increasing involvement of other non-governmental actors. However, in the case analysis presented by Han and Ye (2017), it seems that the central government is omnipotent in setting the agenda and formulating the policy in which other governmental bodies are also involved, such as educational experts, local bodies, and so on. However, public opinion is taken only after the policy document is formulated.

Similarly, England is also among the countries that open the education policy making process to the experts and the citizens through the open policy making notion. Exley (2021) pointed out that the Department for Education, for the sake of being participatory, involved the perspectives of think thanks, parents, and ordinary citizens through online questionnaires and workshops; however, the study showed the fact that the elite network still controlled the process, and the ideas and voices of the citizens that are not aligned with the current policy are ignored. Overall, there are several attempts by governments to be representative and participatory in the education policy making process. However, mostly, these idealized attempts are

suppressed by the reality of the elites' aspiration to hold and exercise power, and eventually, this situation mostly makes the citizens puppets in the showcase.

This chapter discusses to what extent policy making is participatory in Turkey, given the structural and functional characteristics of the education system. Thus, the characteristics of the system that curtail the stakeholder involvement are argued first, followed by the analysis of National Education Councils as the system's formal citizen-centered policy making (CPM) mechanisms as a case study.

## 4 The Structural and Functional Characteristics of the TES

Turkish education system possesses three basic characteristics, which steer the process of CPM on the one hand and affect its performance and effectiveness on the other: overpopulation, over-centralization, and change-inflation (Kondakci et al. 2022).

### *4.1 Overpopulated System*

Turkey is one of the most populated countries in Europe, and in line with this, it has one of the most crowded student populations. Key data on the quantitative capacity of TES are presented in Table 1. According to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) statistics, there are 1.885.000 students in pre-primary schools, 5.433.901 students in primary schools, 5.293.067 students in lower secondary schools, and 6.543.599 students in upper secondary schools. Accordingly, MoNE inhabits a populated teacher force; 107.171 preschool teachers, 310.477 primary school teachers, 376.747 lower secondary teachers, and 389.307 upper secondary teachers, serving in a total of 92.902 schools around the country. The huge size of the system turns out to be a challenge and impedes involving key stakeholders in the CPM process as it requires good and careful planning and abundant resources, including a budget, time, and energy, as well as an inclusive perspective.

### *4.2 Over-centralization*

The structure established to develop and deliver education in this crowded population is also complex. Turkey possesses a centralized education system "based on Napoleonic tradition, featuring high levels of bureaucracy and top-down approach" (Kondakci et al. 2022, p.302). Typical of centralized organizational systems, TES exhibits a tall hierarchy. Although several changes were made in the central bureaucracy of MoNE in order to flatten the structure, TES is still one of the most centralized systems among OECD countries.

**Table 1** Key data on the quantitative capacity of the Turkish Education System

| | Students | Teachers | Classrooms | Schools | Schooling[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-primary | 1.885.004 | 107.171 | 92.910 | 36.644 | 40.67[b] |
| Primary school | 5.433.901 | 310.477 | 269.059 | 24.519 | 93.23 |
| Lower secondary | 5.293.067 | 376.747 | 198.366 | 18.935 | 88.85 |
| Upper secondary | 6.543.599 | 389.307 | 226.040 | 12.804 | 58.61 |
| Total | 19.155.571 | 1.183.702 | 786.375 | 92.902 | |

Source: Ministry of National Education, https://istatistik.meb.gov.tr
[a]Gross rates
[b]3–5 years old

Parallel to the structure of Turkish public administration, TES is structured under central and provincial parts. The central part (Ministry) owns all of the decision authority concerning key structural and functional tasks, including planning, organizing, staffing, and financing of administrative and education-related tasks. In addition to the central administration, there are provincial and district directorates in the hierarchy of the MoNE. In this structure, school principals and teachers have limited authority to make and implement their own decisions. Hence, provincial and district bodies and principals are considered the agents of MoNE in implementing the decisions made at the top of the hierarchy.

In addition to the central and provincial structure of MoNE, it is important to count another body affiliated with TES. With the transition to the presidential government system in Turkey, several boards directly affiliated with the president were established. One of these boards is the Higher Board of Education and Training (HBET). Although this board is responsible for policy development, it is unclear why a second executive body is introduced to the structure of policy development and implementation in TES. Both the MoNE and HBET are affiliated with the president; however, they are not connected. How these two bodies are going to collaborate in policy making and implementation is fuzzy. HBET, at least on paper, has a critical role in policy development because it is expected to intellectually and empirically inform educational policy and reform. Sometimes HBET surveys opinions and forms recommendations to the president. Although it has not fulfilled its mission in policy development, as TES has not been exposed to any policy originating from this board, it has the potential to affect policy development. Furthermore, this body created a duality in the system as the MoNE already has an advisory board for the policy making process, called National Education Councils, which enables the wide representation of all educational stakeholders and citizens.

Centralization comes with its problems. According to Nir (2009), centralized control leads to weak monitoring of administrative and academic practices in schools by local administrators. Besides, centralization brings uniformity of public education services and weakens pluralism, which is necessary to prove the representation of local communities and the recognition of children's individual needs. Moreover, centralization may diminish sensitivity and attentiveness to the local needs of the schools and students, ultimately resulting in a lack of accountability and responsibility of school administrators in various outcomes of the schools.

Thus, the centralized governance mode and school control approach may eliminate the participation and involvement of school-level educators in key decision processes. Turkey forms an extreme case in the centralization of decision authority in education, which puts the entire system in a slow-motion mode and is deficient in ensuring social justice. One of the pieces of evidence for an over-centralized system and its consequences comes from the OECD's comparative analysis of "who makes key decisions in education systems?" (OECD 2018). The issue addressed in this comparative analysis relates to how decisions are made at the school or mid-level for lower secondary schools. In contrast to the case of Turkey, OECD comparative analysis shows that "in most countries decisions on the organization of instruction are predominantly taken at the school level, decisions on resources are more often made at school or local level and decisions related to planning and structures, personnel management is more likely to be made at higher levels of authority, although countries vary widely in this regard" (OECD 2018, p. 408). Considering 23 key decisions across 4 domains (organization of instruction, personnel management, planning and structures, and resource management), OECD analysis suggests that Turkey is the most centralized country in educational decision-making. In the same report, in Turkey, 73% (OECD average 24%) of the decisions are made at the central level, while only 8% (OECD average 34%) are made at the school level. This analysis constitutes empirical evidence for the deficiency in the participatory policy making process.

### 4.3 Change Inflation

The last characteristic related to CPM is "change inflation." Turkey possesses one of the most frequently changing education systems. TES is exposed to unprecedented large-scale change interventions related to structure, curriculum implementation, teacher recruitment, development, and retention. Closely coupled with its centralized structure, these change interventions are designed at the ministerial level, the top of the system, although implementation of these changes necessitates the active involvement of school principals and teachers in the schools (Kondakci et al. 2022). However, "involvement" per se does not guarantee participative policy development and implementation. These two constituencies' engagement requires their involvement from the design until the implementation phase. Change implementation requires the engagement of parents as well. However, change and development interventions in TES leave little room for the participation of the key constituencies of teachers, principals, parents, and ordinary citizens in the design and implementation of change interventions. Thus, we argue that those characteristics of change interventions in TES make them poor cases for practicing democratic participation.

These large-scale interventions are "imposed" (Kondakci et al. 2019) and driven by a political agenda to build religious hegemony (Karlidag-Denis et al. 2019). Centralized public bureaucracies exercise power and authority to accomplish

hegemony in an educational context and, subsequently, in different social and political contexts. The fact that most of the change interventions aim at instituting the influence of powerful groups in education change interventions are either conceived in a top-down manner without wide participation of stakeholders or even when there are opportunities to participate; these opportunities are commonly ceremonial rather than opening a real opportunity to solicit opinions and reflect these opinions on educational policies.

## 5 National Education Councils: Real Participation or an Illusion?

Given that the National Education Council (NEC) is a unique formal mechanism that enables the representation and involvement of diverse educational stakeholders in decision-making and partly gives a highly centralized TES a participatory character, it was analyzed as the case of CPM in this chapter. The regulation on NEC identifies its primary function as the highest advisory board to the MoNE (Official Gazette 2014). Thus, the NEC analyzes the TES to uphold and increase its quality through making advisory decisions. According to Erdoğan (n.d.), the former president of the Board of Education, NEC is one of the primary organs that gives direction to national education in line with developments and steers the alterations in national education with the recommendations offered.

According to Education Reform Initiative (ERI) (2014), the legal basis of the NEC was created in 1933, while the first was organized in 1939. As a long and rooted tradition of the TES, 20 NECs have been organized to date, with the last convening in 2021. Although the regulation signifies that the NEC is held every 4 years (Official Gazette 2014), there have been some organizational disruptions in the legislated time frames. Despite this fact, Aydın (1998) concluded that the organization of the council many times (not regularly, though) indicates the government's importance to education.

Deniz (2001) similarly explains the rationale behind the creation of NEC, referring to its historical underpinnings. According to him, after the proclamation of the republic, (1) the attributed vital role of education for the reconstruction of the state and society, (2) the need for an institution that would make education policies, (3) the failure of universities to produce novel ideas and knowledge helpful for the reconstruction of the education system, (4) the urgent need for development with national resources with the least cost, and (5) the desire to get benefit from the richness and multiplicity of ideas of the groups composed of education practitioners and relevant stakeholders laid the foundation for the creation of a valuable platform for the thorough analysis of educational issues and making relevant decisions to inform educational policies. Thus, the NECs were initially designed to make decisions with scientific and social concerns independent of political influence that potentially shaped the education system, even though they later evolved into institutions that

only made advisory decisions. Aydın (1998) additionally raised concerns about the benefits obtained from the NECs. He criticized the hierarchical and centralized structure of the education system for being the major obstacle against the potential reform efforts. He noted that even though councils have opposite characteristics to the education system, we fail to use them adequately. This unavoidably brought about the loss of resources while the same unresolved problems remained on the council's agenda, which eventually caused the system to find itself in a vicious cycle. This alleged change in their purpose and function over time and the inadequate gain yielded not only caused the NECs to be the subjects of criticism but also fueled many scholarly works on their structure, roles, operation, and effects on policy and practice (e.g., Akgul 2020; Balcı 2019; Çoruk 2019; Deniz 2019).

### *5.1 NEC's Structure, Organization, and Decision-Making*

The NEC regulation defines the participants and operating principles of the councils (Official Gazette 2014). The minister of national education, the chairman and members of the National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Commission, the Deputy Minister, the Undersecretary, and the heads of the central organization of the Ministry are the regular members of the meeting. The invited members of the meeting composed of the Ministry of National Education, ministries, public institutions and organizations, local governments, universities, professional chambers, non-governmental organizations, private sector, media and broadcasting organizations, representatives of students and parents, and experts in the field of education working on the subject of the council. The councils' agenda is determined before the meetings by a commission formed by the MoNE and communicated to the invited members beforehand. During the meetings, different working groups are created based on the match between the topics on the agenda and the members' expertise, and each working group prepares a report on the decisions they make. All decisions created by the working groups are brought to the general meeting, where they are open to voting. The majority rule applies in the decision-making process, and the items accepted by more than half of the participating members are included in the final reports created.

Erdoğan (n.d.) listed the major characteristics of the NECs with a specific focus on pluralism and extensive participation: involvement of diverse stakeholders from different sectors, a scientific character where educational issues with utmost importance are discussed, involvement of reputable experts in the field of education, authorities in educational sciences and the ones with deep knowledge about the decisions made during the previous NECs, and people with diverse world perspectives. However, one of the biggest question marks concerns about the criteria for selecting members to be invited to the councils. The NEC regulation clearly states that the participants are selected, approved, and invited by the MoNE (Official Gazette 2014) without offering any further information on the criteria applied in this process. Because of this murkiness, eight academics previously involved in one of

the NECs made some guesses about those criteria. They mentioned that diversity, representativeness of different institutions, selection by the supervisor with no identified reason, or ability to express and having studies on the agenda topics mattered, as documented by Toprak (2019).

Ambiguous criteria for the selection also seem to have some serious implications. Several studies consistently indicated that a lack of transparency jeopardizes the adequate representation of relevant groups and the legitimacy of the decision-making process. For the 19th NEC, for instance, the representation of the stakeholders who were directly on the target of the decisions was criticized for being inadequate (ERI 2015). Even though females constitute the larger portion of the teacher population in public schools in Turkey, a limited number of female teacher participants was criticized for the working group addressing teacher quality. At the same time, it was the case for the working group discussing faculties of education where an inadequate number of students were involved in faculties of education. ERI (2014) additionally criticized the lack of inclusivity due to the inadequate representation of some other critical stakeholders, such as minority groups and schools, NGOs, and unions which put productive dialogue and multi-perspective discussion in jeopardy. As importantly, Kaya-Kaşıkcı (2016) found out that the participants of the 17th, 18th, and 19th NECs displayed homogenous characteristics in that majority of them worked for the ministry or its related units, members of the teacher union close to the ministry, and had a similar ideology. Thus, the lack of transparency in the selection process and the concern of purposeful selection of participants with high affinity by the ministry cast doubt on the mission of the NECs to increase the quality of education and the potential political influence of the governing bodies on the decisions. These relatively newer findings were in line with the findings of Deniz (2001), who did a detailed analysis of the first 16 NECs organized. He concluded that due to the considerable number of administrators or bureaucrats participating in the NECs, the ruling party or parties have political influence over the decisions in addition to the flawed democratic character displayed by the NECs with the representation of students, parents, teachers, and other school staff only for show. This political influence was also associated with the personalities of the running minister of education at that moment (Çakır 2017; Deniz 2001). Some strived for decisions free from their political positions, while some pressured NEC members to make decisions supporting their ideologies.

Thus, the problems of the NECs are not limited to the degree of representation of educational stakeholders and are closely coupled with political influence; if the decision-making process is democratic or not appears to be one of the most controversial issues about the NECs. For instance, Toprak (2019) documented diverse experiences of NEC participants with decision-making and reported their doubts concerning the fast pace of the voting process and the lack of opportunity for some people to vote in those short moments. Moreover, changes to the agreed or rejected items in the final report or the imposition of already decided topics by the pressure of powerholders were other reported sentiments of the participants. A similar experience from the 20th NEC yielded additional insight into the matter. According to ERI (2021), an item with religious undertones at the preschool level, which was not

discussed and accepted in the relevant working group, was opened to voting in the general meeting and accepted by the majority of the votes. This imposition of a decision violates the working principles of the NECs, which indicates that issues not on the council agenda and not mentioned in the working group reports are not discussed in the general meeting (Official Gazette 2014). This imposition raised concerns about the transparency of the decision-making process while disempowering the NEC participants and working groups, not to mention the huge public concern and dispute over the potential repercussions of such a decision in real practice. Therefore, if the participants have an equal voice in the NECs and an impartial attitude in reporting the decisions made during workgroup meetings, the issues compromise meaningful and fair participation (ERI 2017) while breaching the trust of the practitioners and the public. A survey conducted by Aydın (1998) with the regular members and academics who participated in the 15th NEC also provided empirical evidence of the disparity in the evaluations between the two parties on the degree of democratic participation and the scientific character of the decisions made. For these two matters, the evaluations of both parties suggest the need for improvement, although the academics held more negative perceptions than the regular members. The potentially biased attitudes of regular members and more objective and scientific attitudes of academic staff were found accountable for this gap. All these problems in the structure and operation of NECs caused them to be perceived as tools for the legitimization of political decisions or the means to size up the potential reactions of the public to the pre-made decisions (Kaya-Kaşıkcı 2016; Toprak 2019), rather than a public policy making agent vital for the current centralized system.

## 5.2 *Effects of NECs on Policy and Practice*

The decisions made in the NEC have an advisory character, meaning that they may be on the policy and reform agenda of the MoNE; yet, what makes NECs' decisions worthy of consideration or applicable for the ministry is a question that still awaits answers. Not surprisingly, different studies or reports were put forward to analyze which NEC decisions were put into practice over the course of its history and to understand whether the decision quality or the degree of fit with the ruling party's political agenda is the determining factor.

TEDMEM (2019), referring to the advisory role of the NECs, admitted the low implementation rates of the NEC decisions and evaluated them far from being effective. This argument was supported by some evidence of discrepancies between the decisions taken in the NECs and implementations in practice. In addition to its advisory function, the low rates of implementation of NEC decisions were explained by the lack of consistency among the decisions, abstract and vague decisions, and the lack of alignment between the decisions and real problems of education (TEDMEM 2021). In another study, the desire and agenda of the government and ministry came to the fore as the overriding factors playing critical roles in MoNE's

consideration to implement those decisions while addressing a social need or a problem and alignment with politics and economy were some other minor factors emerged (Kaya-Kaşıkcı 2016). Additionally, the extent to which the decisions of the NEC support the ideology of the ministry was found in the same study to be a factor that the MoNE bases its consideration to include the decisions on its reform agenda, which also contributes to the political nature of the councils concurrently.

Failure of the ministry to implement the NEC decisions renders them useless and inefficient (Çakır 2017). It results in the similarity in the agendas of several NECs (TEDMEM 2019), which eventually leads the problems in TES to be more persistent and remain unresolved for a long time (Tofur et al. 2016) and causes the human and monetary resources to be wasted (Toprak 2019). To exemplify this, ERI (2014) referred to the failure of the MoNE to implement a compulsory preschool education plan, which was envisaged in the 18th NEC as part of the 4+4+4 change, even though preschool education has been on the agenda of the councils since 1981. However, studies consistently reported the 18th NEC's decision of 4+4+4 change, which entailed a shift from the 8-year uninterrupted compulsory education to the interrupted 4 years of primary, 4 years of middle, and 4 years of compulsory secondary education to exemplify the salient role NECs play in the construction and realization of educational policies (e.g., ERI 2014; Kaya-Kaşıkcı 2016; Toprak 2019; Tusev n.d.). Indeed, an interruption between school levels paved the way for the reopening of the middle levels of religious schools, which was closed with another structural change. This uninterrupted 8-year compulsory school change was triggered during the 15th NEC (Board of Education 1996) and was perceived as retaliation for this decision (e.g., Milliyet Gazetesi 2012).

Nevertheless, the 4+4+4 change witnessed strong resistance, particularly from the academy and NGOs working in the field of education, after it was offered to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 2012 to be agreed upon for implementation (Tusev n.d.). The reason for this reaction was that the initial version of the change entailed an interruption between different school levels and an open education option for students starting from the middle level. Thus, supporting and opposing NGOs and other organizations devoted energy and effort to create public opinion and promote their perspectives. This excessive public dispute triggered the creation of a new committee to discuss this change exhaustively and resulted in some adjustments in some items, which might have had a catastrophic influence on the system. Upon invitation, some critical stakeholders were involved in this committee, including important NGOs (although not considered enough), and the change proposition was revised for the better with the help of these stakeholders. Moreover, an immediate alteration in practice brought by the 4+4+4 change was the shift in school starting age from 72 months to 60 months in 2012. However, again with the huge public reaction and efforts of universities and NGOs, the ministry stepped back and withdrew this implementation after 1 year of implementation.

These cases documented how political agendas and prioritization in governmental concerns sometimes undermine the well-being of the public and societal concerns about education and how hard it is to enable fair and meaningful public participation in decision-making in such a politicized context. In this respect,

alternative formal and informal mechanisms enabling stakeholder involvement in decision-making gains greater importance given the limitations of the formal PPM mechanisms and preserving the primary importance of the public good in Turkey.

## 6 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed how CPM operates in the Turkish context. Due to the push from the citizens to be a part of the policy making process to some point, as well as the press from globalization and neoliberal movements, considerable attention has been given to making the policy making process more democratic, inclusive, and participatory at all stages. Although there are several attempts of the government to include citizens in the educational policy making process, this has not been accomplished in each step, which results in not only a lack of participation of the stakeholders in some steps but also illusory stakeholder involvement in others.

Concerning the policy process model (e.g., Fowler 2009), the MoNE seems to be the dominant agent of the policy making process through its active role in problem identification, agenda-setting, and policy formulation stages. At this point, NECs constitute a strong example of the ministry's ostensible encouragement of the school-level implementers' and other stakeholders' participation in the policy formulation process. In line with the discussion of Barkenbus (1998), implementing policies in Turkish schools generally is the most overlooked stage, which causes school practitioners to feel alone without any real guide. In this respect, a gap is created between the idealized policies that originated at the top and real implementations at the bottom, while teachers and principals are treated as technicians responsible for enactment only. Additionally, CPM in the educational context does not display a cyclic character in Turkey since most policies are abolished or changed in structure mainly through public resistance or reaction without proper evaluation, as in the open-education option or alteration in the school-starting age brought by the 4+4+4 change.

Accordingly, discussing the CPM in the Turkish education context from Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation model, Turkey appears to stand on the first two rungs of tokenism, informing and consultation, meaning that the ministry conveys information regarding the created policies through alternative means, such as website and social media and collects public opinions through online surveys. However, being one-way communication, neither of these approaches ensures meaningful participation of the stakeholders or whether their contribution will be considered. The same discussion rings true for the three forms of participation proposed by OECD (2001) when the structure and operation of NECs are considered. They appear to be a window-dressing ritual for the ministry to pretend to support active citizenship participation and cultivate two-sided communication.

Despite the formal and informal mechanisms utilized by the ministry to cultivate participatory CPM, the centralized structural characteristics of TES impede the democratic policy making process largely by creating a culture of non-participation

in educational processes at all levels. Saylam et al. (2020) argued that Turkey lacks a democratic participation culture. Those structural characteristics of TES impose a tradition of top-down change interventions. Thus, key constituencies of education, including teachers, parents, students, and ordinary citizens, do not see themselves as players but as passive recipients (Kondakci et al. 2019), unlike the latest arguments underlining the policy actor roles of key stakeholders (Avigur-Eshel and Berkovich 2017; Chiong and Lim 2022). In other words, over-concentration of the authority at the top of the system suppresses the ideals of local-level actors to take the initiative toward demonstrating active citizenship in educational processes. In this respect, citizenship participation in TES can be described as ceremonial; even if there is any attempt to demonstrate democratic participation, these efforts do not result in concrete implications on the policy, decision, or practices in most cases.

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# Evaluation of Higher Education Policies in Turkey in the Context of Citizen-Centered Public Policies

**Nihan Demirkasımoğlu and Tuğba Güner Demir**

**Abstract** This chapter assesses the reflections of citizen-centered public policies (CCPP) in Turkey's higher education (HE) policy and implementations. It begins by briefly framing the CCPP in Turkish public administration and deepens the analysis by transforming the HE policy and practices in line with citizen-centered public policy-making. The organization of the chapter was formulated to include three main issues as framed by Undheim and Blakemore (A Handbook for Citizen-centric eGovernment, European Commission, EU Institutions.https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/2014-12/media1781.pdf Accessed 1 Oct 2022, 2007) while examining the citizen-centered policies in terms of three groups that produce and/or consume government services. To this end, a general portrait of how higher policies and implementations are transforming in the current era is discussed for these three groups: politicians, policymakers, and producers and users. As the methodological approach, the narrative literature review is carried out through journal articles, reports (e.g., OECD), legislation, and documents of Council of Higher Education (CoHE) produced to regulate the citizen-centered policies in HE. By presenting a comprehensive overview of CCPP in Turkey, this up-to-date review has the potential to serve as a reference source for academics and students who want to make international benchmarking.

**Keywords** Citizen-centered public policy · Citizen-oriented public policies · Higher education · Governance · Higher education policies · Stakeholder-centered higher education · Groups · Literature review · Portrait · Turkey

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# 1 Introduction

After the 1980s, many developments, such as the rise of neoliberal policies, globalization, developments in information and communication technologies, the prominence of the postmodern understanding, and the strengthening of the understanding of civil society, have begun to create significant changes in the delivery of public services. Citizen-oriented public service, which is one of the reflections of this change, takes into account the wishes, expectations, and concerns of citizens at every stage of the design, presentation, and supervision of public services, making these processes more transparent, easily accessible, and high quality with some private sector tools, and includes citizens in the processes (Uysal 2013).

Citizen-oriented public service means considering people's voices and needs when delivering, designing, evaluating, and implementing public policies and services. Governments can do this by directly involving citizens in their decision-making processes and by collecting and analyzing data that can be used to evaluate the performance of policies and services against people's needs and expectations and to predict those needs (OECD 2019). Satisfaction with public services is recognized as an important result of government activities. A better understanding of satisfaction factors allows governments to identify areas where changes are necessary to meet citizens' needs and preferences. Listening to feedback from different population groups can help reduce costs (OECD 2019). The citizen-oriented approach increases trust in public services. It also makes it easier for citizens to receive high-quality, personalized services and problem-solving processes across corporate boundaries. Citizens can better evaluate and monitor service performance (Beecham et al. 2006: 6).

It is very important to be citizen-oriented for the three groups that produce and/or consume government services (Undheim and Blakemore 2007):

- Users—those who are buyers/consumers of services.
- Politicians and policymakers—those who set the policy and regulatory environment.
- Manufacturers—those charged with delivering policy through organization and business strategy.

The above-mentioned groups have been addressed as stakeholders of CCP in higher education (HE). Users correspond to the student in the HE area, and this subject is handled as student-centered learning and teaching. Starting from here, one of the themes of this chapter is student-centered HE policies in Turkey. This theme includes the developments related to the student-centered university and its promises, including student mobility and digital technologies. The second group is the politicians and policymakers who set the policy and regulatory environment. This second group is interrelated with the producers and users of HE services. Thus, the producers of the HE systems can be specified as rectors, deans, and faculty in the universities. These producers can also be considered policymakers because of the flexible nature of universities, most of which allow and encourage the participatory

management approach in HE management processes. The first and second themes are discussed in connection with the open science approach since it is a policy that concerns both users. Within this theme—users—faculty are also analyzed, both affected by this process and as active members of this regulatory environment. Besides, their participatory status—if there is one—in the HE policy-making process is discussed. Lastly, as the vast literature related to the measurement of CCPP refers to the surveys that are based on the satisfaction of citizens with public services, the current view of the students related to the satisfaction with the HE systems in Turkey was evaluated through data covering the 2016–2021 years that measures the satisfaction levels of students in Turkish universities.

This chapter provides a broad overview of how Turkish HE policy and procedures are affected by the CCPP by using a narrative literature review design. As Green et al. (2006) pointed out, a narrative review is useful in giving a comprehensive picture of a subject and frequently discusses a problem's history, evolution, or management. It also converts pieces of information from different sources into a readable format. This review was carried out through two stages. In the first stage, how CCPP is examined in the field of HE in Turkey has been searched through journal articles, regulations made by COHE, national and international reports (e.g., OECD), official documents, and critical papers. While searching the literature, the terms "citizen-centered public (policy)," "human-centered public (policy)," and "HE" were used jointly and separately. As a result of the literature review, no analytical framework was found to guide the comprehensive examination of CCPP in the field of HE. In the systematization of the relevant literature, Undeheim and Blakemore's (2007) conceptualization of groups that should be considered in a citizen-oriented approach is adopted. It has been evaluated that the existing studies focus on the reflections of CCPP in the field of HE with a special reference to single stakeholders of CCPP (e.g., Ağaoğlu 2009; Aydemir 2016; Han and Yolcu 2017; Okur 2019). For this reason, in this narrative literature review, we tried to match CCPP's terms and practices by customizing these terms to their equivalents in HE in a way to cover all stakeholders of CCPP.

## 2 Citizen-Centered Public Policy-Making in Turkish Public Administration

In Turkey, state-citizen relations have undergone a citizen-oriented transformation in the historical process. There are many reasons behind this change, which is also reflected in public services. In particular, as a result of the development in globalization and information technologies, as well as the development of the idea of democracy and the obligations of EU candidacy, issues such as transparency, accountability, and participation in the public have begun to come to the fore. Non-governmental organizations, citizens, and social media also force state administrators to change in this direction. In light of these developments, the bureaucratic, cumbersome, poor

quality, inefficient, state-oriented structure of public services is changing. They are becoming fast, easily accessible, high-quality, effective, efficient, and citizen-oriented. Central and local governments are making great efforts to make public services citizen-oriented. At least, it is obvious that discourse in this direction has developed (Uysal 2013).

The history of e-government applications within the scope of citizen-centered applications in Turkey can be traced back to the Central Population Statistics Project (abbreviated as MERNIS in Turkish), an automation project initiated by the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs in the early 1970s. After the establishment of the first internet connection by the Middle East Technical University in 1993 (METU 2013), some public administrations started to open websites that offer unilateral information and serve mostly corporate promotion. In the following years, both the number of websites of public administrations increased and their contents enriched. E-government practices in Turkey, which first started with individual institutional efforts and mostly at the level of providing information, have become an integrated policy that includes e-government projects of all public administrations, and e-government projects of public institutions have evolved to a stage where some actions can be made from simple information-oriented content (Demirhan and Türkoğlu 2014). In a report aiming to describe the e-government activities in Turkey by TUBITAK (2017), participation in decision-making processes is covered under three main levels: Central Government, local government, and policy preparation. At each level, different platforms were created to provide stakeholders' participation before legislation is developed. Both levels of governing authorities develop digital platforms that enable citizens to report their views and suggestions through surveys. The use of digital platforms to investigate their stakeholders' satisfaction is discussed in detail in the following sections.

## 3 Citizen-Centered Public Policy-Making in Turkish HE

Different practices such as the growth of the Turkish HE system, open science policy, participation in the Bologna process, European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement practices, and the determination of research and development-oriented universities (Şenay et al. 2020) can be evaluated as the phenomena that are brought by CCPP to the field of HE. Turkish HE system experienced two important breaking points in 1992 and 2006 in terms of expansion (Günay and Günay 2017). First, 24 universities were established in 1992, and the number of universities increased from 29 to 53 (Şenay et al. 2020). Currently, The Turkish HE system has a young and dynamic structure with 204 HE institutions with 179,685 teaching staff and 3,801,294 formal education students (YÖK 2022a). Similar to global trends, democratization efforts in Turkey, national development plans and global market demands, and the increasing demand of the young population for HE are some of the reasons for this expansion of HE (Acer and Güçlü 2017).

The 10th Information Society Strategy and Action Plan (2006–2010), which is based on seven basic strategic priority areas, is developed to achieve the

transformation to become an information society. It is a medium-term program put into effect by the decision of the High Planning Council (No. 2006/38). One of these priority areas is "citizen-centered service transformation." The plan aimed at moving public services to the electronic environment to ensure efficiency in service delivery by restructuring business processes in line with stakeholder needs (Ministry of Development 2015). Citizen-centric and data-driven processes require access to information as a basic precondition. "Freedom of information" laws create a framework of legal rights for citizens to request public sector information (OECD 2019). By equipping citizens with the knowledge they need to engage in meaningful participation, open government data is thought to improve democratic outcomes (Schwoerer 2022). By integrating ICT into a larger endeavor to transform governments into ones that are more inventive and collaborative, the open government aims to increase the transparency of the government (Hansson et al. 2015). Open science policy can be thought of as the use of open software as a form of adaptation of emerging technologies to HE infrastructures. This practice can be evaluated by the stakeholders of CCPP. Open science policy is defined as an effective touchstone in producing, accessing, sharing, and transforming knowledge into innovation. The CoHE prepared and implemented the national open science policy in 2019. It is aimed to establish an "Open Academic Archive System" at international standards in all universities in Turkey, to ensure the integration of university archives with the "European Open Access Infrastructure (OpenAIRE)," and to popularize the use of ORCID that indicated the Research Numbers of Academicians (YÖK 2019).

Activities related to open access in Turkey have been carried out in parallel with the developments in the world and often as stakeholders of international projects. For example, DergiPark, an important infrastructure project of the electronic publishing process of scientific journals, was developed by TÜBİTAK ULAKBİM with the suggestions and contribution of the ANKOS AEKA Working Group and has been in service since January 2014. DergiPark is one of OpenAIRE's largest data providers, with approximately 2000 magazines and half a million content published in these magazines. In addition, Harman, in the Turkish Academic Archive of TÜBİTAK ULAKBİM, has nearly 1.4 million publications from 121 institutions (Bulut et al. 2020). According to Cengiz's (2021) study on the current state of open-access archives, 130 of 209 universities in Turkey have open-access archives. On the other hand, most of the institutional academic archives (90.8%) are scanned by TÜBİTAK Harman, and 80.8% of the universities with existing institutional academic archives have OpenAIRE compatibility.

## *3.1 Internationalization and Mobility*

With Turkey 's inclusion in the Bologna Process in 2001, the Turkish HE system has gained a different dimension. Additionally, the increasing importance of the mobility issue, dimensions such as qualifications and quality in HE have started to be discussed and studied within the Turkish HE system in the relevant institutions in

the policy context. In this context, Bologna Coordination Commissions have been established at universities, and Bologna Experts have been selected to advise CoHE (Şenay et al. 2020). The Bologna process aims to make HE systems compatible and comparable with each other while retaining their characteristic differences. Thus, it is aimed to facilitate the transition from one country or HE system to another, thereby increasing the employment and mobility of lecturers and students (Ağaoğlu 2009). The mobility of students and academics is crucial in achieving its overall goals. The "Mobility Strategy for the European HE Area 2020," which was most recently approved by the Ministers of the member nations of the European HE Area, serves as a recent example of this policy.

### 3.1.1 Faculty Mobility

HE institutions around the world not only compete for the best and brightest undergraduate and graduate students, but also for talented researchers and teachers around the world who are trying to be successful (Rumbley and De Wit 2019). The research, teaching, and possibly even the university's ethos will benefit from the unique perspectives of the international faculty. However, the effectiveness of the contributions of international faculty members is closely related to the organizational culture of the university, the expectations of both parties to contribute to internationalization, and other factors (Altbach and Yudkevich 2017). According to the push-pull model, which explains the international mobility patterns of academics through factors related to the host and sending countries, the driving factors are related to career opportunities and unstable economic conditions in the sending country. On the other hand, well-established academic and economic systems, business opportunities in the language, academic market, and geographical proximity are among the attractive factors that attract international academics to these countries. These factors indicate that countries with established resources, academic opportunities, and economic systems attract scholars from around the world, especially from countries that do not have these advantages (Seggie and Calikoglu 2021). In the Turkish HE system, 448 lecturers to 79 universities from abroad received Mevlana, Erasmus, etc. in 2020–2021. In the same year, 786 lecturers from 95 universities visited Turkish universities abroad within the scope of international exchange programs (YÖK 2022a). Additionally, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey supports students who want to study abroad, provided that they return to Turkey after completing their education within the scope of the overseas doctoral scholarship program. The program aims to increase the quality of human resources that will lead to sustainable development and technological development (TÜBİTAK 2022). As the most recent step, the CoHE announced that the "Academic Mobility Project" has been started in 2022–2023. The project aims for national mobility to "support the programs that have difficulties in recruiting faculty members in state universities established after 2006, increasing the mobility of faculty members among universities and bringing students together with faculty members of different

universities." The faculty will be selected "giving priority to the principle of voluntariness," and some universities were asked to determine their faculties with the decision of the university administrative board and the approval of the rector, for a period of not less than a one-half year and no more than four semesters (YÖK 2022b).

### 3.1.2 Student Mobility

International mobility of students is necessary for the growth of national economies. Students want all their qualifications to be recognized, regardless of where they obtained them. Within this framework, many countries devote special resources and make efforts to create systems that allow student exchange in a secure manner (Green et al. 2006). New requirements and demands, such as for "seamless public services across borders," expand individuals' options for mobility, and the European Union continues to embrace greater diversity (Oberer and Erkollar 2011).

"The Regulation on HE Quality Assurance and the HE Quality Council" (2005) paved the way for the developments such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement labels, which were initiated by the European Commission in 2009 and terminated in 2013. In 2011, ECTS became compulsory with the law numbered 6111. Thus, the credit problem in front of the dimensions of mobility and internationalization in the Turkish HE system has been relatively reduced (Gündoğdu et al. 2016). The total number of international students worldwide, which was 2.1 million in 2000, tripled in 2021 to exceed 6.3 million. In 2022, Turkey hosts more than 300 thousand international students from 198 countries. According to the current data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Turkey hosts 2.9% of the number of international students in the world (Özvar 2022). For the development of internationalization in HE and to make the Turkish HE system a center of attraction for international students and academics, CoHE benefited from international diplomacy, diversified HE institutions, assigned different missions to universities (Research Universities, Regional Development-Oriented Universities, Thematic, Vocational Practice-oriented Universities), conducted quality-oriented studies, and opened new programs targeting the professions of the future (YÖK 2021). Universities are expected to use public resources, on which they are heavily dependent as advanced education and research institutions, in a more effective, efficient, transparent manner, and to be accountable (Bargh et al. 1996; Saint 2009 as cited in Kurt et al. 2017). To this end, CoHE initiated a distinction among universities in 2016 by highlighting some of their research function, capacity, and performance. Providing some special incentives such as teaching staff support and university allowance, universities that meet certain criteria are designated as Research-Oriented Universities. This model was developed within the scope of the Mission Differentiation and Specialization Project to increase universities' efficiency in the research capacity, research quality, and interaction and cooperation (Saraç 2020).

## *3.2 Student-Related Issues as the Stakeholders of CCPP of Turkish HE*

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, students and faculty can be taken as the users of the HE system. Student representation is the first mechanism that comes to mind in the governance of HE institutions. Student representation in Europe is operated very effectively at the rectorate, faculty, and department levels. As a matter of fact, HE decision-making bodies are required to consist of students between 1 in 10 and 1 in 5 (Klemenčič and Bergan 2015). Klemencic and Bergan consider student participation in two different contexts. In the first, it is in question whether the students are represented in the decision-making mechanism, while in the second, whether the students have the right to vote in the authority where they are represented. Contrary to many European countries, Turkey can be evaluated within the scope of the first of Klemencic and Bergan's classifications. Student participation in universities in Turkey is only recognized by the student council president, and this participation takes place upon invitation and without the right to vote (Keleşoğlu 2019).

In recent years, an increasing number of documents and studies in the field of HE have focused on the subjects of "student-centered learning and teaching," "student-centered university," and "student mobility." Although most of these studies are not directly linked to citizen-centered public policy, it is clear that these topics can be considered in the context of citizen-centered public policy. For example (YÖK 2018), student-oriented university asserts that the most successful universities in the world and Turkey are those that adopt and implement a student-centered education system. SSU is characterized by considering students' ideas and demands, including students in the projects carried out, more active work of student societies, and their contribution to the administration.

### 3.2.1 Student-Centered University

An integral part of the citizen-centered model is self-service, where the "citizen" takes on most of the administrative tasks performed by the service provider. In the context of online services, these tasks can be performed 24 hours a day. However, a new effort has been made to provide integrated service delivery by bringing together various "channels" of interaction, including face-to-face, telephone, postal, and kiosks, as well as online, to enable communication between government and the public for services that are not eligible to be offered online (Brown 2005). Different examples of such participatory structures are increasing in number and diversity in HE institutions to meet different needs. Student information systems are at the forefront of structures that facilitate university and student interaction in the digital environment for students. The student information systems include the most frequently used transactions, such as course registration procedures, course credits, and transcripts. Student information systems are the organization of the basic

activities of departments, which are the academic units of universities, within a certain automation system. In this way, it is possible to collect data related to academic activities, transfer them to the computer environment, store, query, analyze, and present them to users as documents and reports (Ağaoğlu 2009).

### 3.2.2 Student Information Systems

Student information system service in Turkey operates in two different channels, within the body of the university and e-government. The number of universities that provide e-services directly related to student affairs, such as transcript verification/inquiry, diploma verification, and examination grade inquiry via e-government, is almost non-existent. It is thought that the number of universities on the e-government portal and the limitation in the types of services provided has different reasons. First of all, it is possible to affirm that many universities do not have enough readiness to provide services on the e-Government portal, and the information and communication technology infrastructures are insufficient. Via e-government integrated platforms, CoHE provides various documents (equivalence procedures, university e-registration equivalence application inquiry, equivalence status document verification and inquiry, foreign diploma equivalence pre-application process) that students need. It also provides services such as certificate verification, teaching staff document verification and inquiry, student certificate inquiry and verification, HE graduate certificate inquiry and verification, and various application processes (university e-registration document verification, undergraduate completion application, preference system, and school recognition document inquiry). Many universities are content with providing such services via e-government rather than establishing student information systems within their structure (Okur 2019).

Universities also make use of mobile applications that include the student information systems of universities. Aydemir (2016) surveyed the use of mobile applications in 181 universities in Turkey and determined that the number of universities with at least one application was 118, while the number of universities that did not have any of Android or iOS applications was 63. This result means that about a third of universities do not have mobile applications. Anadolu University has the highest number of applications in terms of the total number of applications among universities because it has open education faculties.

### 3.2.3 Learning Management Systems (LMS)

With a paradigm shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach in education, the use of technology is at the heart of students' learning. The use of learning management systems increasingly facilitates the interaction between the teacher and the student. The LMS is the cornerstone of many schools' technology-based learning strategies, which may also include blended learning, distance learning, or simply more efficient, effective, and environmentally friendly access to

materials typically utilized in traditional classrooms. These terms refer to a hybrid of an online and in-person learning environment that ideally builds on the strengths of face-to-face instruction while incorporating interactive features that engage students and promote deeper learning (Malm and Defranco 2012). E-learning involves a unique understanding of course design and instruction in addition to the requirement for a special organizational and administrative approach because it is a planned process that occurs in a setting different from a typical school. Learner management systems (LMSs), which are employed to automate the administration of the courses, record student use, and track student learning process, were developed as a result of the necessity to administer and organize e-learning (Altunoğlu 2017). LMSs have been used more extensively than ever before, largely by necessity, during the pandemic period in Turkey. The data collected from 208 universities reflecting the transition to emergency distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey revealed that the most used learning management systems are Moodle and ALMS. In addition, it has been seen that the most used live course software by universities is Big Blue Button and Perculus (Durak et al. 2020).

### *3.3 Policymakers of HE System in Turkey*

In general, with the transformation of the concept of the university in the historical process, the understanding of participation in administration processes has also evolved. Until the late 1980s, universities' management processes were largely based on peer partnership and it was essential for faculties to govern themselves. Faculties were represented in the relevant committees in an organizational structure. There are alternative approaches to participation in decision-making in the selection and appointment of administrators in HE. The first of these is the colleague management model, which is the traditional management style of the university. The colleague management model envisages the election of managers with limited powers (Rector, Dean, Head of Department, etc.) and horizontal management together with the Senate, University Council, Faculty, and Department Boards. The collegial university management is very important in terms of ensuring that the university is managed in a participatory manner and that the demands of internal stakeholders are met (Aktan 2009). However, in this model, the committees in universities are formed with the participation of administrators and faculty members from within the university, while there are no representatives of individuals or institutions from outside the university. For this reason, this model has been criticized for its inflexibility in external change, slow adaptation to the changing demands of stakeholders, lack of clear decision-making responsibilities, and not using public resources in an accountable way (Benjamin 2004; Ergüder 2015; Farnham 1999; Tekeli 2004, 2010; Saint 2009 as cited in Kurt et al. 2017). These criticisms highlight the application of the board of trustees as the decision-maker in HE administration. The board of trustees as the decision-makers, which is applied only in foundation universities in Turkey, is used as a common management approach in countries with prestigious

universities such as the USA, England, Canada, and Australia (Doğramacı 2007). In the board of trustees model, the university is administered by a Board of Trustees, which consists entirely of members appointed from outside the university. In this model, the decision-making powers of academic boards are quite limited. However, in the modern framework, universities require being more open and flexible, focusing on effectiveness rather than effectiveness, and participatory management and governance (Balcı 2015).

Doğramacı (2007) asserted that CoHE was established by modeling the HE councils in the USA. While there are differences between states in the United States, almost all board members are non-academic professionals from nonprofit organizations, different sectors of the business world, and fields such as medicine or law. This organization structure indicates significant citizen representation on state HE boards in the United States. However, when the composition of CoHE's members is examined, the majority of them are professors, while the remaining members are high-level state officials. In addition, professors on the board usually come from well-established universities in big cities, and participation from newly established universities in different regions is limited (Gümüş 2018). This discrepancy between the sample model and Turkey 's current model constitutes a noteworthy limitation in terms of the spirit of citizen-centered administration for Turkey 's performance in CCPP. For a deeper understanding, it would be appropriate to take a general look at the selection of administrators of HE. This look is necessary since the structural and administrative processes of CCPP are strongly linked to the participative and democratic practices in decision-making processes.

### 3.3.1 Selection of Administrators of HE

As mentioned before, producers of the HE systems can be specified as rectors, deans, and faculty in the universities. These producers can also be considered policymakers because of the flexible nature of universities, most of which allow and encourage the participatory management approach in HE management processes.

Historically in Turkey, rectors were elected until the establishment of YÖK. In CoHE Law No. 2547, which was adopted in 1981, the rectorate elections were abolished, and with the new regulation, the provision of the appointment of the head of state among the professor candidates proposed by the CoHE was introduced. In 1992, a regulation was made regarding the relevant article and the faculty members would be appointed by the President after being selected from among the rector candidates. In 2016, after the coup attempt, The State of Emergency was declared and the rectorate elections were abolished. Thus, the right to speak of the faculty members who are part of the decision in the selection of university administrators for 24 years—albeit a part of two phases—was eliminated. Currently, according to The Law on HE (No. 2547) structuring HE in Turkey (2/7/2018-Decree Law-703/135 art.), the rectors of the state and foundation universities are appointed by the President of the Republic of Turkey. In universities established by foundations, the

rector is appointed upon the proposal of the board of trustees. Similarly, deans will be appointed by the Council of HE among three professors from within or outside the university, to be proposed by the rector. There is no election in the selection of department heads. Article 21 of the relevant law states that the department heads will be appointed upon the recommendation of the dean or the director of the college. According to the "Academic Organizational Regulation in Universities" (1982), only the head of the divisions is elected by the faculty members and lecturers working in that department or department and is appointed. The administrator selection processes in universities are far from participatory decision-making processes. So, it is thought-provoking that only the head of the department, who is at the lowest level of the academic structure, is consulted for the opinion of the lecturers in the selection of administrators. The stakeholders need to participate in the decision-making of HEs to ensure governance, which is one of the important structures of the citizen-oriented approach.

### 3.3.2 Participation of Other Stakeholders in Decision-Making

In a report prepared for e-Government activities in Turkey by TUBITAK (2017), participation in decision-making processes is covered under three main headings: Central Government, local government, and policy preparation cases. The local government's participatory decision-making processes are exemplified by the "In Suspension" practice of the CoHE. The CoHE launched this practice to include the opinions and suggestions of other stakeholders, including the authorized boards of HE institutions and the entire academic community before some decisions are taken. The first issue suspended by CoHE was the updating of the criteria for opening master's and doctorate programs (TRT 2014) Until today, this practice was followed by the suspension of regulations such as "Development of Foreign Language Competencies," "Regulation on Intellectual Property Rights of HE Institutions," and "Framework for Practical Education."

## *3.4 Satisfaction of Students and Faculties with Their University*

The term "public services" covers a wide range of goods and services provided to people, addressing different aspects of social and individual life (OECD 2019). One of the main differences between the public and private sectors lies in the "emotionally charged" nature of some public services, such as health and education. This distinctive nature of public services indicates that the terms "citizens" and "customers" are not mutually exclusive since people tend to see the public sector as "important and different from the private sector," especially concerning important life events such as birth, health, education, and death (Undheim and Blakemore 2007).

High-quality citizen-centered service delivery requires a solid understanding of citizens' expectations, experiences, and satisfaction in terms of key factors, and a policy framework that puts citizens at the center of decision-making processes. Citizen-centered public service focuses on collecting data that can help governments get better at what they do. It delivers public services to citizens responsively and fairly (Pfeil et al. 2018). More specifically, in a people-centered approach, changes in the design and delivery of public services are not decided without considering and consulting their impact on the well-being of citizens. For this purpose, satisfaction measurements were made to understand whether public services meet the needs and expectations of citizens (OECD 2019).

"The Serving Citizens Framework," developed by the OECD to evaluate the public services that citizens benefit from with a beneficiary-centered perspective, allows the performance of different public services to be compared between countries on some basic axes (OECD 2019). There are large differences in satisfaction with public services among OECD countries. For example, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Israel were among the countries with the most significant improvements in citizen satisfaction with education, while Turkey experienced the largest decline in this sector between 2007 and 2018 (OECD 2019).

In our literature review, it has been evaluated that the most comprehensive and regular research on satisfaction with HE in Turkey is the Turkey University Satisfaction Survey (TUSS) conducted every year since 2016 by "University Assessments and Research Laboratory." The main purpose of TUSS is to determine the level of satisfaction of the students from the universities in Turkey. Students' views on four major fields were evaluated. These are; (a) satisfaction with the management and operation of the institution, (b) support and interest in students, (c) Sensitivity to education-training processes, and (d) satisfaction with CoHE National Thesis Center. The latest results (2022) showed that 47000 undergraduate students participating in the study were satisfied with the Council of HE at the lowest level (56 points out of 100) and the HE Council National Thesis Center (91 points out of 1001) at the highest level. In the same research report, when the 2020–2022 comparative results were examined, it was reported that there was a dramatic decrease in satisfaction with CoHE in 2022 within a year. The main reason for this situation is the change made in the Presidency of CoHE, and it has been determined that there is an inability to maintain effective communication with the students (Karadağ and Yücel 2022). In their "Academic Ecology" entitled research, Karadağ and Yücel (2020) used the following parameters to evaluate the satisfaction of the faculty are as follows: (1) Academic Freedom, (2) Satisfaction with the Administration, (3) Feeling of Burnout and Unhappiness, (4) Internal Cooperation, (5) External Cooperation, (6) Academic Culture and Support, (7) Discomfort from Political Engagement in Management, (8) Quality of Education, (9) Feeling of Belonging and Commitment to the University, (10) Relational Toxicity, (11) Commercialization (Foundation University). The averages of academic ecology scores, which express the combination of the satisfaction of faculty members with universities from selected factors, range from 48.4 to 64.5 out of 100. More specifically, academics are not satisfied with the management of their universities. In addition, the

atmosphere of cooperation within and outside the institution, academic culture and support, and teaching quality in universities are low; on the other hand, the political engagement of the administration was reported to be disturbing at a significant level (Karadağ and Yücel 2020).

## 4 Conclusion

In this study, the concept of CCPP, which is specific to the field of public administration, has been adapted to the HE level of the field of educational administration, which is a sub-system of public administration. Since no analysis was found in the relevant literature review on the axis of the stakeholders that deal with the system integrity and how the CCPP is reflected in the policies and practices of the HE system, this study will provide valuable insight for those who are interested in the subject. As CCPP is based on the understanding of people's expectations and needs in the design and delivery of public services, encouraging their participation in decision-making and satisfaction of the users (OECD 2019) are two main focuses. For this reason, issues related to policymakers who shape HE policies in Turkey and stakeholders who benefit from services are discussed. Before moving on to the subtitles customized for those who benefit from HE, it can be asserted that one of the characteristics driving the fundamental transformation in CCPP practices in HE is the development of an infrastructure that highlights digital technologies in management, education, and training processes. The way all stakeholders benefit from HE has changed considerably, with the use of digital technologies in more and more areas and the rapid and effective provision of services. Another assessment that can be made for the overall HE system is the increase in the number of HE institutions in response to the increase in citizens' demand for HE. Although this breadth of supply seems to listen to the voice of the citizens from the CCPP perspective, the opening of a university in almost every city to meet the intense demand of citizens for HE brought serious quality problems as Acer and Güçlü (2017) underlined.

While the key generic terms of CCPP in public administration are "transparency, access, integrity, accountability, responsiveness, equality and stakeholder participation" (OECD 2019), the equivalents of these principles adapted to HE can be exemplified as "internationalization and mobility, open science policy, student-centered university and learning management systems." Several policy documents (e.g. YÖK 2018, 2022a, b) and projects (2022b) of CoHE show that CCPP is making intense efforts to ensure the transformation required in HE. Quantitative indicators such as the growth of the HE system, the number of students, and faculty benefit from international mobility prove that the Turkish HE system has a strong emphasis on stakeholder-centered transformation. Within the scope of innovations initiated to develop a stakeholder-oriented HE approach at the national level, "international diplomacy, differentiation of HE institutions

(e.g., research universities, regional development-oriented universities, thematic, vocational practice-oriented universities) and new programs targeting the professions of the future" can be referred (YÖK 2021). These activities show that CoHE uses diverse strategies in a wide range of practices to achieve a stakeholder-centered approach in HE.

While the rapid growth and developments in higher education described so far try to respond to both global needs and national demands, there are important limitations in governance and decision participation, which are important components of stakeholder-centeredness. For example, student participation in Turkish universities is represented only by the student council president without the right to vote (Keleşoğlu 2019) while student representation in Europe is operated very effectively at the rectorate, faculty, and department levels in the decision-making mechanism (Klemenčič and Bergan 2015). A similar limitation is also valid in terms of faculty members having a say in the selection of university administrators. In Turkey, the non-participation of the faculty members in the decision-making process during the election of the dean, rector, and department chair is quite far from the nature of the university institution and the principles of governance and participatory decision-making in citizen-centered administration. When this situation is evaluated in terms of the participation of stakeholders in the decision in the historical process in higher education in Turkey, for example, it is known that in the 1946 reform, the understanding of self-management was dominant and decision-making was given to the authorized boards. With the 1981 reform, CoHE was established as a supreme council equipped with the duties of planning, coordination, and supervision in administration, and some of the duties of the university senate were transferred to CoHE. In addition, the 1981 reform abolished the legal personality of the faculties and limited the powers of the deans. So, the decision-making authority was gathered in one person and the "one-man administration" was adopted (Balcı 2015). Despite the radical changes in the public administration perspective and democratization agendas, the fact that the CoHE did not need a transformation in the role of faculty members and students constitutes a serious challenge in terms of the soul of the CCPP. While HE institutions have begun to transform from a "republic of scholars/colleagues" to a "stakeholder university" (Bleiklie and Kogan 2007) on a global scale, the insistence of CoHE on preserving the traditional decision-making approach that excludes these stakeholders of HE is incomprehensible.

Finally, according to the results of the Turkey University Satisfaction Survey and Academic Ecology (Karadağ and Yücel, 2020), students and faculty members are not satisfied with the university. Further, students' satisfaction with CoHE decreased dramatically within one year. This dissatisfaction is linked to the difficulty in communicating effectively with students, and far from being student-friendly. Student (dis)satisfaction can also be linked to the limited participative decision-making processes that are mentioned previously.

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# Access versus Quality Trade-off: How Citizen-Centered Is the Public Policy Making in the Expansion of the Turkish Higher Education System?

**Esra Tekel and Ahmet Su**

**Abstract** In this study, we focus on the central question of how Turkey managed the expansion of its higher education system in terms of public policies and public interest over the past 20 years. We analyzed public policy documents, academic papers, and written records such as news websites and newspaper columns to evaluate how the recent expansion in Turkish higher education evolved and impacted the quality of Turkish universities. Our findings indicated that during the third expansion era starting in the early 2000s, the Turkish higher education system was successful in improving access to higher education immensely. The government's openness to expansion and the pressure from the members of Parliament for different areas of Turkey were effective in this process. On the other hand, after the expansion period, the quality of instruction, student services, and research were impacted negatively in many newly founded universities. In conclusion, with a citizen-centered public policy making perspective, the relevant literature and the written records from different sources show that the expansion was a correct policy decision; however, all stakeholders of the higher education system had question marks about how this process was managed.

**Keywords** Higher education · Public policy · Policy analysis · Expansion · Universities · Policy decision · Stakeholders · Citizen-centered · Government · Education system

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## 1 Introduction

Dye (1987) defined public policy as “everything the government does or does not do.” However, a more detailed look indicates that public policy includes public actors’ planned actions to focus on a social problem, and the need to provide solutions, policies, or programs for social problems (Gül 2015). In this case, public policy analysis includes collecting, processing, evaluating, and interpreting the data necessary to reveal the causes and effects of the problems. Public policies also deal with identifying and assessing alternatives to solve these problems, and with analyzing the policies that were adopted and implemented (Kraft and Furlong 2013). In that vein, the Ministry of Education has the responsibility and the authority to enforce educational policies in the government systems of many countries (Tabak 2021). For this reason, education is a fundamental element of the public bureaucracy.

Over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, higher education has grown to be a massive industry essential to all post-industrial and globalized economies. Around 36,000 postsecondary institutions host more than 100 million students worldwide. Postsecondary institutions have expanded considerably, and as a result, they have acquired complex administrative structures that necessitate significant outlays of public and, frequently, private funding (Altbach 2009). At this point, although the governments allocate the necessary planning and budget for universities, many private universities are established and serve as higher education institutions. As a result of neoliberalism, privatization, and market competition, the number of private higher education institutions increased.

On the other hand, some countries tend to create policies to provide education services only for those who cannot access private institutions (Cıbır 2022). Considering the transformation of the higher education policy, Trow (2006) illustrates three forms of higher education as (i) elite—shaping the mind and character of a ruling class; (ii) mass—transmission of skills and preparation for a broader range of technical and economic elite roles; and (iii) universal—an adaptation of the “whole population” to rapid social and technological change. However, the policies adopted in the transition to universal access have brought some problems in Turkey similar to some other countries. In 2011, the number of public universities was 103, and the number of foundation universities reached 62, making the total number 165. By 2022, the total number of universities has increased to 205, of which 129 are public universities, and 76 are foundation universities. As a policy, the AK Party (AKP=Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi [Justice and Development Party], the party in power) governments always supported increasing the number of universities. For example, the AKP Party Program expressed that “Foundation universities will be supported, and the principles of financial support to these universities from the government budget will be re-evaluated” (AKP Party Program 2022).

With the increase in the number of universities, the quality of education and services offered to students in universities was under discussion. In this context, we aim to analyze higher education policies in the last 20 years concerning the increase in the number of institutions in this chapter. Therefore, the following research

question will guide our chapter: How has Turkey managed the expansion process in its higher education system in terms of citizen-centered public policy making over the past 20 years? We plan to use the policy process analysis to evaluate public policies regarding universities in Turkey. This model includes steps such as the identification of problems and needs, formulation of policy proposals, adoption, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Dye 1987). In this vein, the overlapping agenda of new public management and citizen-centered policy making relate to increasing the efficiency and evaluation of the process for the public good. With this background, this chapter aims to make a process policy analysis to cover these areas.

This study has its theoretical background from Martin Trow's conceptualization of expanding higher education systems through the "elite," "mass," and "universal" as the steps of development (Burrage 2010) and the New Public Service approach (Denhardt and Denhardt 2001). Before moving on to Martin Trow's conceptualization, a historical perspective to the concept of New Public Service from the past to the present will be useful as a background.

The Traditional Public Administration prioritizes concepts such as permanent civil service, bureaucracy, and political authority at the cost of citizens' views, and the citizens cannot participate in the public policy process (Denhardt and Denhardt 2001). According to traditional public administration, citizens do not have managerial knowledge and skills; therefore, citizens have to comply with the public policy decisions made by bureaucrats (Roberts 2003). The New Public Management approach criticizes this approach and argues that privatization would result in an increase in the performance of the public sector (Pfiffner 2004) and meet the needs of the citizens with the minimum cost and high quality. However, ignoring the public interest, overemphasizing privatization, and seeing citizens as a customer in the policy making process led to criticism of this view (Kaya 2017). According to the New Public Service view, it is the right of the citizens to benefit from public services, the citizens are the real owners of the services, and the managers are the providers of those services (Kaya 2016). With this new understanding of public service, citizens contribute to policies and programs that affect their daily lives in various ways (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009); only in this way can the state remain on a democratic basis.

New public service is a necessity for accountability, performance monitoring, and quality assessment for various elements of higher education. As a conceptual framework that "stood the test of the time," Trow's outline applies to many different higher education systems. On the other hand, the new public management highlights components such as increased productivity, a stronger focus on service, a greater capacity to structure and analyze policy, and enhanced accountability (Hicks 2012; Kettl 2005). In this sense, the new public management can be linked with citizen-centered policy making. OECD (2019) summarized citizen-centric services as taking the needs and opinions of the public into account in planning, structuring, and implementing policies and services. In order to have a citizen-centered approach or to provide citizen-centric services, policymakers may involve the public directly or collect data and act accordingly indirectly.

### *1.1 Expansion of Turkish Higher Education*

As defined by Martin Trow, many higher education systems underwent the phases of the elite, mass, and universal systems. Even though the Turkish higher education system went through an expansion and similar phases (Baskan 2001; Günay and Özer 2016; Özoğlu et al. 2016), the timeline in this process was different from the higher education systems in the Global North. Su and Karadağ (2018, 2021) indicated the timeline for different phases of this process as follows:

1. 1933–1946: University Reform Period (Elite)
2. 1947–1982: Period of New Higher Education Institutions around Turkey (Elite)
3. 1983–1995: First Expansion Period (Mass)
4. 1996–present: Second Expansion Period (Universal)

According to this classification, there were several challenges in Turkish higher education regarding research and education activities in the first years of the University Reform Period. In the following periods of the Turkish higher education journey, universities underwent institutionalization processes and showed improvements. In 1980, Turkey experienced the second military coup. One year later, in 1981, a new higher education code was introduced. The Higher Education Law numbered 2547, with which the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) was established and given a critical authority in the central administration of the (public) universities. The CoHE was assigned the duties of coordination and planning among universities. With the establishment of the Council, the appointment method for the university presidents and deans was followed rather than appointing them based on institutional and departmental elections (Doğramacı 2007). Article 2547 brought about extensive changes in the administration of universities at the institution and country levels. Most of the decision-making process was left to the CoHE with this change with a centralized structure (Seggie and Gökbel 2014; Şenses 2007). Despite all the changes in Turkish higher education, access to higher education was limited until the 1990s. After this period, various practices improved access to universities, such as increasing the seats at the universities and opening new programs.

Further, Turkish universities attempted to adapt to changing conditions in the higher education landscape by trying to create an entrepreneurial character, eliminating the gap between theory and practice, and establishing intensive connections with industry (Kurul-Tural 2007). Finally, with the new policies of that period's ruling party, the AK party, Turkey decided to follow policies to expand its higher education. The expansion in this period started with increasing seats in the existing departments and gained speed with waves of establishing new universities in the 2000s and 2010s. Gür and Özoğlu (2015) expressed that Turkish higher education expanded as in other parts of the world. Based on this expansion and university enrolment data, they found that the problem of "accessing" higher education was solved with recent developments. In conjunction with the main idea of this chapter, this change is a positive development for citizens or students who rely on Turkish higher education for this need.

In this context, the aim of this chapter is to evaluate the increasing number of universities in Turkey, with a policy process analysis based on citizen participation. Turkish higher education literature indicated that there is a vast literature on the aims of establishing new universities (Arap 2010), the number of universities from past to present (Günay and Günay 2011), the development of higher education (Baskan 2001; Sargın 2007; Yavuz 2012), the economic effects of universities on cities (Arap 2014; Çalışkan 2010; Ergun 2014; Savaş Yavuzçehre 2016; Ünal et al. 2021), and the criticism of the quality of universities (Bozan 2019; Sallan Gül and Gül 2015; Yalçıntaş and Akkaya 2019; Yavuz 2010). However, this study makes a contribution to explore the nexus of access, quality, and citizen-centered public policy making. Therefore, we think that this study will address this gap in the relevant literature.

## 2 Research Methodology

Dunn (1981) defined policy analysis as an applied social science discipline that uses many inquiry methods and arguments to generate and transform policy-related information that can be used in political settings to solve policy problems. Harold Lasswell was the first scholar to suggest the idea of making a public policy analysis by separating the public policy process into separate periods. Lasswell (1956) divided the policy process into seven periods: (a) information, (b) incentive, (c) prescription, (d) initiation, (e) implementation, (f) completing the implementation, and (g) evaluation. This method was developed and implemented in various ways by different researchers. Dye (1987), on the other hand, identified the main stages in policy process analysis as follows:

1. *Identification of Problems and Needs:* Determining the views, demands, and needs of citizens and determining how the problem came to the agenda of policymakers are the main objectives.
2. *Formulation of Policy Proposals:* Policy options that come to the fore for public discussions, the possible benefits and costs of the options, who participate in this process, and their views on the options are examined.
3. *Policy Adoption:* Legal adopting body, supporting and opposing groups and their causes, and policy advocacy are discussed.
4. *Implementation of Policies:* Issues such as public bureaucracy and institutions, beneficiaries, access to services, and fees are discussed.
5. *Monitoring and Evaluation of Policies:* This step aims to monitor and evaluate policies, outputs, and their expected and unexpected effects on target groups based on data. Policymakers examine positive and negative externalities. Policymakers consider changes and improvement proposals in policies, if necessary.

A study that performs policy process analysis can obtain data on all these stages and search for answers to questions such as how a program or policy is developed and

implemented, who plays a role in these processes, and to what extent, what the results of the implementation are (Gül 2015). This study focused on the higher education policies, expansion of it, and the ways and levels of citizen engagement in this process. This methodological background will guide the analysis of higher education policies in the following sections. We present the steps of policy making as detailed in the methodology section, and discuss direct and indirect intervention of the public and the outcomes of these policies.

## 3 Findings

We present the steps of process analysis and findings on the different phases of expansion in the Turkish higher education system below:

### *3.1 Agenda Setting*

Policy issues arise over long periods to reach the level of severe discussions around them. In many cases, making an impression, dramatizing it, paying attention to it, and pressuring the government to act are essential political tactics. Influential people, organized interest groups, policy planning organizations, political candidates and officeholders, and mass media organizations use these agenda-setting tactics (Demir 2011). Existing problems and demands create agenda-setting frameworks. In every country, governments and public institutions for policy making generally bring issues to the agenda for their interest. Before the elections, voters can also understand from the parties' election campaigns that political parties are sensitive to specific points and they will prioritize these issues when they come to power. For this reason, the parties' programs and the main issues in their agendas are effective on the voter tendencies (Kaptı 2011). In this section, we examined the background to the policies to increase the number of universities in Turkey.

The formation of an institutional higher education system took place in the post-Republican era in Turkey, the 1990s were expressed as "wholesale university production" era (Demirer et al. 2000) and later "a University for Every City Policy" (UECP) aimed to spread higher education institutions nationwide (Yalçıntaş and Akkaya 2019). Although the policy of UECP was first brought to the agenda in the Parliament in 1978, it is possible to say that it has been actively implemented since the 2000s. To put into perspective, a total of 58 universities, 34 public and 24 non-profit foundation universities, were established between 1981 and 2002, while a total of 148 universities, 80 public, and 68 foundation universities, have been established since 2002. In short, UECP has been actively implemented since 2002. In bringing UECP to the agenda, policymakers stated that there are many universities in all developed countries around the world and that Turkey is far behind in this transition. They further emphasized the necessity of establishing a large number of universities in almost every city as one of the primary conditions of being a

developed country. In addition, in 2008, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that the number of universities in the USA was 4.182. The number of universities in England, which has more or less the same population as Turkey, was 114. The number of universities in Turkey increased to 130, with 53 new universities, which could not provide enough seats to admit students (Erdoğan: *Her ile bir üniversite* [Erdogan: a university for each city], 2008). Finally, while schooling rates at different levels, such as primary, secondary, and high school, were at the desired level in Turkey, enrollment at the university was not at the desired level. Moreover, the imbalance in supply-demand in universities, which meant there weren't enough capacity for relevant age group students, was another reason for increasing the number of universities (Çetinsaya 2014). The 58th government program, published in 2002, ensured that universities would be more widespread around the country in a planned manner. The program emphasized that objective criteria that take the potentials and opportunities into account would be employed in establishing new universities and that the new universities will specialize in certain areas by considering the prospect in their regions (58th Government Program 2002).

In this process, different interest groups were eager, and active citizen participation took place in bringing UECP to the agenda. The first and foremost interest group lobbying for establishing new universities were the eminent people and local people of those regions as well the local authorities. The underlying reasons for these activities were twofold: the economic expectations from this investment and the contribution of these institutions to the cities in terms of cultural development and increase in public services. Not only the President of the period but also the members of the Parliament (MPs), especially during the election periods, made statements regarding the need to increase the number of universities in Turkey. In this context, the politicians were acting citizen-centered but they were campaigning for their political endeavors at the same time. The policy of expanding higher education capacity in Turkey was mentioned in the Parliament for the first time in 1978 as "Development comes with science. For this, a university with all faculties should be established in each city" (Çokgezen and Altun 2018). In the following years, MPs brought the idea of establishing universities in every city to the agenda at every opportunity. For example, in his speech to the Parliament in 2003, Kırklareli MP emphasized that "Kırklareli has the necessary conditions for the establishment of a university," and it was time for the government to start Kırklareli University, reminded the government of the law proposal it has given on this subject before. Similarly, Amasya MP mentioned that Amasya was the perfect place for a university, and he reminded the promise of the government to establish a university in Amasya in 2003 with these words:

> Amasya, which has pioneered education, culture, nature, and thermal tourism with its 7500-year history and became Oxford to Anatolia, awaits its university, which was promised to it in 1999 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of our Republic, in this Grand Assembly. Undoubtedly, this Grand Assembly will give Amasya the university it deserves as soon as possible, albeit belatedly.

The newspapers published stories that the MPs proposed establishing a university in each city before the 2015 election. While the MP for Balıkesir requested an independent university in the Balıkesir Bandırma district, the Mersin MP asked for

Tarsus University, and the Kayseri MP mentioned Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University, the Hatay MP proposed İskenderun Technical University and the Trabzon MP requested Black Sea University to be established within the proposed legislation (Seçim yaklaşınca [Election Coming Closer] 2015).

Another pressure group to increase the number of universities was the residents of the cities. In the early 2000s, a sign hanging at the entrance to Yozgat on the Yozgat-Ankara highway read: "We want our independent university."—Residents of Yozgat. As understood from the sign, the people of Yozgat wanted an independent university that was not affiliated with Erciyes University. This was an active effort for which all the people, such as the governor, the mayor, the members of the board of directors of important capital groups in the province, and merchants came together and maintained their struggle under the roof of the Yozgat University Foundation (Kaynar and Parlak 2005). However, some researchers argued that UECP, which was mentioned for the first time in 1978, was an economic policy rather than an education policy (Yalçıntaş and Akkaya 2019).

The agenda-setting process reflected the conflict of views of different pressure groups. The head of the COHE, who was against UECP, was criticized by the MPs. For instance, Batman MP said:

> [Starting a new university in Batman] is the effort and desire of the local government authorities and civil society in Batman. The prevention of such a need and desire by the negative approach of the head of the COHE caused serious discomfort in society. I think the COHE and its head should use their discretionary rights in favor of the society, not against it. (Kaynar and Parlak 2005)

## *3.2 Policy Formulation*

The difference between policy formulation and agenda setting is that the former does not occur in front of the public. Policy formulation takes place in government bureaucracies, in the offices of interest groups, in parliamentary committee rooms, and the meetings of special commissions. The details are usually created by the employees of the relevant institutions (Dye 1987). During policy formulation, answers are sought for questions such as "What is the plan to address this problem? What are the goals and priorities? What options are available to achieve these goals? What are the benefits and costs of each option? What positive and negative externalities are there for each alternative? (Sidney 2007).

After the idea of increasing the number of universities across the country by establishing a university in each city came to the agenda, policymakers discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this expansion, especially in the ruling party. The report published by the COHE (2000) stated that universities have some economic and social benefits, both socially and personally. Accordingly, social and economic benefits are (i) an increase in tax revenues, (ii) an increase in productivity, (iii) an increase in consumption, (iv) an increase in labor flexibility, and (v) a decrease in financial support expected from the government. The personal economic

benefits of universities are (i) a high level of earnings, (ii) ease of finding a job, (iii) increased investment, (iv) better working conditions, and (v) personal/professional mobility. The social benefits of universities are stated as (i) a decrease in crime rate, (ii) donations and service to society, (iii) development of citizenship awareness, (iv) social cohesion, and (v) technology adaptation. Finally, the personal social benefits of universities are (i) healthier and longer life, (ii) better living conditions for children, (iii) better decision-making as a customer, (iv) increased personal status, and (v) more hobbies and leisure activities.

Although the COHE stated the benefits of universities to the cities in its report, it opposed the draft law presented by the ruling party. For example, when the COHE was asked for guidance during the draft law preparation period of 15 new universities that were accepted in the Parliament, they approved the establishment of only four of these universities. Still, they expressed that the remaining 11 needed improvement and the establishment should be spread over time. Not taking the opinion of the COHE into account, all the universities were brought to the Parliament, and signals were given for opening ten more new universities (Sayın 2006). The President of the period reacted to this view of the COHE with the following words:

> If there are people who want to prevent this [opening new universities] from now on, you, as a citizen, will call them to account for this. It is not the prime minister's job to train lecturers; it's the Council of Higher Education's duty. Train them, then! Those who accuse us of partisan ideological approaches have these approaches themselves. (Vekillerin üniversite kapma yarışı [The MPs' Race to catch a University] 2005)

In short, although the government, Parliament, mass media, pressure groups, and public bureaucrats are among the influential actors in the policy formulation process (Çevik and Demirci 2012), most of the policies that are on the agenda, formulated and adopted in Turkey, do not come through a proposed legislation. Instead, they are structured as draft laws by the ruling party. For this reason, the ruling parties play an active role in setting the agenda and the subsequent process (Kulaç and Çalhan 2013). The changes in education and more specifically in higher education occurs in a similar fashion. Even though the politicians such as the MPs and the prime minister or president take the demands and complaints of the general public into consideration, the level of active citizen participation in higher education policies falls short in many cases. As an area of expertise, higher education policies have technical aspects and they require a certain level of specialization; still, the level of active engagement by the general public is lower than it should be mostly.

### *3.3 Acceptance of the Policy*

For the legalization of a public policy in Turkey, the process starts with a draft law or a law proposal. It is then discussed in the Council of Ministers and sent to the relevant commission in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). After the commission examines the proposal, the Grand Assembly accepts or rejects it, and

the accepted drafts or proposals are submitted for the President's approval. The President can approve the draft law and send it to the Prime Minister's office for publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, or he has the right to veto it and send it back to the Grand Assembly (Çevik and Demirci 2012).

The policies to increase the number of the universities were mostly designed as draft laws whose evaluation and enactment proceeded quickly. Universities were established one after another with the slogan "One university for each province" (Demirer et al. 2000). These policies have both positive and negative outcomes for the society and the universities. First, the fact the evaluation and enactment processes moved quickly had a positive reflection on citizens as there were already a good level of demand and interest. This indicated that even though there is not direct citizen participation, the consideration of the demands and taking these decisions indicated the MPs, policymakers, and the government had a citizen-centered perspective. Further, from the citizen-centered perspective, the establishment of new universities have obvious economical benefits for individuals and society.

### 3.4 Implementation of the Policy

Public officials play a significant role in implementing public policies, and their professional skills affect the process (Matland 1995). The establishment of many universities with UECP was questioned concerning the existence of sufficient and qualified academic staff for universities. Although instruction at the undergraduate level started in the newly established universities, different stakeholders began to express the deficiencies in universities loudly. The President, who answered these criticisms in 2008, stated that even if the universities were not formed on an institutional basis, they were legally established and would go through institutionalization rapidly. He stated that "They said that there are too many universities, and we don't have the necessary infrastructure and academic staff. They may be right, but we need to move forward quickly" (Erdoğan: Her ile bir üniversite [Erdogan: a university for each province] 2008).

Public support plays an essential role in the implementation of policies. Large masses of people can lead to the failure of policies in the implementation phase with legal and illegal protests (Congleton 2002). However, with UECP, the pressure of the people on the Parliament via the MPs received a response, and universities were established in their cities. For this reason, we can express that citizens were effective in making policy and they got the universities they wanted. The openness to cater to the public by meeting their demands indicated a citizen-centered approach. The relevant literature on the contributions of newly established universities claimed that universities have an economic contribution to the cities (Çokgezen and Altun 2018). However, Çokgezen and Altun (2018) disagreed with this outcome and criticized it. According to them, universities can contribute to their cities in two ways: Supply-side contribution and demand-side contribution. Supply-side contribution is the development of human capital in the region where universities are located with

the knowledge they produce and the workforce they train, and, the increase in productivity and welfare.

On the other hand, demand-side contribution includes the purchase of goods and services by the university and the additional expenditures of the university employees and students coming to the university to bring economic vitality to the region and increase the welfare of the region. Establishing a university in each city contributed to the cities' demand side, and this situation was regarded as a weakness. Because according to Çokgezen and Altun (2018), establishing a new university or a new prison provides the same economic contribution to the city. In addition, they stated that establishing a university in every city may not be beneficial overall as there will not be a transfer of resources between regions; rather students, their buying power for their needs and the relevant investments, will stay in their home cities. However, there were both demand and interest from the local people for a number of reasons, and founding new universities also attracted additional investment from the government, local people, and beyond. In light of all these, we can say that the citizens supported the policy of establishing a university in every city. Still, the government lacked the personnel who would implement the policy in public institutions in terms of quantity and quality.

## *3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policies*

The policies implemented to expand universities in Turkey have brought positive and negative outcomes. These outcomes were evaluated under two main categories as (i) accessing higher education and the quality, and (ii) academic inflation.

### 3.5.1 Accessing Higher Education and the Quality of the Instruction, Services, and Research

The nexus of access to higher education, quality of the education, and services deserve a well-structured discussion in connection with citizen-centered policy making. The citizens of a society expect the educational services to be accessible and to be of high quality. Founding universities and increasing the capacity of Turkish higher education may have provided this to some extent. However, although it seems like a positive approach to establish a university in every city to meet the expectations of the citizens, it may not meet the expectations of the citizens in the long run. The registration records of universities indicated that the problem of accessing higher education was addressed with the expansion of Turkish higher education. Ergen and Çakıoğlu (2018) shared a detailed table about the percentage of students placed in a program before and after the expansion in higher education. The table indicated a considerable increase in access to programs in Turkish universities from 2008 to 2011. However, the process of founding a university requires detailed planning, physical infrastructure, faculty members, libraries, and

laboratories. When starting a university in Turkey, the general approach is perceived as simply hanging a "University" sign on the faculty building. Many universities have been created in this way in Turkey over the years. This leads to both quality problems and a waste of resources in universities. Balyer and Hesapçıoğlu (2008) claimed that such universities do not prioritize scientific criteria. Mentioning the quality problems, some scholars discussed that many universities have their "university" signs on, but they are far from providing education even at the high school level.

Moreover, Altınbaş (1998) criticized the higher education policies by highlighting that establishing universities without preparing the infrastructure and the team of faculty members meant meeting the workforce needs in the industries rather than providing vertical mobility opportunities for students who study there. On the other hand, Kaynar and Parlak (2005) stated that the economic revival that the university students will bring to the city was prioritized over scientific needs and that the university phenomenon became the material of election investments of political parties. Many studies exemplify the scientific quality problem in universities. For instance, according to the findings of Saylık and Saylık's (2021) metaphor study on graduate students and academic staff, the participants thought that besides the quality and competence problem of universities in Turkey, the appearance of the universities was more important rather than scientific production. According to participants, universities in Turkey are like the bees that do not make honey, the factory that does not produce, the lifeboat in the ocean, the castle with a ghost, and the story of Alice in Wonderland. According to Karadağ (2021), the achievements of Turkish universities were closely related to the qualifications of the rectors. However, when he analyzed the rectors' publications, he found that over one-fourth of the rectors have no articles indexed by Scopus, more than one-third of rectors in Turkey have no articles indexed by WoS. Over 50% of university rectors have five or fewer articles indexed by Scopus and WoS.

According to Gündüz (2017), who examined the new universities established in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions in Turkey, the number of faculties and faculty members was quite insufficient, and necessary measures should be taken to raise these universities to the level of other qualified universities. Using qualitative methods, Özoğlu et al. (2016) defined the challenges the new universities faced in expanding Turkish higher education. They provided a classification based on their interviews with 12 presidents of the newly founded universities. In this section, we build on the classification Özoğlu et al. (2016) presented with enriched data from multiple sources.

### 3.5.2 Administrative Challenges

Özoğlu et al. (2016) summarized that new universities faced challenges in recruiting administrative staff, interference from local public authorities, lack of collaboration by other public universities, and problems in creating and maintaining a positive organizational culture. Balcı (2022) mentioned these universities' problems with

institutionalizing processes too. He highlighted the importance of improving an institution and fulfilling its mission which will contribute to the long-term sustainability of that university. On the other hand, adding to these challenges, social media shares in various venues indicated strong traces of nepotism.

### 3.5.3 Financial and Infrastructural Challenges

Özoğlu et al. (2016) found that the financial support from the central government was generous but not enough for many participating presidents in the study. Moreover, other challenges included lacking support from the local community and finding a convenient location for a new campus. Similarly, although the students, local people, and faculty members shared positive and negative thoughts on various social media websites, criticism was harsher in these venues. In addition, both Kılınç et al. (2017) and Balcı (2022) expressed the infrastructural challenges of the new universities. Findings in various studies indicated that essential spaces such as laboratories, libraries, and social areas were limited and needed (Kılınç et al. 2017; Küçükcan and Gür 2009).

### 3.5.4 Academic Challenges

Academic challenges included recruiting faculty members to the new universities, attracting students to some of the programs, and problems related to starting new educational programs (Özoğlu et al. 2016). Similarly, Kılınç et al. (2017) mentioned academic challenges such as the quality of instruction and lack of academic activities in these universities. Further, Balcı (2022) pointed out the low number of "qualified" faculty members in these new universities. In order to address these issues, the government employed various policies and programs to train young researchers and to encourage academics to work in newly founded universities. However, as the training process of researchers took a long time including the master's and/or doctoral education, the new universities had to run their programs with the available faculty members for a long time. These issues raised concerns in terms of quality of instruction. At the same time, the faculty members in new universities had to compromise on the quality of instruction or on their research activities in this process.

### 3.5.5 Social Challenges

Uz (2021) put forward that giving students from low socio-economic groups an opportunity to access higher education did not mean giving them a chance for upward vertical mobility. These students' access to higher education meant that they studied in newly founded universities that provided "more modest" career opportunities. The students were convinced or had to consent to study at these universities. They received degrees and diplomas, which were less preferred and were seen as

less valuable in the Turkish job market. On the other hand, Özoğlu et al. (2016) highlighted two critical social challenges: the local community's lack of enthusiasm and interest in supporting new universities and the fact that local people's primary concern was the economic benefits of the newly founded universities. Balcı (2022) mentioned the financial considerations such as creating employment in the region and revitalizing and contributing to the regional development in the establishment of the universities as well. Similar studies highlighted the criticism in terms of the quality of the new universities. But Uz's point on the employability of the graduates of the new universities is a double-sided issue because despite the concerns about quality in various aspects, it is well-documented that the new universities increased access to higher education. This means that if many students did not get a chance to study in the new universities which were less prepared in the job market, they would end up not reaching higher education opportunities. They would either join the workforce with lower credentials or complete their training losing vertical mobility opportunities.

### 3.5.6 Success Factors

The participants in Özoğlu et al.'s (2016) study expressed the importance of building close links with the local community and local government agencies as success factors. Moreover, they also touched on the importance of building a positive perception of the university. Other factors shared by the participants included the importance of the quality of the faculty members and focusing on regional needs. Further, Kılınç et al. (2017) found that the funding level was adequate in their study sites. As discussed earlier extensively, establishing universities in a short time is a challenging process. The universities that receive extensive support from various stakeholders reach their potential faster. In this regard, Özoğlu et al.'s (2016) points on collaboration with the local community and getting support from them are valuable conclusions. However, as funding is one of the most important determinants of educational and academic success in modern universities, the financial support received from both the government and other stakeholders would have a critical place in building successful universities and benefitting from these investments. Concerning citizen-centered policies, we can express that the new universities of Turkey contain meaningful opportunities for Turkey if they are supported locally and nationally.

### 3.5.7 Issues of Quality

Karadağ and Yücel (2017) presented a list of university satisfaction levels, including general satisfaction, educational experience, campus life satisfaction, academic experiences, and satisfaction. According to this evaluation, many universities founded in the 2000s and 2010s rank lowly. This indicated that the newly established universities fall short in many aspects of students' expectations. As the university students are stakeholders of the universities and a part of the larger society,

their dissatisfaction or ranking the new universities lowly is an important indicator for citizen-centered policy making. In this context, we can express that even though policies to expand the capacity and increase access met the demands of the citizens at first, they failed to meet the expectations of student-citizens who directly benefit from this service. In summary, these findings suggest that the newly founded universities faced many challenges, similar to the classification of Özoğlu et al. (2016) and beyond. To citizen-centered policy making, establishing new universities in a concise period alleviates the pressure on the demand side with more university seats. However, from recruiting administrative staff to faculty members to creating a solid infrastructure and necessary spaces for students, such as enough classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, universities take a long time to reach their maturity to serve their communities at a high level of quality.

### 3.5.8 Academic Inflation: Qualified Unemployment

Academic inflation means that the number of students and graduates at the university level increases continuously over a period of time while the academic and professional job market is not growing in real terms (i.e., new and better job opportunities are not being created for graduates) (Yalçıntaş 2017). In other words, it means that the demand for jobs that require a university degree is more significant than an economy's capacity to create jobs that require a university degree. The gap cannot be closed over a long period or is growing. In this case, academic inflation and "graduate unemployment" or "youth unemployment" due to academic inflation will occur in that economy (Yalçıntaş and Akkaya 2019). Academic inflation or qualified employment has long been an issue for Turkey and Turkish higher education, as discussed by many papers in the literature (Biçerli 2011; Çoban 2017; Pelek 2022; Ulukan 2020; Yalçıntaş and Akkaya 2019).

This unemployment, more specifically in this context, qualified unemployment, is a hot and controversial topic currently. In addition to the scholars from different areas, many columnists and journalists also discussed this issue. National newspapers and reporters such as T24 (2021), Aykırı (2021), Cumhuriyet (2022), Diken (2022), and Elmacıoğlu (2021) highlighted the high numbers of university graduates who face difficulties in finding a job. Cumhuriyet expressed that Turkey's unemployed university graduates are three times that of the European countries, while T24 and Independent Türkçe mentioned numbers around 25% for the "qualified unemployment" rate. Along with this, Elmacıoğlu (2021) also raised debates over the quality of university education.

## 4 Conclusion

This study aimed to provide a macro-level evaluation of Turkish higher education's transformation. This process started with ambitions to offer higher education to the relevant age group, improve research capacity and the number of academics,

contribute to the social and economic development of cities, and train the young population of Turkey for technical and professional positions. According to Martin Trow's theory of transition in higher education systems, these policies and practices are in line with what many other countries went through. Starting in the early 2000s and going on in the 2010s, the total number of universities tripled nearly from the 2000s to the 2020s. This increase in the capacity and number of universities reflected positively on the access side for many departments. Ergen and Çakıoğlu (2018) found that the percentage of entering universities reached its all-time high in 2009. According to our process analysis, the factors influential in this increase were the high demand and the large age group.

However, after the universities reached the all-time high placement of 59.9% in 2009, the placement percentage decreased steadily. The concerns related to employment opportunities and the quality of the universities and programs led to this consistent decrease in placement levels in universities. Turkish universities had to face unintended outcomes, such as empty seats or departments at universities and a decline in the quality of student services, instruction, and research. The expansion policy of Turkey had some shortcomings, such as academic issues, financial, administrative, and infrastructure issues, and social problems. These adverse outcomes were followed by academic inflation or qualified unemployment. Even though the beginning point of this policy had positive intentions, such as following a structured plan in terms of developing specializations in different areas and using the potential of the regions, the policy implementation did not go as planned. The reasons for unintended outcomes may be linked to a sudden increase in the number of students, the low number of jobs created in different industries, and decreasing interest of students in certain areas due to employment concerns. Moving forward, an increased level of funding to leverage the quality of the student experience, instruction, and academic activities would benefit Turkish higher education.

Moreover, policymakers in Turkish higher education may also focus on improving quality to address the criticism of qualified unemployment and other issues. When considered along with citizen-centered policy making, improving access to higher education was a significant advantage for the Turkish higher education system. However, the concerns related to employment and quality at different levels should have been addressed much earlier in this transition process.

In conclusion, this study aimed to analyze an expansion in higher education within the framework of policy process analysis and citizen-centered public policy making. The significant contributions of the study to the relevant literature are twofold. First, it draws attention to citizen-centered public policy by analyzing the expansion of Turkish higher education with a policy analysis approach. Second, it indicated that the planning and establishment of universities had a good starting point back in 1970s and on. However, designing and implementing policies, founding universities with very little preparation in a compressed mode turned this citizen-centered positive practices into questionable processes with mixed outcomes. This transition had a citizen-centered focus and involved active citizen participation in especially initial phases. The newly founded universities increased the access to higher education but faced various challenges such as social, academic,

administrative and financial, and infrastructural challenges. The long-term outcomes of the expansion of Turkish higher education and the level of quality and success in the new universities are yet to be seen.

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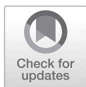
# People-Centered Health Policies in Turkey



**Mustafa Nal and Ekrem Sevim**

**Abstract** Health services have shown significant developments throughout the world in the last century. In addition, the status and outcomes of diseases are substantially changed. In the past, infectious diseases were the most critical health problems, but today, chronic diseases have taken their place. Until the Second World War, health systems focused on eradicating diseases. Afterward, with the expansion of the definition of health by the World Health Organization, this situation changed, and the concept of patient-centered health care emerged. The idea of patient-centered health care was put forward as an essential dimension of quality health care in the late 1970s, but it could not see the expected value. Recent changes in medicine and health systems introduced a patient-centered approach instead of a disease- and physician-centered approach. However, the current global changes emphasize the necessity of providing health services with sensitive and people-centered systems. This chapter has examined people-centered health practices, which are in demand worldwide, from the perspective of health policies in Turkey.

**Keywords** Patient-centered healthcare · People-centered healthcare · Health policy · Health systems · Health problems · Global changes · People-centered systems · Practices · Services · Turkey

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## 1 Introduction

Increasing education and communication opportunities have increased individuals' access to information and improved the expectation of health services. This situation has increased the pressure on health workers, health institutions, and health systems and necessitated a more humane and holistic health service delivery. This approach, which makes health services people-centered, argues that people should be empowered and empowered to improve and protect their health before they get sick (WHO 2007).

In patient-centered health services, patients, clinicians, and the health system are three key elements (Epstein and Street 2011). To make health care universal, it is necessary to put people at the focal point rather than diseases and health institutions (Dion et al. 2019). In this model, people have been empowered. Instead of being passive users of health services, a system has emerged where they participate in decisions and have responsibilities for their health (Patrício et al. 2020).

The health systems of countries have recently become a sector where biomedical services, diseases, technology, and doctors are at the center. It has become necessary to restore the balance between health systems and health service delivery. There are also problems in the financing of health services. These problems also affect the attitudes of health service providers. In most cases, in addition to inadequate service delivery, negative situations such as directing unnecessary services to the patient occur (WHO 2007).

The education given in medical faculties increasingly focuses on body systems and diseases. Cultural factors such as psychosocial, medical ethics, communication, and relationship skills are neglected. The involvement of patients and families in health services remains low. In the emergence of this situation, low levels of education and health literacy, as well as the use of understandable and culturally inappropriate information and educational materials, are shown. In addition to encouraging specialization, the ineffective use of the referral system in many countries causes problems within the health system and fragmentation among service providers (WHO 2007).

With the current policies implemented, the focus of health services worldwide has shifted towards the supply side of health services. It is necessary to establish a health system in which patients, families, and society in general, which constitute the demand side of health services, are centered (WHO 2007). Recent global changes emphasize the necessity of providing health services with sensitive and people-centered systems (Socal 2020).

This section explains the transition from the disease and patient-centered model to the people-centered and people-centered health care model. The second part provides information about people-centered health services in Turkey. In the conclusion part, a general evaluation was made of people-centered health services. There are enough studies in the literature about people-centered health policies in Turkey. It is thought that this book chapter will contribute to the literature in this sense.

## 2 From the Disease-Oriented Model to the People-Centered Model

Until the Second World War, eradicating diseases was the most critical issue. Afterward, with the expansion of the definition of health by the World Health Organization, this situation changed, and the concept of patient-centered health care emerged (De Maeseneer et al. 2012). While fighting against diseases was at the center of health systems until the Second World War, the concept of a healthy society came to the fore with the losses experienced afterward. This has brought about a patient-centered approach. In later periods, this concept moved from a patient-centered approach to a people-centered system.

In supply-side health services, the delivery aspect of the service is emphasized. However, in recent years, a demand-side approach has been adopted. In this context, people-centered health service delivery is valued. Health policies implemented after this period have become people-centered. With a people-centered approach, informing and empowering individuals about improving and protecting their health before becoming ill is the focus. In this way, it can be ensured that precautions are taken before the individual and society's needs for clinical services arise. In addition, people who provide health services are individuals, and health service providers are the centers where these individuals produce services. This way, health policies are planned considering their needs (WHO 2007).

With people-centered policies, a model in which patients are actively included in the processes has emerged from the physician-centered practices that have been going on for centuries. This model comprises training physicians to be more attentive, informative, and empathetic toward patients, transforming them from an authoritarian role to a structure focused on partnership, solidarity, empathy, and cooperation. This model is explained by ethical values regardless of health outcomes. Another situation is to increase the patients' awareness and compliance with the processes. This compliance causes patients' expectations to increase (Epstein and Street 2011). The health workforce is an important factor in the delivery of health services (Yeşilyurt et al. 2020).

People-centered health services are based on the principle that each individual is unique and autonomous in sickness and health (De Maeseneer et al. 2012). At the core of patient-centered healthcare is empowering patients to be active participants in their care and to receive services that focus on their individual needs and preferences (Edward et al. 2015). This approach creates a holistic view of the patient's condition and well-being. At the center of the service is the individual. The patient and family also participate in practitioners' decisions. In this process, the preferences of individuals are respected culturally and socioeconomically. The service is carried out in an accessible and coordinated manner (Sinaiko et al. 2019).

According to Sinaiko et al. (2019), there is a company-designed model within the scope of patient-centered health care. Service providers, a health care system, and external conditions exist in the model where the patient is at the center. In addition, the information flow between all layers is an important issue. Patient outcomes

include health outcomes and better health equity. In patient-centered health services, all layers interact and tend to the center (patient) (Sturmberg et al. 2010).

The basic element of patient-centered health care is to hear the voice of the patient and to participate in the decisions. In the designed model, the patient has six dimensions: goals, life circumstances, values and culture, care preferences, health status and symptoms, and access. Patient-centered health care affects both patient compliance and process indicators of encouraging care, as well as outcome and impact indicators such as patient satisfaction and quality of life (De Man et al. 2016).

The basis of people-centered health services is establishing a reliable healthcare system that can respond to the needs of individuals, families, and communities in humane and holistic ways. In this way, health systems are designed within the framework of the stakeholders' needs, aiming to improve the quality and responsiveness of health services. Public, private, and not-for-profit health system stakeholders must work together (WHO 2007).

Recently, policies that deal with people with a holistic approach have been accepted (Kelesoglu 2021). People-centered health services are based on values and principles embodied in international law, such as human rights and dignity, non-discrimination, access, participation, and empowerment. WHO (2007) encourages families, communities, health professionals, health organizations, and health systems to change for better outcomes by:

(a) *Culture of care and communication*: It should ensure that healthcare providers are informed and involved in decision-making processes and that they meet their needs holistically, respecting their privacy and dignity.
(b) *Responsible*, *responsive*, *and accountable services and institutions*: To provide affordable, accessible, safe, ethical, effective, evidence-based, and holistic healthcare.
(c) *Supportive healthcare environments*: Implement appropriate policies and interventions, positive care and work environments, a robust primary care workforce, and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in healthcare planning, policy development, and feedback for quality improvement.

The primary purpose of people-centered health services is to steer health systems from a biomedical-centered, disease-oriented, technology-oriented, and doctor-dominated structure to a people-centered design. To achieve this goal, WHO (2007) highlights four key features: individuals, families and communities, health professionals, healthcare organizations, and health systems. The expressions contained herein will be explained in detail below.

***Individuals, Families, and Communities*** A holistic health service requires an effective partnership between individuals who need health care and those who provide the service. To achieve this, it is necessary to foster the development of more informed and competent individuals, families, and communities who can participate actively in health care and health systems development. In this context, strategies improving mutual communication in the decision-making process, enhancing self-management and self-care capacity, non-profit organizations (foundations,

charitable organizations), increasing the cooperation capacity of non-governmental organizations and professional organizations, promoting a structure that promotes community participation in the planning of health services and greater cooperation between local governments and communities or uncover community leaders who support community participation in the delivery of health services can be applied.

***Health Professionals*** Increasing the capacity of health professionals for holistic and selfless service or increasing the commitment of employees to quality, safe, and ethical services can be achieved.

***Healthcare Organizations*** In health institutions, providing more suitable and comfortable areas for service providers and recipients, ensuring coordination for the effective and efficient execution of the service, and establishing and strengthening multidisciplinary health service teams, patient education, family participation, self-management, and counseling in health services can be strengthened.

***Health Systems*** For health systems, develop and strengthen primary health care systems and primary care workforce; implement financial incentives that support good practices and service access; improve financial risk protection; seek ways to improve the health system for better health outcomes; ensure rational use of technology, professionally strengthen the monitoring of standards; ensure accountability for the organization, delivery, and financing of health services; take into account the concerns of individuals and the society about the quality of health services; help people who have a negative situation arising from the health system; and ensure patient information can be protected.

The definition of health made by the World Health Organization in 1948 is vital in shifting health services from a patient-centered approach to a people-centered system. In this definition, health is expressed for the first time as a state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This result can be achieved through health promotion. In this context, health is considered a means of achieving an outcome that can be described in functional terms rather than an abstract state and as a resource that allows people to lead an individual, social, and economically productive life (Aydın 2019).

## 3 Patient-Centered Model

Within the scope of the patient-centered health system model, primary health care services are considered essential. In the literature, there are model suggestions developed in this context. A patient-centered process hierarchy is emphasized in the model developed by McCormack and McCance (2006). The model is based on meeting individualized patients' primary healthcare needs. A structure has been created in which service providers and all stakeholders are organized around the needs

of patients. Among the outputs of this structure are satisfaction with care, involvement with care, improved health feeling of well-being, and creation of a therapeutic culture.

## 4 People-Centered Health Practices in Turkey

Patient-centered health services encourage individuals to have a more significant say in their health and to participate in decisions. Advances in technology make it easier for individuals to take on this responsibility and participate in decisions about their health. The development of user-friendly smart systems that have emerged recently supports individuals. In this context, patients can use technologies, such as developed health applications, wearable devices, implanted devices, and services that increase interactions with official or informal healthcare providers (Patrício et al. 2020).

Turkey is one of the leading countries in providing services within the scope of medical tourism for its citizens and citizens of other countries (Sevim 2019). The country has developed many applications in this field, especially after the health transformation program was implemented in 2003. One of the main focal points of these developed applications is people-centeredness (Aba 2022).

### *4.1 Central Physician Appointment System (MHRS)*

The Central Physician Appointment System, one of the most critical components of the Health Transformation Project implemented by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in 2003, was implemented in 2010. The system is where the public can make an appointment with public hospitals, oral and dental health centers, and family physicians from 182 call centers, any hospital and physician they want via the web or mobile application (Ministry of Health 2021). Thanks to this application, patients can have their examinations by making an appointment with the physicians at the appropriate time. Another benefit of this practice is that it shortens patients' waiting time for examination and thereby saves time.

The system implemented in Turkey is one of the 20 basic public services accepted by the European Union (EU). Central Appointment System: Central appointment systems allow to get examination appointments from public hospitals and affiliated health institutions. It is also the first system in the world to manage the appointment systems of public hospitals from a single center. It serves the public at a 99.6% accessibility level. In addition, the data collected through the system contribute to developing new health policies. Created in 2022, "What is my health problem?" means "What Have I Got?" thanks to the app, patients can learn the most appropriate possible diagnosis by entering their complaints into the system and can make an appointment for the recommended polyclinics (Ministry of Health 2021).

The Central physician appointment system was selected as the “Best in the World” in the London Contact Center World Awards finals (Ministry of Health 2020a, b, c, d).

### 4.2 *e-Pulse Application*

e-Pulse is an application that allows citizens and health professionals to access data collected from health institutions belonging to individuals via the internet and mobile devices. It can be defined as a personal health record system where all health-related information can be managed, and individuals can access their medical history from a single place, regardless of where the examination and treatment are performed (Ministry of Health n.d.). Through the system, only the individual health records can be accessed by the physicians within the time allowed by the person and within the scope of the individual’s authorizations. With the records on e-Pulse, the personal health data of individuals are stored, and access is provided from any location. The main purpose of this system is to increase the quality and speed of diagnosis and treatment. This system strengthens the patient–physician relationship and gives individuals more control over health outcomes. It is also possible to determine which physicians can access the personal health data of individuals on the system.

Health records include past appointments, examinations, medical images, and laboratory results. In addition, sensor data such as height, weight, blood group, blood sugar, and blood pressure, which are added by the people themselves or via mobile devices, are also included in the system. The changes in these data can also be presented in graphic form. Satisfaction surveys and user comments regarding past service purchases of users are also available on the system. Moreover, prescriptions were written during the relevant examination, diagnosis, reports, medical laboratory tests, and medical imaging results such as x-ray, magnetic resonance (MR), and computerized tomography (CT) can also be viewed on the system. Individuals’ knowledge of the use of drugs in their prescriptions can also access side effects and indication information through the system. In addition, individuals can also set up a medication reminder if they wish (Ministry of Health n.d.).

Bone marrow and blood donation information, which is an important issue, is also available on the system. People can also donate to the Turkish Red Crescent by entering their information. In addition, organ donation can be made through the system. And drug allergies or other allergies expressed by individuals, which are essential information, especially in emergencies, can also be recorded in the system. There is also a section where individuals can add emergency notes to the system.

In the system menus, there are options such as “No physician can see my data,”, “My family physician can see my data,”, “The physician I have been examined can see my data,”, and “All physicians in the hospital where I am examined can see my data,” and “All physicians in MoH can see my data.”. Individuals can mark the option they want (Ministry of Health 2022a, b).

In recent years, a part of health service delivery has been transferred to the digital environment with e-health applications. In this process, the developments in information technologies and the computer literacy level of society caused a rapid increase. Today, individuals have started to participate in the service delivery process for their health and benefit from online processes, health portals, doctor web pages, and mail groups. This new generation consumer model has also changed the traditional physician–patient relationship (Toygar 2018). Some of the benefits of this application to individuals are: to eliminate unnecessary examination and imaging procedures (MR, CT, X-ray) in applications made to different health institutions, to save time and cost in accessing data such as past examination reports, examination, and imaging.

### *4.3 Life Fits Home (HES)*

It is an application developed to combat COVID-19, which emerged in 2019 and caused the World Health Organization to declare it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. MoH developed it with the first case seen in Turkey (11 March 2020). With this application, it has been ensured that the public can be better protected and benefit from health services in the fight against the pandemic. With the application developed on April 10, 2020, individuals can check the risk situation in the region where they live or where they will travel. The number and the density of everyday instances according to the areas are also communicated to the public through the system, ensuring their awareness. In this way, individuals can be conscious and have a say in matters related to their health. MoH developed the application to provide a safe social life to the public in public places such as vehicles, workplaces, restaurants, and shopping malls. The number of people in public spaces and COVID-19 risk is given with the QR code obtained from the developed mobile application.

Moreover, through the developed application, a notification system has been established for those who do not comply with the mask, distance, and hygiene conditions, which are among the rules determined in the fight against the pandemic. With the "EU Compliant Health Passport" menu, individuals are directed to the "HealthPass" application, which allows sharing of vaccines, immunity, and other health information with country authorities and airline companies during their travels within and between countries. With the "HES Code Settings" menu, citizens can view their vaccination status, disease status, and test status information because of the HES code query "if they give permission" (Ministry of Health 2020b).

### *4.4 Filiation and Insulation Tracking System*

One of the most critical tools in Turkey's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic is the application of filiation. Immediately after the first case was noted, a tight battle was carried out against the pandemic by establishing the filiation teams. The data

obtained from the areas where the application was made was instantly recorded in the system and analyzed by experts. The established filiation teams were directed from the center via the mobile application, and the areas to be filled were intervened quickly. With the filiation studies, the spread of the epidemic was mapped, and success was achieved in reducing the rate of increase with the measures taken (Ministry of Health 2020a).

### *4.5 Ministry of Health Communication Center (SABIM)*

SABIM started to serve in 2004 as a component of the Health Transformation Program of MoH. MoH provides services to more than one million health personnel. It was established with the aim of early detection of the problems experienced at any stage of the health service provided in the units affiliated with the Ministry, finding practical solutions quickly, and carrying out the health services effectively and efficiently in an equitable and transparent manner. SABIM maintains relations between MoH and the public. In addition, SABIM has been providing 24/7 service as the "Coronavirus Hotline" within the scope of the fight against COVID-19. Reliable and up-to-date information prepared by MoH Science Committee on the pandemic is presented to the public by the center (Ministry of Health 2004).

The center also follows the people's demands, thanks, criticisms, and suggestions regarding the health system. Interactive management opportunity was provided with the multi-participation of all sector stakeholders (Bostan et al. 2014). In addition, SABIM plays an essential role in increasing the participation and satisfaction of individuals in the functioning of the health system and in determining the policy by conveying their expectations and criticisms to the Ministry (Ministry of Health 2004).

### *4.6 Health Personnel Mental Support Application*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers were at the forefront and had direct contact with sick individuals. The process has affected health workers physically, mentally, and socially, as well as all individuals (Tanrıverdi and Tanrıverdi 2021). It is important to consider the role of health professionals who have critical importance in terms of the delivery of health services, in the production of the service, and as individuals within people-centered health services. MoH has developed the Health Personnel Spiritual Support Application to provide psychological support to the health personnel who have made great sacrifices in the fight against the epidemic and to their children. Healthcare professionals can request help with the application they download to their mobile phones and benefit from the video support service offered by specialist physicians 24/7 with an appointment created. With this application, which was put into service in Turkey for the first time in the world,

the Special Children Support System was put into service to provide psychological support to children with autism or special needs and their families (Ministry of Health 2020c).

## 4.7 Statistics and Causal Analysis in Health Application

Statistics and Causal Analysis in Health is a decision support system developed to manage ministry resources more effectively and increase central and provincial users' effective and rapid decision-making ability. Measuring the effectiveness of the people-centered delivery of health care is a critical issue. Through the application, special report screens are presented to senior managers, provincial health directorate managers, hospital managers, and physicians to make critical decisions regarding the policies of the Ministry. Another purpose of the application is to create awareness among health service providers about their work and to enable managers to make healthier decisions with up-to-date data (Ministry of Health 2020d).

## 4.8 e-Report System

It is a system developed to ensure that all reports from health institutions affiliated with MoH are submitted electronically and with e-signature. It is an application aimed at facilitating the access of individuals to the service in the people-centered delivery of health care. Through this system, reports such as birth reports, disability reports for adults, driver reports, rest reports, status reports, medical equipment reports, drug use reports, and athlete reports can be given. This system provides easy access to the health reports that the public needs and increases manageability (Ministry of Health 2018).

## 4.9 Procure4Health Project

The Procure4Health project is one of the leading partners of MoH of the Republic of Turkey. The project is a European Union project carried out under the call title HORIZON-HLTH-2021-CARE-05, funded by the European Commission, under the coordination of Andalusia Health Service (SAS). The project aims to support the transformation of health systems so that all citizens have equitable access to quality and sustainable health services. Within the scope of the project, it will support the development of innovative, viable, financially sound, and measurable solutions for governance, financing, human and physical resources, healthcare delivery, and patient empowerment. Topics targeted in this project are as follows (Ministry of Health 2022b):

- To modernize health systems in European Union countries and Turkey through a European public-public partnership
- To improve the quality of health services throughout the entire service delivery process and to be people-centered
- Support and encourage evidence-based healthcare decisions and effective planning of healthcare resources for both healthcare providers and policymakers

With the developed project, the public will be provided with services in more modern health institutions. This is an important development for a better-quality health service with people at the center.

### *4.10 Telemedicine Services*

Telemedicine is a broad term encompassing a range of technologies, from digital x-rays to telephone consultations, video conferencing, and remote surgical procedures. In other words, it uses telecommunications technology to provide medical care or services (Dilbaz et al. 2020). Telemedicine services can generally be expressed as patient–physician interviews in the online environment. In this context, health services are presented independently of space and geography and based on contemporary medical technology. In line with the remote health service demand of individuals (Tele Medicine Regulation 2022);

- Examination, medical observation, and follow-up can be done to the extent that the remote health service allows. Previously diagnosed diseases can be controlled, medical advice can be given, and consultation or a second opinion can be requested. The person may be advised to apply physically to a health institution when necessary.
- Clinical parameters such as blood sugar and blood pressure can be evaluated and monitored for remote management and follow-up of diseases, and treatment and drug management can be provided.
- Services can be provided to protect and monitor health, support a healthy life, and provide psychosocial support services.
- Multifaceted evaluation and follow-up of people with increased health risk or advanced age can be performed.
- Provided that the technological possibilities allow and the necessary permissions are obtained from the Ministry, interventional or surgical operation services determined by the Ministry may be offered to individuals.
- In endemic or epidemic outbreaks, necessary medical procedures can be carried out to protect people's health in line with national guidelines.
- With wearable technologies and other medical devices, the health data of the person requesting health care can be measured and tracked.
- The physician can write an e-prescription and e-report to the person evaluated by the physician.

Telemedicine is beneficial regarding cost and access, especially for remote local people with insufficient health services and infrastructure. The results of the general literature review revealed that patients are satisfied with telemedicine for the following main reasons: increased access to health services, low cost, saves time, and high quality of health services (Sungur 2020). Telemedicine services facilitate citizens' access to health services. Individuals have access to the opportunity to receive health services remotely within the scope of telemedicine.

### *4.11 Tele Radiology*

MoH has developed the teleradiology system to save time and cost in health services. Among the goals of the system is balancing the distribution of radiologist workload among hospitals. This system allows radiological images to be accessed and viewed 24/7 via e-Pulse, and teleconsultations can be made between radiologists. Through this system, medical illustrations and reports in health facilities across the country can be monitored centrally and viewed by patients and physicians. With this system, radiologists can examine and report images independently of time and place, get a second opinion from another radiologist, or conduct a live consultation (Ministry of Health 2019b). In case of need, teleradiology services have made it easier for different physicians to access imaging tests performed in different health institutions and make the diagnosis quickly and easily. This will also increase the quality of health services received by the public. In addition, the service time will be shortened by reporting the examination of a less intensive radiologist.

### *4.12 Home Health Service Application*

Home health services are the examination, analysis, treatment, medical care, and rehabilitation of individuals in need in the home and family environment and providing social and psychological support services to these individuals and their family members. Home health services are provided through training and research hospitals, general or branch hospitals, oral and dental health centers, community health centers established within MoH and its affiliates, and family medicine units (Home Health Services Regulation 2015). Within the scope of home health services, health reports can also be submitted for individuals who have problems accessing a health institution. In this context, bed/device-dependent adult and child patients do not need to come to the hospital to receive a health report. The application, launched in 2022, allows patients to get the necessary drugs and medical supplies without leaving their homes.

Turkish society is getting older, so chronic diseases are becoming a critical problem related to aging (Avcı et al. 2016). The importance of home care service is

gradually increasing due to its advantages, such as reducing care costs, saving time, keeping the family and the patient together, providing personalized care, and bringing the service to the individual's door (Nal and Nal 2017).

### 4.13 112 Emergency Health Service

About 112 emergency health services are provided throughout the country to increase the accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of emergency health services continuously at the national level; to improve the satisfaction level of service providers and those who are provided; and to deliver them to all segments of the society at the same standard. In addition, making the necessary preparations for disasters and extraordinary situations at the national and international level and providing adequate health services by reaching the disaster area in the fastest way with fully equipped teams and equipment in case of disaster constitutes another goal. Within 112 emergency health services, approximately 3000 stations, over 5000 ambulances, and 34,000 personnel provide uninterrupted service to the public. Two hundred fifty snow pallet ambulances provide service in regions where severe winter conditions are experienced. In addition, 91 intensive care and obese ambulances, 62 motorcycle ambulances, six sea ambulances, 17 helicopter ambulances, and three airplane ambulances provide free service to the public when needed by land, sea, and air. The time to reach the case in city centers is 10 minutes, and in rural areas, it takes 30 minutes (Ministry of Health 2019a). Providing fast transportation to people in emergency health services is very important in terms of medical treatment. In this context, the capacity increase in facilities has critical importance in emergency health services where seconds are important.

### 4.14 Family Medicine Service

In the patient-centered health services model, when individuals feel sick, they seek treatment by applying to health personnel such as family physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and physiotherapists. Family physicians have an important place in health, disease, society, and the health system. In the practice of family medicine, each individual has a family physician. Primary health care services for the individual are provided by the family doctor. This way, positive outcomes can be presented to health expenditures and the patient with examinations and referrals. One of the most critical issues in ensuring this success is providing adequate and balanced distribution of primary health care services (Sturmberg et al. 2010). Appropriate health care, in general, is an issue that can be achieved at the local level based on the knowledge of individuals, families, and communities (Stange 2009). The efforts to develop primary health care services in Turkey is one of the studies that bring the individual to the fore within on-site health services (Aba and

Torun 2020). Because the provision of health services in the closest place to the community is important for the effectiveness of the service.

### *4.15 Mother-Friendly Hospital Program*

The program aims to improve the quality and quantity of maternal health services and ensure that expectant mothers receive safe and quality delivery services. The mother, baby, and family-friendly model have created privacy-based single birth units. It is aimed at reducing intervention rates by encouraging expected delivery. It is aimed at pregnant women to feel comfortable and at home with a suitable companion and to provide freedom of movement. Mother-friendly hospital criteria are as follows (Ministry of Health 2017);

- "It is the right of all expectant mothers to receive safe and quality pregnancy follow-up and delivery services."
- "Necessary counseling services should be provided during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum."
- "Polyclinic, education, counseling, and maternity services in institutions should comply with the standards determined by the legislation of the Ministry."
- "Privacy requirements must be met with care, and hygiene and comfort standards must be kept high."
- "Non-evidence-based interventions should not be routinely implemented."
- "The human resources and logistic support required for service delivery should be optimum."
- "The necessary medical intervention should be done without delay in emergency obstetric situations."
- "Maternity service should be mother and baby-oriented."
- "Training should be planned and implemented to strengthen service providers' knowledge and skill capacity."
- "Necessary records regarding the services provided should be kept and analyzed at regular intervals and used in developing services."

The basic philosophy of the mother-friendly hospital concept is to reduce the interventions applied at birth. It has been found that mothers who receive services from mother-friendly hospitals have a higher social support perception, meet their physical needs during the birth process, receive care sensitive to their cultural values-beliefs, feel safe during the birth process, and breastfeed immediately after birth (Bilgin 2022). Another concept related to the mother-friendly hospital is the baby-friendly hospital model. The baby-friendly hospital model was developed in line with the policies recommended by the United Nations in 1991 to prevent breastfeeding and early weaning at the hospital. In this context, a guideline, "10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding," has been developed on successful breastfeeding (Sin and Şener 2020). In 2022, there are 98 mother-friendly and 613 baby-friendly hospitals in Turkey (Ministry of Health 2022a). The increase in the number of mothers- and

baby-friendly hospitals is important for individuals giving birth and their babies, which are the basic building blocks of society and family. In this way, the provision of better-quality health services for the mother and her baby, which are two very important factors for society and the family, is important in raising healthy generations.

### *4.16 Community Mental Health Center*

Community mental health services are activities to help individuals find solutions to their mental problems and regain their social roles lost due to illness. These services worldwide are offered in three different models: a hospital-based model, a community-based model, and a community and hospital balanced model (Songur 2017). In the twentieth century, centers, where individuals with mental problems were observed and treated, were widely used worldwide. In the following period, it has come to the fore that individuals receive these services in their environments without being isolated from their society. Community mental health centers have an important place in providing these services. In this model, individuals are empowered, their access to services is facilitated, and their probability of being stigmatized decreases (Çiçekoğlu and Duran 2018). Increasing loneliness in modern societies also increases mental problems. The new community mental health centers opened by the Ministry are of critical importance in terms of providing services to the community more closely.

### *4.17 Complementary Health Insurance*

As of 2021, 87% of Turkey's population of 84 million is covered by social insurance (Social Security Institution 2022). Complementary Health Insurance, one of the secondary insurance programs, has also been implemented since 2012 to reduce costs for expenses that are not covered by public health insurance, which is the primary insurance of individuals, or partially covered by the public. In this context, insurance companies have been provided to pay for the health services above the amount paid by the Social Security Institution in private hospitals and for which additional fees must be paid instead of the insured's payment. Thus, provided that the health institution from which the insured receives services has an agreement with the Social Security Institution and the insurance company from which the insured purchased the policy, the amount above the amount covered by the Social Security Institution is within the scope of supplementary insurance (Başoğlu 2021). In this way, individuals who want to receive services from private health institutions can access the health service they want. This also reduces the burden of public hospitals. Thus, in line with the possibilities of the whole society, their access to services provided by public or private health institutions has increased.

# 5 Conclusion

It is accepted with the adoption of the patient-centered approach worldwide the quality of health will increase, and this approach will also contribute to healthy development. In this way, it is aimed to include patients in the decisions made in the treatment and care processes, thus increasing patient satisfaction and reducing costs by eliminating unnecessary diagnoses and tests that occur in treatment and care processes. As a second gain, it is predicted that health literacy will increase in society and contribute to health development (Erdoğan and Kırılmaz 2020).

The recent development in education and communication opportunities has increased individuals' access to information and, thus, their healthcare expectations. Patient expectations have increased pressure on healthcare professionals, organizations, and healthcare systems, necessitating a more humane and holistic healthcare delivery. This approach, which makes health services people-centered, has made it necessary for people to be informed and empowered to improve and protect their health before becoming ill. In patient-centered health services, patients, clinicians, and the healthcare system are at the system's core (Epstein and Street 2011). Initiatives made in areas such as home health services, which have recently started to be accepted more and where individuals receive services in their home environments instead of health institutions, are also within the scope of patient-centered health services (Sevim 2021). In the new approach, to make health services universal, it is suggested that people should be placed at the focal point, not diseases or health institutions.

A balanced health reform is possible with a system in which patient needs and economic sustainability are balanced. Reforming a people-centered healthcare system requires "reverse engineering." It involves taking individuals' health experiences, looking at the tools and mechanisms to achieve good health experiences, and finally determining what resources are needed and how they will be most appropriately funded (Sturmberg et al. 2010).

With the new perspective put forward by MoH, a model has emerged in which citizens are at the center of all services offered to them. It can be said that all the policies developed are planned to contribute to the protection, treatment, rehabilitation, and improvement of the health of individuals. "Life Fits Home (HES)" and "Filiation and Insulation Tracking System" applications developed especially during the Covid-19 pandemic period are important applications implemented within the scope of protecting the health of individuals. Developed services such as "Central Physician Appointment System (MHRS)," "e-Pulse Application," "e-Report System," "Telemedicine Services," "112 Emergency Health Service," and "Family Medicine Service" also facilitate individuals' access to treatment. The "Home Health Service Application" application has been developed within the scope of rehabilitation of individuals in need. Within the scope of health promotion, it is seen that the "Community Mental Health Center" and "Mother-Friendly Hospital Program" have been developed. In all of the developed applications, examples are seen in which individuals are centered.

Considering that individuals, societies, and countries are the most important element and that their health adds meaning to this situation, the importance of the developed practices is better understood. It can be said that societies with healthy individuals will be more successful in other areas as well. There is no doubt that healthy generations will give birth to healthy generations.

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# Implementation of Citizen-Oriented Economic Policies

**Serkan Göksu, Erdal Demirhan, and Banu Demirhan**

**Abstract** Citizen-oriented economic policies require policymakers to evaluate the possible effects of the implemented economic policies on citizens and make decisions based on these evaluations. In other words, citizen-oriented policies require prioritizing decisions to increase the economic welfare of individuals. Undoubtedly, policymakers also want to increase the economic welfare of individuals. Increasing the social welfare of citizens is one of the leading aims of economic policies. This aim requires considering the possible effects of policy implementations on citizens. This study examines the design of citizen-oriented economic policies and their reflections on citizens in the context of Turkey. Achieving economic growth goals through the increase in capital stock will lead to sustainability in employment and disposable income increase. Achieving the goal of price stability will contribute to the protection of citizens' purchasing power. The citizen-oriented implementation of economic policies will increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the social benefit obtained from these policies.

**Keywords** Economy policy · Growth · Income distribution · Price stability · Employment · Citizen-oriented economic policy · Goals · Price stability · Effects · Turkey

## 1 Introduction

With the globalization trend experienced in recent years, the pressures created by external shocks on the country's economies have attained the opportunity to spread more quickly and easily. It is often problematic for economic policies to achieve a few goals simultaneously. There is often a conflict between the aims of the economic

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policies; therefore, it is crucial to diversify economic policies. As a result of this diversity, the effect of economic policies on economic units is more comprehensive. This interaction is particularly prominent among individuals and firms. Economic policies affect firms' investment decisions and, therefore, the level of employment and output. Economic policies also have an impact on the savings and consumption decisions of households. It can be expressed that the economic policies will affect all economic units in general, albeit with an unavoidable delay. For instance, a central bank's decisions on the policy interest rates or required reserve ratios will impact firms' and individuals' investment and consumption behaviors.

Along with this possible effect of monetary policy, fiscal policy changes will also impact economic units. For example, changes in tax rates, government expenditures, and transfer expenditures will also effect firms and households. Economic units may not be able to predict the consequences of economic policies on themselves. Because individuals are faced with the problem of asymmetric information (Akerlof 1978) and bounded rationality (Simon 1947). Eliminating this lack of information will enable citizens to evaluate the results of economic policies. In addition, this situation will allow policymakers to make a citizen-oriented decision-making process while creating their economic policies.

Citizen-oriented economic policies require policymakers to evaluate the possible effects of the implemented economic policies on citizens and make decisions based on these evaluations. In other words, citizen-oriented policies require prioritizing decisions to increase the economic welfare of individuals. Undoubtedly, policymakers also want to increase the economic welfare of individuals. The reason for this is that changes in the welfare level of individuals are effective in voting behavior. In this respect, increasing citizens' welfare levels have become the focus of economic policies. It requires the design of policies that will ensure price stability, full employment, and economic growth, among the main objectives (Selim 2020: 722) of economic policies, in a way that will positively affect citizens. In this context, some questions arise to have an idea about whether the economic policies are citizen-oriented. These questions can be listed as follows: Are citizens' expectations considered when making economic policy decisions? How do these policies affect citizens? Are policy changes made when economic policies have adverse effects on citizens? Which policies contribute to increasing the welfare of citizens? The answers to these questions about the effects of this and similar economic policies on citizens will give an idea about whether the economic policies are citizen-oriented.

Although applications in which the citizens are directly involved in economic policy making in the design of economic policies are not possible shortly, some implementations reflect the professionals' expectations about the economy's future in the policies. We can list many examples of these implementations. These are Bank Loans Tendency Survey, Market Participants Survey, Financial Services Statistics and Financial Services Confidence Index, Business Tendency Statistics and Real Sector Confidence Index, Consumer Confidence Index, Tendency Survey and Consumer Confidence Index, and Investment Tendency Statistics (Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey 2022).

Citizen-oriented economic policies should be built on a framework that prioritizes the economic situation of citizens and aims at the positive reflections of these policies on citizens. In this respect, it is necessary to measure the satisfaction or dissatisfaction caused by the economic policies in the citizens at specific periods and to develop the policies in light of the data. Through e-government applications (Karkın 2012) rather than trend surveys, citizens' satisfaction can be measured directly. This approach will bring labor interests to the forefront rather than the interests of capitalists who influence the government. Thanks to e-state applications, when the citizens' opinions are taken, the number of capitalists in society will be in the minority compared to the labor force. Thus, there will be a chance for prosperity to spread to the base.

This study aims to provide a framework for implementing citizen-oriented economic policies and the possible effects of these policies on citizens. The scope of the study is limited to the citizen-oriented implementation of economic policies in achieving the main objectives. Therefore, the framework of a citizen-oriented approach has been drawn to achieving economic policy goals. The organization of the study is as follows: Sect. 2 explains the main goals of each economy, the policies, and the policy instruments used to achieve these goals. Section 3 clarifies the goals of economic growth, income distribution, full employment, and price stability, the evaluation of these goals in the post-pandemic period at the global level, and how these goals should be implemented as a citizen-oriented economic policy. Section 4 provides information on the government's role in the economy within the framework of mainstream economic schools. Finally, the last section offers conclusions and evaluations.

## 2 Main Objectives and Instruments of Economic Policies

The policy can be defined as making decisions to achieve the targeted purpose and putting these decisions into practice. On the other hand, public policy is "everything the government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye 1981). In addition, public policy can be defined as the work and actions of an authorized public institution or public official with the authority it receives from the law (Göçoğlu and Aydın 2015). Therefore, the government's inaction on any issue is also considered a policy. Economic policy refers to a process that involves the government making economic decisions and the implementation of these decisions in order to achieve specific economic goals. Economic policies and policy instruments to be used to realize these objectives vary. Therefore, we can divide economic policy into fiscal and monetary policies (Akıncı and Tuncer 2018). Fiscal policies try to achieve the targets by using fiscal instruments such as taxes, budgets, public expenditures, and public borrowing. In general, monetary policy is the implementation of the central bank toward adjusting the amount of money in the economy. A central bank affects the economy by influencing asset prices, exchange rates, and expectations with general instruments such as open market operations, reserve requirements,

rediscount policies, and special instruments such as liquidity, credit ceiling, selective credit control, and persuasion. However, it is impossible to achieve these goals simultaneously by using monetary and fiscal policy because these goals often contradict each other. Therefore, policymakers prioritize some of these goals. Therefore, the policymakers will have to make a policy choice.

The country's internal dynamics should be considered in the policy choice. It is worth saying that the same policies will not apply to every country because the parameters such as natural resources, geographical location, technological opportunities, employment level, and capital stock of each country differ. For instance, if policymakers detect demand-push inflation, they apply the policies reducing aggregate demand, negatively affecting employment. If they prioritize economic growth, the balance of payments or budget deficits may increase. In case of a reduction in interest rates, investments will increase first, but later on, the inflation rate increases as consumers' loan cost decrease. However, despite the increase in inflation, the central bank may decrease the policy interest rates, and investments may not increase despite the lower interest rates. The essence of economic policy is to solve such contradictory goals by implementing rational policies to minimize social costs. The applied economic policies have different impacts on counties because of expectations. For instance, if society expects inflation to decrease, the effect of anti-inflationary economic policies will weaken. On the other hand, higher inflation expectations will lead to increased demand and, therefore, higher price levels. The high inflation caused by the inflation expectations shows that the economic management should direct the expectations.

## *2.1 Economic Growth and Development Goals*

One of the main objectives of economic policies is economic growth (Ghamati and Mehrara 2014: 75). As it is generally accepted, economic growth is the increase in the real gross domestic product of a country in a given period (Howitt and Weil 2010: 1). The value of the final goods and services produced in a given year within the geographical boundaries of a country, in terms of basic year prices, is called "real gross domestic product (RGDP)." The annual increase in RGDP is "economic growth." In addition, economic growth is the right-outward shift of the production possibilities curve, or in other words, the transformation curve, which expresses different factor combinations and the maximum output level (or potential GDP level) at every point (Carbaugh 2016). The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the world since the end of 2019, has put pressure on economies and increased the income inequality gap in countries. In addition, the rapid declines in the national economies due to the pandemic have caused significant decreases in the incomes of individuals.

### 2.1.1 General Outlook of Economic Growth and Development in the World

Figure 1 gives information about the changes in regional growth rates in the last 3 years. Accordingly, in 2019, the pandemic emerged (Zhu et al. 2020: 1), and in 2021, the growth rate was negative in all regions except for low income in 2020. The most regionally slumped places were the European Union, OECD members, and the Arab World. Therefore, the covid-19 pandemic has severely affected developed and oil-rich Arab countries. As a natural consequence of this situation, all economies in the world contracted by an average of 3.3% in 2019. Positive growth in all regions is remarkable in 2020 and 2021, the years when the effect of the pandemic was relatively reduced. In 2020, there was more growth in all regions than in 2019, with the contribution of the base effect.

### 2.1.2 Is Citizen-Oriented Economic Growth and Development Possible?

Economic growth is a "quantitative" value. Ensuring development in an economy is as important as increases in growth rate. The increase in the growth rate will ensure the transformation in economic, social, and institutional structures, which will also

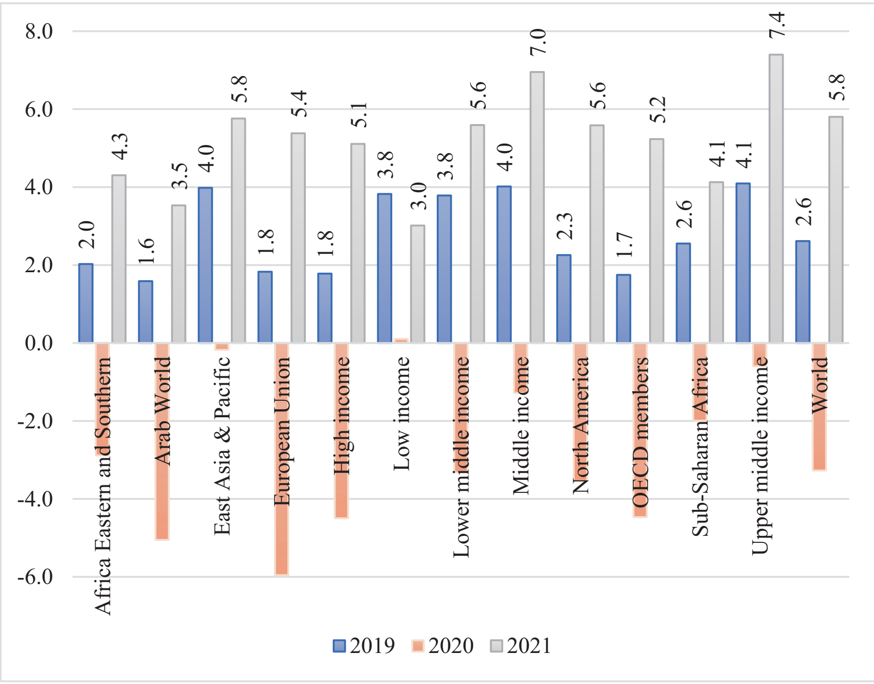


**Fig. 1** Regional economic growth rates (2019–2021). (Source: Generated by the authors using World Development Indicators (WDI) data)

bring economic development. In this respect, growth should be sustainable and employment-increasing. Economic development is a more comprehensive concept than economic growth; it expresses the positive change in social and institutional structures and the increase in the level of welfare. Development encompasses a "qualitative" transformation that includes economic, social, and political developments. This transformation brings with it developments in technology and production processes. Economic growth is an instrument for realizing economic development. The aim is to increase welfare and expand fundamental rights and freedoms (Sen 2000). In recent years, the concept of "sustainable development" has come to the fore, primarily due to environmental sensitivities. This concept has brought the understanding of development to a broader perspective. A paradigm shift has been experienced in the phenomenon of development and growth.

The development concept has evolved from income-oriented approaches that initially centered on production to one that includes non-monetary concepts such as education, health, and freedom. For Amartya Sen, who received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1998 for her work in the field of welfare economics, freedom is a concept that includes not only formal freedoms, such as the right to vote and be elected, but also fundamental freedoms, such as the right to education and health (Kirmanoğlu 2011: 25). In his studies on development, he emphasized the importance of the number of goods and services owned by individuals, whether they are functional or not, and whether there is the freedom to choose between these goods and services. More freedom increases the person's comprehensive freedom and ability to achieve valuable results. Comprehensive freedom increases people's capacity to find solutions to their problems and affect the world (Güneş 2016: 2). Including non-monetary indicators (such as education and health) in explaining the development, expressing rights, opportunities, and freedoms as an integral part of development, and finally, this evolution of thought, which extends to the concept of sustainable development, is presented below Fig. 2:

In this context, the main questions that this chapter tries to answer are whether citizen-oriented sustainable development is possible and what the concept of citizen-oriented sustainable development means. Citizen-oriented sustainable development entails prioritizing the economy from a perspective that centers on citizens, aiming to achieve development while preserving and distributing the generated values without depleting the natural resources that future generations rely upon for their well-being. The concept of citizen-oriented sustainable development is not just related to ensuring justice in the distribution of income. In addition to the fair distribution of the added values created by the country, it is a perspective that does not discriminate among citizens, eliminates regional differences in non-monetary indicators such as education, health, transportation, and housing, and removes obstacles to

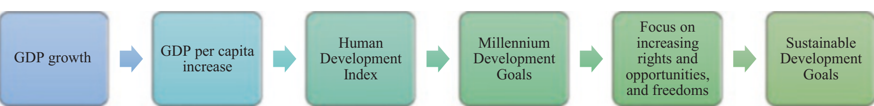


**Fig. 2** Change in development thinking. (Source: Generated from Meier and Stiglitz 2000)

fundamental rights and freedoms. In short, it is a company that sees citizens as its customers and cares about their satisfaction.

The public's view of the citizen as a customer requires that the service offered has alternatives. For example, a person dissatisfied with the education or health services provided by the public sector receives education and health services from the private sector. However, these services are among the semi-public goods and services. There is no alternative in case of dissatisfaction with full public goods and services such as justice or defense service. This situation can be described as the dilemma of citizen-oriented policy design because the person unsatisfied with the service in the private sector has the chance to change the service unit. However, when citizens are not satisfied with public goods and services, they cannot change the unit that provides the service. Although there are mechanisms to report the dissatisfaction arising from the public service, the most critical sanction power is the votes it will use in the elections.

However, considering that the elections are held every 4–5 years on average, the results of this dissatisfaction take a long time. There are some mechanisms to overcome these adverse situations. For example, the Institution of Ombudsman, established to eliminate the injustice experienced in public services in Turkey, is a good example. On the other hand, the limited sanction power of this institution (Zengin 2022), which has supervisory authority, can be considered an important limitation of citizen-oriented service. A second example is the mediation mechanism created to ensure that the justice services resolve quickly and effectively that satisfies the parties.

## *2.2 Fair Income Distribution Goal*

One of the goals that every economy tries to achieve is the improvement of income distribution. Income distribution is the distribution of income obtained in a country in a certain period among individuals or factors of production (Bükey and Çetin 2017:104). The problem of injustice in income distribution is one of the most critical issues on the agenda of policymakers in the historical process. Although its scope and content are not the same, this problem is a "distribution" problem, and it is one of the common problems of all countries, whether developed or developing. Economists have been seeking a solution to this problem for a long time.

### 2.2.1 General Outlook of Income Distribution in the World

Figure 3 provides remarkable information in terms of seeing the situation of inequality in income distribution in the world. As seen in Fig. 3, the wealthiest 1% of the world's population received 17.4% of the total income in 2021. In terms of regional ratios, the average of the highest 66 countries in terms of human development index and the average of the lowest 32 countries are surprisingly the same and is 15.8%.

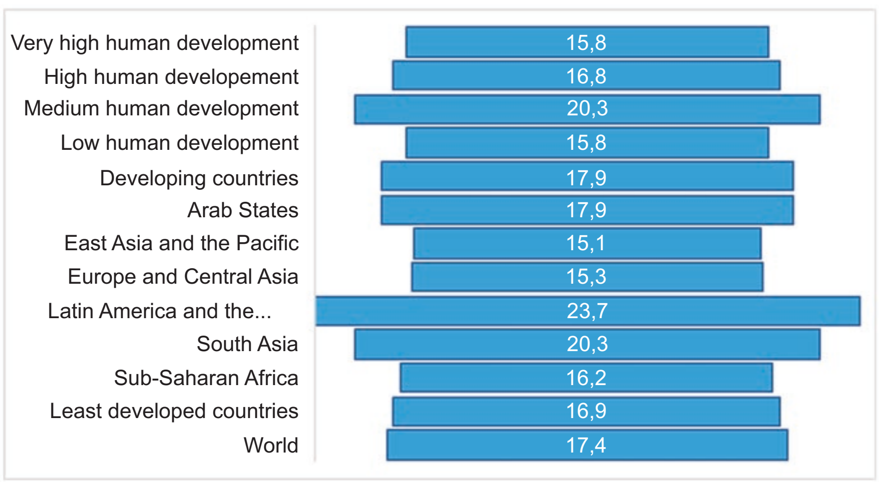


**Fig. 3** Income shares of the regionally richest 1% of the population. (Source: Generated by authors using WDI data)

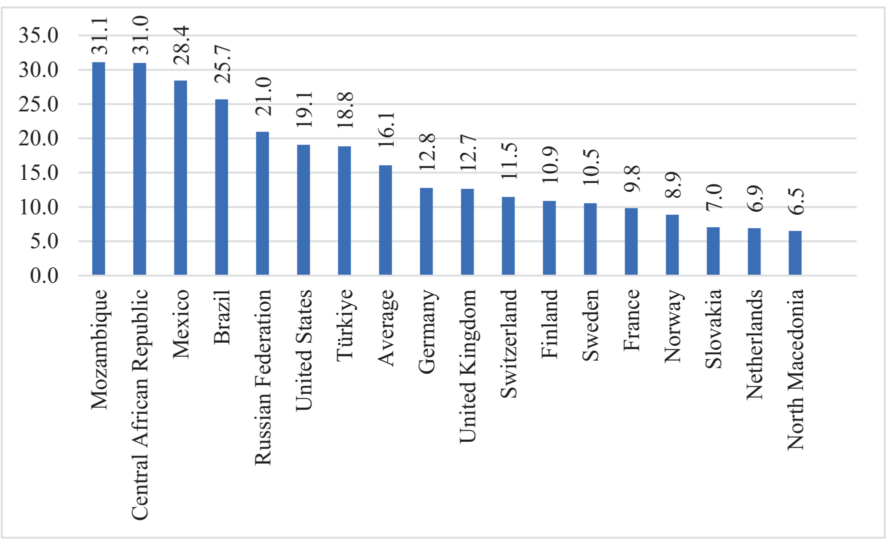


**Fig. 4** Share of income of nationally richest 1% population. (Source: Generated by authors from WDI (2022))

The most unjust income distribution region is Latin America and the Caribbean, with 23.7%. The fairest income distribution by region is East Asia and Pacific, with approximately 15%. Europe and Central Asia come second.

Figure 4 indicates the income share of the wealthiest 1% population of related countries. The countries with over 30% are Mozambique (31.1%) and the Central

African Republic (31.0%). According to Fig. 4, there are three countries with 7% and below. These are North Macedonia with 6.5%, Netherlands with 6.9% and Slovakia with 7.0%. In addition, this rate in Turkey is 18.8%, which is quite close to the world average.

### 2.2.2 Is Citizen-Oriented Income Distribution Possible?

Sharing the total income obtained in a country among the individuals forming the society is vital. The improvement in income distribution brings positive developments in other variables in the economy. The income spread to the base causes economic units to save more, increasing investments. In this way, the fair distribution of income positively affects production and employment. In addition, fair income distribution positively affects money and capital markets. Ensuring the fairness of income distribution affects not only economic indicators but also social indicators positively. Social problems are experienced in countries where income distribution is significantly unequal and the gap between the poor and the rich is high. In these countries, the feeling of injustice in individuals, the restlessness of the society, the tendency of crime, social turmoil, political instability, corruption, and bribery are experienced quite intensely. One of the most basic conditions for individuals to live in social peace and welfare is justice in income distribution. Increasing the production volume of the economy and, thus, the income level is not sufficient on its own. However, it is essential to ensure justice in income distribution, reduce poverty, and increase the welfare level of the vulnerable.

The primary condition for countries to eliminate the problem of income inequality and for a citizen-oriented perspective in distribution to dominate economic management is a radical transformation in economic and social structures. Because this is a distribution problem, and it requires the transfer of resources between classes to overcome it. In the current system, these problems cannot be eliminated. However, it seems possible to improve them because understanding income distribution that puts the citizen in the center requires an approach that ensures labor receives the shares it deserves from the production process. Non-citizen-oriented income distribution is closely related to unequal distribution of resources, lack of control over production resources, and limited participation in political and economic decision-making processes. Citizen-oriented income distribution is possible primarily through the redistribution of wealth in the ownership of specific classes and, secondly, through a more balanced distribution of income that increases with economic growth. It is impossible to increase the welfare of the vulnerable without considering the inequality of income distribution in the increase of national income. The point to be considered in the citizen-oriented income distribution is that all citizens benefit more equitably from the advantages of growth. This approach can be achieved with the quality of economic growth. What is meant by the quality of economic growth here is economic growth that is provided depending on the increase in fixed capital investments, especially in machinery and equipment investments.

In the report titled “Inequality Kills,” published by the UK-based Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM Report 2022), one of the issues that it especially underlined is that although the wealth of the richest people is growing, unfortunately, this wealth is not felt in underdeveloped countries. The wealth of the ten richest people has nearly doubled, while the remaining 99%’s income has deteriorated due to COVID-19. The income of the ten richest people in the world is more than that of the 3.1 billion people with the lowest income. According to this report, accumulating wealth in specific segments is a big problem. There are some striking points in this report that if the ten richest dollar billionaires sat down with their dollar bills on top of each other, they could reach almost halfway through the month.

The report published by the same organization in 2016 stated that the policies proposed by the Washington Consensus lay the groundwork for the injustice in income distribution. This report described the concentration of income and wealth in certain hands and the rupture of the link between growth and productivity-added value as one of the most critical problems in the world. The report emphasizes that the sharp change in the share of labor and capital incomes in total income in favor of capital increases the inequity in labor income, especially the payments made to senior managers. Tax havens, multinational companies transferring their earnings from the country of production to other places, monopolization, and intellectual property rights are among the other reasons that increase the income inequality gap on a global scale (Oxfam Report 2016). This report also offers solutions to remedy this injustice with global agreements and national policies. Some of these proposals are as follows: paying workers a minimum standard of living, promoting women’s rights and economic equality for women, controlling the power of the economically powerful elite, encouraging research and development (R&D) investments, eliminating barriers to drug access, more equitable regulation of tax bands and more effective and intensive use of public expenditures to eliminate inequality (Oğuz 2017), etc.

The main problem in most developing countries is not a “deprivation” in terms of natural resources but an underdeveloped human quality. Therefore, the most crucial problem of these nations is the development of “human resources.” In this context, each country should create a strategy and implement it according to its characteristics to increase the quality of its education and human resources (Kılıcıkan 2001). A perspective that puts the solution to the problems of poverty and inequality in the preliminary plan should include economic programs, policies, and targets for the improvement of the situation of the poor as a priority. It is necessary to prevent the further enrichment of a specific segment, to prioritize the public interest, and to ensure that large masses that realize a large part of production receive a larger share of the income. The solution to these problems is too vital to be left to the mercy of global organizations. A human-oriented economic and social structure that puts its people in the center and cares about public benefit will solve many problems, not just poverty and inequality.

## *2.3 The Goal of Reaching Full Employment*

The goal of achieving full employment, which we can specify as the third goal in economic policies, can be evaluated with two approaches, narrowly and broadly. The concept of full employment broadly, which can be defined as the inclusion of all factors of production, such as labor, capital, natural resources, and entrepreneurs, is one of the main goals every country tries to achieve. Only the full inclusion of labor in the production process is full employment narrowly. Therefore, the phenomenon of unemployment, which can be described as underemployment in the narrow sense, is an economic and social problem that needs to be tackled. Because unemployed people cannot earn any income, they are deprived of meeting even the basic needs of themselves and their families. This sense of deprivation can cause social problems.

### 2.3.1 General Outlook of Employment by Sector in the World

Figure 5 presents the shares of the agricultural sector in total employment regionally. The regions with the highest agricultural employment, which cover more than half of the total employment, are East and South Africa, Low-income countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Regions with a share of the agricultural sector in total employment below 5% are North America, High income countries, European Union, and OECD members. However, it should not be forgotten that the added value obtained by the 5% working in the agricultural sector in these countries may be many times higher than the added value obtained by the 50% working in the agriculture sector in the underdeveloped regions. Figure 5, in fact, visually reveals the most typical feature of underdeveloped countries, the concentration of employment in the agricultural sector. In all countries, an average of 27% of total employment is employed in the agricultural sector. East Asian and Pacific countries are very close to the world average.

Figure 6 shows the total employment in the industrial sector. The regions with the highest agricultural employment, which could not catch up with the industrial revolution, draw attention as the regions with the lowest industrial employment. Approximately 25% of total employment in developed countries is employed in the industry. If we look at the world average, this rate has been 23% in the last 3 years.

Figure 7 illustrates the total employment in the service sector. The typical feature of developed countries is that most employment is in the service sector. This situation is clearly shown in Fig. 7 for these countries. The employment rate in the service sector of the countries at the top of the world development scale is over 70%. In underdeveloped regions, this rate is around 30%. The world average has been 50% in the last 3 years.

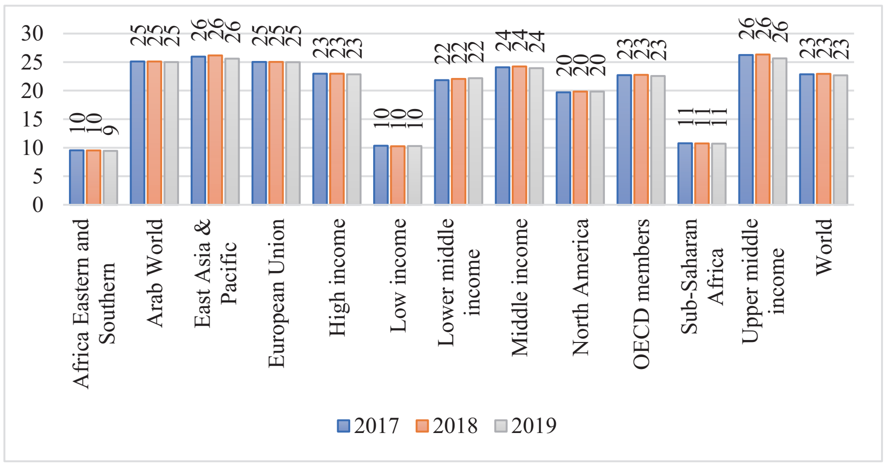


**Fig. 5** Percentage of total employment in agriculture. (Source: Generated by authors using WDI data)

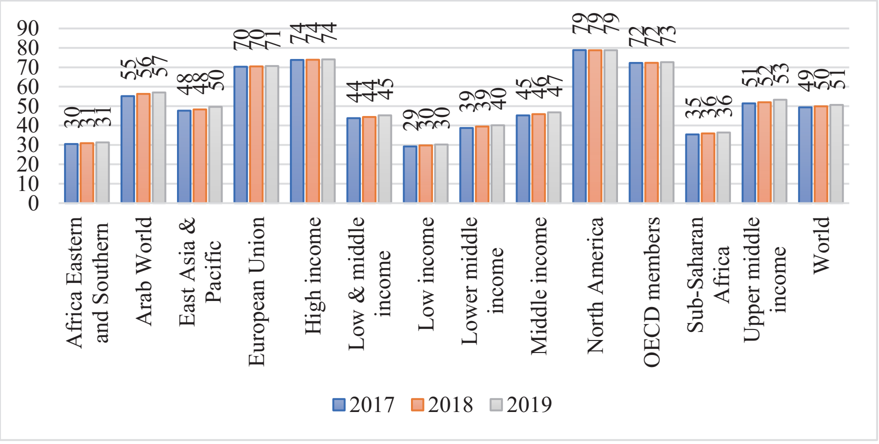


**Fig. 6** Percentage of total employment in industries. (Source: Generated by authors using WDI data)

### 2.3.2 Is Citizen-Oriented Full Employment Possible?

In today's globalization world, where technology is developing rapidly, customs barriers are eliminated, and changes in consumption patterns cause the perception of the need to be dragged to different dimensions. On the other hand, millions of people die yearly due to hunger and poverty and the diseases they cause. Plans, programs, and targets are created to solve these problems nationally and internationally. In countries where democracy and participation are settled with all

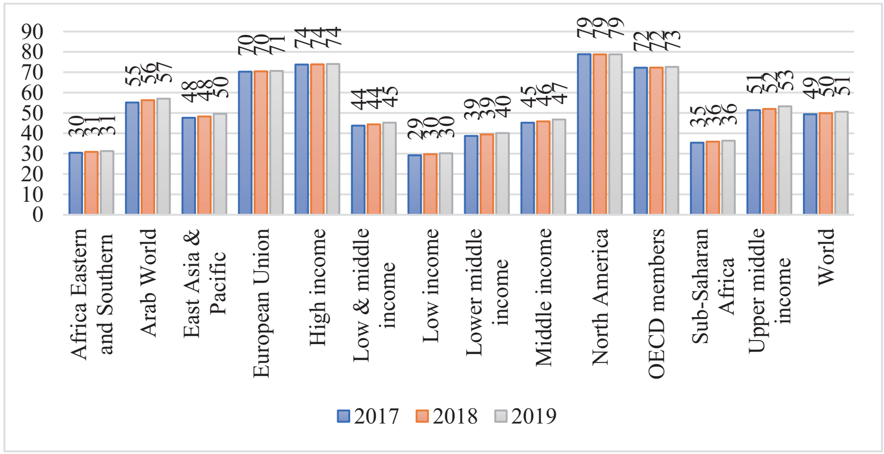


**Fig. 7** Percentage of total employment in services sectors. (Source: Generated by authors using WDI data)

its institutions and rules, it is possible to solve all economic and social problems for the benefit of the country and large segments.

As a result of more mechanization of production after industrialization and the shift of existing products to developing countries where workers' wages are cheap, the need for expertise that requires knowledge, skills, and training has increased. On the other hand, nonqualified workforces have faced a persistent unemployment problem. This segment of society, which is constantly faced with the problem of unemployment, has been exposed to economic, social, and political exclusion and has created the new poor (Karabulut 2008: 19–20).

With globalization, since there is essential convenience in the free movement of goods, services, and capital between countries, the mobility of the skilled workforce is also increasing. Due to the dissatisfaction with public services, the well-trained workforce is shifting from developing to developed countries where there is high public service quality. Although this is a very profitable gain for developed countries, it is a massive loss for developing countries. The citizen-oriented development approach will contribute to the country's development by staying a trained workforce, which is very valuable, especially in developing countries.

Citizen-oriented employment policies should be of a nature that enables the unemployed to reach vacant jobs more easily and quickly. In order to increase the welfare level of the poor, also called the vulnerable, and to eliminate the inequality in income distribution, it should be ensured that the employability of individuals living in poor households should be increased by applying them to practical training programs rather than social assistance. Thus, making arrangements to ensure compliance of the unemployed with vacant jobs will reduce the unemployment rate.

## 2.4 Price Stability Goal

Another aim of economic policy is to ensure price stability. Stable prices mean maintaining a low and stable inflation rate in an economy. In this context, an inflation rate of 2% or 3% (Okun 1971; Samuelson and Solow 1960) is desired. Ensuring price stability in an economy positively affects many macroeconomic variables, such as economic growth, employment, foreign trade, and exchange rates. The policies implemented by economic policymakers to ensure price stability have significant effects on citizens. Expansionary monetary and fiscal policies applied, especially in countries with high inflation rates, have adverse effects on economic units. Therefore, policymakers should stay away from policies that create high inflation. Thus, citizens will be protected from price increases, and the impact of anti-inflationary policies on citizens will be eliminated to reduce high inflation.

In the literature, *inflation* is defined as continuous and perceptible increases in the general level of prices. It also refers to a decrease in the purchasing power of money (Al-Afeef et al. 2022). There are also definitions as the total demand exceeding the total supply, in other words, production and consumption imbalance. Inflation, one of the significant indicators of an unstable economy, is one of the main factors that cause injustice in income distribution and is one of the critical factors that cause labor incomes to deteriorate against capital incomes (Bulir and Gulde 1995). People who cannot maintain their income due to price increases, that is, those in the low-income group and those with fixed income, will suffer more income losses due to inflation. As with inflation, deflation is a serious economic problem for the economy. Even if the decrease in prices seems profitable for the consumer, the producer's giving up on producing a product whose price constantly falls will affect the consumer negatively and, ultimately, the economy.

### 2.4.1 General Outlook of Inflation in the World

Figure 8 describes the annual percentage changes in consumer prices regionally. The most impressive finding in the chart is the increase in inflation in all regions, without exception, in 2021. This situation is due to the rapidly falling oil prices due to the covid 19 pandemic, increasing very quickly again in the next period and increasing the input costs of the countries. The regions with the highest inflation rates are Eastern and Southern Africa, and the low-income countries.

### 2.4.2 Citizen-Oriented Price Stability Goal

The definition "inflation is the cruelest of all tax" (Easterly and Fischer 2001) expresses that the adverse effects of increases in inflation rates are more dominant on the poor than the wealthy class. Although these two separate classes have the same conditions regarding access to financial instruments in terms of protection

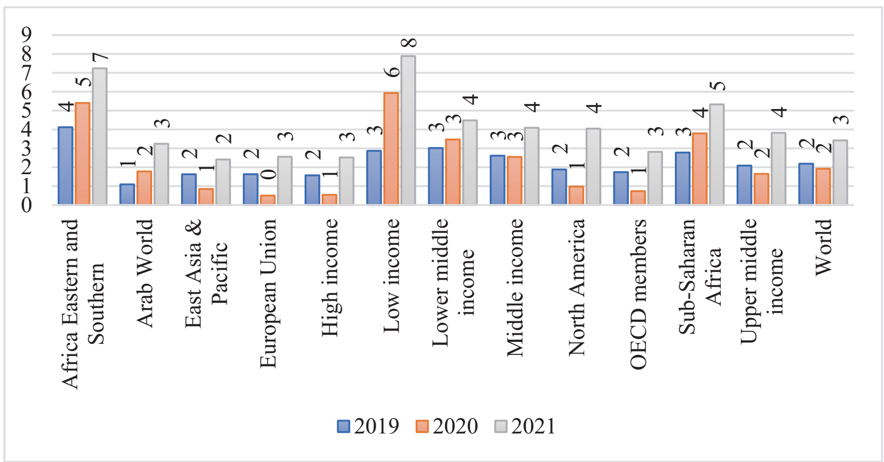


**Fig. 8** Inflation, Consumer Prices Annual Inflation Percent Change. (Source: Created by the authors using WDI (2022) data))

opportunities, they do not have the same opportunities to be protected against inflation. The relatively narrow portfolio structure of the poor class causes liquidity to take up more space in the security portfolio. In addition, the poorer class is more dependent on income, which is determined by the public sector and not fully indexed to inflation, compared to the rich. When public subsidies or direct transfers, in which inflationary pressures are not fully reflected, are added to these unfavorable effects, increasing inflation will inevitably reduce the current income level of the poor significantly (Easterly and Fischer 2001: 160). In light of these adverse effects increasing inflation on poverty will generally emerge through two mechanisms. The first is the decreasing effect of rising inflation rates on disposable income. On the other hand, the second mechanism is based on the fact that the income level will decrease as nominal wages increase at lower rates compared to the prices of goods consumed by the labor force (Cardoso 1992: 3).

Despite the view that increases in inflation rates trigger poverty due to their distorting effects on income distribution, opinions also emphasize that positive interactions may occur between these variables. In line with these considerations, opinions have emerged that inflationary pressures have minimal effects on poverty and may even contribute to eliminating poverty. The basic economic logic in this context is attributed to the increase in labor demand due to the decreases in real wages, especially in the short term, by the producers, who gain a temporary power in the free-market system depending on the general level of prices that increase in inflationary periods (Powers 1995: 4). Increasing labor demand, on the one hand, directs the economy toward full employment by activating idle resources. On the other hand, income level increases depending on the expanding production volume. The rising income level, on the other hand, contributes to the emergence of trends toward poverty reduction if the distribution policies are relatively fair.

## 3 Views of Mainstream Economics Schools on the Government's Role in the Economy and Behaviors of Individuals

Since the eighteenth century, when Adam Smith, who systematized economics and gained a scientific identity, published his work "The Wealth of Nations," economic schools have had different perspectives on economic policies and public service provision. The "classical school," Keynes's words, prevailed worldwide until the 1929 economic depression. However, the inability to find a solution to the great depression has made the classical economy debatable. Because according to the classical school, full employment is general, and underemployment is an exception. Classical economists argued that deviations from full employment would come into balance spontaneously by an invisible hand without the need for government intervention in the economy. Therefore, the government does not implement active economic policies. However, the government will be responsible for producing full public goods and services not produced in the market because it is not profitable for the private sector (Smith 1776). The characteristics of full public goods and services are as follows. It cannot be divided, priced, marketed, or deprived of consumption (Bockstael and McConnell 1993). These goods and services are produced for common consumption. There is no competition in consumption, and it has significant externalities (Baird 2004). Taxes finance these goods and services. Therefore, we can say that for the classical school, the government has a very narrow position as the guardian of order in the economy.

Classical and neo-classical schools characterize the individual as a "rational individual" and define them as an economic unit that maximizes its welfare. While analyzing consumer behavior with the concept of the rational individual, the classical school accepts that the individual is free from many emotions. Therefore, neo-classical schools especially adopted mathematical methods and ignored individual social behaviors. According to the classics, who argue that individuals will maximize their interests and therefore maximize the interests of society, the state's intervention in the economy is unnecessary.

The fact that the fundamental principles of classical economics could not solve the 1929 world economic crisis made liberal thought controversial. John Maynard Keynes started a new economic trend with his work, briefly known as "The General Theory," published in 1936. According to Keynes, the effort to reach individual benefit in an environment of uncertainty will not guarantee social benefit (Kaya and Özgür 2016: 52). This deficiency forms the theoretical basis of the idea that the state should act consciously and direct the market (Erimez 2019: 17).

Contrary to the classical school, the Keynesian theory has caused a paradigm shift in economic policies due to the government's active role in the markets and especially after the Second World War, which played a role in eliminating the harmful effects of the war. The governments actively intervened in the economy with fiscal and monetary policies (fiscal policy is more effective than monetary policy due to the liquidity trap), bringing the government from a passive position to

an active position (Keynes 1936). With this new viewpoint, the functions undertaken by the government, the expectations of the citizens from the government, and their perspectives on the government have led to radical changes. Along with the views of the social state, governments have undertaken many duties they have not undertaken before. Thus, the quantity and quality of public goods and services the government offers (Krstić et al. 2015) have increased. However, considering the dimensions reached by these services, there have been discussions about the sustainability of these services. The views that it was the cause of the stagflation crisis in the 1970s began to dominate (Skidelsky 1996).

Neoliberalism, which can be positioned against the social state understanding, can be described as modifying classical liberal thought and presenting it to the public again. In this context, it can be said that the efforts to reduce the place of the government in the economy were influential in the loss of influence of the social state understanding in the late 1970s, with the new right-wing governments adopting neoliberalism starting to dominate. Ronald Reagan in the USA, Margaret Thatcher in the UK, and Turgut Özal in Turkey can be given as examples of politicians who, especially in the 1980s, reduced public expenditures with a supply-side perspective and limited government intervention in the economy and brought the private sector to an influential position (Ökmen et al. 2004).

Structural Adjustment Policies, Washington Consensus, and Post-Washington Consensus are examples of practices that institutionalized neoliberalism as the primary source of the transformation in the design and implementation of economic policies and, as a result, in public service delivery in these years (Uysal 2013: 31).

The stagflation crisis, which refers to the economic conjuncture in which stagnation and inflation co-occur, emerged in the 1970s in developed countries and can be said to be the main reason for structural adjustment policies. The contractionary economic policies implemented by developed countries to get out of the crisis negatively impacted developing countries' foreign trade volumes. In addition, the rise in interest rates around the world has also increased the external debt burden of these countries. In addition to the increasing debt burdens and fragile economic policies of developing countries, the pressure by international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank on these countries made the transition to structural adjustment policies inevitable in the 1980s (Özşuca 2003). The aim sought to be achieved in structural adjustment programs is realizing neoliberal thinking.

Until the 1970s, the government had an active role in development efforts in most developing countries, mainly making development plans, encouraging domestic production by establishing factories, and dragging and dominating the markets. However, the oil shocks and debt crisis that emerged in the 1970s (Malliaris and Malliaris 2020) led to the questioning of import substitution (Cardoso and Helwege 2018) policies. Organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank have imposed practices such as liberalization, economic stability, deregulation, and privatization as standard policy packages under "structural adjustment policies" (Csaba 2019).

The "Washington Consensus," which symbolizes neoliberalism, is one step ahead of structural adjustment policies and was used for the first time in J. Williamson's 1989 book "What Washington Means by Policy Reform."

It has been named the "Washington Consensus" because institutions such as the US Treasury, IMF, and World Bank are headquartered in Washington and express the standard policies implemented by these institutions (Ocampo 2004). The ten items expressed by Williamson are as follows (Williamson 1990): fiscal deficits, public expenditures, tax reform, interest rate liberalization, competitive exchange rate, trade liberalization, foreign direct capital flows (investments), privatization, deregulation, and protection of property rights (Ateş 2004: 27).

On the other hand, the Post-Washington Consensus added civil society, capacity building, governance, transparency, a new international economic structure, institution building, and safety nets in addition to these ten items (Booth et al. 2000: 16). In other words, while the Washington Consensus is an effort to create a new economic norm, The Post-Washington Consensus is an effort to establish a new socio-political norm (Phillips and Higgott 1999). As a consequence, most neoliberalism practices are market-oriented rather than citizen-oriented.

According to conventional economic theories, people are rational. People prioritize their interests and are selfish economic units that try to get the maximum benefit in every situation (Ruben and Dumludağ 2015). Complete rationality in conventional economic theory asserts that people can choose the best among all alternative decisions. However, in real life, people make decisions according to their cognitive, social, and emotional states. Therefore, individuals are open to mistakes and do not always exhibit selfish behavior while acting with emotions (Aktan and Yavuzaslan 2020). In terms of our study, it is clear that in the design of citizen-oriented economic policies, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that individuals are not entirely rational and are economic units in need of guidance. As a result, economic policies should aim to increase the welfare level of citizens in the final analysis. With the increase in welfare, production and employment will occur in the economy, increasing the effectiveness of the economic policy instruments. It is beneficial to make the correct cost and benefit analyses of economic policies and implement them accordingly. If the cost of a policy is more than its benefit, it will be inevitable for citizens to be adversely affected by the policies implemented. In this context, establishing economic theory and econometric models will give an idea to the policymakers about the possible consequences of the policies implemented.

## 4 Conclusion

This study is a general framework for how economic policies can be handled or transformed to increase citizens' welfare levels. For this purpose, economic policy instruments should be used in a way that will positively contribute to the welfare of citizens. The short- and long-run effects of the costs of policy instruments on citizens must be considered. An implemented policy's short-run positive effect can

turn into significant negative consequences for citizens in the long run. In this respect, it must be taken into account that economic policies may also adversely impact future generations.

The positive effects of economic policies on citizens depend on the analysis and implementation of these policies. For this, policymakers can benefit from economic theory. Economic theory provides policymakers with preliminary information about the possible consequences of implemented policies. Policymakers can resort to econometric forecasts in evaluating the possible consequences of economic policies. Recent developments in the estimation methods of econometric models (Smyth and Narayan 2015: 351) have been a factor that strengthens the hand of policymakers. Using economic theory and econometric methods will cause citizens to benefit more from the applied economic policies. Otherwise, the success of groping economic policies will only be coincidental.

At this point, the support of the citizens for the economic policies implemented will increase the success expected from the policy. It should be noted that the support of the citizens for economic policies is related to the credibility of the policymakers. Policy implementations that do not have time inconsistency in previous periods and fulfill the commitments are likely to receive the support of citizens. In an economic environment where the credibility of policymakers is not sufficient and economic targets are not met, it will be challenging to get the support of citizens. In this context, policymakers should avoid falling into time inconsistency while implementing economic policies and pay attention to transparency and accountability. In light of the evaluations made here, it is also possible to estimate the specific effect of the economic policies applied in future studies on the citizens with the help of econometric models. In addition, the other objectives besides the primary economic policy objectives mentioned in this study can be the subject of analysis in later studies.

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# Citizen-Centered Public Security in Turkey: Policy and Practice

**Ahmet Barbak**

**Abstract** Citizen orientation in public security has come to the fore since the 1990s upon rising crime rates and fear of crime. As a result, focus on the root causes of crime and targeted initiatives to restore public trust have guided citizen-centered public security. Gained momentum with the EU accession negotiations in the 2000s, citizen-oriented policies and practices have also been integrated into Turkey's public security management. Citizen orientation can be seen through participative, community-oriented, and oversight undertakings. In this context, this chapter investigates Turkey's public security policy to explore how citizen orientation has been implemented. The study suggests that committee-type bodies and e-government applications have been vastly utilized to improve citizen participation. In contrast, community-oriented initiatives, alongside nationwide community policing, have focused on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, relying on awareness raising and information. Civilian oversight of public security has made remarkable progress by upgrading an integrated state-wide accountability system. Yet it needs more autonomy, national recognition, and ownership for more effective functioning. For long-term gains, more behavioral interventions must support restructuring and project-based efforts. To conclude, citizen-centered public security in Turkey has been underway and will likely produce more favoring outcomes in the next decade.

**Keywords** Public security · Turkey · Participation · Community orientation · Oversight · Security management · E-government · Outcomes · Community policing · Citizen participation

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## 1 Introduction

Public security pursues to protect people, public or private entities, and their properties from dangers, disasters, or threats to maintain public order (Soares 2007; The Police Foundation 2020; Gierszewski and Pieczywok 2021). Citizen orientation has gradually prevailed in public security since the 1990s when crime rates and fear of crime have risen due to deepening poverty and inequalities, terrorism and organized crime, cyber threats, and extremism (Rodgers 2013; Council of the European Union 2014; Payam 2018). Public security policies began to embrace proactive methods that shed light on the root causes of crime, mainly unfavorable socioeconomic conditions. The basic assumption here is that appealing to the knowledge and cooperation of citizens is the most convenient strategy to tackle crime and safeguard public trust. Thus, the conventional – centralized, state-centric, and militaristic – security mindset has been modified with localized, human-centric, and civilian perspectives (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2009; Muggah 2017; Flom 2018; Emerson 2020).

This localized, human-centric, and civilianized approach has spread across countries through bilateral relations and increased citizen demands for more effective and accountable public security. Significantly, the reactive security measures ignoring individuals' socio-economic conditions and growing distance between citizens and professional public security personnel coincided with rising public distrust. Today, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Agenda – specifically the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions – constitutes the global policy framework for citizen-centered security provision (United Nations 2015). Accordingly, countries launched reform programs or made legal adjustments for citizen-centered public security considering their peculiar conditions. Turkey, a country with around 85 million people and a 76.5% urbanization rate as of 2021 (Worldometer 2022; World Bank Data 2022), also intensified its efforts toward citizen-centered public security in the 2000s, implementing multifaceted reforms focused on crime prevention, community policing, and civilian oversight. Hitherto, consecutive governments have made fundamental changes in structures and functions of public security management.

In this context, this chapter portrays citizen orientation in Turkey's public security policy and practice at the national level. In doing so, the chapter first draws conceptual and policy frameworks of citizen-centered public security. Then it investigates public security policy to depict how citizen orientation has been built and operationalized. The study reveals distinctive features and trajectories of the citizen-centered public security approach in Turkey. Taking stock of what has already been done concerning the main pillars of citizen-centered security, namely the *participation*, *community-orientation*, and *civilian oversight*, it provides a case study for comparative public security policy research. The chapter concludes with recommendations to policy makers for the further improvement of citizen-centered public security.

## 2 Citizen-Centered Public Security: Conception and Policy Framework

Citizen orientation has evolved as a response to emerging security challenges in an era of globalization, digitalization, and Anthropocene. In this period, citizens' recourse to legal conflict resolution mechanisms, cooperation with public security units, and reporting crimes decreased, while non-compliance with laws was exacerbated. Impunities of public security staff, especially in cases of excessive use of force, have paved the way for human rights abuses. Citizen distrust in public security institutions has accompanied rising crime rates; as a result, law enforcement capacity has declined (Arriagada and Godoy 2000; Bergman 2006; Muggah and Aguirre 2013; Olson and Martin 2017; Trebilcock and Luneke 2019; Emerson 2020). Today, advocates of citizen-centered public security assume that only through active citizen participation could crime be prevented effectively, public safety improved, and public trust restored. Within a *rights-based democratic framework*, citizens are now expected to participate in public security provision while the State assumes a facilitator role (Marquardt 2012; Flom 2018; Quintero 2020; Cuesta and Alda 2021). It can be argued that citizen orientation approaches security and freedom as interdependent rather than in competition.

Citizen-centered public security is an offspring of *human security* which advocates the protection and empowerment of citizens and seeks to develop people-centric, comprehensive, context-specific, and preventive solutions. It envisions a security environment conducive to human development and employs an *evidence-based policy framework*. Distinct from conventional approaches, it tackles the root causes of crime, seeing it as a social phenomenon (UNDP 1994, 2013; Soares et al. 2013; Council of the European Union 2014; Gennari et al. 2015; UNTFHS 2016; Williams 2016; Olson and Martin 2017; Bartol and Bartol 2017; OSCE 2019). In this context, public security threats, such as organized crime, homicides, or violent conflicts, are handled concerning developmental issues such as poverty, corruption, education, employment, and urban planning. Thereby, citizen-centered public security promotes social programs tailored according to target groups or purposes, namely the women, children, disabled, youth, or elderly (Stern and Öjendal 2010; Amer et al. 2013; Muggah 2017; Chinchilla and Vorndran 2018). These programs are implemented at multiple levels of government in cooperation with civil society and business. In doing so, *decentralization* is often applied as an essential strategy to alleviate or eliminate crime risk. For instance, participatory local security committees are created, and crime prevention plans are drafted with sub-national partners (Ramacciotti 2005; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2009; Flom 2018; Nanes 2020).

Citizen orientation has diffused across countries as a principle, strategy, and practice of public security, which is integral to national security policy. Besides domestic pressures, international policy transfer has also played a significant role in its spread. Though distinctions may appear due to varied national political and administrative traditions, the governments seem to be more willing to develop

citizen-centered public security policies. Centralized states tend to allocate more resources for analyzing crime data and informing citizens, while others, in addition to these, resort more to citizen consultations, community partnerships, and civilian oversight. In the last analysis, citizen orientation encourages proximity to the society at large, endeavors to repair misconceptions, and enhances sustainable dialogue between the State and its citizens.

## 3 Citizen-Centered Public Security in Turkey: Participation, Community Orientation, and Oversight

Turkey has a relatively centralized public security management system which, at the national level, falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The MoI is responsible for governing the national police (urban areas), gendarmerie (rural areas), coast guard, and emergency management in conformity with national security policies. The governors, as agents of the central government, supervise public security units in provinces. As stipulated in their respective laws, local governments have special law enforcement and emergency management units, such as municipal police, fire department, and village guards. They collaborate at national and provincial levels, particularly for emergency management. Public security management has undergone reforms, while pertinent goals and targets have been involved in policy documents. One of them has been to raise the number of public security personnel to facilitate service provision. For instance, the General Directorate of Public Safety jurisdiction, which covers urban areas, has steadily increased the number of its personnel in the last decade. The number of police officers has increased from 238,247 in 2012 up to 286,883 as of 2021. Likewise, the number of Market and Neighborhood Watchman (MNW) employed for foot patrolling tasks as part of community policing became 29,626 as of 2021, while it was 3981 in 2012 (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü 2022a).

While capacity building – strengthening skills, abilities, and equipment – has prevailed in Turkey's public security policy, citizen orientation can also be observed (Strateji ve Bütçe Başkanlığı 2022). In the 1980s, dialogue with citizens, assistance to public security units, and the incorporation of social and psychological aspects into law enforcement training programs were declared crucial for effective policing. In the 1990s, deterrence and prevention were chosen as the main principles, and citizens' trust in the State was linked to the performance of public security institutions in their counter-terrorism tasks. In the early 2000s, with the prospects of EU membership, technology-intensive restructuring and democratic transformation became the top priorities of public security policy. Cooperation with educational institutions, public awareness-raising against drug addiction and juvenile delinquency, and dialogue with citizens found a place in policy discourse. Citizen satisfaction and participation, accountability, transparency, and freedom-security balance were identified as prime criteria.

In the last decade, public security strategies have highlighted public trust and peace, compliance with universal human rights, and effective coordination in public security services (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2009, 2014, 2018). Policy goals and priorities have focused on public trust and community support, crime prevention, civil society cooperation, and supplementary human rights training. Recently, the MoI has invested in civilian oversight, adequate information for the public, policy coordination, and software-based security management systems. Looking at these, it can be argued that citizen orientation has been embraced as a core principle of public security in Turkey. Yet this needs to be elaborated with policy implementation. To this end, considering the above-mentioned conceptual and policy framework, salient practices are discussed below in three dimensions: *participation*, *community orientation*, and *oversight*.

### *3.1 Participation: Improving Inclusiveness and Accessibility*

Participation can be effectively actualized through better inclusiveness and accessibility. It requires establishing such mechanisms and processes at national and local levels. In this context, participatory initiatives in Turkey's public security system have appeared since the late 1990s. One of the early practices is the *Honorary Traffic Inspectors* (*HTIs*), who are assigned among eligible by the governorates upon the proposal of the provincial directorates of public safety and the approval of the MoI in order to assist the police and gendarmerie traffic units (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022a). Assigned among voluntary citizens, HTIs are trained to report traffic violations. They can submit suggestions about traffic safety via HTIs e-application. Yet they are not authorized to stop the vehicle, interact with drivers, check documents, take photos, or shoot videos (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022b; Trafik Başkanlığı 2022; Polis Dergisi 2022).

Arguably the most representative practice of participation, *Community* (*neighborhood*) *Policing* has also been activated as a nationwide practice since the early 2000s. It helps citizens communicate their demands, views, and suggestions to the neighborhood police officers[1] in person or via an e-government application (Asayiş Daire Başkanlığı 2022). As part of community policing, the MoI has identified two types of local participatory mechanisms: Citizen Participation Programs (CPPs) and Responsibility Area Peace Meetings (RAPMs) (Civilian Oversight 2022). Voluntarily, CPPs are jointly designed and/or implemented social events or projects in order to inform and raise citizens' awareness about preventive security measures. RAPMs are organized at least twice a year by provincial directorates of public safety with the participation of police units, central and local government representatives, public and private educational and healthcare institutions, residents, private

[1] They are specifically trained in human rights, public relations, effective communication techniques, community psychology, body language, and crime analysis.

security, accommodation places, civil society and professional organizations, vulnerable groups, and willing family members.

Another participatory initiative, the 112 Emergency Call System, has evolved within *National Emergency Management*, merging different service numbers of firefighters, healthcare, emergency management, and law enforcement under a single hotline number (Acil Çağrı Merkezi 2022a).[2] It aims to alleviate citizens' access to public security authorities, coordination and cooperation among public security units, and emergency response times. As of 2021, 112 call centers had been established across all of Turkey's provinces, formed with police, gendarmerie, coast guard, firefighters, healthcare, customs, nature conservation, and emergency management under the supervision of the governorates. The *Disaster and Emergency e-application*, which can receive the location and status information of the victims, has also been integrated into 112 Emergency Call Management. Citizens can also actively take part in emergency response activities on a voluntary basis following related training (AFAD 2022).

Besides, an effective *fight against drug dealing and use* has found a place among current priorities of public security. The latest research on drug addicts in Turkey found that 89.8% of their mothers are housewives, and their houses take the lead in providing a place for drug use with 45.7%. The research also revealed that 85% of drug addicts live with their parents. The riskiest group is the males between 15 and 24 ages. According to MoI statistics, the numbers of drug-related deaths among youth were 941 in 2017, 657 in 2018, and 342 in 2019 (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2021a). Considering these findings, in 2018, the MoI introduced *UYUMA Project* to raise citizens' awareness and encourage them to actively participate in the fight against drug dealing and use actively. It activated a national *UYUMA e-application* for smartphones downloadable free of charge. The application enables citizens to report any drug crime and keeps personal information confidential (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022a). In 2020, in collaboration with civil society, including Green Crescent, and media associations, the MoI also launched a project titled *The Best Narcotic Police: Mom*. The Project encourages mothers to recognize their children's irregular behaviors and communicate with public security units when needed (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2020a). The Minister announced that the number of drug-related detainees increased to 119,000 as of November 2022 while 35,000 in 2016, and drug-related deaths fell from 941 in 2017 to 314 in 2020 and 270 in 2022 (Anadolu Ajansı 2021a; Birgün 2022).

The latest appearance of participation at the local level is the pilot establishment of *Local Prevention and Security Boards* (*LPSBs*) as outputs of the EU-funded "Strengthening Civilian Oversight of the Internal Security Sector Project." LPSBs have been expanded to a total number of 19 (2 provinces, 17 districts) during the Project implementation. Chaired by governors, LPSBs comprise members from public security units, local governments, vulnerable/disadvantaged groups, civil

[2] 112 Call Center staff are specifically trained in effective and eloquent speaking, human relations and communication, team work, information confidentiality and security.

society organizations, universities, chambers of industry and commerce, media and bars, and provincial central government bodies such as youth and sports, education, religious affairs, and healthcare. They identify local crimes and priorities, needs, and expectations, draft 3-year local crime prevention plans, monitor public satisfaction, and inform citizens on legal obligations, safety risks, and threats (Avrupa Birliği Turkey Delegasyonu 2021; TGRT Haber 2021). Built upon the collective responsibility principle, LPSBs jointly determine the performance indicators and priorities for public security. For instance, domestic violence, drug addiction, traffic safety, theft, drowning, stray animals, abandoned buildings, and telephone fraud have been described among the priorities in local crime prevention plans (Kılıç Akıncı 2020; Zagrodzki and Kılıç Akıncı 2021).

The above findings reveal some identifying features of participatory initiatives in Turkey's public security. First, those initiatives lean on forming committee-type bodies and utilizing technological means. Second, prioritization is seen to have been distinctively applied according to the findings of crime analysis. Even though not explicit in related policy documents, resource constraints should have considerably affected the prioritization process. Third, due to centralized public security management, powers and responsibilities are assigned to civilians in a limited fashion. In other words, citizens' role in public security has been built upon ensuring their cooperation in policy practices and drawing on their information and feedback, rather than enabling them to directly shape decision-making processes. Yet it is observable that there has developed a broadening understanding of public security through the participation of more non-state actors into specific bodies and mechanisms. Multi-sectoral perspective in crime prevention efforts has also contributed to this development. LPSBs look promising in empowering citizens as co-producers of public safety in the near future. Fourth, as can be noticed in the drug-related initiatives, the societal position of women has been utilized to take advantage of crime prevention activities. At the same time, early ages are considered crucial for developing behavioral change among citizens against crime.

## 3.2 Community Orientation: Developing Focused and Tailored Responses

As customized service delivery has supplanted one-size-fits-all public policy solutions, likewise, context-specific – tailored – responses have become indispensable for effective and accountable public security. This entails first understanding various communities' characteristics, interests, and issues. To this end, citizen-centered public security employs *community policing* rather than traditional policing, which tends to produce uniform solutions with reactive and suppressive methods (Goldstein 1987; Oliver 2006; Quintero 2020). Community policing presumes that crime is a social issue and could be effectively tackled through sound, long-term, and trust-based relations with citizens. In this approach, localized solutions to citizens' safety

needs, interaction and cooperation with citizens, accessibility and accountability, and local knowledge and support are *sine non qua* to forestall crime and victimization (MacDonald 2002; Macaulay 2005; Wilson and Cox 2008; Marangoz et al. 2011; Amadi 2014; Peytona et al. 2019; Hodgkinson et al. 2019).

In the 1990s, citizen orientation appeared in Turkey's public security policy, and as the Turkey-EU relations paced up in the 2000s, it gained more ground through community policing. Since 2003, the MoI has issued internal circulars on organizing *consultative meetings* to gain insight into local security conditions, needs, and expectations. In parallel, the EU-funded project, *Strengthening Accountability, Efficiency and Effectiveness of Turkish National Police*, substantially aimed to establish community policing in the public security system. Launched in 2003, the Project consisted of training, pilot implementation in ten provinces (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Adana, Kayseri, Trabzon, Erzurum, Diyarbakır, and Antalya), drafting legal framework, and developing national standards. Following adjustments, community policing was expanded nationwide in 2009 (Arap 2017). Performance programs of the General Directorate of Public Safety have also set goals and targets for *community-based*, *preventive*, and *trusted* public security (Ministry of Development 2013; Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2019). *Citizen Satisfaction and Trust Survey* conducted recently by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the MoI at local and national scales unveiled that citizen support for law enforcement increased from 60.9% to 73.2% between 2015 and 2021. The rate of citizens who found law enforcement agencies effective increased by 19.9% and reached 78.8% (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2021b).

The widely used community policing method has been *informing* citizens, civil society, and businesses. For this purpose, the provincial directorates of public safety have introduced community policing projects over time. For instance, designed by the Antalya Provincial Directorate of Public Safety, the *Neighbor Watch* (*Komşu Kollama*) project conducted in 2006–2008 in collaboration with universities, municipalities, and civil society organizations was expanded by the MoI across all provinces as a good practice. The project informed citizens on safety risks via visits and meetings, brochures, billboards, and local media in order to make them more sensitive about their neighborhood and alleviate their fear of crime. It reached 206,966 households and 916,626 citizens. In 2018, another project titled *Before Saying I wish* (*Keşke Demeden*) targeted theft crimes, informing citizens, civil society, and businesses on means, tools, and preventive technologies (Lamba and Öztop 2019). In 2011, the İzmir Provincial Directorate of Public Safety, in partnership with the Ministry of National Education, introduced the *Happy Look* (*Mutlu Bakış*) project to preclude young people from joining terrorist organizations. The Project was inspired by the fact that terrorist organizations recruit persons between the ages of 14–25. In this context, police officers presented high school students with how to avoid criminal organizations. The Project targeted to reach around 60,000 students

per year[3] via information and awareness-raising programs (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2018).

Besides these society-wide practices, focused interventions for various target groups have also been introduced. In this context, *family, women,* and *children* have taken precedence in public security policy. Specifically, domestic violence, violence against women, protection of children, and juvenile crimes have been designated priority areas (Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı 2022). Since 2012, gendarmerie and police forces have expanded specialized units across all provinces against the victimization of women and children, which work in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Family and Social Services. Staffed mainly with female officers, these units are entrusted with information, awareness raising, and legal assistance, crime analysis, and prevention, also facilitating applications. Besides, law enforcement training curricula contain courses on gender equality and combating violence against women and children, delivered in coordination with the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Target groups of these training also include conscripts. The Ministry of Family and Social Services also supports victims with *Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers* (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022b; Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü 2022b). In 2021, per Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, the Ministry of Family and Social Services unveiled the *4th National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women* (*2021–2025*) in collaboration with the MoI and Ministry of Justice. The Action Plan promised to provide integrated government responses, depict a risk map across provinces, raise awareness and ensure the cooperation of the society, and organize anger control programs for potential perpetrators. The latest official statistics say, total femicide numbers actualized 307 in 2021 while 268 in 2020, 336 in 2019, 279 in 2018, 353 in 2017, and 301 in 2016 (Hürriyet Daily News 2021; Amnesty International 2021; Human Rights Watch 2022).

To supplement ongoing efforts against domestic violence, in May 2018, the MoI launched the *KADES* (*Women Support Application*) project, enabling women to report emergencies via an e-application downloadable free of charge. KADES provides service in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, English, Russian, French, Kurdish, German, Spanish, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz languages. Temporary residents or refugees in Turkey could also take advantage of KADES. The average response time also fell to 4–5 minutes. According to a public survey by the General Directorate of Public Safety, 90% of respondent women found the KADES useful (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü 2021). As of November 2021, a total of 2,668,306 people had downloaded the KADES, and 227,936 reported cases had been responded to. The MoI announced they would focus on men in years to come to avert violence against women (Anadolu Ajansı 2021b). Despite a 24% decrease compared to prior years, more than 1500 women were reported to have died of violence after 2016, and 90% of the victims had not applied to public security units in advance (Emniyet Genel

[3]According to the latest statistics released by the Ministry of National Education, as of 2022, the total number of students in Turkey's national education system is around 19 million.

Müdürlüğü 2022c). Manifested by the MoI in March 2022, the latest motto in preventing violence against women is *Zero Tolerance and Zero Violence*. In this context, annual action plans target increasing the number of guest houses for women and the capacity of the Electronic Monitoring Center (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022c). According to the latest statistics, the number of preventive orders received by women ascended to around 272,000 as of 2021, with an approximately 95% increase while 139,000 in 2016 (Human Rights Watch 2022).

Public security policy has focused not only on women but also on children. The MoI formed specialized units for children in provinces to tackle juvenile victimization and delinquency. These units, in collaboration with social workers of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, analyze socio-economic and socio-psychological conditions of juvenile perpetrators, work to get ahead of delinquency, and protect and place them in special care units (Civilian Oversight 2022). Disabled and disadvantaged people have either enjoyed targeted interventions. For instance, the *Barrier-Free 112* (*Engelsiz 112*) project helps people with hearing and language-speech barriers to contact emergency services quickly. A database of these people was created and integrated it into 112 Emergency Call systems for quick recognition and response. Disabled citizens may record their health issues on an e-application and designate anyone as emergency contact (Acil Çağrı Merkezi 2022b). In November 2022, the MoI held the first nationwide earthquake exercise, given that Turkey has suffered from deadly shakes. The MoI made it public via television, radio channels, and municipal and mosque speakers to inform and encourage citizens to join (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022d).

The Covid-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge and a milestone regarding institutional capabilities and public accountability of public security bodies. While the governments endeavored to respond to pandemic risks effectively, they restrained public life. They sought to reduce social mobility and interpersonal contact to avert the spread of coronavirus and thus maintain public safety. Because, though the Covid-19 pandemic is primarily a public health issue, it has undermined individual security, sense of personal safety, and socio-economic well-being as a result of lockdowns and limited social life, staggering supply chains and slowing economies. To mitigate adverse effects, the governments had to deliver tailored public security services, especially for those much affected. Accordingly, in March 2020, the MoI issued a nationwide Circular restricting citizens aged 65 and over with chronic diseases to leaving their residences whenever they wanted. The same Circular formed the *Fidelity* (*Vefa*) *Social Support Groups* (*FSSGs*) at provincial and sub-provincial levels to meet all the basic needs of those people 7/24, especially during lockdowns (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2020b). Led by a senior law enforcement officer and open to voluntary participation, the FSSGs consisted mainly of public personnel selected from law enforcement units, healthcare professionals, municipalities, emergency management units, and teachers. They aided lonely persons who were unable to take care of themselves. They delivered healthcare services at home, did grocery shopping, drew cash, paid bills, cared for pets, and cleaned houses. As of May 2020, around 145,000 incumbents worked in FSSGs, and more than 6.5

million requests were met in cooperation with civil society (HaberTurk 2020; Özdoğru 2021). In 2020, the MoI surveyed 2134 citizens in 16 major provinces – Ankara, Antalya, Balıkesir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Istanbul, and İzmir, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya, Manisa, Sakarya, Samsun, Van, and Zonguldak. The analysis found that 93.2% of the participants found the FSSGs necessary and 56% very useful (Anadolu Ajansı 2021c).

Community-oriented initiatives have also addressed emerging public security threats like *cyber security* since the 2010s. For this purpose, the *Cyber Crescent* (*SİBERAY*) *Program*, governed by the MoI's Counter-Cybercrime Department, has been underway since 2020 in order to guide citizens in safe internet use by raising awareness on cyber security, technology addiction, social media use, and cyberbullying (SİBERAY 2022). SİBERAY teams design social activities, workshops, conferences, and cyber products, visit campuses, summer camps, stadiums, and crowded public spaces, and organize entertaining and informative events. They attend sectoral and professional fairs, conferences, and consultative meetings and hold webinars for small- and medium-sized enterprises. SİBERAY program also generates content for children. A cartoon named *Team: SİBERAY* is screened on weekends via public broadcasting (TRT) about safe internet use and cyber threats. Recently, owing to the growing online fraud, specialized offices have been operationalized in provinces (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü 2022d).

In the last analysis, community-oriented initiatives demonstrate that public security units have become involved more in society and built deepened bonds with communities. It can be said that these interventions have been designed based on a *segmentation* according to demographics, socio-economic conditions, and vulnerabilities in order to be able to develop tailored and focused responses. At the same time, it is observed that the job definitions of public security personnel have broadened to encompass more non-security – in the traditional sense – assistance roles. Besides, the public security units have expanded the utilization of e-government applications in community-oriented public security initiatives. Above all, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a stress test to public security services. Covid-19 has required multifaceted and coherent responses to citizen's safety needs, putting an immense strain on public security management. The link between socio-economic well-being and public security had become more visible, especially when the government encountered side effects and/or collateral damages of healthcare measures against Covid-19. In this context, community-oriented public security practices have gathered various public bodies and civil society, which would enhance government-wide policy coherence in a foreseeable future. In other words, community orientation also necessitates integrated responses and contributes to government integration while addressing the safety needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged segments of society. Awareness raising and citizens' information have taken the lead in widely used modalities to empower communities against safety risks and crime.

### 3.3 Oversight: Ensuring Public Accountability and Trust

Civilian oversight is inextricably linked to citizen orientation and predicated upon understanding human rights and democracy. Based on a clear legal framework, it seeks to hold incumbents at all levels accountable, eliminate impunities and discrimination, and sustain credibility, responsiveness, and public trust in institutions. Alongside government bodies, civil society, the media, and citizens are vital actors of civilian oversight, particularly in providing constructive feedback (UNODC 2011; Wasserman and Ginsburg 2014; Buchner et al. 2016; White and Escobar 2021). Public accountability is operationalized by independent oversight – i.e., human rights institutions, ombudspersons, civilian review/advisory boards – and inherently best embodied with citizen committees. These may audit or monitor public security units, receive complaints, investigate misconduct, advise disciplinary measures, or advocate victims in judicial processes. They produce shared solutions and corrective actions, serve public transparency, and provide learning opportunities. They also need to be easily accessible by and accountable to citizens (Bobb 2003; Macaulay 2005).

In Turkey, the goals, targets, and practices for enhanced civilian oversight are explicitly observable in public security policies in the 2000s. The early interventions targeted the *use of force* by police and the *oversight capacity* of governors and MoI inspectors during crowd control (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı 1989; State Planning Organization 1995; Ministry of Development 2013; Fırat and Erdem 2014; Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2019; İçişleri Bakanlığı 2022e, f). The need for more transparency and openness in government affairs, including public security, has been another challenge, yet incremental progress has been made due to national security concerns. For instance, in 2003, though it put constraints favoring state security, national security, confidentiality, and intelligence, the Law on Right to Information provided a milestone (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022c; Resmi Gazete 2010). The EU accession negotiations have accelerated civilian oversight programs since 2005. In this context, the EU urged more trainings on human rights and investigation techniques and an independent oversight mechanism for law enforcement units to avert human rights abuses, excessive use of force, and ill treatment (Council of the European Union 2022).

In 2007, an EU-funded project – *Independent Law Enforcement Complaint Mechanism for the General Directorate of Public Safety and Gendarmerie General Command* – was initiated to develop a legal framework. Consequently, a bill was first drafted in 2010, yet waited till 2016 to be passed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) (Fırat and Erdem 2014; Evren 2016). Civilian oversight has become a comprehensive reform program with a second EU-funded project titled *Strengthening of the Civilian Oversight of Internal Security Forces* (*2008–2021*). The Project covered gendarmerie and coast guard services with several components, namely the drafting legal framework and strategies, empowering provincial civil administrators, civil society, and media, and revising performance evaluation systems. Within the Project, Local Security and Prevention Boards

(LSPBs) were formed at more than ten pilot provinces and districts and training and awareness-raising programs were organized (Sivil Gözetim 2022; Kılıç Akıncı 2020; UNDP 2021).

Another principal element of civilian oversight, *ethics*, began to appear in Turkish law enforcement curricula in the 1990s as part of professionalization programs. Afterward, Turkey adopted the Council of Europe's Police Code of Ethics (2001) and drafted its *Law Enforcement Code of Ethics* in 2007. Herewith, civilian oversight, public accountability and transparency, participation and cooperation, and citizen orientation were declared as the building blocks of public security (Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı 2007). The research by Aydın and Özel (2016) that sought to understand the attitudes of selected governors and senior public security officials confirmed that *citizen orientation* and *commitment to public accountability* had been welcomed in public security management. Yet the participants uttered their concerns about public confidentiality and citizens' responsibility and awareness, indicating the need for a complaint mechanism specific to law enforcement units.

In 2016, *Law Enforcement Oversight Commission* (*LEOC*) was established as a central complaints mechanism under the jurisdiction of the MoI, yet outside the boundaries of public security units. Its mandate encompasses complaints handling, monitoring, advising, public trust-building, and database management about alleged crimes, disciplinary offenses, and related administrative processes. Assigned by the President of the Republic of Turkey for a 4-year term, the LEOC members comprise representatives from the Human Rights and Equality Institution, MoI Inspection Board and Legal Advisors, Ministry of Justice, and academic of criminal law, and a freelance lawyer. Citizens can forward their complaints directly to the governorates and public security units. Complaints bureaus were also formed in the governorates to receive applications (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022d). Recent analysis shows that most of the complaints came from citizens between the ages of 21 and 30, and the highest number belongs to undergraduates. As of 2021, 79% of the applications are from men and 21% from women. A total of 125,422 applications were received in 2020–2022, 94,360 of which had been completed (İçişleri Bakanlığı 2021c; Anadolu Ajansı 2022). Critics question to what extent the LEOC can be independent as it is within the MoI portfolio. Moreover, it is the LEOC's discretion to publicize its annual reports, which demarcates public accountability and transparency. Therefore, it is deemed more appropriate for independent oversight to ensure that the LEOC is directly accountable to the GNAT (Evren 2016).

Apart from the LEOC, citizens can complain to the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (HREIT). Acknowledging the role played by national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in preventing human rights abuses, Turkey began modernizing its national institutions and supplemented them with relatively decentralized mechanisms. Built on prior human rights institutions created in the 1990s,[4] lately, the HREIT was founded in 2016 as a national prevention mechanism

[4]These include by year the GNAT Human Rights Probing Commission (1990), Prime Ministry Human Rights Office (2001), and Human Rights Institution of Turkey (2012).

(Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022e). Granted fiscal and administrative autonomy and characterized by independence and impartiality, the HREIT is affiliated with the Ministry of Justice. It can act upon complaints or use ex officio powers, probe cases, make final writs, and provide judicial guidance. It also propagates human rights content for national education, cooperates with non-governmental organizations and universities, and raises public awareness of fundamental rights. The HREIT drafts an annual report to the GNAT, which contains human rights-related statistics and policy recommendations. Complaints related to public security services have been predominantly against disproportionate use of force, torture, or ill treatment under custody or in the penitentiary (HREIT 2022). Despite criticisms about its limited institutional independence, some scholars find the presence of a national human rights institution crucial for deterrence. They also contend that the growing number of citizen applications indicates public awareness of human rights (Albayrak 2020). Turkey's National Action Plan on Human Rights (2021), in line with Paris Principles, set goals and targets, among other things, for victimized vulnerable groups, especially the children, women, and elderly. Priority areas subsume privacy and individual security, medical and social care for victims of domestic violence, and food and water security (Ministry of Justice 2021a; Council of Europe 2022).

The national human rights monitoring and protection system was decentralized (deconcentrated) in the early 2000s with *Provincial Human Rights Boards*. Supervised by the governors, the Boards probe citizen complaints on human rights abuses at the local level. Representatives from local governments, civil society and media, unions, universities, bars, professional chambers, and political parties participate in these Boards as substantive members (Resmi Gazete 2003). The Boards may report recommendations to public bodies and criminal acts to public prosecutors. Some critics say these Boards have not been operationalized as effectively and independently as intended (Erdoğan and Pank 2017; Didinmez 2022). Their concerns are the lack of a clear legal framework (i.e., powers, responsibilities, and procedures), vague relationship with the HREIT, dependence on public resources, administrative tutelage on membership and agenda, low public recognition and support, and irregularity of meetings. The 2021 Action Plan promised making these Boards more functional by addressing these shortfalls.

Another major step for improved civilian oversight is the establishment of an Ombudsperson. After lengthy debates and failed attempts for the legislation since the 1990s, governmental efforts toward forming an *Ombudsperson Institution* (OI) in Turkey gained momentum during EU accession negotiations. The OI was founded in 2012 as an independent (legislative) oversight body (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi 2022f) upon the EU recommendations[5] once its constitutional basis had been laid down.[6] Citizens may submit their complaints free of charge. The OI monitors public

[5] The EU urges member and candidate countries to comply with UN Paris Principles (1993) and Venice Principles (Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution Adopted by the Venice Commission at its 118th Plenary Session (Venice, 15–16 March 2019)).

[6] Please see the Article 74 of the 1982 Constitution of Turkey, amended by Article 8 of the Law No. 5982, and dated May 7, 2010.

administration at all levels, receives citizen complaints, probes cases, and conducts research. It can communicate administrative, policy, or legal recommendations to public security agencies, though not legally binding. It has authority to neither initiate an investigation ex officio nor apply to the Constitutional Court. The actions, decisions, and orders of the President of the Republic of Turkey, and legislative and judicial decisions and pure military decisions and actions of the Turkish Armed Forces fall outside its jurisdiction. The OI shares its annual work, findings, and writs with the GNAT and the public via its reports and website depository (Alyanak 2015; Karasoy 2015). Recent studies suggest that the number of complaints has grown up to more than 90,000 as of 2020. Females and urban residents have constituted the majority of complainants while human-rights related grievances – mainly discrimination and ill-treatment – have remained very limited, with around 1% (Karan and Sever 2020; Duran 2021; Geylani and Nohutçu 2021).

Some cases forwarded to the Ombudsman have resulted in recommendations to the public (security) agencies for corrective actions (Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu 2022). For instance, in 2016, claiming neglect by public security units and local government, a citizen wanted additional safety precautions at an intersection congested due to the inadequate parking spaces and crowded dining places. Another citizen in 2018 complained, claiming that the police had blockaded the "Human Rights Monument" in Ankara, thus impeding citizens' free movement, association, and demonstration in public spaces. In another case in 2020, an applicant claimed that the police officers had prepared an unfounded accident report and demanded a disciplinary investigation against them. A lawyer applied to the OI, stating that he had not been allowed to see for a particular time his clients taken under custody following a street demonstration, who had been treated rudely by police officers, and he had been filmed without his consent while awaited. In 2021, a driver demanded cancellation of his traffic fine resulting from a violation of the speed limit on the highway, claiming that the Provincial Directorate Public Security had not informed drivers in advance about changing the speed limit nor put a traffic sign indicating the new speed limit. In 2022, a civil society organization, which works on penitentiary institutions and advocates prisoners' rights, filed a complaint against Provincial Human Rights Board because the Board had refused to probe allegations reported in prisoners' letters. The OI concluded that the ways to objection to Board decisions should have been demonstrated to the applicants as a requirement of good administration.

Assessment of Turkey's public security management in terms of civilian oversight portrays an established system across executive and legislative organs alongside the judiciary. The EU accession negotiations seem to have guided or encouraged institutional adjustments toward civilian oversight of public security. However, civilian control – empowering civilian administrators – of public security units took precedence in early reform programs, particularly by the MoI at the center and governors in provinces. Today, looking at citizen complaints and related decisions of national human rights institutions, it can be said that the institutional oversight system has been functioning. On the other hand, the effectiveness of law enforcement oversight is open to debate for its confined independence under the executive

mandate. Moreover, present oversight bodies are not entitled to enjoy ex officio powers, while non-state oversight is almost none except for their memberships in national and local committees. Local oversight bodies also remain to be addressed with systematic interventions regarding their capabilities, incentives, and responsiveness.

## 4 Conclusion

Citizen orientation in public security has been applied since the 1990s as a response to rising crime rates and fear of crime, which outpaced public security capacity. Negative implications of public distrust, as manifested in citizens' non-compliance with laws and reluctance to collaborate with public security units, alarmed governments to take action. Among others, proactive policing, focusing on the root causes of insecurity, and cooperating with citizens have become public security policy's main principles and modalities. Turkey was no exception. Both domestic pressures and international reform demands, especially those of the EU, pushed the construction of citizen-oriented public security. Thus, in the 2000s, citizen orientation has begun to manifest itself in public security policy aims, objectives, priorities, and practices. In this context, this chapter examined Turkey's public security policy and practice threefold: *participation*, *community-orientation*, and *oversight*, to explore how citizen orientation has been put into practice at national level.

For *participation*, public security management drew upon committee-type involvement of citizens in decision-making, facilitating their access to public security units through e-government applications. Whereas the relatively centralized character of Turkey's public administration constrains active citizen participation, public security units and citizens have been encouraged to interact to exchange of ideas and mutual information. At the same time, public security personnel have assumed additional tasks to help people during Covid-19 emergency management, thus having broadened functions. *Community-oriented initiatives* have given priority to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged persons or groups in Turkish society while enhancing government integration to achieve shared goals and targets. Awareness raising and information have been the mostly applied modalities. On the side of *civilian oversight*, there has been remarkable progress. It is observed that an integrated civilian oversight system has been established institutionally. The effective functioning of this system requires both political authorities and citizens to embrace it. Government efforts are still underway to make all components of the civilian oversight system more recognizable by citizens.

Another salient feature of citizen-centered public security in Turkey is the type of interventions. Project-based interventions constitute the majority of citizen-oriented practices. This suggests that an incremental approach has been followed to develop a culture of citizen orientation both in public security management and in society. The EU accession negotiations can be argued to have accelerated and inspired citizen-centered public security reforms. In this context, pertinent projects

include both EU-funded and national (central or provincial) initiatives. This also demonstrates that local ownership of citizen-oriented perspectives has been achieved to some extent in public security management. Cultural change toward adopting globally recognized tenets of citizen-centered security would call for continuous efforts which also draw on local conditions and perspectives. Structural changes would thus need to be supplemented with behavioral approaches.

The study also shows that examined practices in Turkey have served in compliance with citizen-centered public security policy, thus producing a relatively narrow gap between policy and practice. In particular, project-based efforts have proved useful in progress toward citizen-oriented service provision, driving a culture of change and paving the way for institutionalization in Turkey's public security management. Yet citizen orientation has been mainly built upon citizen participation in policy implementation rather than in design. Related initiatives focused on enlisting citizens' assistance in crime prevention activities and facilitating their access to emergency management mechanisms. Besides, public scrutiny looks confined to officially established bodies and mechanisms under a governmental mandate. It can be argued that these are due to the relatively centralized character of Turkey's political-administrative system which has traditionally acted hesitant to share power (monopoly on the use of coercion) with citizens. Hence, the current policy-practice gap could be bridged through more autonomous oversight and public scrutiny, and an active citizen and civil society involvement in decision-making. So, crime prevention activities would become more effective and efficient as they would be timely informed of local safety conditions, needs, and expectations, and encourage citizens' ownership of public security initiatives.

The implications of citizen-oriented initiatives are evaluated in relation to crime prevention indicators, such as citizen participation, victimizations, crime rates, and the nature of crimes (Rummens 2016; Hope 2017). The latest statistics suggest contested results, which confirm the complicated nature of crime and the intertwined, multi-variable structure of crime prevention. According to the Ministry of Justice, crimes against property, drugs, and sexual crimes have increased over the past several years. The share of drug crime among all crime groups rose to 5%. Yet the citizen reports that led to investigations have increased considerably. While approximately 80,000 reports were received in 2018, this rose to 200,288 in 2020 and 265,117 in 2021 (Ministry of Justice 2021b). Preventive mechanisms seem to have been functional as they have been utilized by citizens, particularly those victimized. Arguably, it requires more years to confidently appreciate the functionality and positive societal implications of the targeted interventions, reforms, and preventative mechanisms as they are relatively nascent and still underway. Yet the evidence suggests that a citizen-oriented institutional system has been established in Turkey's public security management, and related processes have been operationalized. In the last analysis, the effectiveness of citizen-centered public security efforts necessitates focusing on long-term outcomes, notably the sense of trust and safety in the society, instead of focusing solely on crime rates.

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