

Chapter 9

Democratization of Governance in Turkey: An Assessment of the Administrative Reforms in the 2000s

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The government of Turkey undertook comprehensive public administration reforms in the first decade of the twenty-first century. These reforms were a new phase in the long history of the public administration reforms in this country. The reforms of the early 2000s were more comprehensive than their predecessors. In this latest phase, the government undertook both “managerial reforms” (improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and adopting businesslike management techniques) and “governance reforms” (improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in public service delivery and citizen engagement in them) (Sözen 2012, p. 168). In this chapter we discuss the historical background and contents of these reforms and assess their effectiveness, particularly in two areas: citizen engagement in governance and reducing corruption.

As the Turkish society and economy opened up to the external world at an accelerated pace beginning in the 1980s, and as the hopes for Turkey’s full membership in the European Union rose in roughly the same period, the philosophy and principles of the subsequent public administration reforms in this country followed closely the tenets of and discussions in the governance theoretical framework (Ateş 2004; Bedirhanoğlu 2007; Kapucu 2010; Sözen 2012). As the discussions in this chapter show, actually the public administration reforms in the previous decades also had quite close parallels with the European and North American “waves of public management reform” Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) identify.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011, pp. 5–11) observe that there were four periods of public management reforms in Europe and North America. The first wave was

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before and during the 1950s. In this period, reforms were considered technical and legal matters, and they involved only reorganizations of public agencies and legal/procedural changes in public service delivery. In the second wave, the 1960s, the “rational models” of decision-making became the drivers of public sector reforms. In this decade of “modernist optimism” the prevailing assumption was that a society’s problems could be solved with rational decision-making. In the 1970s the idea that governments should be run more like businesses and more efficiently became fashionable. This idea was at the core of the New Public Management theory and movement, which became popular in the 1980s, which Pollitt and Bouckaert identify as the third wave. The New Public Management continued to be influential into the 1990s, but in this decade the focus of the reforms began to shift from inside public organizations to the relationships of public organizations with their publics. Pollitt and Bouckaert cite this shift as the fourth wave, in which terms like “partnership,” “trust,” and “transparency” were used more frequently and “governance” became an overarching conceptual framework. This trend continued into the 2000s.

Although the term governance has been used more frequently in recent decades in public administration, economics, politics, and international relations, researchers do not have a common definition for it (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden 2004). In general, it is a concept that is used to describe state–civil society relations (Bevir 2010, p. 1). The term is often used in conjunction with “democracy” and “democratization,” because it has implications for expanding the scope of citizen participation in political processes and public service delivery. The term “democratic governance” is used to denote the involvement of market actors and civil society actors in public decision-making (Fenger and Bekkers 2007, p. 29).

Democratic governance is promoted by international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. There are two recurring areas/themes in the definitions of democratic governance by these organizations and their relevant documents: (1) engagement of citizens in governmental decision-making and holding governments accountable and (2) devising mechanisms of reducing or eliminating corruption.¹

In this chapter, after summarizing the history of the public administration reforms in Turkey, we discuss the outcomes of the reforms in the 2000s in these two areas. We brought together the outcome indicators in these areas from multiple sources: records of government agencies in Turkey, surveys conducted by research foundations in Turkey, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index and Global Corruption Barometer, the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators, and the European Union’s progress reports on Turkey. We conclude with an assessment of the reforms and their future prospects.

¹The UNDP (n.d.) specifically identifies the following as its “focus areas” in its activities to promote democratic governance: access to information and e-governance, access to justice and rule of law, civic engagement, anti-corruption measures, fair electoral systems and processes, protections of human rights, mechanisms of participation in local governance and local development, parliamentary development, transparency, accountable and responsive public administration, and women’s empowerment. Similarly, the World Bank (n.d.) cites the following as the dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.

A History of Reforms in Turkey

Reforms Before the 2000s

The roots of the administrative reforms in Turkey can be traced back to the Ottoman period. As the Ottoman Empire began to lose its military might and economic prosperity after the sixteenth century, multiple unsuccessful attempts were made to restore both by the Sultans. More systematic reforms were undertaken in the nineteenth century. As Eryılmaz (2006) points out, in this century attempts were made to reorganize the military (e.g., replacing the old-styled Janissaries with modern army units in 1826) and to reform the taxation and governmental budgeting systems (e.g., the “Tanzimat” reforms between 1839 and 1876). Because these reforms were driven by the desires of the Sultans and the civilian and military administrative elite of the empire, rather than by people’s demands, they did not change the authoritarian governing practices of the Empire substantially. Instead, a bureaucratic administrative culture emerged that reinforced and refined the traditions of secrecy, nonparticipation by citizens, and centralization (Heper 1985).

These traditions were continued after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, particularly during the single-party rule of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) in the first three decades of the Republic. This era ended with the electoral victory of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1950. Both the RPP and DP governments tried to reform public administration. In both periods, because of the shortages of domestic experts, the political leadership hired foreign consultants to prepare reports on Turkish public administration reforms. The most notable of these reports were the 1934 report by a group of American experts, the Neumark report of 1949, the Barker report of 1951, the Martin and Cush report of 1951, and the Leimgruber report of 1952 (Kalağan 2010). These reports represent ad hoc efforts that were aimed at remedying selected problems of the day through legal means and administrative reorganization, which is similar to what Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) observe in the reforms in Europe and North America during the early decades of the twentieth century as well.

In the 1960s the European and North American governments adopted “rational” and hierarchical models of decision-making and planning for their reform efforts (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Similarly the Turkish Government began adopting 5-year comprehensive development plans in this decade. The public administration reform efforts of this decade were integrated into these plans. The 1963 report on the organization of the central administration (commonly known as the “MEHTAP Report” in its Turkish acronyms) was the most important example of these reform efforts. Similar to the reforms of the earlier decades, the core philosophy of this report and the following implementations of reforms were to remedy administrative problems through legal means and administrative reorganization (Kuyaksil 1994, p. 94).

None of the reform efforts before or during the 1960s was effective, because none of them was based on a coherent set of theoretical principles, nor were they implemented systematically (Sürgit 1972; Karaer 1987; Kuyaksil 1994; Yayman 2008). Also, all these reform efforts focused on internal workings of public

agencies; their relations with the public they were supposed to serve were not taken into account (Karaer, p. 45).

This internal focus of the reforms was arguably a product of the continuing effects of the bureaucratic administrative culture that had emerged in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish civilian and military bureaucratic elite was accustomed only to the notion of “change from above” and was not willing to respond to demands by citizens (Turan 1984, p. 104). The weakness of the civil society organizations in the country (Heper 1985, p. 103) also contributed to the insular nature of the reforms. Although the number of civil society organizations, such as religious associations, cultural associations, and workers’ unions, steadily increased from the beginning of the Republic, these organizations were not allowed to effectively participate in governance process (Özbudun 1976, p. 95).

The internal focus in the reform initiatives began to change in the 1980s. As the focus of the reforms in Europe and North America shifted toward making governments more businesslike, efficient, and customer oriented (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), so did the focus of the reforms in Turkey. The relations between public officials and citizens became an area of reform for the first time in this decade. The political developments in this decade and the significant steps the Turkish Government took toward integrating the Turkish economy into the global economy, particularly into the European Union, played important roles in this shift of focus in public administration reforms.

After the military rule following the coup *d’État* of 1980, the neoliberal Motherland Party (“ANAP,” in its Turkish acronym) won the elections in 1983. During its rule until 1989, ANAP devised and implemented free market-oriented policies and took measures toward reforming government bureaucracies to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

In 1988, the ANAP government asked the Institute of Public Administration for Turkey and the Middle East to evaluate the results of the post-1983 reforms. This study was intended to find out particularly what Turkey needed to do to meet the requirements of the *acquis* (*acquis communautaire*) of the European Union. The report of this study was published with the title “Public Administration Research Project,” known as the “KAYA report” in its Turkish acronyms (TODAİE 1992). The most distinctive feature of this report was that it included specific proposals for the relations between public officials and citizens. The report proposed that openness to the public, right to information, neutrality, and objectivity should be among the main principles of public administration practices. It also proposed that an Ombudsman position should be created to ensure that the rights of citizens would be protected. The report also proposed that some of the power shifted from the central government to local governments. All these proposals were taken into account when the reforms of the 2000s were designed, as we discuss in the next section.

The KAYA report did not sufficiently take into account the problem of corruption in public agencies, despite the fact that this became an increasingly pronounced problem in the 1980s. In this decade, as a consequence of the rapid economic and social changes in the country, the rates of corruption and bribery increased in business, politics, and public administration. Consequently, the level of people’s distrust for politicians and public administrators increased as well (Eryılmaz 2008, p. 156).

One of the sources of the increased levels of corruption and the people's distrust was the ANAP government's increased use of special funds for government expenditures to side-step parliamentary and judicial checks and balances. The funds were created arbitrarily, and there was little, if any, transparency in their usage. The use of special funds became so pervasive that in 1986 the total amount of money in them grew to half of the government's general fund budget. The 1980s were later called the era of "fund economy" (Ahmad 1993). Another reason for the increased corruption and the distrust of the people in the government was the violations of the merit principles in recruiting for public services and promotions in public agencies. In the 1983–1990 period, it became a common practice to appoint "compatible bureaucrats" (bureaucrats who were personally close to the Prime Minister or ministers), rather than "competent bureaucrats," to higher position in public agencies (Sözüdođru 1996, p. 178).

The general trends of the 1980s—economic liberalization policies, the processes of the opening up the economy and society to the global trends, and the integration process with the European Union—continued, for the most part, under successive coalition governments in the 1990s. So did the problem of corruption and the public's dissatisfaction with the government. The political uncertainty of the 1990s that was caused by the succession of weak coalition governments contributed to the continuation of these problems. The lack of transparency in policymaking and government spending reinforced corrupt practices and clientelist and rent-seeking behaviors (Mousseau 2012, p. 65).

There were some efforts to reform public administration in the 1990s. The principle of the openness of government to the public, which was proposed in the KAYA report in 1991, found its legal expressions in a series of amendments made to the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey in this decade. Also some efforts were made to deal with the problem of corruption. The "Law for Declaration of Assets, Fighting Corruption, and Bribery" was enacted in 1990, but problems arose in its implementation, and therefore the law had only very limited effects (Eryılmaz 2008, p. 158). A competitive civil service exam was instituted to recruit employees for public agencies in 1999; its implementation was widened in the 2000s.

These piecemeal reform efforts in the 1990s and the transitional nature of this decade are similar to Pollitt and Bouckaert's (2011) observations on the developments in Europe and North America. They point out that this was the period in which the foci of public management reforms shifted toward the applications of governance concepts: partnership, trust, and transparency. These applications became more systematic and intensive in the 2000s. That was the case in Turkey as well.

Reforms in the 2000s

The decision of the European Union to grant Turkey a candidate status in the Helsinki Summit in 1999 and the financial crisis of 2000–2001 were major turning points in Turkey's recent history. The crisis led to an interruption of the efforts of the successive coalition governments to reduce corruption (Ömürgönülşen and Doig 2012, p. 13).

A new period of one-party rule began in the Turkish political life after the political elections of 2002. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the election and has remained in power to this day, after winning two more consecutive elections in 2007 and 2011.

The newly elected government started an economic reform program whose elements included economic liberalization, privatization, deregulation, decentralization, and effective and efficient public service provision. The roots of these policies were in the 1980s and 1990s, as we discussed earlier. The AKP government continued the past policies with increased vigor and more coherence. The government also implemented an extensive and far-reaching public sector reform program, parallel to its economic and political reform programs.

The AKP government assigned a high priority to public sector reforms, particularly to reducing corruption and increasing transparency, in response to people's dissatisfaction with the government and their political demands in the early 2000s. In the 1990s the political and economic instability and the failures and delays in the intended public administration reforms had resulted in a decrease in the trust in government and an increase in the dissatisfaction with public service delivery. The results of a national survey conducted just before the 2002 elections revealed the degree of dissatisfaction among the people. A vast majority of them (91.9 %) were not pleased with the quality of public services, only a minority of citizens (33.8 %) believed that their complaints to public agencies would be handled fairly, a large majority of the people thought that public agencies did not care about their opinions and proposals (77.0 %), and a majority (66.4 %) did not think that public agencies would respond to their demands and requests rapidly (TUSIAD 2002, pp. 61–65). The leader of AKP made fighting corruption a major plank of his party's platform and vigorously campaigned for it during the election campaign (AK Party 2001).

The European Union's (EU) demands for Turkey to democratize its governmental system were also strong motivators for the government to reform its administrative practices. Although the negotiations over Turkey's ascension to the full member status with the EU were stalled later, when the first AKP government was formed in 2002 there were high hopes for a successful outcome of these negotiations and thus a strong motivation to meet the EU's requirements. Ömürgönülşen and Doig (2012) observe that despite the disappointments with the ascension process to full EU membership, successive AKP governments eagerly adopted the international conventions regarding anti-corruption measures and incorporated them into Turkish domestic legislation. One of the outcomes of these developments was that Turkey was admitted to the "Group of States against Corruption" (GRECO) as a member in 2004 (p. 10).

The administrative reforms announced in the first AKP government's program had distinctive characteristics. For the first time in Turkish history, the terms and principles of "governance" and "New Public Management" were used in a government's program. Also, the program promised to apply the principles of total quality management, performance-based payment system, and contract management in the public sector. The government also promised to increase transparency and accountability in public administration, fight corruption in government, and empower civil society institutions (Program of the 58th Government of the

Republic of Turkey 2002). These concepts and principles were mentioned also in the subsequent AKP government programs.

In 2003 the government took a series of steps to implement the principles stated in its program. An “Urgent Action Plan” was announced to convert the principles into specific action steps. A parliamentary anti-corruption committee prepared a detailed report and proposed to adopt regulations to ensure citizens’ rights to access information and to stipulate ethics standards for public servants (Acar and Emek 2008, p. 190). A white paper was published to clarify the principles of restructuring of public administration in the areas of citizen engagement and governance, applications of strategic management and performance measurement in the public sector, and adopting a code of conduct for public officials (Diñer and Yılmaz 2003).

The reforms adopted by the successive AKP governments had two significant and interrelated components: (1) imposing legal sanctions against corruption and (2) empowering citizens to protect their rights. In the new Turkish Criminal Code of 2004, the definition of bribery was expanded and the punishment for it was increased. Under the guidance of the international treaties and conventions the government adopted, the authority to impose sanctions against corruption and bribery was granted to newly established institutions. The laws and regulations were adopted particularly in the areas of the right to complain to governmental agencies and the right to access governmental information.

Legal Sanctions Against Corruption

The AKP government formulated a strategic vision for its policies to fight corruption and stated its strategic aims and objectives to strengthen democratic governance and curb corruption in the 5-year economic development plans. The government also created the Executive Committee for Enhancing Transparency and Reinforcing the Fight against Corruption to monitor and coordinate the implementation of its anti-corruption policies. More important, the government created the Council of Ethics for Public Service (CEPS) as the primary enforcer of its anti-corruption policies in 2004 with a special act (Prime Ministry n.d.). The act authorized the Council to investigate and prosecute unethical conduct by all public officials, excluding the President of the Republic, members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), members of the Board of Ministers, Turkish Armed Forces, members of the judiciary, and the faculty members at universities. The Council’s authority included examining the asset declarations by public officials and determining the scope of the ban on receiving gifts by them. The Council developed the Application Principles and Procedures for the Principles of Ethical Behavior of the Public Officials in 2004.

To enhance the effectiveness of the Council’s work, the government passed a series of regulations. According to these regulations, every public official is required to sign an ethical contract in the first month of his/her employment, and this contract is kept in the permanent personnel file of the employee. Supervisors are authorized to evaluate the ethical conduct of their employees as part of their

performance evaluations. Public agencies are required to develop their own codes of ethical conduct and submit them to the Council for approval. The agencies are also expected to form ethics commissions to promote ethical culture among their employees, to advise and guide them in the matters of ethical behavior, and to evaluate ethical practices (Ömürçönülşen and Doig 2012, p. 12).

Empowering Citizens

The AKP governments took a series of measures to empower citizens to gain access to information held by the government and file complaints to raise their grievances. The Right to Information Act of 2003 regulates citizens' right to access to governmental information and documents and applies the principles of equality, impartiality, and openness while doing that. The law requires that public agencies provide the information and documents requested by applicants promptly and correctly. There are some specific kinds of information that cannot be released to applicants: trade secrets, private communications, intellectual properties, and state secrets. The Board of Review of Access to Information (BRAI) was created with this law. The Board reviews the objections to the applications to access information. If a request for information or a document was denied by a public agency, the applicant can object to the Board. The Board reviews the objection procedurally and determines whether the application was filed appropriately and whether the denying agency followed appropriate procedures. If the applicant is still not satisfied with the Board's decision, he/she can litigate the decision at a court of justice.

Citizens' right to access to information was incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey with an amendment adopted in 2010. Thus the right to access to information became a democratic right for citizens. The right to information law and the constitutional amendment were important developments in the history of the Republic because they empowered civil society organization and increased the chances of transparent governmental actions. This amendment has the potential to change the culture of "unquestionable state," which was ingrained in the operations of Turkish Government, into a culture in which the state is held accountable to its citizens (Emre et al. 2003). There are some obstacles to progress in the area of right to information, however. Although the Right to Information Law required that the exceptions to citizens' rights, such as the limitations to accessing "state secrets," be defined specifically, the parliament is yet to pass a law to do so.

The AKP government passed a law to create an Ombudsman in 2006, but the Constitutional Court ruled the law unconstitutional. The Court reasoned that creating an Ombudsman would require a constitutional amendment. The constitutional amendment that was adopted with a referendum in 2010 cleared this legal hurdle. According to the constitutional amendment, everyone has the right to apply to the Ombudsman. The parliament enacted the Ombudsman Institution Law of 2012. The law charges the Ombudsman with the responsibility to investigate all administrative acts for their conformity to the standards of fairness and respect for human

rights and freedoms. The actions taken by the President of the Republic, the activities of the Turkish Armed Forces, and the decisions of the legislature and the judiciary are excluded from the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

The constitutional amendment package that was adopted in the 2010 referendum included the right of citizens to appeal to the Constitutional Court, after exhausting domestic judicial remedies. Before this amendment, the right to appeal to the Court was reserved only for a limited number of organizations, such as major political parties and appeals courts. Under the amendment, individuals may apply to the Court also if they think that their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights have been violated by public authorities.

Outcomes of Reforms

The above summary of the reforms in the 2000s shows that the AKP government made a concerted effort to reduce corruption and empower citizens to access governmental information and file complaints. Have these efforts been successful? In this section we answer this question using multiple performance indicators. We first present the information about the applications by citizens to the CEPS and the BRAI. Then we present the information on people's perceptions on bribery, a comparative analysis of the Transparency International's corruption perception index, the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, and the European Union's assessment of Turkey's reforms to reduce corruption.

Applications to Recently Established Agencies

As we noted in the previous section, three new government agencies were created in the 2000s: the CEPS, the BRAI, and the Ombudsman Institution. The longitudinal trends in the applications to the CEPS and the BRAI are presented in Fig. 9.1. Because the Ombudsman was created only recently, no longitudinal information is available for this institution. The trend lines for the BRAI and the CEPS begin at different years in Fig. 9.1 because the former was created in 2003 and the latter in 2004 and the data about the applications to these two agencies became available in the following years.

The figure shows that the applications to the CEPS, the primary government agency charged with investigating corruption, increased steadily since 2006. Should this be interpreted that corruption increased over these years? This is a possibility. However, when this trend is compared with the roughly parallel trend in the objections to the BRAI, the agency charged with securing citizens' rights to access information, a more plausible interpretation is that citizens' overall awareness of their rights to complain and request information increased and they began to feel more empowered in this period.

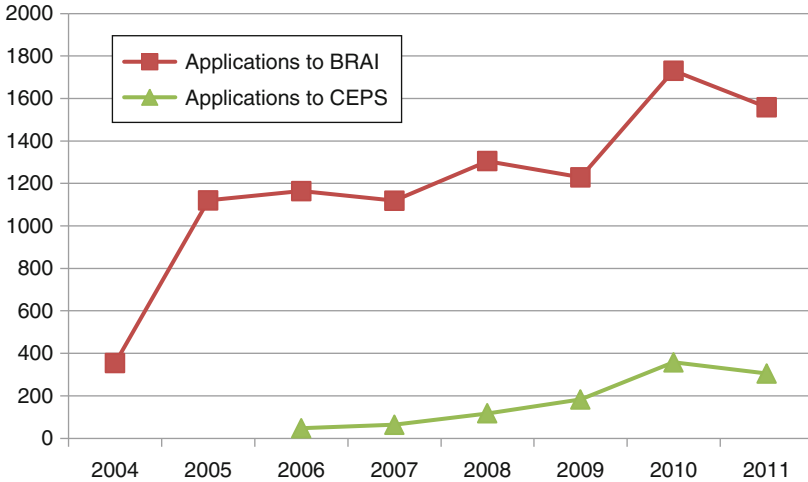


Fig. 9.1 Applications to the Council of the Ethics for Public Service (CEPS) and the Board of Review of Access to Information (BRAI). *Sources:* Compiled from Prime Ministry (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) and Board of Review of Access to Information (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011)

This interpretation is supported by the high percentage of positive responses to the applications to the BRAI by this agency in the same period. The BRAI responded to citizens' access to information requests overwhelmingly positively: Each year a minimum of 80 % of the applications were responded positively, and in some of these years this percentage was as high as 88 % (Board of Review of Right to Information 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011). It is plausible that the high percentage of the positive responses from the BRAI reinforced people's belief that they had the right to access information and the right to complain about corruption and emboldened them to exercise these rights. This interpretation is supported by the results of a 2009 survey: A 41 % of the respondents were aware that they had the right to demand information and documents from public authorities, 31 % of them had applied to public authorities for information or documents, and 91 % stated that the right to access to information was an indispensable right for citizens (Adaman et al. 2009, p. 83).

Citizens' Perceptions of Corruption in Public Institutions

Figure 9.2 displays the results of the national surveys the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) conducted on citizens' perceptions of public services and corruption in 4-year increments since 2000. (No surveys were conducted before 2000.) TEPAV used a scale of 0–10 to measure the perceptions (10 meaning that corruption is common, and 0 meaning that it is not). The results indicate that there is an overall decline in the perceptions of bribery in the public institutions

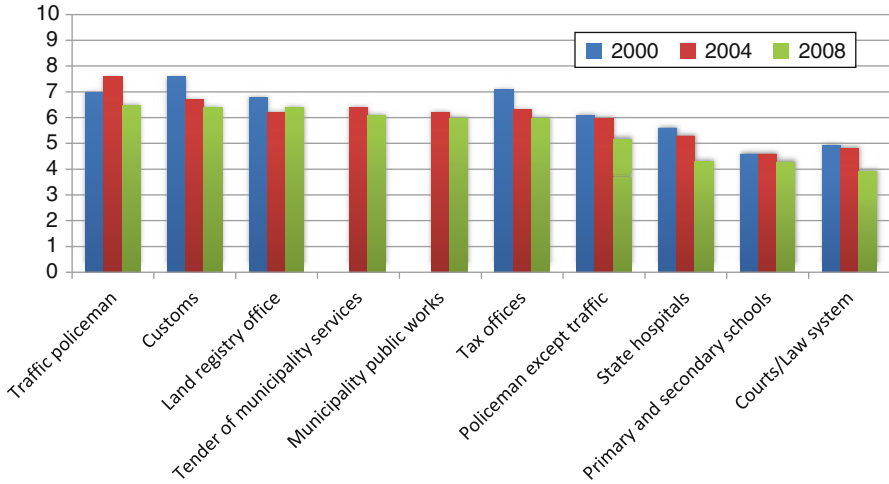


Fig. 9.2 Perceptions of Bribery in Public Institutions. *Source:* Adaman et al. (2009, p. 64)

the TEPAV study included over time. The figure also shows that the levels of the perceptions that traffic policemen, customs officers, and land registry officer receive bribes are the highest among all the groups included in the study. The lowest levels were for the courts, public schools, and government-affiliated hospitals.

The CEPS commissioned a series of studies on the perceived corruption in public institutions, including traffic police, customs offices, land registry offices, public health services, and certain local government services. The results of these studies were published in a special issue of the journal *Turkish Studies* (Ateş 2012; Ateş et al. 2012; Kılınç et al. 2012; Sur and Cekin 2012). The fact that these studies were conducted is significant in itself because this shows that the CEPS takes its responsibility seriously. The results of the studies show in general that there are high levels of awareness of the corruption in the public agencies among both the employees and clients of these agencies. They also show that the employees and clients tolerate some forms of corruption, such as service clientelism and gift-giving, but not others, such as bribery.

Assessments of Corruption in Turkey by International Organizations

Transparency International’s (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) scores are composed from multiple sources of information about perceptions of corruption.²

²TI’s website emphasizes that the CPI is a composite index of the measures of perception by multiple reputable sources and that these measures are the most valid ways of assessing corruption in countries (http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/in_detail/#myAnchor2).

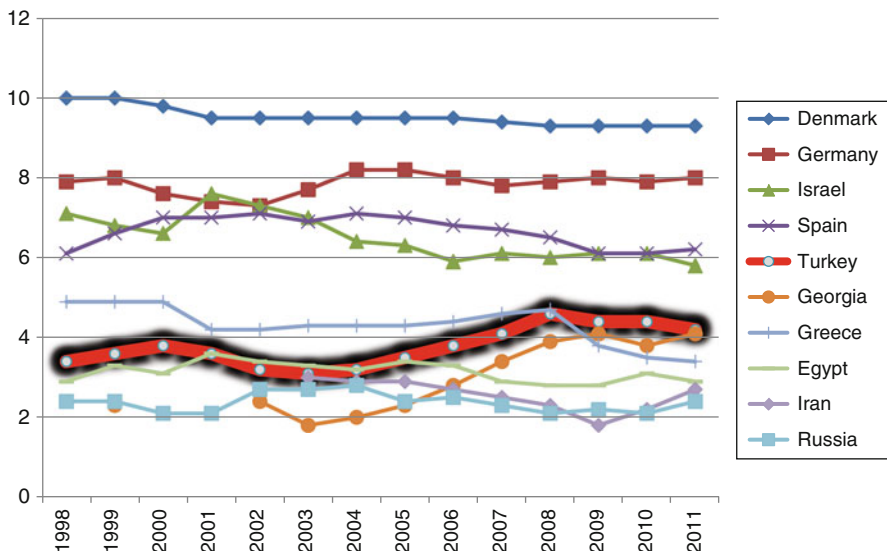


Fig. 9.3 Turkey's Scores on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in a Comparative Perspective. *Source:* Compiled from Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index Reports, 1998–2011 ([Transparency International n.d.-b](#))

In Fig. 9.3, Turkey's CPI scores are compared with those of a group of the countries in Europe and the Middle East between 1998 and 2011. (TI did not collect any CPI data before 1998.) On the CPI index "0" means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt and "10" means that it is perceived as very clean. Thus, the higher scores indicate less perceived corruption. Figure 9.3 indicates that Denmark and Germany maintained their higher scores over time. Israel and Spain also had high scores initially, but theirs declined gradually. Among the countries with comparable scores to Turkey, Greece, Egypt, and Iran experienced declines. Russia remained stable, and Georgia improved its standing. After some fluctuation in the last years of the 1990s, Turkey's scores increased steadily between 2002 and 2008 and declined slightly but steadily after that. This decline is consistent with the results of TI's 2012 "Global Corruption Parameter" survey, which shows that 57 % of the people in Turkey thought that in 2011 the level of corruption increased in this country, while 26 % thought that it decreased and 17 % said that it remained the same ([Transparency International n.d.-a](#)).

The scores on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators Control of Corruption (WGI-CC) Index provide a broader view on Turkey's status compared to other countries. The WGI-CC index scores are composites of the scores obtained from multiple "data sources produced by a variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector firms" ([World Bank n.d.](#)).

Turkey's WGI-CC scores are presented in Fig. 9.4, together with the scores of the same group of countries in Fig. 9.3. In this figure, -2.5 means weak governance

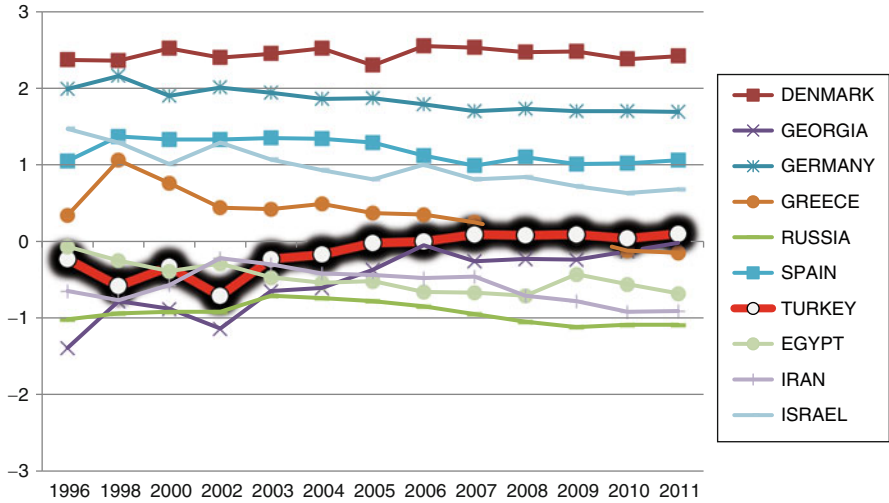


Fig. 9.4 Turkey’s Worldwide Governance Indicators Control of Corruption Scores in A Comparative Perspective. *Source:* Compiled from [Word Bank \(n.d.\)](#)

performance on fighting corruption and 2.5 means strong governance performance on fighting corruption.

Figure 9.4 shows that Turkey’s scores fluctuated between 1996 and 2002 and then increased steadily. This steady increase parallels the trend in Georgia and contrasts with that of Iran, Egypt, Israel, Germany, Spain, and Greece, all of which experienced declines. Russia’s score remained below Turkey’s during this period. Denmark maintained its leading status among the countries represented in Fig. 9.4 over time. All in all, the steady increases in Georgia’s and Turkey’s scores are noteworthy.

The patterns in Turkey’s scores in Figs. 9.3 and 9.4 are similar to those of Georgia, which was identified as the best corruption buster in the world by Transparency International in 2010 (Lessons from 2012). Like Turkey, Georgia maintained an economic liberalization policy and systematic anti-corruption policies for roughly a decade, particularly after this country’s Rose Revolution in 2003. Puppo (2010) cites Georgia’s experience as an example of how political struggles can be used to institutionalize anti-corruption efforts and notes that Georgia’s anti-corruption policy is based on top-down and consistent political decisions. This is similar to Turkey’s experience in the 2000s in that this country’s anti-corruption efforts were also top-down and based on consistent political decisions.

One of the factors that motivated the government in Turkey to take measures in reducing corruption and empowering citizens was the high prospects for Turkey’s ascension to full European Union membership. To determine Turkey’s eligibility for full membership, the EU monitors its performance in multiple areas, including democratization and anti-corruption reforms, and issues annual progress reports. In the most recent progress reports, the EU praised Turkey’s Government for adopting the laws and regulations to enhance citizen participation in governance and reduce

corruption (European Commission 2010, 2011, 2012). The reports also criticized the Turkish Government for not creating the necessary administrative capacity to implement these laws and regulations, for excluding certain groups of public officials (academics, military personnel, and the members of the judiciary) from the requirements of ethical conduct, and for granting immunity to the members of the parliament from prosecutions for corruption (European Commission 2010, p. 15, 2011, p. 19). The reports recommended the Turkish Government to create more effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms for the anti-corruption laws and regulations and enhance the mechanisms to allow civil society organizations to engage in governance (European Commission 2012, p. 18).

Conclusions

Two general conclusions can be drawn from the historical summary of Turkey's reform efforts and the indicators of citizen engagement and corruption presented in the previous sections: (1) the administrative reform efforts in Turkey followed a similar path as the reforms in Europe and North America (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011) and (2) the reforms of the 2000s were quite effective. The reforms before the 1990s focused on intraorganizational restructuring of public agencies through legislation. Beginning with the 1990s, the focus of the reforms shifted toward the relationships between agencies and the public they were supposed to serve, following the tenets of democratic governance. The reform efforts in the 1990s did not have lasting effects, primarily because of the political instability caused by the succession of coalition governments in this decade. The more systematic reforms began in 2002, under the steady administrative regime of the AKP governments. These reforms of the 2000s were more effective, as the multiple national and international indicators cited in this chapter demonstrate consistently.

The indicators show that citizens used their rights to complain about corruption at increasing rates (Fig. 9.1). The effectiveness of the agencies that had been created to receive information from citizens and take actions on them has been debated. Ömürgönülşen and Doig (2012, p. 14) criticize the multitude of agencies that were authorized to combat corruption and empower citizens, arguing that this was ineffective because of the lack of cooperation and coordination among the agencies. Acar and Emek (2008, p. 199) contend that actually the multitude of agencies does not always lead to confusion or conflict; on the contrary, this can help limit corruption because these various agencies hold each other accountable. The national and international studies on the perception of corruption in Turkey and the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators Control of Corruption Index support Acar and Emek's contention by showing that the country made steady progress in reducing corruption in the 2000s (Figs. 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4).

The decline in Turkey's Corruption Perception Index score that began in 2008 (Fig. 9.3) is noteworthy, although there is no parallel decline in its WGI-CC scores (Fig. 9.4). It is possible that the worldwide economic crisis that began in 2008 might have affected the perceptions of corruption in Turkey negatively as well, although

the Turkish economy was not affected by the crisis substantially. It is more likely that public's perceptions of corruption were affected by the series of scandals erupted in public institutions beginning 2009³ as well as the setbacks in the government's democratization efforts (Usul 2011). Because there are no surveys available yet on the perception of bribery in public institutions after 2008 (Fig. 9.2), there is no indication whether these scandals will have lasting effects in the people's perceptions.

Some authors emphasize that the political and administrative culture is important in increasing citizen's engagement in governance and reducing corruption (Emre et al. 2003; Ömürgönülşen and Öktem 2006; Görmez et al. 2009). They point out that traditional cultural habits, such as gift-giving, and past bureaucratic practices, such as patronage in hiring for public service positions, are impediments to implementing reforms.

As we noted earlier, the CEPS studies conducted in 2012 show that there is some degree of tolerance for these practices among the employees and clients of public agencies. It will take some time for these cultural habits to change. The progress that is observed in Turkey's corruption indicators in the last decade shows that Turkey is in the beginning of the changes in these habits and practices. In the coming decades more participatory and less corrupt governance practices may become institutionalized, with sustained efforts by the political authority and civil servants.

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³These scandals involved the Higher Education Entrance Exam, the Public Personnel Language Exam, and the Public Personnel Selection Exam and the awarding of the contracts by the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (34 Sent to Court 2012; Blaser 2012).

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