RESEARCH PROJECT: CRIME AND CULTURE

Crime as a Cultural Problem. The Relevance of Perceptions of Corruption to Crime Prevention. A Comparative Cultural Study in the EU-Accession States Bulgaria and Romania, the EU-Candidate States Turkey and Croatia and the EU-States Germany, Greece and United Kingdom

Project no.: 028442

Instrument: SPECIFIC TARGETED RESEARCH PROJECT

Thematic Priority: PRIORITY 7, FP6-2004-CITIZENS-5

RESEARCH REPORT TURKEY:

A Comparison of Findings of the First (Documents Analysis) and Second (Interviews Analysis) Project Phase in Turkey

Authors: Zeynep Sarlak, Besim Bulent Bali

Period covered: from January 2008 to July 2008
Date of preparation: July 2008
Start date of project: 1st January 2006
Duration: January 2006-December 2008
Project co-ordinator name: Prof. Dr. Ahmet Insel
Project co-ordinator organisation name: Galatasaray University (GSU)
Revision (draft 1)
1. Introduction

The world is in a war on corruption. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, etc. overtly indicate that they fight corruption. Transparency International proclaims itself to be the leader of this war. Corruption is defined, measured and compared both over time and between countries and continents by these international institutions. They are the authors of the dominant international anti-corruption paradigm. And this paradigm of anti-corruption imposes itself as universal. Hence, it is a-cultural. Its remedies are developed within the framework of management sciences and are articulated in a way that they are applicable regardless of time and location. It blames solely the public authority. It rests on the separation between the state and the rest of society. And accordingly, it mainly concentrates on the public authority while developing its strategy on anti-corruption. In this context, the measures for minimizing corruption are by and large listed as transparency in governance, accountability, institutionalization of inspection mechanisms, and increase in the number of NGOs that would conduct monitoring. In other words, the anti-corruption measures articulated share the same goal of curbing the opportunities that facilitate the involvement of public employees in corruption. The target is to define heavy penal sanctions for corrupt acts in advance and develop the institutions which would implement these sanctions whenever corruption is identified.¹

Hence, public officials, politicians, bureaucrats and judges are expected to draw a clear-cut distinction between their personal interests and the public resources they administer. Parallel to the discourse of the neoliberal ideology, in this paradigm, it is the violation of this public/private distinction by individuals that fundamentally defines corrupt behavior. As Haller and Shore state, however, “anthropologists have long recognized that this public-private dichotomy is often an arbitrary and inherently cultural category”.² To say it differently, the definition of corruption inherent in this paradigm is related to the project of modernity which is a cultural movement related to the West.³ In other words, what is moral or immoral, appropriate or inappropriate, legitimate or illegitimate, therefore corrupt or incorrupt

should be analyzed in the context of local standards and practices.\textsuperscript{4} For that reason, it is highly suspicious that the remedies of this paradigm would work for every other country.

An additional crucial point that deserves serious consideration is that as Tekeli clearly indicates, most of the corrupt acts such as bribery are committed by at least two parties. Apart from one sided acts such as embezzlement, corruption is a form of relation, in which both parties feel satisfied, for they have realized their aim. On one side of the relationship, there is the public authority (public officials, politicians, bureaucrats and judges), and on the other side are those who gain advantage and share it with the public authority (citizens, businessmen). It is certainly inadequate and even dangerous, to asymmetrically focus on only those in public sector in the fight against corruption and ignore the private one.\textsuperscript{5}

This dominant paradigm, while labeling corruption as “evil”, relating it to even “death”\textsuperscript{6}, it offers a series of precautionary measures to eliminate the notion of corruption without feeling any need of knowing it and yet at the same time it declares that the notion should normatively stay out of society. Nevertheless, right at this point, the sociology of corruption must be closely acknowledged.

Similarly in Turkey, the anti-corruption measures that have so far been implemented were designed in accordance with the postulations of the international dominant anti-corruption paradigm. Achieving universal legal and institutional standards is considered sufficient to succeed in reducing corruption. Two important factors accelerated this process; approval of Turkey’s candidacy to EU in Helsinki Summit in 1999 and the “Transition to Strong Economy Program” put into practice following the November 2000-February 2001 economic crises and the standby agreement signed with IMF accordingly. Over the last years public administration has been undergoing a tremendous modernization process, for these two reasons.

The architect of this process, Kemal Dervis, prior to coming to Turkey had been employed as Vice-President for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management in World Bank where he had been responsible for global programmes and policies to fight poverty as well as operational coordination with other institutions, including the United Nations system, the IMF and the WTO on international institutional and policy issues. From March 2001 to August

\textsuperscript{4} Dieter Haller and Cris Shore (2005), p. 17.  
\textsuperscript{5} Tekeli, (2007).  
2002, Dervis performed as Minister for Economic Affairs and the Treasury, without party affiliation in DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government. His programme was adopted in principle by succeeding AKP governments.

The crisis of February 2001, in fact not only an economic crisis but also a sign of the institutional collapse of this regime, paved the way for the election victory of the AKP (Justice and Development Party). As Insel has noticed, the AKP was able to channel the reactions against the corruption affairs and the unjust distribution of wealth that had become even more severe in the wake of the November 2002 elections.

In such a conjuncture, fighting corruption constituted a significant part of the overall agenda of the 1st AKP government. AKP, entirely embracing the discourse of the international dominant paradigm introduced in Turkey with Kemal Dervis, in its party programme (2001) declared combating against all types of corruption as “a high priority task of the party”, especially the corruption that stems from the misuse of public power”. Likewise, the same emphasis on public sector was placed in 58th, 59th and 60th government programmes.

---

7 In August of 2002, after the crisis was overcome, Kemal Dervis resigned from his Ministerial post, joined the Republican People's Party (centre-left) and was elected to Parliament in November of the same year. He resigned from CHP after two years. He has been the head of the United Nations Development Programme, the UN's global development network, since August 2005.


10 In AKP’s party programme, a special section was dedicated solely to the “Combat against corruption” and the policies targets were listed as such: “A comprehensive program for fighting corruption shall be prepared and put into implementation immediately. Transparency in the public administration and revising of bid regulations shall be taken up within the scope of this program. -An office will be established to provide coordination between all agencies and institutions in the prevention, identification, investigation and prosecution of corruption; this office shall coordinate the policies and measures against corruption it shall constantly monitor the strategy for fighting against corruption. -Non-governmental organizations active in combating corruption shall be allowed to participate in inspections for corruption: The State will utilize directly and rapidly the studies carried out by non-governmental organizations in this area. -Special criteria shall be adopted for the assignment of personnel to be employed in the public administration where the likelihood of corruption is high, while controlling such personnel shall be subjected to a special procedure. -Authorities of concerned Chief Prosecutors' Offices shall be increased for combating corruption in public administration. -Special offices shall be established to monitor corruption in all agencies and institutions. Alongside this internal control, independent external audit establishments shall also be utilized. When these units indicate cases of corruption, the case shall be immediately submitted to the specialized prosecutors. -The Ministry of Finance shall create a system to investigate the correctness of property declarations made by public officials. -A special law will be enacted to regulate the right provided by the present constitution to the Supreme Council of Public Accounts to carry out audits on behalf of the Grand National Assembly, shall achieve a legal basis. -Turkey's participation in the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) created within the framework of the Council of Europe shall be realized .Two conventions prepared by the council of Europe but not yet signed by Turkey, namely "Convention on the Penal Code against Corruption" and " Convention on Civil Code on Corruption" will be signed and satisfied without delay.” http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/partyprogramme.html.

11 The 58th Government Programme (Gul Government) set its priorities as the improvement of “transparency in the use and the allocation of the public resources” for corruption prevention. Another target related to the this purpose was stated as the acceleration of the judicial process. In addition, a special section on corruption prevention (art. 5-1/d) was included in the 58th Government Urgent Action Plan. In the same period a special
Currently on paper, Turkey looks well poised to embrace the criteria related to corruption by having adopted a number of conventions by international organizations largely in the context of EU integration process. And, since the early 2000s, several legal-institutional steps have been taken accordingly and a certain level of success has been achieved in the struggle against corruption on an operational level.

anti-corruption commission established in the Parliament, conducted investigations into corruption and after six months of work, submitted a report of 1112 pages to the Parliament confirming the corruption cases in various fields. The inquiry motions about former ministers and the former prime minister, Mesut Yılmaz were submitted in line with the commission’s conclusions. The first 149 pages of the report were dedicated to the system analysis and solution proposals related to the legislative, executive and the judiciary. In the 59th Government Programme (1st Erdogan Government) the following goals took place among the set of priorities: “efficient struggle against corruption and poverty”, “elimination of the barriers, including the parliamentary immunity, that prevent public officials to be subject to the jurisdiction of the court”, and “the implementation of measures for the purpose of curbing motivations towards corrupt and criminal acts”. In the 60th Government Programme (2nd Erdogan Government) corruption was defined as a major problem that “damages the trust relationship between the citizen and the State”. The program emphasized the use of technological developments in the provision of efficient public service and its contribution to downsizing bureaucratic processes. The concepts such as e-Government, e-Transformation, and the plans like “Single Card Project” were highlighted as tools of fighting corruption.


13 The legal and institutional restructuring efforts related to anti-corruption strategy that have so far been implemented during this process can be summarized as such: -Including Turkish Criminal Law (Law no:5237, Accepted on:26.09.2004 ) and The Public Procurement Law (Law no: 4734, Accepted on: 04.01.2002) several laws have been changed by amendments. -The Banking Regulation and Supervisory Agency strengthened its supervision and monitoring of banking activities based on the Banking Law No. 4839 of June 1999 later amended by Law No. 5020 on December 26, 2003 in order to lead to a further acceleration of collecting money from private banks that have been taken over. -Turkey enacted implementing legislation in the form of the “Amendment to the Law regarding Prevention of Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International business Transactions” (Law no:4782, Accepted on: 02.01.2003 ). -Public Financial Management and Control Law (Law no: 5018, Accepted on:10.12.2003) comprises clauses related to budget and fiscal discipline in accordance with the EU norms. -Law on the Right to Information (Law no:4982, Accepted on: 09.10.2003) and its regulation were put into force. -Law for Establishment of the Ethics Board for Civil Servants (Law no: 5176, Accepted on:25.05.2004) came into force in 2004. Its secondary regulations were published. The Ethics Board set forth the ethical rules that the public officials are required to comply and the related contracts are signed by the public officials. -The Witness Protection Law was enacted (Law no: 5726 Accepted on: 27.12.2007) -The 57th government, with the contributions of various NGOs and the World Bank, issued an action plan named as “Increasing Transparency in Turkey and Enhancing Good Governance in Public Sector” on 12 January 2001. The action plan includes major components related to corruption prevention. R. Bülent Tarhan, “Yolsuzlukla Mücadele Alanında Türkiye Deneyimi ve Kurumsal Yapı Arayışları”, (Turkish Experience on Combating Corruption and the Search for Institutional Structure) http://www.tepav.org.tr/eng/admin/dosyabul/upload/2_TOBByolsuzluk.pdf. Prior to this process, the only noteworthy legal arrangement was the enactment of the Law on Declaration of Assets and Combating Bribery and Corruption (Law no: 3628, Accepted on:19.04.1990). Beneath these legal restructuring efforts, there lies the idea that the causes of the past economic crisis are to a large extent due to the high level of corruption in public sector. A similar discourse was developed in 1997 concerning the reasons of the economic crisis in East Asian
However, in the mean time, very serious corruption allegations regarding AKP’s leader and political cadres have been brought up by certain media organs and opposition parties, to the point that said allegations constituted the vehicles of propaganda for AKP’s opponents, mainly the opposition party, CHP right before the General Elections in 2007.\textsuperscript{15}

Moreover, all these modernization efforts for corruption reduction during the first half of the 2000s, until now seems to not have yielded any satisfactory results. The findings of the studies carried out by both international and national institutions related to perceptions on corruption in Turkey reveal this fact explicitly.

According to the evaluations of the international institutions, the country’s level of corruption remains still high: TI ranked Turkey at 65th place in 2005 (among 158 countries), 60th place in 2006 (among 163 countries) and finally 64th place in 2007 (among 179 countries).\textsuperscript{16} Turkey, therefore takes place in the group of countries perceived as most corrupt in Europe. According to World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), significant deficiencies continue in the attempts to control corruption in Turkey. Its findings demonstrate
countries. Together with IMF and the World Bank, numerous international institutions have explained the Asia’s economic crisis as the result of “crony capitalism”, “a web of corruption between governments and business leaders throughout the region”. As a natural consequence of this analysis, the legal-institutional prescriptions prepared by these very institutions concentrated on corruption in its narrow sense and preferred to define the concept as “misuse of public authority”.

\textsuperscript{14} The official data regarding the corruption operations took place in the 2007 report of the Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM) working under the General Directorate of Security. The report which documents the drug trafficking, gang related incidents, corruption and smuggling crimes, also states that the “planned” corruption operations which took place between the years 2003-2007, were “doubled” in comparison to the previous years. According to the same report, the KOM units within the coordination of Deputy Director General, organized series of operations against the high ranking bureaucrats and organized crime groups who were associated with corrupting public contracts and gaining high earnings through illegal activities. Based on the official data in the website of the Combating Against Financial Crimes Division of Istanbul Police Department, 156 “planned” operations were organized in the last 5 years to fight corruption. In these operations; legal proceedings were carried out for 2678 people 805 of whom were government employees. Likewise, most of the bureaucrats who were taken into custody were arrested and some of them were dismissed from their positions for turning a blind eye to illegal acts and corruption for their benefit. See, the official website of Istanbul Police Department, Combating Against Financial Crimes Division, http://mali.iem.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=119. The datasets acquired from the website of KOM, show a significant increase in the number of operations against corruption in 2007 in comparison with the previous years. In 2003 the number of planned operational interrogations in the fight against corruption was 16, 9 in 2004, 8 in 2005, 38 in 2006 but then it climbed to 117 in 2007, 55 of which were planned. According to the data given in the same website, in 2007 1028 people were sent to judiciary units. Ahmet Pek, “Yolsuzlukla Mücadelemenin Neresindeyiz?” (Where are we in our fight against corruption?), http://www.kom.gov.tr/Tr/KonuDetay.asp?BKey=64&KKey=159.

\textsuperscript{15} For the details of this process see, Besim Bulent Bali and Zeynep Sarlak, “Corruption in Turkey: Why Cannot an Urgent Problem Be a Main Concern?”, Crime and Culture discussion Paper Series, No. 14, University of Konstanz, 2008.

that no noteworthy progress has been made in Turkey between 1996-2006.\textsuperscript{17} These findings support the World Bank’s and the EBRD’s evaluation in 2005 regarding the high level of organized crime and corruption in the business sector in Turkey.\textsuperscript{18} It is also possible to draw the same conclusions by following Turkey’s “Opacity Index” values for corruption which are 51 in 2001, 67 in 2004 and 52 in 2007-2008 respectively.\textsuperscript{19}

Likewise, the findings of the corruption related studies done by local NGOs and research firms assert that in the perceptions of households and governing elites, corruption is still widespread in Turkey.\textsuperscript{20}

In such a picture, it seems important to return back to the aforementioned “cultural categories” of corruption rather than relying on a “top-down” procedure, i.e. accepting the legislative, administrative and police force measures developed by international institutions as the one and only solution for corruption prevention. It is important to investigate whether all these prevention policies based on a certain corruption definition really “suit” the political and administrative elite’s or economic agent’s perceptions of corruption in Turkey.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The indicators measure six dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. They cover 212 countries and territories for 1996, 1998, 2000, and annually for 2002-2006. The indicators are based on several hundred individual variables measuring perceptions of governance, drawn from 33 separate data sources constructed by 30 different organizations. The units in which governance is measured follow a normal distribution with a mean of zero and a Standard deviation of one in each period. This implies that virtually all scores lie between -2.5 and 2.5, with higher scores corresponding to better outcomes. Turkey’s “control of corruption” in a 10 year period from 1996 to 2006 are as follows: 0.01 in 1996, -0.24 in 1998, -0.19 in 2000, -0.43 in 2002, -0.24 in 2003, -0.20 in 2004, -0.05 in 2005 and 0.06 in 2006. Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters VI: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2006, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4280, July 2007, pp: 91-93.
\item The Opacity Index ranges from 1 to 100. The higher a country’s score, the greater is opacity. For evaluations of Turkey see, Opacity Index Measuring Global Business Risks, available at:
\url{http://www.milkeninstitute.org/pdf/2008OpacityIndex.pdf};
\url{http://www.kurtzmg.com/GLOBAL_EDGE_Presentation_FINAL.pps#289,11,Slide11};
\url{http://www.funcionpublica.gob.mx/indices/doctos/pwc_opacity_index_2001.pdf}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Therefore, in this study, as a part of a research project called “Crime and Culture”, it is expected to gain fundamental insights into the cultural context of Turkey within which deviant and criminal behavior occurs –not only at the macro/formal institutional but also the micro/informal practical level– and into the respective preconditions under which criminality can be combated successfully. To be able to accomplish such a task, it is believed that a top-down perspective per se would fall short of unveiling the existent social reality since speaking in sociological terms; corruption can above all be defined as a type of social relation. In other words, seen from an impartial perspective, phenomena such as nepotism and bribery can be very well characterized as mechanisms for achieving solidarity within and between kinship groups in Turkish culture similar to other cultures.

Parallel to the methodology of the research project, this study, therefore adopts a ‘bottom-up’ empirical approach to corruption to reveal the normative standards of Turkish culture, through bringing together the respective “modes of perception and recognition of the phenomenon by different social actors” in Turkish society.

2. Target Group Perceptions of Corruption

Target Group Politics

The interviewees define corruption as a set of” nontransparent”, “inexplicit”, and “uncompetitive behavior” contrary to the “legal regulations” and “moral principles” in a society. Corruption, according to them, causes unfair competition which “hinders development and justice”. The legal precautions are considered as insufficient to fight against corruption since; it can take place in accordance with the law. So corruption is a phenomenon that is not so blatantly obvious. As stated by the interviewees, the existence of such cases requires the definition of the term to be revised.

The Boundaries of Politics

The existence of an anti-democratic structure in which politics equals to the distribution of rent, is underlined. The structures that set the national security policies in Turkey, hinder the demands of diverse social strata and tend to fix the direction of the politics in this field. When
the vast dimensions of the national security priorities are considered, the manoeuvre space of politicians is quite narrow. To redefine the perceptions of security threat, to change the internal security strategies of security actors who benefit from a vast portion of the state resources, is far beyond the authority of a politician. On the other hand, this situation is not the main priority of the public who suffers from unequal income distribution and poverty, they evaluate the success of the government through their own welfare levels. Within this framework, the governments that act with the motivation of winning the elections, will have the economical field as their manoeuvre space to make politics. The vote repository of the politician appears to be the redistribution of economical resources.

*Land Allocation*

One of the contributing causes of corruption is the fact that, unlike its Western counterparts Turkey has not yet resolved the “proprietorship of land”. According to the evaluations of the interviewees, the rapid urbanization in Turkey since the 50’s has turned “the land” a grand instrument of rent-seeking. However the allocation of land is not always considered as corruption. The logic system of the interviewees is as follows: it is unavoidable to grant permits to the squatter settlements that are the outcome of rapid urbanization and to respond to the housing and infrastructure needs of the communities that live in these areas. An immigrant from the countryside does not have money to buy land, does not have the background to build a house within the local building codes or does not have a steady income. Building infrastructure to the slum areas or granting licenses might be regarded as a populist “corruptive act” on a “legal ground” but when the results are considered it has turned out to be quite useful. This situation is adapted as a method of low-income housing supply in a country like Turkey where there is not enough capital accumulation and it also acts as a social and economic support for the adaptation period of rural immigrants into the urban life. In the course of time, the housing stock has changed from squatter houses to illegal building blocks.

Right before the 2007 elections, without refrain the Prime Minister Erdogan stated that the house he was living in did not have a building permit. This emphasis openly reveals how the housing permits are used as a tool of election campaigns. In other words, neither for the majority of the citizens nor for the politicians, this situation is perceived as a corruption problem.
Since the second component of this issue is more personal and more towards the interest of the individual, it is regarded as more problematic. According to this point of view, by changing the master plans (increasing the surface area of the development areas, etc), municipal authorities have the possibility of manipulating the values of land that are within their jurisdictions. There is no end to creating profit through rent-seeking activities in a ever growing city. All the political parties are claimed to agree on this matter. There are examples of how the changes in the master plans are accepted instantly, without dispute, by the opposing parties in the municipal board meetings.

Historical Sediments

The state tradition of the Ottoman Empire and the residues of the state-society relationship that leaked into the Republic of Turkey, are counted as other causes of corruption. The opinions of the interviewees are reconstructed as follows: The fear that the citizens of Ottoman Empire had for the state and its tax mechanisms had been transferred to the citizens of the Republic. The underlying cause to this fear, lies in the fact that the state both in the Ottoman times and the Republic times do not pay any respect to its citizens. Moreover, since the transition to multi-party governance in the 50’s, the state has been used as a tool of setting up political cadres in public offices as well as reducing unemployment, against the growing population. This also brings along the low quality public officials. A distorted relationship format occurs when the poor education level is combined with the State’s disparaging look on its citizens. The causes of bribery in public sphere should be sought in this mindset. This reality can not be improved by changing the law or enact new legislation. No improvement is expected in the struggle against corruption, especially bribery, unless the reciprocal perceptions between the society and the State change.

The Authority of the Leaders

The interviewees emphasize that the internal dynamics of the political parties also set the ground for corruption. The establishment of the political parties within a chain of command, the authority that the party leaders have in selecting the candidates for parliament membership, is considered as a factor indirectly affecting corruption. This situation turns the
daily routine of the politicians to micro-scale problems (finding a job or a scholarship). Just as the established canon gives space to the party in power, only to be decisive in the economic realm, “the authority of the leaders” in other words “the lack of democracy within the political parties” gives space to their MPs only to be effective in solving the daily problems of their voters within their regions. The MPs also know that when he demands change in the bigger picture, he will be facing the party leader and will not be selected as a candidate for the MP list in the next elections or he will run as a candidate from a region where he won’t be able to get selected. As this condition goes on, MPs are not expected to act on their own initiatives because within the existing structure the MPs feel more indebted to the cadres that make him elected rather than to the electors.

*Cultural Codes*

The interviewees all agree on the fact that majority of the Turkish society does not regard the “petty corruption” in its Western sense, as “immorality”. On the contrary they perceive it to be a quite “natural” phenomenon. The idioms and proverbs like “the property of the State is as huge as the Sea, the one who does not take advantage of it is a pig”, “the donor is content, the recipient is content, what is it to you?”, “the one who takes hold of the honey licks his finger” reflect the cultural codes and this perception of “petty corruption” very clearly. It is suggested that another factor leading to corruption lies in the perception of “loyalty” for Turkish society. It is claimed that the loyalty that Turkish people feel for each other is felt so deeply that the principles are easily disregarded. It is also suggested that, the proverb, “A cup of coffee commits one to forty years of friendship” reflects the approach that has been engraved in the behavioral patterns of Turkish society. This kind of loyalty perception is said to set the ground for patronage and clientalism. According to the interviewees, it is not meaningful to evaluate the actions of MPs irrespective of the cultural structure in the society. As a reflection of the society, the affiliations based on loyalty among the MPs, can also be developed regardless of the political affiliations and the communities these MPs are representing. One can easily monitor these bonds in commissions, meetings, etc.

In fact, parliament membership works as a network, similar to that of the social solidarity networks and provides an existence space. Thus, the agenda of the politician turns out to be different than the agenda of the voter in many ways. In such a communitarian/solidarist
structure of politics, corruption cases can easily be overlooked. In the same manner, the politicians choose to turn a blind eye to the corruption that is the result of complex yet balanced relationships.

Unfair distribution of income

In the perceptions of the interviewees, the unfair distribution of income constitutes an additional cause that triggers corruption and the ignorance towards it at the social level. Accordingly, in a social body where certain groups are more privileged than the others; where there is inequality, corruption becomes a natural practice and people become inured to it without difficulty. It is suggested that without improving the unfair distribution of income, the legitimacy of politics will continue to get damage and there will be a new vicious circle.

Economic Liberalism

The interviewees hold the belief that corruption is a global issue and exist in the logic of neoliberal economic regulations. The fund allocation of the international institutions, which represent the interests of the developed countries, to the dictatorial regimes of the developing countries in the 70’s and 80’s, sets a good example to this belief in the sense that the same funds were transferred back to the Western banks by the financial institutions of these developing countries due to the high interest rates. The transfer of the natural resources and geostrategic values of these poor countries to the rich countries in these ways, is identified as the biggest corruption example ever. Another example to the global economic structures being affiliated with corruption shows how bribery is legalized by taking its place as an entry in the accounting records of the developed economies like US. It is claimed that, despite all these facts, developed countries keep on blaming the developing countries for corruption and “to put it mildly” this can be identified as “hypocrisy”. In this sense, the invasion of Iraq, by the USA is named as an “giant” case of corruption.

It is suggested that, the corruption allegations within privatization processes can also be evaluated in this sense. It is also added that rapid privatization pressures, have been coming from the international finance institutions for years in exchange of credits causing a
privatization process without the necessary legal structure. Privatization is the sphere in most countries where corruption is widely seen and obviously Western entrepreneurs make a packet out of this process. Yet it does not seem possible to go through an uncorrupted privatization process under the pressure of time and lacking the legal structure. The institutions like World Bank criticize these processes saying “your privatization was not successful”. However, they try to rewind and teach what should have been done only when the outcomes are bad. It should be kept in mind that corruption has increased in many developing countries because of rapid liberal transformations. The same thing is true for Turkey. Corruption cases have increased since the 80’s with the economic liberalization policies specifically led by Turgut Ozal. This has been increasingly going on.

**Political Party financing in Turkey**

The interviewees have presented two different views on political party financing. The first of these two, states that financial resources of political parties for election campaigns and other spendings are adequate and even abundant. This group also states that a financial difficulty is not expected in the budgets of these parties because of the generous aid provided by the national treasury time to time. But it is also added that it would be wrong to assume that there is no “black money” or corruption in party financing in Turkey. Mercumek case has been presented as an exemplary case to this.

The second view claims that legislations regarding party financing, restrict the donations made to political parties substantially, which leads to grand corruptions in party financing especially in affiliations with the “construction industry” and “media”. It is asserted that no proposition for the transparency of the financing of politics has ever been taken into account so far.

Within this framework, it is added that not only for party financing but also to see the systematic nature in the realm of politics, the construction industry has to be closely watched.

Currently, it is claimed that the construction industry’s power has been on the highest level, when the last 20 years is considered and it is pointed out that “the growth rate of the debts of Turkey and the growth rate of this sector go hand in hand”. In this context, the cycle of the politician/political party and construction industry can be summarized as follows:
The construction industry support the central and local political candidates and when these candidates acquire the necessary political power that can affect investment decisions they pay their “debts” back by making regulations in favor of these contractors. Just at this point, there emerges the trivet of businessman-bureaucrat-politician. Contractors expand their business by using public resources and gain more power in the system. The ones who gained the necessary power, directly get involved in politics. It is well known that in the draft laws which aim to discipline the public contracts, lots of legislations have been changed in favor of construction industry because of the influence of MPs who were previously contractors. The majority of corruption allegations regarding AKP, claims partnership of the leading party with emerging construction firms. In consequence, the cost of these corrupt acts is paid by the society as taxes and high inflation.

In the media-political party affiliation level, this process which leads to corruption is identified as follows: During the election campaigns, the political parties go to the media organs to ask for their promotions on their channels. These organs bill the political parties for very low prices and make great discounts. The costs of these discounts are paid back by these parties during their governance. In other words, these discounts are nothing but “discounts of corruption”.

_Evaluation of the Target Group_

According to the interviewees, politics, media, jurisdiction, police, and business world are all involved in corruption in the same proportion. To blame one, and disregard others is said to be “unfair” since corruption is not perceived as an single-sided act.

For this reason, it is suggested that it would be wrong to perceive the politician as solely responsible for corruption. It is underlined that the politician is made to be the scapegoat of corruption to direct him for the economic interests of particular groups. It is also accepted that the politician is primarily responsible to take a step for the struggle against corruption and he is far more away from achieving this. However it is also emphasized that the politician should be held primarily responsible for solely not fulfilling this task. It is also stated that the very central structure of the state causes weakness in the control of the resource allocation decisions of the governments. The attention is also drawn to the fact that politician is made to pay the cost of this situation which is structured beyond his initiative.
Conclusion (on prevention)

Although the interviewees claimed that the source of corruption should not be sought in only in the politicians, when they start listing the steps to take to struggle against corruption, they mainly mention the regulations concerning the politics target group. The interviewees all agree on limiting the parliamentary immunity with political acts and freedom of speech. They also emphasizes that not only the members of the parliament but also all state officers should be liable and equal by law for corruption and other crimes like all citizens. Within this framework, it is pointed out that it is necessary to make changes in the “Law on the Prosecution of Civil Servants”. This suggestion is followed by another stating that in any second “party” affiliation with the state, the principle of “transparency” should be considered. However, the predominant belief in the interviewees is the fact that Turkey cannot struggle against corruption with its own internal dynamics. The reasons to this statement are listed as the “rigid structure” of the politics, the “balance of interests” among the political actors, “the organic affiliations with the non-political groups”, public officials’ (including tax controllers, financial controllers and those from the security and the legal system) relations with the criminal organizations and a “non-reactive” society. The interpretation of the Turkbank case not as a step taken by the parliament for the struggle against corruption but as an “attack strategy” as part of a political struggle constitutes to be an important data within this context. The biggest factor that is considered to have an important role in struggle against corruption in Turkey is the EU integration process. The norms of EU in immunities and transparency are accepted to be far ahead of Turkey and in case of full integration, the whole picture is believed to change in a radical way.

Target Group Judiciary

The Turkish Criminal Code, which entered into force on 1 June 2005 does not contain the legal notion of “corruption”, but it stipulates in great detail both the offenses falling under the category of corruption and the rules governing investigation and prosecution of such offenses. Corruption offenses and punishments against such offenses are defined under the headings “Economic, Industrial and Commercial Offenses” (i.e. malpractice concerning public procurements and completion of tender works, etc.) and “Offenses Against Trustworthiness of the Public Administration” (i.e. embezzlement, misappropriation, negligence to supervise,
bribe, breach of confidence, etc.). The new Code also introduces the concept of criminal liability of legal entities in such cases. In addition, in the new Code the definition of public official is extended for the purposes of penalizing the act of bribery. The interviewees, however, define corruption in a much wider sense. According to them, “corruption cannot be limited to illicit behavior patterns”. “Any human behavior in contrast to general ethical principles”, “honesty” and “good will” should be included in the definition of the term. While accepting the fact that “there cannot be a single and an absolute truth in social life”, one can always suggest the existence of a “supreme interest”. “The fact that a principle is not stated by law does not necessarily mean that it could be ignored”. It is likely that the legislator may have “forgotten” or “deliberately” disregarded the principle “for one or another reason”. Therefore, “laws should be in constant revision in accordance with changing social conditions”. Yet, “principles of honesty and good will stated in religious-ethical and cultural codes must remain superior to laws in all conditions”. “People seem to forget the fact that their existence can only be meaningful when it is related to an entity (let it be universal, religious or humanistic set of values) superior to themselves.”

The interviewees think that corruption is generally “demoted to bribery in society” because of its widespread nature. As bribery is an “action of free-will performed by both parties” “mutually content”, it “hardly ever becomes a case before the court” and “is inured” in the society. Nevertheless, bribery exits “in every domain of daily life” where “citizens are faced with the state apparatus” (the police, customs, hospitals and so forth). “Today’s hegemonic conception based on individualism, nurtures bribery”. Every field where money is in question is open to bribery.

In Turkey corruption is believed to exist most extensively in the fields related to State and politics. These are listed as;

- Public bidding,
- Privatization of State Economic Enterprises,
- Stock market operations,
- Local administrative units,
- Political party financing,
- Election expenses.
And, the causes of corruption are stated as following:

- Erosion in the moral values (“the ends justifies the means”, a social climate where success stories are demoted to fortune regardless of the means);
- Administrative heritage of the Ottoman rule (“Whatever you pick from the pig, is your earning”, state-subject interaction based on paternalistic forms);
- Lack of democratic culture (lack of access of people to government);
- Lack of expertise of the members of Jurisdiction related to newly-formed crime types;
- Time bar;
- Low quality of human resources at the implementation levels of government;

*Financing of Politics and Corruption*

According to the interviewees, both the issue of political party financing (the dirty face of the Turkbank Case; “blood money”) and the financing of politician are problematic in Turkey. The perceptions lie beneath this view are as such:

- Who is going to be an MP is designated by the leader and its close entourage, i.e. the MPs are “appointed” rather than “being elected”.
- The MPs are appointed not on the basis of merit but rather by reason of the direct or indirect contributions to the political party.
- Apart from certain well-known names that are used by the party for attracting the public, the MP candidates in general need financing to be (re)elected.
- The fund providers do not offer their financial support without remuneration.
- This climate, pushes away honest people from getting involved in politics.

In such a structure, a top-down initiative (built by the politicians) in support of “corruption prevention” is considered as an unrealistic expectation.
Evaluation of the target group

The main actors of grand corruption are stated as politicians and economic agents (in relation with criminal networks). It is argued that Turkbank case “openly” made “the existence of such a network” “obvious”, “without any hesitation”.

On the other hand, it is thought that the bribery occurs at all levels of police and the legal system. Among the members of the judiciary, the ones who take a firm moral stand against bribery are believed to be very few in numbers. “Giving bribes” under the guise of “presents” or “tips” have become a “standard procedure” to “get things done in a smooth fashion”. The interviewees also accept the fact that they resort to “presents” or “tips” in certain instances. Yet, still, both interviewees strongly believe that corruption is not as widespread compared to the other target groups. As for the Turkish Media, it is argued that it is far from fulfilling its functions to unveil the cases of corruption.

Legal System and its Obstacles in the Field of Corruption Prevention

Except for the domains of party financing and public procurement, the legal structure in Turkey is found to be sufficient for fighting against corruption Then again, it is argued that the legal system is faced with certain obstacles that weaken its power and efficiency in fighting against corruption. These obstacles are categorized under three headings:
- Presumption of innocence that takes place in the Constitution,
- Difficulty in providing evidence,
- Problem of finding witness or informant due to the lack of sufficient protection

In addition, it is stated that, due to its “low income level”, “difficult working conditions” and “work load” the brightest of the law students do not prefer to be a judge. According to this view, the severe working conditions of the State, push the law students who belong to relatively higher socio-economic and socio-cultural families away from their ideal, which is to be judge. On the other hand, it is difficult for an ordinary law student to climb up the stairs of the legal profession as a lawyer. As a result, Turkish legal system is full of judges who “have never read a single book in their life time”. When the “non-analytical” and “pro status quo” characteristics of the Turkish education system is considered, the economic and psychological
status of a judge who has an “average”/“weak” educational background, might weaken his enthusiasm to fight against corruption if not pushes him to directly get involved in corruption.

Theoretically, the application of EU standards is believed to provide certain progress in the efforts of corruption prevention. However, at this point two important reservations are put forward. First of all, it is believed that the AKP government is in hypocrisy regarding EU integration process. The interviewees have serious doubts over the present government’s willingness to meet the EU criteria. And, the second is related to the self-consistency of the EU itself for the reasons stated below:

- “Although the autonomy of jurisdiction is stated in the Copenhagen Criteria, the Union constantly puts the Turkish Jurisdiction under pressure”;

- “EU admitted the two countries, Romania and Bulgaria as member states, which are more corrupt than Turkey according to Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index”.

- “There are series of acts of corruption in which the European Commission is directly implicated, the very institution which regularly condemns inefficiency, delays and cases of corruption in Member States”.

It is believed that “until this very day”, EU integration process has not provided Turkey with any “noteworthy tool” to decrease the level of corruption. The only positive impact of the process is stated as the promulgation of the Public Procurement Law.

Conjunctural Analysis of Corruption

The implementation of the liberal economic model to move Turkey from “semi-capitalism to full capitalism” initiated by the Prime Minister Turgut Ozal in the post 1980 era, is believed to accelerate the acts of corruption. Ozal’s words "my civil servant knows his own advantages"/“My civil servant knows how to survive well!!” are perceived as the most significant signs of corrosion of moral values. It is argued that during this process,

- “the cultural perception of public shame” has started to “transform” noticeably,
- and the society has started to “envy” and “covet” the “lifestyles” of the “nouveaux riches” living in “villas” isolated from the rest by high walls, “without feeling the need to question” how they “turned the corner” (succeeded).

**Conclusion (on prevention)**

In the short-run the following measures are believed to contribute to corruption prevention:
- The establishment of a special commission similar to “Court of Political Parties”;
- Providing proper functioning of the “Law of Prosecution of Public Servants”;
- Effective auditing of expenses of municipalities;
- Enlarging the definition of corruption in such a way that it would include the relations within the private sector;
- Forming a witness protection program.\(^{21}\)

A striking evaluation mentioned in the interviews is that even though, the measures mentioned above were taken and applied in a serious manner, the corruption in Turkey would not be prevented for two main reasons. First, it is stated that unless the topic is taken in hand as an issue of “values education”, in other words, unless a paradigm shift that would re-identify the public shame and appreciation criteria is realized, struggle against corruption would not be more than a technical preoccupation. According to this view, “as far as the motivation behind a mal-practice exists, banning it would not solve the problem”. Yet, above all, corruption “should be perceived as” “a matter of morality” and the moral values are transmitted not only through formal education system but also through family and social interactions. In this context, corruption cannot be prevented unless the fact that corruption is a loose-loose game is internalized by the society as a whole. Anti-corruption measures therefore should be planned in such a way that they include universal humanistic values and principles.

In the final analysis, it would be meaningless to try to find a remedy to corruption as long as “the rules of the game stay the same”. In this context it is suggested that there is an implicit consensus among developed countries (tax heavens located in Commonwealth countries, the scandal of Bank of Credit and Commerce International). The movie “Godfather III” is believed to “very well demonstrate” “the complex nature of the relations between crime organizations, religious structures, politicians, business, etc.”

---

\(^{21}\) The related law was enacted a few months after the interviews had been made.
Target Group Police

When the evaluation of the target group is made on the basis of the interviews conducted, the first thing that appears is the fact that the corruption definition in the official documents and the corruption definition by the interviewees are quite different.

Corruption is defined, by both interviewees as “any act committed contrary to laws”, “regulations”, “the principles of social life” and “individual rights and freedoms”, in order to “receive or grant advantages” by way of either “using or not using one’s own power” In other words, corrupt act can take place both in public and private spheres. Such a definition has a much wider scope as compared to that of the international institutions. But defining the concept like this expands the domain where struggle against corruption will take place.

Both interviewees state that there is no clear and common (“universally accepted”) definition of corruption. Notwithstanding the debates about whether certain activities can be classified as corrupt or not, the day-to-day illustrations in the press and in conversation circumscribe the discussion of what constitutes corruption. From this point of view, sometimes giving or receiving a small gift could be considered as a corrupt act. Here, the determining factor is the value judgment of the society. However when we consider the cultural qualities of Turkish society, how correct is it to consider the small gifts (lunch fee, tie, some pocket money etc.) given to public officers as bribery. This situation has to be interpreted as the sign of love felt for the protector by the protected (in the example of police). It is noteworthy to see that the issue of gift is emphasized in both interviews. Especially an interviewee evaluated this situation giving a reference to a saying by Prophet Mohammed: “give gifts to the people you feel affection for.”? Therefore, there appears an acceptance, adoption, internalization of the petty corruption when it is about choosing between the grand and petty.

The main reasons of corruption listed in the official documents are to a large extent similar to those put forward in the interviews. These are:

- unemployment,
- low income level of public officials,
- lack of meritocracy,
- lack of punishment,
- lack of evidence due to reciprocity of benefits,
• the desire to earn easy money and to avoid responsibilities,
• solidarity reflexes (to favor the members of one’s own social group),
• the institutional heritage that the Republic of Turkey took over from the Ottoman Empire\textsuperscript{22}.

Parallel to the assessments in the official documents, the interviewees believe that the level of corruption increased to a great extent hand in hand with the post-1980 liberalization process. Financial as well as trade liberalization without sufficient legal infrastructure provided immense opportunities (fictitious export, credit embezzlement and state biddings) for people who wanted to become rich in an easy way. Especially, as a consequence of decentralization process that the AKP government started in early 2000s, local administrative units had greater fields of maneuver open to corruption via,

• abusing the legal loopholes,
• creative accounting through Municipal Economic Enterprises,
• receiving illegal grants and distributing them to the local electorate in forms of food supply, coal, etc.

_Evaluation of target group_

Business world, media and politics are placed in the first three ranks of corruption scale and the failures in other target groups including police, jurisdiction and NGOs are more often individual and in trivial amounts than systematic. Other target groups are evaluated as follows:

Politicians play a significant role in corruption. In spite of their great executive power, they do not have to render account of their deeds to any inspection body but the Supreme Court. As for the financing of political parties, it is believed that the aid received from the State Treasury is more than sufficient. Politicians should finance themselves and if they receive external financial support, it should be overtly recorded and declared as is the case in the USA. The immunities of MPs must be limited to freedom of speech. For petty offences, they

\textsuperscript{22} (Among the top administrative cadre in the Ottoman Empire, the idea to become wealthy by using its authority was internalized due to the lack of any formal, legal structure. Despite the penal and civil codes and the modern state institutions imported from the West, even today, this behavioral pattern is still valid for the administrators, as if it is genetically coded.)
should certainly be abolished. However, in the current situation politicians are not expected to lift the immunities since they seem to be in need of them.

The state attorneys and the judges are also enjoying the same asymmetry. The Turkish Penal Code bestows significant initiative to judges (the penalty for a crime X is for example up to 2 to 4 years of imprisonment, the judge may choose to opt for 2 or 4 years according to his discretionary power). Hypothetically, this discretionary power can be misused in exchange for personal benefits. It is a routine that judges apply to experts for subjects out of their professional knowledge. The reports prepared by experts frequently constitute the reference points for verdicts. An expert, if he is corrupt, is very well capable of misleading the judge. Law is applied because it is the Law not because it is fair. Sometimes people become victims of such corrupt experts. Nevertheless, ultimately, there is poetic justice. Even though suffering from low salaries, overwork, even sometimes death threats, the members of jurisdiction involved in corruption is relatively very few in numbers. However, due to the values that the judicial system represents, any corruption case belonging to this target group would erode the trust relationship between the ordinary citizen and the State. Members of the judicial system, for this reason should not worry about their financial status whatsoever. U.K could constitute a good example for Turkey in this context.

State institutions should not be held responsible for corrupt behaviors committed by few of their officials. Internal regulations of police department are very strict and when proven, the person involved in corruption is immediately dismissed. The police is unfairly blamed for bribery and other types of corruption by the public opinion. On the contrary, the police department is the most sensitive institution about corruption prevention. Certain acts considered natural in the past are defined as wrongdoings now. If there was still bribery in the police department despite reasonable improvements in salaries, the situation then must be seriously inspected and perpetrators must be severely punished.

Media has a huge impact, therefore must abide by certain ethical codes while utilizing it. They have the means to bring up the problems into sharp relief of the political authorities. Likewise, NGOs are one of the key actors for raising consciousness among state institutions.

The ultimate motivation for some businessmen is to get their work done regardless of ethical concerns. This mode of behavior has corrosive influence upon State institutions. At this point, reducing bureaucracy becomes an essential issue.


**Conclusion (on prevention)**

Acceptance of Turkey’s EU acquis which appears to be the phenomenon to speed up the efforts to reduce corruption is open to discussion.

EU means contemporary civilization, high quality of life, transparency and accountability and yet what is important about a law is its implementation rather than its enactment. At this point, the essential question is whether the ones that would implement the laws and the others that are expected to obey them share the Western values *intrinsic in the law’s* very rationality.

Given the fact that, in the basis of ethical problems lies ignorance, Turkey should primarily, focus on improving its education system both qualitatively and quantitatively. Adoption of EU criteria would not mean anything without the man power who would meet them. Institutional culture should be promoted in government agencies via institutional training, and efficient internal inspection. As clearly seen in these statements, the elite approach that searches the solution of every problem in Turkey in education is repeated here.

**Target Group Media**

The interviewees define the term corruption in a much wider sense. According to this definition, corruption is “acts contrary to” “legislations”, “regulations”, “traditions” and “cultural norms; in order to gain personal tangible or intangible advantage. In certain occasions even this definition is believed to be insufficient to determine corruption. The views of the interviewees on this subject are as follows: “It is hard to include cheating of a child and illegal financing of a political party or insider trading within the same definition”. At this point, the definition has to be “even more expanded”. It should include ways of “capital accumulation” or “party financing by taking advantage of legal loopholes”, “where jurisdiction has difficulty to define them as acts of corruption”. It is open to discussion to “qualify a modern enterprise that makes people work like slaves”, as “pure” and “clean” just because it is “adapting supposedly some ethical codes”; such as “paying taxes” and “agreeing international laws”. “Favoritism and nepotism” should also be included in the definition of corruption. It is disturbing to provide a general definition where “every type of corrupt act”, “no matter grand or petty is placed in the same basket” and “develop a prevention strategy based on the petty ones since they are more visible”. Likewise, it is questionable to qualify
“multinational corporations which do not evade taxes and fight for environmental issues in their own states and yet, exploit child labor in developing or less developed countries, as clean”. The acts of international companies which virtually “trap people” in a “never ending cycle of debt” and “exploitation” and “which force them to work on long-term contract basis with low wages” should also “considered as a form corruption”. “Process of globalization” “commanded by the large multinational corporations” and “by the governments” “at the expense of poor countries” is “not considered as corruption” “in any part of the world”. Moreover international institutions like “IMF, World Bank” “even the EU” at the service of those corporations interests are claiming that “poor countries are starving because they are corrupt”.

**Evaluation of the target group**

The assessments of the interviewees as regards to the peculiar relationship between the target groups and corruption are reconstructed as such: In early 1990s the term ‘clean society’ was operationalized by some media organs for the first time. They were making daily news of corruption related to every institution, from army to opposition and the government in charge. Their target was “not to create a clean” society but to “be able to give such news by introducing the term itself”. Recently, however, “one cannot read such news in the press”.

At present, the term corruption “lost its meaning”. “TUSIAD (Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen) for example, has quite strict ethical codes. The same codes exist in the publishing commission of Dogan Group. They allege easily that they are clean because they have such codes. The existence of these codes of ethics look as if there is significant improvement in this sphere compared to practices of the past. However, the situation is worse right now. Because, they declare something that does not exist in reality.” “One should ask the question whether “the relation between the news about ‘Turkey will become Malaysia’ and ‘the wish of Dogan Group to purchase the land of Hilton’ have nothing in common”. “These two things are absolutely connected”. “But, the Dogan Group has certain ethical principles of publishing”. “The daughter of the owner of Dogan Group is the president of TUSIAD”. When all these are evaluated together, what is going on is as follows: In the past, “it was the events, people and institutions that were dirty”. “It was necessary to put
forward concepts such as clean society”. But now “these concepts also became dirty”. Therefore, “they need to be redefined”.

According to the interviewees, corruption takes place mostly in the trivet of politics-bureaucracy-business world as demonstrated in the case of Turkbank. However, it is emphasized that “despite the fact that “the logic of market economy imprisons corruption within the boundaries of public sector”, one cannot deny that “the role of economic agents is of primary importance”. 

The evaluations of the other target groups are as follows: Corruption is “extremely destructive if it is committed in Jurisdiction”, because it “erodes the legitimacy of the State”. As for corruption in the police department, it becomes “dangerous” if it “collaborates with mafia and other criminal organizations contrary to its mission”. NGOs are usually in the bottom of the list. As for the media, it is obvious that “it is not struggling with corruption the way it should”.

As for the assessments regarding their own target group the interviewers made these remarks: “Corruption could be unveiled by journalism rather than jurisdiction and legislation”. Contrary to their claims, “media members” however are far from developing “an ethical position” on “unveiling corruption”. They can act only as much as “the capital group behind them allows”. “If one does not have ethical codes, it can only unveil some corrupt acts or none”. This is because “the capital groups in the media sector are also involved in corruption”: all the economy reporters know that there is ‘insider trading’ in every media group, “both at the individual and institutional level”. “In this case, how can a media member declare himself as man of principles?” “How can he confirm that he is making this news in the name of principle, clean media, clean society or clean stock market?” What is done is done to “hit” some people by “a piece of news”.

The approach to corruption is considered as “hypocritical” in Turkey: “The private sector, the capitalists and the journalists as their spokesmen always show the public field as the only corrupt area”. It could be “in a way correct”. “There are many perversions going on in the public sphere”, but corruption has always “two sides”. “A policeman does not bribe a judge”. “A judge does not protect an army officer to gain a bidding”. “Public field does not consist of government or state officials solely. Within this framework, “granting advantages”,
“protection, favoritism”, “provision of interests” should be “evaluated differently” from each other “depending on their scale”. Despite “characteristically” the same, “the corrupt acts of a policeman” whose living conditions are “poor” and of someone who just “wishes to satisfy his greed” should “not be considered equally corrupt”. The system in Turkey however punishes only “the smaller/weaker” but not “the powerful”.

The other reasons of corruption are stated as such:

- Inefficiency of jurisprudence (Overburdened prosecution personnel, long processing times, lack of expertise, time bar)
- Lack of punishment
- Legal loopholes
- Frequent amnesties
- Poor quality of education
- Poor performance of inspection mechanisms: The fact that there is less corruption in developed countries is not because people in these countries are “more honest”, but because of “high and severe penalties”. Corruption, chiefly “the bribery” is inured in Turkey because; “appropriate penalty is not given at appropriate times”. “Ordinary people do not believe in judicial system” in Turkey since “justice delayed is justice denied”. On the other hand many middle level bureaucrats who are seriously fighting against corruption cannot “find the necessary political support to finalize their efforts”.

The interviewers in this target group make a different assessment about the unfair income distribution, a commonly identified reason for corruption by those of other target groups. According to this view, it would be “wrong to draw a parallel between the uneven income distribution and bribery”. This is just a way of “legitimizing” it. The inverse is correct however: “the higher corruption is, the wider the gap in distribution of income becomes”. The fact that many people do not have opportunities to improve their living conditions in their normal course of life turn them into “individuals who run after small gains” and “favors”. “They believe that it is the only way to survive”. This condition “worsens due to the inequality of opportunity”. On the other hand, “ordinary people are not that innocent at all”. They watch “Kurtlar Vadisi” (a TV serial showing intriguing relations in the state) and “criticize severely those who manifested against Hrant Dink’s murderers”.

27
On the relation of financing of politics with corruption, the interviewees make a differentiation between the “maintenance of functioning of the political party” and “maintenance of the businesses of the leading figures in the party”. Within this framework, the question ‘Why do some people become leading politicians and others do not?’ is revised. According to this view, the political system takes in the figures that could “provide the system financial support”. In return, “the system nurtures them” “by means of certain decisions”, “hints”, “insider trading”, etc. “It is not possible to see an ordinary worker as a member of the parliament”. Because, he/she would “not be valuable for the party in terms of creating any sort of impact”. It is “hard to break this vicious circle”.

The dimensions of corruption in local politics are regarded as more “striking”, “despite smaller in scale” compared to those committed in the center. In local politics, “informal clusters” and “networks of kinship”, “townsmanship”, “friendship”, “enmity” and such relations are found to be “more common”.

On the financing of politics, “the practices in the USA” are considered applicable for Turkey: If “watch organizations” similar to the ones in USA could be established in Turkey, it might “provide positive results in relation to monitoring certain processes”.

Another significant issue with regards to the sphere of politics is stated as “the extent of the immunities that the MPs are offered”. The interviewees claim that the immunities must certainly be “limited to the freedom of speech”. Yet, it is not expected that the immunities will be lifted in the near future while some many people are “struggling for being an MP” to “enjoy the legal protections they provide”.

**Conjunctural Assessment of Corruption**

The interviewees assert that in Turkey corruption increased after 1980, with the transition to the liberal economic model. The assessments of the interviewees regarding this process can be summarized as follows: “Contrary to its logic” however, in Turkey the state carried on with its “interventionist stance”. It created, “this time” “a new set of entrepreneurs” by means of
distributing them public resources (export incentives, tax rebates, heavy domestic borrowing, etc.) and “took no notice of their misuse deliberately”. As a result, “Turkey had to face successive economic crises with extremely high social costs”. Now, “the big bosses who got rich through corruption during 1980s and early 1990s are demanding transparency and regulations”. Beneath this demand, however there lies “the fear of new rivals”, “mainly coming from Anatolia”, “challenging their position by using the same path that the formers followed”. Mercumek case is evaluated in this context.

Conclusion (on prevention)

The biggest contribution on corruption prevention is expected to come from the EU integration process. Nevertheless, even if this process is not believed to solve the problems arising from the natural functioning of liberal economic system: It could only “rasp some of the exaggerated, obvious mal-practices”. EU actors would not “prevent the conversion of an archeological site into a construction land for a skyscraper”. Conversely, “they might give support to such a decision for the aim of purchasing the land themselves”. “The bureaucrat in Brussels” would not “explicitly approve” it, but its “businessman” would certainly do. Yet, still EU process is considered as “necessary” for Turkey to reach a certain standard.

Target Group Civil Society

TESEV

The definition of corruption can be made in two ways; by staying within or outside the realm of modernity. In the modern world, a legal definition is more logical despite being narrow. However, when it is evaluated outside the realm of modernity, corruption becomes “the gaining advantage by way of using specific information or a relationship” and this destroys the social networks.

Above all, corruption is the problem of modern world which is unable to produce common ethical values. Modern world rationalizes everybody’s living in their individual ethic systems. Another person’s life can only be questioned with his/her ethical values. Communal life is sustained through the laws not through the common ethical system that is failed to be
produced. If the laws do not function well, then the individual immoralities will be legitimized. After that, people will be involved in corrupted acts either to prove themselves that they are not “foolish” or because they are too smart. If your position in the business world or social life is more meaningful than how you got there, the collapse of the ethical norms will be normalized especially if there is a system encouraging it...Besides, since the society is used to these kinds of corrupted acts, there are not many reactions against these people. To be used to these acts is a phenomenon that has been going on for ages. It would be more weird if there was not getting used to it; the society would not maintain its existence without getting used to these. With time and to the extent they get used to this, the society learnt to gravitate towards narrower worlds to give meaning to their private lives and to be happy with this. Meanwhile the people with corrupted acts learnt to hide this.

For Turkey’s stance, the fundamental thing is the fact that morality is only valid for people’s private lives. Stealing from the state is perceived to be normal and stealing from the neighbor is considered wrong and this can be explained by the perception that state is not considered to be the common state for everybody. In the perception about state there is no space to think that “state only does public work and citizens are part of it.” In other words, state is something that nobody knows what it is but has a different opinion on it. For example someone who reads the news about a forest fire started by land mafia, might turn the pages thinking that “the forest is not mine, what can I do?”

The state is a privileged domain outside of the society. Despite the low wages, each time a position becomes available in the public sector, there are thousands of applications. They try to find ways to get that position and this is all because people want to be involved in the privileged domain of the state. Essentially the prestige of the position within the public domain is not so important, what is more important is that it gives people the opportunity to get into certain networks.

When the society does not see the state as a regulatory tool, it is inevitable to depend on pseudo regulatory devices. For example a “good/fair” feudal landowner might be preferred over state because the state is not a “good/fair” landowner. It is a landowner that might favor anyone at anytime. In a state perception like this, any kind of corruption will create equalities and will be a legitimate corruption. When this kind of a system is established, what is important for the society is the presence of an authority where they can resolve their problems and this does not have to be a state apparatus. And this of course causes the state to lose its
authority. Briefly, the structure of the state today and the dynamics of state-society relationship is the cause of corruption both today and in the past.

“When the share of the public in the economy increases, the corruption also increases” does not reflect the truth so much because the real determinant is not the amount of the share but the mentality. When the share of the state in the economy increases the corruption does not necessarily increase. If the perception of the state is as it is detailed above, a growing state will mean better opportunities. Besides, the rapid progress of Turkey led to the impression that corruption is a tool to create financial resources. Anatolia is moving to the west of Turkey and a new kind of bourgeois class is emerging. As new financial agents are emerging, the demand for resources that are being used by existing players is increasing. Two things can happen at this point; the fight over the resources (old ones vs. new ones) or the expansion of the resource pool. Turkey’s preference has been for the applications that “somehow expanded” the pool.

The change of the picture is only possible through the expansion of the political scene. All of the major issues in Turkey have been agreed upon without the politicians; the politician had information on some of the decisions after they were taken. He cannot be a part of the decision process. Under these circumstances, what is left to the politician is a grand domain for economy and public relations. Those who know that they cannot be involved in politics for fundamental issues and problems, have kept their distance from the politics leaving the domain to those who have been or who want to be in the rent-seeking channels. When the power and efficiency is supplied from the people around, the main goal becomes filling up the networks with as many people as possible. “Favoring” and “patronage” are normalized and the politician who opposes this is regarded as “unsuccessful” or “useless”. Turkish society which went through a top to bottom modernization process has been introverted in extent of this modernization and has developed a “hypocritical behavior pattern” about ethics, during this introversion. For example, the tradesmen who are not affiliated with using debentures, who can run business on promises given by people they do not know, are comfortable with not paying taxes. Within the network that is defined as private sphere of the tradesmen, everybody has an enormous trust and ethical stance towards each other. The domain that is left out is uncertain and any agent of this domain – for example the tax controller- can enter into the business at any time. If the tradesmen learnt from the previous experiences, that they could resolve the situation with bribery, corrupt act will exist. Most probably, those who bribe the others will not also ethically resent this. The situation occurred in a domain where he did
not see himself as part of; the representative of a “self-styled” authority is confronted and this confrontation will not be evaluated by personal moral values. The underlying cause of this situation is affiliated with a historical custom. In the Ottoman Empire until the Tanzimat period there were no public officers except *qadis* who got paid regular wages from the state. A fee was requested from those who benefitted from the services of the state. As it can be easily guessed, the path to bribery from this custom is quite short. By time the perception of paying the state officers for their services – even when it is their jobs to do so- has been internalized. With the establishment of the Republic, state structure has been formally changed but this mentality continued. Old perceptions and behavioral patterns have continued existing. Besides, the power that these state officers have, make it necessary to get along with them. The society has learnt long ago that the officers have the power to hinder the processes and services so they found a way to resolve their business by not aggravating the officers and by paying a fee that would not be an economic burden. Sometimes, even when an officer does not demand it, a citizen wants to give a “gift”. He/she does not expect a service from a state officer; when he is accustomed to bribe the officers, he feels bad about a good service from them and wants to reward these people who are doing their job right. Bureaucrats do not have sanctioning powers on others who have been unfair to the citizens because they are all administered by central government. All of them has evidence documents and files about each other. Therefore nobody wants to get involved in each other’s business. The citizen, who believes that complaining will not be of any use, thinks that corruption is natural.

*Evaluation of the Target Group*

The judiciary system takes the first place in this. The financial dimension of the corruption that takes place in court is not so important; the more important thing is the fact that even the law can be corrupted because in this way corruption is legitimized. The corruption cases in the court encourage those who are inclined to be corrupted. The second place belongs to the media, who sees Turkey almost like a poker table. Media also sees itself as a player who has the gambling chips; a part of the game that goes on with bluffs and rests. The interest of media in corruption, the exposure of the corruption cases to the public should not be evaluated as an outcome of an ethical stance or principles possessed. The main point is what that media group aims, what kind of a government or Turkey they want to see. In essence media tries to figure out, which factors they can affect by giving corruption news. Business world comes
right after the media and judiciary system. Rather than breaking the system, the businessmen try to find ways to maximize their decisions in a corrupt system.

It is not realistic to expect a change in the existing political cadres unless the domain for making politics is expanded or the meaning of getting involved in politics is changed. In this sense, one has to be careful when he evaluates the connection between the politicians and the corruption. There might be 20-30 politicians that are involved in corruption in the whole parliament of 550 MPs which can be regarded as normal. Besides, recently a new idealistic stance can be observed in the behavioral patterns of the politicians. Of course the politicians are not innocent; but corruption exists in the triangle of the politician-bureaucrat-businessman. The individual attempts of the idealist politician to change the system, cannot go beyond dreams. At this point it is quite important to remove all the immunities. The need for politicians in Turkey is big because there is a need for a structural change which can be adaptive to the speed of change for the society. In the final analysis, this change will be made by the politician. The realization of the demands for structural changes by NGOs is limited. Nothing can be one without the support of the politician. Right at this point, EU emerges as a critical anchor. It is not important to get a full membership to EU, it is rather more important to realize the structural change that is required to become a member of EU.

Self-evaluation

NGOs are organizations that are not so old and we can even not say that they are very powerful. Although they are not able to create waves of change, they evoke the sensibilities of some people. The common emphasis on the role of the NGOs can be seen as a sign that shows we stepped out of the liberal democracy. As it is mentioned above, modernity cannot produce a common ethical system and reciprocity in behavioral patterns. Therefore, the instinct for corruption is seen as a natural instinct. In this case a strong judiciary system is needed and if it does not exist, what is left at hand is the media. Yet, the media is not successful in realizing the duty that is expected from it, either. At this very point, the need for NGOs emerges. This is a concept of a different democracy at the same time. Therefore, it is not possible to meet the requirements of the liberal democracy by going to the election booth to vote anymore. A new system in which people feel like shareholders or in which they get involved to the extent that they find it meaningful, will emerge. The real question is how to make the energy of the NGOs functional in a new concept of democracy: Which institutions will the NGOs be
members or contributors of? Up to what extent will they be involved in it? Or will they go on with an external activism?

When we evaluate the relationship of NGOs with the struggle against corruption, through the case of Turkey, the mindset that was mentioned before comes forward once again because nothing is out of the existing mindset. Therefore being an NGO does not mean anything on its own. NGO is a format and it is very possible to support military coups or get involved in corruption but still be an NGO.

To evaluate the longing of the public for “clean society-clean politics”, the accumulated experience of ages should be looked upon. For example, in the Ottoman Empire the land was owned by the state. Although the regime was changed into Republic later on, the state did not want to give up on its land because ideologically, the state considers the land as more important than the citizen. The hegemony of the land by the state is more on the foreground. When the people are considered to be secondary, the ground for corruption also expands. The public has an awareness on this that is why they demand a clean society, if not, they do not want to use their energy on this.

TSHD

Even when there are interventions time to time, the official stance against corruption has toughened in the 2000’s in comparison to previous years. The main causes behind this were as follows:

- The change of opinions of the public officers about doing their jobs right because they believe that they will not receive severe reactions as they used to from their seniors.
- With the increasing pressures of the foreign businessmen who do business in Turkey international institutions the international institutions have set the struggle against corruption the very condition to start the business.
- As a result of the individual efforts and attentive behaviors of the political authorities, the resolution of the corruption in a better way

It is necessary to search for the causes of corruption within the mindset of the people who see the politics not as part of a public duty but as a way to profit from the financial opportunities and also in political structural pollution of the leaders’ sultanate. Political leadership and
upper level bureaucracy affiliated with this leadership has been degraded in the last 20 years; and it has been subject to many corruption and bribery allegations. During the same period, the four presidents themselves, their families and circle of friends have received serious bribery and corruption allegations yet these allegations which have been a first in the history of republic have not been resolved. Within the expenditures of the parliament, president and the prime minister, serious corruptions have been identified. The political authority chose to cover these allegations and let them be forgotten rather than revealing them in a transparent public domain to be discussed. Even though these allegations have been forgotten, what has been permanent is the fact that the public started to perceive the top of the state as corrupted. The philosophy which states that “my officer knows what to do” nourishes this image and validated the proverb “the one who takes hold of the honey licks his finger”. The competition to get rich and to acquire assets has been the predominant philosophy in the administration of the state. Besides this, Public Contract Law even from the former periods has been a significant source for corruption.

The interviewee, who has responded to the question of how to prevent corruption in detail, thinks that it is urgent to make a transformation. The transformation is about changing the discourse of corruption that claims that it is a national threat, damaging the future of the country and the state, preparing the ground for social explosions into a national policy. He even claims that a meeting has to be organized with the participation of the president, the head of the parliament and all the political party leaders to sign a national agreement document realizing that struggle against corruption is far beyond political revenges and it is a national issue. In other words, corruption has to be dealt with on the state level, jeopardizing the future of the state and degrading the moral values of the society.

When the politics target group was reconstructed, it became evident that corruption allegations was evaluated on the basis of party interests, the leaders of the political parties started defending their parties without any hesitation against the allegations. They did not help with the judiciary process, when they waited for the resolution of these allegations. At times, the hushing up the corruption allegations was set as the primary condition for a coalition and they are used as a tool among parties for their political fight. In the context of the national agreement document, the concepts of national threat, problem of state, national politics, become important. Another issue that is at stake is to develop policies for the prevention of corruption and to ensure the implementation of these policies independent from the authority of the politician. The interviewee also recommends the establishment of an interim council.
which will control the implementations and specify the strategies to struggle against corruption of the legislative organ of the parliament in the light of the principles identified in the national agreement document. A council like this will support the identification of the state policy in this matter and will help to control the implementation of this policy. It is also claimed that in order this council to have an independent and neutral stance, it should be established under the supervision of the president or the prime minister and respectable members of the society have to be a part of it. The commission will be a voluntary formation which will function for a temporary period and will report to the chairman of the parliament, to the prime minister and to public about the principles of the struggle against corruption.

According to the interviewee, the corruption is not perceived to be a state problem because there is not any authority figure that can carry the common responsibility to the parliament and to the head of the state. If the political structure of a country is not democratized due to the incapability of the pre-election system and if the leaders and their administrative circle is dominant in every sense forming an organized anti-democratic movement, NGOs can play a significant role in the compensation of this structural weakness. NGOs can and should play an important role in the expression of the public opinion and the canalizing of their powers into the struggle against corruption. This kind of an effort would encourage the public in thriving for the truth: people with ethical values would be as brave as the corrupted ones. In this struggle, it is as important for the media to get transparent and got rid of the commercial interests as it is important for the politicians to keep their distance from trade affiliations.

**Target Group Economy**

It seems as though, the corruption perceptions of interviewees are heavily shaped by the predominant international paradigm. Just like in the official texts, corruption is defined as beyond history and immanent to the state and also as “the abuse of public office for private gain”. Moreover, one of the interviewees declared that even the special anti-corruption commission established in the parliament did not define corruption and the difficulties that occur in private sector should not be regarded as corruption and might be defined as “irregularities”. They also added that accepting the corruption definition of the World Bank seems like the best solution.
There is a common argument, which claims that corruption is seen mostly in underdeveloped or developing countries where there is no transparency or accountability. Since Turkey is a developing country which lacks good governance, it is no exception to this. On top of it, corruption is more common in Turkey than it is in other countries similar to Turkey and it spread to all domains of life. Corruption is everywhere where the citizen encounters the public authorities; there is even a schedule of rates for bribery in the customs.23

The economic development that has accelerated after the 80’s, increased the corruption in various ways. The fact that status and prestige of a person is mostly defined by money, has not depreciated these people in the eyes of the public. Moreover, the prestige that comes with having a lot of money, is so effective that these negative reactions are neutralized.

Politics used to be the domain to which the social elites directed their children; however these children of social elites have shifted to the business world predominantly to the service sector after 1980. They were replaced by the cadres who come from lower classes (that come from small towns and modest in the socioeconomic level) of the society. These new political and bureaucratic elites, want to be on equal terms with the economic elites and to realize this they can easily turn to decadent ways. Initially to be a bureaucrat meant to have a respectable career. Subsequently, people began to use government office as a step stone to private sector which was offering much higher salaries. At the present, obtaining political or financial gains is the strongest motivation to work in the public sector.

By 1980, Turkey had shifted from the import substitution industrial model to an open economy growth model. The incentives given by the public to speed up this transformation has opened the road for corruption in two ways, starting with the tax return in export trade. First of all, those who wanted to benefit from the opportunities that have been given by the state, worked hard for the allocation of some of these resources by building up close affiliations with the political power.

23 In the customs, for example one has to bribe for almost every bureaucratic operations. “It is like paying toll to cross the bridge”. Every bureaucratic step has its fare and sometimes the customs official even gives the change back. The rumor is that so as to be appointed as a customs official, people are ready to pay a considerable amount of money to top level bureaucrats. The ones who refuse to receive bribes are immediately isolated from the system. The situation was much worse during the years 1981-1989. Employees were all relatives. Between 1989-1996, it got even worse in terms of corruption. It is not surprising that this period coincides with successive devaluation of national currency which in turn increased the volume of exports. In 1996, with the signature of the Customs Union agreement the foreign trade office began to work better.
Secondly, the people in power demanded financial and political support from those people in exchange for the allocation of these resources. However, a lot of people who assured their financial success not by making right financial decisions but making right political choices, moved away quickly from the business world when the political party they support was not in power anymore.

The parties of the process mentioned above are not only the businessmen and politicians. The bureaucracy which designs and distributes the incentive mechanism has been an important part of the game. The comparative analysis of an executive director, who had taken part in the public bureaucracy both before and after 1980, is quite interesting. In pre-1980 era, corruption used to take place only in low levels of bureaucratic hierarchy. It had never been an issue in the top economic bureaucracy such as Treasury and Ministry of Finance. The institutional culture of such government bodies would never allow any of their members accept a gift of great value. The liberalism process à la Turgut Ozal (“My official knows what to do”) has deteriorated the existent the notion of public service. Especially the year 1987 was a milestone in this context. That was the year when corrupt public procurement policies and disputed deals and contracts in the state enterprises accelerated. From that time on corruption has spread over every top organ of economic bureaucracy. The reasons for this can be stated as:

- the transformation of institutional culture (those who could not adapt themselves to the new set of “rules” had to leave),
- the widening gap between the public and the private sector salaries,
- as a consequence, the low quality of the new appointees.

The fundamental reasons of corruption which are highlighted in the official documents are stated by the interviewees as well. The reasons of corruption are listed as such:

- Deterioration in income distribution,
- Consumerism,
- Lack of institutional culture,
- Lack of evidence due to mutually beneficial nature of the relationship,
- Wrong role models,
- High tax rates,
- Economic protectionism,
• Tax exemptions, privileges and incentives for certain sectors,
• Red tape,
• Decentralization.

Political Party Financing and Corruption

It is believed that in every step of corruption, there is the issue of politics and party financing. The politics is merely in the hands of the political party leaders who are in charge till they die. And, the rest have minor impact. Political cadres are in general very poor in quality. Corruption is at its peak in the political arena. Even the Prime Ministry Inspection Committee acts politically despite its mission stated by law. Regardless of their contents, its reports are interpreted in accordance with political interests, and even in some cases the Committee is internally manipulated.

Conclusion (on prevention)

The political immunities have been regarded as an important obstacle in struggle against corruption. The common opinion of the public has repeated itself here once more: legislative immunities must definitely be limited to freedom of speech. But at the same time an alternative mechanism has to be established where the lawsuits could only be bought before the courts in the presence of serious evidence. Otherwise, the MPs would spend a great deal of their time in the judicial tribunals. However, the immunities that public employees enjoy are equally important in the context of unfairness. The prosecution of public employees for alleged offenses is subject to the permission of their administrative authority. This is an unacceptable situation.

Political will is considered as vital for struggle to succeed. Primarily, the political leaders have to believe in the urgency of the anti-corruption fight. In this context, the pressure coming from EU institutions is of fundamental necessity. Turkey could improve in corruption reduction if and only if it sticks to its EU membership plan. In this process, the steps of the action plan are stated as follows;
• Making clear-cut definitions and giving necessary education to bureaucrats (autonomous bureaucracy-free of political pressures),
• Providing transparency,
• Downsizing units of state to simplify the bureaucratic processes,
• Improving financial conditions of government employees,
• Making strict rules and regulations including the domain of immunities,
• Establishing Watch Groups for effective inspection.

3. Conclusions

When the findings obtained in the first and second phase of the study are evaluated together, there appears a noteworthy distinction between the approaches mentioned in the official documents and the ones developed by the interviewees. When the discourses that take place in the documents created by the target groups are checked (definition wise and cause, effect and resolution wise) it is evident that the predominant corruption paradigm is imported by the elites in Turkey. In the documents discussed, there is an analysis of corruption regardless of the cultural elements, sociological base and the political manners. One comes across to discourses that legitimize the shrinkage of the public in these documents. This discourse is also adopted as a prerequisite of being European or a member of EU. This situation is intensely felt in the “Economy” and “NGO” target groups. However there is a hypocritical stance within the “Politics” target group. This case can best be described by the approach that says “if the case is about me it can never be corruption, if it is about my opponents it definitely is corruption”.

The picture that comes out of the reconstruction process of the interviews done with the names that are in the target groups, is about how the crimes of corruption whose boundaries context and resolution recipes are defined by the international financial institutions, cannot find their right niches in the perceptions of elites in Turkey. These conclusions provide significant clues to why the mainstream resolutions imposed by the western institutions cannot be solutions for Turkey even if they are applied.

Concerning the politics target group, there is a perception developed around two main axes. First of these is about the guardianship characteristic of the regime. The second one is related to the internal structure of the politics. According to the first one, in a regime where the manoeuvre space of the politics is limited by the main security actors and the bureaucracy
what is left for the politician is their intervention into the distribution mechanism as an instrument of their act of making politics. As a result of this, the politician himself adopts nepotism, clientelism and populism as instruments providing him the legitimization he looks for.

The main instruments that the politician uses in this direction are,

- The distribution of the land which still lacks the cadastral surveys and has rapidly gained value as a result of rapid urbanization caused by the internal migration
- To work almost like an employment agency due to the insufficient contribution of the private sector to the unemployment conditions of the country caused by the population increase and the dissolution in the agricultural domain. The politician is in a specific effort to accommodate the young unemployed voters to public offices in return of their votes and political support. The lack of “political will”, which is necessary to meet the demands of the international predominant paradigm that defines clientelism and nepotism as corruption, is in fact nourished by a fear that seems rational within itself: the loss of instruments to make politics. The main problem here is caused by the way in which politics is made. What seems to be more important for the politician is to struggle against the institutions or the people – extensions of these institutions- that narrow their space of movement rather than creating rational and applicable policies. When this is the case, to sustain existence in the political domain is directly related with providing specific interests to certain groups. This has turned politics into a public relations mechanism.

Secondly, the hierarchical structure of the politics is mentioned. The main characteristic of the political parties in Turkey is the hegemony of the leader. Therefore to be elected as an MP or to stay as an MP (to run as a candidate and to be reelected) is in the power of the leader. Thus loyalty to the leader is more important than the loyalty to the voter. On the other hand, in order to be an MP the politician needs to have enough financial assets and social networks. These are necessary both for the financing of the political party and the politician himself.

Yet, in most cases it is not possible for the politician to achieve this financial power with his own assets. At this point the politician become indebted all those who finance him. The financers (this group is mostly composed of the people and the groups, particularly the contractors who do business with the public sector) expect the politician to use his power in their favor, through all the times he is involved in politics. Apart from those two main axes, it is claimed that corruption is used as an active propaganda instrument in the struggle among
the political parties. At this point, it is emphasized that the Turkbank case actually is the instrument of another political struggle. When the politics is going forward with left to right dynamics mentioned above, the normalized relationships among the politician-voter-financer are suddenly set as the examples of corruption by the political parties during the election periods. Almost all the interviewees, except from the politics target group, points out the politician as the main actor of corruption. However, corruption is not the act of a single person, namely the politician. It is claimed that the immunity of the politician stands to be an important obstacle in the struggle against corruption in Turkey. A generally accepted proposal is the limitation of the immunities by political acts and freedom of speech but almost all the interviewees are hopeless about a decision from the parliament in this direction.

An important issue that is raised in the self-evaluation of the politics target group is the close supra-party relationships of local authorities with the MPs. When the conflicts among the parties still go on before the eyes of the public, there is another agenda under the roof of the parliament. Most of the MPs, like the members of an elitist club, are in a solidarity that favors their own interests. In the local authorities level, these sorts of relationships show up mostly in the commissions that closely deal with the urban rent-seeking.

Judiciary defines itself as the target group that is least affiliated with corruption. However, there is a significant perception difference in the evaluation of any kind of bribery case as corruption. Between a judge or prosecutor who is bribed and a clerk who is bribed, there is a normalization in favor of the latter. What lies behind this normalization is the view that states bribery does not affect final decisions it is just an instrument that speeds up the legal process by reducing bureaucracy. On the other hand, the low wages of the legal officers is put forward as the most important factor that legitimizes this practice. Even though the authorities mention that people working in the legal system are stuck in between the conscience and the wallet, they still claim that there is no systemic corruption in the judiciary. The individual corruption cases in the decision mechanisms are connected with the decreasing quality of the judges in the legal system which started to be the case mainly after the 1980s.

To put in another word, the hard working conditions as well as the low income level of judges push the highly qualified law school graduates away from choosing this profession.

The interviewees define corruption much wider than the Turkish legal system does. Accordingly, intentional or intentional, omissions of certain corrupt acts by the lawmaker from the legislation, does not necessarily mean that they cannot be classified as corruption.
According to the interviewees of this target group, the main reason the lies beneath the effort of blaming solely the public sector for corruption should be sought in the choice of a certain economic ideology.

Judiciary is the target group which has almost no serious expectation from the foreign anchors in the prevention of corruption in Turkey. The major reason of this approach is due to the fact that corruption is perceived as a systemic problem and above mentioned foreign anchors are just parts of the system. In other word, the institutions of the Western World which have a monopoly on setting the universal standards and demanding their implementation at the same time avoid the fact that so far, corruption has been the main instrument of the capital accumulation. The idea of combating corruption was brought to light right after this accumulation process had been interrupted at the expense of the big players of the global system.

Both in the official documents and in the interviews, the common point highlighted in the police target group is that corruption in Turkey is not as widespread as it is made out to be and the security forces are struggling against it with their full power. Their main concern seems to be the protection of the state institutions. Corruption is regarded chiefly as a security problem. Although it is related with certain socio-economic as well as administrative reasons, combating corruption is thought to be realized by mainly security forces and the legal actors. Especially the official view is in this direction. Corruption, in the context of both its reasons and combating tools, is defined in a very narrow sense. It is assumed that corruption would decrease only if the role of the state in economy could be reduced.

Another common point indicated both in the documents and the interviews is that the police force in Turkey punishes corrupt acts that take place in its own group without tolerance. Moreover, it is frequently stated that the police force is stigmatized on the basis of the corrupt behavior of the few and the alleged corruption cases are sporadic in nature. Nonetheless, the rest of the target groups state that bribery is exceptionally widespread among the police force (especially among the traffic police) to such an extent that it is perceived as a standard procedure in the daily life of the citizens and a large number of high level police officers have relations with the criminal groups.

In the interviews of the police target group, the thin line between bribery and the gift is vague. Gifts are regarded as the token of the citizen’s gratitude towards the ones who protect them.
The frequent emphasis made on the low income of the security forces can be evaluated as an argument that seeks to legitimize the bribery in the police force.

At the same time, although mediocrity is stated as one of the primary reasons of corruption, the dubious recruitment standards in the Turkish police force are passed up.

As previously stated, when assessed through the cases, the general attitudes of the Turkish media groups show a great similarity to those of the politicians in the sense that they promote anti-corruption not as a definitive end but as an instrument to externalize their rivals that act contrary to their interests or choices. In fact, in the mid 1990s, with the rise of the RP (which, by means of an Islamist discourse succeeded in gathering the support of the peripheral groups pushed aside by the central actors), the political polarization that came to surface on an ideological level directly influenced the discourse of the media groups on corruption. While evaluating the approach of the different media groups (grouped as “pro-secular” and “pro-Islam” for the sake of simplification in this study) to the corruption problem in Turkey it seems important to remind that beneath this polarization there has always been a severe competition on the allocation of economic resources going hand in hand with the struggle for political power. In other words, the corruption related news in various media groups should be read while bearing in mind the specific nature of the economic relations between these media organs and the political authority. This view reveals itself in the interviews though not in the documents.

In order to understand the media’s changing attitude related to Turkbank case, one has to keep in mind the conjunctural developments that are summarized in the target group politics. The foundation of AKP (14 August 2001) coincides with a period where the costs of grand corruption have been well recognized and where the political parties that had governed in the 1990s lost their legitimacy entirely in the eyes of the public. The mainstream media, for the moment, had no interest to enter into conflict with this new political movement which declared itself as “conservative democrat” and “pro-EU”.

All six of the target groups, do not consider the media in Turkey as the fourth estate, i.e. as the guardian of the public interest, especially if the corruption is in question. The “clean society” discourse which has been a popular discourse for a particular period of time by the mainstream media organs, had in fact been used as the instrument of a different power struggle and the concept had been emptied by the media itself. In most of the cases, the corruption news is believed to take place in the media because of the conjunctural needs of
the media patrons. The patron, who also has businesses in other sectors different than media (banking, energy, and telecommunications), chooses either to use the insider information he has about the corruption of his opponents, the government or bureaucrats for his own good or to ignore it.

Such a structure of the media, force the journalists to apply a variety of measures, ranging from self-censoring to misinformation on the subject of corruption. Nonetheless, it is still due to the media that a considerable amount of corruption cases have come to light

According to the dominant paradigm, NGOs are regarded as the key institutions for the raising public awareness of the corruption issue. Yet, one of the most significant conclusions stemming from the analysis employed here is that the NGOs in Turkey are not perceived as functional for fighting against corruption by the rest of the target groups. NGOs until now have not succeeded in establishing organic relations with both the public and the decision making bodies. Moreover, an NGO, as stated by a director of an NGO, is just a format all by itself. To be an NGO does not mean anything unless it participates in the decision making process. The essential problem is how the NGOs’ energy could be channeled towards this particular shared goal with a new set of democratic rules which for the time being are not compatible with the existent Turkish political system

The corruption perceptions of the institutions and the interviewees that belong to the economy group overlap with each other. The arguments regarding reasons and consequences of corruptions as well as the methods to struggle against it are no more than the repetition of the discourse developed by the international economic institutions. According to this target group, corruption is seen solely in public sector. In the private sector, however, there can be only irregularities.

The main criticism made about the economy target group by the rest of the target groups is that the businessmen do not refrain from being a part of corruption as long as it accelerates the accumulation process and provides unfair competition in their favor. Right at this point the business world is divided into two spheres: the big corporations (TUSIAD) most of which already have or want to establish links with multi-nationals, evaluate corruption as a major problem and demand the implementation of serious anti-corruption measures (in line with the international anti-corruption paradigm) from the administrative authorities and the politicians. On the other hand, there is the Anatolian capital, which in the previous periods traditionally was left out of the opportunities that the State provided for today’s big corporations.
Therefore, like their predecessors they are currently finding it easier to lobby for resource transfers than to compete for wealth in an open marketplace. These firms, labeled as “green capital” by the mainstream media, which are mainly concentrated in the Anatolian cities like Konya, Kayseri, Malatya and Gaziantep, are considering the current government as their representative.

The governments in Turkey provide certain privileges to the capital groups that support them. The privileges are designed according to the needs of these capital groups, most of the time in such a way that the existing rules and limits are either bent or stretched. In other words, the private agents in Turkey, to a large extent, have accumulated capital through rent-seeking economic activities. Likewise, the current government, while dealing with the corruption of the previous governments, is generating new privileges for its supporters. At this point, the attempt of the big business (TÜSİAD) in Turkey to set certain ethical standards for their members as well as its appeal to the government for the implementation of a more efficient anti-corruption strategy can also be evaluated in the context of its struggle with these relatively new adversaries.

The main criticism addressed to the grand capital group is about their hypocrisy in their anti-corruption war. In other words, while they openly indicate that they fight corruption, they stand against any initiative for reducing the exploitation of labor in the name of competitiveness. Therefore, they are responsible for the biggest corruption. They are criticized for emptying the meaning of the corruption concept for their own favor.

As for the perception of the target groups related to the “ordinary citizen-corruption (bribery)” relation, majority of the interviewees identified bribery as a tool of survival for the average man on the street who himself is not as innocent as generally claimed. The average man, despite its enthusiastic declarations about the anti-corruption struggle, never hesitates to have recourse to bribery so as to avoid any potential problem with the State apparatus. As a result the average citizen in Turkey is inured to petty corruption. Moreover, as an Ottoman heritage, the average person in Turkey does not trust the State as well as anyone but the member of his or her close entourage. Everyone prefers to stay beside his relatives or friends as much as possible. In this sense, Turkish society is communitarian. Since the raison d'être of the Turkish State has never been (perceived as) the provision of services to its citizens, the members of the society act according to the requirements of the communities that they belong
to, rather than those of citizenship. This situation therefore, brings along the internalization of nepotism and patronage as a natural part of life.

The common opinion of the all interviewees is that corruption has increased considerably after 1980. Economic liberalism “alla turca” has brought about a considerable weakening of bureaucratic institutions, which until then, had been claimed to be based on virtue ethics. In this period, the rules which in reality had never been internalized by the society in general and yet followed to an extent due to the fear against the State disappeared. The absence of the tools and the mechanisms of civic monitoring that could replace the functions of the state institutions in this process, increased anomie and lawlessness in Turkish society.

According to the researchers of this study, the expectation that corruption in Turkey can be reduced through the implementation of legal-institutional restructuring measures, especially in the context of the latest IMF agreement and EU requirements are open to discussion for two main reasons: Firstly; the main thing that would prevent corruption is not the rule of law but the the extent of the priority given to the notion of “clean society/clean politics” in the value system of the individual. The second argument related to the first statement is the society’s resistance against embracing the rules whose rationality is not internalized due to the fact that they are externally imposed rather than arising out of an inclusive process of dialogue and negotiation. The source of norm, let it be the Turkish State, EU or IMF, would not change this situation.
Literature


---: "Political Accountability, Managerial Accountability and the Budget System: Towards a Proposal for Restructuring” (Turkish) Izak Atiyas, Serif Sayin; 1997.


TSHD: Toplumsal Sayamlilik Hareketi Dernegi (Transparency International Turkish Chapter), for articles see the TSHD web site: www.sayamlilik.org.
UNDP: Human Development Report(s) - Turkey, UNDP Ankara.