

# The corruption in turkey politics essay



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In this report you can read about the corruption in Turkey. The purpose of this report is to show you where corruption in Turkey is taking place and how the Turkish government is fighting it. In chapter two you'll find general information about Turkey. The corruption in Turkey, entitled Ergenekon, is described in chapter three. In chapter four the corruption in Turkey is being linked with one of the four syndromes described by Michael Johnston. The conclusion of this report can be found in chapter five.

Turkey, as a successor of the Ottoman Empire, is a republican parliamentary democracy established in 29th October 1923 by Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal was honoured in 1934 by the Turkish citizens with the title of Ataturk, the Father of the Turks. Although Istanbul is the biggest and wealthiest city in Turkey, Ankara was chosen as the capital city of Turkey by Ataturk. Furthermore, Turkey has eighty-one provinces. In 28th August 2007 Abdullah Gul was elected president of Turkey by the National Assembly. A day later he appointed Recep Tayip Erdogan as the Prime Minister of Turkey. Just after two months, 21th October 2007, they successfully set with Turkey the next step towards democracy. In the future the president is going to be elected directly and not by the National Assembly. Going back in time, Turkey became an associate member of the European Community in 1964. In 2005, with Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayip Erdogan, Turkey began accession membership talks with the European Union. Turkey is a member of the UN since 1945 and also a member of the NATO since 1952.[1]

## **2. 1 Population**

In July 2009 the population of Turkey was estimated 76, 8 million. Two-third of the population was estimated between the age of fifteen and sixty-five.

More than twenty-seven percent of the population was estimated below the age of fifteen and more than six percent was estimated above the age of sixty-five. In 2008 the urban population of Turkey was estimated around seventy percent of the population. The majority of the Turkish population is Turkish, estimated around seventy-five percent in 2008. Eight-teen percent of the population was estimated Kurdish. With a minority figure the Arabs, Turkmen, Circassians and Greeks are also present in Turkey.[2]The EU issued in 2005 that Turkey didn't sufficiently guarantee the freedom of expression in line with the European Convention of Human Rights towards the minorities. According to article 301 of the Turkish Constitution, an insult to Turkish people is no longer used systematically to restrict freedom of expression. It is that article which the EU found not sufficient enough. The EU are of the opinion that Turkey must take more measures in line with the European Convention of Human Rights towards the minorities.[3]Next to that, most of the people in Turkey are Sunni Muslim.

## **2. 2 Economy**

In Turkey the state is a major participant in basic industry, banking, transport and communication sector. Textile and clothing are the largest industrial sectors in Turkey. Today thirty percent of the eligible population is employed in the traditional agriculture. At the moment, the most notable progress in the Turkish economy is the rising of the automotive and electronic industries. That is a sign that the Turkish economy is modernizing. The GDP of Turkey grew between 2002 and 2007 with an average of six percent. Despite the strong economy, the GDP in 2008 grew with zero point nine percent and it was decreased in 2009 with five point nine percent, a thirty-four year record

low. Explanation for that is the high account deficit en high external debts. The government of Turkey expects with further economic and judicial reforms and prospective EU membership to boost their economy with foreign investors. However, the global financial crisis in 2009 didn't affect the Turkish financial markets. In their history, Turkey experienced in 2001 a financial crises. In that year Turkey implemented reforms in the banking sector which protected them from the global financial crisis in 2009. At the moment Turkey's future doesn't look so bright. The economical experts are expecting a decline in the export sector and because of the current political crisis, al lot of foreign and intern companies are afraid to invest in the Turkish economy. With an estimated GDP worth of 861, 6 billion Euro's in 2009, Turkey is ranked eighteenth compared to the other countries.[4]The top three of that same list is, respectively, dominated by the EU, the United States and China.

### **2. 3 Military**

In October 2005 a National Security Policy Document was adopted by the Turkish government. That document increased the role of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) concerning the internal security of the state. Today the TSK leadership plays a key role in politics and considers itself the guardian of Turkey's secular state. They demonstrated their power sever times after the adoption of the National Security Policy Document. For example, in April 2007 they warned the ruling party about any pro-Islamic appointments. They are also responsible for limiting the progress of establishing a civilian supremacy over the military, which started in October 2005 after the Turkish government started to negotiate with the EU. The EU is of the opinion that

the military power of Turkey must first decrease if Turkey wants to join the EU. The TSK has also been taken an international peacekeeping responsibilities and they took charge of a NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) command in Afghanistan in April 2007. Furthermore, the Turkish military forces adopted an Aerospace and Missile Defence Concept in 2002 which set new priorities. The priorities included attaining a modern deployable, survivable, and sustainable force structure and establishing a sustainable command and control system. The affects of the Aerospace and Missile Defence Concept looked promising in 2008.[5]

## **2. 4 Corruption**

In December 2007 Turkey started, with the help of the European Union and the Council of Europe, the project on Ethics for the Prevention of Corruption in Turkey (TYEC) for a term of two years.[6]This project is funded by the European Union and by the Council of Europe. It is implemented by the Council of Europe’s Directorate of Co-operation. The project’s main counterpart institution is the Council of Ethics for Public Service at the Prime Ministry of Turkey. In recent years the Turkish Government has taken a number of important steps in combating corruption. The country ratified the Council of Europe’s Civil and Criminal Law Conventions against Corruption in 2003 and 2004 respectively and joined the Council’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in January 2004. Moreover, in June 2004 the Council of Ethics for the Public Service was established and in 2005 the Regulation on the Principles of Ethical Behaviour for Public Officials, the Code of Ethics, was adopted. Despite these steps, corruption remains a serious concern for the people of Turkey. The Turkish authorities acknowledge that corruption is a

priority issue requiring comprehensive and serious counter-measures.[7]The project will assist Turkey with their efforts in preventing corruption by supporting the implementation of specific measures, and provide support to other related reforms. The TYEC project has four main aims:

Support the implementation of the Code of Ethics across the public administration in line with GRECO recommendations;

Develop codes of ethics for other categories of officials or holders of public office;

Develop systems of monitoring the effectiveness of prevention and other anti-corruption measures;

Ensure and enhance coordination of anti-corruption measures.

The corruption in Turkey is the continuing interference of judicial and military power in Turkish executive and legislative powers. This is problematic if viewed with historical hindsight. The weakness of the boundaries that divide Turkish powers seems to be confirmed by the Ergenekon trial, which saw more than three-hundred personalities involved in conspiracies aimed at weakening the government and possibly leading to a coup d'état.

### **3. Ergenekon**

The state is not necessarily innocent, and the people convicted of crimes with political repercussions in the past may well be victims of a deep state operation. That is the main lesson Turkey has learned from the current Ergenekon investigation. The investigation itself is already related to several murders and terrorist attacks of the recent past. Analysts claim that the

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state and the relationship of the state organs with the society, terrorist organizations and the mafia will create a valuable opportunity to mobilize the public.[8]It will also create a political will and determination to reopen old dossiers filled with unsolved crimes and presumably victimized convicts. Allegations that the Ergenekon terrorist organization was behind two attacks, the Council of State attack in 2006 and bombs thrown at the headquarters of the Cumhuriyet Daily in the same year, ascribed to a certain segment of society, have changed the entire view to analyze politically influential crimes. In this chapter I try to show you the link between Ergenekon and the corruption they caused on the fields of politics, economics and military. First I start with the describing a few cases.

### **3. 1 Crime dossiers**

The Turkish history is full of crime dossiers, either left open or whose closure was disputed.[9]Starting from the infamous Sheikh Said Revolt of 1925, passing through to the Dersim Massacres of 1937-1938, the Taksim Square killings of May, 1977, the serial murders of secular-minded intellectuals in 1990 and more resentful and sophisticated attacks on symbolic names and institutions, question marks were left in the consciousnesses of the people. One reason was the inconceivability of state involvement in these crimes. The army, which still places first in public surveys of the most respected institutions, was not only beyond reproach, it was also unthinkable, unperceivable and unpronounceable to claim that army officers were committing crimes, not for the sake of the country, but for their own and evil interests. Now that the Ergenekon investigation has proven that Turkish officers are not sanctified angels and that they are judicable, detainable,

liable to interrogation and arrest, that perplexed public consciousness is asking whether those old dossiers can be reopened and reinvestigated with this new framework in mind. The Istanbul chief prosecutor already announced that Ergenekon suspects would be trailed for their involvement in the Council of State attack of May, 2006, an attack which left a judge dead, and in the throwing of hand grenades at the headquarters of Cumhuriyet Daily. It is suggested that the indictment and subsequent court decision will influence the open cases and may also induce a reopening of closed ones. On top of the list of reopening closed cases are the murder of Necip Hablemitoğlu, the Gazi neighborhood events, the murder of İzzet Zaim, the murder of Sabancı, the murder of General Erol Bulut, the murder of Uğur Mumcu and the murders that took place in the Adapazarı-Özmit-Sapanca triangle. The Ergenekon decision will also influence the İbrahim Çiftçi case, already waiting for the Ergenekon trial to be finalized. Çiftçi was killed in 2006 in a bombing soon after he confessed to a prosecutor that he killed Hablemitoğlu. The influence of the Ergenekon investigation won't wait for the prosecutors to open some of the older dossiers on their own. Already there are several criminal complaints about detainees of the Ergenekon terrorist organization from the relatives of lost and murdered people. Families of Serdar Tanrı, a People's Democratic Party Silopi district deputy and Ebubekir Deniz already filed a complaint about Brigadier General Levent Ersöz, who is still being sought and is said to have left for Russia before the last round of Ergenekon related detentions. The two were detained by the TSK seven years ago and were never heard from again. Relatives of the people killed during the Gazi incidents of 1995 also filed a complaint recently about Osman Gürbüz, who was arrested during the

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Ergenekon investigation. The People's Democratic Party was banned from the society and therefore doesn't exist anymore.

### 3. 2 Politics

Avni A-zgürel, a columnist writing on Turkey's recent history is not optimistic. He thinks no one would be happier if real the perpetrators of certain political crimes were revealed.[10]“ Look at the A°pekçi murder. There is already an understanding that this was the job of nationalists. If this explanation proves incorrect, we will lose the entire paradigm. The society may be ready for this, but the state is not,” he told Sunday's Zaman. According to A-zgürel, the state is happy with the current state of what is known. “ Further investigation would not be well received within the state. The state would be ready to claim some of the murders if they were really committed for the sake of the state or the country; But what if an investigation reveals that the real reason was of a financial nature? What if notions like ‘ state’ and ‘ nation’ were used as a disguise for personal interests?” he asked. A-zgürel is not hopeful for the results of the Ergenekon investigation and hence does not want to attach additional hopes to it. “ There is a political will in Turkey, but politics is a politics of bargaining. The AK Party is dealing with a closure case and no one knows what will happen with the Ergenekon investigation if the AK Party is closed. Look at the constitutional amendments on the headscarf issue. There was a political will there, but it didn't help. We should wait and see whether this investigation will reach a meaningful end,” he explained. Mithat Sancar, a professor of law at Ankara University, agrees that the Ergenekon investigation is an opportunity to confront the dark past. [11]However, he thinks that neither the government nor the courts can do

this. " The political government will understandably deal with what it sees necessary for its own political interests. Prosecutors and judges are in no position to start an investigation into the events of the past on their own. Such an investigation necessitates a mobilization of democratic circles, especially the democratic left wing which has traditionally fought with militarism and the deep state," he told Sunday's Zaman. According to Sancar, public control over the legal and political processes is also important to guarantee that the political government does not enter into the mistake of bargaining.

### **3. 3 The influence of the military**

Ergenekon prosecutor Zekeriya A-z is claimed to have come upon significant information about the murder of assistant professor HablemitoÄŸlu in 2002. A-z is claimed to have received strong evidence that Brigadier General Veli Küçük, the prime suspect of the Ergenekon investigation, was involved in the abduction and killing of several Kurdish businessmen in the AdapazarÄ±-Izmit-Sapanca area within the first six months of 1994.[12]The influence of the Ergenekon investigation on a confrontation with historical crimes was not always direct and organic.[13]The fact that the KahramanmaraÅŸ Massacre, in which over 100 Alevis were killed by alleged nationalists in December 1978, the murder of journalist Abdi Ipekçi on February 1979, the murder of frontrunner nationalist Gün Sazak in May 1980 and the Çorum Massacre of twenty-six, unofficially fifty-six, Alevis paved the way for the military coup of 1980 is showing signs towards that direction. The link between these events and the Ergenekon terrorist organization doesn't have to be organic. The fact that the existence of a terrorist organization that penetrated into state

organs, including the army, and conspired to stage violent coups gives enough material to rethink the Kahramanmaraş, Ipekçi, Sazak and Çorum incidents.[14]It has to be kept in mind that the prime suspects of the Ergenekon organization were already colonels in the army in the run-up to the 1980 coup and that their involvement in these events may have been more than learning a lesson. In Turkey it is already felt that the plans of the Ergenekon terrorist organization is pushing the country into a period of unrest in order to legitimize a military intervention. Next to that, former military judge Ümit Kardaş thinks that the political will that would confront the dark events of the past should have been powerful enough to confront Turkey's recent problems, such as the Kurdish issue.[15]" The prosecution needs to have special support from not only the government but also from the media and the society," he told Sunday's Zaman. According to him, the AK Party was and still is strong enough to give that support but, considering previous opportunities lost, there is not enough evidence to be hopeful of its support. " It has lost a major opportunity in Şemdinli. We also don't know whether the AK Party will be closed or not nor what will happen to the Ergenekon investigation if the party is closed. The investigation in itself is an opportunity, but there are reasons to be pessimistic that this opportunity will also be lost," he explained.

### **3. 4 Finances**

Former mayor of Istanbul's Esenyurt district Gürbüz Çapan, who is also currently under arrest on charges of being a financier of Ergenekon, was once offered immunity from arrest in Turkey by Ergenekon suspect retired General Veli Küçük, according to claims of Bertan Zülaloğlu and Şerafettin Düz, who

served as the former deputy mayor and an aide to Çapan, respectively, during his term as head of the Esenler municipality.[16]Çapan was being sought as a suspect in a major corruption operation carried out by the TSK into various municipalities, including Esenler, when he was abroad in Germany. He also owns ten percent of the shares of Cumhuriyet Daily and is currently being charged with financing Ergenekon. Çapan was established as a suspect in the Ergenekon investigations when it became clear that he had meetings with Ergenekon suspects Doğan Perinçek, leader of the neo-nationalist Workers Party and Kemal Aydın, head of the Nationalist Industrialists and Businessmen's Association. Furthermore, prosecutor Zekeriya Aydın, who is the chief prosecutor on the Ergenekon case, has frequently been target of various smear campaigns directed from different segments of society. Aydın, Cumhuriyet and Sözcü newspapers claimed that in 1998, when Aydın served in the Çine district of Aydın, he tried to extort money from businessman Mehmet Ocak. Metin Uyar, the former head of the Çine Industrial Zone and Ahmet Keleş, president of the Çine Drivers' and Motorists Chamber, denied any truth to those allegations. The future will hopefully tell us more about the link between Ergenekon and the corruption they caused on the field of economy. Popular history writer Ayşe Hür thinks the Ergenekon gang has a distinctive ideological position. [17]" The ideological tools of the organization are yet to be revealed. So far this has been an operation against a criminal gang," she told Sunday's Zaman. According to her, as long as the ideological tools have not been revealed, it is almost impossible to disclose the link between criminal actions of the Ergenekon organization and the earlier political crimes. " For that we need a stronger will. Political will is not enough," she said. According to her, <https://assignbuster.com/the-corruption-in-turkey-politics-essay/>

the society is not ready for a full-fledged cleansing and there is no real consensus on the nature of the threat. “ The opposition of the AK Party is undervaluing the operation, whereas we should have dealt with the facts and not with who said what,” she explained.

#### **4. The four syndromes**

According to Michael Johnston, established democracies tend to have mature market economies in which liberalization is largely considered. He also states that there are also reforming democratic societies in which political competition is still emerging or undergoing significant change. Furthermore, he describes that there are countries who are undergoing major transitions in politics and economics. He noted that Turkey is an example of such country. Last, but not least, Johnston also describes that there are undemocratic regimes who are by definition marked by political opportunities. Johnston links those societies with four syndromes: Influence Markets, Elite Cartels, Oligarchs and Clans and Official Moguls. Below you can see a table with an overview[18].

In the recent years Turkey made a huge progress in reforming its democracy and economy. That is the reason I agree with Johnston that the corruption in Turkey can be described with the Elite Cartels syndrome. The stronger the economical and state institution, the lesser corruption occurs according to Johnston. In the syndrome Influence Markets the corruption will most likely seen in the economical system. Johnston also recognizes that the stronger a constitution is, the bigger the chance will be that such institution will abuse its power by sealing deals with other powerful institutions. In this chapter you can read what the Elite Cartels syndrome is according to Johnston and <https://assignbuster.com/the-corruption-in-turkey-politics-essay/>

why Turkey can be linked with this syndrome. I will close this chapter with the Turkish government's point of view about its future. The other two syndromes have similar corruption cases, but it is likely that in undemocratic regimes the corruption is bigger than in transitional regimes.

#### **4. 1 Elite Cartels syndrome**

In the Elite Cartels syndrome, the corruption is of defensive nature, protecting existing economic, political or policy advantages. Corruption is conducted through networks and elite parties, sometimes seeking each other to become allies for a greater purpose. Looking back to chapter three, Ergenekon can be seen as a network who is extremely powerful. They are powerful because they have, as it is determined by the prosecutors, economical, political and policy advantages. While these advantages are decreasing, still no one really knows how big Ergenekon is. Therefore the power of Ergenekon cannot be underestimated. Prove was found, and mentioned in chapter three, that in the past Ergenekon could operate freely and successfully. Many cases were closed without a legitimate reason and political parties were banned from the society. The AK Party was also close to getting banned from the society. The fact that the closure of the AK Party failed determines the moderate power of the state and its capacity.

#### **4. 2 The government's point of view**

“ We hope the shroud of mist over the facts will be dissipated with this operation. We want the Ergenekon indictment to be completed as soon as possible,” stated Erdoğan.[19]Erdoğan also said during his parliamentary group meeting that his ruling AK Party is the only address for Turkey's full membership in the European Union. He noted that Atatürk's goal of reaching <https://assignbuster.com/the-corruption-in-turkey-politics-essay/>

a higher level of civilization equals integration with the modern world. By making that note he wants to drive his country towards mature democratic society.” However, some circles cannot stand democracy in Turkey.

Whenever Turkey attempts to stand on its own feet, whenever it musters up its strength, these circles put hurdles before it. The basis of Turkish politics lies in a struggle between those in favour of Turkey’s development and those who oppose it. While some want Turkey to become a global power, others want the preservation of the status quo in the country,” he stated. With that statement, Erdoğan confirms the fact that corruption in turkey is of defensive nature. Erdoğan also noted that a movement which isn’t in harmony with the fundamental principles of the constitutional order and which doesn’t act in harmony with the basic characteristics of the republic will not be successful in Turkey. With that note Erdoğan points his finger to the economical and political reforms his government made in the recent years and that Ergenekon should be consider as a dark chapter of the Turkish history.

## **5. Conclusion**

Turkey, as a successor of the Ottoman Empire, is a republican parliamentary democracy established in 29th October 1923 by Mustafa Kemal. In July 2009 the population of Turkey was estimated 76, 8 million. The GPD of Turkey grew between 2002 and 2007 with an average of six percent. Despite the strong economy, the GDP in 2008 grew with zero point nine percent and it was decreased in 2009 with five point nine percent, a thirty-four year record low. The TSK leadership plays a key role in politics and considers itself the guardian of Turkey’s secular state. In December 2007 Turkey started, with

the help of the European Union and the Council of Europe, the project on Ethics for the Prevention of Corruption in Turkey (TYEC) for a term of two years. The corruption in Turkey is the continuing interference of judicial and military power in Turkish executive and legislative powers. The weakness of the boundaries that divide Turkish powers seems to be confirmed by the Ergenekon trial, which saw more than three-hundred personalities involved in conspiracies aimed at weakening the government and possibly leading to a coup d'état. The state is not necessarily innocent, and the people convicted of crimes with political repercussions in the past may well be victims of a deep state operation. That is the main lesson Turkey has learned from the current Ergenekon investigation. The Turkish history is full of crime dossiers, either left open or whose closure was disputed. According to Sancar, public control over the legal and political processes is also important to guarantee that the political government does not enter into the mistake of bargaining. It has to be kept in mind that the prime suspects of the Ergenekon organization were already colonels in the army in the run-up to the 1980 coup and that their involvement in these events may have been more than learning a lesson. In Turkey it is already felt that the plans of the Ergenekon terrorist organization is pushing the country into a period of unrest in order to legitimize a military intervention. The future will hopefully tell us more about the link between Ergenekon and the corruption they caused on the field of economy, in which there is already made important progress. Anyway, Ergenekon can be seen as a network who is extremely powerful. They are powerful because they have, as it is determined by the prosecutors, economical, political and policy advantages. That is why the Elite Cartels syndrome can be linked with Turkey. The fact that the closure of <https://assignbuster.com/the-corruption-in-turkey-politics-essay/>



the AK Party failed determines the moderate power of the state and its capacity. However, Erdoğan points his finger to the economical and political reforms his government made in the recent years and that Ergenekon should be consider as a dark chapter of the Turkish history.