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Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Berat AKINCI

Adana Alparslan Türkeş Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi, Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Adana / Türkiye
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5239-5417>

BİLGİ EDİNME VE DİLEKÇE HAKKI KAPSAMINDA KAMU YÖNETİMİNDE ALTERNATİF HESAP VEREBİLİRLİK YÖNTEMLERİ: İNOVATİF E-DEVLET UYGULAMASI OLARAK CİMER MEKANİZMASI

ÖZET

Yirminci yüzyılın son çeyreğinde yoğun bir şekilde hissedilen kamu yönetim anlayışındaki paradigmatik değişimler, bir taraftan birey-devlet-toplum ilişkisine yeni bir boyut kazandırırken diğer taraftan da yeni yüzyılın gerekliliklerine uygun vatandaş odaklı, şeffaf, hesap verebilir, hızlı ve nitelikli hizmet sunabilen örgütsel yapı ve iletişim ağlarını zorunlu kılmıştır. Geleneksel kamu yönetim anlayışının aksine vatandaşlara yönelik oldukça önemli fırsatlar sunan bu süreç, devlet-vatandaş arasında var olan tek yönlü ilişki ve iletişim ağını karşılıklı etkileşime dönüştürme potansiyeli taşımaktadır. Ancak kamu hizmetlerinin gittikçe daha teknolojik bir altyapı ve hibrit kamu kurumları tarafından sunulmaya başlanmasıyla birlikte, vatandaşların hesap sorabileceği aktörlerinde zaman zaman muğlaklaştığı görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte geçmişten günümüze başta politika belirleyiciler olmak üzere belirlenen politikaları uygulayan idare aygıtının da sorumluluğu çeşitli mekanizmalar çerçevesinde sorgulanmaktadır. Özellikle yeni kamu yönetim yaklaşımının çıktılarından olan e-devlet uygulamaları da devletin hesap verebilirliğini artırmaya yönelik vatandaş katılımını önceleyen, basit ve hızlı sonuç üreten bir platform olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Nihayetinde vatandaşların beklenti ve tercihlerini politika çıktılarıyla eşleştirme gayreti içerisinde olan politika aktörleri, artan yönetim çıkmazları sebebiyle oluşan memnuniyetsizlikleri çözme adına vatandaşların başvuru hakkını daha talep edilebilir seviyeye taşıma arzusundadır. Öyleki geçmişten günümüze yargısal denetimin dışında oluşturulan başvuru mekanizmaları zamanla yöntem ve içerikolarak değişse de, vatandaşların devlete başvurma hakkı güncellenerek muhafaza edilebilmiştir. Günümüzde özellikle bilgi edinme ve dilekçe hakkı kapsamında realize edilen başvuru hakkı, vatandaşların yönetime katılmasını ve yönetimin denetlenmesini demokrasinin bir gereği olarak görmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada bilgi edinme ve dilekçe hakkı kapsamında birey-toplum-devlet arasındaki iletişimi güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan CİMER uygulaması ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmanın sonucunda CİMER üzerinden vatandaşların başvuru hakkını etkili ve artan oranda kullanma isteği olduğunu ancak yeni gelişmeler ve ihtiyaçlar çerçevesinde sistemin yeniden revize edilmesi gerekliliği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hesap verebilirlik, Bilgi Edinme Hakkı, Dilekçe Hakkı, CİMER

ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY METHODS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE SCOPE OF INFORMATION AND PETITION RIGHT: CİMER MECHANISM AS AN INNOVATIVE E-GOVERNMENT APPLICATION

ABSTRACT

The paradigmatic changes in the understanding of public administration, which were intensely felt in the last quarter of the twentieth century, bring a new dimension to the relationship between the individual-state-society on the one hand, and on the other hand, they have required an organizational structure and communication networks that are citizen-oriented, transparent, accountable, capable of providing fast and qualified services in accordance with the requirements of the new century. Contrary to the traditional public administration approach, this process,

which offers very important opportunities for citizens, has the potential to transform the one-way relationship and communication network between the state and the citizen into mutual interaction. However, with the introduction of public services by a more and more technological infrastructure and hybrid public institutions, it is seen that the actors that citizens can ask to account are sometimes ambiguous. However, the responsibility of the administrative apparatus, which implements the determined policies, has been questioned within the framework of various mechanisms from past to present. Especially e-government applications, which are one of the outputs of the new public administration approach, stand out as a platform that prioritizes citizen participation to increase the accountability of the state and produces simple and fast results. Ultimately, policy actors who strive to match the expectations and preferences of citizens with policy outputs desire to bring the citizens' right to apply to a more demandable level in order to resolve the dissatisfaction caused by the increasing governance dilemmas. Even though the application mechanisms created outside of judicial control from past to present have changed in terms of method and content over time, the right of citizens to apply to the state has been updated and preserved. Nowadays, the right to apply, especially realized within the scope of the right to obtain information and petition, sees citizens' participation in management and supervision of the administration as a requirement of democracy. Therefore, in this study, CIMER application, which aims to strengthen the communication between the individual, the society and the state, is discussed within the scope of the right to obtain information and petition. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the citizens' desire to use their application rights effectively and increasingly through CIMER, but the system should be revised again in line with new developments and needs.

Keywords: Accountability, Right to Information, Right to Petition, CIMER

1. INTRODUCTION

The public organizational structures have also received their share from the paradigmatic changes in the public administration approach, which has reached almost half a century. The administrations, which undertook the task of generating useful information from complex data within the framework of traditional public administration approach, have been in an effort to increase their authority over time. For this purpose, the bureaucratic system has shrouded the concept of state secret in order to both protect themselves and realize the principle of secrecy. In addition, subordinates, who were subject to strict control by superiors in terms of corporate accountability, had to fulfill the orders and instructions given in the name of loyalty. Although the disciplinary system taking place in the formal structure is remarkable in terms of accountability, it could not prevent the formation of gray areas in terms of managerial accountability when evaluated together with other components of the traditional management approach. However, the Weberian bureaucracy model, which is at the center of the criticism, is even claimed to be beneficial for democracy provided that it is well controlled and its deficient and / or faulty parts are corrected. However, it can be said that confidentiality, impersonal, rigid organization and hierarchy, centralism, uniformity and paperwork, which are the requirements of the bureaucracy, do not coincide with the aim of creating an effective public administration. From this point until the 1980s, it is seen that the bureaucratic principles, which pioneered the organizational propositions of the traditional public administration approach, began to be replaced with the "New Public Management" elements in accordance with the requirements of democracy and business management with the new process. With the change, a citizen-oriented flexible organization model has been adopted to increase political and administrative accountability, and it has become possible to audit bureaucratic elements by the public through all kinds of complaints, notices, requests and suggestions. Thus, by emphasizing the importance of openness in legal and corporate governance, the accountability of the administration has started to be questioned more through the concept of governance. On the other hand, it becomes possible to control the state structure which has shrunk with the effect of neoliberal economic policies, and with the integration of performance-based methods and processes into the system, it has been ensured that public organizations are redesigned in a way that reflects social preferences that are effective, efficient, auditable and accountable (Aydın and Belli, 2020: 327-336; Eryılmaz, 2006: 193-225; Kutlu, 2012: 73-85).

Governments that care about participation and accountability in public administration and policies have recently benefited from the developments in information and communication

technologies. These developments bring a new dimension to the interaction between individual-society-state; instead of the usually cumbersome and stationary public administration structure; requires the transition to a fast, effective, effective, flexible, participatory, transparent, efficient and citizen-oriented organization model (Kurun, 2017: 85-106; Ömürgönülşen, 1998: 517-565). With the new process, the number of citizens expressing their dissatisfaction with the provision of public services and its effect on the system is increasing day by day. Nowadays, political and administrative authorities, which tend to keep the citizen interaction alive, do not see the expectations and preferences of the people as limited to the ballot box in representative democracies. Although it is important that the elections reflect the preferences of citizens in terms of political participation, it is equally important to pay attention to the demands, suggestions and complaints of the citizens against the political and administrative decisions between the two elections. Ultimately, the new public administration approach is fed from the same intersection cluster with active participation and result-oriented private sector management techniques (Hood, 1991: 1-20).

Similarly, in line with global developments in citizen-focused behalf of Turkey has taken important steps to create public service provision and management structure. The change in the government system made with the referendum held on April 16, 2017 also constitutes an important milestone of a transformation in accordance with this understanding. With the transition to the new government system, Prime Ministry Communication Center (BIMER), which is the application authority related to the executive, was closed and all applications started to be directed to the Presidential Communication Center (CIMER). Citizens' ability to use their constitutional rights to obtain information and petition quickly and easily through e-government applications will also contribute to the participation in administration and indirectly to the supervision of public service provision. The CIMER mechanism, which aims to strengthen individual-society-state relations, is also an electronic platform that contributes to the consolidation of democratic institutions and rules and the development of public service provision. In this context, the CIMER mechanism that contributes to the formation of effective audit culture and the realization of good management principles in order to increase the accountability of public administration is discussed (Altun, 2020a).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Accountability in Public Administration

Accountability is at the top of the list of concepts regarding the responsibility of political and administrative decision makers and implementers, who are in a position to bring public resources to the service of the public. The concept of accountability, which is as old as the history of civilization, has been constantly expanding in scope. From this point, the concept of accountability has been used in Hammurabi to draw attention to the responsibility of those who manage public resources. In addition, the concept emerged more clearly when the King of England William I brought the landowners accountable to the central government at certain periods. In this process, although the concept of accountability primarily describes the accounting procedures related to calculations, it has become a complementary element of public administration and one of the basic principles of good governance in time. In addition to these, the concept of accountability; corresponds to a complex communication network that includes moral dimensions among the political power, bureaucracy and citizens, which are indispensable for democratic governments (Akman, 2015; Kalkan and Alparslan, 2009: 30).

With the new public administration approach, the establishment of political and administrative integrity has gained importance in order to restore the feeling of trust between the state and the citizen. In this context, the accountability of the rulers and the officials using the public power for their work and transactions within the framework of their responsibilities is also supported

by structural norms. Ultimately, accountability, which strengthens its conceptual base with the effect of new managerial processes, is defined as any employee and team informing another person or group about the activities they are responsible for, regardless of their rank in the public or private sector. Regarding accountability, Public administrations are obliged to explain from the determination of public policies, the implementation of the determined policies and the public expenditures made within this scope to the public and relevant authorities with their reasons.

In this way, it is understood what extent administrations can meet the expectations in making and implementing public decisions. This process which turns into a kind of feedback for public administrators; also includes the responsibility for the effective and efficient use of public resources from planning to budgeting, implementation and finalization. This responsibility also makes it necessary to consider the elements of accountability, which are among the basic principles of good governance (Eryılmaz and Biricikoğlu, 2011: 21; Yazıcı, 2018: 295-317).

In addition to structural regulations, the framework of the concept of accountability, which also includes ethical values, should not be limited to public administration. In this way, every person, institution and non-governmental organization providing direct or indirect service to the public is expected to account for the outputs they produce within the framework of their activities to internal and external stakeholders. From this point of view, accountability, which is classified as political, administrative and judicial, is carried out against an external mechanism in social interaction (Eryılmaz and Biricikoğlu, 2011: 22-23). The process that proceeds as a question and answer bilaterally includes the acceptance of hierarchical / principal-surrogate propositions. In this context, while superior authority is accepted by subordinates, those in the position of proxy take into account the demands and expectations of the originals while using their powers. Ultimately, the functioning of all these supervisory processes depends on the full use of the accountability mechanism (Mulgan, 2000: 555; Hughes, 2003: 237; Kaymal, 2019).

2.2. Right to Information and Petition

Informing the public before and after the activities of public institutions and organizations that produce public goods and services, monitoring the processes by the parties and accessing the information and documents to be created within this scope are critical for a transparent and accountable public administration. The traditional public administration approach and bureaucratic structure adopted a restrictive style in terms of transparency and accountability.

Especially bureaucratic structures created spaces protected for themselves by sharing less of the information they gained over time. This situation has caused public administrations to operate in a closed circuit in time. Political governments, which have the responsibility of reaching the information that citizens want, have endeavored to increase their political output by only sharing the information they want with the public. The first legal regulation that enables individuals who want to access information and documents created by public administrations is the Press Freedom Law enacted by Sweden in 1776. Since this date, as the scope of human rights and freedoms expands, more countries have started to include them in their constitutional and legal regulations regarding the rights of individuals to apply and obtain information. It is seen that the application and the right to information, which started especially after the 1980s and gained momentum after the 2000s, gained more place in legal texts. In this context, the "Freedom of Information Law" adopted by Australia in 1982 has been taken as an example by other countries with its opening towards foreign, real and legal persons. In the aforementioned law, in order for the public administration to fulfill its responsibilities and to use public resources effectively and efficiently, it is regulated that the relevant persons can access their personal information and documents, request corrections if necessary, and inform the public of the decisions taken. Subsequently, legal regulations were made in Canada (1985), Austria

(1987), Italy (1990) and Spain (1992) to recognize individual rights to information (Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2008; Özek, 1999: 62-65; Demirkıran, Eser and Keklik, 2011:169-192).

From the past to the present, there have been governments that care about the citizens to convey their demands and requests to the state. Of course, although different countries have been granted the right to apply and obtain information in different dimensions and content, the use of the right to information by citizens within the framework of the new public administration approach is guaranteed by similar laws. In this context, the right to obtain information includes the citizens' request from public institutions and organizations for information and documents on other persons and subjects, to the extent permitted by law, even if they are not relevant or related to them. Removing all the obstacles in front of individuals to have knowledge falls on political and managerial authority. This obligation is a requirement of democratic and transparent state understanding. In today's modern nation states, judicial control mechanisms alone are not considered sufficient in fulfilling the rights of individuals to apply and obtain information. Political governments that especially prioritize citizen participation and want to make the control of the administration operational have also developed alternative practices that produce rapid results in addition to traditional ways of obtaining information. Because the traditional way of judicial review is often an expensive, long and slow process. At this point, one of the prominent mechanisms is the legal regulation that allows citizens to exercise their right to information. Citizens can request the decisions taken or be taken by public administrations for the provision of public services within the scope of this right, and all kinds of information and documents related to their results by applying to the relevant authorities. What is expected from public institutions is to fulfill citizens' these demands within the legal periods specified in the law, in accordance with the rule of law. The state, which meets the needs of the information society through information communication technologies of our age and e-government applications, is able to respond to the legal demands of citizens equally, impartially, transparently and quickly through the same mechanism. (Acar, 2018:4836-4848).

Another application mechanism that enables citizens to submit their wishes and complaints about themselves or the public to the administrative authorities is to exercise their petition rights. Right to petition is among the political rights that ensure obtaining information in terms of fulfilling the wishes of citizens, accountability of the administration by making complaints about public problems, governance and democratic participation by making wishes and wishes (Çakmut, 2017:45-55). In exercising this right, it is necessary to apply to public institutions and organizations under the roof of legislative and executive powers outside of the judicial institutions. The right to petition, which has a wider application area than the right to information, is one of the most basic and ancient application rights of individuals. The milestone of the right to petition, one of the most fundamental human rights in this ancient past, can be traced back to Magna Carta Libertatum, signed by King John I of England in 1215. The king pioneered the birth of the right to petition by granting the right to demand to the barons with the great freedom treaty. Subsequently, in the period of Edward I, special personnel assignment and council institution were established for petitions. With the settlement of the parliamentary system in England over time, the "Appeals and Complaints Commission" was established by the House of Commons in 1571. Thus, it was aimed to strengthen the bond of the councils with the citizens through the right to petition. This regulation also helps to explain the dominant role of today's assemblies in the exercise of this right. This right, which spread from England, was also included in the Legal Basis of 1876 and the French Constitution of 1791; Subsequently, the right to petition has been included in similar national and international legal regulations. Starting with the "Kânûn-ı Esâsî" of these mechanisms in terms of constitutional context, Turkey has also developed and made available to the citizens of the republic constitution (Taşkın, 2012:172-236).

3. UNDER THE PETITION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOUNTABILITY IN TURKEY AND CIMER MECHANISM AS AN INNOVATIVE E-GOVERNMENT APPLICATION

3.1. Turkey's Infrastructure Accountability in the Context of Information and the Right to Petition

Rising on the corporate balance Ottoman Empire, Turkey inherited a public administration structure that was not based on merit, participation, openness, and accountability. The Ottoman Empire, trying to improve the public administration structure with the impositions of the West, tended to frame the public administration structure legally and legislatively with the Tanzimat (1839) and Reform Edicts (1856). The reform efforts that continued in the Republican period, under the influence of internal and external dynamics and mostly according to the results of the report prepared by external dynamics, could not produce a quick solution to other organizational and administrative problems accumulated over the years. Until the 1980s, efforts to create an effective and efficient public administration structure continued far from presenting an accountable / questionable contemporary public administration structure (Kaymal, 2019). Thus, reformist approaches made in this period were not enough to eliminate citizens' dissatisfaction with the public administration. However, Turkey which can not remain indifferent to the theoretical changes in the global scale since 1980, has tried to adapt to developments by the impact of external dynamics such as IMF, World Bank and EU particularly during the period of the Ozal government. In this process, it is aimed to transform the one-way communication and relationship network between the individual-society-state into a multi-directional and interactive structure, by prioritizing the formation of an understanding and bureaucratic structure suitable for the administrative paradigm change. It is also seen that the political power continues with the structural reforms that will increase the sense of trust between the society and the state and exclude anti-democratic practices and corruption. These reforms, which are integrated with the efforts of harmonizing human rights and freedoms with universal norms, also contributed to the formation of competition and democratic public opinion. In this way, it has become possible for citizens to access the information and documents they need during and after the determination of public policies in the transition to the information society, with the legal regulations made. After all these processes, the transition to a democratic public administration structure has accelerated, where the principles of good governance are taken into account by political powers and administrative levels, citizens can question all kinds of administrative decisions and can easily express their wishes and complaints when necessary (Çetin, 2010: 23-38). Parallel to global developments, with the expansion of the right of access to information on the most important needs of the information society, Turkey has experienced important changes in the processes of public institutions and organizations doing business.

In this context, public institutions and schools that respect the citizens' right to obtain information and petition and obey the principles of transparency and accountability have been redesigned as a product of the new public management approach. So that accountability is an important milestone in the implementation of the principle of the Right to Petition the 1982 Constitution, the 74th in the article was arranged as "Citizens and the condition into account the reciprocity right Foreigners residing in Turkey wishes and complaints related to themselves or the public, are eligible to apply with what font to the competent authorities and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Parliament). The petitioners are notified in writing without delay about the results of their applications. In order to ensure the use of this right, on 01.11.1984 the "Law on the Exercise of Petition Right" (DHKDK) numbered 3071 was enacted. Thus, one of the important mechanisms of accountability in the new public administration approach has become operational (Çakmut, 2017: 45-55; Duran, 2019: 59-92; Taşkın, 2012:172-236).

Right to petition based on constitutional and legal grounds covers complaints and demand of Turkish and Foreigners residing in Turkey to the Turkish Grand National Assembly and public institutions and organizations. Law No. 3071 has adopted that foreigners write their petitions on the basis of reciprocity and in Turkish. Persons who will apply to the Turkish Grand National Assembly or related public institutions and organizations must state their name, surname and work / residence address in their petitions. Otherwise, petitions that do not have a name, surname and address, do not contain a certain subject in terms of content and are within the jurisdiction of judicial authorities are not taken into consideration. Institutions whose subject of petition and complaint do not fall within their field of activity must immediately send the petition to the relevant institution and inform the petitioner. The competent authority must also respond to the petitioner within thirty days from the result of the process of the transaction with justification. However, upon the completion of the process in ongoing works, the petitioner is also informed. The petitions sent to the Turkish Grand National Assembly are examined in the "Petition Commission" and finalized within sixty days. The Petition Commission may forward the petition received to the relevant public institution and organization if it wishes. It can also request information, documents, expert or administrative investigation. Apart from these, the subject of the petition can examine the petition and complaint on site. If the council directs the petitions sent to the relevant public institutions or organizations, the administration must respond to the petition within thirty days (Law No. 3071 DHKDK).

The accountability of public institutions and organizations to the relevant authorities and the public as a result of their activities is a decisive criterion for the democratic rule of law. Democratic countries produce various accountability mechanisms and structural transformations in order to keep their public administration structures under control. By regulating the right to information in Turkey, citizen participation and supervision will allow the public administrations through open data sets has established an alternative mechanism. With the Law on the Right to Information (BEHK) dated 09.10.2003 and numbered 4982, it has become possible for people to exercise their right to obtain information in accordance with the principles of equality, impartiality and openness as required by democratic and transparent management. With the "Regulation on Principles and Procedures Regarding the Implementation of the Right to Information Law (BEHKUHY)" published in the Official Gazette dated 27.04.2004 and numbered 25445, the implementation method of BEHK was clarified. Within the framework of the fore mentioned regulation, an Information Communication Center (BIMER) was established within the Prime Ministry for citizens to use BEHK. In addition, "Public Relations Application Offices" were established in central and provincial organizations (district governorship, governorship and ministry) and BIMER application network was established. "Alo 150" call centers have been established within the governorship so that citizens can exercise their right to obtain information without going to the authorities listed in the legislation (Demirkiran et al., 2011:169-192; BEHKUHY dated 27.04.2004 and numbered 25445).

With BEHK numbered 4982, foreigners are required to write their petitions to request information and documents regarding their field of activity in Turkish on the basis of reciprocity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkish Republic published the countries under the principle of reciprocity in the Official Gazette. Natural persons who will request information and documents must indicate their name, surname and business / residence address, while legal persons must indicate their trade name, address, signature of the authorized person and the certificate of authorization in the petition. Otherwise, requests that do not have a name, surname and address and whose content is unclear are returned. However, with the completion of the relevant deficiencies, the process starts over. However, information and documents related to state secrets and intelligence, documents related to the economic interests of the country,

documents containing internal opinion and information note, requests for advice and opinions, private life, communication and trade secret information and documents within the scope of jurisdiction have been excluded from the scope of the regulation. The information and documents requested in accordance with the procedure are evaluated if the public institutions and organizations are related to their field of activity and legally, positive or negative feedback is made to the applicant within fifteen days. However, if the requested information or document is to be obtained from another public institution or organization or if it is required to be prepared together, this period may be extended up to thirty days in order to be notified to the applicant before the end of the fifteen-day period. In addition, if an opinion is obtained from another institution, time extension is applied by notifying the justification of the applicant (BEHKUHY dated 27.04.2004 and numbered 25445).

While the applications about the petition are made only in writing, information communication technologies are also used in order to ensure that citizens can use their right to information at the maximum level. From this point of view, BİMER, which stands out in the use of the right to obtain information, entered into force with the Prime Ministry circular numbered 2006/3. BİMER, which has been put into use as a public relations application in order to meet the requirements of today's digital age, enables the interaction between the state and the citizen to be monitored and controlled in an electronic environment quickly and effectively (Acar, 2018: 4836-4848).The number of applications made in the period from 2006, when the BİMER mechanism was put into use until 2017 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. BİMER Application Numbers and Change Percentages by Years

YEARS	APPLICATION NUMBERS	RATIO OF APPLICATIONS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	PERCENT CHANGE OF APPLICATIONS
2006	129.297	1,22%	-
2007	137.716	1,30%	6,51%
2008	217.859	2,07%	58,19%
2009	384.852	3,66%	76,65%
2010	649.115	6,17%	68,66%
2011	822.287	7,82%	26,67%
2012	866.885	8,24%	5,42%
2013	1.168.853	11,11%	34,83%
2014	1.124.005	10,69%	-3,83%
2015	1.267.665	12,05%	12,78%
2016	1.729.952	16,45%	36,46%
2017	2.016.021	19,17%	16,53%
TOTAL APPLICATION:	10.514.507		

Source: Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2018: 41-42; Anadolu Ajansı (AA), 2018.

Within the scope of the BİMER application, a total of 10.514.507 application transactions were made between 2006 and 2017. The continuous increase in the applications made to BİMER, except for 2014, shows that the interest of citizens towards the e-government application is continuous. Especially when the applications made in 2016 and 2017 are evaluated together, it has an important place in the total number of applications with a rate of 35.62%. The increasing interest of citizens has increased the sensitivity of the Turkish public administration towards BİMER and filled an important gap in conveying public issues to policymakers. In addition to being useful, the e-government project BİMER, which produces effective and fast results, has also been awarded domestic and international awards. Thanks to the system, which is followed meticulously by the Prime Ministry, the performance chart of public institutions and organizations at the point of providing citizen-oriented service has been continuously followed. With the implementation of the new government system as of 10.07.2018, the BİMER application was combined with the Presidential Communication Center (CİMER). Thus, since

this date, wise and document requests of citizens from public institutions and organizations have started to be met through CIMER (Oktay, 2018).

3.2. CIMER Mechanism as an Innovative E-Government Application

In order to meet the increasing need of the information society, a rapid and innovative transformation has been experienced in information and communication technologies after the 1990s(Yılmaz and Turan, 2019:313-342). Service infrastructures constantly renew themselves according to new citizen-oriented demands, and citizen participation and satisfaction are increasing day by day with the implementation of e-government applications. E-government applications, which provide convenience at the point of obtaining, processing and storing information in a way that cannot be compared with traditional methods, have enabled public services to be carried out electronically thanks to information technologies. In this way, the transactions that citizens have to do face-to-face by going to public institutions can be carried out in a very short time and within the framework of personalized service concept without communication accidents (Çiçek, Çiçek and Çiçek, 2007: 201-224; Şahin and Örselli, 2003:343-356). Public administrations, which have changed their shell with e-government services, prioritize efficiency and productivity on the one hand and restructure in terms of transparency and accountability on the other. This process does not only transform the public institutions and organizations that make cumbersome and important decisions behind closed doors. Citizens, who benefit from public services themselves and are in a more passive position, also want to be more active in decision-making processes by adapting to the new understanding. Increased feedback with the opening of governance channels helps e-government applications to close service gaps. Ultimately, while the state provides a cost-effective public service, citizens are pleased that their taxes have been transformed into correct public policies (Acar, 2018:4836-4848).

Globalization, developments in information communication technologies and the requirements of the digital age have accelerated the integration of the state device with other national and supranational organizations. Public administrations have had to engage in a multi-dimensional interaction in tackling global problems, especially individual and social demands. From this point of view, the new public management and governance paradigms tend to transform into flexible, transparent, participatory, effective and accountable organizational structures, unlike the traditional public administration approach where everything is determined from top to bottom by the state (Tunç, 2014:83-106). In the new process in which good governance principles are tried to be implemented, public institutions and organizations give more importance to the demands and requests of the citizens regarding public service delivery. Public policies, which are determined especially behind closed doors and with narrow participation policy actors, are now open to the public and in a multilateral manner (Koçak, 2010: 115-125). Turkey aims to establish an organizational structure that prioritizes citizen satisfaction by trying to keep up with changes that started globally. Especially with the recognition of the right to petition and information within the scope of the right to apply to citizens, public institutions and organizations have started to implement many innovative applications one by one in the name of openness and accountability (Turan, Aydılek and Şen, 2015:215-225). At the beginning of these applications are e-government mechanisms such as BIMER (2006-2018) and CIMER, which are products of the digital age. By collecting requests, complaints, notices and suggestions of the citizens in electronic environment without the notion of time and place, the communication between the individual, the society and the state are constantly kept open. With the implementation of the Presidential Government System, the BIMER application was closed on 10.07.2018 and transferred to CIMER (Oktay, 2018). In the new government system in which the President assumes political responsibility, it is aimed to directly convey the

expectations and complaints of citizens from public services to the relevant authorities through the CIMER application.

The CIMER application, which acts as a bridge between the citizen and the state, has become the address where the applications are made intensively with the closure of BIMER. Although the grievance mechanisms established within the ministries continue their activities, CIMER application removes all the intensity in problems that exceed the ministries. The process, initiated with the motto "Ask the President" from the official website www.tccb.gov.tr since 2016, continues to exist as a platform that facilitates citizen participation. First of all, in order to increase the accountability of public institutions and organizations, CIMER has removed the obstacles in front of both the state and the president, who is the head of the executive power, to easily reach. The CIMER application, which is followed by the Presidency's Directorate of Communication, accepts the applications of the citizens via its official new internet address <https://www.cimer.gov.tr/>. The process starts with clicking the "Apply" button; ID number, name-surname, first and last letter of the mother's maiden name and mobile phone information. The system then sends the confirmation code to the mobile phone for the applicant to verify. After the approval process, e-mail addresses and education status information can also be added to the application screen. The system also allows specifying a correspondence address other than the residence address. In addition, if the subject of application is related to local services, location information can be directly uploaded to the system. The application text is completed by creating the application text on the application detail screen and adding the files if any. After the applicant has made a preview of his request, he approves the legal information letter and completes the application completely. The number of applications submitted for follow-up purposes is also sent to the e-mail address for information purposes. In order for the application to be answered in a very short time, it is directed directly to the relevant institution via "CIMER Automation". If the relevant institution is not selected directly, the Presidency Communication Directorate examines the application content and sends the requests to the relevant institution (CIMER, 2020). The institutions to which the applications are directed within the scope of CIMER are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2.Institutions Covered and Not Covered by CIMER

Institutions Covered by CIMER	Institutions not Covered by CIMER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidency Central Organization • Presidential Offices, Boards and Affiliated Presidencies • Ministries • Governorships • Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor District Governorships • Universities • Affiliated, Related and Related Institutions and Organizations • Metropolitan Municipalities • Provincial and District Municipalities • Special Provincial Administrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) • Ombudsman Institution • Supreme Election Council • Council of Judges and Prosecutors • Court of Accounts

Source: CIMER, 2020.

Almost all (99%) of the applications made by CIMER are directed to the relevant institutions, while approximately 80 thousand public personnel work in administrative units to respond to the applications received within this scope. Public institutions are required to respond to the positive or negative applicant within thirty days, depending on the application content (request, complaint or notice). If the transactions subject to the application will take longer than this period, the reason for an interim answer is reported. If the subject of the application is a request for information or documents in accordance with BEHK numbered 4982, the response time is fifteen working days. If for any reason, the requested information or document cannot be obtained within this period, this period may be extended up to thirty business days, provided that the applicant is informed. In the applications, both CIMER and the relevant institution's

CIMER officials are required to strictly abide by the provisions of the "Law on Protection of Personal Data" numbered 6698. From this point, the administration and public personnel have to take all kinds of technical and administrative security measures in order to protect the personal data of the applicant or the persons who are the subject of the application. The confidentiality principle should be protected by strictly observing masking procedures, especially when referring to the higher authority of that manager in complaints and notice applications made against institution managers. Otherwise, other notices and complaints from within the institution will be blocked. When such a picture is encountered, judicial and administrative investigations should be carried out immediately and the CIMER mechanism should not be allowed to be worn down (Altun, 2019a; CIMER, 2020).

Taking the mission of providing resources for public policies through the feedback of citizens, CIMER carries out the sending of applications to the relevant public institution, response in a short time and warnings of the units in possible delays through the same system. In addition, the accountability of public institutions and organizations and the performance outputs of public personnel can be monitored regularly by regularly reporting the applications on various variables. Other applications made to CIMER, which aims to spread the importance of public control and public relations concept to public institutions and organizations, are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.CIMER Application Numbers and Change Percentages by Years

YEARS	APPLICATIONS NUMBER	RATIO OF APPLICATIONS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	PERCENT OF APPLICATION CHANGES
2018	2.870.879	23,98	42,40% ¹
2019	3.138.233	26,21	9,31%
2020	5.962.6432	49,80	90%
TOTAL:	11.971.755		

Source: Altun, 2019a; Altun, 2020b.

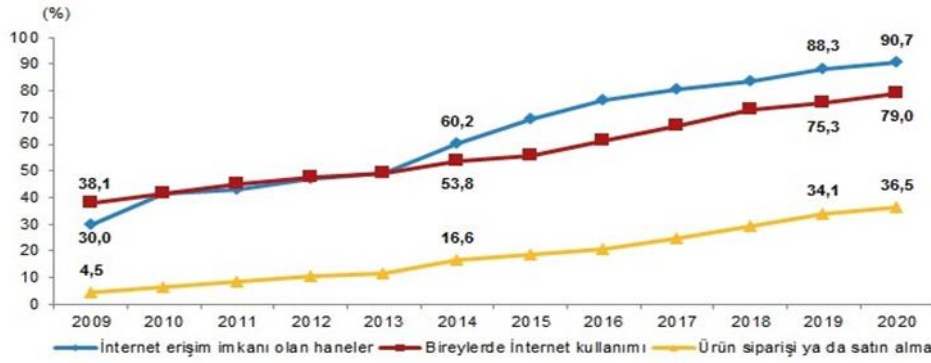
As it can be understood from Table 3, interest in CIMER is constantly increasing. The platform, which continuously strengthens its technical infrastructure with developing information and communication technologies, is a pioneering mechanism that is deemed worthy of awards among electronic application and access to information systems (Altun, 2019b). The goal of the political power to create an accountable public administration has a great place in CIMER's success. However, in recent periods in Turkey in efforts to improve the Internet infrastructure and usage can be a guide in explaining that citizens prefer CIMER more than traditional methods (letter, phone-fax, personal application, etc.)

From this point, in the "Household Information Technology User Survey" conducted by Turkey Statistical Institute (TUIK) in 2020, it is seen that the citizens have increased possibilities of access to the Internet constantly. Basic indicators of household information technology usage between 2009-2020 are given in Chart 1 below.

¹ The percentage of change has been determined according to the number of 2017 BİMER applications.

² In an interview with Presidential Communication Director Fahrettin ALTUN, he stated that there were approximately 6 million applications to CIMER in 2020, and this number evolved to 90% of the number of 2019 applications. Since 2020 data has not been announced yet, the number of applications for 2020 has been calculated based on 90% of the 2019 number (Altun, 2020b).

Chart 1. Basic Indicators of Household Information Technology Usage Between 2009-2020



Source: Turkey Statistical Institute (TUIK), 2020.

When Graph 1 is analyzed, it is seen that between 2009 and 2020, the use of internet in households with internet access (30-90.7%) and individuals (38.1% -79%) has been constantly increasing. Altun (2019a) stated in the information note that he shared the CIMER statistics for 2018, that 93% of the applications were made electronically. From this point of view, it can be said that applications have shifted from traditional methods to electronic media due to the increase in internet usage among households and individuals who have internet access rights. Apart from a limited decrease of -3.83% in 2014, a similar upward trend was also experienced in BIMER and CIMER applications from 2006 to 2020. TUIK found the rate of using e-government applications of citizens as 51.5% in the same research. In the aim of citizens to use e-government applications, obtaining information with a rate of 48.7% took first place (TUIK, 2020).

As a result, CIMER, which is an innovative e-government application, is a bridge for citizens to participate in controlling the service quality and to transfer the problems they encounter to the relevant institutions effectively and efficiently. The web-based application management system is an electronic accountability mechanism that is easy to use and saves time and resources for the applicant and public administrations without being limited to space. In this way, while the petition and the right to obtain information, which are the most basic constitutional and legal rights of the citizens, are exercised more actively, on the other hand, the communication channels between the individual, the society and the state are constantly kept open.

4. CONCLUSION and EVALUATION

The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the transition of the state and public administrations to modern public management practices that can respond quickly to global competition instead of traditional public management understanding in order to meet the needs and expectations of the society. In this period, the pressure of change was felt intensely by the nation states in many areas from economy to industry, state-society relations to the requirements of globalization. Developments in information communication technologies in particular have enabled the state to provide much faster and cost-effective services for citizens' wishes and complaints through internet-based applications. Today, many countries have aimed to utilize information communication technologies in the process of creating an effective public policy with citizen participation by encouraging e-government applications to the extent allowed by their political systems. Special incentives provided in this context increased the interaction between the individual, the society and the state day by day and led to improvements in citizen-oriented public service provision (Çiçek et al., 2007:201-224). Turkey, suffered from the pressures of change and transformation in the global area, has not refrained from taking steps to modernization to ensure accountability and transparency in public administration.

In this process, an increase is observed in the efforts of the political and administrative powers to match the policy outputs, risks, costs and benefits with the demands and expectations of the citizens in determining public policy. Ultimately, it is seen that those who are decision makers and implementors abandon the tendency to protect and hide, and adopt an open and accountable management approach that will contribute to the consolidation of democratic rules and rules in public service delivery (Demirkıran et al., 2011:169-192). From this point of view, petition and the right to obtain information stand out as two important gains at the point of opening public services to public scrutiny without arbitrariness. Both regulations form the basis of freedom of thought within the scope of the right to access information and include respect for more universal human rights. In the information society consisting of democratic and free people, access to correct information, which is not detached from its context, is the most important input for individuals to make and express their decisions freely (Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2018). CIMER mechanism, which stands out as an innovative e-government application at the point of accessing the right information, also provides the citizens with the opportunity to use their right to information without the notion of time and space.

Having merged with BIMER after an act was passed to the presidential government system, CIMER operates under the responsibility of the Presidency Directorate of Communications. CIMER, an electronic e-government application, allows citizens to make requests, complaints, notices and suggestions to public institutions and organizations to the extent permitted by the constitution and laws. Thus, resources are created for public policies through the feedback of citizens. Applications made within this scope can only be accessed by authorized public personnel and referrals are made through this personnel. Sending applications from citizens to the relevant administrative units, CIMER acts as a kind of bridge between the citizen and public institutions and organizations. It also monitors the reply to the applications as soon as possible and warns the relevant institutions in case of any delay. The data obtained as a result of all these processes are reported statistically, and the accountability of public institutions and organizations and the performance outputs of public personnel are measured (CIMER, 2020).

CIMER enables fast and easy application in electronic environment and also sets evaluation standards for public service provision. In this way, it helps to reverse the stereotyped criticisms of the bureaucracy. Moreover, in terms of effective public control, it prevents bad management practices for citizens to have information and to benefit equally from public services. However, criticism towards CIMER, which is an innovative application, has started to rise over time. The main criticism is that the personnel working in CIMER central and provincial units do not show the necessary sensitivity in the implementation of the relevant legislation and the confidentiality principle is ignored in complaints / notices. Undoubtedly, the principle of confidentiality is an extremely important principle in reaching results in complaint and notice applications. It is of vital importance for CIMER to send the personal data of the applicant to the relevant authorities by making blackening procedures, for the healthy operation of this platform. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the training activities for the personnel on this issue and to be resolved when concrete events are encountered. In addition to these criticisms, it is also stated that citizens' applications were responded late or replied with stereotypes in order to close the application. In the 2020-2024 strategic plan prepared by the Presidency's Directorate of Communications regarding these criticisms, it is aimed to gradually reduce the response time to ten days in 2024 in order to ensure that citizens' right to petition and obtain information is used effectively and quickly through CIMER. In the strategic plan, it is also planned to use the ALO 150 line effectively and to increase the awareness level of the citizens in order to make CIMER more accessible. In order to create an effective application mechanism with all administrative units, the inspection of public administrations is accelerated, and it is aimed to inspect 750 public institutions and organizations in this context by 2024 (CIMER, 2019).

Expanding the inspection mechanism to cover more public institutions and organizations will pave the way for CIMER's personnel to be more sensitive towards applications.

Citizens can also use the applications of requests, complaints, suggestions and denunciations regarding the issues that they encounter or witness during the presentation of public services within the scope of the right to petition. However, in accordance with the legal regulation, the right to petition should only be made in writing and with a wet signature. In this context, the necessary arrangements should be made in DHKDK and citizens should be given the opportunity to apply electronically (Taşkın, 2012:172-236). With all these improvements, it is important to introduce planned awareness programs for e-government applications that mediate the citizens' right to petition and obtain information effectively. From this point of view, more active participation of citizens in decision-making processes should be prioritized and support should be given to the transformation of their preferences into policy outputs. Because the success of the policies to be applied depends on this. Political and administrative powers that ignore the feedback of citizens are the biggest obstacles in consolidating democracy. However, strengthening of democracy and increasing trust in administration is possible by increasing political and administrative accountability and citizens' participation in the administration. As an electronic e-government application in CIMER, it contributes greatly to the establishment of a citizen and solution-oriented public sector culture. Therefore, it is recommended that the research, development and innovative studies on such innovative platforms are encouraged by the political and administrative authorities and the system is kept up-to-date through feedback.

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