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OBJECT OR SUBJECT? THE PARADOX OF “YOUTH” IN TURKEY

Our mnemonic culture [insists on] the novelty of no longer fetishizing the new.¹

How can you call us “young”?
How can you call us “new”?
We are just getting used to love, death and art
Our soccer player, our singer, our queer
It’s really a moot hope:
Our retirement will end one day.
We were old when you gave birth to us,
We will get younger as we die!²

A columnist in a Turkish newspaper recently asked, “Will nothing really be the same again?”³ referring to the impact of the massive earthquake of 17 August 1999 on the Turkish psyche. The writer Murathan Mungan used a similar metaphor earlier in what seems today like a prophetic statement: “I think Turkey has really come to lean against the wall. There is nowhere to go; either the wall will crumble or it will be dismantled. If it crumbles, we will be crushed below, if it is dismantled maybe we will move to another space—or at least try to.”⁴

The earthquake is an apt metaphor for the large-scale dislocation of Turkish society at the wake of the millennium. This dislocation stems from the attempt to construct a single national identity upon the body of a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual empire. The main instrument in this civilizational process, based on a localized version of Enlightenment ideas, was educated youth.⁵ While the role of gender in the construction of national identity has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention,⁶ the construction of age in Turkish society has not been sufficiently analyzed.

Recent studies have emphasized the historical and cultural variability of experiences of modernity outside the Euro-American context. These studies indicate that Western modernity itself constitutes a culture located in time and space rather than a universal paradigm. This suggests that there is not one but many modernities.⁷ The emergence of “youth” as a distinct category and stage in the lifecycle is linked to the history of modernity in Europe. But how is the transition from childhood to adulthood experienced and constructed in non-Western modernities? The Turkish case suggests that

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studies of youth, which largely focus on age-based subcultures, can benefit from contextualization within a wider frame of age, lifecycle, and generation. In Turkey, age, including the relationship between elders and juniors, is a core cultural construct within kinship and nationalist discourses. Notably, historical constructs of age were maintained subsequent to the adoption of modernist notions of youth in the 19th century. In addition, generational identity is central to the experience of being young, particularly for a core group of educated elites. Until recently, Turkish society has managed to reconcile the veneration of the elderly (including the cult of Atatürk⁸) with the cult of youth.

In this article, I analyze the construction of youth in public discourse during three periods in recent Turkish history. I argue that in the first period (1923–50), youth—and educated youth in particular—came to embody the new nation. In the second period (1950–80), in which a student movement led to widespread violence between “leftists” and “rightists,” youths were reconstructed in public discourse as rebels and as a major threat to the nation. However, young people involved in the student movement viewed the incumbent government itself as illegitimate, perceiving themselves as acting in the name of “the people” to build a just society. In these two periods, then, despite a change in the discourse on youth, educated youth largely identified with the mission assigned them of transforming society from above—although most young people, like the rural masses as a whole, remained silent in public discourse.

I argue in this article that the third and current period (post-1980) constitutes the first serious rupture with a modernist construction of youth in Turkey, just as it constitutes a break in Turkish political culture as a whole. Public discourse on youth in the post-1980 period tends to represent contemporary youth as apolitical consumers. In the media age, though, young people are increasingly challenging their representations and creating new transnational spaces through which to express their identities. Globalization has been linked to changing conceptions of time and space. A future-oriented modernist concept of time (the time of the nation) is being replaced by an orientation in the present (the time of the self or body) along with a new orientation to the past through memory.⁹ Tuna Kiremitçi is a Turkish poet in his twenties. In the poem quoted earlier, the narrator addresses the older generation, rejecting their construction of youth as “new,” along with the mission it implies. We find in this poem an image of the “young” burdened by the weight passed on by previous generations, who themselves acclaimed the “newness” of the young.

The rise of a global youth culture in recent decades suggests greater convergence of the experiences of young people in global cities. In Turkey, mass-based youth subcultures with links to the diaspora are emerging, paralleling the fragmentation of Turkish society into enclaves based on identity politics.¹⁰ Turkish youth are torn between hopes of constructing a more participatory public sphere and disillusionment with the nation-state as the embodiment of modernity. The process of transition of Turkish youth from object to subject is still in the making.

YOUTH: A GENERATIONAL APPROACH

Research on youth, as distinct from the study of age and the life course in anthropology, has been historically associated with the fields of psychology, education, and

sociology.¹¹ "Youth" tends to be defined demographically as a cohort between ages 15 and 24.¹² Rather than universal, however, as historical and ethnographic studies have shown, the concept of youth is a product of the experience of modernity. A more comparative cultural definition might characterize it as a liminal time of transition from childhood to adulthood, a transition that can be abrupt or prolonged, depending on the context.¹³

It is important to distinguish the definition and representation of youth from above, such as by power-holding adults, from the ways in which young people view and represent themselves. Studies show that youth tend to be viewed ambivalently by adult society, which romanticizes them vis-à-vis visions of utopia while castigating them in practice for being "trouble." Much of 20th-century sociology has viewed youth as deviant anti-citizens—often imagining them as black males in the process.¹⁴

According to Michael Mitterauer, relations of authority and dependence prevailed historically between elders and juniors in European society.¹⁵ Philippe Aries famously claimed that until the 17th century, the life course of individuals consisted of two stages: "miniature adulthood" and adulthood.¹⁶ It was presumably subsequent to the creation of childhood as a distinct stage in the life cycle that a concept of youth began to emerge.¹⁷ The notion that educated youth would take the lead in the construction of modern nation-states emerged out of Enlightenment ideas about progress. Most importantly, the process of industrialization necessitated a longer period of apprenticeship to adulthood and full citizenship through education. With the growing labor (and, increasingly, consumption) demands of industrial economies, youth came to be perceived as a distinct stage in the life course associated with a distinct subculture. With the rise to world power of the United States in the post-war period, the notion of the "teenager" as mass consumer was coined. The 1970s were significant in the literature on youth due to the rise of an international youth movement. During this period, studies influenced by Marx argued that youth subcultures served to maintain the status quo because resistance was largely confined to the sphere of consumption.¹⁸

Was Western society unique in accentuating the gulf between children and adults?¹⁹ The existing literature raises particular challenges for the study of youth in non-Western societies. Whereas contemporary studies tend to assume the universality of youth as a category, there are few historical and ethnographic studies of how youth is constructed in non-Western societies. Although young people played a central role in anti-colonial movements, for example, there are few studies from an age-based perspective. Of particular interest are comparisons among different imperial traditions, such as the Ottoman Empire,²⁰ Russia,²¹ and China.²² The Turkish case suggests that the concept of generation, defined as an age cohort with a shared historical experience,²³ is particularly useful in studying young people in societies characterized by rapid social change, a powerful intelligentsia, the centrality of collective identity (including age-based groups) in the construction of subjectivity, and the maintenance of historical constructs of age in the process of adopting modernist notions of youth.

In a classic study of generations, Karl Mannheim underscores the formative period in which an individual's identity emerges. According to Mannheim, individuals raised in the same socio-historical period are marked in ways that make it possible for them to develop a generational consciousness if their cohort comes to experience transformative historical events. In such a case, an age cohort is transformed into a generation

with a distinct identity. Even when sub-units of a generation have conflicting views, they share a moral universe associated with the historical period in which they came of age.²⁴

In the past decade, transnationalism, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the rise of identity politics have necessitated new approaches and new methodologies in the study of youth. Globalization has blurred previous distinctions between North and South and among regions. A recent study in the field of geography characterizes youth cultures as global hybrid cultures that need to be viewed as open systems.²⁵ Recent work on youth, particularly in the field of cultural studies, has focused on popular culture, including music, style, image, and performance. These studies highlight in particular the experiences of women, racial and ethnic subclasses, and second-generation immigrants.²⁶ A byproduct of the rise of identity politics may be an increase in age-based mobilization, suggesting that youth may be gaining autonomy as a social category the world over, despite their economic marginalization.²⁷ Jean and John Comaroff suggest that youth embody the contradictions of late capitalism, constituting a new counter or “alien-nation” outside the modern nation-state as we know it.²⁸ At the same time, youth have become “global citizens,” dynamic nodes of communication and linkage between the local and the transnational in global cities. The exclusion of young people from established institutional spaces has resulted in the creation of alternative spaces and forms of political mobilization, particularly through new communication technology—including the netherworld of the transnational trade in drugs and arms linked to violence.²⁹ The issue for youth today is how to achieve (or maintain) the promises of modernity, including an inclusive social democracy, within the conditions of neo-liberal globalization.

In the following sections, after a brief discussion of the cultural construction of age in Turkish society, I analyze public discourse on youth in three periods. This study focuses primarily on discourses on youth rather than on the experiences of young people themselves, although public discourse as well as autobiographies and biographies provide clues as to how young people view themselves. The analysis of discourse is invaluable in understanding the construction of national identity by a modernizing elite. Nevertheless, rather than privileging the study of discourse, this article aims to provide a framework for an ethnographic study of the experiences and narratives of young people in the global city of Istanbul.

“WILD BLOOD”: AGE IN TURKISH SOCIETY

Most studies of youth in Turkey have been carried out in the fields of psychology, education, and sociology. These studies tend to be based on quantitative surveys administered at a given point in time to a subset of the population defined as “youth.”³⁰ More historically oriented studies include accounts of the student movement, which focus on the experience of a small but significant subsection of the population.³¹ Previous studies have pointed to the central role of the family and of the ideology of nationalism in shaping individual identity in Turkey,³² although the relationship between the two domains has not been sufficiently analyzed. There are few studies that relate age as a cultural construct to generational identity and to the emergence of youth subcultures in Turkey.

In Turkish society, “youth” is associated with the state of being unmarried or not yet a householder. For both men and women, until relatively recently, marriage in their teens conferred adult status.³³ According to Şerif Mardin, youth was conceived as a period of apprenticeship in Ottoman society.³⁴ Historically, the relationship between elders and juniors was marked in the family, the educational system, the system of apprenticeship, the organization of religious brotherhoods, and the military establishment.

The distinction between elders (*büyükler*) and juniors (*küçükler*) is central to the construction of personhood in Turkish society. Age is marked in kinship terminology.³⁵ Elder siblings are distinguished on the basis of age and gender, whereas younger siblings are referred to by a single term, undifferentiated by gender. Recep Aslan, a carpenter who grew up in eastern Turkey, recalls that it was unthinkable for children to address elders; they could reply only when spoken to.³⁶ Necdet Sakaoğlu, a retired teacher and historian, recalls a tradition in the town of Divriği known as *dil saklama* (hiding the tongue), according to which a young bride could not speak to her in-laws directly.³⁷ Fuat Bayramoğlu, whose father led the Bayrami religious order in the first decades of this century, recalled being addressed as *baba* (father) as an honorific while still a child.³⁸ In 1920, the first meeting of the Turkish Parliament convened under the leadership of the oldest person present; Mustafa Kemal was subsequently elected president. Mustafa Kemal himself took *Atatürk* as his last name, which means “the father (or forefather) of the Turks.”

Age cohorts play an important role in defining identity and establishing structures of dominance in Turkish society, and individuals tend to define themselves with reference to their generation.³⁹ Age cohorts are an informal means of organization in villages, as well as in educational institutions. In some regions, such as in an Arab Christian village in Hatay, leaders were elected until recently from among young male age mates, a practice known as “*şeyh şebek*.”⁴⁰

Turkish society does acknowledge a stage of potentially unruly behavior, particularly among young men, who are referred to as *delikanlı* (those with wild blood).⁴¹ Although primarily associated with men, the term can also be used to refer to women. This is the period in which one acquires “a name,” often in the form of a nickname or by-name (*lakap*). Single young men tended to circulate in Ottoman society as seasonal workers, apprentices, and students. Unlike householders, single young men (like roaming nomads) were viewed as a potential threat to organized society. Young men formed the backbone of revolts that broke out in Anatolia from the 16th century.⁴² Similarly, the prototypical bandit in Ottoman society was a young male, referred to as *kızan* (young boy) in the Aegean region.⁴³

Historically, it was single young men who became involved in acts of collective rebellion—the threat of nonconforming behavior on the part of single *young* women, on the other hand, required more stringent and internalized systems of domination.⁴⁴ In addition to the requirements of agricultural and pastoral production, then, it was preferable for reasons of social control to keep the period between puberty and marriage—the period of “wild blood”—as short as possible. “Wild blood” was to be channeled along tracks acceptable to adult society, such as the military, apprenticeship, agricultural and pastoral labor—and early marriage.⁴⁵

According to Şerif Mardin,⁴⁶ the period of reforms known as the Tanzimat (1839–

76) ushered in a new conception of youth in Ottoman society. Westernization began in Ottoman society with attempts to modernize the army. The first educational institution in the Western mold was a military school, and the first official student associations were paramilitary groups that served the joint purpose of mobilizing young people for war and inculcating Turkish nationalism.⁴⁷ In the 19th century, Western-style schools were established, including a military school (*Harbiye*), a medical school (*Tıbbiye*), and a school that trained public servants (*Mülkiye*). The graduates of these schools, who formed professional associations, would become the new elite, replacing those trained in religious schools (*İlmiye*). Intellectuals, who are difficult to distinguish from the bureaucratic elite, played a central role in the process of modernization. Cemil Meriç describes the Turkish intellectual as “an inexperienced youth (*toy delikanlı*) who wants to carry the treasures of a foreign civilization to his country.”⁴⁸ It is no coincidence that the main social movements of the late Ottoman period were known as the “Young” Ottoman movement and the “Young” Turk movement.

In the late 19th century, educated young Ottoman men were called upon to “save” the institutions of empire. It was the students of the new schools who would eventually challenge the regime they were educated to protect and maintain. It is from such a group of Western-educated young army officers that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk would emerge. Similarly, in the 1960s, educated youth would challenge the state—again, however, with the aim of “saving the country.”

“GUARDIANS OF THE REGIME”: YOUTH AND THE NATION (1923–50)

The Turkish Republic was established in 1923 upon the remains of a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious empire reduced to the space of Anatolia. The emphasis on the modernizing role of educated youth beginning in the Tanzimat period culminated in the 1920s in a veritable cult of youth initiated by the new Turkish state in an attempt to build a national consciousness and a modern nation-state. This was to be achieved by cutting ties with the Ottoman past, the world of the elders.⁴⁹

The story of Turkish nationalism has been described as the experience of a state “in search of its nation.”⁵⁰ Turkey’s experience is intriguing because the country was not colonized except by its own elite, who imagined a national identity to be assumed by subjects by speaking Turkish and professing allegiance to the localized Enlightenment vision of the republic. Education played a central role in the Turkish social-engineering project aimed at creating a homogenous population with a single shared identity.⁵¹ Nationalist rhetoric was based on imagined attributes of “Turkishness” identified with the Turkish language and the geography and ancient history of Anatolia. This “folkloric” approach steered away from references to Islam and the Ottoman Empire, preferring to focus on the mythic “Turkic” past or to the imagined (though not the actual) Anatolian peasant. Ziya Gökalp, a sociologist influenced by Durkheim, defined Turkish nationalism in terms of shared ideals and values, which were to be inculcated through education: “[n]ationalism is not based on genealogy. It is based on a national ideal and on national education (*milli terbiye*).”⁵²

Young people were central to the ideology of Turkish nationalism because the goal of the regime was to create a new type of person with a new mind-set, imbued with the values of the Republic and freed of what were perceived as “the shackles of

tradition." Young men and women were the main images through which the Turkish Republic was represented. A "Youth and Sports Holiday" was established and celebrated with great shows of gymnastics.⁵³

At the end of the long speech delivered to the Second Congress of the Republican People's Party on 15–20 October 1927, Atatürk directly addresses Turkish youth. In this speech, while identifying youth with the Turkish revolution, Atatürk advises young people to do exactly as *they*, their elders, did—to defend the country in the same manner if it is invaded again. The famous lines from this speech, committed to heart by every Turkish student, include the following: "Turkish youth! Your first duty is to maintain and protect Turkish independence and the Turkish Republic forever. This is the primary basis of your existence and of your future. This constitutes your most valuable treasure. The child of Turkey's future! Your duty is to save Turkish independence and the republic. You will find the strength that you need to achieve this in the noble blood that flows in your veins!"⁵⁴

Along similar lines, the "oath" recited by Turkish schoolchildren every morning, written by former Minister of Education Reşid Galip (1932–33), goes as follows: "I am a Turk, upright, diligent. My law is to respect my elders, protect those younger than myself. To love my country and nation more than my own self. My ideal is to rise up and go forward. Let my being be sacrificed for the sake of Turkish existence!"⁵⁵ The relationship between elders and juniors is reinvented in this oath as an attribute of "Turkishness." Here, the "self" of the republic comes before the "self" of the individual, who must be prepared to sacrifice himself or herself for the nation.

Young people were the primary recipients of the benefits of the "young" republic. A potent symbol of achievement and means of social mobility in Turkish society, education is imbued with an aura of sacredness. The young people who identified most closely with the new system were those who entered the public education system and achieved upward mobility during this period. The term "The children of the Republic" (or "Atatürk's children") is used to refer to the new Republican youth. A woman educated in the 1920s recalled those years in a documentary film: "We lived a highly esteemed period of youth."⁵⁶ Metaphors of kinship stand out in life-history narratives in which the republic (embodied by Atatürk) is depicted as parent. Speaking of Atatürk's funeral, a retired university professor said, "It was not at all like the funeral of a president. It was as if a very close relative of yours had died."⁵⁷

Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, a Turkish poet who was eight years old when the republic was established, described this transition as an epiphany, reminiscent of a mystical experience. This lyrical account, which contrasts with the dry positivism of official texts, demonstrates the degree to which a core group of persons identified with the Kemalist transformation: "[t]he Republic is the girl that you long for. Our whole household was suddenly transformed. It seemed as if our home had grown larger. Our garden seemed to have more trees. Even my books became clearer, more understandable."⁵⁸

During this period, the gap between educated youth and the young people of Anatolia remained significant. It would take decades for young people of rural origin to be able to attend primary school. The majority of the population are conspicuous in the public discourse of this period by their silence—though there seems to be no shortage of those who would speak for them.

Whereas national identity overlapped with that of Turkish-speaking persons of

Sunni Muslim heritage, individuals from other backgrounds tended to assimilate, particularly in the public sphere. İsmet İnönü, the second president of the Turkish Republic, made government policy eminently clear in an address to schoolteachers in 1925: “[t]his nation does not yet embody the organic nation we envision. If this generation commits its whole life to this task, the political Turkish nation may become a cultural, ideological, and social nation. We make a direct offer to those who view themselves as belonging to alternate collectivities: join the Turkish nation.”⁵⁹

The Village Institutes, established in 1939 to educate rural children, are a case in point. This institution is reminiscent of the *devşirme*⁶⁰ system of the Ottoman army in which Christian boys were removed from their families at an early age and socialized to ensure that their primary loyalty was to the state. A striking militarism prevails in the life-history narratives of graduates of the Village Institutes, which were established during World War II. A graduate recalls insisting that meals be eaten by the clock upon her return to her native village. Her mother responded, “This is not the army: you have become a soldier.”⁶¹

The main student organization in this period was the Milli Türk Talebe Birliği (MTTB), established in 1924. From the late 1920s, the MTTB supported government policies such as “Citizen Speak Turkish” and “Let us use local products.”⁶² A militaristic approach to youth influenced by the fascist regimes of Europe prevailed during the war years, when the single-party regime under President İsmet İnönü became increasingly authoritarian. State repression of political opposition was fierce, particularly of the left, while the countryside experienced economic difficulties, including a heavy tax burden.⁶³ Adapting to the emerging post-war world order, President İnönü supported the transition to a multi-party system after 1946, and the Republican People’s Party established by Atatürk was ousted largely on the basis of rural votes.⁶⁴ Student protests also played a role in ushering in a new leadership under the Democratic Party.

“SAVING THE COUNTRY”⁶⁵: FROM VANGUARD TO REBEL (1950–80)

Until 1950, it was primarily an urban elite that ruled Turkey. The Democratic Party, ushered in by rural votes, supported the modernization of agriculture, which, together with industrialization centered on the Marmara region, would result in large-scale rural-to-urban migration, irretrievably transforming Turkish society. There is an intimate relationship between Turkey’s demographic transformation and its identity crisis. During this period, Turkey’s population continued to increase while migration to major cities, especially of younger people, accelerated.⁶⁶ As a result, “White Turks”⁶⁷ would increasingly feel that their cities were invaded by “the barbarian within.”

Although initially popular, the Democratic Party was subsequently charged with corruption and authoritarianism, and student protests played a role in precipitating a military coup that ousted the regime in 1960. The army and young people were the two main supporters of the coup.⁶⁸ The liberal constitution of 1960 allowed more room for the expression of alternative political views, and a legal party emerged on the left for the first time. University students, spurred by local developments as well as by the events of May 1968 in Europe, began rapidly to organize. Initially calling for an improvement in the conditions of universities, they soon began to support other

mass movements, such as those of teachers, workers, and peasants. From 1968 onward, the student movement, increasingly disillusioned with the status quo; influenced by parallel movements in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere; and spurred on by various forces with much to gain from the rise of extremism, gradually moved outside the legal terrain. This culminated in increased violence, followed by brutal repression, subsequent to the military coup of 1971 (and again in 1980).⁶⁹

This period was characterized by the widespread politicization of youth, particularly university students, who were increasingly divided into the two opposed camps of "rightists" and "leftists." Most studies of youth in this period have focused on the left—particularly, the early years of the left referred to as "'68."⁷⁰ This is how one writer characterizes the centrality of '68 as a generational identity: "[i]f identity is conceptualized as an onion, the decade to which an individual feels that he/she belongs constitutes one of the membranes. The only exception to these pack of years is 'arrogant '68'. '68 tries to claim a generation on its own, and those who identify with '68 try to claim the whole century."⁷¹ There are fewer studies of the student movement on the right, particularly from within. Although there are some useful attempts at a critique of the left from within,⁷² studies tend to focus on political history, including the arcane ideological debates that characterized the leftist movement. There is a need for a *cultural* reading of this period, including a comparison between the movements on the left and the right.

During this period, youth were reconstructed in public discourse as a "threat" to the national interest. The media referred to student activists as *eşkıya*, or bandits.⁷³ Students themselves, on the other hand, claimed that it was the incumbent government itself that was illegitimate. In autobiographical accounts, students who joined the leftist movement at its inception tend to identify with the early years of the republic. "The '68 generation did not appear out of the blue. My mother and father were children of the Atatürk period. That's how we were raised as well. We are continuing the tradition we inherited from Mustafa Kemal."⁷⁴ A statement made in court by a student in November 1968 became famous. "You are not judging 24 young people in this court, but Mustafa Kemal himself."⁷⁵ In a letter addressed to his father, which was published in a daily newspaper in 1971, Deniz Gezmiş, the student leader who was hanged by a military tribunal in 1972, expresses the continuity he felt between his father's generation and his own: "You raised me with Kemalist ideas. I grew up listening to memories of the War of Independence. Since then I have hated foreigners. We are the fighters of Turkey's second War of Independence."⁷⁶

Mustafa Kemal's own words were used by student activists in support of the turn to extra-legal means. Arguing that the government had betrayed the Kemalist revolution, leftist students made reference to Atatürk's controversial "Bursa speech." According to witnesses, on 6 July 1933, following a riot that called for a return to the call to prayers in Arabic,⁷⁷ Atatürk incited Turkish youth to struggle against their "historic" enemy, "religious reaction": "Turkish youth is the owner and guardian of the reforms and of the regime. If he hears any movement attempting to weaken these, he will not say, 'This country has a police force, a gendarmerie, an army, a court system.' He will protect his own creation with his hands, with stones, with sticks, with arms, with whatever means available to him."⁷⁸

The degree to which the '68 movement in Turkey may be considered an heir to

Kemalism has become increasingly blurred by recent attempts to mythologize (and cleanse) the experience of '68. In the 1990s, a "'68 nostalgia" has emerged, particularly in accounts of middle-aged former activists who have become powerful figures in Turkish society, particularly in the media.⁷⁹ These writers tend to berate the "Post-1980 generation" and to mythologize the student leaders of the 1960s, particularly those who were hanged in 1972. Those who were active in the left following the 1971 coup and 1974 amnesty, and who refer to themselves as the "'78 Generation," claim to have been ignored or disparaged by those who identify with '68, whom they accuse of elitism and nostalgia. Accounts of the late 1970s tend to be infused with metaphors of violence. "In the belief that they would see beautiful days, they ran from one political operation to another, feeling death like a sharp knife against their backs."⁸⁰ According to a female student and former activist, "Istanbul has always reminded me of a mosquito who feeds on blood. It sucks and grows."⁸¹

What is intriguing is that reflections in the present tend to construct '68 in opposition to the post-1980 generation while emphasizing continuity with the Republican generation. The narrative of Gündoğ Kayaoğlu, who was a student during the 1960s, is a case in point: "We were raised as persons willing to sacrifice, thinking of others always before oneself. This meant protecting the nation, the country, even your desk in school, which you ought not scratch up. 'This belongs to the state, you must protect it, the state is yours to protect, the Republic is yours.' That is how we were raised. I don't accuse the youth of today, but we didn't have the mentality of 'What's in it for me, brother?' I think of Atatürk as someone who had planned for what would happen seventy years later. He did this within the conditions of his time, but this doesn't mean that it has become outdated."⁸² Speaking of the left, Oğuz Güven uses the term *kelaynak*, which refers to a species of bird that is becoming extinct.⁸³ The Republican generation has been referred to disparagingly as "dinosaurs." In giving a similar term a positive connotation, Güven underscores the structural parallels between the two generational identities.

Just as Kemalist elites constructed "religious reaction" as their "other," the left and the right constructed their identities in opposition to each other. This binarism, which was based on the notion of an "enemy within" (as well as without), resulted in a structure reminiscent of a blood feud. Writers on the left have rightly argued that the government's direct support of the right was largely responsible for the spread of violence in the 1970s. Ultimately, however, understanding the extreme violence that prevailed among young people during this period necessitates a cultural—as much as a political—analysis.

While ideologically opposed, the political movements on the left and on the right shared significant features. They might be usefully conceptualized as generational units in Mannheim's terms.⁸⁴ These were modernist, nationalist, anti-imperialist, and corporatist political movements whose rhetoric underscored the independence of the Turkish nation-state and the "duty" of youth to dedicate their lives to the construction of a future society, whether envisioned as the recuperation of the early Kemalist period, a socialist utopia, or a Pan-Turkic haven. This period can also be viewed as one of continuity in terms of an age hierarchy based on the relationship between elders and juniors, which co-existed with a modernist vision of the role of educated youth. It is ironic that when young activists known as *Dev-Genç* (short for *Devrimci Gençlik*

or Revolutionary Youth) went to support peasants in the Gediz region affected by an earthquake in 1970, the acronym lettered on their armbands was deciphered by peasants to read *Devlet Genci* (Youth of the State).⁸⁵ This exemplifies well the split identity of educated youth. Ayhan Akman's analysis of political cartoons summarizes well the culture (and contradictions) of this period. The highly abstract modernist cartoons of this era are characterized by a marked binarism, expressing a unilinear and developmentalist view of history and a vision of social reality that is idealistic and prescriptive, unable to articulate with everyday life.⁸⁶

Arjun Appadurai has suggested that violence linked to the creation of an "enemy within" can be understood in relation to the increasing uncertainty of identity generated by the problem of modernity.⁸⁷ Violence can therefore be understood as a way of "ensuring" the certainty of the categorical identity of the "other," and therefore of the self. There was a similar search in Turkish society for categorical identity, both on the left and on the right. Autobiographical accounts of political conversion read like narratives of religious conversion. These accounts tend to represent conversion as an emotional and transcendental experience—not unlike the narratives of young Kemalists in the early Republican period. In his autobiography, the poet Ismet Özel claims that he chose to join the left because it promised the possibility of becoming a "better" person in moral terms.⁸⁸

The student movement was marked by a cult of leaders modeled as much on contemporary political leaders (such as Che Guevara, Atatürk, or Alpaslan Türkeş⁸⁹) as on the epic heroes of Anatolia.⁹⁰ In his autobiography, a rightist student who became a notorious killer recalls that he was "in love with the grandiose spirit of epic heroes" and ready to become a martyr (*şehit*) for the "sacred cause."⁹¹ Autobiographical accounts repeatedly underscore the need activists felt to repress their individual needs, their belief in the necessity of living for the future, and their sense of having been chosen to play a special, unique role in history.⁹² Individuals tended to pride themselves on dressing exactly like members of their own group: a "leftist" or a "rightist" man could be distinguished, for example, on the basis of his facial hair. Deniz Gezmiş declared in his court defense: "We have made a gift of our lives to the people of Turkey."⁹³

Notwithstanding the rhetoric of equality, the student movement was organized in practice as a sort of fraternity, with a hierarchy between "elders" and "juniors"—and between men and women. Men tended to dominate the movement; a history of women in the politics of this period remains to be written.⁹⁴ Over time, the political movement became increasingly divorced from daily life outside the arcane ideological debates and militant activities that characterized life in introverted groups. Some observers have even argued that it was frustration with bookish debates on political theory that spurred student leaders to incite their followers to political action that culminated in violence.⁹⁵

The student leaders, particularly during the early years, tended to come from urban middle-class families, especially on the left. Their parents were educated people who identified with the Kemalist movement. As the movement expanded, and as more students of rural background began to attend universities, political activists on both the left and the right came increasingly from rural and working-class families.⁹⁶ In Anatolia in particular, political allegiance was linked to ethnic and religious identity.

In towns with an Alevi–Sunni divide, students of Alevi⁹⁷ background tended to join leftist groups, while those of Sunni background joined rightist groups. In time, these ethnic and religious affiliations would themselves become the basis of a politics of identity.

Homi Bhabha argues that the nation's story is an attempt to reconcile the tension between discourses that present the people as "object" versus "subject."⁹⁸ Not only is the epic form, in which people are represented as "objects," characteristic of early Republican novels, but epic heroes play a central role in the "conversion stories" of young political activists of the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁹ Despite a change in discourses on youth, the two historical periods discussed represent a continuity in a historical tradition in which youth were educated to protect the state—even from itself.

"TURNING THE CORNER"¹⁰⁰ OR EMERGING SUBJECT? (POST-1980)

The 1980 military coup was an important watershed in Turkish politics, and the early 1980s have been characterized as a "dark age."¹⁰¹ Even though civilian rule was quickly established, a new constitution was put into effect that restricted civil liberties, and young people born in the 1970s were raised in a relatively depoliticized environment. The liberalization of the economy and its incorporation into the circuits of global capital marked the 1980s. With privatization, the rise of a consumer society, and the influx of new communication technology, the media became a major player in Turkish society.

The 1980s saw the emergence of what became known as the "Turkish–Islamic synthesis." After the military coup, religious education became mandatory in the school system, and graduates of religious schools were allowed to attend university. What was intended as an attempt to forestall the rise of further extremism among youth resulted in the emergence of a strong Islamist movement among university students in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰² A further challenge to Republican identity was posed by the rise of a Kurdish nationalist movement from within the left in 1984. The rise of Islamism and Kurdish nationalism led to the reactive resurgence of neo-Kemalism, ultra-Turkish nationalism, the "new left,"¹⁰³ and an Alevi revival in the 1990s. These are transnational social movements with links to the Turkish, Kurdish, and Alevi diaspora that make use of new communications technology.¹⁰⁴

The political repression of the 1980s was accompanied by increased freedom of expression on the cultural and personal front.¹⁰⁵ In the 1980s and 1990s, a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and subcultures, including environmentalists, human-rights activists, feminists, gays, rockers, and others, entered the public sphere, particularly through the media.¹⁰⁶ Today, Turkish society has begun to examine its national taboos. There is a resurgence of interest in memories of the past and in the cultural legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The period leading up to the establishment of the republic has become the focus of a heated debate. More and more subjects or citizens, including those who have had to "travel" considerably less to perform national identity, are challenging it in so far as it rejects cultural pluralism and reinforces the central role of the state as the locus of allegiance.¹⁰⁷ Despite increased political polarization and the emergence of new collective identities, what distinguishes this

period is the language of the self and body through which hybrid identities and political demands are increasingly expressed.

Today, one-half of Turkish society is younger than 25; these young people are increasingly urban. The rise in educational attendance and age at marriage, coupled with high unemployment, have led to the extension of youth as a life stage—without, however, reducing the economic dependence of young people on the older generation.¹⁰⁸ Growing economic inequalities threaten to disfranchise an increasingly urban and youthful population from the rights of citizenship. The Turkish state is increasingly unable to provide health and educational services and employment. It is also becoming increasingly fragmented itself as the lines between the legal and the extralegal domains are blurred due to political corruption linked to privatization and the trade in arms and drugs. While the military remains powerful, particularly due to the undeclared war in eastern Turkey against the PKK,¹⁰⁹ private armies, mafias, and armed fundamentalist groups have proliferated as the state is increasingly unable to control the monsters it fostered or created. The loss of legitimacy of the political system has resulted in widespread cynicism and political apathy, feeding the cycle of corruption, nepotism, and anarchic individualism.

In the 1990s, new urban spaces have emerged, particularly in the global city of Istanbul, that include exclusive suburbs along with new age- and space-based identities, such as street children and youth subcultures.¹¹⁰ Although the family (and local and ethnic and religious networks) remains a central node of personal identity and social mobility, there is evidence of increased generational and familial conflict.¹¹¹ Young people, particularly high-school and university students, tend to be disproportionately represented in new social movements and alternative (including virtual) forms of political mobilization based on identity politics. In her study of secondary-school students in Istanbul, Buket Türkmen shows that the public school system, which was central to the lives of students in previous generations, has become less important, with youth becoming more involved with peer groups and informal networks, including Islamist groups. Türkmen's study demonstrates that not only universities, but also high schools, have become an important arena for political mobilization in the 1990s.¹¹²

Türkmen also argues that despite the ideological polarization between Islamists and secularists, students exhibit a shared interest in expressing their individuality in the spaces of everyday life through the medium of the body.¹¹³ Along similar lines, a study in Germany of the children of immigrants suggests that political ideologies such as Turkish nationalism and Islamism be read as expressions of subjectivity linked to the diaspora experience. The study underscores the importance of a contextualized analysis of the relationship between political ideology and subjective identity.¹¹⁴ Studies of the diaspora in Western Europe underscore the links between Turkish youth and a transnational youth culture.¹¹⁵

Just as it symbolizes a break in Turkish political culture,¹¹⁶ the post-1980 period constitutes a rupture with modernist constructions of youth. Today, constructions of youth circulate largely through the media, where young people themselves are increasingly represented. The expression "turning the corner" is commonly used to characterize the ethos of the post-1980 period, evoking images of the wanton display of "private" lives and consumption-oriented lifestyles in the age of media and economic

liberalization accompanied by widespread corruption and the private use of public resources.¹¹⁷ Youth in particular tend to be identified with such an ethos. Given the cultural weight of both the Republican and 1968 generations in the public sphere, members of the generation known as the “Özal generation”¹¹⁸ or the “post-1980 generation” tend to be represented as selfish, individualistic consumers, implying the lack of a sense of collective responsibility.

This is how Mina Urgan, a retired professor of literature, depicts contemporary youth in an interview in a literary magazine on occasion of the publication of her memoirs: “It’s a very bad period for young people. The youth that I refer to as ‘Özal’s brats’ are at a terrible impasse, if you ask me. Because all they want is to ‘turn the corner’ [to make it]. They also have no hope, because they know that even if they complete the best universities, they may not find a job, they may receive unfair treatment. I wanted to write in order to give these young people some hope.”¹¹⁹ Urgan entitled her memoirs, which became an unexpected best-seller, *Memoirs of a Dinosaur*.¹²⁰ This was her comeback to those who have come to refer to diehard Kemalists of the “Republican generation” as “dinosaurs,” implying that their worldview is out of touch with the times.

The way the post-1980 generation is depicted by members of previous generations contrasts with members’ own accounts. One writer in his thirties today remembers his childhood. “What the Republic meant for my generation was discipline, holding out your chest, keeping your head high, and standing while placing your hands firmly on your sides. From now on I would stand up whenever the teacher entered the room and salute him wherever I saw him. I was a child, and if someone forced me to do something in an official setting, I would immediately reply, as I was taught in school, ‘Upon your orders, teacher.’”¹²¹ This quote is distinctly different in tone from the reminiscences of members of previous generations. Here, the Turkish Republic is identified with a militaristic and bureaucratic state from which the *individual* feels increasingly detached.

A letter sent in to a youth magazine makes a similar point. “It has been stated and imposed upon society that youth should play a role as guardian or vanguard. Thus, youth protect the honor of the neighborhood, the brothels from American soldiers, society from communists, fascists, social democrats, religious fanatics. Those with short hair protect society from those with long hair. The ones with mustaches protect society from those without, those with beards from those without, those with jeans from those with ties, those with overcoats from those with parkas. One should be able to say that youth exists for itself.”¹²²

Young people seem concerned with the *silences* that marked the decade in which they were raised. “The 1980s have recently come into the limelight. A beam of light is centered upon a decade spent in the dark. Our relationship with the ’80s is similar to our relationship with our country, our family, and all the levels to which our identity belongs. While we were living in it—the decade of the 1980s—it was difficult for us to accept it, but now we accept it, saying: ‘I realize now how much I loved you.’”¹²³

Young people feel they have been defined in terms of what they lack, particularly vis-à-vis previous generations. Some claim their elders used this as a form of social control, a way of legitimating ’68 despite its “failure.” “We could never come to terms with our generational identity. We tried to prove that we did not belong to a youth

obsessed with designer labels and personal gain. We felt oppressed by the discourse of the '68 generation, who persisted in the nostalgia of their old revolutionary days marked by comradeship, solidarity, and a belief in the future."¹²⁴

This quote suggests the search for a new language through which to express the new politics of the 1990s. For young people who reject the way they are depicted, existing categories just do not seem to fit. The denigrated "individualism" of young people seems to be about their hesitancy in linking their subjective identities and lifestyles to a single national project. Youth, like Turkish society as a whole, seems to be fragmenting into identity-based enclaves. Can Kılçksız, a young man of Christian Arab heritage, puts it this way: "[o]nly I can represent myself; no one can represent me. But I am not even sure that I can represent myself, for I cannot be myself in many contexts. What matters is not that I continue to live while hiding my difference but that I live despite my difference. Otherwise, my existence would have no meaning. For we are all so very different."¹²⁵

Might conceptions of age also be changing in the current period? In a cartoon printed on a plastic *ayran* (a yogurt drink) can sold in kiosks in Istanbul, Keloğlan¹²⁶ has a dream. In this dream, he encounters an old man. The old man says to Keloğlan, "Sleep well, Keloğlan. I am the sage with the white beard who distributes fortunes in dreams." Keloğlan replies, "Hello grandfather, you are very welcome. What fortunes did you bring me?" The old man replies, "I am sorry Keloğlan. I couldn't bring you anything. I am now very aged. Could you help me find an old people's home where I can rest in comfort?"¹²⁷

On 29 October 1998, celebrations commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Turkish Republic took place. The motto of the anniversary was "The Republic is 75 Years Old." The treatment of street children by the police in Istanbul during the same period prompted the cartoonist Kemal Gökhan Gürses to draw a cartoon in a daily newspaper that includes the following text: "[o]ur Republic is 7 years old, 10 years old, at most 13–14 years old. A. K., B. L., C. Ç. We are tied to the future with a rotten rope where we disappear in the first letters of our names."¹²⁸ Our hope has run away from home! Fear in rat holes, the dirty hands of Beyoğlu.¹²⁹ A new Republic is rising in the midst of the BANANA Republics. Towards winter, an ICE Republic. The only home they know is the detention room of the police station! The Police Operation and Hatred. PEACE¹³⁰ is just an excuse! The most beautiful child is the one who was not born here."¹³¹

This cartoon can be read as a reaction to a societal mission gone terribly wrong. Kemal Gökhan Gürses suggests that young people, who were the hope and symbol of the Turkish revolution, have become victims of the joint brutality of the market and the state. This is a society in which state and nation have become increasingly divorced. Republicanism, which represented itself as a radical break with the past in the 1920s, has become a conservative, institutional identity associated with the status quo. This is how the poet Dağlarca, who was raised in the early republican period, expresses his disillusionment: "Let us make sure that the political leaders do not mistake the celebrations of the people [of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Turkish Republic in 1998] as a sign of respect for their rule or as an appreciation of their success as leaders. The Republic is as far from Turkish youth as Leyla."¹³² The nation awaits Leyla with a longing that grows every day. They will find that beauty, which is being

kept from them, sooner or later, even if it is to be found in the mountain of Kaf.”¹³³ The young people of the 1990s, on the other hand, may not be awaiting “Leyla” anymore, as Turkish society is increasingly fragmented at the dawn of the millennium.

After the Marmara earthquake of August 1999, young people from a variety of backgrounds and ideological persuasions were at the forefront of efforts to organize relief for victims, belying their representation in the media as selfish, apolitical individuals. The experience of the earthquake displayed the bankruptcy of the current political system as well as of conventional political categories, as young people from all walks of life worked together with local and transnational NGOs. However, despite the success of NGOs in providing relief for the earthquake victims, the development of a more participatory public sphere in the long term is predicated on the restructuring of a political system that amounts to a gerontocracy. Is it a coincidence that most leaders of political parties in Turkey are in their seventies, while the majority of the population is younger than 25? The “mission” of youth in the 21st century might be to reject the mission of transforming society from above and to work toward the joint action of global citizens to create a society that is more tolerant of difference.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have analyzed the construction of youth in public discourse in Turkey in three periods since the establishment of the republic. I have argued that in the 1923–50 period, youth came to embody the new nation. In the 1950–80 period, youth were reconstructed in public discourse as rebels. Despite the change in discourse, educated young people in these two periods continued to identify with the mission of building a new nation in the name of “the people.” The post-1980 period, however, constitutes a rupture with modernist constructions of youth. Today, young people are increasingly able to express themselves through the new media, challenging their construction in public discourse, the established hierarchy between elders and juniors, and the mission imposed on them by adult society. This suggests that the construction of age in Turkish society may be changing in the current period.

The fact that youth came to be perceived as a distinct stage in the life course is linked to the history of modernity in Europe. Was Western society unique in accentuating the gulf between children and adults? Recent studies of non-Western experiences with modernity suggest referring to modernity in the plural to account for the historicity of these alternative experiences. This article suggests that studies of youth, which largely focus on age-based subcultures, can benefit from a wider frame of age, life-cycle, and generation in the context of non-Western modernities. The Turkish experience shows that the concept of generation is particularly useful in the study of societies characterized by rapid social change, a powerful intelligentsia, the centrality of collective identity in the construction of subjectivity, and the maintenance of historical notions of age during the process of adopting modernist constructions of youth.

Today, the emergence of a global youth culture suggests a shared experience in transnational space that cuts across national borders. In global cities, a largely youthful population remains economically dependent on the older generation as it is politically disfranchised from the rights of citizenship linked to adulthood.¹³⁴ At the same time, the exclusion of young people from established institutional spaces has resulted in the

creation of alternative spaces and forms of political mobilization, particularly through new communication technology. Young people the world over are caught between disillusionment with the promises of the nation-state and the hope of greater participation in what has become a transnational public sphere—requiring new definitions of citizenship as well as of adulthood. The issue for youth today, then, is how to achieve (or maintain) the promises of modernity, including an inclusive social democracy, within the conditions of neo-liberal globalization.

There is growing interest in Turkey today in memories of the past, including life histories, autobiographies, and biographies, as identities are increasingly narrowed into the space of the self and body. Even members of the Islamist movement of the 1980s have begun to publish their memoirs.¹³⁵ Mass-based youth subcultures with links to the diaspora are emerging. There is a need for in-depth ethnographic studies of young people of the post-1980 generation. There are still few studies of the Islamist, Kurdish nationalist, Alevi, Kurdish, neo-Kemalist, and Turkish nationalist movements from an age-based perspective, given that young people are disproportionately represented in these movements. Such studies might ask, for example, how these social movements differ from collective movements in previous periods in republican history. How are they shaped by the new subjectivity and the global hybrid youth culture that marks the contemporary period? What are the links among new social movements, NGOs, youth subcultures, and the new media? Ongoing research on the effects of the Marmara earthquake as well as new studies of and by young people will shed further light on the meaning and experience of being young in Turkey and in the diaspora. It is only by shedding the burden of the mission imposed on them that youth can become “young.” Otherwise, as Tuna Kiremitçi puts it, they are doomed to “get younger as we die.”¹³⁶

NOTES

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¹Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 6.

²Tuna Kiremitçi, *Akademi* (Academia) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998), 32 (my translation).

³Semih Kaplanoğlu, “Vicdan” (Conscience), *Radikal* (1 September 1999), 6.

⁴Murathan Mungan, “Milliyetçilik Travesti bir Kavram” (Nationalism Is a Transvestite Concept), *Express* 44 (1994).

⁵In a classic study, Benedict Anderson notes that one of the features that distinguishes nationalist movements in non-Western societies from earlier movements in Europe is the central role played by a new generation of European-educated elites: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 109. For a study of elites in Turkey, see Nilüfer Göle, *Mühendisler ve İdeoloji: Öncü Devrimcilerden Yenilikçi Seçkinlere* (Engineers and Ideology: From Revolutionaries to New Elites) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986).

⁶Yeşim Arat, “The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 95–112.

⁷Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “On Alternative Modernities,” *Public Culture* 11 (1999): 1–18. On the Turkish experience with modernity, see Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity*.

⁸Turkish national hero and first president of the republic (1881–1938).

⁹Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*.

¹⁰Ayhan Kaya, "Multicultural Clientelism and Alevi Resurgence in Turkish Diaspora: Berlin Alevis," *New Perspectives in Turkey* 18 (1998): 23–49.

¹¹E. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968).

¹²*The Global Situation of Youth in the 1990s: Trends and Prospects* (New York: U.N. Center for Social Development and Human Affairs, 1993).

¹³In India, for example, the wealthy, urbanized, and educated sectors of society can be said to "have" a period of youth, whereas among poorer sectors the transition from childhood to adulthood remains sudden: Nita Kumar, "Children and Childhood in Connecticut and North India: Space, Time and the Body," paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) Meetings, San Diego, March 2000.

¹⁴Jean and John Comaroff, "Reflections on Youth, from the Past to the Postcolony," in *Youth in Africa: Producing Futures in a Global Age*, ed. Jean and John Comaroff (New York: Social Science Research Council, forthcoming).

¹⁵Michael Mitterauer, *A History of Youth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

¹⁶Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962).

¹⁷Gill Valentine, "Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood," *Environment and Planning D* 14 (1997): 581–99.

¹⁸Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

¹⁹Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976).

²⁰Serif Mardin, "The Mobilization of Youth: Western and Eastern," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Youth*, ed. J. Kuczynski et al. (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1988), 235–48.

²¹Hilary Pilkington, *Russia's Youth and Its Culture: A Nation's Constructors and Constructed* (London: Routledge, 1994).

²²Ruth Cherrington, "Generational Issues in China: A Case Study of the 1980s Generation of Young Intellectuals," *British Journal of Sociology* 48 (1997): 302–20; Craig Calhoun and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Legacies of Radicalism: China's Cultural Revolution and the Movement of 1989," *Thesis Eleven* 57 (1999): 33–52.

²³Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," *Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1952 [1927]). See also Jane Pilcher, "Mannheim's Sociology of Generations: An Undervalued Legacy," *British Journal of Sociology* 45 (1994): 481–95.

²⁴Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations." As Kriegel notes, generation is essentially an elitist concept linked to the rise of an intelligentsia: Annie Kriegel, "Generational Difference: The History of an Idea," *Daedalus* 107 (1978): 23–38.

²⁵D. Massey, "The Spatial Construction of Youth Cultures," in *Cool Places*, ed. Skelton Tracey et al. (London: Routledge, 1998), 121–30.

²⁶Joan Gross et al., "Arab Noise and Ramadan Nights: Rai, Rap, and Franco-Maghrebi Identities," in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, ed. S. Lavie and T. Swedenburg (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 97–117.

²⁷Mamadou Diouf, "Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988–1994," paper prepared for Workshop on Collaborative Research Networks on Youth and Globalization, Social Science Research Council, New York, 15–16 April 2000.

²⁸Comaroff and Comaroff, "Reflections on Youth."

²⁹Philippe Bourgois, "Understanding Inner City Poverty: Resistance and Self-Destruction Under U.S. Apartheid," in *Anthropology for the World*, ed. J. MacClancy (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, forthcoming).

³⁰Konrad Adenauer Foundation, *Türk Gençliği 98: Suskun Kitle Büyüteç Altında* (Turkish Youth '98: The Silent Masses Under Scrutiny) (Ankara: Konrad Adenauer Vakfı, 1999).

³¹Alpay Kabacalı, *Türkiye'de Gençlik Hareketleri* (Youth Movements in Turkey) (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1992).

³²Nükhet Sirman, "State, Village and Gender in Western Turkey," in *Turkish State, Turkish Society*, ed. Andrew Finkel and Nükhet Sirman (London: Routledge, 1990), 21–51.

³³According to Duben and Behar, the city of Istanbul was a special case where age at marriage was later than the norm in Anatolia at the turn of the century: Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

³⁴Mardin, “Mobilization of Youth.”

³⁵Robert Spencer, “Aspects of Turkish Kinship and Social Structure,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 33 (1960): 40–50.

³⁶Leyla Neyzi, *Istanbul’da Hatırlamak ve Unutmak: Birey, Bellek, ve Aidiyet* (Remembering and Forgetting in Istanbul: Self, Memory and Belonging) (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 116.

³⁷Idem, transcript of life-history interview with Necdet Sakaoğlu, 12 February 1999, personal archives.

³⁸Idem, transcript of life-history interview with Fuat Bayramoğlu, 7 December 1995, personal archives.

³⁹On 29 October 1998, amid much fanfare, the Turkish Republic celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. One of the exhibits prepared for these celebrations was entitled “3 × 25,” a reference to the three generations that have come of age since 1923: *Üç Kuşak Cumhuriyet* (Three Generations of the Republic) (Istanbul: Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

⁴⁰Neyzi, *Istanbul’da Hatırlamak ve Unutmak*, 68.

⁴¹The radical poet Ece Ayhan refers ironically to the republic itself as “delikanlı”: Ece Ayhan, *Bütün Yort Savul’lar* (All the Yort Savul’s) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 151.

⁴²Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler* (Unbelievers and Heretics in Ottoman Society) (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998).

⁴³Halil Dural, *Bize Derler Çakırca: 19. Ve 20. Yüzyılda Ege’de Efeler* (They Call Us Çakırca: The Efe in the Aegean in the 19th and 20th Centuries) (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

⁴⁴Sirman, “State, Village and Gender.”

⁴⁵According to Sakaoğlu, early marriage was also a means of ensuring against sexual abuse of boys by older men: Neyzi, interview with Sakaoğlu.

⁴⁶Mardin, “Mobilization of Youth.”

⁴⁷Zafer Toprak, “II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Paramiliter Gençlik Örgütleri” (Paramilitary Youth Organizations in the Second Constitutional Period), in *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 531–36.

⁴⁸Cemil Meriç, “Batı’da ve Bizde Aydının Serüveni” (The Adventure of the Intellectual in the West and at Home), in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 130–37.

⁴⁹Mardin, “Mobilization of Youth.”

⁵⁰Ayşe Kadioğlu, “The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity,” in *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, ed. S. Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 177–93.

⁵¹Ismail Kaplan, *Türkiye’de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi* (The Ideology of National Education in Turkey) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999).

⁵²Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (The Principles of Turkism) (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1990), 22.

⁵³Şerif Mardin, “Youth and Violence in Turkey,” *International Journal of Social Science* 29 (1977): 251–89.

⁵⁴Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Speech) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989), 1197.

⁵⁵Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Tarihi* (The History of National Education in the Republican Period) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1992), 61.

⁵⁶“Çok muteber bir gençlik yaşadık”: Enis Rıza Sakızlı, *Cumhuriyetin Hayalleri* (Visions of the Republic) (Istanbul: VTR, 1998).

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Buket Öktülmüş, “Interview with Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca,” *Radikal* (8 November 1998): 23.

⁵⁹Sakaoğlu, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Tarihi*, 28.

⁶⁰İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Devşirme maddesi” (Article on the Devşirme), *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1997.

⁶¹Neyzi, *Istanbul’da Hatırlamak ve Unutmak*, 123.

⁶²Kabacalı, *Türkiye’de Gençlik Hareketleri*.

⁶³Niyazi Berkes, *Unutulan Yıllar* (The Forgotten Years) (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997).

⁶⁴Şevket Pamuk, “Turkey, 1918–1945,” in *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 10–29.

⁶⁵The expression “saving the country” (*memleketi kurtarmak*) is used ironically to refer to the endless discussions of intellectuals—usually accompanied by drinking—about politics.

⁶⁶Fred Shorter, “The Population of Turkey after the War of Independence,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985): 417–41.

⁶⁷The term “White Turks,” ostensibly without ethnic or racial connotations, is used in the media to refer to the urban elite.

⁶⁸Kabacalı, *Türkiye’de Gençlik Hareketleri*.

⁶⁹Ahmet Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review* 126 (1981): 60–85.

⁷⁰Aydın Çubukçu, *Bizim ’68* (Our ’68) (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 1998).

⁷¹Atilla Aydoğdu, *Roll Dergisi* (October 1998), 55.

⁷²Şahin Alpay, “68 Kuşağı Üzerine bir Deneme” (An Essay on the ’68 Generation), *Toplum ve Bilim* 41 (1988): 167–85.

⁷³Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Bizim Deniz* (Our Deniz) (Ankara: Doruk Yayınları, 1998), 288.

⁷⁴Ibid., 266.

⁷⁵Ibid., 145.

⁷⁶Ibid., 266.

⁷⁷The call to prayers was recited in Turkish for the first time on 18 July 1932.

⁷⁸Selim Kemal Keydul, *Atatürk’ün Bursa Nutku Yargıda* (Atatürk’s Bursa Speech in Court) (Bursa: Nil Ofset Matbaacılık, 1997).

⁷⁹Bedri Baykam, *’68’li Yıllar: Eylemciler* (The ’68 Years: The Activists) (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 1998).

⁸⁰Oğuz Güven, *Zordur Zorda Gülmek: ’78 Kuşağı* (It’s Difficult to Laugh in Difficult Times: The ’78 Generation) (Istanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 1998).

⁸¹Meral Özbek, “Mekansal ve Kültürel Haritalar: Istanbullu Kadın Öğrencilerden Yaşam ve Göç Öyküleri” (Spatial and Cultural Maps: Life and Migration Histories of Women Students in Istanbul), *Defter* 32 (1998): 109–27.

⁸²Neyzi, *Istanbul’da Hatırlamak ve Unutmak*, 106.

⁸³Güven, *Zordur Zorda Gülmek*.

⁸⁴Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations.”

⁸⁵Feyizoğlu, *Bizim Deniz*, 288.

⁸⁶Ayhan Akman, “From Cultural Schizophrenia to Modernist Binarism: Cartoons and Identities in Turkey (1930–1975),” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6 (1997): 83–131.

⁸⁷Arjun Appadurai, “Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization,” *Public Culture* 10 (1998): 225–47.

⁸⁸İsmet Özel, *Waldo Sen Neden Burada Değilsin* (Waldo, Why Aren’t You Here?) (Istanbul: Şule Yayınları, 1997).

⁸⁹The leader of the party on the extreme right (MHP) until his recent death.

⁹⁰Ironically, the leaders of the political movement of the ’60s have themselves become cult figures.

⁹¹Haluk Kırcı, *Zamanı Süzerken* (Sifting the Past) (Istanbul: Burak Yayınevi, 1998).

⁹²Güven, *Zordur Zorda Gülmek*.

⁹³Feyizoğlu, *Bizim Deniz*, 407.

⁹⁴Fatmagül Bertay, “Türkiye Solunun Kadına Bakışı: Değişen bir Şey Var mı?” (Is There a Change in the Way the Turkish Left Looks at Women?), in *Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadınlar* (Women’s Perspectives on Women in the 1980s in Turkey), ed. Şirin Tekeli (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990).

⁹⁵Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Mahir* (Istanbul: Su Yayınları, 1999).

⁹⁶In a prose poem, Ece Ayhan refers to two well-known figures on the right and on the left. “Mehmet Ali Ağca and Yılmaz Güney. (Both lived their childhoods and youth in great hunger; both were completely alone.) On the other hand, those on the two opposing sides can easily exchange places at a ‘table of power’”: Ayhan, *Bütün Yort Savul’lar*, 237 (my translation).

⁹⁷The Alevi are an endogamous minority group whose identity historically has been defined in opposition to Sunni identity: Tord Olsson et al., *Alevi Identity* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998).

⁹⁸Homi Bhabha, “Dissemination,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁹⁹Sibel Erol, “The Image of the Intellectual in Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s Works,” *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 16 (1992): 1–20.

¹⁰⁰The expression “turning the corner” (*köşeyi dönmek*) is commonly used to refer to those who make a quick profit, usually through dishonorable means. It is also used as a metaphor for the liberalization of the economy in the post-1980 period.

¹⁰¹Aydoğdu, *Roll Dergisi*.

¹⁰²Doğan Duman, “İslamcı Gençliğin Sertüveni” (The Adventures of Islamist Youth), *Birikim* 25 (1997): 57–73.

¹⁰³Emrah Göker, “Alacakaranlık Kuşağının Puslu Bir Muhasebesine Giriş: Gençlik Bölü Sınıf Çarpı Kültür (A Hazy Account of the Twilight Generation: Youth Divided by Class Times Culture), *Mürekkep* 10/11 (1998): 85–119.

¹⁰⁴Hakan Yavuz, “Media Identities for Alevis and Kurds,” in *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ed. Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 180–99.

¹⁰⁵Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (Living on Display) (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1992).

¹⁰⁶Popular music is one of the main arenas of debate on identity in the city of Istanbul: Meral Özbek, “Arabesk Culture: A Case of Modernization and Popular Identity,” in Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity*, 211–33.

¹⁰⁷Bahar Öcal Düzgören, “Fedon Nere?” (Where Is Fedon From?), *Radikal İki* (8 March 1998), 23.

¹⁰⁸Konrad Adenauer Foundation, *Türk Gençliği* 98.

¹⁰⁹*Partia Karkaren Kürdistan* (Kurdish Workers Party), center of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey since 1984.

¹¹⁰Ali Akay et al., *Istanbul’da Rock Hayatı* (Rock Life in Istanbul) (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1997); Hikmet Temel Akarsu, *Rock’n’ Roman: Kaybedenler’in Öyküsü* (Rock’n’ Novel: The Story of the Losers) (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 1998).

¹¹¹Sema Erder, “Dissolution of Two Traditional Institutions and the Youth Living in Informal Housing Areas,” paper presented at the Middle East Awards Study Group Workshop on Youth in the Middle East, Cairo, 19–21 November 1998.

¹¹²Buket Türkmen, *La Redefinition de la Laïcité par les Lyceens en Turquie* (The Redefinition of Secularism by High School Students in Turkey) (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1996).

¹¹³This is corroborated by a recent survey of youth: Türkiye Mülkiyeliler Vakfı, *Türkiye’de 90’ların Gençliği* (The Youth of the ’90s in Turkey) (Istanbul: Yeni Yüzyıl Kitaplığı, n.d.).

¹¹⁴Nikola Tietze, “La Turcite Allemande: Les Difficultés d’une Nouvelle Construction Identitaire” (German Turks: The Difficulties of a New Identity Construction), *CEMOTI* 24 (1997): 251–70.

¹¹⁵Ayhan Kaya, “Ethnic Group Discourses and German–Turkish Youth,” in *Redefining the Nation State and Citizen*, ed. Günay Gökü Özdoğan and Gül Tokay (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2000), 233–51.

¹¹⁶E. Fuat Keyman, “On the Relation Between Global Modernity and Nationalism: The Crisis of Hegemony and the Rise of (Islamic) Identity in Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 13 (1995): 93–120.

¹¹⁷Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak*; Can Kozanoğlu, *Cıralı İmaj Devri* (The Age of Polished Images) (Istanbul: İletişim, 1992).

¹¹⁸A reference to Turgut Özal, prime minister and president of Turkey during the 1980s and early 1990s, who played a key role in the process of economic and cultural liberalization.

¹¹⁹Ali Çakmak, “Interview with Mina Urgan,” *Virgül* 11 (1998): 2–5.

¹²⁰Mina Urgan, *Bir Dinozorun Anıları* (Memoirs of a Dinosaur) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 1998).

¹²¹Semih Kaplanoğlu, “Hatırlıyorum,” *Radikal* (4 November 1998), 23.

¹²²Reha Bilge, “Tunalı Caddesi ve Mehmet” (Mehmet and Tunalı Avenue), *Yeni Olgü* (1984).

¹²³Aydoğdu, *Roll Dergisi*.

¹²⁴Umut Azak, “Gençlik Üzerine Düşünceler” (Reflections on Youth), unpublished ms., 1998.

¹²⁵Neyzi, *Istanbul’da Hatırlamak ve Unutmak*, 71.

¹²⁶A stock figure in Anatolian folktales, Keloğlan is usually represented as a single young man.

¹²⁷*Hızır*, the guardian spirit who appears to the needy in the form of an old man, is a feature of Anatolian belief systems characterized by the historian Ahmet Yaşar Ocak as based on a cult of the sage (*evliya*): Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*. After the earthquake in Turkey, the municipality of Istanbul established an earthquake hotline, which it named *Yetiş Hızır* (Hızır, Come to Our Aid).

¹²⁸Only the initials of minors appear in newspaper accounts.

¹²⁹A neighborhood in Istanbul frequented by street children.

¹³⁰A reference to claims that police operations secure public “peace.”

¹³¹A rewording of a line from a famous poem by the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet. The original line reads, “The most beautiful child is the one who has not yet grown.” Kemal Gökhan Gürses, *Radikal* (25 October 1998), 2.

¹³²A reference to the object of Mecnun's affection in the well-known mystical love story of Leyla and Mecnun.

¹³³Kaf is the magical mountain of fairytales, where braves must fight giants to save their beloved. Öktülmüş, "Interview with Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca."

¹³⁴Comaroff and Comaroff, "Reflections on Youth."

¹³⁵Zekiye Oğuzhan, *Bir Başörtüsü Günlüğü* (A Diary of the Headscarf) (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1998).

¹³⁶Kiremitçi, *Akademi*.