



POWER2YOUTH

The Impact of Youth Policies in Turkey

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Laden Yurttagüler¹

Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the impact of the social policies developed by the official actors on the participation of young people in Turkey. The discussion particularly focuses on the emancipating and/or limiting effects of family-related policies on the participation and autonomy of young people. In addition, youth employment, migration and spatial policies regarding young people are examined. Youth policies are mainstreaming several areas and are covered by various departments (including ministries and directorates) of the state. The official reports and programmes of different governmental institutions and, also, the (pro and contra) discourse developed by the state actors, civil society organizations and media become main sources for this study.

Keywords: Turkey | Youth | Domestic policy | Employment | Migration

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's macro-level youth policy analysis report aims to present the situation of young people in Turkey as well as to identify the main actors, policy areas and conceptual frameworks that affect them. The report consists of five parts. The first section introduces youth-related governmental agencies and their role in making and executing policies. The second section presents information and proposes a critical analysis of the available data on young people in Turkey. The third explores the concepts of youth and social exclusion found in reviewed documents. The fourth analyses the main policy areas including youth employment, family policy, migration policy and spatial policy.

1. BASIC INFORMATION ON YOUTH-RELATED STATE AGENCIES

The 2011 general elections became a turning point for the reorganization of governmental institutions and ten new ministries were formed. Among those, the Ministry of Youth and Sports holds an important role. It defines itself (in its establishment law, Article 2) as the main responsible agency for providing services to meet the needs of young people and also as the main coordinating agency among youth-related institutions (Turkey 2011). Since young people constitute a group that cuts across many types of public services, there are also institutions that indirectly provide services for young people though they are not established specifically for this objective. Youth as a public policy domain has been distributed among different public agencies in Turkey.

Although the Ministry of Youth and Sports holds a pivotal role in specific areas such as employment or family policy, other related ministries are held responsible for the development and execution of youth-related policies, such as the newly formed Ministry of Family and Social

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Policy (MFSP) and the Ministry of Development. The Ministry of Family and Social Policy was formed in 2011 in replacement of the Ministry of State responsible for women and families. The Ministry of Development was established in June 2011 instead of the State Planning Organization. Other related policy executive parties are the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Ministry for EU Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Higher Education Council. The Ministry of the Interior and the Higher Education Council possess and execute regulative mechanisms related to young people. They have an important impact on the political participation of young people.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) was established in 2011 in order to define the main policies aiming to support the personal and social development of young people; to provide opportunities for young people via youth groups to fulfil their potential; and to stimulate the active participation of young people in all fields of social life especially with regard to decision-making and implementation processes. Other responsibilities of the Ministry include providing services such as guidance, access to information, and counselling. It coordinates and cooperates with other public institutions, conducts research, determines the basic methods and principles and carries out projects. Additionally, the Ministry is also responsible for the administration and implementation of sports policy. Moreover, the National Youth and Sports Policy Document legally opens the way to convene Youth and Sports Councils and Working Groups in order to work towards the set objectives (MYS 2013:2-3). The basic values of the Ministry are defined as to respect human rights and freedoms; to show respect for differences, to be tolerant and impartial; to protect the principle of equality of opportunity; to be sensitive to gender equality; and to take into account the special needs of disadvantaged groups (MYS 2013:6).

The National Youth Councils that exist in all EU member states are officially recognized as higher bodies established to promote participation of young people through NGOs. They stand out as important and civic examples of good governance that are financially supported by the states despite their autonomous status. The absence of a National Youth Council in Turkey was viewed as an important omission and the Ministry of Youth and Sports made a decision to work toward rectifying the situation. The Council will be established under the Ministry with the adoption of a new article within the existing Decree on the Organization and the Duties of MYS adopted on 1 March 2013, which allocates necessary funding for the Council. Nevertheless, to date, the Council has not yet been established. On the other hand, civil society organizations (CSOs) working with young people are attempting to establish independent and autonomous National Youth Councils. One initiative, the National Youth Parliament, was started with the facilitation of the Habitat Centre for Development and Governance with the participation of the Municipal Youth Council in 2004.² Another initiative was also started and facilitated by 34 youth CSOs with the help of Community Volunteers Foundation and Youth Services Centre in 2014.³

² For the facilitative organization, see Habitat website: <http://habitatkalkinma.org/en>. For the initiative see National Youth Parliament (UGP) website: <http://ulusalgenclikparlamentosu.net>.

³ For the facilitative organizations see Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) website: <http://tog.org.tr/en>; and Youth Services Centre (GSM) website: <http://www.gsm.org.tr/en>. For the initiative, see Genç Haklı, "Ulusal Gençlik Konseyi Girişimi Manifestosu" (National Youth Council Initiative Manifesto), in *Facebook*, 16 June 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/genclikhakli/posts/503453499756344>.

The Ministry of Development (MoD) is the “coordinating ministry” in developing public policies among all government agencies. It holds a special place in analysing social exclusion and youth policies. The Ministry is responsible for preparing four-year development plans, two-year medium-term programmes and also annual plans which state Government objectives and policies. The policies of the particular ministries were, at least on paper, shaped according to the master development programme following annual/biannual programmes prepared by the MoD. Particular policy areas and/or particular actors were chosen and given priority according to the policy documents prepared by the MoD.

The Social Support Programme (SODES) was implemented in 2008 under the Ministry of Development. It is a social development programme which aims to meet demands created by problems such as migration, poverty, and unemployment in disadvantaged regions in order to strengthen the human capital in those regions as well as to support the social integration processes. Increasing employability, promoting participation of disadvantaged groups in economic and social life, and giving children, young people and women in distant regions the chance to express themselves through cultural, artistic and sports activities are SODES's main goals.

The Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) is a state agency established under Law No. 4904 in 2003. It is composed of multiple stakeholders (including almost all executive ministries, different directorates, unions, confederates and the Council of Higher Education). The principal focus of the agency is to provide education and training opportunities to enhance employability and facilitate the school-to-work transition. It also concentrates on implementing employment policies that target youth in parallel with the 2012 recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO 2012). İŞKUR implements various projects using both national and international resources. While some projects directly target young people, others such as projects for the employment of (young) women are indirectly related to young people.

Other important state agencies related to youth policies include the Higher Education Credit and the Dormitory Agency (YURTKUR). Both function under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The National Agency functions under the Ministry of European Union Affairs and organizes youth programmes such as Erasmus. The Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education works under the Ministry of National Education; the Ministry of Family and Social Policy provides social assistance. The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) is a national council responsible for universities which acts in favour of both academics and students. Also international organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and national and/or local CSOs provide important data for developing youth policies.⁴

⁴ To give an idea, for some of the youth CSOs see the websites of TOG and Habitat.

2. CORPUS OF DATA AND INDICATORS ON YOUTH AVAILABLE IN TURKEY

Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) is Turkey's official statistical institution. Since 2011 it has published an annual report titled *Youth in Statistics* and as such contributes to the "creation of youth policy" (TurkStat 2015:iii). The data on youth covers physical and mental health, personal life (including marriage and fertility), crime and conviction, education, work, unemployment, income, poverty, happiness, life satisfaction, expectations for the future and social participation (e.g., sports and cultural activity).⁵ The first data set on youth produced in the 2011 survey focused on young people between 18 and 24. With the 2013 survey, youth continued to be a determining factor and a short explanation about the choice was added in the introduction. TurkStat defines young people "according to the UN definition" whereby "youth" is the "transitional phase between childhood and adulthood including the '15-24' age group" (TurkStat 2015:iii).⁶ Yet some of TurkStat's age groupings differ: for instance, 18-24 is adopted in some employment surveys; and other research areas use 15-24 for age grouping and demographic purposes even while marital status in the same survey is the 18-24 age grouping.

One of the main legal documents used as a reference in determining youth policies in Turkey is the National Youth and Sports Policy Document prepared by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which was adopted in January 2013. Article 18 of the law establishing the Ministry of Youth and Sports assigned the task of preparing the National Youth and Sports Policy Document with a renewal clause every four years. The Ministry organized 17 youth workshops as well as a national youth council, and gathered opinions via the Internet to ensure the participation of all stakeholders (including young people) in developing this policy document (MYS 2013:2-3).

The ministries and related agencies include the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS); the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) working under MoLSS published annual reports on their projects and past activities. These reports included the aim and objectives, actualized projects and budgetary information. Besides activity-based information, discourses used by the state agencies in the reports also provided valuable data for analysing how young people are assessed by the policy makers.

Expenditures allocated to young people can be obtained from the budget of the central government, as well as budgets of local governments. However, particular expenditures on youth can be deduced from each public institution's specific budget. The Public Expenditures Monitoring Platform is an initiative of rights-based NGOs. It publishes yearly reports on public expenditures targeting disadvantaged groups, including youth.⁷ Several universities have youth studies centres; for example, Istanbul Bilgi University, Hacettepe University, Akdeniz University, Üsküdar University, etc. There are two recent surveys on young people published by SETA (Gür et al. 2012) and Istanbul Bilgi University (Konda 2014, conducted as a part of the Youth Participation Project network), both of which include questions on the economic status

⁵ Nearly all relevant statistics on various thematic areas accessed through the TurkStat website (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr>) can be obtained according to age break-down.

⁶ In the 2013 TurkStat Youth Survey, the dataset contained almost identical content.

⁷ See the Platform website: http://kahip.org/index_en.html.

of young people. Moreover, various international organizations, such as the UN, UNDP, ILO, EFT, as well as the EU provide statistics and analysis on young people in Turkey.

Youth CSOs had and still have an important role in developing youth policies in Turkey. They have contributed through surveys and research related to the youth field such as young people's accommodation problems, participation constraints and autonomy problems. They also inform the public about young peoples' needs and demands based on first-hand information. The surveys and research conducted by the CSOs were also supported by the related units/departments of various universities.

3. THE CONCEPT OF YOUTH AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

3.1 The Concept of "Youth" in Policy Documents

"Youth" constructed as a political, yet anonymous agent has held an important and influential role since the second part of the 19th century (Zürcher 2004, Lüküslü 2015). That period saw the formation of "young Ottomans" as a political and reformist group in the late Ottoman Empire. The "young Ottomans" and, since 1908, the "young Turks" were mainly educated males in their twenties who favour replacement of the absolute monarchy of the Ottoman Empire with a constitutional monarchy (Kılıç 2011).⁸ Both the "young Ottomans" and later the "young Turks" considered themselves to be an enlightened, freedom-seeking generation devoted to the wellbeing of the nation. By 1923 with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, although the regime had changed from a monarchy to a republic, the representation of young people as the "future of the country" continued in the eyes of the new founders.

From the foundation of the Republic in 1923, until the 2000s, two mainstream and complementary narratives led the discussions regarding young people in the Parliament. The first narrative had its roots in the end of the 19th century and was related to the role of young people as the "future of society" needed for the development of the country. As the future of society, they were given the task of developing the country.

In order to fulfil their task, proper investment, which was seen as education, should be directed to young people.⁹ Yet the politicians stated that these youth should also be prepared to sacrifice themselves for the good of the country. They should work in the public sector (with low salaries) or as soldiers. Whereas the first narrative is based on the decision makers' trust in young people, the second narrative takes the opposite side. It emphasizes young peoples' instability and tendency towards dangerous habits and/or criminal activities.¹⁰ According to the decision-makers/parliamentarians, adults have the duty to intervene, control and guide young people. Since young people are the future of the country adults must protect them and in so doing they protect the country. Both narratives walk side by side and reflect a

⁸ As a result of the "young Ottomans" efforts, the first parliament of the Ottoman Empire was formed through elections in 1876.

⁹ From the very foundation of Turkey, good education for the young was an important issue among politicians. The education programme of the country was supported with exchange programmes starting in the 1930s.

¹⁰ Drugs and/or "extreme" political tendencies and/or "to be deceived" were (and still are) listed as the potential threats for young people.

paradoxical attitude towards young people. The decision-makers announce their trust in young people at the same time that they express their reservations about the capability and judgment of young people. These two narratives have been dominating discourses since the second part of the 19th century (Yurttagüler 2014b).

Youth as “the future of society” and youth as “the potential risk to be controlled” can be found in every state document. This dichotomy is present even in the Constitution. The 1982 Turkish Republic Constitution conceptualizes “youth” in Article 58 entitled “Protection of the Youth.”

The State shall take measures to ensure the education and development of the youth into whose keeping our independence and our Republic are entrusted, in the light of positive science, in line with the principles and reforms of Atatürk, and in opposition to ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation. The State shall take necessary measures to protect youth from addiction to alcohol and drugs, crime, gambling, and similar vices, and ignorance.

Therefore, youth is considered as a homogenous and monolithic group and is held responsible of the safety and independence of the republic. Young people are given the role of being a “defensive force” against the “destructive” ideas towards the Republic. The article continues with the role of the state that takes the responsibility of protecting youth from “harmful habits.”

The youth CSOs criticize this emphasis on the “protection of youth” in the Constitution, through advocacy and lobbying. The CSOs want to see the term “young people” added to the 10th Article of the Constitution that ensures equality among citizens.¹¹ In January 2012, the Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) prepared a detailed report¹² introducing the concepts of “empowerment, equality and autonomy of young people” to the new Constitution (TOG 2012). In the report, the Foundation emphasized the importance of young people’s inclusion in political, economic and social life that could be guaranteed with the newly formed Constitution (Kurtaran 2014).

Certain laws have helped to advance the concept of youth. The law establishing the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) developed the concept of youth slightly. In Article 2(a) the heterogeneity of the different youth groups was recognized when the duties of the MYS were described as “identifying supporting policies for the personal and social development of youth; considering the need of the different youth groups supporting opportunities for young

¹¹ Article 10: “Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. Men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality. Measures to be taken for children, the elderly, disabled people, widows and orphans of martyrs as well as for the invalid and veterans shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality.” If youth were included among the disadvantaged groups listed in that paragraph, this could provide a legal basis for positive changes to be made in youth policies in favour of young people.

¹² Turkey experienced a new constitution-forming process in 2012. During the process, CSOs were asked to contribute to the new constitution with their suggestions. As a youth CSO, TOG prepared a review report on the 1982 Constitution and brought alternative suggestions on youth/youth related issues.

people to actualize their potentials" (Turkey 2011). The protection of youth was made explicit for the first time in Article 7 when the General Directorate of Youth Services under the MYS became responsible for developing policies about the prevention of exploitation and violence against young people and protection of young people from harmful habits. The "protection of young people" reappeared in Article 8, where the goal of the General Directorate of Projects and Coordination under the MYS was established to support disadvantaged young people. Although the principal goals of the establishment law of the MYS are the protection and provision of leisure activities, the document also highlights heterogeneity with its recognition of "different" and "disadvantaged young people."

The National Youth and Sports Policy Document defines youth as between the ages 14 and 29. Policy makers have added a clause that "youth is a concept that should be discussed in a sociological meaning rather than just biological." Since youth should be defined by level of socio-economic development, culture and tradition, there is no universally accepted definition of youth based on age (MYS 2013:4). In the document, the policy makers have also given recognition to the different needs of young people according to their age, economic, social, familial and cultural conditions, education level and geographical status in order to develop suitable public policies (MYS 2013:5). Youth is defined as a "dynamic human resource and positive power" for a "more prosperous and more powerful state and society" (MYS 2013:5, 1). "Participation of young people in economic and social areas has a great significance for the country's development and improvement" (MYS 2013:1). Although "active" participation of young people is mentioned in the policy document, it does not emphasize political participation or taking part in the decision/policy making process as equal citizens. Young people under 30 years old, constituting 49.3 percent of the total Turkey population, are assessed as a demographic advantage for economic and social development and as a population that should be supported by efficient and influential public policies (MYS 2013:4). Youth policy is also seen as an essential tool to protect young people due to their "vulnerability" and their "openness to abuse" (MYS 2013:5). In cases where young people are not considered as a source for the development of the society, they are regarded either as potential victims because of the way they have been raised and the conditions they live in, or potential criminals because of their personality and characteristics.

In the policy documents, young people are more often identified as a part of a "family" and not as autonomous individuals. Therefore, policies developed to support young people were aimed at supporting families - or conversely, to develop the capacity of young people as instruments of support to families. Families are also seen as instruments for demographic planning. Young people are not only seen as an opportunity due their contribution to the labour force. They are also instrumentalized for population increase. Young people with their reproductive contribution are even named the "demographic opportunity" (MFSP 2015:1).

The existence of different and disadvantaged youth is occasionally recognized in the public/policy documents. Yet the identity and characteristics of these groups are not described and/or discussed in detail. "Being disadvantaged" is matched frequently with regional identities, particularly the eastern and southeastern part of Turkey. The reference to the region is based on the assumption that young people from the "region"¹³ are coming from a lower socio-

¹³ "Region" as a term is often used for the parts of Turkey where a high percentage of the ethnic minority is

economic background. The geographic reference does not include ethnic characteristics. Although recognizing “disadvantaged young people” in public documents represents a change, it remains a superficial contribution due to the limited description of the concept.¹⁴

Gender is only timidly taken into account. Young women are mentioned in labour- and employment-related policy documents although the participation of women in the labour force is quite low in Turkey. Women also appear with regard to family-related issues since women are seen as a “reproductive” reservoir. LGBTI young people, on the other hand, are non-existent and go unrecognized in policy documents.

3.2 The Concept of Social Exclusion in Policy Documents

The term social exclusion begins to appear in policy documents in the second part of the 2000s. The concept emerged to define problem areas preventing citizens from participating in social, economic and/or political processes. Poverty, unemployment, inequality, lack of opportunities and discrimination are frequently cited as problem areas. Alternative concepts such as social inclusion, social cohesion, social integration, social support, social assistance, disadvantaged groups and at-risk groups are also found in policy documents. The term “empowerment” however is rarely found. Terminology used in policy documents changes according to authors, agencies and subjects.¹⁵

Social exclusion (and related terminology) is frequently matched with the “disadvantaged” groups. Definitive explanations of “disadvantaged groups” are rare in the policy documents. The general tendency in the documents is to list “known” disadvantaged groups such as children, young people, the elderly, women, disabled individuals and poor people. Another reading assumes that men, middle-aged individuals, middle class and healthy individuals are not under the risk of social exclusion. The “average” or norm is stated or agreed upon implicitly without spoken or agreed consensus in policy documents. Those outside of the “norm” are identified as socially excluded, disadvantaged or at-risk. Yet such a classification can cause “labelling” of particular groups. Worse, it can induce a certain kind of “blindness” with regard to the needs of the people since they are not recognized by the policy makers. The needs and experiences of socially excluded groups such as LGBTI or the rights, needs and demands of ethnic groups and refugees are rarely touched in the policy documents.

Kurdish and where political autonomy discussions of the Kurdish movement are targeted.

¹⁴ There is a blurred link between the definition of the concept “disadvantaged” and the Kurdish problem. Betterment of the socio-economic conditions of the Kurdish population is seen as a solution by the state and/or state-related agents to fulfil the political demands of the Kurdish movement. Therefore, regional analysis has an implicit connection to the state-led assumption.

¹⁵ The authors of the policy documents differ according to the ministries’ areas of responsibility. Although the general and long-term planning documents of the state come from the Ministry of Development, the specific execution areas are prepared by the related ministries. Since social exclusion is a multidimensional policy area, different ministries are responsible of the empowerment of the disadvantaged groups. To give an example, the employment policy of the country is set in the three-year developmental plans by the Ministry of Development. Yet, the specifics and execution methods were determined by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Through the research, social exclusion (and related terminology) emerged in multiple policy areas. In the interviews, the interviewees were asked on what conditions they prefer particular terminology to be used in the documents. However, the interviewees did not respond with an explanation. Although there is a coherent terminology used in the particular ministries’ policy documents, the variety in the “social exclusion” terminology among different ministries still stands as a question to be researched.

The term “social exclusion” appeared in the first Medium Term Programme which was published in 2005 and covered the period 2006-2008. The programme was prepared by the Undersecretariat of State Planning Organization (which became the Ministry of Development in 2011) and was accepted by the decision of the Council of Ministers in 2005 (MoD 2005). The first Medium Term Programme, “designed as a road map to enhance predictability both for the public and the private sector, shall contribute further to the confidence and stability by strengthening the positive economic and social developments achieved in recent years on a more solid basis” (MoD 2005:1). One of the seven priority areas of the programme was “strengthening social inclusion” (MoD 2005:4). Social inclusion was discussed under the title of “Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty.” The programme was meant “to increase the active participation of the individuals and groups that are subject to poverty and social exclusion or face this risk in economic and social life and secure social solidarity and integration by upgrading their life quality” (MoD 2005:20). Social inclusion was associated with economic and social participation. Although the emphasis on participation was noteworthy, the absence of “political participation” makes us think that the authors of the report did not expect the socially excluded (and “poor people”) to participate in the decision- and policy-making processes. In order to reach its objective, the programme prioritized target groups such as: the unemployed, poor and unqualified people whose numbers have risen due to the structural transformation in agriculture, migrants, women, at-risk children, children with special needs, the handicapped and convicts. Some intervention areas were also given priority. These included access to education and health (with a general health insurance system) for disadvantaged groups, enhancing employment opportunities and employability. Parallel to providing fundamental social services, employability stands out as the predominant “solution” for social inclusion.

In the National Youth and Sports Policy Document, participation of young people is strongly emphasized in various policy areas, especially education. Participation in the decision-making processes within educational institutions was one of the main objectives of the education and lifelong learning policy (MYS 2013:6-7). Another priority of education policy is access to education and equal opportunity in education (MYS 2013:8). In order to encourage these areas, the education policy aims to:

- create opportunities and incentives for access to education;
- increase preventive measures to fight against inequality in education;
- enable access to education for young people including those in the area of agriculture;
- create opportunities for young detainees and convicts in order to pursue their education;
- provide opportunities for young women to obtain levels of education equal to those of young men;
- provide distance learning and/or special education opportunities for handicapped young people and young people with permanent health conditions to pursue their education.

Young people at risk of social exclusion are indirectly addressed through the subject of “access to education.”

In other policy documents, migrant families are given priority for social services and social assistance in community centres. Examples include women’s consulting centres, child and youth centres, social service centres and related departments of municipalities to support

the integration of migrant families to urban life (MoD 2015).

4. YOUTH POLICIES

In the following sections, the four main policy areas covering employment, family policy, migration policies and spatial policies will be assessed with a focus on youth policies when analysing policy documents. For the Turkish Republic, the principal subjects in developing youth policies are employment and family policies. These will therefore be the structure and foundation points of the following discussion.

4.1 Employment Policies

According to the TurkStat's *Youth in Statistics 2014* report, the population between the ages of 15 and 24 forms 16.6 percent of the total population. Though Turkey still has a young population, the percentage of youth aged 15-24 reached its peak in 1980 with 20.2 percent; it has been slowly declining since then and is expected to reach 11.7 percent by 2050. Regional differences exist in terms of the share of youth population; in many eastern and southeastern provinces this share is around 20-29 percent.

The Turkish labour market has widely recognized structural problems: low education levels among the labour force and consequent skill mismatches; striking differences between men and women, particularly visible in labour force participation rates; different characteristics in rural and urban employment and high levels of rural-to-urban migration; as well as a high level of informal employment. These are problems that affect the whole population, but young people are a particularly disadvantaged group.

In 2013, 0.8 percent of the young people were illiterate and 7 percent were literate but had no diploma. 53.1 percent had a primary education diploma, 31.5 percent had high school or vocational education diplomas and 7.6 percent had higher education degrees. Young people constitute 16.2 percent of the total population neither working nor in education in the labour force. Labour force participation rates (LFPR) in Turkey are 50.8 percent, which breaks down to 71.5 percent for men and 30.8 percent for women. LFPR of young people between the ages of 15-24 equals 39.6 percent, while it is 51.9 percent among young men and 27.5 percent among young women. Unemployment rate in 2013 among the population aged 15+ was 9.7 percent; it was 18.7 percent among young people between ages 15-24 and higher among young women than among young men. Both the LFPR rate and the unemployment rate of young people increase as the level of education increases. Moreover, unemployment rates among high school and vocational high school and university graduates are considerably higher for young women compared to young men, while the opposite is true for those who are illiterate. In Turkey, the number of women who are enrolled in or graduated from higher education institutions is higher than men for the age groups of 18-21 and 22-24; therefore the level of unemployment among women with tertiary education degree is evidence of the disadvantaged position of young women in the job market. In addition, among the female population, unemployment rate among those with university degrees is 15.1 percent and LFPR is 72.2 percent; labour force participation among women increases until age 30 and begins to decline afterwards. However as the number of women with tertiary education continues to increase, educated female unemployment is likely to become a serious problem in the

future. Young women are mostly employed as service and sales workers (24 percent), skilled agricultural and fishery workers (19.9 percent) and in elementary occupations (18 percent).

The occupations with the highest rates of young male employment are service and sales jobs as well as crafts and related trades. The figures show a decline in the number of women employed in agricultural jobs, which corresponds to the ongoing rural-to-urban migration in Turkey. The figures also indicate that young people mostly work in the services sector, in which flexible contracting is widespread, the system of internship can be easily exploited and the labour turnover rate is quite high. Most importantly, 34 percent of young women are not employed because they are occupied with household chores, a category that is non-existent among men.¹⁶ Approximately one-third of the non-institutional youth population lives in rural areas, 61 percent of which have primary education degrees. In rural areas, LFPR of women is 21.4 percent for those aged 15-19 and 40.2 percent for those aged 20-24 (LFPR of young women in urban areas is 14.3 percent and 39.2 percent for the same age groups), while it is approximately two times higher among young men for both age groups. Youth unemployment in rural areas (13.7 percent) is lower compared to urban areas (21.2 percent). Of young people working in non-agricultural sectors, 70.3 percent are men, while this share decreases to 51.4 percent in agricultural employment. In rural areas, the unemployment rates are higher for both men and women with university degrees, while the unemployment rate among women who are illiterate or without diplomas is strikingly lower than for men. In rural areas, 85 percent of the young population in the agriculture sector work and are classified as “unpaid family workers.”

In Turkey, 36.8 percent of the employed population in 2013 has no social security, and approximately 10 percent of those who do not have social security are young people between the ages of 15-24. Nearly half of the employed young people work without social security, while the share of those with no social security is 95 percent in the agriculture sector. For those aged between aged 15 to 19, 70.5 percent of females and 69.7 percent of males work informally. Those rates fall to approximately 50 percent in the next age group, and then decline rapidly among men, while remaining almost constant among women. Though education level is an important determinant of informal employment,¹⁷ figures also indicate that irrespective of their education level, women are more likely to be stuck in informal employment, while the transition from non-registered jobs to registered jobs is easier for men. Eleven percent of the population work in temporary jobs, while young people between the ages of 15-24 constitute 28 percent of those working in temporary jobs and approximately 20 percent of employed young people work in temporary jobs. Among unemployed young people, 21.5 percent are first-time job seekers and the ratio of long-term unemployment is 19.2 percent for young people.

There are various chapters of the EU accession process that are linked to youth employment. These include: information society and media, social policy and employment, enterprise and industrial policy, regional policy and the coordination of structural instruments, science and

¹⁶ “Household chores” is a category used by the TUIK to categorize young women who are not in the school system and/or in the labour market.

¹⁷ Around 60 percent of young people working informally have a primary education degree, and education levels are lower for older age cohorts.

research, and education and culture. While the negotiations on the “Education and Culture” chapter have been expected to open since 2006, “Social Policy and Employment” is among the chapters whose screening reports have been approved at the European Council by benchmarks. In the area of education, Turkey tries to harmonize its policies with the EU’s strategic framework “Education and Training 2020,” the Bologna Process and the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018. The most important policy changes in that direction in recent years have been the establishment of the Vocational Qualifications Authority, the adoption of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy and the approval of the National Youth and Sports Policy Document. The EU Commission’s 2014 Progress Report on Turkey notes the adoption of the National Children’s Rights Strategy as a positive development, while it underlines the persistent problems concerning informal employment,¹⁸ ineffective social dialogue mechanisms, regulations on health and safety in the workplace, as well as anti-discrimination, social inclusion and social protection policies (European Commission 2014:39, 2015:51).

The worldwide financial crises have also affected employment policies in Turkey. Though Turkey is among the developing countries that have managed to perform relatively well during this period, the economic impact of the crises has identified various emerging problems, particularly those related to youth unemployment. Turkey has been forced to tackle the problems of high levels of urban youth unemployment, unemployment among tertiary education graduates and skill mismatches in the labour market. This pressure constitutes the main reason behind the strong emphasis made in recent policy priorities on vocational education and training programmes.

Many recent policy documents in Turkey recognize young people as a disadvantaged group in the labour market, mostly alongside with women and the disabled. For example, the National Employment Strategy (MoLSS 2014:33-35) has a specific section for those three groups and states that, although these groups have legally equal status in the labour market, their participation remains limited; they are usually found in unacceptable working conditions, and face a higher risk of unemployment. The strategy also underlines that obstacles in school-to-work transition are the main reason behind high youth unemployment rates and therefore advises policies that can facilitate the employment of first-time job seekers. The strategy targets lowering youth unemployment to the average unemployment rate through better and effective internship opportunities, career planning and job search assistance, matching and counselling services, support for youth entrepreneurship and by establishing specific youth units in the Turkish Employment Agency, as well as regulating employer’s social security premium discounts for encouraging youth employment (MoLSS 2014:83-85). However, although they do not specifically target young people, various other parts of the strategy are also closely related to youth employment and give an idea about the priorities of the recent policies that affect the position of young people in the labour market. For instance, besides

¹⁸ In spite of the changes in legislation, child labour is still a drastic problem in Turkey. The 2015 report of DISK on child labour reveals that, despite the fall in the employment of child labour observed during 2006-2012, the figures show an increasing trend until then. Also, children who cannot be employed in jobs are directed to household work and therefore the number of children between ages 5-17 occupied with household chores has been increasing steadily. In 2013, 1,235 workers were killed as a result of workplace accidents and 59 of them were below 18. Average weekly hours worked is 40, for those between ages 6-17 it increases to 54.3 hours for those outside the education system. Fifty-two percent of the working children receive an average monthly income of 400 Turkish lira; 36 percent of them work without weekly leave and 89 percent work without annual leave with pay.

other measures, the policy objectives under the heading “Strengthening Links between Education and Employment” include those for providing young people with guidance for vocational education. Moreover, the section on “Ensuring Security and Flexibility in the Labour Market” particularly mentions young people and women as groups that can benefit from temporary employment and proposes the establishment of “temporary employment agencies” in that regard.

The National Youth Employment Action Plan (İŞKUR 2011) prepared under a United Nations Joint Programme by the National Technical Team set up by İŞKUR provides a more detailed analysis on the situation of young people in the labour market and 32 policy recommendations. The plan stresses that youth constitutes a disadvantaged group in terms of labour market opportunities and underlines that focus on youth, gender sensitivity, flows of young migrant workers from agriculture, and disabled young people are adopted as guiding principles for the plan (İŞKUR 2011:12). The policy recommendations of the plan, which have been transformed into an action plan matrix targeted to be put into implementation by the end of 2015, can be summarized under the following general headings (İŞKUR 2011:13):

- employment-focused growth and implementation of specific policies to this end;
- enhancing cooperation with NGOs, including trade unions and governmental organizations;
- an education and training system responsive to the needs of the labour market;
- universal schooling to eliminate gender and regional disparities;
- finalization of the system for occupational skills;
- support and encouragement of the entrepreneurial initiatives of youth;
- adaptation of migrants to urban life;
- bringing labour cost in line with OECD practices through relevant analyses;
- enhancing the organization of the Turkish Employment Agency in rural areas;
- developing areas in agriculture with high added value and supporting qualified employment;
- informing relevant parties about policies and practices geared to promoting employment.

The Tenth Development Plan includes the general policy priorities for the term 2014-2018 (MoD 2014a:27). The plan suggests that maintaining high growth rates can only be possible if the quality and the innovation capacity of the workforce through support of the young population can be enhanced. However, it also notes that the education system, which is crucial for increasing the quality of the workforce, has been insufficient in satisfying labour market needs and the decrease in the unemployment rate of young people has been quite limited (MoD 2014a:46). The policies listed under the heading “Employment and Working Life” reveal the prospective policies that will affect the situation of young people in the labour market (MoD 2014a:47):

- increasing the number of qualified employees taking into account regional, local and sectorial dynamics;
- policies for reconciling work and family life and employment incentives aiming to increase labour force participation and employability;
- combating informal employment and reducing labour costs;
- active labour market policies, particularly vocational guidance and counselling services;
- increasing education levels and enhancing skill formation through formal and informal vocational education;
- changes in severance payment system, sub-contracting and temporary employment.

In terms of labour policy, Turkey needs to solve many problems simultaneously; it has to shrink the informal economy, increase the labour force participation while maintaining low levels of unemployment, even while it increases education levels. However, different problems sometimes require conflicting policies and tools and a better prioritization between different policy options. Moreover, most of the available policies are more likely to show their impact in the long run, while short-run results are more important for governments and public institutions, and this also affects the practical choices made among several policy options. In addition, government ideological policy concerns such as establishing a family-based youth assistance system and increasing the birth rate to overcome medium-term demographic risks, also put pressure on employment policies which are likely to have consequences particularly on youth (and female) employment. Nevertheless, Turkey's employment policies aim to adopt the mainstream neoliberal agenda of "flexicurity." As such they prioritize policy options that create a workforce ready to meet the labour market needs. The main characteristics of the recent employment policies concerning youth can be summarized as follows:

- increasing the education level of the workforce through raising school enrolment rates, extending compulsory education and opening new universities;
- enhancing specific skills through formal and informal vocational education;
- reducing informal economy by decreasing labour costs and extending irregular forms of employment;
- strengthening the link between social assistance and employment.

4.2 Family Policies

Turkey's Civil Code is the main legislative code regulating family-related issues including marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody and adoption of children. The Civil Code also regulates the status of women and men and the rights of minors with the complementary interventions of the Penal Code. With the European Union negotiation process, articles in both codes, particularly regarding gender equality, were adjusted according to EU legislation with a vital intervention and great efforts on the part of women's' organizations. Articles changed in the Civil Code in 2003 covered subjects related to the status of women in the family, child custody, right to work and property regulations.¹⁹ The changes in the Code, at least on the legislative level, provided women (in the family) a relatively more powerful status. Family is defined as the core unit of society in legislative documents such as the Civil Code. The same definition is present in policy documents in fields such as poverty, health and housing in which agents such as young people, women and the elderly are referred to in terms of the "needs of families" instead of the "needs of the individual" (Heinrich Böll Foundation 2014).

Since the family is taken as the main agent for policy development, young people are also considered part of the family, rather than as autonomous individuals. Therefore, policies developed to support young people either aim to support young people through providing

¹⁹ In the former civil code, woman and man were defined as "wife and husband." The present code defines marriage as the unification of two partners. In the former code, the head of the family was defined as the "husband," whereas in the current code the "head of the family" concept is removed. In the former code, the custody of children was assigned to the father (as the head of the family). In the present code, the custody of children is open to the decision of the judges. In the former code, a "wife" needed to receive "permission" for working. In the recent code, this article is removed. With the recent code, the regime of the family property has changed and the property owned after the marriage act is defined as the common property of man and woman.

services to their families or aim to develop the capacity of young people as instruments to support “their” families. Young people need family support in school (including university), the job search, initial employment experience, and benefits in health services and housing (Konda 2014, Yurttagüler 2014a).²⁰ Family is a safety net for young people, which in turn makes young people dependent on their families, forces them to follow family “rules” and hinders their autonomy and capacity to decide for themselves as individuals (Yurttagüler 2014a).

Young people are assigned the role of “being the daughter or son” of the family. They are under the “supervision” of their parents particularly with regard to moral subjects regardless of their age and/or employment status (MYS 2013:11-13). Policy-makers warn that if “parents do not convey the values and culture of the society,” then young people may be alienated from the society they live in. It can put them at-risk of “becoming prone to crime” (MYS 2013:12). Family is seen as the source and the solution for “problem youth.” The role of young people changes when they establish a new family and take on the roles of father/mother and husband/wife. Marriage becomes a breaking point with regard to policies. Young people are perceived as adults when they marry. They are transformed into “qualified individuals” in the policy documents. Married people are often no longer considered to be young. Marriage is a turning point, a step towards adulthood where youth is left behind.

In the majority of documents, with the exception of the TurkStat datasets, married people are not considered “young” even if they are less than 25 years old. Ministry of Family and Social Policy documents do not designate married individuals as young people. An example of this includes suggestions and recommendations to manage female unemployment through maternal care services. Mothers with young children are rarely identified as “young” women. It is only when young women are not married, and policy suggestions are trying to find solutions for unemployment problems, that they are viewed as “young” women. This is also the case in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security policy documents. The presentation of marriage as a way of transitioning to adulthood and the underestimation of young people as qualified individuals/citizens results in family domination and in controlling young peoples’ emotional and sexual lives.

Another indication of adulthood is related to living in a different/separate house. Change in accommodation conditions provides young people with a private and autonomous space and loosens their relationship with their family. However, most young people cannot afford to live

²⁰ Throughout the schooling process, young people not only need the support of their family for primary and secondary education, they also need family support for university since there is not sufficient state support for university students. In the job-seeking processes, employment agencies are replaced by the family. The network of the family provides the necessary connections for young people to find jobs. In the initial employment experience, since young people receive a comparatively low salary and since the turnover of young people is quite high, family support becomes inevitable. In order to benefit from health services, either the individual must be working or their contribution to the health insurance fund must be covered by a member of the family (most often the father). After 18 years of age and until 25, young women can use their parent’s insurance if they are studying. Last but not least, since young people have no steady income or a low income and since there is no state housing support for individuals, young people either continue to live with their family or they receive housing support from their family.

in a separate house for economic reasons.²¹ Most young people leave their parents' houses for educational reasons and return after their graduation unless they are married (Konda 2014, Yurttagüler 2014a).

Marriage (and family) is shaped by heteronormative discourse in the policy documents. Same-sex marriages are not recognized by the Civil Code. The mean age for first marriages is 23.9 for women and 27 for men. In the last 15 years, the mean age for women changed from 22.2 to 23.9 and for men from 25.5 to 27.²² The longer time spent in school and men's higher labour force participation have an impact on the increase in the average marriage age of men. Since only 10 percent of young women attend university and a low percentage of young women are in the active labour force, women's mean marriage age is lower than for men. According to TurkStat, among the 602,982 couples married in 2015, men are older in 445,144 marriages whereas 84,823 women are older. Among the "men older" couples, 61.5 percent of men are 1-5 years older, 29.5 percent of men are 6-10 years older and 9 percent of men are +11 years older than women. The marriages where the age difference is +11 years (men older) have occurred in less than 10 percent of the total marriages in every city in Turkey, except the cities of Hatay with 12.9 percent, Kars with 12.1 percent, Ardahan with 12.4 percent and Iğdır with 11 percent. CSOs and universities have underlined the relation between some of the above-mentioned cities and the occurrence of higher percentages of the child-marriage.²³ It is necessary to note that except for Hatay,²⁴ the above-mentioned cities are also known for their disadvantaged socio-economic conditions, lower literacy level (particularly among women), high fertility and high infant/mother mortality (Institute of Population Studies 2014).

Marriage and natal policies go hand in hand in policy documents. Natal policies have gone through three important periods since the foundation of the Republic. The first spanned the 1920s to the 1960s and had a strong pro-natal policy tone. The second period began in the 1960s. In 1965, the Turkish government launched a nationwide family planning campaign in parallel with international concerns and collaboration with international organizations. This included importing contraceptives, spreading reproductive health services and creating a network of family planning centres. The family planning law changed in 1983 and abortion until the 10th week became legal, giving weight to anti-natal policies. Turkey's population rate slowed significantly with the use of contraceptives, the family planning campaign and reproductive health services. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has turned policies in a pro-natal direction since 2010. The government has supported in vitro fertilisation treatment and provided natal care services.²⁵ Couples are encouraged to have "at least three children" in policy documents and public discourse, and the prime minister's speeches in 2012 made abortion an issue.

²¹ Employment alone is not seen as equating with adulthood or autonomy, due to the working conditions of young people, who are mostly working in low-paid jobs, without security and with high turnover.

²² TurkStat, *Vital Statistics: Marriage Statistics*, http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1060.

²³ Sabancı Foundation, Flying Broom (a women's organization), and other local CSOs have published important reports about child marriage. They have achieved drawing the attention of the public and the government to the subject.

²⁴ Hatay is the border city with Syria. The refugee population is quite high in the city. Although there is no reliable report about marriages with refugee women, there are speculations about "bride-money" and marriage between old Turkish Republic men and young Syrian refugee women.

²⁵ Law No. 5510 of 31 May 2006 on Social Insurance and General Health Insurance.

With the foundation of the Republic, discourse concerning natal policies was justified by economic and developmental needs. More recently in the Family and Dynamic Population Structure Conservation Programme Action Plan, released in January 2015, family was described as the core unit of society, which needs protection for the development of social welfare and social capital (MFSP 2015:1). Young people are seen as an advantage, even as an opportunity for development, but they are also instrumentalized for population growth. The pro-natal policies launched with the programme include the creation of social assistance mechanisms in order to encourage young people to marry earlier (MFSP 2015:23). These mechanisms include extension of parental leave for women, part-time working opportunities for women until the child is 66 months old, financial support for women for every birth, “dowry” support to young couples as well as compelling municipalities to open day nurseries. The government also enabled financial support for young couples between 18 and 25 years old through interest-free loans of up to 10,000 lira (3,700 euros) when marrying. In addition, it erased state education-loan debts upon marriage. The government generally presents pro-natal policies as a way to increase individuals’ welfare and to support “life planning.”²⁶ However, natal policies and the strong emphasis on marriage and births creates an important breach for the reproductive rights, especially of young women.²⁷ Women’s organizations are particularly concerned with young women’s sexual freedom and access to contraceptive methods (Güney et al. 2014).

Young people’s sexuality is anchored and limited within marriage. Although there are “pre-marriage,” “in-marriage” and family counselling programmes (including training and one-to-one counselling) organized and implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP 2013), there is an absence of state-sponsored reproductive health services. National and local civil society organizations attempt to fill this gap.²⁸

Since 2004 sexuality out-of-marriage (adultery) is no longer a crime in Turkey, nonetheless young people’s sexuality is framed as in-marriage and bound with heteronormative discourse in the policy documents. Young LGBTI²⁹ as a group face difficulties, social exclusion and even violence due to their sexual orientation. LGBTI civil society organizations have worked for the recognition of sexual orientation in the Constitution. They have cooperated with the opposition party (Republican People’s Party-CHP) and proposed to form a parliamentary inquiry commission to investigate the problems of LGBTI individuals such as civil rights, sexual health and body integrity.³⁰ They have supported the adoption of a new constitution with the recognition of same sex-marriage in the Civil Code and the inclusion of sexual orientation in

²⁶ The Minister of Family and Social Policy, Fatma Şahin, made this statement to a journalist. See Toker (2013).

²⁷ The loud promotion of giving birth and condemnation of abortion surely affect the lives of all women. Women’s organizations and professional organizations such as the Turkish Medical Association have organized campaigns against anti-abortion discourse and released several press announcements to raise awareness about the drawbacks of such policies. See Turkish Medical Association, *Kadınların Sağlıklı ve Güvenli Koşullarda Kürtaj Hakları Kısıtlanamaz; Karar Kadınlarındır* (Women’s Abortion Rights in healthy and safe conditions can not be restricted; Women’s Decision), 17 January 2013, <http://www.ttb.org.tr/index.php/Haberler/kurtaj-3574.html>.

²⁸ For example, TOG which is running a reproductive health programme with UNFPA.

²⁹ LGBTI organizations are mostly formed by young people in Turkey.

³⁰ The CHP petition was dated 12 February 2013 and signed by 43 parliamentarians.

the newly formed Hate Crime Law.³¹ Although a commission has not yet been formed and, unfortunately, LGBTI individuals are not currently recognized in any legislative and/or policy document, their efforts have made LGBTI problems visible in the public sphere.

Young women's cultural and economic dependence on their families is strengthened with "care policies." State policies which aim to ensure the welfare of the family organize "care work" of children and the elderly through women by assisting them with a monthly salary. Such policies have crucial shortcomings for both the care provider and the person in need of care. For the care provider, it is a legitimate tool that confines her to the household. Women in the family are viewed as care providers, called "house girls," and this is reflected as low schooling and labour force participation rates (Lüküslü and Çelik 2008). Apart from women in school and/or employment, the rest - whether married and not - become caretakers in the household. This policy liberates the state from opening care institutions since care work in the household becomes a "paid service" situated in the private sphere. Consequently women in the household do not seek jobs in the market since they are paid for the care work. Yet the support provided to women for their care work is quite limited. It is devoid of insurance benefits and limits the lives of women to the house. Also such a care policy confines the person in need of care to the home (e.g., handicapped youth) since they receive care services within the household, and makes them dependent on family members, especially on mothers and/or sisters.

4.3 Migration Policies

Migration is often a hot topic for policy developers and researchers. In Turkey, 64.7 percent of the population has migrated at least once in their life time (Institute of Population Studies 2006:63). Migration-related discussions carry varying perspectives, paradigms and concerns bound up with the characteristics of the migrants, place and time.

Although youth with regard to migration are not considered a separate focus category in the policy documents, differentiated migration trends and practices are discussed with a some recognition of young people since they form the majority of migrants.

Youth and migration is mostly discussed in the context of economic concerns about development. This discussion focuses primarily on the migration of young unskilled men (from Turkey to other countries, from rural to urban and/or from other countries to Turkey). It also considers the brain drain (Institute of Population Studies 2006, Tansel and Güngör 2003, Güngör and Tansel 2005). Motives for young people to migrate (in the country and out of country) are in line with economic reasons (searching for job opportunities, employment and higher wages), better education as well as for familial reasons (such as marriage) (Institute of Population Studies 2006, Koç et al. 2008:20).

Young peoples' migration can be classified as movement in-country and between-countries. In-country migration has been discussed mainly in terms of two directions, from rural to urban and vice versa, in the policy documents.

³¹ Article No. 122 of Law No. 5237 on Hate Crime was changed on 2 March 2014. The law punishes those who discriminate against individuals based on their language, race, nationality, disability, political thought, philosophical belief, religious or sect difference. The law does not cover sexual orientation.

Most young people - 51.9 percent of those 18-20 years old and 63.1 percent of those 20-24 years old - have migrated at least once since birth (Institute of Population Studies 2006:64). Individual, familial and security motives for migration are the principal reasons motivating migration in the half of one's twenties, whereas economic reasons become the main motive in the second part of one's twenties (Institute of Population Studies 2006:71).³² While men's motives to migrate centre on familial (16.2 percent), economic (13.7 percent) and individual reasons (11.8 percent) such as education; for women, the motives are familial (25.9 percent), individual (18.9 percent) and economic (3.7 percent) (Institute of Population Studies 2006:60). Women mostly migrate for marital reasons (Institute of Population Studies 2006:63-64).³³ Since the percentages are quite high for the young population, integration of young people is a major focus area in policy documents. Migrated families were given priority to use social services and social assistance in community centres including women's consulting centres, child and youth centres, social services centres and related departments in municipalities to support the integration of the migrant families to settle into the urban life. Since young people were conceived of as a part of family policy, the integration of young migrants was also covered under this policy (MFSP 2015). Regional differences in development are emphasized in the case of migration. In order to decrease (in-country) migration and increase the citizens' wellbeing, services and programmes in the "underdeveloped" regions are prioritized in the development plans (MoD 2014a, 2014b). These include not only employment-related programmes, but also support service implementation such as community centres, training and consulting programmes for disadvantaged groups.

Women's migration is another problem area. Migration from rural to urban areas has a negative impact on women's labour-force participation (due to the prolonging of their schooling and their lack of skills adapted to city employment needs) (Koç et al. 2008:20-21). In the development plan, women's labour-force participation becomes a special policy area that aims to be supported with training, care services and legislative regulations to decrease gender discrimination in the recruitment process (MoD 2014a:164). In 2004, Turkey enacted a Compensation Law (Law No. 5233) that gave opportunities and social assistance to people who want to return their village.³⁴ Among people aged 20-34, only 37.6 percent wanted to return their villages (Institute of Population Studies 2006:87). The willingness to "return" is low among young people of the internally displaced population (Institute of Population Studies 2006:112). To increase the "return" rate, in parallel with the regional development plans, the Turkish government has provided social assistance, tax exemption and training opportunities with particular focus on young people.

³² Between 15-19 years old, individual reasons account for 27.9 percent, economic reasons for 13.4 percent and familial reasons for 13.8 percent; between 20-24 years, 29.1 percent migrate for individual reasons, 24.5 percent for economic reasons and 21.9 percent for familial reasons.

³³ Based on gender classification, 68.2 percent of women and 59.7 percent of men have migrated at least once since birth.

³⁴ Turkey experienced an inner conflict from the 1980s to the 2000s in the Southeastern and Eastern part of the country. During the process, some villages were evacuated by the public authorities - by the military. With the peace process, the government has enacted a law that enables people to return their villages.

Turkey's migration pattern is understood under two headings: regular and irregular migration. The motives of the regular migration are employment, education and quality of life (MoD 2014b:11). Irregular migration is explained as a social, security, economic and "costly" problem in the policy documents. Considering the Readmission Agreement enacted in 2014, the authorities stated that the changing status of Turkey from a transit country to a target country for migrant smugglers has created a need for stricter border and security control mechanisms for "good cooperation" with the EU countries (MoD 2014b, İçduygu et al. 2014). Refugees and asylum-seekers have a separate heading in the documents. Since Turkey defined itself as a transit country for refugees³⁵ its policies have aimed to regulate and support the bureaucratic, social and economic conditions of refugees until they have been relocated to a third country. However, since 2011, Syrian refugees have changed the picture. In public discourse and policy documents, they have been called "guests" (not refugees) and several social support programmes have been started to accelerate integration, albeit irregularly and arbitrarily. While there is a powerful concern about the low-skilled migrants, educated and high-skilled migrants are welcomed by the authorities for economic reasons (MoD 2014b:42).

Youth, as a category, emerges in three different areas in public documents on migration. The first area includes those who study abroad (education-driven migration). The second category includes those who were born or grew up abroad. The last group represents high-skilled and well-educated foreign citizens. Education became one of the reasons for young people to migrate to other countries.³⁶ Although American and European universities were the main focus point due to their reputation, respectability and scholarship opportunities (Tansel and Güngör 2003, Güngör and Tansel 2005), the universities in Balkan countries, in Russia and in Asia were also attractive thanks to their financial affordability and easy acceptance conditions. Hence, diploma equivalency became a well-defined and feasible process. Political and economic instability, social and cultural life, career opportunities, social insurance and familial reasons are the main reasons for young people to study and stay abroad (Giannoccolo 2006). The Turkish diaspora is another group that has attracted the attention of public authorities (MoD 2014b:49). Policies aimed at fostering the cultural and religious links with Turkish diaspora have eased the bureaucratic process to vote and to participate in political processes. They have also promoted the return of educated young people through legislative regulations, scholarships and investment opportunities. Since 2010, the Turkish diaspora (and their civil society organizations) have received support through scholarships, grants and training with the establishment of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and related communities. The office has launched exchange, training and summer school programmes for young people.³⁷

The third category is the high-skilled foreign citizens. In the development plan, the importance of high-skilled and well-educated people is strongly underlined. The need for bettering working conditions, easy access to public services (accommodation, education, health and

³⁵ Due to the reservations to the particular articles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, Turkey has limited its "refugee admittance" regime with geographical borders (Turkey does not accept refugees from the "eastern" countries). Therefore, refugees spend on average 5 to 7 years in Turkey and re-settle in a third country such as Canada, the US, Australia and European countries. Between 1981 and 2005, 666,412 people migrated from Turkey to a third country as a refugee or asylum seeker.

³⁶ According to World Bank data, Turkey is among the top ten countries sending students to the US.

³⁷ For the activities of the institution see: <http://www.ytb.gov.tr>.

other), and increasing the quality of these services is a significant goal of public policy (MoD 2014a, 2014b). In order to attract foreign citizens, the Turkish Republic enacted the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in April 2013. This law eased the bureaucratic processes of obtaining a work permit, for foreign citizens who are studying and/or have graduated in Turkey.³⁸ Apart from efforts to attract educated young people, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) has also provided undergraduate and graduate scholarship programmes for international students.³⁹ Although there are various efforts to stop or reverse brain drain such as legislation changes regarding work permits or new research funds for foreign and/or expat Turkish citizens/researchers,⁴⁰ it is difficult to say that there is a concrete and consistent state policy (Tansel and Güngör 2003). Lack of economic, technical, academic and employment resources is one of the main reasons for the failure of the state policies to stop Turkey's brain drain. Other reasons are related to the lack of freedom of speech, or generally to the economic and political conditions in the country.

4.4 Spatial Planning

The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization is the main agent responsible for urban planning. Along with the Ministry, the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) reports to the prime minister and develops social houses for lower and lower-middle income families.⁴¹ Last, but not least, the municipalities also provide urban planning services on the local level. Turkish urban transformation strategy is based on relogement (rehousing), which enables dwellers to transfer to a new settlement built for them by a public or private developer. The urban transformation law of 2012,⁴² anchored in the improvement of settlements and earthquake threat, has transformed public discourse whereby downtown city areas have become construction areas. The new strategy launched the resettlement of the poorer population (particularly in Istanbul) to the outskirts of the city. Although TOKİ is held responsible for social housing, generally TOKİ's services more often benefit the median-level income families and their households.

Reference to the needs and/or demands of young people regarding spatial policies is virtually nonexistent in public documents. Also young people are not part of the decision-making processes with regard to public spaces. Although Turkey is experiencing a massive re-urbanization process, the absence of young people in the development of spatial policies is not only negligence on the part of policy makers. Rather it is a reflection of their tendency to not consider public spaces as "commonalities" and shows how they do not try to include young people in the public spaces. In May and June of 2013, the Gezi Park protests became a symbol of young people's request to be part of the decision-making and policy-making processes in urban settings. Over the last two years, at least in Istanbul, civil society organizations and civil initiatives, formed mostly by young people, have organized meetings, campaigns and

³⁸ An English translation of the Law No. 6458 of 4 April 2013 is available in the website of the Turkish Ministry of Interior: http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf.

³⁹ For the opportunities provided by TÜBİTAK see: <http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/en/node/17263>.

⁴⁰ The Law No. 4691 of 26 June 2001 on Technology Development Zones and the Law No. 5746 of 28 February 2008 on Supporting Research and Development Activities. Apart from legislative regulations, there are research funds provided by TÜBİTAK to attract Turkish citizens living abroad. See <http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/tr/node/130>.

⁴¹ For the detailed information about the institution see: <http://www.toki.gov.tr/en>.

⁴² Law No. 6306 of 16 May 2012 on Restructuring of Areas under Risk of Natural Disasters.

protests about the major urban construction projects. The discourse and requests of young people are mainly based on the concept of “reclaiming the commons” which is in parallel with global urban movements.

Young people’s housing conditions represent another aspect of the urbanization/spatial planning discussions. Young people mostly live with their parents/families for economic and cultural reasons and regardless of their employment status (Konda 2014:74).⁴³ Consequently, the socio-economic status of their families is a determining factor about where young people live. Lower class youth establish their lives on the outskirts of the city with limited (mostly no) access and/or opportunities to cultural, sport and/or social activities. Twenty-five percent of young people cannot participate in a cultural, sport and/or cultural activity due to economic reasons or they cannot obtain permission from their family (Konda 2014:61-66). In spatial planning there is no consistent and coherent policy for young people to enable their access to and/or their usage of the city’s cultural activities (Gürsel and Öztürk 2011).⁴⁴

The opportunity to live alone occurs for young people when they get married or when they go to another city to study. For young couples, TOKİ has started a “Home Promotion” that provides low-payment and long-term credit for buying a house. Another “acceptable” exception of living in a separate house comes in the educational setting. Young people experience living in separate accommodations such as dormitories and/or student houses as a temporary setting for 4 years during the university education process.⁴⁵ The dormitories, aside from insufficient physical conditions, apply different regulations for young women and young men, particularly with regard to attendance and entry hours (Ezgin and Kurtaran 2014).⁴⁶ While young men can enter the dormitory until midnight and have no problem with attendance in the dormitory, young women are expected to enter 2-4 hours earlier (after this the doors of the dormitories are closed) and they are held responsible for their nightly attendance. If young women are not present nightly in the dormitory and/or miss the entry hours, the dormitory manager informs their family.

Since the number, capacity and physical conditions of the dormitories are not sufficient for every city, students prefer to rent houses collectively (mostly 2 to 4 persons). In most cities, house owners exploit student housing needs by over-renting properties. Although same-sex house sharing is common among students, in some cases young women and men share a house. In November 2013, the prime minister started a debate about shared houses and said that they can cause depravity (Sirin 2013). Soon after the prime minister’s commentary, city governors and police forces started applying pressure (without legal foundation) on young people using shared houses.

⁴³ Regardless of their employment status, 70.2 percent of young people live with their family.

⁴⁴ Access to and usage of cultural activities depend on the initiatives of the municipalities. While some municipalities provide cultural, sportive and/or social activities for young people, some have not considered any such organizations. On the other hand, there are youth centres functioning under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Unfortunately, the services and the attitude provided by the youth centres are not preferred by young people and also not “youth-friendly.” For the MYS Youth Centres see: <http://genclikmerkezi.gsb.gov.tr>.

⁴⁵ In Turkish, houses used by more than one university student are called “student houses.”

⁴⁶ TOG’s critical petition: <https://docs.google.com/folderview?usp=sharing&id=OB0hxcXiMSAAbTDh3eXEzWnpSYnc>; Istanbul Bilgi University Youth Studies Unit critical policy paper on gender discrimination in the dormitories, dated 2013: http://issuu.com/genclikcalismalari/docs/gcb_degerlendirme_notu_4_01.11.2013.

CONCLUSION

Discussions on young people in policy documents share two major points. On the one hand, young people are seen as the “future of the country” for economic reasons. Therefore young people are encouraged to reproduce (in order to increase the demographic capital of the country) or they are encouraged to gain skills for the development of the country. On the other hand, there is an acute concern for controlling young people in order to protect them from harmful habits, depravity and/or taking a “wrong turn.” Instead of considering young people as autonomous individuals and creating opportunities for self-actualization, current youth policies prefer to situate them in the family until they become “proper/wanted adults.” Since becoming an adult results in social inclusion, disabled young people, young women, LGBTI young individuals, young people from lower classes or different ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds experience a double disadvantage regarding social exclusion. Apart from general blindness, the ministries working on youth policies do not coordinate effectively with each other. Considering that social exclusion needs a holistic approach, disconnected policies fail in reaching their objectives. Also the policies do not provide for the needs of young people.

The Arab spring occurred almost simultaneously with the Turkish general elections in 2011. Both induced structural changes but these occurred for different reasons. Street protests like those of the Arab spring occurred two years later, in 2013, with the Gezi movement in Turkey. Young people showed their reactions to repressive and insufficient governmental policies during the Gezi protests. Thus, the protests could be considered part of a process against governmental policies that broke as a wave around the world (inspired not only by the Arab spring, but also by the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Hong Kong student movement, etc.), and may not be an effect exclusively synchronized with the Arab spring (Hardt 2012). Different from the Arab spring, Gezi did not end with a change of government and/or regime. It did however create an important resistance point.

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POWER2YOUTH is a research project aimed at offering a critical understanding of youth in the South East Mediterranean (SEM) region through a comprehensive interdisciplinary, multi-level and gender sensitive approach. By combining the economic, political and socio-cultural spheres and a macro (policy/institutional), meso (organizational) and micro (individual) level analysis, POWER2YOUTH explores the root causes and complex dynamics of the processes of youth exclusion and inclusion in the labour market and civic/political life, while investigating the potentially transformative effect of youth collective and individual agency. The project has a cross-national comparative design with the case studies of Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Turkey. POWER2YOUTH's participants are 13 research and academic institutions based in the EU member states, Norway, Switzerland and South East Mediterranean (SEM) countries. The project is mainly funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme.

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