

## The Experience of Youth Unemployment in Turkey

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### Introduction

Youth as a phase of life in its own right has emerged within the past century as a consequence of changes both in the economic sector and in the education system. With industrialization, growing numbers of workers have found employment leading to the prolongation of the 'youth period' due to an increase in the time required for professional training. Life is commonly thought of as an ordered sequence of developmental tasks; the failure to fulfil age-specific tasks is the main obstacle for making a transition to the next stage of life. Although mostly accepted as a demographic category, the definition of youth is problematic as their dependency relations remain unclear. Since young people are not exactly children they cannot be placed in the category of complete dependence. In the same way, they cannot be accepted as independent adults either. They hold a position between dependence and independence, between childhood and adulthood, between immaturity and maturity.

The transition to adulthood implies processes of initiation into two adult roles: family roles and work roles (Fend, 1994: 80). The survival of humankind is dependent upon both. Biological reproduction is tied to some kind of family role; physical survival is tied to economic subsistence through some kind of work<sup>2</sup> role. Industrialization and urbanization throughout the past three hundred years created paid work as a dominant form of economic transaction and, with these radical changes in the modern era, people's worth has been measured by the market value of their labour (Gallie, 2002). Thus, paid work is seen very much as a major stepping stone *into the* adult world (France, 1998:107). Therefore, paid work is the key means for young people to become an independent adult and being included within the wider society. Having an income allows young people to gain access to independence through leaving the family household and setting up their own home (Jones & Wallace, 1992). It also gives them opportunities to participate in adult forms of leisure and consumption. For these reasons, work is a major criterion of adulthood. In addition to physical survival, work or lack thereof, also affects consumption patterns. Consumption has become an integrating force in contemporary societies and may dramatically affect identity construction, another crucial aspect of the transition to adulthood. Finding a job, especially for young people, may be the only way for a person to be an 'individual', leaving his/her family, getting married and establishing a separate household: in short, becoming an independent adult. Without employment, the young person continues to lead a dependent life out of necessity (dependency may be on family, close community and/or the state).

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study, instrumental value of work is accepted, and it refers to the paid work Unpaid and voluntary work is irrelevant for the aim of this study.

On the other hand, the definition of unemployment is not easy or straightforward: meanings within and between countries – as well as over time – vary. At its most basic, unemployment can be defined as the condition of one who is able to work but unable to find paid employment. Nevertheless, the unemployed are not simply all those not in employment, because such a definition would encompass all those who are ill, retired and in full-time education. To be unemployed, people must at least be *available* for paid work and availability is not easy to define. People are officially considered to be unemployed if they work less than 1 hour paid employment each week, are actively looking for work and are able to start work within a set period of time. The official unemployment figures may give a misleading impression due to the presence of the hidden unemployed: people who have become discouraged and left the labour force. The level of disguised unemployment is also affected by people classed as employed, but who actually regard themselves as unemployed (i.e., would like to work more hours) as well as those engaged in unproductive work. Data sampling errors and people giving false information can also distort such estimates. Unemployment may be due to seasonal layoffs (e.g., in agricultural jobs), technological changes in industry (particularly by increased automation), racial discrimination, lack of adequate skills by the worker, or fluctuations in the economy. On the other hand, definitions are important, for the definition of unemployment determines the size of the official unemployment figures and this is clearly a politically sensitive issue. Thus, the ILO's (International Labour Organisation) definition is commonly used. According to this definition, to be classified as unemployed an individual has to satisfy three criteria: (i) not being in work during the reference week; (ii) actively searching for a job; and (iii) is ready to start work within 15 days. According to this definition, those who have found a job and are about to start working, are classified as unemployed. Youth unemployment, on the other hand, refers to the 15-24 year age group.

A number of studies (MacDonald 1997; Gallie & Paugam 2000; Bay & Blekesaune 2002; Hammer 2003) on the impact of unemployment indicate that the experience depends on such dimensions as state, family, labour market and their interrelations. How these structures affect the person concerned in specific and concrete terms, on the other hand, depend on individual characteristics. While the concept of unemployment has its place in the realm of economics and politics, the concept 'unemployed' is a singular and individual-based one corresponding to the agent. Disclosing the relationship between unemployment and the transformation of the economic or political structures, as well as understanding how the process of this transformation affects unemployment, requires a political perspective. However, understanding how the relationship between these things affects the unemployed requires a 'reading' over a specific individual. Thus, the link between individual and structure -between unemployment and unemployed- is that which is defined by the state. Thus, in trying to find possible answers and understandings of the experiences of unemployed youth, two different viewpoints are required: a policy perspective and a sociological perspective.

With the policy perspective, the structure of the state (institutional and regulatory framework) and the level of policy implementation concerning unemployment are duly

analyzed. Policy as a public regulation system can be defined as the protection of individuals and the maintenance of social cohesion through intervention (by legal and redistributive measures) in the economic, domestic and community spheres (Esping-Andersen 1990; Gallie 2001). The '*macro level*' comprises economic structure as well as such policy domains as labour market measures and regulations, education and training, and social insurance, assistance and provision. Of course, policy and legislation does not always guarantee adequate implementation. While policy could allow opportunities and freedoms in unemployment related issues, the actual procedures and barriers that people face could be very different, or indeed *vice versa*. Furthermore, the macro level is too abstract for understanding its effects on individual experiences. Thus, policy implementations are accepted as '*mezzo level*', or middle level: between macro-level structure and micro-level experience. Decision-makers of state institutions, employers' associations and trade unions are considered, for this study, the three active parties of working life who decide on issues related to work and employment. Realization of the policy can be understood by looking at what is really happening on unemployment issues at the macro and micro levels.

With the sociological perspective, the individual experience of unemployment is also analysed. People cope with unemployment in many different ways, and individual experience is heterogeneous. Coping is, to a large extent, related to gender, age, qualifications, one's financial situation, level of activity, and social networks. Furthermore, individuals are not isolated from their families - which are understood here to be the primary institution determining how young people experience unemployment. The experience of unemployment and the way in which an individual responds to such a situation depends to a large extent on the support offered by his or her society. Thus unemployment, more than mere individual context, should be understood in a social context. With a sociological perspective, therefore, family, close relatives, neighbours, friends, social support, income sources, networks, and values about work, paid work and unemployment are investigated at the '*micro level*'. For understanding different arrangements in coping with unemployment, and also to see regional differences, two provinces are selected for analysis: Ankara and Şanlıurfa. By including two provinces in the study, different opportunities, facilities, implementations and/or obstacles can be distinguished at the *mezzo level*, helping us to explain the different types of experiences.

This study has two main assumptions. The first assumption is that work and employment has profound effects at all ages, but the implications are particularly significant for young people. Youth unemployment is particularly problematic because the most important sign of the end of youth is only possible with paid work. Being unemployed is not only a question of being left outside of wage earning and the incapacity to take part in leisure or free time activities; it also means continuing in a dependent lifestyle. Being dependent and being adult simultaneously is difficult. The second assumption of this thesis is that a study which intends to understand experience has to be retrospective. Experience can be defined as an accumulation of knowledge, memory and/or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities. To this end, a group of young people who had been officially registered with the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) as 'unemployed' within the last quarter of 2003 was selected and they were approached six months after their registration

date. This duration (six months) was thus considered the unemployment experience of youth to be studied. Possible outcomes of this unemployment duration (still unemployed, securing a job, continuing a training scheme, returning to education etc.) and related mechanisms used to cope or end this experience were analyzed.

### Method of the Study

This chapter is based on a study that sought to find out how unemployment is experienced by young people, how it affects routine processes and how related mechanisms work during this process. In order to address these questions, methodological triangulation was used.

#### Organisation of the survey

Issues	Aim	Method and Technique
The State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contextual mapping of youth unemployment</li> <li>collecting qualitative data via interviews with the decision-makers of both provinces</li> <li>identifying the welfare regime of Turkey as it relates to unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentary Study</li> <li>Interview</li> <li>Model testing</li> </ul>
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How young people experience unemployment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative Research: Questionnaire</li> </ul>
The Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the role of family in unemployment and unemployed people's lives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative Method: In-depth Interview</li> </ul>

*The first tool, documentary study*, was the contextual mapping of youth unemployment making use of official statistics about education, employment/unemployment, demographic trends, and policy documents related to the subject. *The second tool, interviewing*, comprised collecting qualitative data via interviews with the decision-makers of both provinces. As the purpose was to study how youth unemployment is experienced, it was considered meaningful to interview decision-makers or those having some role in the decision-making processes regarding employment/unemployment policy in order to fully understand this dimension of the experience. *The third tool, model testing*, involved identifying the welfare regime of Turkey as it relates to unemployment. In this step I used a model which was developed by Gallie and Paugam<sup>3</sup> (2000): the European 'welfare regime type'.

*A questionnaire* was developed by reviewing earlier local, national and international surveys relating to the subject. Based on these materials, a questionnaire including open and closed-ended questions (82 total questions) was developed. The questionnaire was designed

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<sup>3</sup> Gallie&Paugam (2000) developed a research model related with the welfare regime type about unemployment. They tried to develop a typology of welfare regimes based on different protection systems for the unemployed. They selected and used three dimensions -*coverage, level of compensation and expenditure on active employment policies*- for naming the welfare regime of the country. By taking these three criteria, according to them, it is possible to distinguish at least four 'unemployment welfare regimes' in Europe: the sub-protective regime, the liberal/minimal regime, the employment centred regime, and the universalistic regime. Considering these three criteria, Turkey is a good representative of the sub-protective welfare regime.

to depict the unemployment experience of respondents under seven sub-headings. In considering the possible impact of the family on unemployment experiences, I used the *in-depth interview technique* for understanding the nature of the relationship between the family and the unemployed individual in the two cities.

The results in this study are obviously not representative of Turkey's unemployed youth as a whole on a national level, but are limited to the unemployed registered with ISKUR during the last three months of 2003 in Ankara and Şanlıurfa. It is only representative of registered youth unemployed in these two provinces and for defined periods.

### **Study Site**

It is generally accepted that unemployment affects different people in different ways depending on their economic and demographic conditions, sources of income and activity, and the values and expectations of their culture and / or close groups concerning work and employment. To make a comparative study I decided to choose two provinces in Turkey in which different opportunities for employment are available and, as a result, different profiles of unemployment. Spatial and regional locations in the West and East of Turkey can differ on the basis of:

- rates of immigration and emigration
- metropolitan cities versus small cities
- distribution of different employment sectors ( industry, services, and agriculture)
- location in the centre of the country versus location on the periphery

Therefore, I selected two provinces: one from the developed West and one from the less developed East. Ankara and Şanlıurfa were thus selected based on the State Planning Organisation's (DPT) *Socio-economic Development Index*<sup>4</sup>. In this index, Ankara is among the developed western provinces of Turkey. It is a metropolis that has experienced large-scale immigration and offers a variety of employment opportunities<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, in the east, Şanlıurfa has recently started to show some progress. It is, however, still considered an underdeveloped town in the index. Both of these provinces have a variety of employment opportunities, different health and education facilities, different opportunities in the public and private sectors and diverse labour market conditions. In sum, I selected these two cities in order to understand regional, economic and sectoral differences regarding youth unemployment.

### **Sample**

In this study, unemployed youth (aged 18-24 years) and their experiences in two cities in Turkey were analysed. To understand the experiences of unemployment, a group of young

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<sup>4</sup> While Ankara is included into the first level highly developed areas in the national development index, Şanlıurfa is classified under the fifth level of development (DPT, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Ankara receives population from other parts of the country. New settlers in Ankara are mostly from neighbouring provinces, mainly from Central Anatolian provinces.

people, who had registered to the Turkish Employment Agency as ‘unemployed’ during the last quarter of 2003, was selected as a sample. They were approached six months after this registration. The survey pool consists of persons resident in the central districts of Ankara and Şanlıurfa, who officially registered as unemployed to İŞKUR within the last quarter of 2003. The number of such persons is 2,297 in Ankara and 152 in Şanlıurfa. Then the number of persons to be covered as a sample from each of these sub-pools was calculated through the optimum sample size formula and 316 persons from Ankara and 109 from Şanlıurfa were actually covered. Stratified random sampling was the method used in selecting persons. Relevant variables of stratification were the administrative district, gender, the last school finished and age in Ankara; and gender, the last school finished and age in Şanlıurfa. The number of persons who could not be reached was 72 in Ankara and 24 in Şanlıurfa. These were for the following reasons: wrong address statement, moving to another city and being in military service. Eventually questionnaires were given through face-to-face interviews to a total of 329 persons, 244 in Ankara and 85 in Şanlıurfa. Thus, the sample access rate was 75.3% for Ankara and 78.0% for Şanlıurfa.

The state (welfare state provisions) and family are also important in this phase. The aim, therefore was to ascertain the perceptions, opinions, projects and future expectations of those holding posts in and exercising state power as well as workers’ and employers’ organizations as actors in the labour market. To this end, interviews with 21 people occupying decision-making positions in Ankara and Şanlıurfa were conducted. The nature of the family also has an effect on the experience of unemployment. I investigated, in addition, the role of the family in unemployment and unemployed people's lives. In-depth interviews with 30 families were conducted to fulfil this objective (15 families in Ankara, 15 families in Şanlıurfa)<sup>6</sup>. The basic idea here is to see whether it has any effect on unemployment experience. Information then follows about the daily subsistence of the family concerned, its ‘breadwinners’ and ownership (house, land, car, etc.). This gives some idea about economic status. This is followed by what it means to have a job or to be unemployed and how they cope with negative situations in general. How unemployment affects family relations and the relations between the unemployed person and the rest of the family is the next heading. Finally, the interviews were completed by soliciting the opinions of interviewees on unemployment and future prospects<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> In identifying families to be interviewed, the following question was added at the end of the questionnaire designed for unemployed young persons: “Would you accept a more detailed interview with your family members at a time convenient for you?” Telephone numbers of those who responded positively were taken. Then a list of young persons accepting this interview was taken respectively in Şanlıurfa and Ankara.

<sup>7</sup> There were some difficulties faced during the planning and conduct of interviews. These include some vague addresses hard to find and language. But the most difficult of all was to give satisfactory responses to some expectations of the families. The most frequent questions forwarded both during telephone calls and interviews were “How did you find us?” and “Will this interview be of any benefit to us or our child for finding a job?” Families were informed about how we found them since it was important in terms of research ethics. They were told this research is an academic thesis on youth unemployment; that the İŞKUR has been visited and information about unemployed youth was obtained from this agency. In spite of all efforts for strictness and clarity, it was not possible to keep families and young persons away from some expectations. This is quite natural since most of them had not received any feedback from the agency even after 7 months of registration. Mention of the name of the agency hence gave rise to some expectations.

## Findings

The first finding of this study is that the state support to unemployed young persons in Turkey is too limited to conduct a specific analysis. The ways in which young people experience unemployment has direct bearings on family life in Turkey. Many young unemployed people are not entitled to unemployment insurance. Furthermore, there is no systematic and established assistance/service scheme for unemployed youth and available assistance is family-focused. Also, limited availability of jobs as well as their low wage and incidental character further add to the importance of family and family solidarity in Turkey. The welfare state and the implementation<sup>8</sup> of its benefits are very limited for the young unemployed. Individuals and their families have to take more responsibility for coping with unemployment. Under these conditions the family and its capacity (including social, economic, and cultural capital) become crucial. The substituting role of family in Turkey heavily affects the behaviours and life decisions of young people and they generally live with their families<sup>9</sup>. Young women leave their homes mostly to get married or attend university. For young males these occasions may include military service or finding jobs elsewhere. Most families consider that that a young person should get married at a certain age even if he or she has no job. This is to protect young people from developing bad habits and to help, regulate and control them in their passage to adulthood. Families provide support in such cases and married couples start living with the family of one of the spouses. Married couples leave when circumstances allow. Therefore, standard indicators of adulthood - including 'parting with family', 'having job' or 'getting married' - may not point to the state of adulthood in Turkey. Young people in possession of jobs and living with their parents acquire rights of adulthood, but delegate responsibilities to their elders. Or it may be the case that they undertake responsibilities but do not exercise corresponding rights.

The second finding of the study is that unemployed youth are almost totally dependent on their families. Family income is the most important factor determining the economic, social and psychological well-being of unemployed youth. Families give significant support to their young members while they are unemployed. Dependence of young people on their families during unemployment includes material/economic, social and moral dimensions. Financial dependence is the key dependence during the experience of unemployment. It is, however, not experienced in isolation from other types of dependence. In all conditions, dependence on families affects young people in many ways. In particular economic dependence creates other types of dependence. Full dependence on family has some

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to recall that the basic characteristics of sub-protective welfare regime is a system that offers the unemployed less than a minimum level of protection needed for subsistence. Few of the unemployed receive benefits, and when they do the amount is low. Active employment policies are virtually non-existent. In this type of regime it could be expected that the unemployed will experience severe financial difficulty and live under the poverty threshold. The probability of long-term unemployment is also high, even though this is also likely to be conditioned by other factors such as the level and patterns of economic development (Gallie & Paugam, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> We see some different living arrangements as well in Turkey: living alone, living with cohabittees and/or home mates. But all these kinds of arrangements need family support or paid work.

important consequences which are emerging in this period, but results will depend on family unity, capacity and income level.

The third finding of the study is that the unemployment experience of youth is heterogeneous. The following factors are influential in the experience of unemployment: gender, education status, marital status, health status, presence or absence of father, income level of the father, number of dependent family members, and province of residence.

The fourth finding is that family solidarity is not taken for granted. If the family fails or does not have the resources to provide for the maintenance of all its members, the young people find themselves in a vulnerable situation. Types of vulnerability depend on gender: if the family has economic difficulties, females become part of those difficulties which isolate them in the home. Their expectations thus decrease or, indeed, are lost altogether. The more disadvantaged males are ready to accept whatever job they are offered within the informal and underground economies. In some circumstances minors contribute to the family income through seeking employment.

The fifth finding is that dependence on families decreases the mobility of youth. Dependence on families affects young people in many fields. These include: their potential, initiation and freedom to take part in activities; the capacity to move to other places for work; their ability to get married, form stable relationships and have children; opportunity to return to education; and secure jobs in the formal sector.

The sixth finding is that youth unemployment reduces family resources. Significant problems arise, particularly if unemployment on the part of a young member of the family, makes the family poorer or if the family of the unemployed young member is already poor. In this vulnerable situation poor families may begin to start blaming others (relatives, neighbours, and the state) when ties with immediate environments and relatives are weak or non-existent. In such cases families suffer not only from the difficulties of unemployment alone but also from poor access to health and education services.

The seventh finding is that family solidarity helps young people to cope with psychological distress better. Families try to keep their members together and protect psychological integrity through dealing with the unemployment problem as completely exogenous to family itself; maintaining affection and care for its unemployed members. Young members who cannot find sufficient material or economic support from their families 'know' that this is because there is not much to share within the family. Without attaching any blame to their children for the condition of unemployment, parents try to support them as far as is possible. This approach by parents is perceived positively by sons and daughters and they, accordingly, behave in a manner not to place them in a difficult position financially or emotionally. It is this mutual warmth and understanding that insulate unemployed young people from marginalisation, engagement in extreme political activities and crime. This experience also has the effect of minimising young people's personal demands and spending.

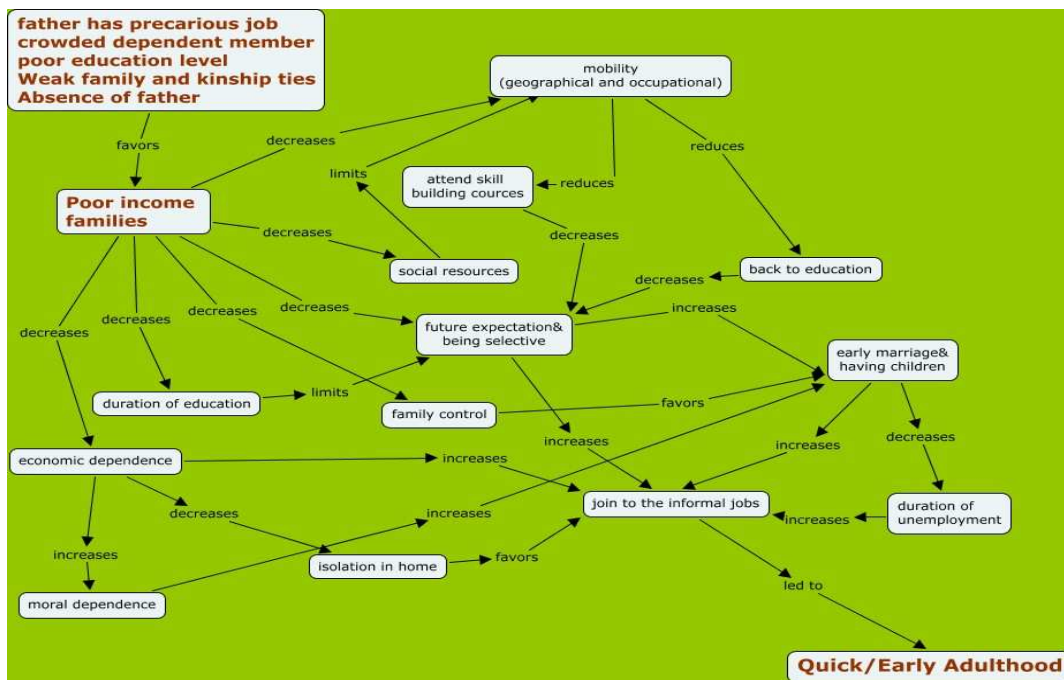


The eighth finding, quite simply, is that youth unemployment decreases the possibility of being adult in a full and meaningful sense. Extended dependence on family is a serious obstacle for being an individual. As financial security is provided by the family, young people learn to become good family members instead of good citizens who feel wider responsibilities for the collective well-being of society as whole. Since young people are dependent on their families they tend to comply with family norms. When the young people themselves later establish families, these norms tend to be reproduced. Such social and a cultural reproduction can form vicious cycles from which it is difficult to break free. Uncertainty, loss of earnings, and the likelihood of increased dependency upon parental support are accompanied by the actual physical presence of the young person at home. Thus, under this situation, finding tools and resources for successful coping are centred on educational attainment. Household composition, unemployment duration and the material conditions of the family are also very important factors in the future of unemployed young people.

### **Discussion**

It is true that intergenerational solidarity makes it possible for most families to face the economic difficulties resulting from the long time that young people have to wait before entering the labour market. However, if family and/or primary solidarity channels do not have adequate resources for their dependent members, what is the outcome for unemployed youth? There are two important results of this dependence: early/quick adulthood and postponed adulthood.

*Early/quick adulthood* can be summarised in the following terms. A large family affects all family members and reduces the chances of longer education for children. Since the father's income is the only source of support, family members get less and less in material terms as the size of the family gets larger. A low level of family income, a high number of dependent family members and a low level of education by the parents negatively affect the life chances of young people. Thus, generational 'transfer' of education, employment and income (from elders to young family members) can be very limited. This has the effect of shortening the period of education on the one hand and forcing young family members to take any job in the informal sector on the other.



Young people from poorer families do not have much chance of extending their period of unemployment, especially when their families are too crowded and need their wages from work. In this kind of family, young people tend to have backgrounds of low educational attainment (being primary or secondary school graduates) and low job expectations. Their chances of finding decent employment in the labour market are very limited. Since the family fails, or does not have the resources to provide for the maintenance of all its members, the young people find themselves in a highly vulnerable situation. Consequently, they are forced to take any job offered. Thus they are faster in obtaining jobs because their expectations are so limited. The quality of the job held does not matter much for them, and early entry into the labour market also brings them an early marriage and early parenthood. On the whole, the unemployment spells of young people with low educational levels of attainment are shorter but more frequent. Therefore unemployment breeds unemployment. As a result, *early/quick adulthood* is seen as the most important consequence for the young members of poor families. Inter-generational transmission of social and cultural capital is a mechanism for social reproduction, including the reproduction of social inequality from one generation to the next. Thus the most common result of early/quick adulthood is *'familization of poverty'*. Considering the situation of poor families, family solidarity can not be taken for granted for all segments of society in Turkey.

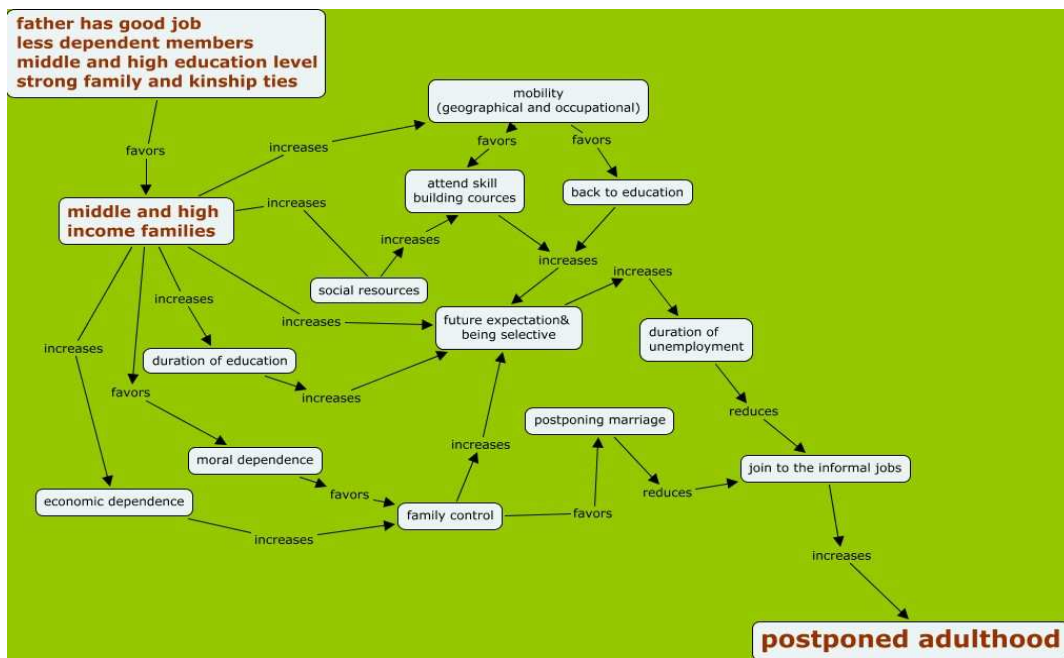
*'Late/postponed adulthood'* can be described as follows. If families are relatively well off, young people may have chances of extending the period of their unemployment and be more selective about the jobs for which they apply and accept. Depending on their families' income level, they may consider returning to education or attending skill building/vocational courses (foreign language, computer, driving, etc.) which extend their

period of unemployment. Under these conditions, young people have to postpone their adulthood. This can involve the postponement of marriage/stable relationships, leaving home, other key life decisions and – even - developing independent personalities. When they postpone their adulthood in such ways, they might learn their responsibilities but not their rights. Therefore, postponing adulthood actually means postponing the exercise of citizenship rights. Being aware of the fact that their alternatives are quite limited, young people tend to make rational choices in order to try to maintain their good relations with family elders. At this point one can clearly observe a switch to an understanding of ‘my State is my father’. The key coping strategy is thus to listen to what their families say, act accordingly and even get married if they ask so to do. The influence of parents on young individuals is far beyond supporting and advising them. Moreover, young people are generally defined as ‘learner citizens’ or ‘citizens in the making’. Consequently, if young people depend heavily on their family, they learn how to be good member of their family instead of becoming fully-fledged and active citizen (or member of society). What is described here could well be a turning point where loyalty to the state is replaced by loyalty to the family.

It is obvious that support from parents – economic, social, and moral – also exerts a high degree of social control over young people. When the family carries out all kinds of responsibilities in relation to its unemployed members, or when it is the only unit to give support to unemployed youth, this family situation can be defined as a ‘golden prison’ (Sgritta, G. B., 2001) or iron cage: a place that is both ‘*prison and home*’<sup>10</sup>. This is especially true for highly-educated young females. Family is ‘a prison’ because, like it or not, there are no other possibilities for escaping from those four walls; it is a golden-home because, in spite of this, the young unemployed receive protection and care. Uncertainty, absence of earnings and the likelihood of increased dependency upon parental support are accompanied by the compulsory physical presence of the young people at home (especially in the case of females). Under these circumstances, tools and resources for successful coping are centred only on educational attainment; and household composition, unemployment duration and material conditions are very important issues for the future plans of unemployed young people.

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<sup>10</sup> Sennett used this analogy referring to Weber in his last book when discussing state socialism. “The secret of militarized capitalism lay in time –time structured so that people formed a life narrative and social relations within the institutions. The price individuals paid for organized time could be freedom or individuality; the iron cage was both prison and home” (2006: 180).



There are a variety of ways in which young people can respond to the pressures and difficulties of situation: oversleeping; returning to education; attending skill-building courses; doing intermittent jobs; accepting any employment in the informal sector; getting married and having children; job-seeking; minimising personal demands and expenditure; lowering expectations of the future; maintaining good relationship with family; and becoming politically engaged. Young members who cannot find sufficient material or economic support from their families 'know' that this is because there is not much to share within the family. Low family income means, for many young people, exclusion from social and economic life as well as from wider consumption patterns and mobility. However, young people believe that the problem of unemployment can be solved mainly through the interventions of the state. As they tend to explain present unemployment as a result of factors 'exogenous' to themselves, the level of agreement with such statements related to 'self confidence' and 'feeling of exclusion from society' remains low. All these coping strategies help young people to protect their psychological health better. Neither production (absence of work) nor consumption (due to limited family income) exist in their lives to help construct individual identities. This is a huge obstacle in becoming an independent adult.

The independence of youth depends on the acquisition of a good quality of job, family unity and a supportive culture. Without a good/decent job, the balance between dependence and independence is still a problem. Widespread youth unemployment enable employers to further extend working hours, shorten weekly days off, make employees work on special holidays, pay lower wages and avoid insurance. Both young people and their families are heavily affected by this situation. It is important in two respects: increasing dependency on family resources; and increasing expectation from the state. Low quality and

low paid jobs make it impossible for youth to separate themselves completely from parents through the establishment of a new home. Due to the limited availability of jobs in the labour market and the attitude of employers, families tend to expect more from the state and want it to help support them. Their first criterion for a 'good job' is job security with social insurance. Feeling secure is a critically important perception of the value of any given job. It is because of this that both families and young people regard 'public sector jobs' as the best jobs that can be found. Even if these jobs do not pay much, they are still preferred for the security and certainty they entail. Observing this situation, families' identification of 'good jobs' with public sector employment is further consolidated by their expectations from the state.

The study also proved that the experience of unemployment by youth is not a single topic. Gender, type and level of education, type of skill and occupation, marital status, health status, presence or absence of the father, income level of the family, number of dependent family members, and place of residence (province) all influence the individual experience. For instance, the unemployment of disabled young persons emerges as an issue that requires a quite different approach than those adopted when addressing the problem of youth unemployment in general. The attitude can be summed up in the statement: "a healthy young person can do any job, but disabled ones have no such chance". The government should take into greater consideration that not all job-seekers are homogenous. As such, they need to develop different policies concerning the different profiles and characteristics of youth. They should also recognize that the problem is not merely unemployment; it is entangled with many different dimensions of Turkish society. For example, the regional differences should be taken into account to raise the efficiency of planned policies. In sum, unemployment seems to be a dynamic situation and this is coped with in different ways by different young people in different situations. It will depend upon the resources delivered through the state, labour market and family. The particular orientation of the individual and her / his family will also be crucial factors.

A discussion of the responsibilities on young people to find jobs - and not remain unemployed - is also important here. Young people are generally classified as those who have a certain level of education and others who don't. Recommendations would differ with respect to the respective educational statuses of young people. Given the scarcity of public funds in general and the need to prioritise targeted measures, educated young people should take more initiative and develop special projects without expecting so much from their families or the state. Conversely, there are not many options available to uneducated young people. Such persons should be pointed towards subsidised courses that will help them to develop skills. *"Uneducated people must not behave too selectively when it comes to jobs and work hard to cover their gap. First of all they should not 'choose' jobs; I mean they should be ready to do any job"*, says the General-Director of İŞKUR. Decision-makers in Turkey consider "any job is better than no job". *'Welfare-to-work'* rhetoric may reinforce the role of 'the welfare state as work enforcer' without considering properly the type of work being enforced, or its social or individual effects<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the *World Employment Report of ILO* during 2004-2005, there are 550 million people who work but earn less than US\$ 1 a day. This 'working poor' represent 20% of total world employment. In spite of the

Paid work and its expected (enabling) impact on independence, adulthood and citizenship status is only possible with a *'decent job'*. While it is clearly the case that employment is central to poverty reduction, it is 'decent and productive' employment that matters, not any employment alone. Any job is not better than no job, particularly in segmented labour markets where often the quality of the first job determines the subsequent working lives of individuals. With poor quality jobs, young people will also continue to be dependent on their families for extended periods; their dependence-independence situation remaining blurred despite all their hard work. Another consequence is related to the transmission of poverty to their newly formed families; a concept that can be described as the *'familization of poverty'*. Those who have limited education and poor families are the most vulnerable group trapped in a vicious circle. Thus, considering the future, it makes sense to give the priority to this group. Target measures need to be developed in order to assist them in their transition from poor and precarious employment into decent jobs.

Recently, there has been a proliferation in 'enterprise discourse' in the sphere of training, mainly targeted at the unemployed, but also at school leavers. This discourse is located somewhere between utilitarianism and a commitment to personal development. This is partly a response to the growing public distrust about vocational and tertiary education as it has failed to produce skilled workers to meet ever-changing workplace demands. The *European Employment Strategy* along with national and international institutions has presented 'entrepreneurship' as a way to combat youth unemployment. This study tried to understand the feasibility of this measure in the research group and the result shows that it is not a realistic solution as far as most of them would be concerned. Entrepreneurship is closely associated with the economic, cultural and symbolic 'capital' held by young people. More specifically, it is closely associated with such factors as access to starting capital, 'learning by observing' in an environment where entrepreneurial culture exists and presence of entrepreneurs within the family and immediate environment. That means, being a successful entrepreneur is not easy; it requires young people to know and follow changes occurring in local, national and even international markets. Decision-maker interviews emphasised that *"there are many persons starting various initiatives, but many of them fail within a year due to many reasons"*. Therefore, if 'becoming an entrepreneur' is forced upon young people by the lack of real alternatives and without a properly supportive environment, this strategy is doomed to failure.

Another important issue that came to light in the study is related to the problems of the education system in Turkey. The consensual view is that the problems of the whole education system are one of the most important reasons for high youth unemployment. This criticism is valid at all levels (primary, secondary and higher) and types of education (general, vocational-technical). A poorly planned and inadequately delivered system of education is widely regarded as one of the underlying causes of unemployment. The system

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record levels of global unemployment, the reality for most of the world's poor is that they must work -often for long hours, in poor working conditions and without basic rights and representation- in jobs that are not productive enough to enable them to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

of education, as well as the curricula, is not planned with due consideration given to the needs of the labour market. Consequently, it does not produce the required profiles of workers and professionals who can initiate, analyse and maximise available opportunities in modern labour markets. Another point raised in the context of education is the distribution of students to general and vocational high schools. Three aspects of the educational career seem to be relevant to a person's position in the labour market: the level of education, the level of specialization, and the diploma obtained. Continuing training (including lifelong learning) is also frequently mentioned as a solution to unemployment, but not well-established yet for those who most need this training. It is generally believed that longer education (vocational or university) will lead to better job opportunities. Young people with intermediate vocational training, higher general secondary education, or a pre-university education had the next best rates, followed by young people with higher vocational training. The position of university students, however, get relatively worse in the labour market; a phenomenon that is fairly new.

What occupations have disappeared or are bound to disappear in the foreseeable future? Which are the newly emerging occupations? How many people are needed for any specific occupation or economic sector? What should be the qualifications and standards sought in these new professions? These questions have yet to be addressed adequately. It is essential that these questions are answered as well as possible if the relationship between education and the needs of the labour market is to be improved. İŞKUR has responsibility for undertaking these labour market analyses and developing appropriate measures accordingly. In fairness, though, its staff and resources are very limited. In fact, the level of its scarce human resources is by no means comparable with any public employment service in the developed world. It cannot, therefore, fulfil its role properly. Without performing these essential tasks and taking effective measures, merely declaring that 'education is so important for finding a job' represents inadequate and simplistic advice in these complex times. It can also have an undermining effect on young people's lives. The outcome could simply be a waste of human resources. Given that the most important resource for sustainable economic and social development is its people, this represents the waste of the country's most precious natural assets. One young person in the survey group defined her situation in the following sentence: *"It is as bad as not harvesting your products from your fields in spite of your long education"*.

Today the numbers of workless individuals are increasing all over the world. At the same time the regulatory functions of the state in respect of both the economy the labour market is in decline. These kinds of controls are also no longer accepted because of the perceived 'dependence culture' created by welfare institutions. It is now stated quite openly that the goal of the welfare state has shifted from protection to increasing the burden of responsibility on individual citizens. Under these conditions the family and its welfare role have become very important; not only in Turkey, but in many parts of the world. The memory of the 'old times' prior to the advent of the modern welfare state still lingers. In this era the family and community-based social organizations – such as religious institutions - were the responsible agents relied upon to sustain welfare during the hard times experienced by individuals. The new politics and new economics of the present era invite

people to recall this shared past. The old forms of welfare – especially the family – are once again invoked as the main sources for sustaining the future welfare of citizens. This invitation to return to the past in these new times must also recognise the potentially to negative effects of the individual, family and society at large.

Young people are at the crossroads of the process of social reproduction. When social structures have weakened, it is felt most acutely by young people: it is they who become the most vulnerable and dependent. Young people's sense of collective responsibility towards their society is very important and development of this civic sense is needed for social peace. My study shows that gender, education, occupation, skill, social class, and location influence the chances of being unemployed. Such factors also mediate the way in which unemployment is experienced differentially. All relevant dimensions of policy must therefore be considered by the responsible authorities in order to ensure the healthy social reproduction of a good society. If young people become fully dependent upon their families, then they will obey only the rules of that specific family and will go on reproduce these patterns and values in when they eventually establish their own families. Considering the rich diversity of society, this could be a serious obstacle for the (re)production of common collective social values. As a result, young people's natural loyalties to their families may even more decisively in this direction and at the expense of any residual sense of social solidarity with the state. This, in turn, may mark a drift away from a wider sense of social responsibility to society as a whole.

'Becoming' a citizen has been taken up as a useful concept when talking about young people's membership of adult society. It offers a more useful framework than adulthood for understanding the end product of youth. Full citizenship yields three types of rights: civil, political and social. The social rights include, among other things, minimum standards of financial security that should enable all citizens to realise their political and civil rights. Therefore paid work and/or sources of income are paramount in young people's transition towards citizenship. Young people's entitlement to full citizenship must involve an actual capacity to exercise those rights. The relationship between citizenship and paid work is one that must be revisited and reviewed closely by the state. The future wellbeing of both young people and the state depends up the strengthening of that critical relationship.

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