“THE *GEZİ* GENERATION”: ANALYZING SOCIAL FORMATION OF A GENERATION THROUGH ITS COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

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ABSTRACT

"THE *GEZİ* GENERATION": ANALYZING SOCIAL FORMATION OF A GENERATION THROUGH ITS COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

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This dissertation explores the formation of a generation, namely "the Gezi Generation" in Turkey through generation theory of Karl Mannheim's and theories of collective memory. By adopting these theoretical perspectives and depending on qualitative field study, the study argues that a generation is not merely a biological age group or birth cohort but a dynamic social formation which evolves from "location" to "actuality" through shared mnemonic practices. While doing this, the study builds upon a tripartite analytical strategy that orchestrates structural, interpretive and critical perspectives to analyze generational formation. At the structural pillar, the study establishes socio-historical ground by employing purposeful sampling to map the contingent historical exposure of the generation by specifically focusing on university students who experienced their "fresh contact" in early 2010s. At the interpretive pillar, the study utilizes collective memory theories as hermeneutic tool to decode recollections regarding early 2010s at both the analytical levels of "generational location" and "generational actuality". At the critical pillar, the study positions the findings through a critical lens by arguing how the collective feelings of "loss" and "in-betweenness" are shaped by the social

constraints. The thesis states that the Gezi Generation is not a monolithic entity defined solely by political engagement, but a complex social formation characterized by specific collective memories that distinguish it from the ‘68 and ‘78 generations in Turkey. By introducing two original concepts “remembered conjuncture” and “mnemonic commons”, this research updates Mannhemian theory of generations and contributes to sociological understanding of generational formations in contemporary Turkey.

Key Words: The Gezi generation, Karl Mannheim, social formation, collective memory, generation

ÖZ

"GEZİ KUŞAĞI": KOLEKTİF BELLEK PERSPEKTİFİNDEN BİR KUŞAĞIN TOPLUMSAL OLUŞUMU

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Bu tez, Türkiye'de "Gezi Kuşağı" olarak adlandırılan toplumsal oluşumu, Karl Mannheim'ın kuşak sosyolojisi ve kolektif bellek teorileri ışığında incelemektedir. Niteliksel bir saha araştırmasına dayanan çalışma, sosyolojik anlamda, bir kuşağın yalnızca biyolojik bir yaş grubu veya doğum kohortu değil, paylaşılan anımsama pratikleri (mnemonic practices) aracılığıyla "konum"dan (location) "gerçekliğe" (actuality) evrilen dinamik bir toplumsal oluşum (social formation) olduğunu savunmaktadır. Çalışma, kuşak oluşumunu analiz etmek amacıyla yapısal, yorumlayıcı ve eleştirel boyutları bütünleştiren özgün bir üçlü analitik strateji üzerine kurgulanmıştır. Yapısal boyutta çalışma, özellikle 2010'lu yılların başında "taze temas"larını (fresh contact) yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerine odaklanarak, kuşağın rastlantısal tarihsel maruziyetini haritalandırmak için amaçlı örneklem (purposeful sampling) yöntemiyle nesnel bir sosyo-tarihsel zemin oluşturmaktadır. Yorumlayıcı boyutta ise çalışma, bellek anlatılarını "kuşak konumu" (generational location) ile "kuşak gerçekliği" (generational actuality) arasındaki analitik geçişleri deşifre eden hermenötik bir araç olarak kullanmaktadır. Çalışmanın eleştirel boyutu ise, "kayıp" ve "arafta/arada kalmışlık" duygularının toplumsal ve siyasal sınırlamalar tarafından

nasıl şekillendirildiğini tartışarak bulguları kuramsal bir çerçeveye oturtmaktadır. Tez, Gezi Kuşağı'nın yalnızca siyasi katılımla tanımlanan monolitik bir yapı olmadığını; aksine Türkiye'deki '68 ve '78 kuşaklarından farklılaşan özgün kolektif bellek örüntüleriyle karakterize edilen karmaşık bir oluşum olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu araştırma, "hatırlanan konjonktür" (remembered conjuncture) ve "anımsama müşterekleri" (mnemonic commons) gibi özgün kavramları literatüre kazandırarak Mannheim'ın kuşak teorisini güncellemekte ve çağdaş Türkiye'deki kuşak oluşumlarının sosyolojik kavrayışına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gezi kuşağı, Karl Mannheim, toplumsal oluşum, kolektif bellek, kuşak

Dedicated to the young people of this country, of whom much is expected but for whom little is provided, and yet who continue to build the future in every chapter of our age…

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Finally, an important aspect of generational phenomena has been addressed by historian Hans Jeager as "Anybody born only a decade earlier or later might have become a completely different person as far as his own education and sphere of action are concerned."

Similarly, Sarp Palaur (a.k.a. Şanışer), a millennial musician and song writer says:

Some of us are crazy about magnificence
Some about ambition
Some about power.
But only being born and dying is for sure.
The rest is a small possibility.

(Kimimiz ihtişam,
Kimimiz ihtiras,
Kimimiz iktidar delisi.
Oysa yalnızca doğmak ve ölmek gerçekmiş,
Küçük bir ihtimal gerisi.)

Coming out from the complete chaos of a "small possibility" from "the rest", I was able to finish this work. I was lucky, but there are a lot of precarious PhDs out there who are not as lucky as me. Our story could have been written in a very different way...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APC	Age-Period-Cohort Model
DTCF	Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi
EMO	Elektrik Mühendisleri Odası
METU	Middle East Technical University
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
STK	Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu
TMMOB	Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background: Ambivalent Discourse on "the Gezi generation"

Is there such a generation called "the Gezi generation"? This question has been frequently debated in both public and scholarly domains. Even long after the protests burst out, in the newspapers and academic articles, by looking at the high percentage of young participants and newly emerged ways for protesting, numerous intellectuals (columnist, artists, politicians, scholars and public figures) from different political affiliations (but overwhelming majority of which are from the older generations) have argued whether they were standing in front of a new form of political agency namely "the Gezi generation", perpetuated by young people back then (Fırat et al., 2017, p. 156)[1].

The ways of protesting, the created discourse, the tone and characteristics of the slogans were remarkably unique so as to mark a break from the ways of doing politics before 1980. While some were plotting a continuity line from democratic movements before 1980 and stating that "the youth" has found its own voice in line with history of rights struggle in Turkey with an unconcealable excitement, the others were rather suspicious that such continuity line could even be plotted with nearly an angry tone. This ambivalent body of discourse on "the Gezi generation" became evident in 2013 after the protests but was not confined to a single period, instead, it created a discursive field that gradually expanded that continued to the date. The "birth" of this discourse can be traced in the expressions to describe young people.

[1] It should be noted that while compiling the excerpts included in this section, I have drawn substantially the articles listed in the footnote on page 156 of article of Derya Fırat et al. in the volume *Devrimci Bir Pusula: Gezi* (2017).

In his column, Ahmet Ergenç states that:

> A generation that had been stuck in an atomized, cynical existence with no grand, collective narratives suddenly found itself becoming part of a "grand narrative", a shared history, with Gezi. In fact, the situation shifted from "it is your story that is being told" to "it is your story that is being lived". The notion of "story" is particularly significant here, for it was through this very story that a generation moved from being "middle children of history" to occupying a position at its very center. The sense of "depression" associated with existing as anonymous figures within a historically "eventless" period was replaced by a far more euphoric state produced by the feeling of becoming part of history. Documenting and representing this transition are both highly consequential and exceptionally challenging for literature.[2] (Ergenç, 2018, author's trans.)

In this account, the youth of that time have firstly viewed as "atomized", "cynical", "storyless", "middle children of the history" who were then "suddenly" transformed into a political agent after the protests. While this sudden *ex nihilo* transformation is not explained, there is also an implication that they "proved" themselves to the rest of the society, through the high volume of voice raised during the protests. Here, youth is burdened with the weight of both remaining bearers of history and agents of social change as per the observed shift from passivity to collective participation which is said to result from depression to euphoria.

Another intellectual, Ferhan Şensoy, in an interview with Volkan Mantu in Radikal newspaper, states that:

> Today's youth in Gezi Park are the generation of the 1990s, that we could more or less say. There is a certain eruption or surge characteristic of the '90s generation. When educating subsequent generations, care and attention should be exercised, and I am sure it is.[3] (Mantu, 2013, author's trans.)

[2] Büyük, kolektif hikâyelere sahip olmayan, atomize, sinik bir varoluşa saplanıp kalmış bir kuşak Gezi ile birlikte aniden bir 'büyük hikâye'nin, ortak bir tarihin parçası oldu. Aslında olay, 'Anlatılan senin hikâyendir'den 'Yaşanan senin hikâyendir'e dönüştü. Bu hikâye meselesi çok kritik çünkü bu hikâye sayesinde bir kuşak 'tarihin ortanca çocukları' olmaktan çıkıp, tarihin orta yerine oturdu: tarihte 'vakasız' bir zaman diliminin anonim figürleri olmanın verdiği 'depresyon' hâli, yerini tarihin parçası olmanın verdiği çok daha öforik bir hâle bıraktı. İşte, bu geçişi kaydedebilmek, edebiyat için hem çok önemli hem de çok zor bir iş.

[3] Bugün Gezi Parkı'ndaki gençlik aşağı yukarı 90'lar kuşağı. 90'lar kuşağında böyle bir patlama var. Arkadan gelen kuşakları yetiştirirken siz de ihtimam gösteriniz. Gösteriyorsunuzdur da eminim.

In the same interview elsewhere Şensoy continues as:

> In a way, this generation, forty years later, can be seen as an extension of the '68 generation. There is a remarkable awakening among the youth, and I am confident that they will achieve significant things.[4] (Mantu, 2013, author's trans.)

Şensoy plots a generational continuity between '68 generation with the young people in Gezi by highlighting not only ideological inheritance but also shared capacities for critical awareness, collective action and social engagement. This continuity is expressed through a normative framing of historical consciousness, "awakening".

Commenting on the popular uses of the term generation as GenX, GenY, GenZ; Evrim Kuran states that[5]:

> Within the cyclical structure of generational systems, one of the four generations can just be considered truly apolitical, as it has been systematically depoliticized. Contrary to common belief, this is not the Y generation. The most apolitical generation is arguably GenX, born between 1965 and 1979, whose parents, having themselves paid the heaviest costs of political engagement, sent them off to school to avoid involvement in political events. Most did not engage as students, nor did they later in life. Regarding Gezi, I do not believe we can speak of a distinct "Gezi generation." According to various studies on participant profiles in the civil disobedience movement that took place in 80 out of Turkey's 81 provinces, 70%of the participants were members of the GenY. These young people often invited parents or other older relatives to participate actively and they mostly succeeded.[6] (Çavdar, 2018, author's trans.)

[4] Bir nevi bu kuşak 40 sene sonra 68 kuşağının uzantısı durumundadır. Gençlerde çok güzel bir uyanış var ve eminim çok da güzel şeyler başaracaklardır.

[5] It is also worth highlighting that the question directed here includes a discourse on the Gezi generation: "Until Gezi, it was often claimed that those born after the 1990s were apolitical. Then Gezi emerged, and it became apparent that this generation was not apolitical but understood the politics differently. What would you say about this generation? Can we talk about a 'Gezi generation'? Or was Gezi able to create an intergenerational political ground?". As can be seen, the question itself just revolves around discussion whether young people were born around 1990s were apolitical or not.

[6] Jenerasyonel sistem içinde döngüsel biçimde yer alan dört kuşaktan biri gerçekten apolitik. Çünkü sistematik olarak depolitize edilmiş bir kuşak. Ama bilinenin aksine, o kuşak Y Kuşağı değil. En apolitik olarak kabul edebileceğimiz kuşak 1965-79 arası doğduğunu varsaydığımız X Kuşağı. Çünkü siyasallaşmanın bedellerini en ağır biçimde ödeyen önceki nesil ebeveynleri tarafından evden olaylara karışma diye okula uğurlanan çocuklar onlar. Öğrenciyken de olaylara karışmadı çoğu, büyüdüklerinde de. Gezi'ye gelince, Gezi Kuşağı diye bir kuşaktan bence bahsedemeyiz. Türkiye'de 81 ilin 80'inde ortaya çıkan sivil itaatsizlik hareketi olan Gezi direnişi sürecinde yapılan çok çeşitli direnişçi profili araştırmasının da ortaya koyduğu gibi, eylemlere katılanların %70'lik bir oranını Y

Here, “the cyclical structure of generational system” refers to the positivist framing of generation in social sciences, known as “pulse-rate hypothesis” (Jaeger, 1985) stating that generations emerge according to a repeatedly occurring cycles in periods as a result of a linear and pre-given frame of history.

On the other hand, sociologically grounded theories do not foresee an automated creation of generation in slices. Consequently, the description of “the four generations”, i.e. as Baby boomers, GenX, GenY and GenZ, represents application of pulse-rate approach to generations in popular uses of the term generation. On top of that, Kuran compares these four generations with each other through the famous binary and pre-defined criteria of “apoliticalness” and declares “the most apolitical one”, at the same time totally rejecting the term “the Gezi generation”.

On the other hand, these popular uses of GenX, GenY, GenZ have been referred as “America-patented terminology” for defining the generations by Orhan Alkaya. He grounds his views through an approach closer to sociological framings by explaining the generational characteristics through socio-historical dynamics. Interestingly, rather than referring GenY as “the Gezi generation”, he states that Gezi’s main young subjects were indeed GenZ, who viewed as being born into virtual world of social media and is able to grasp the social reality in mediation of it. He further comments on this generation as:

> Since the widely used typological terminology is essentially American-patented, we could also describe this generation as the one that grew bored with the “Y” generation, which was raised with knowledge of technology and globalism and after the “X”s, who had been distanced from the historical trauma that the Vietnam War inflicted on American society; a generation that reacted against the suffocation of specialization and declared their own identity directly through their bodies to the social order.[7] (Alkaya, 2013, author’s trans.)

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kuşağı oluşturuyordu. Ve bu gençler önceki kuşaklardan ebeveynlerini veya yakın çevrelerini de eylemin aktif parçası olmaya davet ettiler; çoğunlukla başardılar da.

[7] Her türlü yaygın tipolojik terminoloji Amerikan patentli olduğu için, bu kuşağa, Vietnam Savaşı’nın Amerikan toplumunda yarattığı travmanın bilgisinden habersizleştirilen ‘X’ler sonrası, teknoloji ve globalizm bilgisiyle yetiştirilen ‘Y’ kuşağından sıkılan, uzmanlık boğuntusuna tepki duyan, kendi kimlik tanımlanmalarını (identitiy) doğrudan bedenleriyle toplumsal düzene deklare eden bir kuşak da diyebiliriz.

In this article, on the contrary to other accounts claiming that they were GenY or millennials, it is stated that young people in the protests were the members of GenZ. Afterwards, Alkaya differentiates this generation from the others by socio-historical conditions grounding their unique political action. As per this account, GenX in Turkey was named as "Özal generation" or "12 September generation" who were the ones experienced "the joy of capitalism and benefited from its experience the most". GenY on the other hand, prioritized success criteria of creating new instruments to rationalize capitalism through selling non-existent values in money-based exchanges. However, "The Gezi generation" as GenZ was born into capitalism's dead ends. By exceeding binary criteria of "apoliticalness" at this time, Alkaya claims that GenZs are not apolitical or de-politized; rather they are "a-realpolitical", in the sense that they deliberately stay outside from the conventional ways of doing politics.

Another framing is from Cumhuriyet newspaper's report (2018) entitled "Gezi Kuşağı Göçüyor" (The Gezi Generation is Leaving). According to this report, in total, more than 113,000 citizens moved abroad in 2017, representing a 63% increase since 2016. Out of this number of people, 40% are at the age between 20 and 34. It is concluded that the conditions in the country channelize "the Gezi generation" to volunteer migration, who were in this frame homogeneously defined as highly qualified, white-collar young professionals.

Back in second half of 2010s, one of the most frequently mentioned words alongside with Gezi protests was "sociology". In their edited book *Gezi ve Sosyoloji: Nesneyle Yüzleşmek, Nesneyi Kurmak,* Vefa Saygın Ögütle and Emrah Göker discusses this word inflation and confusion towards the terms "social", "sociological" and "sociological reality" (2014, pp. 11–14). They state that although it is possible to talk about multiple aspects of the protests as political, cultural, social and socio-psychological; unless it is constructed as an object of analysis according to knowledge production protocols of sociology and being validated as well, no event could be "sociological" by definition. Rather the phenomena should be "sociologized".

On the same issue from a different view, Halil İbrahim Bahar, in his article, argues about "abuse of sociology" during the protests. He addresses that since a number of

social scientists failed to conduct "value-neutral" research; a broader distrust emerged toward sociology, due to the engagement which he described as "social engineering". He continues about sociology and the protests as:

> By mythologizing the youth who participated in the Gezi Park protests, sociology was once again misused. Some authors, without reliable or valid data, constructed a so-called "90s generation" in order to derive political conclusions. Before we could even ask what is happening; like in a fast-food-style, drive-through data began to circulate everywhere. They fell into the fallacy of assuming that a cluster of roughly 3,000 people in Gezi Park could represent Turkey's entire population of 76 million. The biological cohort of the 1990s failed to function as a "social generation," and the idea that political change could be achieved through these young people did not work. The fact that the young participants in the protests happened to be born in roughly the same years does not make them a "sociological generation." Nor is opposition to the government sufficient criteria for a sociological generation to exist! For a sociological generation to emerge, there must have a shared ideology, a shared culture, strong bonds, patterns of mutual interaction, and a collective will.[8] (Bahar, 2013, author's trans.)

In this view, name of the generation is "90s generation" this time. It is criticized that the phrase "90s generations" addresses not a social generation but rather a birth cohort. In between the conceptual discussion of generation, criticism towards generational formation criteria strikes the attention. He claims that "opposition to government" was set as a primary conceptual criterion by the ones who coined the term.

The final excerpt to be mentioned here is from recent publication on the protests, *Gezi at Ten: Domination, Opposition and Political Organization* (2024), from the Critical Review section of the book, by Sungur Savran:

> This went hand in hand with a naïve exaltation of this new generation. In a country where the left has been mesmerized by the role played by the

[8] Gezi Parkı gösterilerine katılan gençler efsaneleştirilerek sosyoloji bir kez daha kötüye kullanıldı. Bazı yazarlar geçerli ve güvenilir veriler olmadan politik sonuçlara ulaşmak adına 90'lar kuşağı denen yeni bir kuşak inşa ettiler! Ne oluyor demeye kalmadan, McDonald's ürünleri gibi "arabadan sipariş" şip-şak veriler ortalığa saçıldı. 76 milyon nüfus içinde Gezi Parkı'nda kümeleşen 3 bin kişilik bir örneklemin Türkiye'nin genelini yansıttığı yanılgısına kapıldılar. Biyolojik kuşak olan 90'ların, sosyal kuşak olarak adlandırılması ve siyasal değişimin bu gençler üzerinden gerçekleştirilmesi planı tutmadı. Gösteriye katılan gençlerin doğum tarihlerinin aynı dönemlerde olması, onları 'sosyolojik kuşak' yapmaz. Sosyolojik bir kuşağın olması için hükümet karşıtlığı da yeterli değildir! Sosyolojik kuşağın olabilmesi için ortak bir ideolojinin, kültürün, güçlü bağların, karşılıklı etkileşim kalıplarının ve iradenin olması gerekir.

> generations of 1968 and then of 1978 in revolutionary politics, there was an incredibly rash talk of a new generation. It was rumoured that this generation, so disdained before Gezi for its depoliticization, was in fact very conscious politically. Strange then that ten years on nothing, absolutely nothing has remained of that generation in terms either of intellectual renewal or political acumen. (Savran, 2024, p. 42)

He continues in the next page as:

> Now, we are not talking about the youth of the park, but about the socialist currents of Turkey. This deception about the nature of the "Gezi generation" is a corollary of the failure of the left to study and analyse and understand the collapse of the twentieth century experience of socialist construction, coupled with the defeat suffered at the hands of the military in the early 1980s, a factor specific to Turkey. The price paid for this failure was the adoption of facile explanations that had nothing to do with the real world. The belief that a refusal to organize is the correct battle-cry of the future because young people who had not been interested in politics in the least up until then said so was the latest and most abhorrent of these quick-and-easy solutions to the most important intellectual problems that we have inherited from the twentieth century. (Savran, 2024, p. 43)

Here, as the most recent account on the Gezi generation among the given excerpts, it is argued that the search for a new generation as the subject of political dynamism on the streets was primarily due to the fascination with the '68 and '78 generations. He states that unlike these generations, in the end, "the Gezi generation" is left with "absolutely nothing" in their hands, including a political intellect. Through a normative and inherited evaluation criteria dominantly based on '68 and '78 generations, it is claimed that young people back then were anti-organized, even consciously against organizing, and accordingly they have "not been interested in the least up" in politics.

Across the excerpts given, four recurrent characteristics of ambivalence are visible: projection, contradiction, instrumentalization and homogenization. First, projection appears in the ways older generations reflect their own normative expectations, political longings or political frustrations upon young people, whether by casting them as bearers of a "grand narrative", as inheritors of '68 generation and as the a-realpolitical antidote to the failures of earlier generations or "youth of the park" who does show even bit of attention to the politics after ten and more years. Second,

contradiction refers to the coexistence of these affirmative and dismissive framings, that are from the youth's rediscovered political agency to sceptic views implying nothing significant emerged. Third, instrumentalization is seen where youth is tested vis-à-vis pre-existing generational schemas or political typologies as GenX, GenY, GenZ or in the strategic use of "the 90s generation" in academic and media discourse. Finally, homogenization operates through the reduction of heterogeneous young participants to a single, coherent "apolitical generation" whose internal differences are erased.

Taken together, these dynamics show that "the Gezi generation" as a discourse reflects not the political subjectivity articulated by young people themselves, but the reflected expectations or aspirations of the older generations who are over enthusiastic to name and define them.

1.2. Research Problematic: Framing "the Gezi Generation" as Social Formation Beyond "Myth of Youth"

The generation studies which bring young people themselves into focus and aim to look at their social formation vis-à-vis social, cultural, political and historical conditions are mostly clustered in the field of youth studies. High percentage of these studies depend on Karl Mannheim's groundbreaking work of *The Problem of Generations* (1928/2017). This is not a coincidence, as elaborated in theoretical framework section of this study, Mannheim conceptualizes generations as confined by a particular life stage, emphasizing that generational formation is closely tied to the formative period of youth.

In her seminal work, *Türkiye'de Gençlik Miti* (Myth of Youth in Turkey) (2009), Demet Lüküslü conceptualizes "myth of youth" as the long-standing tendency in Turkey to treat "youth" not as a sociologically grounded group with diverse experiences, but as a symbolic category onto which other members, institutions, social and political groups in the society project their own ideals, anxieties as well as political aspirations. Rather than being recognized as subjects who are capable of building their own political positions, young people have been recurrently cast as

bearers of national progress, modernization, moral decline, political hope and political treat. This mythic construction produces a normative and often contradictory figure of "the youth", one that is expected to serve the agendas of various political and intellectual actors regardless of elaborating upon the internal heterogeneity and actual lives of young people.

Lüküslü traces the construction of this "myth" of youth in Turkey from the early republican era to the period after 1980. For the young people of 1980s and 1990s who were frequently blamed to be "apolitical", "depolitical" or "repressed" especially being compared with '68 and '78 generations, she reveals a different kind of political engagement as one of the main findings in the study. Representing this phenomenon, "active apoliticism", reflects a deliberate choice by young people to differentiate their political agency from previous modes of political engagement. Contrary to popular opinion that "the young people are apolitical", she argues that young people rather demonstrate an active political engagement by maintaining their distance to realpolitik. This, in fact, means that with the changing conditions, young people are calling for an urge to rethink and reshape the politics itself, i.e. how it is articulated, enacted and practiced.

Within a similar approach, Cihan Erdal (2017, p. 136), in his article based on a graduate work, concludes that young people has been declared their "we are here too!" statement through the new ways of protesting during the Gezi Park protests. He defines this "young generation" as the ones who grew up with memories and narratives of the "great struggles" of the 60s and the 70s. At the same time, they were positioned as the primary target of severe criticism by these pre-1980 generations. It has been discussed that young people who were found politically passive before thought that they "proved" themselves and this proving has been done both addressing "to" and yet "against" the older generations. In this study, it has been demonstrated that young people conducted an anti-gerontocratic resistance against institutionalized social position of "abilik" (being the older brother and role model) by stating that the political discourse was required to change.

Viewed this way, the ambivalent framings across the previous section reveal that "the Gezi generation" has functioned less as an empirically grounded sociological

category and more as a discursive surface onto which mostly the older generations have projected their own political imaginaries, regardless of the glorifying or blaming content, within the frame of the discussions of "myth of youth". While the term has been mobilized for celebration, instrumentalization, dismission, comparison; it rarely engaged with how young people back then made sense of the world where they inhabited. What is produced as a discourse for "the Gezi generation" thus far, is therefore not a coherent account of a social generational formation but a contested narrative space shaped by projection, contradiction, instrumentalization and homogenization.

It is precisely this the point of disjuncture between the dominant discursive constructions of "the Gezi generation" and the lived, remembered and narrated experiences of the young people of early 2010s; that this study pursues to address. Rather than affirming the pre-given labels of "90s generation," "GenY," or "millennials," and remaining inside dilemma of "praise" and "blame" (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 11)[9]; this dissertation examines whether and how a generational formation can be sociologically traced through shared memories towards early 2010s. By shifting the analytical focus from externally imposed generational attributions to the internal dynamics of meaning-making, historical positioning, and collective memory; this study aims to produce a more nuanced and sociologically grounded account of what might be called "the Gezi generation", not as a homogeneous cohort, but as a generational formation emerging from socio-historical conditions.

Depending on Mannheim's framework, Derya Fırat et al. (2017, p. 151) state that a set of criteria is required to be able to talk about a generation. In the first place, biographical availability and transformative historical event/period are needed. If one can talk about these two criteria, it is possible and meaningful to discuss the formation potentiality of a generation at the analytical level. As the third factor, "generation effect" addresses shared historical "imprint" by the members of a

[9] Demet Lüküslü this work, i.e. "Türkiye'nin 68'i: Bir Kuşağın Sosyolojik Analizi"; states that getting outside of this dilemma could be possible by highlighting the inevitable relationship between the generation and the given socio-historical conditions. For this reason, she traces the generational reality from the academic works and research done on the youth of 1960s and then looks at the produced genuine discourses of '68 generation.

generation, in relation with existing social processes that generations went through. First one, biographical availability, refers to the life stage of youth, in which the members are the most able and open to respond to the demands of existing social movements. Second is the transformative historical events or periods paving the way for the political transformation of young people. The third, however, is associated with the generation's actuality as well as generational memory.

Taken together, generations are formed through the alignment of three factors: the biographical availability of youth, a shared socio-historical location, and the encounter with a transformative event/series of events/period that crystallize these experiences into a shared generational consciousness and memory. While a transformative event may be witnessed and experienced by a group of people consisting of distant age groups, its potential to catalyze a generational formation is strictly limited to those who share a biographical stage of youth as coevals. That is to say, as per Mannheim's notion of "fresh contact", only individuals encountering the event during their formative years possess the specific biographical positioning necessary to internalize it as a constitutive element of a new generational actuality.

In the same piece, Fırat et al. (2017) examine the history of generations in Turkey through Mannheim's theory, identifying a shift from the "integral" (yekpare) textbook generations of '68 and '78 to the more fragmented "proto-generational statuses"[10] (kuşak durumları) characteristic of the post-1980 era. These are not monolithic "textbook" generations, but rather clusters of communities politicized around shared transformative events. Despite this fragmentation, Fırat et al. conclude that the period encompassing the Gezi protests provided the necessary "generational effect" for the post-1990 cohort to meet the structural and conjunctural criteria for generational formation (Fırat et al., 2017, p. 158).

[10] The Turkish original version could have been literally translated as "generation status". However, indeed "kuşak durumu" is the Turkish version of Mannheimian term "generation location". In original German text, there is only one word for "generational location": "Generationslagerung". The word "lagerung" comes from the root "lager", i.e. "to locate" and "lagerung" means location. Thus, the term means "generation location". Here, the Turkish phrase Fırat et. al. used "kuşak durumları". By looking at the definitions and given examples, "kuşak durumları" is used to describe age groups gathered around historical events for rights struggles and remained at the generation as location stage of the generational formation. Therefore, "proto-generational statuses" seems to be an illustrative English translation for it.

The distinction between such an emerging "location" and actualized generation relies on the mobilization of Mannheim's two analytical categories: "generation as location" and "generation as actuality". Stating that a cohort remains at the level of "location" implies while the objective conditions for structural clustering are present, a shared "crystallized" (Nora, 1989), i.e. consciousness remained resilient through the passage of time, has not yet manifested[11]. Within this framework, "actuality" is not a pre-given but a mnemonic state that emerges only when these structural conditions are internalized and narrated in a shared way.

According to Pierre Nora (1989), the phenomenon of generation remains closer to the domain of memory and symbolically shared narrations of the past than it is to objective history. Nora's distinction suggests that the collective consciousness constituting "generation as actuality" requires a certain temporal distance from the transformative event. This distance facilitates a retrospective collective gaze, through which members do not merely witness history but actively interpret its conditioning effects. While the structural ground of history is undeniably present, the existence of a generation as a social formation depends on this shared glance toward a similarly conditioned past.

At this point, a fundamental clarification is necessary. Thinking through the title alone, the reader might carry the expectation that this dissertation is merely about the Gezi protests and how a specific age group remembered them. However, as previously stated, the study deliberately aims to go beyond the limited and instrumentalized descriptions such as "youth in the park" or "voting bloc". Even years later, these descriptions still serve as a discursive surface for other generations to project their own aspirations. Reducing a generation to a single event study would entail overlooking the depth offered by the Mannheimian framework, particularly regarding the theoretical lens of "similarly stratified" socio-historical experiences. While the literature points out that Gezi may serve as a "defining moment" or a

[11] The concepts here (textbook generation, proto-generational statuses, generation as location, generation as actuality) are used to indicate a differentiation at the level of analysis. In other words, this distinction is a heuristic device rather (like Weber's "ideal type") than an essentialist categorization. It allows for a systematic examination of the interplay between structural conditions and generational agency, which are, in lived experience, inextricably intertwined.

"landmark event", the field data demonstrates that the participants' political engagements exhibit a continuity encompassing both the period before and after the events.

Consequently, rather than defining a group as a generation solely through what people narrate about Gezi, this study analyzes "mnemonic commons" for generation, which is, a concept embodied in, yet fundamentally transcends the memory of protests. Such a framing exceeds the reductionist "youth in the park" perspectives discussed earlier. The main difference between this generation and the '68 or '78 generations is that it constitutes a "unity of experience" rather than a "unity of political action" which remains the main defining characteristic of post-1980 generations. While it is possible to discuss a generation in terms of shared cultural repertoire and memories, it is not possible to speak of monolithic organization templates similar to those of '68 and '78 generations, who, despite their internal divisions, often operated within centralized social movements and shared a direct unity of action.

Surely, this is not a "deficiency". Rather, it is particularly this dialectic that defines the very engagement and formation of this generation. For this reason, I addressed this dialectical characteristic through the concept of mnemonic commons to show the generation's political uniqueness and strength: The capacity to coexist with differences and remain "synchronized" without compromising one's own voice as a group yet remaining connected and acting together. In other words, as the study "myth of youth in Turkey" (Lüküslü, 2009) states for generations after '80s, an alternative lens to define them is required, that is independent from *a priori* frames inherited from generations before '80.

Accordingly, with this problematization at its core, the present study targets in what ways the narrative tone from the field constructs the generational dimension. It argues the "mnemonic actuality" of this generation is manifested through a collective sense of loss. Instead of looking for a unified political manifesto, this research seeks to understand how shared generational wounds function as a cornerstone for a generational formation. Ultimately, it explores how the act of remembering the past

serves as a tool for this generation to define its own reality, past, identity and boundaries as opposed to the labels imposed by the public discourse.

Building upon this theoretical synthesis, the primary aim of this study is to reconstruct "the Gezi generation" not as a projection of a myth from the public discourse, but through the lived, remembered, and narrated experiences of those who were university students in the early 2010s. By analyzing these narratives, the study examines social formation of the generation in its dual but relational analytical model: its structural "location" and its mnemonic "actuality"[12]. Consistent with Nora's emphasis on the necessity of temporal distance, this research pursues to capture the crystallized traces of generationality through empirical fieldwork, exploring how a shared "mnemonic actuality" is constructed even through fragmented and multilayered personal experiences.

1.3. Aims of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to revisit what has come to be known as "the Gezi generation" through the lived, remembered and narrated experiences and belongings of the young people of 2010s who were in their formative years back then; rather than through the discourses, projections or mythologizations that have circulated in the public and scholarly spheres. In other words, rather than thinking through the previously produced labels as given analytical categories, the present study seeks to examine whether and how social formation of a generation from multiple but interrelated domains can be traced through the shared memories, narratives, meaning-making practices and strategies and historical self-positionings articulated by the participants. Consequently, it reconstructs the actuality of the generation through the collective memories told in the form of narratives.

First, the study operationalizes Mannheim's distinction between "generation as location" and "generation as actuality" for the analysis of this historical-event cohort of the early 2010s. Instead of assuming a static identity, it investigates the process of

[12] Surely, if sociological analysis is the primary aim, the latter remains fundamentally grounded in the former.

becoming, asking to what extent the retrospective narratives of the participants indicate a collective glance toward the social change they witnessed.

Second, through the analysis of "generation as location" the study plots a schema for specific socio-historical conditions of the 2010s in Turkey. It aims to contextualize the participants' experiences within the recent history and proposes the concept of "remembered conjuncture" to frame the interplay between structural conditions and how the generation metabolizes it. In doing so, instead of depending on the idealist term *Zeitgeist*, this study proposes a materialist ground by conceptualizing the generation at stake as "transnational bounded local formation". Consequently, the proposed concepts are neither imposed top-down nor randomly selected, they are empirically grounded framings derived from a rigorous synthesis of the field data and the theoretical literature on generations.

Third, addressing "generation as actuality" the study investigates the constructive role of memory in for generationality. It explores how members construct their generational belongings, boundaries, differentiations, distances, criticisms and so on. While doing this, the study facilitates the theoretical and rich analytical potentialities of memory studies. In doing so, the study conceptualizes these generationality dimension as "mnemonic commons" to address the shared narrative space where these collective memories circulate, symbolizing a shared space for the members which is no person's private property but at the same time belongs to everybody. Fourth, the study examines the internal heterogeneity of this formation at the level of actuality by using the Mannheimian concept "generation units". Rather than treating the generation as a monolithic entity or equating one single generation unit with the whole generation, the research conceptualizes it as a heterogeneous social formation. It aims to demonstrate how distinct interpretive frameworks and political orientations coexist within the same "generational actuality", thereby constituting the very formation of the generation.

1.4. Scope of the Study

Having defined the research objectives, it is equally crucial to delineate the boundaries. Firstly, the study is based on qualitative approaches, which implies that

the primary objective is not statistical representativeness, the research adopts a purposeful sampling strategy, i.e. criterion-based selection of interviewees to ensure analytical depth and theory-building capacity of the data. While population-level representation concerns are thus outside the study's scope; gender balance and socio-economic diversity of the participants have been maintained during the sampling process to capture the mentioned heterogeneity within the generation.

Secondly, the study operationalizes the generation at stake as "historical-event cohort" consisting of peers defined by their years of "fresh contact". In other words, it targets a sample consisting of people who experienced a period marked by an event, i.e. university students in early 2010s. Accordingly, the scope remains within the limits of the fieldwork operationalized in this manner. It focuses on the experiences, interpretations and memories of young people who were in their formative years during the period of 2010s. Thus, the study is bounded with a life stage/age group, whose "fresh contact" has been in the years between 2010 and 2015.

Thirdly, the research is limited to interviews conducted with students back then from several universities in Ankara. This city has been deliberately chosen since Ankara represents a critical case for this study: it hosts high density of politically diverse student population from numerous public and private universities. By focusing on one specific city, the study aims to present controlled and profound analysis, ensuring consistency in contextual dynamics (such as city-specific political culture and local exposure). Thereby the study restricts the scope in a methodologically sound manner.

Fourthly, the study concentrates on intragenerational dynamics, rather than intergenerational relations. It examines how people with diverging political orientations may share interpretive repertoire and mnemonic narratives as generational formation. Inter-generational comparisons such as examining different life stage groups (for example between younger and older groups) or generational memory succession for the members fall outside the scope of this research, as the primary objective is to explore heterogeneous and shared dynamics in what has been

labelled “the Gezi generation”. The only intergenerational-like dimension addressed in this study is the members’ perception of how they are viewed by the rest of society.

1.5. The Research Question and Sub-Questions

In line with the aims and scope discussed above, the central research question of the study is formulated as follows:

“In what ways does ‘the Gezi generation’ remember the political practices and mobilizations of the early 2010s, when they were university students?”

Before discussing the clarifications of the terms in the question, it is necessary to argue the potential theoretical space that this question might open for the aims. To begin with, it would be unproductive and analytically limiting to formulate the question as “Is there a Gezi generation?”. As the attentive readers might recall, this question was posed answered in the discussed excerpts and the answers oscillated between the axes of “yes” or “no”. Such a formulation merely testing the ontological standing of generation does not have a capacity to open a genuine theoretical space, except for a rhetorical one. For this reason, the research question purposefully formulated through the phrase “in what ways”, situating it within the spectrum of “how” questions. While the ultimate theoretical aim of this study is to plot the generational formation of young people of 2010s, main research question is intentionally formulated in a concrete and operational manner. By focusing on the “ways of remembering” to analyze generational actuality, the study avoids testing a pre-given generational status. Such a question allows the study to examine multiple dimensions of generational formation within a Mannheimian framework and opens an analytical space in which lived experiences, social positioning, and historical exposure can be discussed relationally.

As stated, several phrases in the formulation of the main question require clarification, which indeed serve as entry points for discussing different analytical dimensions of the problem. First of all, the phrase “in what ways” refers to how a

particular past is remembered alongside the content. In other words, what is significant in this study is both what is recalled and how it is recalled.

Secondly, the temporal focus has been limited to "the early 2010s", referring specifically to the years between 2010 and 2015, as stated. This period represents a dynamic period for student movements from various aspects. It also includes the Gezi protests and signals a break from previous conventional forms of contention, and the emergence of new collective modes of protests. Sociologically, this interval is significant enough to potentially generate a generation effect on its "fresh contact"ers. Taking the formative years as period, i.e. early 2010s, is crucial since it means to take it as a regime of time, rather than a mere event.

Thirdly, "the Gezi generation" having the empirical correspondence as historical event cohort[13], i.e. the young people of 2010s whose formative years (operationalized by being university students in these years) coincided with the period between 2010 and 2015. This group includes members of various student movements of that time who directly or indirectly participated in the broader process surrounding the Gezi protests. At this point, the reader might ask whether the focus of this study is the historical event cohort itself as concrete social group, or the generationality dimension that the main argument intends to reveal. The answer is the former; it is the cohort that is primarily denoted here. The generationality dimension, on the other hand, can only be reached through abstraction based on the interview data. It is precisely the reason why the phrase is placed in quotation marks in main research question: The Gezi generation remains in its "hypothetical" (metaphorically speaking) form at the beginning of the inquiry.

Taken together, the research question is designed to investigate how a group of people, who experienced their "fresh contact" as university students in early 2010s, collectively negotiate their generational identity. By consulting the memories of this

[13] On the contrary to the popular uses, "cohort" does not automatically mean "birth cohort" in scholarly uses. There are different kinds of cohorts like education cohort, election cohort, historical/period cohort, event/incident cohort, exposure cohort. The common point for all is that they used to refer a group of people who exposed to the same factor. In this way, it is aimed to cluster together a group of people whose experiences are more likely to be similar.

historical-event cohort regarding a specific period, the study analyzes generationality in its dual Mannheimian in two interconnected forms as “generation as location” and “generation as actuality”.

The related sub-questions can be listed as:

- Which political events, turning points, or conjunctures of the early 2010s are the most prominently remembered, and how do participants narrate the opportunities, constraints, and affections of this period?
- How do narrated conditions back in 2010s relate to the participants’ sense of being (or not being) part of a generation, and what kinds of shared or divergent meaning schemas shape this relationship?
- In what ways do intragenerational differences (political orientations, interpretive repertoires, emotional-moral meanings) emerge within memory narratives?
- How do participants articulate, appropriate, contest, or resist the meaning and context in phrase of “the Gezi generation” in relation to their remembered experiences?
- In what ways do collective and personal memory practices contribute to (or fail to produce) a durable sense of generational formation among these young people?

1.6. Significance of Study

Potential contributions of the study can be discussed into three: theoretical, methodological and practical.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the Mannheimian sociological tradition by empirically investigating how the shared experiences of the 2010s crystallize into a collective generational consciousness. Beyond identifying a “generation effect”, the research incorporates and integrates a Thompsonian historical construction perspective to conceptualize generationality as an ongoing “making” rather than a static historical product. Furthermore, through the operationalization of generation units, it challenges previously assumed generational homogeneity, and it

demonstrates how members with proximate generational location can develop divergent but anchored interpretive repertoire. In doing so, it moves the discussion from a simplistic "spirit of the age" (*Zeitgeist*) to a structural and relational analysis revealing how intragenerational fragmentation coexists with a shared generational actuality, mediated through the reflexive lens of collective memory.

Methodologically, the most distinct and arguably the most original contribution of this study lies in the integrated framework it proposes. By mobilizing contemporary memory studies for sociological analysis of generations, the study offers an original framework for analyzing personal but socially constructed narratives. In other words, rather than treating memory narratives merely as descriptive accounts, it utilizes them as analytical tools to trace the sociological formation of a generation. A key methodological contribution lies in its abductive research strategy, that is, the study constructs an intermediate analytical layer that connects abstract theoretical concepts with micro-qualitative data. Through this continuous dialogue, it makes an original contribution with two concrete heuristic tools to the field: "remembered conjuncture" (to operationalize "generation as location") and "mnemonic commons" (to operationalize "generation as actuality"). These proposed terms offer reproducible analytical vocabulary for future qualitative studies on generations.

The synthesis of the theoretical and methodological contributions discussed above is operationalized through a tripartite analytical framework, serving as the backbone of this study, which is summarized in the table below.

The analytical backbone of the study, the Tripartite Analytical Framework is demonstrated in Table 1 below. This table shows that this study makes a synthesis of structural, interpretive and critical perspectives to analyze the social formation of "the Gezi generation". The significance of this framework lies in its rejection of functionalist consensus both among members and within their memory narratives. Instead, this architecture ensures a systematic and relational bridge between the structural foundations and the often-contested mnemonic references of the participants. It explicitly acknowledges that generationality is not a monolithic identity, but a dynamic dialectic between a shared historical exposure and internal heterogeneities.

Table 1. Tripartite analytical architecture of the study

Analytical Perspective	**Theoretical/Conceptual Counterpart**	**Strategic Function in the study**
Structural	Mannheimian terms of generation location, fresh contact	Lays the objective socio-historical ground by mapping the structural conditions; specifically, the contingent historical exposure of the Millennial cohort in early 2010s in Turkey
Interpretive	Mnemonic hermeneutics of memory studies	Decodes recollections by treating memory narratives as heuristic tools to trace generationality dimension, analyzing the dialectics between shared mnemonic actuality and the intragenerational heterogeneities (class, gender, scale, ethnicity etc.)
Critical	Discussion of affective formations of the generational gaze to the past	Synthesizes findings into a critical lens regarding the sociological meaning of shared "generational wounds". That is, it analyzes how collective feelings are shaped by the social and political constraints.

An important nuance directly addressing the significance of the study must be indicated at this point. The primary abstraction category of this study is neither class, gender nor regional inequalities, ethnicity; but generation. This is a deliberate analytical choice, which was undertaken with full awareness of its potential analytical and theoretical implications. It is not a dismissal of other sociological categories but a methodological commitment to carve out a distinct space for "the Gezi generation" within academic discourse. By focusing on this specific generationality, the study prioritizes the sociological problem of generational formation through the lens of collective memories. This analytical choice is driven by the limitedness of research exploring the imprint of this specific generation in current literature.

When generational formation is prioritized, other categories are repositioned as contextual variables that shape the internal diversity of the generation itself. Consequently, it should be clarified that the internal dynamics of a generation,

especially when analyzed through the lens of collective memory, operate through a different logic than the material contradictions typically found in traditional social stratification studies. Depending on this difference, in both the fieldwork design and theoretical framework, the concept of "intragenerational heterogeneities" was used instead of "conflict". This is not due to "overlooking the inequalities within the generation", or "lack of political lens"; it is rather an analytical requirement to maintain the conceptual autonomy of generationality dimension as the analytical focus, as explained.

On top of that, these "heterogeneities" are operationalized through the Mannheimian concept of "generation units". Generation units[14] do not presuppose a predefined or inevitable material conflict; rather, any tension is constructed through differing viewpoints and distinct ways of interpreting the world within the generation. For instance, while the class positions of the participants in this study are relatively similar[15], these proximate positions have defined their own "generationality" and shared historical exposures along diverse and differentiating lines. This represents the boundaries between generation units, not the inherited material conflicts[16]. The challenge, as well as potential contribution of this study precisely lies within this nuance: it utilizes classical sociological categories to analyze the generational dimension while maintaining generation as the primary abstraction focus.

[14] The fieldwork supports the abstract idea of generation units as the intragenerational differentiations based on the way that members interpret the world. This has been expressed as "we are in the same generation but surely we do not perceive the world in a similar way" (Int#3) or "I do not even think that we live in the same world!" (Int#25) by several participants. Though some think they at least share a generational position and some disagree, the participants have a consensus on their interpretation of the same world differentiates.

[15] The educational profile of the participants is an outcome of the research design, rather than an arbitrary selection. Since the study specifically focuses on "young people who were university students in a university in Ankara back in 2010s", the sample "naturally" exhibits a high level of education and social awareness. With a bachelor's degree serving as the minimum educational threshold, the sample was predominantly consisted of high-skilled professionals, including those with PhDs. Therefore, if this is ultimately a "choice", it is rather an analytical choice, not a random individual one, the rigorous details of which are discussed in both the methodology and theoretical framework chapters.

[16] This critique of the assumption of inherited material conflicts should not be confused with the material foundations of the study itself. Although this research adopts Mannheimian framework, it establishes a material analytical ground by incorporating conjunctural analysis while moving away from the idealist *Zeitgeist* perspective. The original conceptual framework proposed within the scope of this study serves to operationalize and concretize this very materialist grounding in generational analysis.

Finally, turning to the practical and societal contributions, this study offers a critical alternative frame to the prevailing discourse on "the Gezi generation" which often oscillates between romanticized mythology and reductive stigmatization. By revealing the internal complexity, political agency, and memory struggles of this generation, the study challenges the public and political tendency to view them merely as a monolithic "voting bloc" or a "generalized social problem". Instead, it provides a nuanced sociological picture that enables policymakers, scholars, and media commentators to engage with the youth as heterogeneous, autonomous, and historically situated group in society.

1.7. Organization of the Chapters

The study consists of five chapters in total. The current chapter summarizes overall approach and strategies of the study by introducing a brief background, related research problematic, aims and scope, research questions and related sub-questions, addressed gaps in the literature and potential contributions of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework which is positioned before the methodology chapter because the study followed a theory-driven approach in the operationalization process of the research question. The conceptual discussions offered here provide the necessary groundwork for understanding how the research is designed. This chapter covers three key bodies of literature, namely: social formation, generation and memory. Its first axis of discussion is how generation theory could provide for analyzing social formation in a selected historical period while the second axis is how sociological perspectives on memory, framed as a collective glance at the past, are key for analyzing generational phenomenon.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach derived from the theoretical foundation as per Chapter 2. This chapter details methodological approach, operationalization of research questions, overall research design as well as analysis strategy. Both the contextualization of "generation as location" and the analysis of "generation as actuality" emerge inductively from the data. For the data collection, a qualitative research design is followed in 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews that

were conducted through purposeful sampling to explore the generational formation. Moreover, as the analysis strategy, the study adapts abduction, using the interplay between empirical material and theoretical frameworks to build an intermediate conceptual layer that bridging the two, which means stretching theoretical concepts where necessary according to data, while keeping them analytically anchored.

Chapter 4 constitutes the empirical core of the study, unifying Mannheim's theoretical trajectory from "generation as location" to "generation as actuality" within a comprehensive analytical narrative. The chapter is structured in two interconnected parts. The first part focusing on "generation as location" reconstructs the socio-historical conditions of the early 2010s. Here, the study introduces the concept of "remembered conjuncture" to analyze the specific spatial, economic, political, and digital domains that shaping the generation's "fresh contact" with the era. The second part shifts the lens to "generation as actuality" investigating how these experiences are echoes and formed generational consciousness. In this section, the analysis focuses on the "mnemonic commons" of the generation, exploring the specific modes of remembering, the reflexive negotiation with "the Gezi generation" label, and the construction of internal boundaries. Collectively, this chapter traces the sociological transformation of the group from a historical-event cohort into a generational formation.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, evaluating the findings of the analytical chapters in relation to the research question and overall framework. It provides a synthesis of the entire study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GENERATION AND MEMORY

In this chapter, the study's theoretical framework is outlined with the two interconnected conceptual layers: generation and memory. At the "conceptual core" of the architecture, there is Mannheim's theory of generation. Underpinning the entire theoretical structure, the concept memory provides required "conceptual foundation" connecting the framework with the empirical material, i.e. memory narratives regarding a historical period. It functions as a key basis for analyzing narratives through which "generation as actuality" is constructed. Taken together, this architecture ensures that the analysis remains both empirically grounded in participants' accounts and analytically positioned within the relevant sociological debates of generations.

2.1. Generation

The word "generation" has Greek roots of "genos", derived from the verb "genesthai". The words with connection like "genea", "genesis", "gone", "genus", "generatio" have a meaning scale from birth and reproduction to age, time of life, cycle of life, race, family and species (Nash, 1978, p. 2).

The etymology of the term allows us to trace two distinct but interconnected meanings. The first is genealogical succession. In Turkish, this corresponds to the word "nesil". Derived from the Arabic root "nsl", it encapsulates meanings of reproduction, descendants, offspring (Nişanyan, n.d.), all pointing to transmitted lineage.

Yet, all these terms ultimately originate from the Indo-European root "gen", which fundamentally means "to come into existence" (Nash, 1978, p. 2). This implication

of a new presence extends beyond biological succession, but it suggests the opening of a new existential moment in cultural and political life. “Genea”, thus functions as a cultural and temporal framework for organizing time and cultural transmission through collective memory.

This semantic trajectory brings us to the second meaning of the word: new body of people entered in the societal system with new cultural potential which expressed by the word “kuşak” in Turkish.

2.1.1. Positioning the Framework within the Sociological Landscape of Generation

In general, “the concept of generations is an old one, dating back a few thousand years” (Burnett, 2016, p. 4) and “the concept generation, like the phenomenon of generations, is almost as old as humanity itself” (Jansen, 1974, p. 90). In general, generation is used to describe “human self-understandings as experiencing life as collective and individual” which inevitably “occurs in slices of time” (Burnett, 2016, p. 9).

For sociological analysis[17], more specifically, the concept of generation is far from being straightforward. In literature, there are numerous scholars (Carlsson & Karlsson, 1970; Jaeger, 1985; Kertzer, 1983; Kriegel & Hirsch, 1978; Ryder, 1965; Spitzer, 1973) who produced canonical works of the field that have pointed out this difficulty. They argued varying interpretations, interchangeable uses; and criticized vague conceptualizations, inadequate operationalizations, as well as tendency to treat

[17] To distinguish the sociological approaches from the popular but shallow uses, two aspects come to forefront. First is the distinction between birth cohorts and generations. Although the cohort meaning is widely used in the literature in various contexts for operationalization purposes; on the other hand, the ultimate aim is to trace generational identity, based on shared cultural and political meanings. Being born within a period does not automatically turn any group into generation, which means birth cohort might only have limited place in sociological analysis. Second is the emphasis on heterogeneity within the group characteristics. Most of the rigorous remarkable sociological works of generations, the analytical lens is systematically open to the social diversifications within the groups and does not assume a default homogeneity between distinct generations, like in the popular framings of GenX, GenY, GenZ. Explaining both conflicts and continuities among distinct generations, a rigorous reference to intragenerational social differences are given. Whether through the idea of Mannheimian “generation units” or other classical sociological analysis categories, intragroup diversities are necessarily addressed.

generation synonymously with cohort, age, life stage, historical period or even class. Scholars note that the term is often underspecified and sometimes used to obscure ongoing political conflicts. Yet, generational analysis has still a considerable potential to offer a fruitful body of knowledge; on the condition that its theory and methodology is grounded sound and clearly (Purhonen, 2016, p. 109; Roberts & France, 2021, p. 789).

In the discussion that follows, with the aim of positioning the generational approach in this study into literature, I go through the conceptual debates within sociological approaches to be able to constitute the core dimensions for the upcoming chapters of methodology as well as analysis. The corresponding organization manner adopted here is a thematical one. I organized the discussion around conceptual nodes where the debates in literature are most densely knotted because the framework is constructed through resolving these nodes.

Karl Mannheim's theory marks a breakthrough in the sociology of generations literature, i.e. making it possible to divide the literature into two as pre-Mannheim and post-Mannheim periods. Therefore, before delving into the details of his theory, it is required to show how he reviewed and reflected the problematic regarding generations until him and how he changed the problematic for the benefit of sociological framing. Therefore, the first following sub-title shows this change while next ones point out the other conceptual nodes in the literature.

2.1.1.1. The Changing Problematic of Framing Generations

Jonathan White argues that "depictions of the world in generational terms, for analytical and practical purpose, are a relatively modern phenomenon" (2013, p. 218). By describing as "relatively modern phenomenon", White states that the concept of social change is redefined through the "new metrics" of economic development, which are not cyclic anymore, but linear. In that regard, usage of the life course defined by age came to the forefront since human life started to be redescribed in a biological causality ground. Accordingly, role of youth in society also became dominant as the social agents and guarantors of the continuity of the development (White, 2013, pp. 218–219).

Despite its contemporary widespread cultural usage including popular usages, the concept of generation has been largely overlooked, or at best remained ambivalent, within the mainstream sociological perspectives and stayed with its "undervalued legacy" (Pilcher, 1994) since it has not been put at the core of the discipline by classical sociological perspectives as other established concepts like class, gender or ethnicity. However, though it did not draw universal scholarly attention when it has firstly been published in 1928 and it took considerable time for it to translate to English in 1952 (Kingstone, 2024, p. 42); at the beginning of 20th century, Karl Mannheim wrote one of the most influential texts of sociology of generation: "The Problem of Generations" (1928/2017).

As can be read from his seminal article (Mannheim, 1928/2017), there are two distinct schools of thought in the view of the term generation at the beginning of the 20th century. First is the positivist school of thought, in which he reviewed the works of the scholars like Auguste Comte (sociologist and philosopher, founder of the theory of positivism), Augustin Cournot (economist and mathematician), Justin Dromel (lawyer and sociologist), Francois Mentre (sociologist and philosopher), as well as other European authors like Giuseppe Ferrari (Italian philosopher, historian and politician) or Ottokar Lorenz (Austro-German historian and genealogist); school of whom "based its activities/logic on quantitative research techniques, formulating the idea that the principle of political continuity can be translated in terms of the biological continuity of generations" (Popescu, 2019, p. 17). Therefore, it should first be noted that this school of thought formulated the problem around the continuity of the status quo and the existing system.

Though the idea for the transfer of political continuity is not new, i.e. can also be traced back to Middle Age Christian thought (Burnett, 2016, p. 16); as Mannheim (1928/2017, p. 352) gives the example of Hume's frame, biological ground and periodically systematized metrics of defining political continuity could be counted as new for that time. Thus, the corresponding methodological choice of this school is to measure the theoretically defined generational problem in quantitative terms.

In this frame, another scholar, August Comte associated tempo of progress with average length of life of a person and consequently the life length of a generation.

Here, recurring rates of progress have been seen as a numerical and proportional function of a mean value of life variable. Furthermore, at the core of realist-positivist approach, there exists the ultimate research goal of formulating the universal law of historical evolution rhythm in terms of biological life length and cyclical succession depending on it. In parallel, members of this school of thought labored for the measurement of length for a new generation to emerge in years (Popescu, 2019, p. 18). As Mannheim himself discusses, Mentre starts his studies with the hypothesis that each 30 years a new generation is produced, by following the coined problematic by Comte (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 354). Thus, in direction of asserted problematic on generations as political continuity, this school has been studied on the universal and abstract social laws of the rhythm of historical evaluation, which is grounded on a biological basis and cyclic production of new generations.

The second school of thought, on the other hand, is historical-romantic school predominantly influenced by Wilhelm Dilthey, German historian, sociologist and philosopher. This school has problematized the issue from a temporal aspect. The members of the second school criticized mechanistic equally pounding temporal basis by proposing an alternative temporal view, namely "interior time" as subjectively elapsing and in parallel which is methodologically based on qualitative methodologies.

This view of interior time has remarkable implications on generation theory. One implication is that members of the society who witness the same historical era may not be indeed experiencing "the same". According to Mannheim's account, this view "shifts the discussion from a plane on which it risked degenerating into a kind of arithmetical mysticism to the sphere of interior time which can be grasped by intuitive understanding." (1928/2017, p. 357). On this ground, Dilthey states that the core of problematic about generations is the coexistence of multiple generations with different pools of experience, rather than successions or continuation, by emphasizing the "socially distinct" manner of framing it, rather than kinship-descent meaning. In this way, Mannheim finds the ground for framing generation in its cohort context, which is for him, a social group of peers affected by a shared pool of cultural means.

However, Mannheim does not adopt the framing of this school as such. He defines the second school's move as mere replacement of subjective experience with the mathematical variables, and states that it is possible to find a determinism, similar to that of first school's, to some extent. In other words, according to Mannheim, while the logic of causality remains the same with the one that posed by the first school, i.e. at the individual level as unit of analysis; differently from the first school, just quantitative variables have been changed with the qualitative variables (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 357). However, he also sees a potential to build his own sociological view on this "experiential ground", but this ground is required to be constructed vis-à-vis social time, depending on one's position in the society.

In sum, as we have learnt from Mannheim's review, while the positivistic school framed "the problem of generations" depending on the logic of "spacing of generations" by the positivist school, which stated and explained by Burnett (2016, p. 33) as "the timespan and borders of social generations"; historical-romantic school, on the other hand, by criticizing positivistic view of time as seeing it external and objective; frames time on the basis of experience as both internal and subjective. Distinct approaches of the two schools are very well conceptualized by historian Hans Jaeger (1985) as "pulse-rate hypothesis" and "imprint hypothesis", respectively; by looking at their focus of problematization. Jager states that while the first school focuses on measuring the "laws" of automatically feeding new groups to society in the form of generations, the second school focused on their "imprints" as per unique interpretation of time by each generation as distinct social groups.

As a different approach both from positivistic and historical-romantic school, generation sociologists of the 20th century adopted Mannheim's critical frame on both schools, and in this way, their studies represented the first seeds of disciplinary sociological framing of generation. These researchers did not deny the biological limiters, i.e., they accept simple biological truth stating human life is restricted by birth and death; however, at the same time, they ground the fundamental core of their theory on socio-cultural repertoire shared by the peers, i.e. people from similar life stages. In this way, this approach made it possible to study generations in the discipline of sociology both grounded on the idea of cohort although not limited to it,

operationalized by the peers as the members of a generation, and culturally-politically similar experiential repertoire. In this way, with this systematic contribution, the causality of the problematic shifted from biological determinism or mysticism, towards producing sociological explanations referring to the social position and shared socio-cultural aspects of the generational repertoire.

Research on generations continued to be an intriguing topic also among the sociologists in post-Mannheim period of 1960s and 1970s, soon after American sociologists and political sociologists draw their attention to power asymmetries and social relations between different age groups living in the same society, by uncoupling generations with their lifestyles, social positions and worldviews. As a "second generational theory considered a reference point in the study of the concept of generation", also known as "functionalist model", Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Talcott Parsons developed a functionalist model which emphasizes intergenerational conflict occurring due to age differences between different generations. In this model, as a different interpretation of Mannheim's frame and closer to the positivistic framings, age is conceptualized as the main factor making difference in the distribution of social roles, that is, it addresses social and cultural features of a person and determining that person's social roles.

As can be seen from this brief history of change in the problematic, with Karl Mannheim's contribution, the problematic shifted to sociological ground which in his words very well explained as: "any biological rhythm must work itself out through the medium of social events" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 361). However, as can be seen from even the discussion up until here, kinship-descent, cohort, contemporaneity, coevalness, life stage, age groups, social change are the nodes that the discussions are revolving around. To clarify related position of the study, the following titles elaborate on them.

2.1.1.2. Generation as Cohort vs. Generation as Kinship-Descent

As mentioned at the very beginning of generation part in this chapter, first address of the term is the kinship-descent, which can even be traced back to the Bible and

excerpts regarding inheritance, rights and power between siblings within the context of "true line" of descent (Burnett, 2016, p. 15). Though kinship-descent meaning is still relevant in sociological analysis, on the other hand, in especially the studies of cultural transmission or post-memory (Hirsch, 2012), it is relatively new and child of modernity when compared to its primary and profound kinship reference (Burnett[18], 2016, p. 15; Kriegel & Hirsch, 1978, pp. 24–25; Pilcher, 1994, p. 481; White, 2013, p. 218), when compared to with its present-day uses to indicate a group of "socially distinct coevals", i.e. the definition of social generation as various forms of cohort. Accordingly, while the pre-modern kinship-descent meaning address the almighty gods whose agency is realized through human beings, contemporary approaches to generations are rather framed as humanly and earthly activity, at the core of which there is competent human agency capable of making the history in the form of perpetually fed human generations.

In the contemporary literature, in its kinship-descent context, generation refers to a vertical lineage within the family structure: from grandparents to parents and to children. The underlying temporality here is biological and mostly recursive, organized through the predictable succession of reproductive units. As David Kertzer (1983) notes, descent-based generations operate through a logic of vertical substitution, where genealogical distance serves as the primary criterion of distinction. This meaning dominated pre-modern and early modern discourse, in which generational succession expressed continuity of authority, inheritance, and kinship-based obligation. The unit of analysis here is the family, socio-biological reality is grounded, which mostly looks at cultural transmission, is grounded through it. On the other hand, the cohort meaning of generation marks a horizontal position in historical time and suitable for those who want to look at the diversities within. Here,

[18] It worth nothing that these two approaches, as kinship descent and cohort, are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, there are also more sophisticated contemporary approaches merging the two meanings. Namely, Judith Burnett, at the beginning of her book "Generations: The Time Machine in Theory and Practice" (2016) integrates the two. For her, generationality dimension has a dual temporality as personal temporality and socio-historical temporality intersecting within each other. Throughout the book, she shows that these two analytically distinct categories become integrated with each other like intersecting axes of an analytical plane: On the vertical axis, there is kinship descent and familial relations of contemporaries and on the horizontal one, there is socio-historical relations of coevals. At the intersection of these two, contemporary person and its personhood stand in the context of generation. Although being an innovative one, the broader implications generated by this approach are not pursued within the scope of this study.

members of a generation are defined not by kinship ties but by shared exposure to the same socio-political and cultural conditions, typically anchored through "common destiny", i.e. a potential proximity by the similar chance of experiences. This formulation reflects the modern shift toward linear and historical temporality, that is, individuals are grouped because they experience major societal transformations such as industrialization, political upheavals, technological change, within a similar phase of their life course. Methodologically, it allows designing a study by interviews with people who do not constitute a concrete social community. Mannheim theorizes this as "generational location", i.e. the structural potential created when contemporaries confront the same historical events from comparable social positions. Cohort-based generations thus rely not on descent but rather on coevalness and contemporaneity at the same time.

As the two meanings function through different causation mechanisms; in the first one, generational difference is a property of biological succession mostly, while in the second, generational difference is rather contingent, socially constructed and historically varying. While the first is mostly used for highlighting continuity and transmission, as the second emphasizes discontinuity and differentiation. Here, in this study, operationalization is based on the second meaning, i.e. the cohort meaning. Also in this study, familial relations remain outside the scope, instead, the societal processes linking personal recollections of more macro historical changes are at stake.

At this point, a closer glance to the term cohort[19] is needed. The term has been frequently used in Roman antiquity, addressing "a division within a legion" (Mason & Fienberg, 1985/2012, p. 1). In the most inclusive meaning, cohort means "group or aggregates defined by point of entry into a social system" (Mason & Fienberg, 1985/2012, p. 1). According to The SAGE Dictionary of Sociology, cohort "Originally a term for a unit of the Roman army (10 of which made up a legion), this

[19] It should be noted that for a study adopting a Mannheimian generation framework, it would be contradictory to say that generation is merely equal to cohort. However, the idea of cohort is necessary to make a fieldwork for sociological research on generation possible. For this study, the idea of cohort is used for the purposes of operationalization, but the ultimate idea is not to research mechanistically "cohort effect", but social formation of a generation.

is now used to describe any group of people with the same time-specific experiences: for example being born, entering university or joining the police force in a particular year." (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p. 40). Whether in a military context or a social setting, a cohort refers to a subgroup defined by a specific criterion. For social sciences and especially contemporary sociology, depending on the research purposes, "point of entry" could be defined by birth date alone or could be defined with an additional criterion for shared experience in the different themes of study. This criterion could be a single event (like in the example of COVID-19 pandemic) or a historical period or an environment (like in the example of an education cohort) or a professional cohort. The core idea here is to capture and explain the structurally conditioned[20] shared experiences due to the exposure of the same time span. Consequently, it is possible that a cohort can be defined as a multiple combination of these, again, depending on the intended area, purpose and the scope of the study; yet it does not have necessarily to point out only "birth cohort".

Among other various cohort definitions, birth cohort refers to a group of people born within the same year interval. Definition of generation only depending on the birth cohort is the strong legacy of positivistic school of thought, projected on disciplinary studies of sociology depending on the sound methodology of Durkheimian school as well as popular framing that we commonly come across through the media. Here, when the research aims are thought, methodological choice reveals itself. It is logical for a demographer who is aiming at researching social change through quantitative methodologies to frame the generation with an empirical anchor of birth cohort alone. Whether positivistic or interpretive, the choice depends on the research aims and strategy.

Accordingly, depending on the research aims and strategy, it is also possible to define a generation through an event marking a historical period (as in the example of 12 September military coup or Gezi protests), a historical-event cohort in other words, and defining a cohort, i.e., group of people whose experience are likely to be

[20] This phrase addresses the overarching historical contingency of human birth and life for which the individual human agency remains inevitably negligible. By quoting Goethe, historian Hans Jaeger (1985, p. 274) states that "Anybody born only a decade earlier or later might have become a completely different person as far as his own education and sphere of action are concerned."

shared because of witnessing the same historical period and the corresponding research aim to analyze the social dimension of the shared attachment formed among the members by this exposure.

In sum, after these warnings, in sociology, birth year can be thought of an empirical estimate of a historical exposure pointing out witnessing the same period of structural change, i.e. representing the determining power of historical-social context, rather a number with an intrinsic value. It remains rather as an outcome, an empirical indicator of historical exposure, not necessarily a starting point with an independent value in and of itself. On top of that, for a study looking at sociological formation of a generation, the main aim is to look at how the shared meanings construct generational identity rather than looking at which tendency among age, period and cohort effects comes to the forefront when the other two are taken as controlled variable in the case of demographic studies.

2.1.1.3. Coevalness vs. Contemporaneity

At the heart of generation with its cohort meaning, there is "socially distinct coevals" as the measure of imprint, which brings another key distinction is necessary for framing the generations, namely the coevalness and contemporaneity. Although both concepts refer to simultaneity, they highlight different modes of it.

Contemporaneity refers to witnessing the same historical period independent from the particular life stage which members are at, which was researched previously in the literature as "period effect". In this way, a period is a capacity to leave a mark on the contemporaries who are at different life stages. On the other hand, even when different groups of people witness the same historical "present", they experience it through different temporalities. Pinder's famous "non-contemporaneity of contemporaries" (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*) formulation, as reviewed by Mannheim: "different generations live at the same time. But since experienced time is the only real time, they must all in fact be living in qualitatively quite different subjective eras" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 358) also points out this fact.

Coevalness, on the other hand, is key to sociological framing of generations and addresses not only being at the similar life stages but also sharing the socio-historical experience of a given time. The idea here is to take a group of people whose experiences are likely to be similar through the coevalness criteria (for example for university students), which constitutes the context of the idea of cohort for generation theory (Pina-Cabral & Theodossopoulos, 2022, pp. 456–457).

Being coeval requires both the criteria of being peers and being affected by the conditions of the same age, i.e. being contemporaries. In other words, coevals are contemporaries at the same time, while contemporaries are not necessarily coevals. Consequently, according to Mannheim and other scholars following him, though witnessing the same historical period, since span of experience differs at each life stage, only coevals may have a chance to share a common history, paving the way from the idea of contemporaneity to coevalness one more time.

To illustrate, as one of the early generation theorists, Jose Ortega y Gasset (Spanish essayist and philosopher from 20th century, as one of Mannheim's contemporaries) frames generation by putting the idea of coevalness at the center, differently however, centering the birth date and sees generations as mechanically produced aggregates by the social system. People born within the same period share a common history, which allows for the distinction of social groups based on cohort-specific determinants. Consistently with Mannheim's approach, Ortega y Gasset stated that each generation has their "special mission" despite the fact that this mission may remained as "unachieved" (Kertzer, 1983, p. 128).

In sum, for a Mannheimian framework for researching generations, in its general meaning coevalness is the key since the experiences of peers are likely to be similar (as per the theoretical translation of the relative inner experiencing of time to sociology), rather than all members of the society witnessing the same historical period. At this point, the question is which group of coevals from which life stage of theirs are significant to be able to talk about formation of a generation, which channelizes us to the next title.

2.1.1.4. Life Stage vs. Age Groups

In the previous title, it has been shown that generation as cohort is grounded in the idea of coevalness, i.e. being positioned similarly in biographical internal time. Up until here, this establishes the temporal basis of cohort membership. However, the question of which specific life stage makes the witnessing of a historical period capable of producing a meaningful generational imprint still remains unanswered. To put it another way, the question of biographical stage through which historical experience becomes generation has not yet been addressed.

James J. Dowd (1980), from the post-Mannheimian era, states in his study that in 1980s, early studies of generationality differentiate aging and cohort effects as mutually exclusive social phenomena. This created a methodological problem since maturation effects and cohort effects go hand in hand. Excluding one of them and researching it as a controlled variable is problematic since it remains insufficient to explain the social ground of it. Any research intending to explain differences between generations requires to consider these three factors, age, period and cohort together (Dowd, 1980, p. 214). Likewise, "ontogenetic change/biological maturation" just partially influences age change. To be able to design qualified research on generations, Dowd proposes an integrated approach to empirical research with strong theoretical ground. Interestingly, he view Mannheimian framework "invariably cited but rarely used as a framework for analysis" (Dowd, 1980, p. 216). In this regard, Dowd mentions Mannheimian idea of "fresh contact" and its effects on life stages and shows that if social change is to be explained through generational differences, researchers need to consider age stages of a person and socio-cultural meanings of them. In this study, he declares the fundamental finding as the effects of time on individual values are mediated by cohort membership. That is, "more recent birth cohorts evidence relatively greater value change than older cohorts" (Dowd, 1980, p. 216). One could see the integrative cohort and aging, period and cohort effects formulated as a research question. Dowd's intervention does not offer an alternative theory of generations, but rather exposes the limits of treating life stage, cohort, and period as analytically separable variables.

Here again, there is an age-related discussion point. Even though it seems so, age as a number does not have enough capacity in and of itself to indicate the life stage of a person. As stated previously, it is rather a proxy for indicating the life stage. Accordingly, the sociological frame adopted by Mannheim is different from popular framings blamed to be "horoscope-like", merely depending on birth date. To explain, Kriegel & Hirsch (1978, p. 28) state that "no one can escape the reality of belonging to an age group". They differentiate age as a number and seniority as a life stage, since "age is only a countable objective datum" and cannot capture the entire sociological meaning of seniority. As stated previously in this text, other types of cohorts might include the age dimension secondarily, but at the core, there are other social descriptive elements. The same goes for the life stage discussion. In these cases, a definition for the agglomeration of people is done by a sociological description criterion.

What remains unresolved in Dowd's and other integrated approaches, however, is how specific life stages acquire generational significance beyond statistical interaction effects on the condition that it coincides with broader processes of social and political transformation, rather than being reducible to age alone. It is precisely this unresolved question that Mannheim's concept of fresh contact addresses. Although Mannheim develops the idea of "fresh contact" (which will be discussed in detail in in a separate title) primarily as a mechanism tied to the temporal positioning of cohorts, it also implicitly identifies which life stage is critical for generational formation: the youth, as an important stage of life. In this discussion, Mannheim does not argue that the youth automatically produce generations. Rather, the youth mark a biographical threshold at which historical experience is more likely to be encountered as formative, on the condition that it coincides with broader processes of social and political transformation, as previously stated. Therefore, generational context of life stage in sociology of generations field is not the discussion of stages of human development stated by psychology or other related disciplines; rather, it marks the experience of first encountering a historical moment which is a biographical threshold through which generational consciousness becomes possible. For this reason, fresh contact provides the conceptual bridge that links Mannheim's theory to contemporary discussions on life stage and age groups.

2.1.2. Further Positioning of the Framework: Conceptual Boundaries

2.1.2.1. APC Studies

For a researcher aiming to study generations sociologically, there are various concepts, definitions, studies in the literature from multidisciplinary areas. Between these piles of knowledge, navigating the way is not quite easy. Consequently, by looking at the discussions up until here, the debate clusters are not quite mutually exclusive from each other. Rather, they are converging, intersecting, and have even hard to separate parts within.

At this point, to be able to further position the study in the literature, I bring a critical discussion from sociology of generations literature on how to operationalize generation, initiated by the canonical article of American demographer and sociologist Norman B. Ryder, "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change" (1965). He is the first scholar who is problematizing Mannheim's framing by defining it "exhaustive" (Kertzer, 1983; Popescu, 2019); and in parallel with his research aims as a demographer, he suggests to narrow the sociological framing of generation down into a single one, to "the descent of kinship", i.e. "the succession of individuals who pass through a social system and that the concept of life stage actually defines a certain segment of an individual's life" (Popescu, 2019, p. 21). For Ryder, conflating generation with either cohort or life stage is problematic, just as it would be inappropriate to use cohort in the place of life stage. He suggests rigid boundaries of cohort for the sake of clarity of some kind and of generation as well, by differentiating the terms cohort and generation as mutually exclusive concepts. At the cost of narrowing its meaning, Ryder was certain on the idea that the term generation must be used just for kinship descent while cohort must be used for groups of socially distinct people as agents of social change. In this perspective, the way of operationalizing generation as cohort is deliberately closed for the sake of "conceptual clarity". However, as we read from Kertzer (1983, p. 128), a considerable number of researchers who operationalizing generation with the idea of cohort referred Ryder, despite the fact that he stated exact the opposite. Kertzer points out the misinterpretation and defines this tendency in the literature as "ironic".

Kertzer did not completely agree with Ryder on rigidly separating generation and cohort as mutually exclusive categories, but he finds the warning valuable.

Here, first, Ryder's view is explicitly designed to narrow down the meaning of the term generation into the domain of cultural transmission only, primarily for analytical clarity. Also, Kertzer's warning is especially for universality and generalizability. Obviously, neither Ryder's model is adopted in this study, nor Kertzer's generalizability is applicable for this study. However, taking into consideration of both warnings to some extent is critical to position the study in literature.

There is an illustrative distinction that Ryder made, which is designed to distinguish separate the effects from one another which was referred in the demographic studies as age-period-cohort (APC) model. In these studies, the primary aim is to separate age effect, period effect and cohort effect from each other on looking at which one is more significant for the selected case. Period effect highlights the power of a historical era to leave a considerable mark on people, regardless of their age or cohort. Secondly, age effect is the power of the particular life stage, represented by the number that the group is at. Finally, cohort effect is the power of long-term shared tendencies of a group of people whose experiences are similar. Age effect and cohort effect are differentiated from each other at the point that the latter is mostly researched by the longitudinal studies which monitor a group of people born at the same year throughout a span of time. Age effect, on the other hand, focuses on youth, seniority etc., i.e. mostly the different stages of human life, including proximity of birth dates but focusing on the stage of life. For the APC model to be workable, there requires a case or phenomenon for which these three have both potential effects but need to be distinguished in terms of statistical significancy. As can be seen, there is a completely different model of causation here than this study aims to adopt, and the discussion is added solely for the purpose of conceptual clarification.

By contrast, for the Mannheim's generation theory adopted in this study, although there is a theoretical place for the idea of life stage, only focusing on a certain life

stage is not enough for generational formation. Biologically grounded formulations of life stage are only marked as “false problem” by himself. The idea of period effect could only be a starting point for generation as location, in other words, he only used its translated form to his generational formation theory. Rather, it represents “the potential” for forming a generation. Similarly, cohort effect (though seems the most proximate idea from APC studies), again, could only find itself in such studies including this one, in a “translated form” within the concept of generation as location, and eventually can only be a starting point for researching the generational formation. Therefore, Mannheim’s social formation theory sits in a different sociological ground, which is distant from demographics’ mechanistic world discussed above.

Schuman and Scott’s canonical work (1989) on generations and collective memories exemplifies rather a “hybrid model” and it is illustrative for any researcher to turn generational formation into a researchable project. As can be seen from the footnote at page 359 in the article, while they refer to Ryder’s descriptive definition of cohort, they try to depart from his conceptual strictness. Their project investigates “formative events and changes that cohorts are assumed to have experienced in the past and to carry with them into the present” (Schuman & Scott, 1989, p. 360) Thus, they shift the analytical focus from demographic aggregation to the mnemonic traces that may distinguish generations from one another. By empirically identified differences in recalled public events, they argue that cohorts may be redefined “generationally”, if collective memories show qualitative distinctiveness. This framework effectively extends cohort analysis into interpretive domain, which is an extension more compatible with Mannheim’s emphasis on experiential structures than Ryder’s demographic purism. As per their reference to Ryder and Mannheim at the same time, their model occupies a hybrid one: engaged with Mannheimian concerns regarding experiential formation oriented toward potential generational formation through shared memory but operationalized the generation depending on the rigid definition of cohort by demographers.

It could be said that this idea is suitable for this study to adopt with one nuance: Ryder’s cohort idea which is strictly separated from Mannheimian generation theory

could not be applicable for generation research which aims to look at "generation effect"[21] or formation of a generation both are grounded on Mannheimian theory. In other words, Ryder differentiates his approach strictly from Mannheim's approach which makes these two not quite referrable at the same time in single research on generations. Though he wrote his article years before Schuman and Scott's work, Kertzer's identification as "ironic" is also important since a study grounding itself on Mannheimian ground cannot be grounded on Ryder's strict differentiation at the same time. Aligned partially with Ryder's clarification urge, Kertzer emphasizes that each of these terms as well as combinations of them addresses different social processes and should not be conflated. He also warns against applying genealogical definitions of generation to population-wide analyses, noting that individuals with the same kinship descent may differ in age and historical experience. From Kertzer's interpretation, hybrid models such as Schuman and Scott's are methodological compromises that obscure the conceptual boundaries necessary for analytic clarity. In conclusion, here lies the crucial warning: Idea of cohort can primarily and legitimately be used for operationalization purposes for a study depending on Mannheim's theory, rather than demographic measurement of "cohort effect" of any historical period or event.

Before delving into how exactly Mannheim provides analytical lenses to these problematics, there remains only one stop: a criticism on "generationalism" that the recent scholarship has made this discussion impossible to disregard for this study.

2.1.2.2. Recent Criticisms on "Generationalism" Discourse

Generationality dimension in social sciences draws considerable scholarly attention due to its multiplex and tension-filled characteristic as "powerful yet contested" (Bristow, 2024, p. 21). As shown in this text as well, generation, as a term "with no well-known, unitary definition that sometimes creates confusion in social sciences and humanities" (Popescu, 2019, p. 15); opened a great deal of conceptual

[21] This term is also used by Fırat et. al. (2017) to indicate the crystallized memories but as can be seen from the discussion here, it holds a completely different approach from quantitative investigation of age, period or cohort effects.

discussions, seemingly complex but in fact quite rich in content. Although this study does not primarily theorize generations as discourse, engaging with these debates is analytically necessary, as they constitute the epistemological conditions under which generational analysis is conducted. Consequently, it is worth noting that, one of the promises of this study is to see generationality dimension as "a site of material political contestation" (Little & Winch, 2024, p. 100), without standing at a point that is systematically blind to the fact that it is also a problem of representation with its discursive material. This perspective makes generations more than uniform social groups but a web of social, political and cultural replies which have both an experiential, i.e. concretely lived; and discursive, i.e. negotiated bases. Therefore, it is required to distinguish generationality dimension from generationalism as a risky discourse for sociology and elaborate on the latter to clarify the former. This distinction does not aim to dismiss generational analysis, but to specify the theoretical conditions under which it can be sociologically meaningful.

When the recent literature (mostly in the last five years from 2020 to 2025) on sociology of generation is reviewed; a significant amount of progressive and challenging perspectives within the field draw attention through the criticisms of "generationalism" in the English-speaking world. This discourse has been referred as "use of poorly defined ideas about generations to act as metanarratives for a host of social issues and problems, which may be better understood in other ways" (Ruspini, 2024, pp. vii–viii) and as "the systematic appeal to the concept of generation in narrating the social and political (Wohl, 1979)" (White, 2013, p. 216) as well as "a simplified and exaggerated view of generations" (Purhonen, 2016, p. 96). Here, the criticism is about the ways in which other political and social problems are systematically abstained from being addressed, by covering with "generationalism" discourse. Issues like economic and social inequalities, problems of youth and gender relations and demographic ageing are being misrepresented as intergenerational conflicts. It turns the discourse itself into a political issue in knowledge production process.

Nevertheless, at this point, it is necessary to avoid two possible misinterpretations here: Firstly, these criticisms are not brand new, having the roots "back to the early

20th century in Europe" and also "is still found today" both "in popular discourse and in academic studies" (Purhonen, 2016, p. 96), as was already stated previously under this title. Secondly, it is far from questioning the existence of the generationality dimension, i.e. existence of "generational identity" (Erll, 2014, p. 387) and generational analysis as such. It should be noted that any study who choose to see the social reality from generation aspect, by definition, includes "generationalism" discourse to some extent. Since every study is a labor of producing a scientific discourse, it is not possible to escape it. In other words, it is also valid for any concept that an academic discourse is intended to be produced. In sum, these critiques should not be read as a rejection of generationality as an analytical dimension, nor as a denial of generational identity or generational analysis as such since any study that chooses to approach social reality from a generational perspective inevitably produces a discourse.

The ongoing criticism about ambiguous uses of the term has also manifested within the context of neoliberalism and its political agenda. One of the most recent books written in English speaking world, in the book *Studying Generations* (eds. Kingstone & Bristow, 2024), in her article "Sociology and the Problem of 'Social Generations'", Jennie Bristow states that "the danger of generationalism", as the abuse of the concept generation, is related with its homogenizing discourse which blurs social differences and conflicts based other sociological categories like class, gender, geographical location, ethnicity etc. (2024, pp. 31–32). In this way, social conflicts having other social aspects are reduced to so-called intergenerational conflicts. Different generations with popular names such as GenX, Boomers, millennials or GenZ are used to describe groups of people in satirized presentations, who are most of the time in a natural and given conflict between their elderly. Bristow (2019) states elsewhere that this approach shows itself as "boomer blaming" as condemning boomers taking credits for themselves especially in the social policy areas using their demographic and cultural power. In fact, intergenerational relations having multiple economic and social aspects is reduced to so-called generational conflicts between boomers and the younger generations as "generational inequity"; on top of that, boomers as a homogenous group is blamed by creating the very conditions of this inequity (Bristow, 2024; Kingstone, 2024).

In these discourses, a birth cohort, i.e. a group of people born in a pre-described period; has been described in such a homogenizing way that as if class, gender, race and ethnicity stratifications are not socially significant or relevant. Furthermore, intergenerational relations represented in such a way that as if they intrinsically and naturally includes young and old conflict, in which the former is fixed in a victimized inferior position and also certain essential features of description are attributed to both age groups (Kingstone, 2024, pp. 51–52).

Bristow also adds the example of media representations on "COVID generation" from the similar critical lines by stating that asserted label does not state who is really pointed out: Does this "generation" include all babies, children and young people who are alive during the pandemic or is the coming-of-age cohort formerly called "GenZ" at stake? Although it is also possible to talk about other forms of cohort like historical cohort, case cohort etc. other than birth cohort or age cohort (Porta, 2016); these critical questions point out a confusion for reasoning the choice of criteria that are used to include groups of people to the analysis that also can be observed in quick and surficial "GenX", "GenY", "GenZ", "Boomers" definitions. In other words, the criticism on "COVID generation" here is not on the type of definition itself as event cohort but insufficiently discussed aspects of the definition. As the conceptual boundaries are not clear, there is also another absent pillar of spatiality in "COVID generation" discourse: Does this "generation" exist outside of British context? (2024, p. 34). Both in cohort and generation studies there is a spatial dimension to be indicated about where "the story" takes place, in addition to temporal dimension (Çelik, 2022). In general, the examples point out systematically overlooked diversities in the experiences of people defined as a generation.

Jonathan White also states that "generationalism" discourse, as a master-narrative "bridging science and normativity", could be used to hide diversities and lead to a "deterministic conception of human agency" (2013, p. 217). In addition to other scholars' analysis, he starts with pointing out the continuities of "generationalism" discourse at the beginning of 20th century with the contemporary "generationalism" discourse. In the 20th century, the Industrial Revolution required measuring the social change with the new metrics as a part of developmentalist approach. As can be

predicted, one of these new metrics is the concept generation, that has been frequently addressed in youth studies. Young people, as continuously reproduced members of the society in the form of new generations, have been seen as main political agent of social development in the previous "generationalism" discourse. In parallel, most of the works have pointed out the relation between generation and social change. On the other hand, contemporary "generationalism" discourse, while assigning a historical and social role to young people and building political discourses over the term generation; young people as "new generations" are not seen as social and political groups capable of asserting autonomy over their future or independent political builders of the history but viewed as reproducers and instruments of the status quo, or at best as victimized social groups who are having huge loss of rights. Across the critique until here, generationalism emerges less as a problem of naming generations, and more as a mode of explanation that substitutes generational labels for structural inequalities.

As can be seen in this brief overview, the criticism revolves around "the one-sided application of 'the social generations paradigm' tends to flatten out difference in the young people's experience and distract scholarly and political attention from more significant sociological divisions." (Bristow, 2024, p. 23). On the other hand, nearly all mentioned scholars give the credit for the potential embedded in generationality aspect. For instance, Purhonen gives this credit as follows: "This is not to argue, of course, that the concept of generation is worthless." (Purhonen, 2016, p. 109). Likewise, Robert and France highlights the potentialities within the concept "generation unit" as the concept in generation theory addressing the diversities within a generation : "Similarly, rather than a wholesale abandonment of 'generational unit', we have pointed to the work of other scholars that lays the foundation for thinking productively about how young people traverse different generational units." (Roberts & France, 2021, p. 789). Another example of credit to Mannheimian view of "generation units" is given by White as "A shift from identity of attributes or consciousness towards commonality of reference-points is generally wise and allows generations to be treated as the site of competing tendencies (cf. Vincent 2005; Klatch 1999)". Also, Bristow and Kingstone edit a whole methodology book about how to design generation research and suitably constitute a

working frame for generational analysis in contemporary contexts. On the other hand, all mentioned writers highlight the importance of a refined methodology as well as adequately articulated conceptual tools to read generational reality.

Taken together, these critiques do not undermine generational analysis, rather reinforce the need for a theoretically grounded framework capable of accounting for both shared historical experience and internal differentiation, that is precisely the problematic that Mannheim's theory seeks to address. Accordingly, in the following title, as the backbone of this study, Mannheim's generation theory and key concepts are discussed in detail.

2.1.3. Karl Mannheim's Generation Theory and Fundamental Concepts: From Generational Debates to an Analytical Framework

2.1.3.1. Fresh Contact as the Intersection of Cohort, Life Stage, and Historical Experience

As demonstrated in the previous sections, sociological framings of generation repeatedly oscillate between various approaches and formulations of the ideas of age, cohort, life stage, and historical period, which often treat these dimensions as analytically separable. In this title, I will discuss the backbone theoretical framework of this study bringing these dimensions into a different problematic, that is namely Mannheimian generation theory, in terms of the node points that were specified in the previous section. Here, it is necessary to demonstrate how his theory takes up and reworks these analytical loads produced by the problematics specified.

Karl Mannheim's pioneering work on generations was presented in the article "The Problem of Generations" (1928/2017). In his review of two distinct schools of thought, on the one hand, he acknowledges the markers of biological life as prerequisites for social life (addressing the simple fact that sociality is impossible without biological existence); on the other hand, Mannheim is not fully convinced of the assumption that society mechanically produces generations in successive rhythms at fixed intervals, as framed by the positivist school. Drawing on this, the vitality of

his work for this study lies in his promise of a sociological ground through which biological time, social position, and historical experience become analytically inseparable. As discussed in the previous sections, attempts to frame generations solely through biological rhythms, kinship-descent, or birth cohorts fail to take into consideration the social conditions under which generational formations emerge. Mannheim's intervention is crucial simply because it neither rejects biological reality behind it nor constructs causality from biological ground. Instead, he insists that "any biological rhythm must work itself out through the medium of social events" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 361). This statement establishes the theoretical ground on which generational analysis can move beyond mechanical and determinist models.

Within this framework, Mannheim does not adopt a kinship-descent understanding of generation as Ryder insistently suggests for generational analysis, nor does he affirm popular or "horoscope-like" framings depending merely on birth dates and continuing automatic production of generations in the case of generationalism discourse. While cohort context remains functional in his theory, it works only as an entry point rather than a sort of effect that needs to be made statistically significant. Age, in this sense, operates as an analytical proxy rather than a determinant. As Kriegel & Hirsch (1978, p. 28) state, "no one can escape the reality of belonging to an age group". They differentiate age as a number and seniority as a life stage, since "age is only a countable objective datum" and cannot capture the entire sociological meaning of seniority, which was also previously discussed in this text. It is the consequence of defining a group of people who are likely to have similar experiences both in terms of life stage and witnessing a remarkable period. It is coevalness, i.e. being positioned similarly in the similar biographical interval, that marks only the initial point. In other words, what matters is not merely being born around the same time and witnessing the same period but rather occupying comparable social positions in their lives while encountering the same historical processes.

This is where Mannheim's framework brings together the analytical nodes mapped in the previous sections. Cohort, life stage, and historical period are not treated as separable variables whose distinct effects can be isolated as in APC studies, but as interdependent conditions that gain sociological significance in their intersection as

“generation effect”. Individuals from different age groups may be contemporaries of the same historical epoch; yet, without sharing a common biographical stage, they do not form a generation. Conversely, sharing a common stage of life without exposure to a transformative historical context does not suffice either. Mannheim thus conceptualizes generation as a sociological cohort, distinct from a mere birth cohort, whose members are coevals and located at a comparable life stage, while simultaneously being exposed to formative historical experiences.

The concept of “fresh contact” names this intersection point for the discussion of cohort, coevalness and life stage. Rather than implying that the youth automatically give rise to generational consciousness, Mannheim treats youth and being young as a biographical threshold at which historical experience is more likely to be encountered as formative, provided that it converges with broader social and political transformations. Fresh contact therefore does not denote a psychological trait of youth, but a structural social condition under which historical events become generationally meaningful. In this sense, Mannheim offers a theoretical resolution to the problem left open in integrative approaches (such as Dowd’s): he does not merely explain that the effects of age, period, and cohort interact with each other, but how specific life stages acquire generational significance.

Then, the question is what this idea of “fresh contact” indeed is, and how it works both as an important element of theoretical foundation and as a guide point for the operationalization of generational analysis in an empirically designed disciplinary works of sociology. In the fourth section of his article, Mannheim describes “fundamental facts in relation to generations” (1928/2017, p. 367) which are biological in origin but socio-culturally grounded in their causality. In other words, these “facts” are dependent on very ground of life-death and human’s limited and earthly existence, however, as it is indicated in the previous parts, they have a sociological significance. The fact in which he explains the concept “fresh contact” is the sub-section (a), “new participants in the cultural process are emerging, whilst”. In here, the idea of “fresh contact” is introduced as “meeting something anew”, which was theoretically placed as “a changed relationship of distance from the object and a novel approach in assimilating, using and developing the proffered material”

(Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 368). For generational phenomena, fresh contact notifies that new bulk of people are ready to encounter that of life stage for the first time, as others did before, because new members are continually entering into a society. He further elaborates on this:

> Thus the continuous emergence of new human beings in our own society acts as compensation for the restricted and partial nature of the individual consciousness. The continuous emergence of new human beings certainly results in some loss of accumulated cultural possessions; but, on the other hand, it alone makes a fresh selection possible when it becomes necessary; it facilitates re-evaluation of our inventory and teaches us both to forget that which is no longer useful and to covet that which has yet to be won. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 369)

Here, as the idea of fresh contact brings us to the idea of "youth", there is also a footnote at the page 372 worth to discuss, where he highlights the falseness of "the usual assumption uncritically shared by most students of generations, that the younger generation is 'progressive' and the older generation *eo ipso* conservative". Young people's "youngness" here is rather about "freshness" of their contact with the already existing world, which is more in relation with their ability to rethink and reconstruct any movement that they choose to be in. This highlight is important and constitutes a warning for the scholarly or publicly frames which refer to young people with positive or negative labels as such. Both fresh contact and generation are meaningful when it is grounded on experiential plane.

The concept of "fresh contact" has been an influential theoretical and methodological point for the early empirical studies on sociology of generation. As discussed before, in their canonical work, "Generations and Collective Memories" Schuman and Scott (1989) analyzes how individuals from different birth cohorts recall major historical events in American society. Their findings of this quantitative study are influential for the timing of exposure of these historical events across the life course of individuals from different age groups. The central empirical finding is that events experienced during "formative years", i.e. roughly corresponding to late adolescence and early adulthood, comes to the forefront as a tendency in individuals' collective memories. Importantly, the same historical event acquires different meanings depending on the life stage at which it is encountered by the individual which

indicates that historical experience is mediated by biographical stage that the individuals are at.

In parallel, Schuman and Corning (2012) further highlights the importance of the idea of fresh contact, which explicitly links collective memory patterns to the formation of generational identity. Their analysis in this study demonstrates that cohorts which are exposed to distinct historical events during their formative years, conceptualized as "critical period" in this study, develop shared reference points that persist over time and shape political attitudes and social interpretations. Conceptually, they associate this term with Mannheim's "stratification of experience" (Schuman & Corning, 2012, p. 3). As they find, the same historical event (a war, assassination or political crisis) may have been experienced by different age groups; however, events experienced during adolescence and early adulthood become more enduring, central, and provide more normative reference points of reference compared to those experienced in later years. In other words, it is not the "magnitude" of the event, but it is the biographical timing that remains decisive on persons' memory. They conclude that for the construction of generational memory, the critical and impressionable period is the most significant period of member's life. Here once more, the formative years come to the forefront as influential stage of an individual's life through which historical experience becomes generationally meaningful. In this sense, their work resonates with Mannheim's idea of fresh contact.

For this study, the idea of fresh contact is key for looking at the social formation of the Gezi generation. As stated in Fırat et al, this view paves the way to analytically take Gezi protests as a formative event primarily for the young people of that time, who born after 1990 (2017, p. 157), as the literature on the protests demonstrates. This implies that young people at the time constituted a group of coevals whose historical exposure to this period during their formative years or critical period carried the potential for their memories to be crystallized into generational formation. For other age groups, even in the case that they actively participated in the process of the protests, this necessary overlap between biographical stage and historical exposure does not occur. Together with the other age groups, they constitute

contemporaries but not coevals, as they remain outside the borders of generational formation. To be able to look at the generational formation, biographical criterion of being at the years of fresh contact is necessary. This point constitutes one of the key elements both for the theory and operationalization of the present study.

2.1.3.2. Generation as Location

As the reflection of the historical-romantic school's claim on differentiated inner time, in title (c) Mannheim brings the idea of "location". However, this idea of location depending on different courses of inner time is grounded by "the social". For a generation to exist, its members are required to be "similarly located" in the society, which brings the idea of "generation as location"[22].

Mannheim considers coevalness, i.e. being born around the same period, as a necessary sociological condition to define "common location" of a generation. In other words, age as an indicator for life stage proximity (being at a certain life stage for a group of people) is required to speak of a distinct generation. However, this age criterion as a number alone is not sufficient, as it is often assumed in the "popular" considerations of generation defined in the form of birth cohorts, like in the example of defining those born between 1980-1996 as millennials. Mannheim goes beyond these and reveals that a generation is not equal to a certain birth date in and of itself but rather, it is shared "social location" shaped by collective exposure to historical events as it is stated in the introductory paragraph. Accordingly, generational analysis requires an explanation of how and why members, as socially positioned actors, appropriate historical events in specific ways. For generational phenomena, it is the tools of "social location". In parallel, as in his own definition, "correct problematization" of problem of generations by sociology is to say that "According to what we have said so far, the social phenomenon 'generation' represents nothing more than a particular kind of identity of location, embracing related 'age groups' embedded in a historical-social process." (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 367).

[22] An early warning is needed here, even if the dual criteria of fresh contact and coevalness are fulfilled, it may not be possible to talk about a generation. In other words, "generation as location" designates rather a potential reached through retrospective reading, rather than a deterministic destiny point to turn to a generation. This tricky point will further be elaborated and clarified in the part presenting the concept "generation as actuality".

Accordingly, the idea of "social location" (*Lagerung*), turned as "generation location" [23] here, is stated in Mannheim's theory as: "Individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process." (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 365). Here, social location addresses a common four-dimensional spacetime in the course of history, i.e. a shared position within the socio-historical process.

Social location, which will constitute the core idea of generational location later in the article, is differentiated from another social category, "concrete social groups" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 363). Concrete social groups, i.e. family, tribe, sect etc.; are the social groups in which individuals have social proximity and primary social bonds, members of which have concrete knowledge and recognition on each other and sharing a "sense of community", i.e. sharing a conscious will to be a community.

> By a concrete group, then, we mean the union of a number of individuals through naturally developed or consciously willed ties. Although the members of a generation are undoubtedly bound together in certain ways, the ties between them have not resulted in a concrete group. How, then, can we define and understand the nature of the generation as a social phenomenon? (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 364)

As can be seen from the paragraph above, Mannheim is quite clear on the claim that generation (in its location meaning) is different from a concrete social group. Although there exist shared socio-historical elements among the members of a generation, it does not necessarily produce "ties of spatial proximity", which result in "community of life". Generational belonging does not presuppose spatial proximity, reciprocal recognition or sense of community, rather, it refers to shared social location which plots the boundaries of the potential experience without necessary conditions of producing direct social ties. The statement he made here has methodological significancy (in general and for the present study as well): It allows

[23] In the English translation (Mannheim, 1928/2017, Eds. Kurt Heinrich Wolff), this term is introduced as "generation status"; however, despite that, in this section, Mannheim continues to elaborate on location aspect of the generation phenomenon. In the Turkish translation (Mannheim, 1923/2018, Trans. Mustafa Yalçınkaya) as well, this term has been translated as "kuşak yerleşimi" in the title at stake. Because of both reasons, I discuss the term here as "generation location".

researchers to constitute a sample among which primary social bonds are not prioritized.

At the end of the paragraph, he reveals the central question of the article: How to frame a biologically grounded phenomenon with a sociological frame? At this point, it is seen that he grounds the generation theory analogous with social class and stratification theory as:

> An answer may perhaps be found if we reflect upon the character of a different sort of social category, materially quite unlike the generation but bearing a certain structural resemblance to it —namely, the class position *(Klassenlage)* of an individual in society. In its wider sense class-position can be defined as the common 'location' *(Lagerung)* certain individuals hold in the economic and power structure of a given society as their 'lot'. One is proletarian, *entrepreneur*, or *rentier*, and he is what he is because he is constantly aware of the nature of his specific 'location' in the social structure, i.e. of the pressures or possibilities of gain resulting from that position. This place in society does not resemble membership of an organization terminable by a conscious act of will. Nor is it at all binding in the same way as membership of a community *(Gemeinschaft)* which means that a concrete group affects every aspect of an individual's existence. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 364)

As per this paragraph, according to Mannheim, generation is not merely biological or identity-based category, but it principally identifies a position in the social structure, which is about being exposed to common historical era from a structural position. To open this up, Mannheim draws comparison with the concept of class position (*Klassenlage*), which addresses a specific "location" (*Lagerung*) for the individual to be at, in terms of economic and power structure in a society. This, however, is completely different from being a voluntary member of an organization or being a member of a real community (*Gemeinschaft*). In a similar vein, generational belonging is not an explicit identification or ideological affinity as such. Rather, it is grounded in the structural fact of having been exposed to similar socio-historical forces during a comparable biographical stage. In other words, generational affiliation is based on objective positioning of the individual in the social structure, based on individual's contingent encounter with the historical moment. This comparison enables Mannheim to distance his theory from essentialist or culturalist notions of generation and instead offers a framework where generations are seen as

social units later in the article, constituted through historically contingent experiences that potentially give rise to idea of shared consciousness or orientation.

2.1.3.3. Generation as Actuality

While generation as location represents a shared structural positioning within the socio-historical process, generation as actuality refers to the "realized" form of this positioning. Mannheim does not provide a closed definition of actuality, nor does he offer clear criteria through which it can be directly "diagnosed". For an interpretive study concerned with potentially "crystallized" memories and shared meaning-making frameworks, generational actuality cannot be assumed as a given starting point. Instead, it must be reconstructed retrospectively through an analysis of how the past is collectively remembered and framed. What can be assumed as a starting point is the analytical plane of the shared memories which makes this retrospective reading possible. Accordingly, this study does not ask whether a generation exists in an ontological sense, rather, it pursues what ways in which generational commons are constructed through shared memory frames. In this schema, generation as location does not function as a direct cause of generational actuality, but as a prior condition that renders the emergence of such actuality analytically apparent.

2.1.3.3.1. Generational Units and Differentiation Within a Generation's Actuality

As was stated, actuality of a particular generation is not composed of a single homogeneous group. Generation units are the theoretical correspondence of intragenerational heterogeneities. They refer to changing ways of interpreting and meaning making from shared historical conditions. Although generation units may appear contradictory, Mannheim conceptualizes them as the core mechanism through which a generational location is transformed into a "generation as actuality". Generation units, by contradicting, encountering, struggling, cooperating etc. with each other, together constitute the very actuality of a generation. The units are the ideologically and culturally different groupings within a generation, at the level of actuality.

Then the question is how root elements constituting a generation unit emerge. In this issue, for Mannheim, one of the main points to be discussed is "the great similarity in the data making up the consciousness of its members" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 379). This "mental data" belonging to the area of the conscious is sociologically significant since they are shared (or collective).[24] Consequently, they have a group building potential: "The concept of Freedom, for example, was important for the Liberal generation-unit, not merely because of the material demands implied by it, but also because in and through it, it was possible to unite individuals scattered spatially and otherwise." (Mannheim, 1928/2017, pp. 379–380). Although mental data is central, they are the results of another important constructive element: "formative forces". Through a work of a reasoned system of thought can be the "vehicles of formative tendencies" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 380). On top of these concrete "things", what he highlights is the forces that enables us to "identify themselves with a set of collective strivings". He states that:

> The social importance of these formative and interpretive principles is that they form a link between spatially separated individuals who may never come into personal contact at all. Whereas mere common "location" in a generation is of only potential significance, a generation as an actuality is constituted when similarly "located" contemporaries participate in a common destiny and in the ideas and concepts which are in some way bound up with its unfolding. Within this community of people with a common destiny there can then arise particular *generation-units.* These are characterized by the fact that they do not merely involve a loose participation by a number of individuals in a pattern of events shared by all alike though interpreted by the different individuals differently, but an identity of responses, a certain affinity in the way in which all move with and are formed by their common experiences. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 381)

Therefore, it could be said that although grounded by the stratified characteristics of given sociological conditions, generation units appear through a mode of orientation that becomes effective through action. In other words, the given conditions within a generation do not automatically make them generation units, a form of subjectivity activated by the action is needed. On the other hand, though occasionally there may exist concrete groups at the nucleus of them, generation units are not "concrete social

[24] Here, by looking at this theorization logic, it could be said that social stratification elements (like class, gender, ethnicity etc.) are embedded in the idea of generation units.

groups" per se. At the nucleus, concrete social groups may produce and circulate the frames of interpreting political life. However, generation units have a capacity to make broader associations exceeding one single concrete social group through "integrative attitudes and formative principles". Generation units symbolize different political currents in a four-dimensional spacetime.

At the beginning of this title, it is stated that the idea of generation unit is critical for the idea of generation as actuality. To trace the theoretical line from location, actuality is required to pass through the interaction of units. For generation to turn to the form of actuality, it is needed for location, i.e. a potential, to turn to a shared identity. In this process of transformation, for generation as actuality, there can be members with different "modern mentalities" and Mannheim claims that we can count these different mentalities together as a generation as actuality if we make "a further terminological distinction" as "generation units". People with the "common destinies" in their hands form a community, which he names as the event of arising "generation units". The idea of generation unit refers to "the identity of responses" by an "affinity in the way in which all move with and are formed by their common experiences". In other words, each generation unit has a social border differentiated by common experiences within. The relations between the generation units constitute the generation's actuality, as "they are oriented toward each other, even though only in the sense of fighting one another" (Mannheim, 1923/2018, p. 382).

2.1.3.3.2. Entelechy and *Zeitgeist*

Mannheim's terms entelechy and *Zeitgeist* are his starting points for explaining generational actuality. However, in the theory, he uses both terms to end up with the original idea of "generation units". The term generation units represent his sociological intervention to already existing concepts of history and philosophy. In that vein, it could be said that sociological analysis of generations fundamentally is grounded on three concepts as generation as location, generation as actuality and generation units. The terms entelechy and *Zeitgeist* remain parallel with the teleological reading of generations, and they remain not operable in empirical fieldwork to explain social reality of the generation at stake. Consequently, it should be noted that the reason why they discussed here in a foundational manner is to show

how the idea of generation units as groups with political agencies from different perspectives has emerged in Mannheim's theory. Both of the terms have not been used for analytical purposes in this study. Rather, a revision is provided in analysis section in the light of the recent generational theories developed and their relevance with the current data is also argued.

The word "entelechy" originates from Aristotelian philosophy as "the condition in which a potentiality has become an actuality" (*Entelechy - Etymology, Origin & Meaning*, n.d.), and literally refers to the actualization of a potential. However, Mannheim's adaptation of this notion is in neither metaphysical nor teleological manner. Instead, drawing on Wilhelm Pinder, art historian, he reworks entelechy as an "inner orientation" shaped through historically and socially situated experiences. This move allows Mannheim to conceptualize generations not as expressions of a singular spirit of an epoch (*Zeitgeist*), but as qualitatively distinct formations emerging from shared socio-historical exposure.

Mannheim criticizes Pinder for locating entelechy outside social relations, rather more individually; thereby mystifying it as an inner, metaphysical and quasi-romantic force. Mannheim's own intervention situates entelechy firmly within social and political processes. In his framework, what appears as generational entelechy corresponds analytically to generation as actuality, that is, the historically realized form of a generational potential.

In relation with the term entelechy, in the next paragraph, he discusses the term *Zeitgeist* from Pinder's point of view as "accidental chord" by a musical analogy from Pinder himself; that is despite its "apparent harmony", "produced by the vertical coincidence of notes which in fact owe a primary horizontal allegiance to different parts" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 359). To put it another way, Pinder's concept of entelechy functions in Mannheim's theory to dismiss monolithic and macro temporal concepts of an era, like in the term *Zeitgeist*. Furthermore, on entelechy, he explains that:

> The epoch as a unit has no homogeneous driving impulse, no homogeneous principle of form-no entelechy. Its unity consists at most in the related nature of the means which the period makes available for the fulfilment of the

> different historical tasks of the generations living in it. Periods have their characteristic colour- 'such colours do in fact exist, but somewhat as the colour-tone of a varnish through which one can look at the many colours of the different generations and age-groups'. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 359)

As stated in the excerpt above, differently from *Zeitgeist,* there is no one unified form of entelechy in Pinder's view, differently from Heidegger or other *Zeitgeist*ers' frames. Rather, an epoch is like a spectrum of color consisting of the different groups of coevals contingently, sharing common entelechy. For Pinder, a "historical process" is "the interplay of constant and transient factors", while the first is the macro effects like nation, tribe, family etc.; the second is entelechies. Mannheim concludes that out of the influential factors of constituting historical process, there is no place for social factors. This aspect, for him, is the very aspect which constitutes the "romantic" side of this school, in addition to historical frame, since these inner factors were somewhat mystified. Therefore, although acknowledging Pinder's revision on the idea of *Zeitgeist* as entelechy, Mannheim's generation entelechy is also different from that of Pinder's.

Mannheim's revisions on entelechy show itself his theoretical reflection on the term *Zeitgeist*. He criticizes the idea of a singular "spirit" defining an epoch for all, as well as individual, inner quasi-romantic forces; instead, he implies that an epoch consists of multiple, qualitatively distinct social realities emerging from different social groups. According to Mannheim's view, Heidegger views primary factor of qualitative union as a unitary "fate", i.e. realization of an ordained destiny at the eternity in its time and place (Mannheim, 1928/2017, pp. 358–359). In this way, his revised version of entelechy is more suitable to point out the generational phenomenon than Heidegger's fate since the former is far from being mystical and also rationalizable within sociological analysis. For Mannheim's generation theory, entelechy is the inner aim enabling a generation to realize itself as a qualitative formation not as a homogeneous unity but a historically situated orientation. This idea is perpetuated in Mannheim's frame through the concept "generation as actuality".

As can be seen from the discussions up until here, entelechy is the pattern of orientational capacity that becomes visible in a generation through the retrospective

articulation of the encounter. Accordingly, it is rather retrospectively read in the aftermath of the encounter. It may result in something apparent or not. As a slightly different concept, *Zeitgeist* refers to a monolithic spirit produced by history, which somehow remained mystical for Mannheim.

Mannheim raises a critique to the tendency of social scientists to interpret history through a single factor, i.e. "historical monism", in his terms. For him, the *Zeitgeist* cannot be homogeneous for a society; each social group leaves its own "intellectual stamp" on the epoch, reflecting on Pinder's terms for entelechy. Importantly, these entelechies do not indicate organic connections among society members or a unitary consciousness, rather, emerge from the dynamic interplay of different social currents, giving rise to historically situated orientations.

Accordingly, Mannheim allows for conceptualizing the *Zeitgeist* as a "unitary entity" only when approached in a dynamic-antinomical way, highlighting tensions and interactions among social currents and generational units. Generations actualize historical experience not as a singular, pre-ordained spirit, but through these interactions. This framework situates entelechies within generation units and underpins the concept of generation as actuality. This illustrates how historical experience is reconstructed retrospectively through the heterogeneous, socially mediated consciousness of coevals.

It should be noted that building on Mannheim's framework, it is possible to interpret generation entelechies as the distinct shares of the generation units appropriated from the *Zeitgeist*. While this conceptualization provides a functional lens for analyzing historical generations with a closed and completed formation, it remains insufficient for the present study due to its inherent teleological tendency. Although entelechy invokes agency of generation units, it still implies a predetermined historical direction for assuming a "finalized" character for the generation (and accordingly a closed historical period) at stake. Consequently, such a framework is not fully compatible with the specific generation in this study, whose formation is taken not as a static historical product, but as an ongoing and open-ended process resisting such a quick and premature analytical closure.

Accordingly, in this study, the terms entelechy and *Zeitgeist* are not employed as explanatory concepts as such, nor as substantive properties of generations. While Mannheim's notion of entelechy provides an important theoretical insight into the internal orientation of generations and heterogeneity within a generation, it remains analytically latent and is not operable in empirical analysis because it treats the generational orientation as pre-given ontological aim and a property that a generation "has". This study, on the other hand, approaches the generational phenomenon not as a static entity with a fixed and finished inner aim but as an ongoing process of formation. In this sense, generation units do not simply "possess" distinct entelechies; rather they are in the process of "making" (constructing and reconstructing) the collective identity of generation through collective memories based on experience. For this reason, even though remaining more nuanced and sociologically grounded, Mannheimian concept of entelechy is not treated as a separate analytical category in the analysis, but functions as a theoretical reference point clarifying the conceptual architecture of the framework.

2.1.3.4. A Necessary Revision for Mannheimian Generation Theory to Bridge the Concepts of Generation as Location and Generation as Actuality: Generational Actuality as a Dynamic Relation between Structural Conditions and Political Agency

After closing the discussion section for main concepts in Mannheimian theory and their analytical places for this study, at this point, a necessary theoretical intervention to bridge two core concepts in Mannheimian generation theory are discussed in relation with the particularities of the specific case investigated in this study.

Sociology of generation studies in Turkey, particularly the analyses of the '68 and '78 generations (Durmaz, 2019; Lüküslü, 2015) successfully map how specific political identities were forged through political socialization, organizational ties and ideological discourses within a historical period. By focusing on the "causes of engagement", such as the transition from "social generation" to "political generation", these works provide a comprehensive identity formation of these generations through shared discourses and collective memories.

However, in these studies, the historical exposure marking the imprint of the generation is a rather a “closed” and “sealed” historical period, in the sense that most of the issues has been reached in a stage of academic consensus. The temporal distance allows for a scholarly consensus on the referred works, documents, and historical data, providing an established ground for analysis. In contrast, the challenge of analyzing a generational formation whose formative years passed only a decade ago, such as “the Gezi generation”, is that this period lacks the “temporal distance” of that of 1960s and 1970s.

To exemplify, in Lüküslü’s work (2015) first, the socio-historical conditions for students in 1960s are framed to be able to show how the political movement of ’68 generation transformed from the student movements into revolutionary movements. In the second part of the work, discourses of the generation are discussed through the socio-political ground of going to student movements to anti-imperialist/worker-peasant solidarity movements and finally to socialist revolutionary movements. The first transition is marked as the “birth” for this generation while to final one indicating the imprint for the generation. The generational actuality pictured in this work is therefore a relatively static picture of a closed period. Surely, no past is “passed” even thousand years have experienced on an event, however, the difference of this work with the present work is that that the former has to reveal a static and sealed picture of a period that was experienced more than fifty years ago. Accordingly, there hardly exists a difficulty in supporting the arguments with the academic historical analysis for this period.

This work, on the other hand, intends to analyze a historical exposure of nearly ten years ago. It is difficult to find consensus on historical pictures for this period. In the absence of such an established academic consensus regarding the intended historical period of this work, and to accurately delineate the structural conditions to which the generation was exposed, this study consults the collective memories of the participants concerning the 2010s. By consulting the memory of the members as a primary resource, the research shifts its methodological focus from a static historical reconstruction to an analysis of lived experience. Therefore, the “actuality” of the Gezi generation is not sought in archived documents, but in the relational and ongoing narratives of the actors themselves.

In Durmaz's work (2019), methodologically, "formation" of '78 generation is has been revealed through their political socialization of the members in their root families, in proximate social environments, in mass organizations. In that vein, by using the generational theory, her work seems to be dwelling on the question "how the members of socialist generation unit within 78 generation of Turkey have organized to the socialist organizations and movements in 1970s?". In that vein, she researches political socialization in families and proximate social environments, reading cultures, common places for organizing as well as feeling structures for a single generation unit, not for the whole generation.

However, a conceptual problem arises when a specific generation unit is operationalized as the entire generation, potentially overshadowing the inherent heterogeneities that Mannheim emphasized. In this study the formation of the generation has been taken in a different vein because the significant methodological gap in Durmaz's frame is that a single generation unit has been represented as a whole generation despite the fact that there existed numerous generation units in relation with each other in 1970s such as Islamist, nationalist etc. Furthermore, while even socialist and leftist organizations are quite rich in the branches in 1970, the reader cannot deduce which socialist fraction is intended and why in the study.

Another problematic implication of this frame is that the definition of the generation addresses a unity of action. In fact, as Mannheim states, a generation is not a homogenous social entity with unity of action, world view or "culture". Rather, the generation units have this unity in his theory but the generation as a whole has heterogeneities primarily in terms of world views. He importantly states that a generation is formed through the relations between these units, not through political socialization in family or close social environments.

For the generation studies which focuses on a single generation unit, as Jennie Bristow (2024) stated in her criticisms to generationalism discourse in the previous sections, one remarkable research question for generational formation could be "how and why a single generation unit has become/has been constructed as the 'essence' of a whole generation in a historical period?". In its very formulation, this question does

not represent a single generation unit as the whole generation, rather it refers to the relational characteristics of generation units in a whole generation. Answering it from Mannheimian perspective through sociological analysis mobilizes analyses on the differences on the basis of classical sociological categories of analysis like class, gender, race and ethnicity etc. What Lüküslü (2015) has done for 68 generation is this exact analytical move since she discusses how and why university students in 1960s got the prestigious social status and accessibility of opportunities differently from the other members of the same cohort in the country. However, this question could be meaningful when enough studies have been done and literature on a single generation has reached a point of saturation and a consensus is possible to be found in this very literature. Therefore, for this study, this important question also has not been chosen and deliberately kept out of scope.

Differently from the analysis of these "established" generations, the period that the Gezi generation was exposed for a generational formation corresponds the era of post-1980s. Lüküslü elsewhere (2009) plots a continuity line for the generations after 80s. This analysis is quite accurate and illustrative because 1980 marks the period that the life for young people radically changed in several aspects both in Turkey and in the world. Although the sub-periods changed, it would not be wrong to say that the periods before 80s in Turkey is closed and a new era has been opened. The Gezi generation, like the generations whose formative years coincides with the 80s and 90s belongs to the group of "generations after 80s". On top of that, the period of structural historical exposure for this generation has not yet indicated a closure for the present. It is true that the formative years of Turkey's millennials has already been passed but it is difficult to say the same for the historical period.

Then the question is how to modify Mannheimian generation theory for the analysis of this specific generation with the specific analytical needs. It is true that the generational formation analyses are inevitably done retrospectively like in the example of the analyses on 68 and 78 generations and this situation is valid for this work too. However, while labouring to contribute to this specific literature, it is equally important to reveal methodological differences between analyzing these distinct generations. "The Gezi generation" requires a different methodological lens

due to the ontological distinctness of the phenomenon itself. Unlike the 68 and ’78 generations, the “making” of this generation is under ongoing negotiation. Its boundaries as social construct and a way to give meaning to the past, and even its statutes of membership are still being negotiated in the present. Therefore, applying for generations whose formative years have been closed as an era would result in a premature and inaccurate analytical closure, potentially freezing a process that is still fluid and relational.

As stated, framing generational actuality as relatively a static historical picture in the mentioned studies might be valid but the present work requires a different perspective. Therefore, the theoretical move of this study to bridge the gap between the concepts of generational location and actuality is to reconstruct the latter not as a finished analytical product, but as a social construct under ongoing negotiation. This dynamic relation vector for generational formation has been studied through the concept memory in this study because memory addresses the member’s current and dynamic relation between the experienced past and their today. Due to this methodological choice, the participants who has been located in the generational position on the basis of concrete experience were asked to comment on the label “the Gezi generation”.

Before delving into the theoretical details on critical place of memory in this study, it is crucial to discuss how this study addresses the mentioned negotiable characteristics in the theory. E. P. Thompson (1964) opens the book *The Making of The English Working Class* with the following statement:

> This book has a clumsy title, but it is one which meets its purpose. Making, because it is a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning. The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making. (Thompson, 1964, p. 9)

In this work, Thompson conceptualizes the working class as a historical formation, emerging through lived experience and through collective act of “making”, rather than a pre-given, mechanistic or “factual” social category. Class, in this sense, not a dead category prior to analysis but is a present and living social construct, grounded

in shared but differentiated experiences. Being “present at its own making” does not imply a fully reflexive class consciousness at the moment of action. Rather, it points out that class formation unfolds through lived experiences, given meanings and world views by the very class members themselves as well as historical structural conditions of social stratification. Therefore, the class is simultaneously experienced, interpreted, and later is narrated by historical actors themselves.

In this sense, class does not merely emerge as a stable position but as a historically contingent social formation articulated through struggles, practices, stories, and retrospective accounts. The constructed subjectivity in this analysis is, thus, far from being unitary and homogenous. By emphasizing historical contingency, conflict and the open-ended character of historical process, Thompson resists teleological readings of class formation and instead treats it as an ongoing and contested process. This perspective implies that the class is required to define itself as a “class” to be able to “be” one, rather than being a mere structural output of a historical moment.

Thompson’s perspective on historical formation resonates strongly with the analytical treatment of generations as retrospectively constructed collectivities. When the Mannheimian framework is utilized to analyze generational formation, the generation in question becomes “present at its own making”. That is to say, “the Gezi generation” is a social formation, a self-making and self-defining process for the generation, understood through commonalities on an experiential ground as well as the collective memories as “the stories” told reflexively by this ground, rather than a pre-given, homogeneous social category.

On the theoretical grounding in which Thompson’s dynamic class formation meets with Mannheimian generational actuality formation, there exists a key point both for theories of generation and memory: the experience. The experience connects the structurally given conditions with the narrative frames at the level of consciousness (which is indeed analyzed through collective memories in this study). In other words, the material ground originated by the structural conditions is connected with level of consciousness (or memories) on the basis of experience. In such perspective, memories cannot be thought as exactly the same materiality with “actions”, however,

at the same time they do not reside merely in the world of ideas but remain as a material map for the social formation of the generation, in a different way than actions but rooted in the same ground, that is materiality.

Looking at Mannheimian generational theory through these lenses brings a necessity which gives its name to title of this section: taking generational actuality as a dynamic and on-going social construction process analyzed through the negotiation of memories and labels by the potential members of the generation itself who are at the very generational location on the experiential basis. Therefore, this study takes generational actuality of the Gezi generation as a relation between two conceptual poles as structurally given conditions and the reflexive agency of the generation itself by narrating itself, due to the particularities of the case that is at stake.

2.1.4. Recap: Mannheimian Generation Theory as a Toolbox for the Present Study

Up until here, in this section, I have approached the concept of generation in three analytical steps. Firstly, I mapped the major sociological framings of generation in order to demonstrate how the concept has been reduced to cohort effects, life stages, kinship-descent models, or synchronic notions of coevalness, and to clarify the limitations of these approaches for the present study. Secondly, I positioned the study's theoretical position through conceptual boundaries between APC-based models, recent critiques of generationalism with that of Mannheimian framework to specify both what this study aligns with and what it deliberately avoids. Thirdly, I engaged with Mannheim's theory of generations as a set of analytical distinctions through the four key terms as fresh contact, generation as location, generation as actuality and generational units. At the end of third step, I also indicated the necessary theoretical and methodological revision of this study to the Mannheimian generational theory. Here, I demonstrate how they can be a conceptual toolbox for the analysis in present study.

Generation as location provides the structural and historical context in which coeval groups experience their formative period, allowing the identification of a shared

social position without presupposing direct social ties or community membership. Generation as actuality, in relation, emphasizes the historically situated realization of this position, within the dynamic and mobile boundaries of socio-historical conditions (Koselleck, 2004), seen through the interactions of generational units. It is not given; it is co-constructed by the researcher through rigorous analysis depending on the self-constructions of the generation itself.

To concretize the generational location for the present study, it could be said that being a university student, or being employed as a part of working classes or being NEET[25] could operate in different sites in generational reality and represents the different contexts for "generation location", for the members of a society who are coevals and at their fresh contact with the historical conditions. These positions do not constitute distinct generational locations, but rather different social contexts through which a shared generational location is experienced and articulated. It implies that generational actuality does not have to be read through a single social site; rather, university students represent only one analytically possible way among others, depending on the studied case. For this study, university students are selected for the Gezi generation as the primary social context through which generational formation is studied[26], with one important distinction: this context belongs to the past and therefore accessed retrospectively from present conditions.[27]

[25] NEET is defined by European Union as "young people neither in employment nor in education and training" (Eurostat, n.d.).

[26] Mannheim gives the example of young peasants as "Thus, the young peasants we mentioned above only share the same generation location, without, however, being members of the same generation as an actuality, with the youth of the town." (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 378). In a similar vein, when considering early 2010s' university student movements and the Gezi protests, the analytical focus of this study is placed on urban and university settings, as these constitute the primary social sites in which the generational actuality of "the Gezi generation" was crystallized. This does not imply that rural youth were absent from the same historical period, in other words, they share the common generational location with university students in cities. However, since the unavoidable context of the selected case is grounded in urban conditions, the university students in a city seems suitable for the analysis.

[27] In his novel, *Deliduman*, Emrah Serbes gives the floor to a young man who was living in one of the periphery cities: "While you were suffocating from tear gas in Taksim, we were suffocating in Kıyıdere from your freedom. The freedom you didn't share with us." (Siz Taksim'de gazdan boğulurken biz de Kıyıdere'de sizin hürriyetinizden boğulduk. Bizimle paylaşmadığınız hürriyetinizden.) (Serbes, 2016, p. 301). This could be read as an illustrative example of region-based tensions between different social scales within the same generational location, which points out different experiences.

From a Mannheimian perspective, however, this crystallization cannot be observed directly at the moment of historical exposure. Generational actuality as dynamic relation becomes analytically accessible only retrospectively, through the ways in which shared experiences are organized, narrated, and remembered. For this reason, the present study approaches generation as actuality not as an immediately given outcome of experiences regarding 2010s, but as a formation that can be traced through memories.

Accordingly, memory does not function as a supportive dimension of the analysis, but as the very methodological ground through which generational actuality can be reconstructed. The following section therefore turns to memory as both a theoretical and methodological entry point for analyzing generational formation.

Table 2. Tools and corresponding functions in Mannheimian generation theory

Tool in the box	**How it Works**
Generation as location	Socio-historical location, "the world" that members were born into
Fresh contact	Intersection of coevalness, life stage and historical exposure
Generation as actuality	Dynamic, negotiated but socio-historically conditioned generationality dimension, retrospectively read through shared memories, orientations and experiences as a relation between structure and conscious social construction
Generation units	Intra-generational differentiations within a generation at the level of actuality

The concepts of Mannhemian framework and their place in this are summarized in the Table 2 above.

2.2. Memory

In its most encompassing sense, memory can be comprehended as the process through which temporal experience is anchored within human existence. In other

words, memory can be conceived as the time appropriated by human's earthly mediation, revealing the lived experience through the act of recalling. As an interplay between past experiences and the present conditions (Erll & Nünning, 2008, p. 2), memory, reconstructs the past in the light of concerns, meanings and frameworks of the present. This mediation capacity renders the concept a crucial analytical lens for engaging with the nebulous notion of time, which is experienced readily but grasped elusively.

In the scholarly debates, analytical potential of memory made it a central concept across a wide range of fields, from biological to social sciences. Memory studies provides an expanding transdisciplinary field of inquiry rather than as a concept confined to a single discipline (Erll & Nünning, 2008, p. 3). Precisely because of this immenseness, a warning regarding the scope of this study is necessary at this point. This dissertation does not aim to provide a comprehensive survey of such landscape. Rather than being a study solely focused on the theory of memory, it strategically utilizes the analytical potentialities of memory to facilitate a sociological analysis of generational formation.

Consequently, a deliberate analytical prioritization strategy has been followed: As stated in the chapter introduction, generation remains the conceptual core, while memory serves as the indispensable foundational tool. Accordingly, there exists a conceptual and field-wise hierarchy between the terms generation and memory in such a way that the former is prioritized as the ultimate goal while the latter is an integral part of the former. To maintain theoretical focus and analytical rigor, this section adopts a selective strategy, focusing on the debates within memory studies that are directly relevant for the relational generational perspective of this study, while the field allows for an almost infinite broadening of theoretical volume. Other discussions, regardless of their contemporary prominence, are intentionally excluded to ensure a "to-the-point" integration of memory as a primary resource for tracing the "making" of the Gezi generation.

In accordance, the organization of this section is structured around a set of conceptual nodes engaging key debates in memory studies. The analytical necessity

and relevance of each node are justified within their respective subsections by their capacity to serve as entry points for researching both "generation as actuality" and "generation as location"[28]. Combined, these dimensions constitute the core for generational analysis in this study, providing the theoretical ground required to analyze generational formation through collective memory.

2.2.1. Scholarly Trajectory of Memory Studies: Three Eras

As previously stated, memory has been used as a strategic tool for generational analysis in this study. To be able to operationalize memory as a sociological tool, first, it is required to discuss the concept itself within context of its historical evolution in scholarly approaches (Olick et al., 2011, p. 10; Radstone, 2000, p. 3). Following this, the scholarly trajectory of memory studies can be categorized into three pivotal eras illustrating the historical evolution from structural and functional emphasis of classical sociological schools to pluralized and reflexive constructions of social reality.

The first era, defined as "memory crisis" of 19th century, characterized by the widening gap between "history" as a social science and "memory" as a framework of meaning that exists solely within the present. Second era was crystallized by the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs (together with the prior works to him) which marks a breakthrough in literature, by shifting the focus from individual psychology of Freudian school to the approach of "social frameworks" mediating personal recollections. Finally, the third era, was defined as "memory boom" (Olick et al., 2011), dates back to the post-1980s and is associated with the growing interest in identity politics (Neyzi, 2011).

To begin with, the 19th century represents a pivotal era for the field in which history and memory were increasingly singled out and sharp boundaries were established in between. During this period, as modernity redefined and reorganized everyday life

[28] Since generation as location is also read through the conditions of "remembered conjuncture" in this study, memory remains as both theoretical and methodological tool, crosscutting the generation both at the level location and at level of actuality.

through a radical rupture with the past, the social experience of time underwent a total transformation. With the rapid advancements in cinema, photography, and sound recording technologies, the methods of preserving memory were externalized, shifting away from human cognition and oral traditions (Misztal, 2003, p. 43). As David Lowenthal (1985/2015) describes, the past ceased to be "omnipresent" and began to be blurred in a fog of nostalgia. This transformation of the past into a "foreign country" was not merely a result of the passage of time but was directly linked to the sudden severance of the bonds between the past and the present (Nora, 2011, p. 439).

Drawing on Durkheimian social analysis, as societies transitioned from the organic solidarity of primary social relations toward the mechanical solidarity of modern structures, collective identities lost their traditional transparency and were confined within pre-determined frameworks (Nora, 1984/2009). From a similar perspective, Richard Terdiman (1993, pp. 5–7) argues that while traditional societies carried the past and its meanings clearly into the present, a kind of opacity emerged in post-revolutionary society (specifically following the rupture of the 1789 French Revolution), evolving into a "memory crisis". Consequently, as the past fades from view, the link between the past, the present, and even the future has lost its continuity; memory has thus been transformed into a framework of meaning that exists solely within the present.

By the early 20th century, as the narrative of the modern welfare state began to be fractured in the post-war climate, nation states increasingly turned toward the past to strengthen their legitimacy (Olick et al., 2011). Driven by these political imperatives, the past was processed and "invented" by official historical narratives to justify political interests, with "usable pasts" being selectively projected to the present. This interruption of memory's natural continuity through methods of "inventing the past" led to the realization that spontaneous "milieus of memory" (*milieux de mémoire*) no longer existed. Consequently, "sites of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*) emerged as spatial organizations where memory was packaged into teleological and monolithic narratives (Nora, 1984/2009). This era, which was defined as "the century of history" by Jacques Le Goff (1992, p. 15), consolidated the monolithic narrative of history,

transforming it from an "art of memory" (Hutton, 1993) into a social science, utilizing monuments, museums, and recording technologies to transmit the founding narratives of the nation-state.

Toward the mid-20th century, two World Wars further deepened the cleavage between the past and the present. The social traumas triggered by these wars did not lead human populations to a "golden age"; instead, they confronted the world with a history of war crimes and mass destruction (Huyysen, 2011, p. 434). The rise of Holocaust studies, which represents a significant trajectory within memory scholarship, highlights how trauma interrupts the transmission of narrative and speech (Benjamin, 1968), marking a definitive shift toward the subsequent era of memory work.

The second era points out the scholarly period when sociology started to declare its autonomy as a social science. In a nutshell, the social frameworks perspective states that modern and standardized time is not a transcendent truth, rather a social consequence. While various approaches to conceptualizing memory had already developed by that time, systematic engagement with memory as an object of analysis within sociology brought us one name and his groundbreaking work: Maurice Halbwachs and *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Memoire* (The Social Frameworks of Memory). However, there are also works before him, within the second era, first we visit these works prior to him.

If one briefly looks at the inventory prior to Halbwachs' seminal work, it could be seen that the social dimensions of memory had already begun to draw scholarly attention across the fields. In his influential lecture named *What Is a Nation?*, Ernest Renan (1882/1990) identified both remembering and shared forgetting as constitutive elements of national identity. Around the same period, Aby Warburg (1932/1999) developed his theory of artistic iconography by tracing the transformation of cultural memory across different epochs. Similarly, British experimental psychologist Frederic Bartlett (1932/1995) revealed the role of social context in processes of remembering, thereby challenges the dominant individualistic orientation within psychology.

Parallel concerns could also be found in early sociological and philosophical thought. Charles Horton Cooley (1918/2004) examined the social construction of reputation and fame through the processes of self-image and memory, while George Herbert Mead (1932/2017) within his philosophy of the present, explicitly addressed the notion of "shared memory" in relation with social experience. Mikhail Bakhtin's (1983/2010), well-known concept of "speech genres," conceptualized language itself as a key social carrier of memory, highlighting the historically embedded and socially structured characteristics of meaning (as cited in Olick et al., 2011, p. 21).

When we eventually come to the Maurice Halbwachs's work (1952/1980), in the course of this trajectory, he is widely recognized as the first scholar to explicitly and systematically build on the social dimensions of memory by demonstrating the social embeddedness of personal recollections. Although the term "collective memory" itself was first used earlier by the Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1902 to describe the societies' relationship with the tradition, Halbwachs' intervention to the term marks a breakthrough and represents a shift towards a sociological understanding of memory, defined as a socially framed and collectively mediated process.

Although contemporary memory scholarship has raised significant and crucial critique to the certain parts of Halbwachs' original framework in "The Social Frameworks of Memory"(1952/1980), it nevertheless acknowledges that the very view of memory as a sociological phenomenon owes much to the way he paved. Halbwachs' enduring contribution to both sociology and memory studies lies in his rejection of the approaches with methodological individualism and his insistence on the constitutive role of social frameworks in shaping how human beings remember. Against perspectives that conceptualize memory as an internal, self-contained repository, which could be found in early psychological traditions, Halbwachs argues that remembering could not escape "the social", rather it is structured through it.

Although social framework approach remains highly influential, the conceptual trajectory did not remain confined to Maurice Halbwachs and classical sociological works. The final period, i.e. the post-1980, "memory boom", shifted the focus from

what is remembered to how contested memories are mobilized to reconstruct social identities. Memory, which in the preceding era was excluded from monolithic historical narratives and confined to the category of the individual, found substantial ground in this period through the narratives of social communities and political groups as an alternative to history, particularly through oral history studies. Nevertheless, it is difficult to assert that memory's capacity to ensure continuity between the dimensions of time, a link ceased from history in the prior period, suddenly returned.

In his article "Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory" in the book *Collective Memory Reader* edited by Olick et al. (2011, p. 438), Nora explains the causes of the "memory boom" through two distinct dynamics: the acceleration of history and the democratization of history. The acceleration of history implies that the most permanent feature of the modern world is change itself. This acceleration brings two emotions: a sense of loss and an anxiety to preserve the past. The reinforcement of the rupture in the present's connection with the past and future terminates the autonomy of both, making autonomy a part of the present alone. In this sense, the "rift" that opened in the 19th century has deepened even further today. The three distinct modalities relating to the past, which he defines as maintaining, revising, and completely changing the past, have been set aside. In the middle of the uncertainty of what the future holds, the present, equipped with a series of technical means to preserve the past, imposes upon us an indeterminate obligation to remember (2011, p. 438). Consequently, our understanding of the past transforms into appropriation of what we know no longer belongs to us, evolving into an anxiety over the preservation of the past.

The other cause mentioned by Nora, the democratization of history, points to an era where those previously silenced raise their voices against the monolithic narratives of nation-states, or rather, an era where these voices are finally heard. However, as Susanna Radstone (2000, p. 41) points out, it is hardly possible to speak of a self-evident democratization in this period. The existence of micro-memories and their public sharing in opposition to monolithic official history, which sought to fix meaning for everyone, did not automatically create a critical position. On the

contrary, these memories have engaged with difficult pasts such as silences, repressions, and traumas. They are more complex structures where a "culture of trauma" and a resentment toward the past have emerged as legacies of the previous era (Olick et al., 2011).

This era has also been noted as "fear of amnesia" (Huyssen, 1995). Standing at the point where the teleology of history has ended imposes an "urgent call to remember" and creates a kind of "epidemic of commemoration" (Misztal, 2003, p. 46). Since people can no longer view the past as a whole and inhabit it, they can only relate to its fragments within the scope of questions regarding their identity. At this juncture, Nora both distinguishes memory from history and asserts that memory now corresponds to what we formerly called history. This new "history" is itself a reconstruction. It is an era characterized both by commemorative rush against forgetting and a simultaneous need for forgetting in order to construct memory. Huyssen states in the article "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia" in the book *Collective Memory Reader* (Olick et al., 2011, p. 431) that the turn toward memory is subconsciously motivated by the desire to anchor ourselves in a world characterized by an increasing instability of time and the shattering of lived space. In an era where the teleological narrative of history has concluded, the historical ground is also shifting, thereby generating commemorative impatience.

For the final era, it is worth noting that the historical course of memory has not been linear, rather significant amount of historian has reexplored Halbwachs' theory after 1970s. This period is known as "memory boom"[29] (Huyssen, 1995) marks the era in which the studies on memory has exponentially increased. In this discussion, scholars turned their attention to the broader question of why memory itself became such a compelling object of inquiry by looking at the inflation of concepts looking at cultural, political and social aspects of memory from the late 20th century onwards.

Furthermore, on this increase, many authors within the field (Berliner, 2005; Confino, 1997; Fabian, 1999; Gedi & Elam, 1996; Gillis, 1994) warn against blurring conceptual boundaries between memory and closely related other concepts

[29] Translated and discussed as "söz patlaması" in Turkish speaking world by Arzu Öztürkmen (2001).

such as identity, representation, discourse, and culture. This means that any study pursuing to elaborate on memory is required to be clear on what to intend conceptually.

In this era, especially 1970s onwards to the date, a wide range of canonical concepts have been developed to address the socio-historical dimensions of remembering and forgetting from different analytical aspects. These include, among the various others: "lieux de mémoire" (sites of memory) (Nora, 1984/2009), "social memory" (Connerton, 1989), "cultural memory" (J. Assmann, 1992/2011), "public memory" (Bodnar, 1994), "postmemory" (Hirsch, 1997), "mnemonic practice" (Wertsch, 2002), "prosthetic memory", (Landsberg, 2004), "cultural trauma" (Alexander et al., 2004), "multidirectional memory" (Rothberg, 2009), "oral history/narrative memory/memory as narrative" (Portelli, 2010), "palimpsestic memory" (Silverman, 2013). Despite addressing different aspects of memory from different perspectives, all of these elaborate social and cultural aspects of the memory phenomenon.

For memory studies second half of 2010s onwards, Maria Elizabeth Dorr et al. (2019, p. 1) introduces a series of other concepts on memory "transnational memory studies" (Cesari & Rigney, 2014), "transcultural turn" (Bond & Rapson, 2014), "planetary turn" (Bond et al., 2017), "memory in a global age" (A. Assmann & Conrad, 2010), "memory and migration" (Creet & Kitzmann, 2014), "scales of memory" (Kennedy & Nugent, 2016), and "moving memory" (Pine, 2017). They importantly point out a "travelling" characteristics of memory which goes beyond the cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, gendered, and national boundaries. While the memory is travelling across these borders, at the same time, there also emerges the issue of locatedness. In the same piece, it has been stated that via these newly created concepts and approaches, the recent scholarship labour on the dialectical relationship between the crosscutting features of memory due to the hyper-connectedness through media and locatedness and local social conditions.

The most recent debate in the field is encapsulated in the edited book of Brett Ashley Kaplan *Critical Memory Studies: New Approaches* (2023), which advocates for a "critical turn" that moves beyond traditional frameworks for memory studies. Kaplan

identifies new trajectories such as “ecological memory”, “materiality of mnemonic objects”, and “intersectional nature of remembering”. These contemporary approaches suggest that memory is not just a social framework but a contested, material, and multidimensional site of resistance.

In light of the recent scholarly debate in the past decade, from the transcultural journey of memory (Dorr et al., 2019) to the critical and material interventions summarized by Brett Ashley Kaplan (2023), memory studies expand its discussions to the emerging issues of environmental crises and anxieties, global catastrophes (such as COVID-19 pandemic) and the hyper-connectedness of digital media as well as algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI).

While the different, fragmented, controversy characteristics of remembering and commemoration is highlighted, the very theoretical foundations of the field still sit on a set of sociological insights provided in the second era Halbwachs’ and other intellectuals who emphasized the social aspects of remembering. The breakthrough by Halbwachs in this era owes its remarkableness to two premises. First is the emphasis on the act of social remembering by the real persons, which dwells on the dialectic between personal memories and social framework. The second is that the act of remembering as an action placing the past into today through narration and storifying. Within the context of contemporary needs in social world, concepts and theories developed to explain memory phenomenon changes and sub-fields were opened (and surely will continue to be opened), the foundation provides the indispensable theoretical bedrock for contemporary inquiries. Methodologically, this approach allows the sociologists to design a fieldwork in which real persons are consulted but the analysis is necessarily placed on a social ground. Surely, this does not mean that the theoretical ground that Halbwachs drew from Durkheimian functional and homogenizing view of “the social” is adopted in contemporary perspectives or in this study. This point will further be elaborated in the following section titled “The Question of Who Remembers”, where the critique of methodological individualism and homogenization of memory are discussed. By doing so, the study shifts the focus from a purely functionalist views to a more reflexive understanding of how mnemonic agency interacts with social frameworks.

Building on the conceptual trajectory outlined thus far, the following title indicates the theoretical positioning of this study and demonstrates how memory is operationalized as a rigorous sociological tool. It argues that memory studies, in dialogue with other temporal approaches, provides an indispensable analytical framework for examining the intricate interplay between personal recollections and social structures.

2.2.2. Memory as a Sociological Tool for Generational Analysis

Turning to the literature of memory studies in relation to generational analysis, several canonical works in literature have highlighted the role of memory in generational research in relation to Mannheimian framework. To begin with, Barbara Misztal (2003) states that Mannheim is the first scholar who systematized the sociological grounding of generational analysis. The connection between generation as sociological category and memory in his theory remains as a central point. The fundamental idea here is that generations' "imprint" can be found and characterized in their collective memories. In other words, generations are differentiated from each other by their ways of collective looking to the past (Misztal, 2003, p. 86).

As previously discussed in this text, in their works, Schuman & Scott (2012) and Schuman & Corning (2012, 2000) are among the first scholars who systematized the empirical research on Mannheimian generational study depending on collective memories. Based mostly on quantitative methodologies, they have empirically shown that the witnessed and experienced events in the formative years (or during the fresh contact in Mannheimian vocabulary) are more likely to construct a generational identity. These works importantly emphasize the place of Mannheimian concept of fresh contact in generational research.

Several works in the literature also pointed out the role of generation within memory studies.[30] Ron Eyerman (2004) also emphasize the close relation between the terms

[30] At this point, it is important to note that in these works, the term generation is used to compare the subsequent generations with each other. This framing is closer to kinship-descent meaning of the term. Though they are quite important to see the unavoidable relation between generation and memory, the generational framework in these studies is not adopted in this study.

generation and memory. In his work, which is primarily focused on cultural trauma and memory, he states that the groups which experienced the slavery, this was an individual suffering while for the ones who did not experience but raised with the stories of slavery, it was rather a cultural trauma (Eyerman, 2001, pp. 70–72). This study echoes with Marianne Hirsch's study (2012) in which she coined the term "postmemory". In this work, she dwells on the Holocaust memories of the generation born after and not experienced the Holocaust. In this work, she highlights the importance of imaginative investment as opposed to experience.

For this study, the theoretical positioning for memory starts with Halbwachs' work due to his two fundamental theses, which still ground the contemporary sociological works:

1. While remembering is necessarily personal, in the sense that no one can remember in place of another; its meaning and content are necessarily mediated by the social frameworks.
2. The past is reconstructed at the present by act of remembering.

Before, revealing why these two suit as the ground for memory framework for this study, it is required to elaborate Halbwachs' work a step further to explain the fundamentals of these two theses.

Maurice Halbwachs developed a novel conception of memory by engaging with and synthesizing the theories of two preeminent thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Henri Bergson and Emile Durkheim. This period was characterized by a drive to sacrifice subjectivity and interpersonal differences in favor of homogenization and standardization, led by institutions and sciences claiming objectivity.

Time, as a fundamental regulator of everyday life, inevitably underwent this process of standardization. Across all spheres of life, from production to trade, local time differences were synchronized into a uniform, linear progression. A quintessential example of this modern temporal organization was the establishment of the Greenwich Observatory as the prime meridian according to which all other meridians and clocks worldwide were calibrated (Kern, 1983/2003, p. 12).

In response to this uniform notion of modern timing, Bergson developed a philosophy locating the source of knowledge solely in subjectivity. He argued that as time became increasingly objective and closed to personal interpretation, the meaningful connections, both individual and collective, to the past were weakened. Consequently, he proposed the concept of "duration" (durée), which treats time not as a series of identical, mechanically ordered moments, but as a holistic entity based on lived experience (Kern, 1983/2003, pp. 61–62). Within this framework, memory is not a "box" where the past is preserved "as it was" in the form of fixed and objective realities; rather, it is an active connection to the past established through the act of recalling. In this context, there is no such thing as "remembering incorrectly" as the act of remembering is not a matter of comparing individual recollections against a chronological, "objective" record, but rather concerns the qualitative nature of the "micro-records". According to Jeffrey Olick et al. (Olick et al., 2011, pp. 15–16), this subjective variability of memory formed the primary context for Halbwachs' engagement with the concept.

Following Olick et al.'s same piece, Halbwachs found the answer to this problematic in Durkheimian sociology. In a way similar to Emile Durkheim's (1897/2006) pioneering work *On Suicide*, as his student, Halbwachs showed "the social" grounds even the practices that seem most individual are in fact grounded in social relations. From this perspective, Halbwachs' "sociologization" of memory led him to theorize remembering in relation to the question of what holds societies together. He addresses this question by identifying different types of collective memories corresponding to distinct social groups in modern society such as familial memory and religious memory. Accordingly, he argues that it is not sufficient to show that individuals make use of collective frames; rather, individuals must be situated within the concrete groups of which they are members.

In this respect, Halbwachs' intervention echoes with Durkheim's broader intellectual aim of establishing sociology as an autonomous scientific field by demonstrating that the phenomenon commonly attributed to individual psychology and psychological condition, like intelligence, identity and memory, are indeed socially structured.

On the other hand, Halbwachs' theory is rather unique and relatively different from that of Durkheim's from several aspects. In this respect, impact of another name, alongside with Durkheim, reveals itself in his theory: Henri Bergson and the notion of duration. Bergsonian understanding of time emphasizes relativity, continuity, heterogeneity of the experienced time, instead of series of equally spaced, mechanically ordered moments. Merged with the Durkhemian emphasis of sociality dimension, Halbwachs finds a way to approach time as a socially lived phenomenon. In fact, it resonates with the critique elaborated by historical-romantic generation theorists against positivist conceptions of time in the previous section. Instead of a uniform temporal flow, time is experienced differently by groups and their members who live through the same historical and social conditions.

As another pivotal point of Halbwachs' theory is his approach to the temporality of memory. Drawing close to a Bergsonian perspective, Halbwachs emphasized the place of "today", by arguing that the past is actively reconstructed within the present through the concept of memory. In other words, he asserted that the past is recalled and re-constructed in the current moment (Halbwachs, 1952/1980). This approach serves as a crucial reminder that memory, while seems that it is about the past, is in fact deeply embedded in sociality of the present. While Freud previously conceptualized remembering as re-experiencing of the past as it was, Halbwachs redefined it as a re-construction in the present. By doing so, he moved away from a rigid understanding of the past that remains unresponsive to change, emphasizing instead the creative nature of memory and its openness to "re-readings" from the standpoint of today.

In short, the very roots of sociological approach to memory are grounded by the idea that remembering is enacted by individuals but could not be outside of the terrain of "the social", as purely individual and isolated process. Rather, it is intertwined with social structures, cultural norms, and historical contexts. Equivalently, personal memory cannot be reduced to mental or cognitive operation alone, it is a social phenomenon shaped through social contexts and collective frameworks.

The second thesis of Halbwachs, that memory is an active reconstruction of the past from the standpoint of the present that is constructed through the act of remembering.

This point is fundamentally in line with the generational framework of this study. As stated in the previous section of generation theory, generation is an active, ongoing and reflexive social process of constructed by the act of remembering. In this sense, "the Gezi generation "is not a fossilized entity defined solely by the given socio-historical conditions or early 2010s; rather, it is a social construct that is continuously re-negotiated and re-contextualized by its potential members today.

By prioritizing the this "present-centeredness" of memory, this study acknowledges that participants do not merely recall stored data about their formative years, rather they selectively build the meaning in an inter-episodic manner between then and now. Methodologically, this justifies the use of qualitative narratives as the primary data: Rather than searching for the "objective" historical facts but for the "remembered conjuncture" that continues to shape the generational consciousness in the present. Therefore, Halbwachs' emphasis on reconstruction at the present provides the theoretical bridge that transforms a social cohort into a living, reflexive, and sociologically significant generation.

2.2.3. Methodological Distinctiveness: Memory Studies and Other Temporal Approaches

Having established the theoretical position of the study regarding memory, at this point, the question is that in which aspects memory studies could be a suitable methodological tool for this study, vis-à-vis other methodologies both occupied with the temporality and sharing the socio-cultural context.

Depending on Halbwachs' second thesis of reconstruction of past, in memory studies, like several other methodologies addressing "the social" from the temporal aspect, the focus is primarily on the present rather than the past. In this perspective, the narrated past serves as a medium through which present meanings on the past are constructed. Methodologically, it means that the interviewees consulted within the scope of this study are the beings belonging today, rather than the past; and since it is possible to study empirically their constructed relation between the episodes of experienced time through the verbal narrations. Consequently, memory studies'

examination is far from discussing how the past events "objectively" occurred. It is rather concerned with how past events are selectively rendered meaningful, significant and relevant and placed today's reality. In other words, the analytical target is the inter-episodic meaning making between the past and the present traced through the memory narratives on the generational belonging and identity by the participants.

By designing research grounded on memory studies as both thematic field and methodological tool, this study further aims to produce sociological explanations of how human actors remember.

Approaches like historical sociology share a related concern, but often their primary goal is to explain why historical events occurred in a specific way, rather than how people relate themselves socially to the past. To illustrate, François Georgeon (2012), in his article "Nesil Kavramı Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Kemalist Türkiye'ye Geçişi Anlamada Anahtar Olabilir Mi?" ("Could the concept of generation be key to understanding the transition from the Ottoman Empire to Kemalist Turkey") in the book *Tarihsel Sosyoloji: Stratejiler, Sorunsallar ve Paradigmalar*, looks through the concept of generation to explain macro-level historical change. He looks at Young Turks (*Jöntürkler*) as a generation, certain members of which participated in the macro revolution to establish the republic after the empire and answers to the question "How did their shared generational consciousness enable the Young Turks to facilitate such a macro-level revolutionary change?" Methodologically, Georgeon's work focuses on producing historical explanations by using a sociological term. Accordingly, it can be described as "sociological history" as the focus remains on producing historical explanations with the help of a sociological term. On the other hand, memory studies target to explain the present and accordingly, it focuses on how social dimension shapes people's relations with the past from the present.

As another close methodology, oral history often aims to give voice to historically silenced actors and rely heavily on participants' narratives as primary evidence. In that vein, oral history turns out to be a perfect tool to study "difficult pasts" (Olick,

2016) requires to be guided by the silenced or massacred actors during the traumatic events like the Holocaust and war crimes. As stated, in this study, the aim is not to understand what "really" happened by merely relying on participants' recollections. Instead, the focus is on analyzing these narratives through the analytical potentialities of memory to be able to analyze generational formation.

In conclusion, the choice of memory studies as a methodological tool, in addition to analytical tool, serves as a bridge between personal experience and social frames of the members of the generation. It provides an epistemological framework capturing active and synchronous temporality of the generation, where the past is not treated as a static data source but as a living reference point. By focusing on how the past is selectively reconstructed to give meaning to the present, this dissertation takes memory as a reflexive site of social construction for generational naming and labels, where the "then" constitutes the very context of how "now" is narrated. This approach ultimately enables a comprehensive sociological understanding of how generationality manifests itself as a meaningful, ongoing actuality. In that vein, memory studies as a methodological tool suit with the aims of this study.

2.2.4. The Question of Who Remembers

In the wide literature of memory studies, it is possible to come across numerous definitions for memory, as discussed in the previous titles. One of the significant classificatory debates, both in a broader sense and specifically for this study, revolves around the question of "who remembers".

In fact, the title "The Question of Who Remembers" does not merely point out which social group in the society tells the story. After the discussion of other methodologies aiming at analyzing the temporality, this section was formulated to open a theoretical space to discuss the distinct methodologies within memory studies. In that regard, Jeffrey Olick, in his famous article, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures" (1999) discusses two methodological difference over the "whatness" of collective memory. He explains two distinct cultures elaborating the questions "what is memory?", "whose memory?", "where is it located?. While the first stream conceptualizes

memory as collective representations embedded in material and symbolic forms, the second treats memory as the act of remembering performed by individual actors within social frameworks. Although he originally asks the question on whatness, his account touches upon significant points on the question of who remembers.

Here, the distinctiveness of the two methodologies lies in the difference in the ontologies of remembering assumed in the two. While memory is framed as the externalized artefacts, books, monuments, museums etc, the remembering as well as storifying actor is institutions or a web of institutions with the human actors. On the other, when memory is framed as a personal act of remembering by real humans, then the acts of remembering and storifying is done on an experiential basis.

When memory is framed through externalized manifestations such as monuments, books, archives, or photographs; artefacts themselves or a message encoded in it are often treated as memory. Accordingly, memory turns out to be rather a stable, autonomous entity. This perspective has been productively developed in influential studies of the first stream. In that regard, Pierre Nora's notion of "*lieux de mémoire*" (sites of memory) can be mentioned where memory is understood in an spatially institutionalized form in sites (Nora, 1984/2009). Similarly, through the term "cultural memory", Jan Assmann (1992/2011) conceptualizes memory as sustained through external carriers such as texts, textual monuments, and canonical narratives that has a longer lifespan than humans.

These approaches have made crucial contributions by demonstrating how memory is stabilized, transmitted, and institutionalized beyond individual consciousness. However, their primary analytical concern lies in the durability, institutional mediation, and circulation of memory through material and symbolic forms, rather than in the situated act of remembering as performed by social actors. While such externalized forms function as powerful reminders, they are not capable of remembering by themselves[31]; they acquire mnemonic meaning only through interaction initiated by human agents who are embedded in social contexts.

[31] To state it in the right place, that is the very point that this study also did not choose to use methodologies like archeology and genealogy which primarily focuses on archival data. These

For this reason, although these streams constitute a canonical and indispensable part of memory studies, for a researcher with main question of "in what ways a particular past is being remembered by a social group of people", the primary focus could not be these externalized forms of memory, except for framing them as memory triggers for human agents. Instead, this question necessitates to approach memory as a socially mediated phenomenon enacted by human agents.

The second stream (Misztal, 2003; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Zelizer, 1995), on the other hand, assumes the primary agent of remembering is the separate human beings. Ontologically, memory is taken as a necessary faculty of human body to survive. Any person with a functioning body is assumed to perform the act of remembering regardless of the content. However, this does not imply methodological individualism in which remembering agent is framed as fully independent and self-contained. Instead, although memory is personal and remembering is specific to the recalling agent, the recollections are shaped by socio-cultural contexts.

Adopting the perspective in the second stream, externalized forms of memory remain "metaphorical extensions of memory"[32] rather than their subjects. As Halbwachs stated, while memory is fundamentally anchored in social frameworks, recollections are personal and "remembering agent" is the member of the intended social group. This distinction demonstrates that one way or another externalized forms necessarily requires a human agent to interact and perform the act of recalling, bridging the gap between a silent past and an experienced present. Therefore, this study takes the members of generation with the capacity to recall from a lived past, by definition.

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methodologies aim to analyze the power asymmetries by revealing how the powerful constructed the reality in written forms of memory. However, as stated here, archives themselves also do not "remember". For reality of the present, they may only function as reminders which cannot escape the necessity of human engagement to produce any memory.

[32] As a quite illustrative example to open this point further, Paul Connerton's work *How Societies Remember* (1989) seems to be posing the remembering subject as "the society", even from the title. However, in this work, he scrutinizes the rituals as the medium and means of the memory. It is concluded that societies and social groups constitute their collective memories through recurring commemoration ceremonies, i.e. through socially shared remembering practices. Consequently, "the society" in the question of "how the societies remember" remains rather a metaphorical extension to denote the members of a social group who actively participate to these commemorative events since rituals also are not able to "remember" and accordingly require active participants even to reproduce and reaffirm the framed memory in these practices.

However, prioritizing the human agent as the subject of remembering on an ontological basis necessitates addressing a crucial nuance regarding the very nature of "collectivity". This is precisely where Susan Sontag's (2003) provocative critique provides an important insight to the potential pitfalls of over-socializing the act of remembering. Sontag famously argues that "strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory". She asserts that rather than collective memory, "collective instruction" exists while the biological and cognitive act of remembering remains exclusively individual (Sontag, 2003, p. 85). For Sontag, images and narratives do not create a shared memory in the literal sense; rather, they "stipulate" what is important, effectively "locking" a story in our minds as a fiction of shared experience.

While this study adopts the second stream's focus on the human agency as remembering subject, it does not interpret Sontag's critique as a rejection of the sociological ground. It is crucial to state that while Sontag's skepticism provides an indispensable methodological warning, however, this view is not adopted here in its most radical form. For a study grounded in the social construction of generationality, Sontag's absolute rejection of collectivity might appear somewhat restrictive, as it risks overlooking the powerful, supra-individual forces that bind a generation together. The "collective" aspect of remembering explored here does not overlook the differences, heterogeneities, conflicts, encounters etc. As per Mannheimian generational framework, it is very area of "mnemonic commons" formed as per these relations.

Nevertheless, Sontag's warning is taken into serious consideration not as a dismissal of the social ground, but as a guiding principle to place this study in a more nuanced position. Instead of assuming a monolithic and mystical "collective will" to remembering, it compels the analysis to focus on how personal interpretations of the past interact with shared social frameworks of collective action. In this regard, Sontag's intervention serves as a safeguard against a naive functionalism; it ensures that "the Gezi generation" is analyzed not as a pre-given entity, but as a dynamic and reflexive formation constantly being "stipulated" and "re-narrated" by its potential members. Therefore, by acknowledging personal nature of remembering while

insisting on its social mediation, this study moves into a theoretical space where memory is understood as a narrative bridge between these two agencies.

In the light of this discussion, to further position the memory framework of the study in the recent literature, it important to discuss a recent concept from memory literature. Bull and Hansen's (2016) concept of agonistic memory provides a crucial ground for discussion for the purposes of this study, as it acknowledges that collective memory is not a site of consensus but a site of productive conflict. By reframing the "other" as a legitimate adversary rather than an absolute enemy, agonistic memory allows for a multi-vocal and reflexive understanding of the memory ground, where diverse narratives coexist without losing their political charge.

Rather than choosing between the moralizing consensus of cosmopolitan memory and the exclusionary violence of antagonistic memory, the agonistic mode recognizes past conflicts as a legitimate clash of divergent political visions. Bull and Hansen (2016) coins their concept through criticizing "antagonistic memory" and "cosmopolitan memory" and they suggest that "agonistic mode of remembering" allows for a reflexive and multi-vocal remembering where "the other" is reframed as a legitimate adversary. This brings potential to both recognition and critical and reflexive dialogue which does not homogenize or overlook the differences as well as conflicts in perspectives. In other words, while placed into today, past conflicts are not dismissed while a way for dialogue is not closed.

On the other hand, though the parties are recognized and they are not depoliticized, in their concept there is a conceptual highlight on "competing" in between. Bull and Hansen (2016, p. 393) states that "Agonism refers to the relationship between political adversaries who share the same symbolic space and respect the democratic rules established as conditions for the struggle for hegemony.". While the agonistic mode of remembering (Bull & Hansen, 2016) provides a framework for legitimate political conflict, this study distinguishes its conceptualization of "mnemonic commons" for generation from a mere competitive struggle for narrative hegemony. Unlike a standard agonistic competition where diverse voices might vie for

dominance, “mnemonic commons” focuses on the mutual sustainability and dialogic construction of the shared recollections. In this context, the interactions between different groups are not characterized by a desire to “win” the past or a zero-sum game, but by a collective effort to preserve the memory as a shared resource. Thus, the diversity within the Gezi generation is viewed here not as a set of competing products in a “mnemonic market”, but as a series of interconnected contributions to a living, multivocal commonality that depends on the very presence of its diverse actors to survive.

This shared resource comes from being exposed to the same structural socio-historical conditions, which at the same time does not mean that all the parties, i.e. all distinct generation units, do not take exactly the same from “shared” conditions. This view is not required to overlook the conflicts or homogenize the heterogeneities. While agonistic mode of remembering very well explains the ways of mutual recognition, it hardly addresses shared symbolic space(s) of remembering, which is indispensable for generational analysis. Then we go back to the question “what is a generation?”. It is a shared repertoire, a point of connection, a pool of references, a mutual interest to scrutinize the same agenda; which has been which has a particular “imprint” that makes it possible to distinguish one generation from another. What sociology labours to explain through the concept generation is not the competition of incompatibles. In fact, in the form of generation units, they constitute their generational reality together, in relation because of the very reason that the generational actuality is a web these relations, even though the generational units are distinct. Thus, while it is illustrative to explain the politics between generation units, agonistic mode of remembering fails to explain the connections constituting generational actuality.

This study argues that a generation is not merely a site of competition between distinct generation units; rather, it constitutes a total reality emerging from shared structural socio-historical conditions. In this sense, generation units may interpret the event through different ideological lenses, yet they all draw from the same shared repertoire and pool of references. This “imprint” is what makes the generation a distinct formation. Therefore, “mnemonic commons” explored here is not a call for

homogenization, but an acknowledgment of a foundational connectivity that allows these distinct parts to form a coherent whole, even within their most radical conflicts.

Also, it would not be accurate to assume an inherent material conflict between generational units. It is possible that the generation units may have conflicting memories, however, this does not mean an automatic structural material conflict between the members of units. Mnemonic commons is a concept designating a shared symbolic space in which the identities are recognized but not stabilized, rather, negotiated, re-negotiated, and co-constructed in a generational commonality.

Depending on this insight, for generational memory and generational modes of remembering, Michael Rothberg's "multidirectional memory" (2009) seems more relevant to the concept coined in this study, namely "mnemonic commons". By integrating Rothberg's concept, this study argues that the different "generation units" do not have to be engaged in a zero-sum political struggle for mnemonic dominance in a generational actuality. Instead, their diverse recollections act as interconnected layers of generational actuality. While these parts remain distinct and ideologically unblended, they collectively expand the mnemonic commons of the Gezi generation. In this sense, "multidirectionality" explains how the shared symbolic space is not a site of erasure, but a productive pool of references where different historical and social trajectories encounter one another, creating a singular generational "imprint" through their very interaction.

2.2.5. Selectivity of Memory: The Dialectic between Remembering and Forgetting

As can be seen from the discussion up until here, memory is defined mainly with the act of remembering. However, as many scholars in the field has pointed out (A. Assmann, 2008; Connerton, 2013; Huyssen, 1995; Misztal, 2003; Zelizer, 2000), memory is constituted by remembering and as well as forgetting as the two sides of the same coin, which implies selectivity of the memory phenomenon. From Renan's notion of "shared forgetting" in nation-building to Connerton's "types of social forgetting" and Misztal's concept of "functional forgetting", the literature consistently treats memory as a selective process.

In the first place, this premise implies that memory is not a zero-sum process, it is rather a dynamic and layered constitution. In other words, together with the dynamics of remembering and forgetting, the study of memory is inherently a study of selection, rendering the act of forgetting not as a failure but as a foundational element. Silence, omission, and repression are also the processes shaping the memory. As stated, from national memory studies (Anderson, 1983/1991; Renan, 1882/1990) to social and communication studies (Misztal, 2003; Zelizer, 1995), several works in the literature addresses this aspect.

In the realm of nation-building, Ernest Renan (1882/1990) in his famous work asserts that shared forgetting is as essential to national unity as shared remembrance. This "organized amnesia" is further articulated by Benedict Anderson (1983/1991), who argues that the nation, as "imagined community" relies on an orchestrated historical narrative that systematically omits unwanted traumas to maintain a cohesiveness of national identity. However, this process of omission is not always one of total erasure, as Barbie Zelizer elsewhere (2000) discusses the paradox of "remembering to forget" over the televised and cinematographed memory of the Holocaust. She concludes that the over-circulation of standardized, iconic representation can actually mask the depth of a difficult past, by turning it to the act of commemoration against genuine historical engagement. Barbara Misztal (2003) also frames these silences as "functional forgetting" as a strategic necessity for social cohesion and stability. Thus, the dialectical relationship underlines selective character of memory. What is remembered, how it is remembered, and what remains unarticulated are all shaped by social frameworks and present concerns. Accordingly, while acknowledging forgetting as a constitutive element of memory, this study approaches memory empirically through narrated acts of remembering, treating these narratives as selective constructions also inherently shaped by the process of forgetting, rather than exhaustive accounts of past experience.

2.2.6. Recap: Memory and Retrospective Analysis of Generationality through Memory

The addressed analytical potential up until this point becomes especially remarkable in the study of generations. As per the position that this study adopts, generational

formation does not exist as pre-given social entity. Instead, this study promises to analyze it retrospectively through shared narratives and interpretive frameworks that are articulated in the present. Memory equipped with the mentioned analytical capacities, thus, plays a central role in "the making of" generational location and generational actuality, as it enables individuals to situate their personal biographies within broader socio-historical trajectories.

Accordingly, this study mobilizes memory to examine how a generation comes to be constructed as a social reality through acts of remembering. By focusing on narrated recollections rather than archival traces or institutionalized commemorations, the analysis foregrounds the ways in which generational subjectivity is negotiated, constructed or contested through narrations. In doing so, memory serves as the analytical bridge between individual experience and collective formation, allowing the study to conceptualize generation not as a fixed category, but as an ongoing, socially mediated process.

As the last point necessary to elaborate, within the scope of this study, the consulted narrations operate experiential plane. That is, what this study is after analyzing the generational formation is not opinions but traces of experiences. These traces of experiences are, in fact, framed as memory narrative in the empirical ground.

In his study, Reinhart Koselleck (2004) coins the term "horizon of expectation" as historically accumulated form of experience. Expectations towards the future are conditioned by how past experiences are lived, internalized, and carried into the present. Experience, thus, remains confined to staying in the medium of the boundaries through which actors interpret the present and project on possible futures. The word horizon is explicitly important here since it does not denote a stable and unnegotiable frame of what the future is going to be. Rather, it is the flexible boundary that is open to move with covering distance like horizon line.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

After having plotted the theoretical framework, in this chapter, from research design to analysis strategy, details on methodology are discussed. This chapter has been placed after theoretical framework due to conceptual clarity, i.e. to be able to be at utmost precision about how the concepts are framed and in which manner they operationalized to turn this theoretical framework into empirical inquiry through the disciplinary protocols of sociology.

In social research, methodological choices are far from being neutral application of universal templates or mere discussion of a single selected methodology in literature. Rather, they consist of epistemological construction with and through the research object (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), in the direction of the context of the research object and the related fieldwork necessitates. By fundamentally adopting this general principle, this chapter starts with explaining a series of methodological choices of the study: methodological approach among the others in literature, continues with the details on research design and eventually concludes with analysis strategy. Taken together, three sections illustrate how the research was designed, how it was conducted and data was produced, and how it synthesized with the frame of mentioned theoretical ground.

3.1. Methodological Approach

To illustrate the chosen methodological approach to study the Gezi generation, in this section, first, the recent methodologies in literature for studying generations are reviewed, and these three different approaches are compared, then suitability of Mannheimian framework is explained with the specifications of the selected case and finally, how methodological projection of memory theory is presented.

3.1.1. How to Study Generations: Three Distinct Methodological Approaches in Literature

To be able to reveal methodological approach of the study, first, it is required to situate it within the broader sociological debates on generations. Accordingly, this title briefly outlines three recent approaches of studying generations in literature.

Recent literature provides three distinct yet partially intersecting methodological approaches for studying generations. These differ in how they conceptualize the ontological status and temporal aspect of generations. They can be grouped as:

A. Performative-Discursive Construction Approach (Foucaldian)
B. Weak Ontology and Analytical Tool Approach (Bourdieusian)
C. Retrospective Analysis of Generational Social Formation (Mannheimian)

To begin with, Approach A mainly dwells on knowledge and power dynamics and asymmetries on the basis of Foucauldian perspective. This approach presumes that generations are not pre-existing social categories but discursively constructed objects of study. Generational labels like "the Gezi generation" or "GenZ" do not solely describe social realities, but on top of that, they actively participate in production of such realities. In this sense, generational formation is discursive and performative where recurring references, classification and public narratives construct generational reality. Here, at the core of the problematic there is power dynamics organizing social relations to be analyzed through the discursive plane.

This performative-discursive understanding of generation has been particularly influential in the studies which examine how knowledge categories of generations used in public discourse, media representations, and expert opinions. By bringing Foucauldian legacy of power and knowledge into generational analysis, contemporary studies (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2014; Bristow, 2019; Edmunds & Turner, 2005) have analyzed labels such as "GenX", "Millennials", "GenZ" as discursive constructs that appear in academic research policy documents, market analysis and popular media. In these works, generations are approached not as sociological formation grounded in shared historical experience but as classificatory

discursive social constructs organizing knowledge. From this perspective, the analytical task is not to discuss generation's social formation, but to trace how generational categories circulate across the disciplines and platforms, gain authority and acquire power in shaping social expectations and self-understandings.

Secondly, Approach B adopts a cautious glance at the ontological status of the generation. Within the Bourdieusian critique of "substantialist fallacy", taking generations and their existence as pre-given is problematized in this approach. In that vein, generational differences could only be meaningful when they reflect historically differentiated conditions of "the social", embodied in habitus and patterns of practice.

While in Approach A there are power asymmetries at the core of problematic; in Approach B, on the other hand, the focus is on the discussion of social class, which is inter or intra generationally read through embodied form of cultural distinctions. In other words, instead of generational phenomena and its social formation process, class is at the center; and the term generation is used secondarily as analytical cross-section. Also, embodiment and bodily traces of time and related practices are at the center of the epistemology.

Approach B is not primarily interested in the "existence" of a generation or generationality dimension. Here, the frame is class-oriented and analyzed through "habitus" as embodied versions of the class relations. Since this epistemology prioritizes practices and embodiments, narratives remain secondary.

In the literature, Bourdieu himself (1977, 1984) talked about generations as well as later works inspired by his framework (Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Purhonen, 2016). For Bourdieu himself, generation remained a temporal indicator of changing historical conditions under which class formation occurs. Differences between generations are analyzed on a class basis through forms of capital and social position in the related field.

For the studies focused on generational analysis after him, it is hard to say there is a consensus on how a Bourdieusian framing could adapted to generational study. To

illustrate, while Eyerman & Turner (1998) uses the term "generational habitus" to indicate the embodied orientations of generations, Purhonen (2016) criticizes their perspective. He rejects the application of habitus to generational analysis altogether and states that a Bourdieusian sociology of generations could only be possible through the term "generational doxa", rather than "generational habitus".

Finally, Approach C focuses on the generation's social formation. This approach is based on Karl Mannheim's (1928/2017) framings of generation in which the object of analysis is generation in and of itself. Through two analytical forms, "generation as location" and "generation as actuality"; generational reality is approached as a socio-historical process. Here, the twofold analysis addresses two social dynamics, first is the social position by the given socio-historical conditions and the second is the generation's active, unpredictable response to those conditions.

At this point, the reader might quickly conclude that there is an intrinsic ontological assumption on generations' existence. In fact, this is not the case. Mannheimian frame deliberately distances itself from the positivist framing of generation assuming pre-given existence of generations. In that vein, it shares the substantialist fallacy criticism and weak ontology in Approach B as well as it shares the discursive criticism in Approach A to some extent[33]. At exactly this point that the reader might also ask whether a weak ontological stance toward generations contradicts with placing generational analysis at the center of inquiry.

The answer lies in the "processual" framing of generation in Mannheimian approach. This is to say that instead of automatically assuming the existence of a generation at the beginning, this frame methodologically assumes the possibility of shared memories and cultural meanings. Accordingly, mnemonic thresholds (such as shared frames of meanings, collective memories and common self-recognitions) are pursued to be able to talk about generationality dimension. Common interpretive orientations toward a shared past constitutes the ground upon which a generation may be

[33] Both "myth of youth" discussed in Chapter 1 and "generationalism critique" discussed in Chapter 2 reside within the area in which Approach C (as the adopted approach of this study) coincides with the Approach A.

analytically reconstructed. Here, retrospective reading refers to an analytical strategy through which generational phenomena is analyzed from the present narratives on the selected past. In this sense, temporal retrospection is not treated as a methodological limitation, but as a key analytical complementary of studying generations as social formation.

In the literature, empirical studies drawing on Mannheim's framework have typically operationalized generational formation through shared experiences, collective interpretations of historical events. Empirical studies on generations have reconstructed generational actualities by tracing how specific cohorts narrate formative events such as wars, revolutions, or protest cycles (Eyerman, 2001; Schuman & Corning, 2012; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Wohl, 1979). Similarly, this line of studies on generations have focused on the emergence of common sensibilities, cultural genres, or interpretive frames that differentiate one generational formation from another. Across these works, Mannheimian concepts function as analytical device enabling researchers to connect personal narratives to broader socio-historical processes.

Table 3. Three Approaches and Differences

Approach	**Ontology**	**Temporal Logic**	**Focus**
A	Discursively constituted	Performative present	Naming & circulation
B	Weak/minimized	Historical reproduction	Practice & habitus
C	Processual	Retrospective analysis	Social formation & memory

Although Table 3 above outlines key differentiation points, it should be noted that these methodologies could hardly be taken as mutually exclusive and competing. They share significant intersection points at ontological assumptions, alongside their differences. To illustrate, Approach C intersects with Approach B on cautious stance toward generational ontology, taking into account of self-definitions by generation

itself and historically embeddedness of social practices. Similarly, Approach C intersects with Approach A through its discursive sensitivity to generational descriptions and recognition of generational labels and narratives as active intermediaries that shape meaning making processes.

Next title discusses the reasons why Mannheimian methodological approach is selected to study "the Gezi generation".

3.1.2. The Methodological Choice: Why to Study "the Gezi Generation" from a Mannheimian Framework

The present study approaches generation as a retrospectively read analytical construct rather than an essence. This is to say, in this study, generation's actuality is an abstraction category within which memory narratives by the potential members who are purposefully selected to form a sample of historical-event cohort are analyzed and discussed. In this way, this approach could argue the possibility of shared meanings, common schemas while narrating the past and could only reconstruct generational actuality through the analysis by placing them within broader processes of social formation. Mannheim's theory and concepts provide a suitable toolbox for the examination of how shared meanings, memories, and orientations come to the forefront as a generational formation.

This study puts the social formation of a generation into the focus, rather than merely bracketing the generational dimension or treating it as an auxiliary analytical device to reveal other social phenomena. This analytical and theoretical choice is mostly due to the gap in literature on "the Gezi generation". Apart from conceptual studies from youth and generation studies perspective (Fırat, 2014; Fırat et al., 2017; Lüküslü & Uzun, 2025), there is a considerable gap in the literature done for the systematized and empirical analysis of this generation whereas studies for other generations such as '68 and '78 are numerous. Consequently, the absence of prior research examining this case through the lens of the collective memory makes Mannheimian framework not only suitable but also indispensable for this exploratory inquiry.

Regarding the generation studies in Turkey, this study situates itself in Mannheimian sociological framings in the generational analysis, in dialogue with context-oriented works such as Demet Lüküslü's study (2015) of the '68 generation of Turkey. In this work, sociological analysis of the '68 generation has been presented in a processual manner, just as Mannheim's framework states. In the first part, " 'The Zeitgeist' into which '68 generation has born into" ('68 Kuşağının İçine Doğduğu "Zamanın Ruhu"), she analyzes how being a student in 1960s through the sociological studies done on the youth of that time.[34] In the second part, "Turkey's '68 Generation: Birth and Discourses" (Türkiye'nin 68 Kuşağı: Doğuşu ve Söylemleri), how the '68 generation constituted its discourse starting as a student movement from the universities. This part is the one in which "generation as location" has been analyzed. In here, we read how the '68 generation still as a university student movement responded to the existing conditions that they were born into. In the last part, "Transformation: From Student Movement to Revolutionary Movement" (Dönüşüm: Öğrenci Hareketinden Devrimci Harekete), generation as actuality is analyzed through different sub-topic and perspectives which were not much studied to the date. All in all, from birth to unique discourses, formation of a generation has been examined.

This study is in line with Lüküslü's approach, though the particularities of generations are different. As can be seen from the presentation logic above, the generations are analytically approached as a process and can only be reconstructed retrospectively. On the other hand, to be able to do the reconstruction, temporal distance is needed, that is certain time must elapse for shared meanings and interpretations to crystallize[35]. Without temporal distance, it is nearly impossible to identify the point at which the "birth" of a generation can be said to have occurred.

As also addressed in the previous chapter in detail, the difference in the present case lies in the temporal proximity of the period that this study focused on. Unlike '68

[34] As noted at the beginning of the study, given the abundance of biographical and memoir-based accounts, the study is relied on sociological studies on youth conducted in the 1960s.

[35] Temporal distance refers to a historical condition whereas retrospective reading refers to an analytical strategy. The latter becomes analytically meaningful only once a certain degree of the former has emerged.

generation, whose formative period has been closed and extensively documented, the generational formation examined here remains open, vivid and contested. Precisely because the current case is still vivid, fluid and negotiable, that makes it meaningful to trace the generational actuality from the narratives and memories regarding the period. The presence of shared orientations and collective memories is analytically sufficient to speak of a generational quality, without implying closure or completion. As expressed by Fırat et. al.(2017):

> In this sense, it is evident that both the structural conditions (the emergence of changes in the means of reproduction) and the conjunctural conditions (the historical moment experienced throughout June) necessary to describe the young people born in 1990 and after who took part in the Gezi process as a generation have been fulfilled. However, the use of the label "Gezi generation" requires the passage of time; only when these young people themselves use this naming as per their consciousness and memory acquired from experience will make this group a generation.[36] (Fırat et al., 2017, p. 158)

This study places itself into the literature mentioned in this paragraph. In the following section, methodological projection of memory is discussed.

3.1.3. Memory Studies as the Key Element of Interpretivist Methodological Approach

As discussed in Chapter 2 through several works in the literature highlights the close relationship between generation and memory. The term, both in terms of its theoretical and methodological potential, is a key element of generational research. Under this title, its methodological projection and the characteristics necessitating interpretivist methodology are discussed.

In Chapter 2, I have discussed that memory does not work like a "video recorder" or a stable repository. As per Halbwachs' first thesis, when people remember a piece of

[36] "Kuşağın bu anlamıyla Gezi sürecine dahil olan 1990 ve sonrası doğumlu gençleri bir kuşak olarak adlandırmak için yapısal (yeniden üretim araçlarındaki değişimin ortaya çıkmış olması) ve konjonktürel (Haziran ayı boyunca yaşanan tarihsel dönem) etkenlerin yerine gelmiş olduğu aşikardır. Ancak Gezi kuşağı adlandırmasının kullanılması için belli bir sürenin geçmesi ve söz konusu gençlerin deneyimlerinin bilinciyle ve belleğiyle bu adlandırmayı yapmaları ancak söz konusu grubu bir kuşak haline getirecektir."

past, they reconstruct it at the present. In other words, remembering is a creative act in which imagination, meaning and narration are central. Once remembering is framed as such, "wrong remembering" remains out of scope since the focus in memory research is not rational retrieval of the past or the chronological affirmation of the events, but how the past is recreated and how the meaning is constructed in this recreation.

On this point, Keighley & Pickering elaborates more as:

> In some ways it is understandable that there is a reluctance to challenge the alienation of memory and imagination from each other. There are, for example, cases where we confuse what we imagine with what we remember, or what we remember with what we imagine, just as there are others where we are not sure if we have seen someone in the past few weeks, or heard a particular song on the radio, or if we have imagined seeing this person or hearing that song. We know how memory can play tricks, and how imagination can be fertile. Such cases may involve us in difficulties about what we know or create obstacles to what we want to find out. But here's the rub. The source of our consternation in these moments of difficulty or confusion lies in the close resemblance between remembering and imagining. In such cases, as we acknowledged in the previous chapter, it can be extremely important that we make every effort to distinguish the one from the other, but the resemblance between remembering and imagining should not be construed solely as a problem we need to overcome. That is what has happened as a result of the rigid separation of memory and imagination and the decontextualised dissociation of remembered-images and imagined-images. These wrong steps have led to the entrenched belief that memory is an independent faculty, beavering away on its own and having no association with faculties cognate to it, as imagination is said to have. This may allow us to concede that we draw on our memory when we imagine, but it prevents us, sometimes quite emphatically, from thinking of how we draw on our imaginations when we remember. (Keightley & Pickering, 2012, pp. 44–45)

In the paragraph above, they challenge the idea that separating imagination and memory as mutually exclusive faculties. In general, memory is associated with the intelligence, rationality and recalling the knowledge "as it was taught". In this schema, imagination might remain as "making up". On the other hand, within the frame which Keighley & Pickering argues, that is, imagination goes hand in hand with the recalling act in remembering; imagination is a rather another "faculty" or ability to make sense of the past, which sometimes might be discussed in the context of storytelling also.

Methodologically, the close relationship between imagination and remembering puts meaning at the heart of the analysis. The meaning bridges the gap between the experienced past and today's conditions. From bridging of this gap, the context of memory narratives appears. In this way, what is there to research for a sociologist is the ways in which people make meaning the past while placing it to their concrete present and how they choose to narrate it.

The interpretivist framework comes into picture at this exact point. When memory studies' meaning focus is translated into the disciplinary protocols of sociology, an interpretivist framework that is used to analyze the collective memories of a generation treats memory narratives as the medium in which social context of the personal memory narrative is created. Since memory is an active social process where the remembering actors constantly and inevitably attribute meaning to their past; drawing on Max Weber's concept *Verstehen*, interpretivist approach to analyze memories is built on "understanding" "the social" in the actors' inter-episodic meaning making relation between the past and the present.

Analysis of "the social" in memory studies brings the discussion of an important term: "intersubjectivity". On the ontological level, starting from Halbwachs, memory studies attributes subjectivity to real, embodied persons. Every person is able to turn their experience with socio-historical conditions into memory and also is able to recall them. Thus, in terms of remembering, every real person with a functioning body has the faculty of remembering not as an extraordinary skill or indicator of high intelligence but as a fundamental faculty. This very framing makes the memory an action of sharing, interaction, exchange and negotiation of meanings in between remembering subjects.

This intersubjective characteristic of memory states that what and how a group of people with a social bond in between (could be a community with primary bonds like a community or a group of people with rather societal secondary bonds like a generation) remember is a social act, rather than collection of biographical or personal memoirs. Similar to Koselleck's concept of "horizon of expectation", i.e. a shared horizon for expectation shaped by the historical conditions; intersubjectivity

states that what potential members told us as the memory narratives in the interviews are not isolated and individual narratives, rather they share a "horizon" of meaning shaped by the socio-historical conditions. As can be expected, this horizon is shaped by the given socio-historical conditions. The intersubjective characteristic of memory provides a productive bridge on the tension between structure and agent within sociology: Assuming human agent powerful enough to make meaning of its past without turning into a "voodoo doll" of social forces, at the same time, by including the shaping effect of socio-historical conditions into analysis.

There is one last point to close the discussion in this title, which is the place of narration and narrative in memory research. Keighley & Pickering further states on the narrative in terms of memory research as:

> More importantly, whatever material it yields is not necessarily a more or less analogous image of some past experience; it is not identical to that experience, but instead involves a creative regeneration of past experience in such a way that its meanings in relation to what is past make sense and have significance for us in the present. It in this sense that Ian Hacking rejects memory as unlike a video record and instead suggests that 'the best analogy to remembering is storytelling. The metaphor for memory is narrative'. As we noted in the previous chapter, in recollection the past is not possessed, but repossessed, and this requires the interpretative activity necessary for us to have any sense of the distinctive qualities and textures, and definite limits and possibilities, of particular times and experiences in the past. In itself this derives from multiple acts of recollection in the past, for in our thinking of the past we are the continually changing result of processes of remembering over time, and for this reason among others memories cannot be considered as if they are like unchanging archaeological exhibits, laid out for display on a museum table. (Keightley & Pickering, 2012, p. 50)

As can be seen from their discussion, reconstructed characteristics of memory have a close relationship with narration as it has with the imagination. Methodologically, this very point makes question of "in what ways do members of targeted group remember" crucial for sociological analysis of memory. People get experiences as a result of appropriating the socio-historical conditions external to them. A social researcher is not able to reach the experience itself but its representation in various forms. In sociological research on memory, what is at stake is how interviewees produce a "story" with social meaning. In other words, a sociologist is after the

social meaning embedded in memory narratives. This analysis of memory narratives constitutes the second element of the tripartite analytical structure of the study mentioned in Table 1, in Introduction chapter.

To conclude, in this study, in the research design, the methodological focus is not to verify the factual accuracy of "what happened" in 2010s but to get how the potential members of the generation constitute the meaning making of their experienced 2010s during the interviews. These are far from being isolated accounts, but the potential members are socially situated into the reality of early 2010s as university students in Ankara, Turkey. The intersubjectively situated memory narratives reveal "the social", i.e. the socio-historical conditions that they appropriated. The meaning in the narratives reflects both their relationship with the past and how they place the past into the present. In this sense, memory narratives are not a source of distortion or "making up", rather, is the analytical tool through which both generational location and actuality of the Gezi generation become visible.

3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Translating Theoretical Framework into an Empirical Inquiry

As per theoretical framework, there is a required criteria to be able to talk about generational formation, the potential members were required to be in their years of fresh contact in the specified period. Likewise, to be able to analyze social formation of "the Gezi generation" and the generationality dimension here, required biographical threshold for potential members are to be in the formative years/years of fresh contact in the years between 2010-2015.

In line with generationalism critique, which distinguishes generations from mere birth cohorts, and Mannheimian generation theory, both mentioned in the theoretical framework chapter; this biographical threshold is the structural condition of "social location". This constitutes the first element of tripartite analytical structure explained in Table 1. Selecting the participants who occupy the same generational location is also consistent with the Thompsonian revision mentioned in the same chapter.

However, there can be multiple social groups who were in their years of fresh contact in the years between 2010-2015 in Turkey. As was discussed in the theoretical framework, several social positions exist for the young people who were at their fresh contact in 2010s; exemplified as being NEET, unemployed or being university students. Thus, another specification is required. In the study, social location for the generation was taken as being university student back then. These criteria had also another important nuance of being undergraduate back then since the graduate students of early 2010s were not among the people who were having their fresh contact in the period.

The choice of university students as the specific social location for this study is suitable to research the targeted research aims for several reasons. Within the Turkey context of 2010-2015, universities functioned as the primary site for fresh contact for young people in which they first meet with the social and political actions to the public and societal issues. Universities were not places in which young people certified their skills solely, but a site for critical thinking, interrogation, questioning the status quo and political participation. As the primary element of universities, university students were expressing themselves socially, politically and culturally in several groups, political parties, clubs etc. This aspect makes the focus on university students of 2010s suitable to research the socio-political aspects of generational formation.

Moreover, the targeted group of interviewees to consult were further limited to the ones who were university students at a university in the city of Ankara. This is due to illustrative characteristics of the city in the context of research. As the capital, i.e. the primary city for political power in the country, Ankara represents a diverse political landscape for politics, as for the university students. The city has been hosting a diverse and politically active student population coming from all over the country, making it a unique locality to research generationality.[37] This point was crucial to keep the diversity within the generation formation. Within the city of Ankara, however, no university focus was considered.

[37] This methodological choice has been later confirmed by an interviewee as "the political reality where I came from were consisting of two structures, in Ankara, however, I saw plenty of 'letters' which are symbolizing different political fragmentations." (Int #4)

There is also one last point here to discuss. I deliberately included two high school students and four politically unaffiliated and independent university students; both groups had the required criteria of being at their fresh contact in 2010s. This move was done to ensure the internal differentiation within the sample. While university students were at the core of the generational location, the high schoolers back then were inside and near the younger partition of the fresh contact boundaries for the generation. Second, unaffiliated participants provide a remarkable perspective on how generational actuality crystallizes outside of the mainstream political discourses adopted by individuals. By targeting these diverse characteristics of generation units within, the study aimed at reflecting the heterogenous "making" of the Gezi generation, proving that shared affective and crystallized aspects at the level of actuality transcends from the strict political boundaries.

3.2.2. Sampling Strategy

As can be seen from the previous title, the targeted group of people has been specified according to the theoretical framework. In that vein, there exists a theoretically given set of criteria for the selection of interviewees in fieldwork.

In his book Michael Quinn Patton (2014) defined purposeful sampling[38] as:

> The logic and power of statistical probability sampling derives from its purpose: generalization. The logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases: *information-rich cases*. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research; thus the term *purposeful sampling*. For example, if the purpose of an evaluation is to increase the effectiveness of a program in reaching lower–socioeconomic status groups, one may learn a great deal by focusing in depth on understanding the needs, interests, and incentives of a small number of carefully selected poor families. (Patton, 2014, p. 53; emphasis in original)

By comparing statistical probability sampling which seeks generalizability, with qualitative sampling which seeks analytical in-depthness, Patton states that the power

[38] There is also another word for this kind of sampling, that is, purposive sampling. In this 2014 version, in a table, Patton compares these two terms and decides the purposeful sampling is more suitable for the context he mentioned. It is because with the purposeful sampling, the researcher is emphasizing that the each participant selected for the study was not chosen by chance, rather they are included with a strategic manner to answer the main research question.

of qualitative sampling lies in the richness potential for providing targeted information of the selected cases. For a study based on theoretical means such as this one, the prioritized case selection strategy would be to-the-point selection of interviewees with the higher possibility of providing targeted information for generational formation.

Due to required specifications (such as fresh contact) implicit to generation research, it had the utmost importance to include the cases with higher possibility of targeted information for generational formation. The "purposefulness" of purposeful sampling as defined by Patton has embodied in this research through the criteria whose rationale discussed in the previous title, that is being at their fresh contact/formative years as a university student in a university in Ankara in between the years 2010-2015. Therefore, by depending on the prioritization of explanation power of criteria-based purposeful sampling, people who were fulfilling pre-defined criteria have been included into the research, who were the individual cases which have utmost potential to discuss the generational formation of the generation at stake.

Furthermore, snowball, or chain sampling as defined by Patton (2014), is also combined with purposeful sampling for reaching the targeted number of interviewees. The process has begun with limited "seed" participants who met the specified criteria and proceeded by consulting with suggested profiles by them. This technique targeted to reach other information-rich cases in their social networks which was vital for including people from different generation units. At this point, snowball sampling functioned as ensuring a level of credibility and trust for the interviewees. Every participant who reached through this chain fulfilled the set criteria at the beginning. In this way, purposeful and snowball sampling strategies, both in line with the main principle of including cases with the utmost analytical explanation power, were used integrally to complete the fieldwork.

3.2.3. Planned Interview Procedure and Prepared Interview Questions

The interview procedure has been organized in the form of one-on-one interviews since it is crucial for memory research. The target group of interviewees within the

scope of this study composes a group without a primary bond. Following Tönnies' classical distinction, a generation rather composes a *Gesellschaft*, a society with more complex, secondary and impersonal bonds; rather than *Gemeinschaft*, a community with direct and primary bonds. In this context, one-on-one interviews allow the researcher to trace the sharedness and commonalities of "the social" in personal-based, fragmented and distinct memories. In one-on-one settings, they remain independent from groups' "synchronization" or getting "in-line" in their personal narratives with other participants, like in the other methods such as focus groups interviews (which could be quite suitable for the communities with more primary bonds for observing the community ties) which allow the interviewees to discuss a specified past together and remind some part of it to each other.

Therefore, the procedure was designed in the form of a series of one-on-one semi-structured in-depth interviews with a pool of interview questions in hand. The same general structure has been followed in each interview with a slight flexibility of asking more questions in the direction of interviewees' narrative content. In this way, semi-structured as well as in-depth design choice provides researcher a focused and specified guide for the proceeding of the interview duration, and on the other, it gives the participants to space to situate their "story" and the embedded meaning in it. Given that this research focuses on how the past is experienced, interpreted and narrated; this method seems appropriate for the research objectives.

The interview guide has been prepared in three thematic clusters of questions[39], which were designed to reveal generational formation in two analytical layers: generation as location and generation as actuality. Together with demographic part, it could be said that the interview questions consisted of three main parts: demographic question for the interviewee profile (1), the remembered 2010s experiences of the interviewee as a university student (2) and memories and opinions on both "yesterday" and "today" of being a generation (3).

As stated, the first part consisted of the questions for acquiring demographic information such as age, birth date, gender, education level, occupation; designed to address the socio-economic profile of the participants.

[39] The pool of interview questions could be in the Appendices chapter.

The second part consisted of the set of questions regarding being young and university student in early 2010s, i.e. the years between 2010-2015, all of which could be summarized as "how was 2010s for you, as a student?". These questions were designed for the analysis "generation as location". That is, they target to acquire the remembered socio-economic conditions for the university students of 2010s.

The third and last set of questions was about "being a generation". These sets of questions were designed to analyze belonging, generational boundaries, legacies-transfers, generationality of the student movements in 2010s, shared values, political culture etc. These questions are designed to analyze "generation as actuality".

At this point, the reader may ask whether the processual framework of Mannheim, which does not assume *a priori* existence of a generation at stake, conflicts with directly asking the questions on generation and generationality in the third set. The reasons (of the design stage) why it suits the Mannheimian generation framework as well as memory studies methodology are discussed in the next paragraphs.

For the analysis of generation as location, i.e. for the second set, there was no mentioning of the term "generation". This part is designed to analyze the socio-historical conditions that the interviewees are born into by what and how they remembered their past as being university students. However, in the second part, there exist questions such as "do you consider yourself part of any generation?" or "would you say the protest styles of the 2010-2015 era had a generational character?".

Depending on the adopted methodological approach, in which questions remain as tools to invite the participants into discussion of generationality, these questions are suitable and functionable to analyze generation as actuality, simply because generation as actuality depends on potential members' opinion and approaches to remaining inside or outside of the generational boundaries, in direction of how they themselves interpreted the generation and the generational belonging. Methodologically, grounding the data production in this part to the memories and the

relationship established with the past here are also another key since the questions are open ended which allows the interviewees to discuss why and how they construct the generational belonging depending on their narrated recollections.

Crucially, offering this narrative resource does not imply forcing a consensus. The validity of this method lies in its openness to negotiation, as well as rejection. The study included the parts in which interviewees rejected the label of "the Gezi generation" or expressed ambivalence and rejection just as analytically significant as their affirmation and declaration of composing a generation. Therefore, the explicit questioning was not designed to confirm a pre-existing bias or a pre-given generational *a priori* formulized in the form of a question like "the Gezi generation exist, don't you think?", but to talk on how the concept resonates. If a collective generational look depending on sharedness and commonalities in the memories are applicable, it depends on interrogation of "how", if not, the rejection by the interviewee turn the data itself. In this way, this set is an "invitation" to discuss and elaborate on generational belonging.

About the design logic of the third part in the interview guide, in their interview methodology, Holstein & Gubrium (1995) rejects the classical model of "vessel of answers" from which interviewees apply for to answer the posed questions in an interview. They reveal an interview methodology within the discipline of sociology called "active interview" that is an interview inherently turns to a site of meaning-making where the researcher is also an active participant, a "co-meaning maker". In that way, the interview guide turns to a space that "incite the production of meanings that address issues relating to particular research concerns." (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17).

Furthermore, conceptualizing the interview as active site echoes with the epistemological stance of memory studies regarding "remembering agent". As Keighley & Pickering (2012) argues in the previous titles, memory is not a passive retrieval of a stable past but a form of "mnemonic imagination" as a creative process of reconstructing past in the present. From this perspective, when thought in terms of memory, the consulted people are also creative agents within the frame of

remembering and in this way recalling the knowledge accumulated through the time. Holstein & Gubrium's approach of conducting active interview echoes with the interview methodologies widely discussed in the approach of memory studies in which memory research is an active co-constructing process between researchers and interviewees through the medium of interview procedure and questions.

3.3. Field Study

3.3.1. The Fieldwork Experience

With the planned procedure and interview guide in hand, I conducted 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews in total. Due to different geographical distribution of the participants, 7 interviews were conducted face-to-face in various cafes in Ankara, while the remaining 18 were conducted online.

Prior to fieldwork, I acquired the Ethical Committee Approval from Graduate School of Social Sciences. I also prepared an Informed Consent Form in advance and sent it to the interviewees in advance. The form included detailed information about research scope, the affiliated institution and principles of confidentiality. Before the interviews, I explicitly shared the purpose of study and acquired the consent, to ensure that the research is committed to the principle of voluntariness. This step was crucial for establishing rapport and ensuring that the interviewee understood the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time.

Consent for audio recording was also requested prior to the interview sessions. After the consent has been gotten, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed into the text format. The profile of interviewees is given on the table below.

In Table 4 below, the column labeled as "Movement" represents which student movement that the interviewee was affiliated with back in 2010s. This column is crucial to specify the generation units, i.e. the generational differentiation within the generation as conceptualized by Mannheim.

Table 4. Interviewee Profile

Number Interview	Date of Birth	Occupation	Gender	Education Level	Graduated Department	Movement back in early 2010s
Int #1	1994	Psychologist	Female	BSc	Psychology	Student Clubs
Int #2	1990	Psychologist	Female	MS	Psychology	Ethnicity Movements
Int #3	1990	Economist	Male	MS	Economics	Student Clubs
Int #4	1989	Public Servant	Male	PhD	Political Science	Ethnicity Movements
Int #5	1997	Athlete	Male	BSc	Sports Sciences	High Schooler back in 2010s
Int #6	1993	Chemist	Female	BSc	Chemistry	Student Clubs
Int #7	1994	Teacher	Female	BSc	History	Student Clubs
Int #8	1994	Engineer	Male	PhD	Mechanical Engineering	Unaffiliated
Int #9	1990	Accountant	Male	BSc	International Relations	Marxist Movements
Int #10	1990	Tourism Entrepreneur	Female	BSc	Chemical Engineering	Marxist Movements
Int #11	1989	Education Business Owner	Male	MS	Social Sciences Education	Nationalist Movements
Int #12	2000	Graduate Student	Male	BSc	Communication Sciences	High Schooler back in 2010s
Int #13	1989	Service Sector Employee	Male	Associated Degree	Educational Sciences	Marxist movements
Int #14	1989	Service Sector Employee	Female	Associated Degree	Administrative sciences	Marxist movements
Int #15	1993	Activist	Female	BSc	Communication Sciences	Feminist Movements
Int #16	1989	Private Sector Employee	Male	MS	Sociology	Unaffiliated
Int #17	1993	Architect	Female	MS	Architecture	Feminist Movements
Int #18	1990	Private Sector Employee	Male	MS	Political Science	LGBTi+ Movements

Table 4. (continued)

Int #19	1989	Private Sector Employee	Female	MS	Political Science	Marxist Movements
Int #20	1990	Architect	Male	BSc	Architecture	Student Clubs
Int #21	1991	Lawyer	Female	BSc	Law School	Unaffiliated
Int #22	1989	Public Servant	Male	BSc	Sociology	Ethnicity Movements
Int #23	1989	Tourism Entrepreneur	Female	BSc	Sociology	Unaffiliated
Int #24	1995	Actor	Male	BSc	Performing Arts	LGBTi+ Movements
Int #25	1995	Private Sector Employee	Female	BSc	Political Science	Alevi Movements

As also can be seen from Table 4, the sample consists of highly educated people with high intellectual capacity, majority of whom are white-collar experts. A considerable number are graduates of social and political science departments. This group possesses well-developed conceptual skills and the ability to view and evaluate public events with intellectual capital from an intellectual distance.

This characteristic of the sample was particularly important for the third set of questions where I explicitly asked about "generationality". To quickly recap, contrary to the questions in the first set in which I asked about the experiences of being student in 2010s, the third set was aiming at dwelling on their own views about generational belonging and boundaries. I was aware the potential for "social desirability bias", that is the risk formulizing questions with the main concept of the research (generation/generationality) might lead interviewees to give answers they though I wanted to hear. However, my field experience proved the otherwise due to this educational background of the sample.

All interviewees held at least undergraduate degrees. They also had high level of social sensitivity, which allowed them to engage with abstract concepts without difficulty. Rather than being led by terminology or intimidated by jargon, the questions in the third set facilitated profound dialogue. The explicit use of the concept opened a space for interviewees to honestly discuss their relationship with

the generationality dimension, whether rejection, affirmation, negotiation etc. Thus, explicitly mentioning the concept did not threaten the validity of the procedure; on the contrary, it offered the participants the necessary intellectual tools to articulate their own reality, proving rich data for the analysis of generation as actuality.

3.3.2. Position of Me as the Researcher

As the researcher of this study, I share the same generational location with the interviewees. Particularly, I experienced my own "fresh contact" between the years 2010-2015 as an undergraduate university student in Ankara.

This common background puts me with the same historical timeframe and cultural codes within the participants, fostering a horizontal relationship rather than a hierarchal one in terms of generational position. Being an "insider", i.e. remaining coeval with the interviewees, helped me to challenge the vertical distance between the traditional labels as "expert researcher" and "studied subjects". The shared familiarity and culture of the period facilitated the rapid establishment of rapport and enabling participants to express their opinions more openly.

Moreover, this horizontal positionality required a constant self-reflexive lens. While the "insider" status provided with trust and access, it also carried potential risk of taking common experiences for granted or imposing the own meanings to the narratives. As the mitigation strategy, I kept the analytical distance, in which I treated the already known event and shared history not as obvious but as a topic of inquiry. By maintaining the analytical distance, I used familiarity to ask deeper, more precise and nuanced questions that an "outsider" might easily miss. Thus, my "insider" position functioned as a bridge that allowed for a "co-construction" of meaning where boundaries between the researcher and the participant were permeable and also methodologically preserved.

Furthermore, the interviews often transcended solely exchange of information and lead to an affective encounter. Since the topics (campus memories, political hopes, subsequent disappointments etc.) were also personal and emotionally charged for

both parties, the positionality of me as the researcher included emotional labour to some extent. Also, this shared emotional ground allowed me to understand deeper of the affective status of the generation which an outsider might have interpreted differently.

3.3.3. The Saturation Point

There is also another point to discuss known as redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or saturation point (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2009), i.e. when to terminate the fieldwork. For this research, I observed that in after 23rd interview, the answers became resembling to each other. Even if the demographic profiles differed, there were hardly new insights regarding generational experience provided other than the already recorded ones. The personal narratives began to echo with one another, revolving around the similar key themes and metaphors. A point of "saturation" has been reached by the repetition in the data where the additional interviews were no longer yielding new significant themes or categories.

Therefore, the fieldwork has been terminated after the 25th of interview has been completed. This decision aligns with the methodological principle of "information redundancy", allowing the termination of fieldwork when sufficient data has been gathered to construct a sound analysis of the generation as both levels of location and actuality.

3.4. Analysis Strategy

3.4.1. Coding and Thematization Procedure

The analysis of the interview data followed a systematic qualitative thematic analysis protocol. Until the transcriptions were completed, a rigorous process of thematic coding was done. Using automated software has not been preferred, rather, a manual indexing strategy was deliberately employed to be more in accordance with the emotional tone in the narratives. This involved the development of a structured analytical index, where raw data were categorized into distinct conceptual clusters

based on recurrent patterns and theoretical relevance. These clusters were subsequently refined into the analytical titles used in this study, ensuring that each theme captures the multifaceted nuances of generational memory while remaining firmly anchored in the participants' lived experiences.

In line with the Mannheimian framework established in the theoretical chapter, the analysis of generationality in this study has two primary dimensions: generation as location and generation as actuality. This dual analytical focus necessitates a two-staged procedural approach, ensuring that the structural conditions of the generation and its active, reflexive formation are examined in a holistic yet distinct manner.

The first analytical dimension, generation as location, was mainly asking the main question of how the early 2010s were for university students in Ankara. To be able to analyze this, I started with a very general question "how was 2010s for you", as it was stated before. During the analytical process, raw narrative data were initially categorized through a systematic thematic indexing protocol. Then, these themes from the raw quotes were translated into the conjunctural domains of the 2010s. The conjunctural domains (the detailed explanations for this analysis strategy discussed in detail in the next chapter where I analyzed generation as location) also were created as meta domains to capture the mentioned themes. Within the frame of conjunctural analysis suggested instead of description of "Zeitgeist" in this part, the direct quotes and their thematical context has been discussed under the title of these internally autonomous but intersecting domains (as per Stuart Hall's conjunctural analysis principles). Together, these internally autonomous but intersecting domains constituted the generational conjuncture (instead of Zeitgeist for the generation), i.e. the total social panorama of being a university student in early 2010s.

For the second analysis part, i.e. for the analysis of generation as actuality, three main analytical categories have been constituted by the same thematization logic in the previous paragraph. In Mannheimian generation theory, generation as actuality has constituted by shared and declared looks to past, as well as internal differentiations conceptualized as generation units. Depending on this theoretical ground, in this fieldwork, it has been seen that three main categories clustered for

generational formation at the actuality level. They are commonalities, differentiations (inter and intra) and crystallizations. The first address shared glances while the second refers to inter and intra boundaries. The third is common values and affections across the generation units as the differentiations within the generation. Together these three aspects constitute a generation's reflexive actuality.

Consequently, while the location symbolizes common location of experience by the exposure of same historical period from the same social location, the second is the active reflexive glance of potential members to their own generationality as remembering, commenting, creating "we-ness".

The micro analysis in these parts was particularly inspired by C. Wright Mills' seminal work, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959/2000). In this book, Mills states that "the sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society", which he sees as the primary task for many prestigious sociologist including "the intricate and subtle Karl Mannheim" (1959/2000, p. 6). In this view, "the personal troubles of milieu" and "the public issues of social structure" are not though as distinct areas but the milieus with necessary relationship in between that is the sociologist's task to reveal. To use this approach as an analytical tool, the following differentiation is done:

1. Socio-historical condition from 2010s' conjuncture
2. Particular experience told as memory narrative by the interviewee on this condition
3. The difference between today's condition and 2010s' condition

The data has been analyzed according to this analysis logic. To illustrate, the excerpt below is argued:

> When my friends went to 8th March demonstration for example, if one of them asked if she could use my phone to call a friend because her battery was low, I immediately handed it to her. But now, if someone asks me for my phone during a demonstration… There is a code for it, they call the other person with a hidden number. First, you enter that code, then you enter the number so that your number won't be seen since you don't know who the

other person is. I think this is a good example to compare then and now; I think we trusted each other more as a country back then. (Int#1)

The interviewee talks about a changing social condition from 2010s to today, that is public trust in society. She states that before it was not a problem for her to hand her phone to a person who barely knew in a demonstration but now it has turned into a problem. In this excerpt:

A. People were trusting each other in a public arena
B. Details on handing a phone for a person with a low battery
C. There is a lost for trust in between people – additionally also a strategy is told

The analysis is done depending on this logic. Thereby, socio-historical conditions of 2010s when looking from the conditions of today have been analyzed.

It should be noted in this exact point that there is a criticism to memory studies done mostly by classical historians called "presentism". This criticism is crucial to consider not to be trapped by presentism, to rely on present as it was stated. Rather, as stated in methodological approach part, the comparisons of the present with the past were taken as the answer to the question "how they make sense of their past" rather than the reality of the present or the past itself. Here, also in this example, the task is not to research whether such loss for trust exists or not but to reveal the members' description of today's reality within the frame of what is lost.

The logic and form of the analysis in the generational analysis at the levels of location and actuality has been summarized in the table below.

Table 5. Analysis details of generation as location and generation as actuality

Analysis Level	**Focus**	**Analysis Logic**	**Form of Analysis**
Location	Objective Ground	Condition+Experience+Comparison with today	Vertical: from history to biography
Actuality	Subjective Construction	Shared+Differentiated+Crystallized	Horizontal: from person to generation

3.4.2. General Analysis Strategy

This study adopts abductive research strategy (Blaikie, 2000), as the primary objective is to grasp the meaning making ways to in the collective look to the past for the generation at stake. Unlike other analysis strategies, for example deduction, testing the theory or induction building the theory from scratch, abduction allows a continuous dialogue between social theories and the experiences. As Blaikie puts, abduction starts with "insider's view" by the targeted group and seeks to translate these accounts into the abstraction language of social sciences.

Blaikie further defines abduction as follows:

> The fourth research strategy is different from the other three in that it is the only one that specifically addresses the objective of *understanding. Abduction* is the logic of enquiry in which the researcher, at least initially, takes on the role of learner and seeks to be educated by the people being studied. The initial task is to learn about their form of life and the way they conceptualize and make sense of it. With this knowledge as an ingredient, the researcher may then proceed to redescribe lay accounts of the social world in social scientific language. The objective is to both describe and understand the problem at hand. Whereas *explanation* is concerned with abstract patterns of relationships in deductive arguments or causal sequences, *understanding* is concerned with the reasons social actors give for their actions. The focus is not so much on the explanations that the researcher constructs but on the explanations social actors can offer and which can be used by the social researcher to construct a social scientific account of their activity. (Blaikie, 2000, p. 77)

Here, as can be seen, main focus is on the interviewee's point of view and how they interpret the social conditions. Following Blaikie's framework for analysis strategy, abductive analysis proceeded in this study in two distinct but interconnected steps:

1. Understanding the insider's view: The initial phase in which the researcher reveals how the participants make sense of their own reality. This is the generational reality in this case. This step includes articulation of the memories on 2010s.
2. Redescription or the translation of the insider's view to disciplinary protocols of sociology: This second phase involved lifting the accounts by the participants into the realm of sociological discourse. The raw and direct

narratives by the participants were “redescribed” and “translated” through Mannheimian generational theory and its components. However, it should be noted that this was not applied as a mechanical manner in this study. Consistent with the abduction logic, when the data collected did not fully fit the classical definitions (e.g. abstract concepts like entelechy and Zeitgeist), the theory was revisited and refined in the analysis chapters.

In this sense, abductive strategy did not only bridge the macro-level generational theory and micro level personal data, but also it provided methodological legitimacy ground to revisit and refine Mannheim’s concept (such as proposing “conjunctural analysis” instead of “entelechy” description) by keeping the grounds of his theory to better explain the specific context addressed in this study. Thus, theory was not merely applied as a “rigid law” but rather as a flexible heuristic device in relation with the data in hand.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYZING THE GEZİ GENERATION

This chapter reveals the empirical core of the study, by tracing the sociological formation of the generation, operationalized as historical-event cohort consisting of the participants whose fresh contact was in early 2010s.

While this selective sampling strategy in research design constitutes the structurally given conditions for social location, the "generation as location" in this chapter addresses how the participants recall what they experienced in this structural location. A crucial methodological point must be revealed here: This part is not only about analyzing how the participants metabolize the structural conditions. Rather, it dwells on how they storify this metabolization as the interpretation of "generational location". Therefore, the analysis is not about relating "what happened" through the scholarly resources. It is rather analyzing how they storify their historical exposure by the conjunctural domains of early 2010s. In relation, the micro analysis in these sections is built upon interpretivist analytic strategy, which frames the recollections as "remembered conjuncture". In other words, micro analysis constitutes the double interpretation and framing them as relatively autonomous and articulated multiple domains of the conjuncture in 2010s. Taken together with the articulated domains, this part is used to explain the generational actuality in the following section.

As the following section, 4.2. Generation as Actuality section dwells on commonalities, differences and crystallizations looking to the past, that is in relation with the 4.1. Generation as location. As it was discussed in theoretical framework chapter, Mannheimian generational theory is facilitated in this study to read generational actuality as a dynamic and on-going social construction process analyzed through the negotiation of memories and labels by the potential members of

the generation itself who are at the very generational location on the experiential basis. Here, through three parts revealing commonalities, differences, as well as crosscutting crystallizations, constitutes the very actuality of the generation as "mnemonic commons", in relation with how members storify their formative years in the 4.1. Generation as Location section. As generationalism critique states, this actuality of the generation is far from being homogeneous as well as showing "once and for all" characteristic. Micro analysis strategy in section 4.2. Generation as Location is also interpretivist strategy and refers to the second partition of the Tripartite Analytic Structure of the study.

Looking from these two analytical windows, this chapter states the generational actuality of "the Gezi generation".

Before delving into the details, it is vital to state that the conceptual categories introduced and discussed in this chapter, namely generation as "transnationally bounded local formation", "remembered conjuncture", "mnemonic commons" should not be treated as merely extensions of theoretical framework. On the contrary, these concepts developed in relation to the abductive research strategy mentioned in Methodology chapter, where a continuous and reflexive dialogue between social theory and empirical data was maintained in the process of developing them. In this sense, these categories are not pre-given templates drawn from literature, rather, they are empirically driven framings that originated by the narratives themselves. Therefore, these discussions belong to the analysis part and accordingly, place in here. In doing so, the study underscores that this chapter is the site where theory is tested against data; and data, in turn, reshapes the theory.

4.1. Introduction: Contextualization Rationale

In line with abductive research strategy, this introduction discusses contextualization rationale for anchoring the micro level findings within macro and mezzo level contexts.

The contextualization rationale of this study rests on two analytical pillars. The first is grounded in the critique of "global generations", stating that the generations

should be understood as a local formation, whose history is constituted by the transnationally bounded forces. The second is based on the critique of "Zeitgeist", suggesting the term "conjuncture" provides a historical material ground enabling the analysis of differences both within inter and intra generational relations.

Taken together, these two perspectives, as spatial and temporal pillars respectively build the context of generation in this chapter, by discussing the generation within a transnationally bounded local conjuncture.

4.1.1. Position of the Study regarding "Global Generations"

The term "transnational" is deliberately used in place of "global", to highlight that the generation is a locally framed[40] yet transnationally conditioned phenomenon. This frame acknowledges that while generation's experiences are rooted in specific local contexts, they are simultaneously shaped by political, cultural and economic processes transcending the national borders. In this sense, contextualization captures the interplay between structural embeddedness and cross-border circulation as overlooked in the "global generations" framework.

This choice of approach and terminology echoes with the criticisms by numerous selected scholars in the literature (Bristow, 2024a; Roberts & France, 2021; Thorpe & Inglis, 2019; White, 2013) which problematizes the notion of "global generations" thesis coined by Edmunds & Turner (2005), Beck (2008), Beck & Gernsheim (2009).

4.1.1.1. The Idea: Tracing the Term "Global Generations"

To begin with, Edmunds & Turner (2005) are among the earliest to introduce the term "global generations" into sociological debate. Main argument is that due to technological advancements, it has become relevant to discuss generations as global

[40] For the countries with unitary state organizations like Turkey, it is meaningful to speak of a country-based formation ground for the generations, since it is possible to talk about a shared "common destiny" for the young people as citizens. However, this does not imply that every member of the generation is equally affected by this "common destiny".

categories which were previously framed as nationally bounded. While late nineteenth and early twentieth century constituted an era of international generations, and the mid-twentieth century was characterized by transnational generations; the latter part of the century represents the era of global generations. The analysis relies heavily on the frequency and intensity of the interaction facilitated by communication technologies. Based on digital and electronic interaction across the world, they even go further to suggest that traumas are now experienced on a global scale.

Their main criticism to Mannheim's theory is on the basis of "the tendency to conceptualize generations in their national context", which they think it is the "original temper of Mannheim's thinking" (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 564). Furthermore, they argue that Mannheim's theory lacks elaboration of transnational relations and flows due to the conditions of his time as well as strong legacy of traditional sociology. Objection has been raised to this frame, exemplified by the 11 September 2001 event, which illustrated the necessity to "embrace the thinking around globalism" (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 564). The claim is that this event was a "globally experienced traumatic event" since it created a "global awareness of the terrorist strike" due to the fact that millions of people have watched the airplane striking World Trade Center from TVs in real time (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 564).

Another example is the 1960s generation, which was discussed as the first global generation. In that vein, the '60s generation is discussed as a generation that created a domino effect and reached a global scope by provoking a transnational activism. According to them, the reason for this generation to have such self-awareness is the advancements in the communication technologies (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 566). They state this as:

> Why was the 1960s such a self-consciously global generation? What was the key dynamic that made the 1960s generation into a global phenomenon? One answer lies in developments in communications technology. Social generations are defined by having a collective memory. This memory may come from direct experience, but it is also mediated (interpreted, translated

> and ‘spun’) by the media. While Mannheim (1997) stressed the view that generational identity was forged out of direct experience, later theorists have explored the role of mediated experiences. Thus, the 1960s generation does not include just the activists, but also those who experienced the events through the media, in particular, television (Eyerman 2002: 62). (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 566)

They differentiate the ways to constitute a collective memory in two, as experience based and as mediated by mass media channels. Main claim here is that the media crates a generational consciousness through disseminated and circulated messages as well as its form of “medium” (with reference to Marshall McLuhan). In that vein, the last point they argue is the potential power and future of internet for organizing activism even for one locality, which is exemplified in the article by the 1996 Serbia demonstrations which had a huge impact on the local election results (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 270).

Secondly, the two works of Beck (2008) and Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2009) have a similar yet more sophisticated perspective of offering a “global” look to the generational phenomenon. These articles describe a methodological trap for generation studies as “methodological nationalism” and suggest a general approach as “cosmopolitan sociology” against this trap. This criticism is grounded on the idea that Mannheim’s sociological framework is outdated with respect to current contemporary global risks and it needs to be updated with a “cosmopolitan sociology” approach, which takes into account the “multiplicity of global generations that appear as a set of intertwined transnational generational constellations” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2009, p. 25). It could be said that Beck’s “cosmopolitan realism” is created to point out global problems like climate change with the claim that for issues of such kind, national borders seem meaningless (2008, p. 204). Here, “global interconnectedness and intercommunication” is aimed to be emphasized predominantly. This is also presented as a way to overcome “the exotic gaze of the colonizer on the colonized”. It is stated that for generation theory, global intercommunication became a feature that could not be overlooked.

Beck (2008) also elaborates on the idea mentioned in Edmunds & Turner’s (2005) on cross national interconnectedness by stating that “for the first time in the history”, the

countries share a “common present” due to the communication devices allowing to be informed in real time. In relation with this idea, the article also refers to the “global trauma” by relating trauma with the risk:

> You can apply the basic idea of Mannheim's sociology of generation in a modified form: it is the symbolic code of traumatic cosmopolitan events which constitute the new space of experience, of global generations in the world risk society. So, global generations are also global risk generations. What is global, in fact, is not necessarily the catastrophe, but the anticipation of catastrophe. This is what risk is about. Risks bring home to us a condition of the world, which does not (yet) exist. (Beck, 2008, p. 206)

In this frame, risk, as both globally shared anxiety about misfortune and a globally shared collective emotional structure, turns to a formative experience for global generations. This experience is not a direct bodily one, rather, a mediated experience, produced through audiovisual exposure to events that others directly passed through.

At the same time, he turns to global inequalities, for which he suggests that in the aftermath of postcolonial critique and the spread of transnational ways of life, inequalities are no longer confined within nation-states but increasingly understood and lived as global realities. The article continues by pointing out that political opposition at the peripheries now is global because they resist the mono-cultural gaze of the “international order and its guardians”. Ultimately, he proposes a methodological cosmopolitanism for the fields of youth and generational sociology, with the claim that “it must at least be able to answer the key question: What is going to replace the nation state unit of investigation known as ‘generation’?” (Beck, 2008, p. 215).

Beck & Gernsheim (2009) provides slightly more ordered structure and profound reasoning than presentation in the previous work of Beck (2008). One of the grounding arguments is that the daily life of an ordinary person is now a “cosmopolitan” one. Since the “sphere of the experience” expanded, unit of analysis for the generational phenomena needs to be expanded to a global one too. In that vein, they state that not only generational understanding, but also sociological analysis should shift from national state scale to a cosmopolitan one. Their main

causality line for this argument is “cultural globalization”, which is currently being grounded by precariousness and risk.

4.1.1.2. The Critique: Limits and Drawbacks of Claiming “Global Generations”

Several voices of objection have been raised in the recent years to these frames of “global generations”. The first objection is about political representation problem. Roberts and France (2021, p. 785) argues that the absence of clearly defined geographical and political context jeopardizes the accuracy of the sociological analysis on the generations. Drawing on longitudinal works from Australia and Canada (such as Andres & Wyn, 2010); they highlight that research claiming to be cross-national has predominantly represented the experiences of young people from Global North. While presented as providing a “global” picture, these studies are in fact highly localized within Global North, remaining their findings unsuitable for generalization to the diverse generational experiences across the world. In this regard, advancements in communication technologies in and of itself cannot generate a genuine global sense of belonging among generations.

Moreover, Jane Bristow (2024a, p. 33) importantly states that “Mannheim’s problem of generations relates not only to understanding of how generational consciousness is generated but understanding why the consciousness of one particular ‘generation unit’ comes to dominate.”. In that vein, fundamental warning of these scholars (Bristow, 2024a; White, 2013) is that what is called as a particular generation by the sociological frameworks is a particular social group (often associated with the social change) within the young people who are peers. Here, this warning emphasizes that social profile of the group called “global generation” is often middle class, white, Western youth with high digital accessibility. Being informed on a global scale has also its socio-political context and structure, it does not occur in a political vacuum.

Second objection concerns with the unclear definition framework of generation, often confused with age cohort. Thorpe and Inglis (2019, p. 40) states that existing frameworks on global generations are “muddled, especially in terms of conflating generations and age cohorts, and are often deterministic”. They start with one of the

most frequently raised criticisms in the generation literature, that is theoretical framework for generation is not clear and rarely fitting to the case. They importantly address Judith Burnett's (2016) differentiation of age cohort and generation: to be able to address an age group as generation, they need to define themselves as a generation. Therefore, depending on Mannheim's approach, what differs for generation than a cohort is the self-consciousness, sense of "us", seeing themselves as members (Burnett, 2016). This is in line with Wohl's well-known statement that "historical generations are not born, they are made." (1979, p. 5). In the framing of global generations however, advancement of communication technologies and the fact that an event happening somewhere in the world spreads immediately does automatically not mean that a united global generation exists. At this point, Thorpe and Inglis warns against "trauma-determinism", i.e. an assumed idea of global trauma that is originated by the fact that an event happened one location in the world spread in a short time to every other location of the world. One example is "9/11 generation" as a global generation consisting of the young people who lived in the historical period in which 11 September 2001 terrorist attack all over the world. They state that it is hard to talk about existence of such generation since it is not enough to watch the news about an event with a potential to trigger sense of insecurity to form a generation.

Although these scholars are not quite convinced the idea of a "global generation" in the way that it was developed by Edmunds & Turner, Beck, Beck&Gernsheim, they do not deny the interconnected reality of the histories across the world. For instance, the critical position of Thorpe & Inglis does deny the transnational resonance of the globally mediatized events, crises etc. However, not only the implications of the concepts but also the concepts themselves require to capture particular realities of the social phenomena at stake. In that vein, their warning is to produce concepts to analyze generations which remain critical, contextual and multiple to capture the heterogeneous and multi layered realities of the generations across the world.

4.1.1.3. Towards a Transnational Contextualization Rationale for This Study

The discussion between the idea and the critique is quite fruitful for constituting the framework of this study. In the light of these discussions, I conceptualize the Gezi

generation as a local formation, context of which is constituted transnationally. The two foundations of this rationale are explained here, as theoretical and conceptual aspect (4.1.1.3.1) and as empirical aspect (4.1.1.3.2).

4.1.1.3.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundation: the Gezi generation as a Local Generation Contextualized Transnationally

To begin with the analytical and conceptual foundations, if it is the social formation at stake, the concept of generation requires to be approached as an autonomous sociological phenomenon. This necessitates, asserting that generation is, above all, a form of subjectivity emerging in the historical process. While the framework of this process is shaped by given conditions, generational subjectivity may develop the ways in which it exceeds (or time to time even shape) those very conditions. Therefore, generation is both a process and a historical relation. Main problem with the term "global generations" and its framework is that generation and its historical subjectivity are approached solely as a milieu within which the mechanisms of theories such as globalization and risk society operate. It is undeniable that the mass media today has a capacity to expand the scale of communication and analysis to the global level. However, producing a concept of generation focusing primarily a dominantly on this scale draws attention away from generation itself as a sociological reality and toward the process of globalization instead. Within such a deliberate theoretical positioning, the generational phenomenon ceases to be approached autonomously, and the notion of "global generations" emerges as a byproduct of macro scale theories of globalization or the risk society.

Recalling Little and Wilch's (2024, p. 100) argument that the 2008 global crisis had generational effects, it is important to note that young people became one of the most vulnerable groups during the post-crisis restructuring. Yet these experiences were not merely determined by structural constraints. The self-reflexive responses of youth, emerging during neoliberal transformations, generated new political subjectivities and forms of contestation, as Little and Wilch describe as a "point of rupture".

Secondly, sociological analysis of generations requires an approach addressing the differences in inter and intra generational relations. A theoretical approach

overlooking these relations and establishing its conceptual framework accordingly is far from encompassing the sociological significance of the issue. What enables contextualization in the first place is the spatial and temporal positioning of the generation itself. Without this, it is difficult to claim that a generation has a context. In this sense, intergenerational analysis requires not only to point out temporal relations between preceding and succeeding generations, but also to spatial differences across various geographies. Pointing to such differences do not necessarily imply a direct reference to distinct nation-state formations, as Beck & Gernsheim want to prove with the criticism of "methodological nationalism". As noted in the previous paragraph, a generation is not merely determined by the given conditions that they were born into. Each geographical configuration carries the potential within to produce its particular responses. This, at the same time, does not mean that these differences do not communicate across spatial and temporal contexts and remain just within the borders of nation states. On the contrary, to be able to imagine a form of existence with the capability of communicating without being homogenized requires, as a theoretical necessity, assuming autonomy as well.

Absence of such a framework, as critical researchers have pointed out, leads to problems with representation whereby the experiences of young people in the Global North are projected onto youth across the world, particularly in the Global South. Furthermore, it also leads to "trauma determinism" that Thorpe and Inglis pointed out, in which traumas determined by internationally broadcasted events. Representation problem here is that affective structures of particular generations are reduced to televised events without discussing how this news is produced. On top of that, a sociological theory of generation requires not to be blind to the differences within a generation situated in a specific spatial and temporal context. Rather, it needs to be analyzed these differences in a relational manner. At this point, Mannheim's concept of the generation unit and more importantly the relational analytical framework, generation's actuality emerges as a historical outcome of the relations between generation units. In this sense, Mannheim's approach neither overlooks the intra-generational difference nor loses sight of the ways in which these units constitute a form of collectivity.

By depending on these two important points, in this study, I take the Gezi generation as a form of historical subjectivity[41] in and of itself. Needless to say, particular subjectivity of the generation occurs in macro and mezzo level context. However, the Gezi generation has a specific response that can be singled out from the generations before and after it, just like the other generations. In that regard, taking the Gezi generation as a "global generation" remains insufficient to capture this particularity. In fact, a qualitative research design was made onto this very ground, so as to capture this historical subjectivity by narrowing down spatial and temporal context.

Thirdly, based on the theoretical points discussed so far, it can be argued that the context of a generation is material. This requires grounding its spatiality and temporality on a material basis. In this sense, generational memory, which operates as an interface of commonality in the present, is also materially grounded, that is, it functions through being at the particular sociological location. Such a framework does not deny the existence of mediated memory, or vicarious trauma, on the contrary, it suggests that while the context of memory could be fallacious at the level of information, it could not be misleading at the level of self-association. The primary focus of memory analysis[42], therefore, lies precisely in this associational dimension.

Within the framework of this approach, trauma itself has material ground. The significant point is how the members associated themselves with the broadcasted catastrophe, which is happening through the local conditions that the lives of the members are situated. What is at stake here is that how the members describe "common destiny" from their standpoints. This approach does not deny the fact that watching catastrophes may create trauma effect, on the contrary, it highlights the

[41] As per generational subjectivity, I refer to the unique ways in which each generation interprets the historical conditions that they are born into, which obviously could not address a complete independency.

[42] Humankind may misremember events and how they happened. However, for memory researchers, this does not mean that memory is misleading and cannot be analyzed. On the contrary, they look at the data at the level of meaning and association, i.e. how the members associate themselves with the collective events, how they re-member (redeclaring their membership); that is, they ask the question how that event is remembered by the members in that particular way. Therefore, asking the question of "how" to the memory data is vital in analysis.

conditions of locality on which members associated themselves and their conditions with that of the televised catastrophe.

Fourthly, all the criticisms above lead to a transnational frame that is not only focusing on the national conditions since transnational conditions shape the national level and vice versa. My main argument here is that contemporary youth and their generational memories can neither be singled out as unconnected and nationally bounded frameworks, nor can they be reduced to one homogenous global body. 2008 economic collapse can be seen as a formative event that cut across borders, connected generations all over the world. However, while global processes produce shared temporalities, they are lived and interpreted unevenly across distinct socio-political contexts. In this sense, transnational is not a homogenous analysis ground, but a web of connections marked by structural power asymmetries. As Philipps argues:

> Young people come into contact anew not only with their own region's history, but with entangled histories whose origins are scattered across the globe. To different degrees and through different means, they harness and hybridize a diversity of cultural inventories to navigate a world that simultaneously becomes more interconnected and less capable of silencing long-standing inequities. (Philipps, 2018, p. 3)

Under contemporary conditions, generations are connected to the globe in this way, from within the filter of their localities in an indirect way. How "different degrees" and "different means" are hybridized should be the analysis ground of sociology of generations. Young people in the world are connected by their concerns and their positions in social means such as class, gender, race etc. Their cultural and affective connection only can be leveled in such means. Student movements against neo-liberalization of universities and concerns about futurelessness and precarity make them connected on a global scale.

I also re-bring the idea discussed in Thorpe & Ingles that Mannheim's frame echoing with Marx's idea of a global working class. This idea also could be though alongside with the idea of "multitude" as in the way that Hardt & Negri (2001) stated at the beginning of the century. In this frame multitude has a transnational connection on

the basis of challenging neoliberal regulations. Both frames point out a transnationally connected political communities. Only in this way could it be said that the right struggles in the early 2010s could be discussed on a global scale. Therefore, here, in this chapter I suggest a transnational panorama in the way that they suggested, acknowledging interconnectedness without erasing difference, i.e., tracing both connected and varying aspects of generational memories appropriated by student movements of early 2010s youth.

4.1.1.3.2. Empirical Foundation: Local as the Scale where Members of the Generation Situate Themselves

There are also empirical reasons for framing the Gezi generation as a transnationally bounded local formation. The rationale here is based on the answers to the interview question "How were the early 2010s for you?". While the contents of these memories are important, the way they were narrated, i.e. the narrative scale through which participants position their experiences is equally revealing.

The analytical question guiding this part is: "At which scale do the members of the generation situated themselves in recollections of early 2010s?"

Interviewees predominantly framed their experiences as university students through local conditions, particularly those specific to Turkey. Even though globally significant events were mentioned, they appeared mainly as background references to explain local effects. In the data, self-contextualization appeared vis-à-vis mezzo scale, i.e. the country context.

Self-definitions such as "a generation in between" further indicate the locally bounded consciousness. Comparisons were made primarily between preceding and succeeding generations within Turkey, and in some cases even between different regions or campuses. For many, the university campus itself was described as a "small village", suggesting that their lived generational space operated even at a micro-local scale, rendering the concepts like "global trauma" controversial. Although the data was collected through interviews focusing on individual

experiences (thus micro-level by design), the analytical argument here does not stem from the scale of data collection, but from scale of narratives through which participants placed their memories. What is "local" here does not refer to level of collected data, but the mode of self-positioning observed in the collected data. In other words, the scale on which they placed themselves produces belonging and experience as the members of a generation are local. These individuals are not unaware of global conditions, rather, their generational memory operates within spatially and socially localized contexts, whether micro or mezzo but not macro. This provides empirical support for conceptualizing the generation as a local formation rather than a global generation.

4.1.2. Position of the Study regarding *Zeitgeist*

If the scale of analysis in the previous title constitutes the spatiality of the generation, conditions of the world in which a generation was born into provide the temporality; together, these two aspects determine the location of the generation in Mannheimian sense. For the contextualization, the term *Zeitgeist* has been addressed as an early notion corresponding to the temporal conditions that carve the riverbed through which the stream of generations flows.

Rather than conceiving this temporality through the idealist notion of *Zeitgeist*, this study employs the term conjuncture to reveal a rationale of contextualization grounded in the historico-material conditions of a generation's configuration. This framework primarily draws on the critique raised to Mannheim's modification of *Zeitgeist* (which he discusses Pinder and Heidegger on this term) in his pioneering article "The Problem of Generations" (Mannheim, 1928/2017) by numerous scholars such as Pina-Cabral & Theodossopoulos (2022) and Little & Wilch (2024).

4.1.2.1. The Idea: "Zeitgeist" as a Contextualization Rationale for Early Generational Analysis

To begin with, early ideas of *Zeitgeist* were reviewed in Karl Mannheim's seminal article "The Problem of Generations" (1928/2017) since the term has a central place

to explain generational reality especially to address the term entelechy for generations. Accordingly, the term itself was discussed by him in the title under which generational theory of historical-romantic school is reviewed. As can be seen from the articulation of argument in the article, he conducts a discussion about German romantic school after criticizing generation framework by French positivist school; both of which reviewed, criticized and selectively discussed.

In that vein, *Zeitgeist* is a term belonging to the school of German historical-romantic school which is indeed constituted as a result of criticism of French positivistic school. On the opposite side of mechanistic temporal view of developmentalism, German romantic school put a subjective and affective flow of temporality. This view is summarized by Mannheim himself as:

> This idea that, from the point of view of the history of ideas, contemporaneity means a state of being subjected to similar influences rather than a mere chronological datum, shifts the discussion from a plane on which it risked degenerating into a kind of arithmetical mysticism to the sphere of interior time which can be grasped by intuitive understanding. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 357)[43]

As the concept implies, each historical period has a "spirit", that could be distinctively described. This "spirit" may have its own laws of development, natural or even mystical. For instance, as he cites Heidegger, he sees the "spirit of the age" as a homogeneous atmosphere by his framing of "fate" and "destiny". To Heidegger, "fate" is a primary factor for the history as is for a generation's existence, which is defined as realization of an ordained destiny at the eternity in its time and place. However, as can be predicted, according to Mannheim, this view is also not convincing. Mannheim states this school of thought as "romantic" and on top of that, this view also cannot escape from "false problem of spacing generations". However, he also acknowledges the potential here since the view argues that generations is not a chronological fact that can be operationalized through birth date but a matter of

[43] However, it should be noted that as per the next paragraph in the original text, he is also not quite convinced by this replacement of historical romantic school: "thus, a problem open to quantitative mathematical treatment only is replaced by a qualitative one, centred about the notion of something which is not quantifiable, but capable only of being experienced. The time-interval separating generations becomes subjectively experienceable time; and contemporaneity becomes a subjective condition of having been submitted to the same determining influences." (1928/2017, p. 357)

identity, internalization of time and depends on how members of society oriented their mind historically (Burnett, 2016, pp. 33–34).

At this point, in order to be able to ground the theory on more sociological ground, he brings the idea of entelechy. Within the same school of thought, he appeals to Pinder, an art historian of his time, who studies to explain the historical emergence of art movements. While adopting Pinder's entelechy to his theoretical aims, Mannheim is required to mention also his framing of *Zeitgeist*, as "accidental chord" by a musical analogy, that is despite its "apparent harmony", "produced by the vertical coincidence of notes which in fact owe a primary horizontal allegiance to different parts" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 359). This is to say, there is no one unified form of *Zeitgeist* in Pinder's view, differently from Heidegger or other *Zeitgeist* theorists. Rather, an epoch is like a spectrum of color consisting of the different groups of coevals contingently, sharing individual entelechies. For Pinder, a "historical process" is "the interplay of constant and transient factors", while the first is the macro effects like nation, tribe, family etc.; the second is entelechies. Mannheim choose to draw upon Pinder's frame after other German idealists because he thinks that his frame acknowledges the fragmented character of generations' entelechy. However, he concludes that out of the influential factors of constituting historical process in Pinder, there is no place for social factors. This aspect, for him, is the very aspect constituting "romantic" character of this school, in addition to historical frame, since these inner factors were somewhat mystified.

In other words, though is found "romantic" and "mystified", Pinder's frame functions in Mannheim's theory to dismiss monolithic macro temporal concepts and structural determinism of an era with a conceptual intervention. Furthermore, in relation to *Zeitgeist* about the term entelechy, he explains that:

> The epoch as a unit has no homogeneous driving impulse, no homogeneous principle of form-no entelechy. Its unity consists at most in the related nature of the means which the period makes available for the fulfilment of the different historical tasks of the generations living in it. Periods have their characteristic colour- 'such colours do in fact exist, but somewhat as the colour-tone of a varnish through which one can look at the many colours of the different generations and age-groups'. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 359)

In this way, Pinder's entelechy seems more suitable to the analysis of generational phenomenon than German idealists' frame such as Heidegger's fate, since the former is far from being mystical and also is rationalizable within sociological analysis. For Mannheim's generation theory, entelechy is "the inner aim" enabling a generation to realize itself as a qualitative formation not as a homogeneous unity but a historically situated orientation. This idea is perpetuated in Mannheim's frame through the concept "generation as actuality". He discusses this as:

> We must try to break up the category of Zeitgeist another fashion than Pinder did. With Pinder, the Zeitgeist as a fictitious unit was dissolved, so as to make the real units, i.e. for Pinder, the generation entelechies, visible. According to him, the Zeitgeist is not one organic individuality, since there is no real, organic entelechy corresponding to it. It would seem to us, too, that there is no such Zeitgeist entelechy which would confer organic unity on the spirit of an epoch; but in our view the real units which have to be substituted for the fictitious unit of Zeitgeist are entelechies of social currents giving polar tension to each temporal segment of history. (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 388)

As can be seen, while Mannheim distances himself from Pinder's idea of fragmented entelechies, he nonetheless retains the fundamental presupposition of a temporal unity. A spirit of an epoch is neither contingent nor a crystallized being to be described, it is rather, a dynamic process of encountering flows of thought from the social as : "any biological rhythm must work itself out through the medium of social events" (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 361).

Although Mannheim distances himself from both fate-destiny and individual-self realization axes, he divided somewhat homogenous cultural atmosphere of an epoch, this time, to socially grounded groups. In order words, his term generation entelechy, even though "socially grounded", could not escape to be related with the idea of *Zeitgeist* at the core. Because of this reason, in this study, I offer a revision to the use of both terms, entelechy and *Zeitgeist* in Mannheimian theory for researching contemporary generations.

On the other hand, from the idealistic universe of both terms, Mannheim succeeded in producing a term which could be operationalized in empirical research. That is, generation units. This term is suitable to research the intragenerational

heterogeneities within a generation formation. Therefore, at this point, it could be said that this study grounds itself in three terms from Mannheimian generational theory: Generation as location, generation unit and generation as actuality. As follows, mentioned revision is discussed.

4.1.2.2. The Critique: Necessity of a Materially based Contextualization Ground

Though framed in more sophisticated way in Mannheim's frame, it remained within the idealist legacy of *Zeitgeist*, which presupposes a shared "spirit of an age". In response to such idealist readings of historical periods, critical theorists proposed a materialist alternative for the temporal aspect as well, through the concept of conjuncture.

To give a brief background, the term conjuncture itself roots back to the Marxist critique by Gramsci, who discusses it to produce explanations why the working class has not actualized the foreseen revolution against the capital as Marx himself stated in his history thesis. On this problematic, Gramsci states that it is through hegemony that the materially grounded power asymmetries produce the consent for the perpetuity of the status quo. Hegemony is a complex social formation in which cultural and ideological elements joint together, though they are primarily grounded by the political-economic conditions. Gramsci does not totally reject infrastructure-superstructure logic in the way that Marx stated but sophisticates one step further. In this discussion, hegemony, necessarily operates within a historically unique "conjuncture" (Gramsci, 1948/1971). The very term itself addresses amalgamated historical conditions specific to an epoch. In other words, hegemony works in the conjunct milieu of history.

Taking the term from Gramsci, another giant name for cultural studies, Stuart Hall, took the term and developed it as a "versatile analytical tool" for a non-reductive, historically-plotted contextual view for the crisis of capitalism and the moment of social transformations (Pina-Cabral & Theodossopoulos, 2022, p. 466). For Gramsci, conjuncture is the moment in a historical period when economic, political, and ideological forces reach a certain balance. While in this frame Gramsci follows

classical Marxist logic of infrastructure-superstructure, Hall modifies this frame and transforms this model from two aspects: Autonomy of culture (1) and articulation instead of determination (2).

First states that culture has an autonomy exceeding to be simple reflection of economic relations, but it is a field of social practice. Cultural forms in this frame are the sites where conjunctures are experienced and contested in relation to economic schemas but not in a reductive manner. Second is the view that conjuncture is not predetermined but articulated. Conjuncture as structured articulation of contradictions in which economic, ideological and political processes joint together in a historical moment. For Hall, conjuncture is a specific moment when different political, economic and ideological contradictions are aligned and temporarily stabilized. Main axis of intervention of Hall to the term hegemony for reinterpretation of conjuncture is that since hegemony does not have a stabilized teleological structure, it is a stabilization moment that can only be analytically paused for explanation. In this way, Hall aims to develop an approach to the term conjuncture which is far from historical determinism. Conjuncture, therefore, turns out to be the expression of relationality and historicizing for the connection between the structural forces and human agents.

When reconsidered within the framework of generational analysis, main argument of objection is that cultural milieus are grounded by the material conditions. As the name implies, conjunctural criticism states that socio-cultural milieus are constituted conjuncturally, that is, they emerge as a result of a series of tensions, encounters, and temporary stabilization moments. In a seemingly one description for the cultural atmosphere of an epoch, *Zeitgeist* states that young people of the epoch affirmatively constitute one single “spirit” on a consensus. Conjunctural analysis on the other hand states that the described so called atmosphere is result of contradictions, encounters and interactions, which are grounded materially. It is necessarily grounded in the critical theory and the fundamental idea that cultural atmospheres could be not viewed independently from political economic conditions as well as might not be reduced to them. In this way, conjunctural analysis does not reduce socio-cultural milieu to mere function of economics, rather, assumes a complex and temporal

relationship between the two, which could remain flexible to issues like intersectionality. When viewed from his perspective, emergence of a generation is not a mere production of the conditions but an active process of being in which members have an agency.

Likewise, in their conjunctural analysis of the Millennials, Little & Winch (2024) states that this generation historical emergence is highly related with the 2008 crisis. They importantly state that it was not only an economic shock one directionally determining the conditions for generation but the conjuncture, i.e. a temporal stabilization point of combination with social cultural and ideological crises that brought the generation to a moment of rupture. This framework stands against seeing members of a generation as mere voodoo dolls, since the authors conceive of generations not simply as biological cohorts, but as processes of subject formation within specific material and ideological conjunctures. This, in turn, makes conjunctural analysis a valuable tool for investigation of shaping social conditions. Therefore, the authors argue that idealist concepts such as Zeitgeist are inadequate in generational analysis and that a historical, material and relational analysis is required instead.

4.1.2.3. Towards a Conjunctural Contextualization Rationale for This Study

In the light of *Zeitgeist* critique, my approach to generation in this study is on a historico-materialist basis, namely relying on conjunctural analysis mentioned by the scholars (Little & Winch, 2024; Pina-Cabral & Theodossopoulos, 2022) in generation literature. Two foundations of this rationale are explained here, as theoretical and conceptual aspect (4.1.2.3.1) and as empirical aspect (4.1.2.3.2).

4.1.2.3.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations: Analysis of Remembered Conjuncture

Theoretical potentialities of conjunctural analysis mentioned in previous title make it apparent that what is at stake in this study is remembered conjuncture. In this ground, generational analysis is in a retrospective reading frame, rather than the teleological.

There is nothing "meant to be" for generational analysis while looking at the history. All the explanations are required to be within the frame of "what happened" instead of "what was meant to be happen".

This retrospective reading, in this study, shows itself on the basis of a remembered conjuncture, which means in this way, this study does not analyze the conjuncture or aims to reveal a thesis statement for historical rupture moment *per se*. Rather it aims to discuss how the conjuncture of early 2010s is remembered and appropriated by the members of the generation[44]. Viewed in this way, my main aim in this study by discussing the conjuncture of 2010s is not to make a thesis statement about history but to show how the articulated domains of conjuncture in early 2010s paved the way to the generation's shared consciousness.

In this way, though echoing with Hall's frame, a remembered conjuncture is slightly different, in such a way to add another analytical dimension, namely memory. For example, in their analysis, Little & Wilch (2024) take conjuncture for Millennials as an analytically stabilizable historical moment. However, in this study, the interplay between present and the past is central, because the members are looking at their experienced past from within the window of the present. This shift in temporality demonstrates how the past is re-negotiated and reconstructed in today's reality.

4.1.2.3.2. Empirical Foundations: Conjuncture as a Material Ground for Generational Memory

To be able to think this choice for rationale through the fieldwork, I asked the following question to the data: "How (in which domains) do the interviewees make self-contextualization of their experiences regarding temporal conditions of the early 2010s?". Throughout the interviews, the members pointed out different potential domains that might be grounding the generationality. These aspects differ from economic, political, social, technological to affective. While some explained

[44] Throughout this text, I use several phrases to indicate the same social phenomena: how members recall early 2010s, how the recollections of early 2010s are constituted, how members appropriated conjuncture of early 2010, how the memory is constituted by members. All these refer to the followings: generation's common recollections and meaning frames of memory.

generationality on the basis technology by the use of social media and digital means, others addressed changing elements of social life with respect to today. As per these, they constructed a memory narrative regarding “back then”.

It could also be said that the self-contextualization ground of the interviewees was a material one. Members did not describe the features of the cultural atmosphere back then within a frame that could be in line with the idea of *Zeitgeist*, i.e. a description of a singular spirit with little variation in terms of meaning. The way that they contextualize their experiences stays closer to the conjunctural analysis framework adopted in this part since they situated their experiences in relation to macro, mezzo and local contexts by not psychologizing, individualizing or even personalizing what was experienced. It could be empirically said that in adherence of an experience belonging to past in the form of memory by act of remembering depends on its materiality, not only its present relevance.

4.1.3. Recap

Mannheimian generational theory discusses generation with respect to historical exposure rather than birth date. Within this framework, generation as location refers to historical conditions of the time in which the members were having their fresh contact, but not from “official history’s side” or “the chronology of events” but with respect to how the members interpreted and make sense of the historically given conditions.

As discussed until here, generational “location” has two dimensions merged spatial and temporal as revealed in up until here namely transnationally bounded local and remembered. in the narratives of the potential members as spatial and temporal. This title summarizes the contextualization strategy before the analysis of the narratives.

4.1.2.1. Spatial Aspect: Transnationally bounded local conjuncture

To illustrate how the transnational conjuncture turns locally lived and remembered, an excerpt from the interviews can be discussed. While reflecting on early 2010s, an interviewee mentioned about the bottleneck in Turkey as:

> So, when I think about it back then, it seemed bad. I mentioned that my student life was good, but the situation in the country seemed not so good back then while we were going through 2010s too because there were also bad things like terrorism etc. During the times of crisis, we were also among those who experienced it directly because my father was tradesman. With the entry of the China into the textile sector in the country, the sector collapsed. My family experienced that crisis and so did I. (Int#1)

First, her memory of remembering the early 2010s as "better than today" is associated with the material conditions. In that regard, the economic crisis is pointed out. The material ground in this statement is obvious, though it does not always only by means of economics for every member. She associates her life back then with the material conditions emerged from the financial conditions of her family who provides her financial resources with. This echoes the frame of "remembered conjuncture" for the members of the generation.

Secondly, she connects her personal experience of being a student, i.e. appropriation of local conditions, to macro material conditions "back then". The "crisis" she refers is not only an economic downturn confined to national scale; indeed, the national scale is affected by the global. China's rise in 2010s[45] is a remarkable element of transnational conjuncture of 2010s. Namely, its new production strategy reshaped many sectors at the global level as it did to global chains of textile sector, which had direct effects on the production chains in Turkey.

Yet, narrative anchoring of her recollection remains local: the site of experience is her family's livelihood and the concrete effects of the national conditions on their lives. In this sense, the transnational and national conjunctures constitute overarching conditions, while the local conjuncture provides the concrete ground through which it is remembered and lived. Thus, this narrative piece exemplifies logic of contextualization by explaining how memory by her past experiences emerges at the point where transnational-national conjunctures manifest themselves in her lived experience at the micro level, i.e. showing itself on a material ground in her life in terms of being a university student.

[45] Throughout whole interviews, the only other remaining transnational reference was Syrian Civil War in 2011 by 2 different interviewees. However, this one has not been narrated as through direct impact to the interviewees' life like this one here. It was like a mentioned and passed international event back then. This validates both the local association tendency and transnational indirect reference frame discussed through Philipps' excerpt in title 4.1.1.3.1.

Also, another interviewee stated that:

> The events happening in this period overlap significantly with my personal history. I mean, my confusions, my loss of connection from existing politics, and then wandering around, and then suddenly erupting... It was the time when grassroots movements were starting to be discussed more in political science theory. This history is not just about METU, it was something happening in the world. Protests in America, breaking out all over Europe at the same time... Yes, maybe if I was in a provincial area, then it would not be like this. But in a metropolis anyways, no matter which school or which city, as a student in a big metropolis, I think we would likely have experienced similar things. We would be talking about and debating the exact same things in those cases also. (Int#10)

The interviewee bonds the personal story with the transnational wave of political mobilizations. The "grassroot movements" framed as simultaneously experienced political conjuncture with "the world" resonating to the local. Crucially, the interviewee plots a boundary between provincial and urban space pointing out that generationality is situated accessed through the specific material conditions of the metropolitan universities. Therefore, this narrative serves another example of empirical rationale for the proposed term "transnationally bounded local formation" for generation.

4.1.2.2. Temporal Aspect: Re-membered/Re-constructed Conjuncture

When memory is viewed as a meaning-making practice while connecting the past and the present, rather than a mirror merely "reflection" the past events by historical exposure; it could instead be thought as a reconstruction of the experience. The told narratives are not the conjunctural situation itself, not even the experience of the given conditions itself but the recalled and reconstructed pieces at the present. It is not possible for researcher to reach the experience itself but how it was narrativized. In this way, as the told pieces, memories on 2010s remains as the "interface" for the experiences and given conditions themselves, which is the only facet that a qualitative researcher has access to. Thus, remembered conjuncture refers to the active reconstruction of experiences of historical material conditions through the lens of the present.

In this study, while the "lived experience" of the 2010s is ontologically real, it is epistemologically accessible only through the interface of narrations. Narrated memory pieces serve as the medium and the filter through which the structural reality of the conjuncture is retrieved. In this schema, the researcher cannot access the experience itself but can exchange and analyze how it is articulated in the milieu of narrations in the present. On the other hand, I also argue that these narratives are not free-floating fictional constructs, rather they are rooted in and conditioned by a conjunctural material ground constituted by experience.

Therefore, the term "remembered conjuncture" refers to this dual process: it is in narrative level in form but material in origin. The expressions are traced to discuss material reality. Thus, I integrate concept of "conjuncture" precisely to emphasize that the personal narratives are the expressions of material ground of the experiential and experiences.

4.2. Generation as Location: The Remembered Conjuncture for early 2010s

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, according to Mannheim "generation as location" is structured by the contingent socio-historical condition for generation. Being situated in a particular generational location limits the participants to a specific range of potential experiences due to the same historical exposure. In this section, the social status of being a university student in the early 2010s is discussed as the social location of the generation. In the form of four domains of early 2010s' conjuncture being relatively autonomous but articulated, this section analyzes how the potential members of the generation storify their experience of their formative years at the social location of being university students in Ankara in early 2010s.

At the temporal location, there is being a university student in early 2010s while at the spatial location there is being university student in Ankara. The analysis examines how members remember and make sense of their university experience in terms of these two particular "locations", which eventually translated into the multilayered conjuncture of the period as it was storified. From the interviews, there emerged four main domains as spatial (1), economic (2), political (3) and digital (4),

and each domain addresses relatively autonomous yet interconnected domains. These domains together form a textured understanding of socio-historical conditions of the early 2010s depending on the perspectives of students back then.

4.2.1. Spatial Domain of Being Student in Early 2010s

For the interviewees in the sample, whether they arrived from outside Ankara or were already residents of the city, "the story" of being student in 2010s begins with affiliated with the university campuses. When I asked the question of how the early 2010s were for them, the participants invariably started the narratives by addressing the spatial contexts of being student in the period. In that vein, arriving in Ankara for higher education and encountering the university campuses in the capital city constituted the spatial context of fresh contact for the potential members of this generation.

4.2.1.1. Analysis of Interview Data

It was unlearning what high school is back then, as expressed one of interviewees: "So, it was not really about starting something new at university, but about forgetting about high school." (Int#9). Socio-spatial context of university starts with being the first step to adulthood without the parents in which the students can go wherever they want and do whatever they want. Also, it was frequently expressed by both women and men (Int#6, 7, 8, 9), it was a period of separation from the family in terms of identity and establishing one's own political stance.

For Ankara, the first place of this encounter was at the bus station, AŞTİ or train station, Ankara Garı in. A graduate stated that:

> At the station, we were welcomed by METU students at information desks. They explained how to get to campus, told us the METU ring buses were there, free of charge, and warned us not to use taxis and not to spend extra money. Also strongly advised us to register for METU dormitories instead of other options. (Int#9)

Following this initial welcome, the encounter with Ankara and its unique city culture was initially experienced as a scale shock. For students coming from smaller

provinces, the transition from a town where everything is within "walking distance" to the large-scale magnitude of the capital city was disorienting. Ankara was not merely a city to reside in, it was the capital, representing a sharp contrast to the organic structure of their hometowns with its planned boulevards and intimidating architecture. The impact of this change of scale is vividly expressed as:

> I come from a province. Ankara was a big city for me. A civilized, planned, beautiful city… And I was learning the neighborhoods and streets of this city. Slowly. I was learning what this building is, what that building is, where the bazaar is, where the restaurant is and so on. My brain was spinning. The scale was very large in Ankara, especially if you are coming from a small place. Even METU itself is already huge. Things were on a very large scale. It was something new for me. Because in my life in my hometown, everything was within walking distance. Moving from one place to another was very different. (Int#9)

With its planned boulevards and architecture, the city represented a sharp contrast to the organic structure of the hometown. This transition marks the shift from the local/familiar to the "grand scale" of the metropolis and the university campus METU, which itself functions as a modern planned city-within-a-city.

In a similar vein, another interviewee highlighted the shift in social relations caused by this spatial expansion. She pointed out the contrast between the familiarity of their hometown and more individualistic characteristic of the metropolis:

> I lived in a relatively small city which indeed became a metropolitan city later. My hometown has always been like this. If you say you are hungry, you can go to someone's home and eat and drink there and so on. But Ankara was not like that. When I first arrived, this surprised me. Ankara was a place where everyone was very much on their own. Because it was my first experience of living in a metropolitan city. For example, when you ask someone for directions, they only give you the information you need. Whereas in my hometown, they would take you to your destination and even take you to the place you want to go. (Int#1)

Not only the scales but also the characteristics of social interactions and relations and the culture of the city were different than the provinces. Relative homogeneity and direct solidarity of the hometown were replaced by distance based on individualism and anonymity of the metropolis. It constitutes the second layer of the shock: beyond

the physical size of the city, the students from the provinces confront a social environment where individuals are expected to be self-sufficient.

The city of Ankara also included gendered segregations:

> A woman could not move around Ankara wearing the same outfit in different neighborhoods. Every district had its own dress code… I was living in Batıkent with my family. If I was going to the campus through Kızılay, I would wear something different. If I was going from Etimesgut or Şaşmaz, I would wear also different. I mean, I had to live with three different dress codes. (Int#11)

This gendered account vividly plots socio-spatial fragmentation within the city of Ankara for a young woman student during the early 2010s. The participant experienced the city not in an urban space in a continuum, but rather as traveler between different cultural zones, each enforced by its own implicit rules. In this view, the city is navigated through invisible but functioning borders even for reaching from point A to point B in the city.

As one of the most remarkable campuses hosting thousands of students each year, The METU campus has the characteristics like “the city-within-a-city”, as another interviewee stated:

> That is why being a student of METU was an incredibly enriching experience for me. Because we were living in a city there. We were living in a city called the Middle East Technical University. We were very far from Ankara itself. For example, it took me a very long time to go to Kızılay Square. It took me an extremely long time to discover places like Kale. I learned all of these very late. I still do not know many parts of Ankara at all, to be honest. Being in such an intense environment was incredibly politicizing, and in everything we did, we felt completely justified. Completely justified. I was almost going out of my mind with a sense of being right, thinking, “How can you not see this?”. When I came to METU that year, my life expanded significantly. I had been living comfortably in a very small city, where there was nothing around me that could really be called political. The only political thing was a local association, and because I attended a few of its events, I thought of myself as revolutionary. But indeed, I had a Che necklace, and that was all. (Int#2)

METU campus in Ankara city, as numerous interviewees have been indicated in the sample, is a kind of “micro-universe” which is indeed isolated from the rest of the

city. The city is also large in scale but so was the METU campus. As a typical campus orientation, like the other campus universities in Ankara, METU campus provides a self-sufficient habitat for the students with its dormitories, cafeteria, bar, forest etc. in which they don't need to go down to the "real city", Ankara. This creates a sense of isolation from the city and simultaneously equates Ankara with the campus.

On top of that, as the "city-within-a-city", METU campus has a spatial isolation which later acted as a catalyst for constituting the political identity for students. As the gated community, this isolation makes METU campus remain outside from the rather more conservative reality in rest of the city and maintain sterile, idealized egalitarian utopia of peers inside. The culture within amplified collective consciousness, creating a strong sense of moral and political righteousness. For many, the campus provided the physical space necessary for political socialization that was absent in their hometowns which the students realize only after they arrived at the campus.

The interviewee who stated that she could not find the closeness of the hometown in Ankara also stated about METU campus as:

> When I was moving my belongings into the dormitory, my older brother had come with me… And then someone, whose name I did not even know picked up two suitcases and helped me while carrying them. It really felt very communal, almost like a commune… I mean the campus. (Int#1)

This narrative illustrates how the university campus is remembered not merely as a physical setting, but a place an 18-year-old could easily grow belonging. The participant's description of the campus as "commune-like" is particularly significant. The campus has seen as a "liberated space" where the rules of the outside world and the city are not found.

This sense of belonging is also valid for the students who were already Ankara dwellers indeed. An interviewee who was staying in Yüzüncüyıl neighbourhood, very near to METU campus stated that:

> I was studying very much. University courses themselves were not really central anyway, as I already mentioned. Academic life was very much in the background, in the second or even third place. Rather than going to the courses, it was probably the traditional lifestyle of the METU. It was as if we were living away from Ankara and started living entirely on the campus although it is in Ankara. I was in campus all day, from morning until night. It had almost become like a small village, where you feel like you know everyone. We withdrew into our own small world, our own bubble. The protests, the forum experiences, and realizing that something different could be built within different communities were important experiences. But for me, in terms of friendships, courses, and places, not much really changed. (Int#10)

As stated, "gravitational pull" of the campus was not limited to students coming from the periphery. Here, the difference is being a university student, seeing the dynamic political and cultural life inside the campus. Expressed as "bubble", the interviewee is well aware that this bubble both protects and limits. There is a unique dynamic agenda inside the campus symbolizing a cultural and political life different, it is also different from the rest of the city.

Also as stated in previous excerpt, the time was flowing at a different speed:

> Back then, so many things were happening. For example, now, I can tell you three things I did in a week as I ate, I worked, I watched movies. But in a week at school, so many things were happening, you would not believe it. So, I think we lived the life to the fullest. (Int#9)

The narrative states that the campus' spatiality also includes temporality. Physical boundaries of the campus created a unique internal rhythm, distinct from the outside. Because the internal dynamism was intense within the campus borders, the flow of time was experienced through the "intensity" of events rather than the linear progression of the clock. As the interviewee contrasts the "fullness" of the past with the "routine" of the present, it becomes evident that the campus functioned as a high-density zone where time accelerated.

The described unique experience of time is that the university years, as the formative years, are remembered as a period with its density.

This situation also gave a sense of security to the students of 2010s:

> My hometown is small town. It is not a political place at all, in my opinion, indeed not at all. The maximum level of political engagement is that the entire district supports the Republican People's Party (CHP). People here, at most, walk for a short distance in the square, in the most central part of the town, and then go their homes. It is still the same. I went and came back, but nothing had changed. It was the same during the most recent student protests as well. That is why I do not even consider myself to be very political. My family is not political at all, to be honest. I became aware of this a bit after university, because in life you start to take the shape of the community you are in. I realized this after that point. I mean, socially, at METU… I realized something. I realized that it is not always enough to remain silent. About some things, you have to speak up. You know that someone has to do it, and perhaps that someone is you. This was something I became aware of while I was living in Ankara. (Int#7)

During the interview, she stated that her husband often jokes: "The only thing left was for you to have 'I am graduated from METU' written on your forehead!". This highlights how the spatial experience marked the bodies and identities of the students. The role of the campus as a space of political subjectivation is remarkable. The interviewee contrasts "passive" political environment of the hometown limited to voting with the "active" political participation normalized in the campus. "To take the shape of the community" is a statement that political identity is not something to be born with but to be socially constructed through spatiality of the campus. The campus was a transformative world, reshaping the students' approach to their own political agency. The transformative universe of the campus also described as:

> I always interested in politics. I was always curious about what was happening in the country and what was coming to the forefront. When I came to university, of course, things were different. The situation in Turkey was different as well. I was at the prep school and we were able to express ourselves without fear. We were not looking at anything with such pessimism. It was during the preparatory year that I first encountered oppositional actions. Before that, politics mostly stayed at home. We would watch the news and complain about things, but the only thing that we actually did was to go and vote. That was the extent of what we could do. But at university, at METU, I saw that things could be different, and it was there that I first began to feel a sense of belonging to the university. The beginning of these experiences also created a sense of belonging in me. (Int#6)

In this narrative, the interviewee states that before the university, political engagement was confined to voting and watching the news and this was enough for

the province. However, in university this “private” sphere politics turned into more “public” sphere politics which is closer to the collective act.

All these aspects, in early 2010s, universities were not places merely certifies the occupational skills and getting the diploma to be later exchanged in the related labour market but places for more holistic transformation through gaining life skills:

> The university offered many other things than the diploma. I think it offered socialization skills. How to communicate with people. Because you meet people from very different groups, different ages, different religions, and cultures. Now indeed, I think I’m pretty good at that. I think I gained much of that in university. And for young people, I think 18 is a very important age, a crucial threshold for the development of one’s personality. It was nice to have opportunities then. What kind of opportunities would these be? Learning a different language, a different hobby, an opportunity to invest in one’s profession, an opportunity to do an internship somewhere. I don’t necessarily think of it as money or as a contribution to the diploma, but something transforms a person. University and Ankara… transformed me. That is how it was for me. (Int#1)

In this narrative, also the age 18 has been highlighted as transformative years as “threshold for the development of one’s personality”. It emphasizes the importance of the years of fresh contact and having it in university.

In fact, this “sense of belonging” is not limited to “METU village” and its residents. Narratives on another university, Ankara University, that is not a campus university in an isolated district of the city, but marks a similar encounter with the “liberated” space of university with different words:

> I studied at Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science. Coming here was very surprising for me, because I was born in “region”. Of course, I had been outside the city and even in abroad before, but this was the first time I was leaving my hometown permanently and living in Ankara. I was admitted to the university, and so on. I was very surprised by the student movements. Where I came from, there was a political life structured around two blocks. All political reality was shaped through these two. But when I came here, I remember my very first day at the Faculty of Political Science. Before, I remembered being beaten by the police in my hometown for talking about issues such as education in the mother tongue. When I entered the university here, people were openly talking about issues like education in mother tongue

> etc. I thought that there must be some kind of confusion. These things were supposed to be in my hometown, but they were here, in Ankara, in the very center of the city. There you see letters everywhere. I was not someone who knew leftist organizations very well. Each letter corresponded to an organization, and so on. Then, gradually, I began to learn what they were. From my perspective, it was quite striking. It was as if I had come into a completely different world, almost a schizophrenic one. What could not be said in my hometown without being beaten was being expressed freely here. The political reality there was made up of two structures, while here every letter and every poster represented something different. (Int#4)

The settlement was full of "letters" as the abbreviations of various political groups. It represents the plurality of political identities. While the periphery hometown was ruled by binary laws, the university campus located in the very center of the state had the multiplicity of voices. In this space, what remains as the taboo in the periphery could have been openly expressed.

As another interviewee has expressed, in Faculty of Language, History and Geography (DTCF), as one of the rooted faculties for social sciences in Turkey, the space itself acted as a carrier of collective memory. The territories represent the political groups:

> DTCF has, since the 1990s, and even since the period following the late 1980s, had a situation in which different political identities have shared the same space. This is something that we inherited as a form of memory transmission in a place that carries such spatial memory. Up until the period when we were studying there, this memory was passed on through the faculty members, through other people working at the school, and through students, as a shared experience and as a transmission of memory. In other words, when you come to study at the Faculty of Language, History and Geography, you already begin to learn this memory in your first year, even in your first months. This memory is conveyed to you in one way or another. Those spaces are described to you, you listen to those memories and stories, and in doing so, you reproduce the space once again in your own mind. (Int#22)

This one illustrates how space functions as a medium of inter-generational memory transmission. Unlike relatively newly built campuses, DTCF is a site for memory where the political heritage of the 1980s and 1990s is being transmitted. The interviewee emphasizes that the space itself carries a "memory" which is not static but dynamic and negotiated, which carried and transmitted through faculty members,

employees, and senior students. In this sense, becoming a student at DTCF is not just an academic registration but orientation of the space serves as a living archive, where any newcomer "learns" the history of it.

Since the universities back then were mostly located in metropolitan cities due to regional disparities, sending the children to a metropolitan city for higher education is a necessity for upward class mobility for their families in provinces. The child got the higher education and with the diploma he or she got the possibility of living in "better conditions" than the family. For the families in the provinces, this is the main reason for shouldering the moral and material burdens of sending the child to the city.

From the students' side, as the narratives under this title demonstrate, the spatial domain of the 2010s' conjuncture, namely the university campuses and the city of Ankara, served not solely as institutions that the students got diplomas but rather as active political places in which "the basics of the citizenship" (Int#19) is learnt. As further explained in this interview:

> İTU, Boğaziçi, Yıldız Teknik, Istanbul University, Hacettepe, Ankara University... all universities were actually part of the hegemonic sphere of the left wing. Campus culture and university culture could not be thought of separately from the culture of objection. I am not defining this objection strictly as a socialist one just because I am a socialist. I mean it in the sense of being able to access the means for whatever one wanted, whether through dancing, making music, forming a reading group in a club, taking direct action, or debating in a forum. This is automatically the hegemonic sphere of the left anyway. There was a natural relationship. There was an organic relationship. And only a very strong authoritarian wave could break this organic relationship. And that is exactly what happened. The previous generation used to tell us about the "fall" of Gazi University. Now, we are in a position to describe the "fall" of Hacettepe day by day or how Ankara University fell in the same way... (Int#19)

This account defines the campus through its "culture of objection" where the definition to object is not confined with solely political demonstration but cultural productions as well. On the other hand, the narratives is marked by a sense of loss. Expressed as metaphor of "fall" as losing a space, marking the end of campuses as "safe" spaces with the upcoming authoritarian wave.

In the middle of an era in which increasing conservatism and rising political pressure in Turkey during the 2010s, university campuses were still places in which political identities are gained for the students, who freed from the authority of the families and the periphery.

4.2.1.2. Spatial Aspect of Generational Location

The spatial domain, as the socio-spatial aspect of generational location, reveals how the participants had their "fresh contact" while moving to city of Ankara and being a student in a university in Ankara. The following paragraphs summarize and further discuss these socio-spatial aspects.

The recurring memory of the campus image as "small village" or "bubble" indicates that the generational location was defined by a high degree of spatial insulation from the rest of the city. The university campuses were the hubs in which young people were together with their peers most of the time without parents. These dynamics both lead the campus life to be experienced differently than the rest of city and having its own agendas inside. This allowed the students to engage the communities more easily, shared set of values and a sense of "moral righteousness" in this sense. In their way of forming generation, young people have been affected by this sense of community as more egalitarian milieus. The fact that universities are not merely the places to get certifications for occupational expertise but places of contestation and critical inquiry.

The "scale shock" that was experienced by the participants back then represents the structural rupture that pulled the participants away from their provincial and familial identities. Moving from small-scale hometowns to the "planned" and "intimidating" magnitude of the capital was the moment their fresh contact became another aspect of socio-spatial aspect of generational location. This transition from the "walking distance" familiarity of the periphery to the metropolitan scale of Ankara forced the participants into a liminal position. By breaking ties with local and familial authority experiencing the city of Ankara aided them not only be independent adult urban subjects but also meeting with the different and new political organizations and conditions of this city.

The physical boundaries of the campus organized the generation's perception of time. The participants remember this period through its “fullness” and “intensity”, where the flow of events and intense agenda of the campus was much faster than the routine of the outside world. This temporal density suggests that the physical closeness of thousands of students and the constant flow of forums and protests accelerated the process of political socialization. The spatial organization of the university created a sense of sharedness as the generational location.

Furthermore, while the social ties were intensified and the agendas were campus-specific, these young people were among the most transnationally-connected groups in society. The university campuses of Ankara functioned as nodes where global flows of information and cultural trends were most visible. Despite their high intensity within the boundaries of campuses, the participants had high levels of access to global discourses on rights and ideas of democracy through digital connectivity and the internationalized curriculum of their universities. This created a unique paradox of the generational location: they were physically anchored in the local reality of Ankara, yet their intellectual and social expectations were shaped by global standards. This high level of “connectivity” significantly raised their demands and expectations for more egalitarian society. This discrepancy between their high intellectual access and the local political/material constraints increased their sense demand to a better future not only for themselves but also for the society, further fueling the “culture of objection” when those expectations were met with structural barriers.

4.2.2. Economic Domain of Being Student in Early 2010s

In the sample of this study, students of 2010s were supported primarily by their families, public funds (scholarships/loans) or a combination of the two. There were also limited interviewees who were self-supporting students back then. Even for this group, employment was largely part-time, freelance or project-based; rather than full-time, mainly due to the necessity of keeping up with the course loads and attendance obligations etc. Consequently, these jobs were supplementary resources for pocket money rather than primary financial resources.

4.2.2.1. Analysis of Interview Data

In that vein, socio-economic status of the students during the period was narrated primarily in comparison with current socio-economic conditions for students. As one interviewee noted: "Perhaps they are both students, but the living conditions of students back then are not the same as the living conditions of students today." (Int#4). This implies that while the status of "being a student" remains relatively constant through the years, the concrete material conditions have shifted drastically. Second, the result of this comparison stated that back then was "better". Economic conditions of the era were rather reconstructed as a period of relative prosperity compared to the current situation:

> In 2010s, in Turkey, even when we look at through classical capitalist indicators, people's so-called prosperity was relatively high. In 2010s, indicators such as gross national income per capita were higher, inflation was at one of the lowest levels, and unemployment was at relatively low levels. That economic conjuncture was this. Today, the situation is the opposite. (Int#4)

Students' socio-economic conditions were inevitably affected by these general parameters. A student who was working part-time in those years stated:

> I was a student working at the same time. I was supporting myself. Back then, there was still an economic system in which this could have been done independently. Let me try to say this in comparison to today, at least. For example, recent graduates could start their first job with an average salary of around 2-3 times more than the minimum wage. Or, like me, students studying at the same time could still pay their rent, take vacations, or buy clothes and necessities they wanted with part-time jobs. So, economically, it was a much better time compared to today, but we were also feeling that it was worse compared to previous years before 2010s. So, it was a time when our anxieties about our future began. (Int#23)

According to labour statistics from the period, the gap between the minimum wage and the starting salary of a university graduate was indeed significantly wider than today. For instance, in 2012, Chamber of Electric Engineers (EMO) affiliated with the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) set the minimum gross salary for a new graduate at 1,950 TL (EMO, 2012); which is

roughly 2,6 times more than the minimum net wage of 739.79 TL (T.C. Resmî Gazete, 2011). However, in 2017, decisive moment in the precarization of qualified labor occurred, when the Social Security Institution (SGK) unilaterally terminated the Minimum Wage Protocol previously established with TMMOB (Dursun, 2017). By removing the mandatory wage floor for engineers and architects, the institution withdrew wage guarantees, leaving these professionals and experts more vulnerable to market dynamics.

In contrast to the present, early 2010s offered relatively better conditions for students, as "the future white-collar workers". As another interviewee expressed: "Starting from the 70s, a university student is actually a natural candidate for jobs requiring expertise as well as public service. That is, a district governor comes from there, an engineer comes from university, an academic comes from university." (Int#22). This plotted economic scheme allowed students working part-time to afford "extra expenses" like vacations, while simultaneously covering the basic needs like share of the rent, food, clothes etc.

There is another crucial detail regarding how the conditions of the past are reconstructed. The interviewee is aware that "it was much better compared to today, but we were also feeling that it was worse compared to previous years before 2010s.". This nuance indicates that recalling conditions back in 2010s is not mere idealization or a romanticization of the past. This self-reflexivity, which was also expressed by other interviewees in other contexts, is remarkable since it demonstrates that the interviewees are temporally aware of the socio-economic reality that they were going through back then. It is an indicator that 2010s were not remembered as a flawless "golden age", but rather as an "intermediate place" which was relatively "better", before the worse conditions has arrived.

In that vein, as another indicator, an interviewee mentioned "purchasing power":

> Life used to be more livable back then morally, but economically too. But when we look at the situation we are in now, especially in the fields of law and economics, there is a very serious difference. It is as if we are going backwards in many ways. This applies to both the rules of law and our

> economy. It is much more difficult now, our purchasing power has decreased. For example, in 2010s, when I bought a product from the market, I would not look at its price especially for the foods. I would buy whichever was the best. Then I would buy oat milk, and so on, various kinds… I would buy this and that. But now, if I am going to buy a product, I first compare prices. I spend considerable time on this. (Int# 21)

The economic aspect of the socio-historical change is traced through the loss of purchasing power. The remembered conjuncture, detailed through daily consumption habits, illustrates a transition from choice-based consumption, i.e. buying the what is thought as "best", to a form of survival-based consumption focused on what is affordable.

As another aspect of the 2010s student experience was the vividness of social life, lived mainly "outside" in the streets of Ankara as well as within the campuses. Students economically managed to attend social events, eat at restaurants and go to social places within and outside of the campuses. Also, the city of Ankara was offering plenty of affordable choices:

> So, we were constantly going to concerts. Freedom… Your family was not with you, you do not even think about calling them, you are living in a dorm. You are independent, eat wherever you want, drink wherever you want. I was going to Bahçeli with my friends, to the opera, to the ballet. My prep school years were all about this. (Int#9)

The preparatory programs in foreign-language instructing schools generally were part-time, i.e. 3-4 hours of classes every day. This allows students plenty of leisure time to explore the campuses and the city. In this context vein, Ankara, with its city culture, offered various affordable cultural consumption options to students who were having humble budgets (even to the ones who came from the peripheries) such as theater, cinema, opera etc.

However, the period also witnessed the increasing number of university graduates alongside a decrease in the value of the degrees obtained. Regarding this "diploma inflation", one interviewee stated:

> Too many universities have been opened in Turkey. There are too many universities. This is uncontrolled growth, and the number is constantly

> increasing. In relation, students' housing needs are a very serious one, their scholarship needs are a very serious one, and economically, we were actually in a process that was getting progressively worse. (Int#25)

Also, from this aspect too, the situation was "getting progressively worse". This point has also been elaborated by another interviewee as decreasing "prestige" of being a university graduate as:

> Back then were times when quotas had not increased so much, when a so-called "apartment universities" had not been established in every province, and the schools were genuinely schools. Studying at university was a prestigious thing. We were also more comfortable financially. With the scholarship or state loan we received at that time, we could live quite comfortably. Today's young people sometimes even go hungry. I remember those times as good and comfortable. (Int #1)

The expression of "apartment universities" designates a phenomenon, as mentioned by another interviewee:

> Then the period of "apartment universities" came. It was a time when universities were being established everywhere, when having a university degree no longer mean much, and when people were forced to turn to master's education. At that time, having a master's degree was considered something with value. However, even that period has passed. This has now become the period of doctoral education. Today, in Turkey, you are considered "someone" only if you have a doctoral degree. And even then, there is still a possibility of not being able to find a job. (Int#24)

The period between 2010-2015 marked a distinctive shift in higher education policy, characterized by an exponential increase in quantity of universities open in the country, but at the expense of decrease in quality of education. As Tuğba Tekerek highlights, the government doubled the number of state universities from 53 to 109 between 2010 and 2015 which means to establish more institutions in this short period than in the entire history of the Republic (2023, p. 20).

However, this expansion of "apartment universities" into small provinces and districts served also a primary economic function alongside with the political, rather than an educational purpose. Tekerek argues that these institutions were designed primarily increased the economic activity in peripheral towns, where students were

viewed not as academic subjects but as “customers” to revitalize local markets and provide employment for the region (2023, p. 386). Consequently, while the number of university students reached a number over 8 million on paper, this “bubble” hided a deep qualitative deficit in the higher education. As Tekerek strikingly continues, the massification of higher education became nothing more than a transition “from one rotten plank to another”[46], instead of “a society that is moving up the social ladder in education”[47] on paper, creating a generation of graduates with devalued diplomas without real competence or job security (2023, p. 35).

To conclude, the participants’ reconstruction of the 2010s as a period of “relative prosperity” is not a product of mere subjective yearning for the past; rather, it sits on the concrete material ground of the historical conjuncture. When analyzed alongside socio-economic data and the policies of the period, it becomes evident that the everyday life of a student was grounded in a relatively more stable economic infrastructure.

In this vein, the socio-economic experience of the 2010s stands in a contrast with the contemporary “struggle for survival”. This is one of the most striking expressions in the narratives. On the other hand, the interviewees define economic domain of conjuncture not as an era of absolute prosperity, but as a period of “modest sufficiency” in the general spectrum of conditions of a being a university student in Turkey then and now. Unlike today, basic needs such as housing and nutrition could be met through state scholarships or minimal familial support. This relative economic self-sufficiency was crucial not only for survival but for the accumulation of “time capital” providing students to the necessary leisure to engage in cultural activities and socialization.

This economic configuration provided students with an autonomous sphere relatively independent from parental authority and immediate market pressures. The stronger purchasing power of state scholarships and part-time employment provided relatively better living conditions and proceeded beyond the conditions of mere survival. On

[46] “çürük bir tahtadan başka bir çürük tahtaya atlayış”

[47] “eğitimde sınıf atlayan bir toplum”

the other hand, as was stated in Int#23 also it was the times the anxieties about the future have begun for the young people. Another "in-between" state in the economic domain has shown itself: they were having through a transitional threshold between the disappearing promise of stability of past welfare state and the oncoming reality of precarity after neoliberal restructuring after 2008 crisis. They were experiencing a state between relative abundance in which their material conditions were significantly better than the present day, and they simultaneously experienced the slowly worsening conditions. Thus, this conjuncture is remembered not as a static paradise, but as the specific moment when the structural shift towards economic instability was first felt, marking the cohort as the witnesses of the stage prior to precarization.

4.2.2.2. Economic Aspect of Generational Location

The economic domain of the early 2010s marks the generational location as a temporary material equilibrium. This economic location was not defined by absolute wealth, but by a "modest sufficiency" in the economic domain of the remembered conjuncture of 2010s.

One of the most crucial findings in the economic domain is the availability of "time capital". Because it was stated that the purchasing power of state scholarships and modest family support was relatively high compared to today, students were not yet forced into "survival mode" of full-time labor. As narrated by the participants, being able to afford "extra" cultural activities like theater or concerts suggests that their economic location provided them with a material in-between stage. This "bought time" allowed the generation to invest their energy into campus politics, social clubs, and intellectual inquiry. What defines the economic domain of the fresh contact for the Gezi generation is not economic desperation, but from the relative autonomy provided by this temporary financial stability.

The discussion on "apartment universities" and the massification of higher education is central to understanding the impending crisis and source of frustration for generation. Even though the participants studied at prestigious institutions, they were

the first to witness the devaluation of their cultural capital. The historical "prestige" of being a university student in Turkey began to erode as the market was flooded with degrees, a process that converted the university from a "ladder for upward mobility" into a "temporary shelter from unemployment" in the conjuncture of early 2010s. This created discontent and frustration through the tension between the current comfort and the future precarity.

The structural conditions for generation signals as they are "last witnesses" of a disappearing welfare-state promise. They were situated in an "intermediate place", they were both at the beginning of their adulthood to remember the stability of the past but still quite young enough to be one of the primary interlocutors of the neoliberal restructuring following the 2008 crisis.

4.2.3. Political Domain of Being Student in Early 2010s

As part of remembered conjuncture of 2010s, the political domain was the most frequently addressed domain sphere during the fieldwork. For the sample of this study, the political context of 2010s was not merely a background context but a dynamic force itself that shaped their formative years and constructed their generational belonging.

4.2.3.1. Analysis of Interview Data

An interviewee argues how the removal of transportation lines was experienced as a direct political intervention on her right to education, linking the logistical breakdown explicitly to the ideological labeling of universities:

> I suffered a lot because I had a huge problem with access during that period... My journey from home to the school, which should normally take 20 minutes or half an hour, was taking 2.5 hours. It was because the mayor of that period, Melih Gökçek, decided on his own that universities were "nests of terrorism" and removed the lines providing our transportation... This year, for the first time in METU's history, the English proficiency exam had to be repeated a week later because so many people like me were late and could not enter... And this actually cost me my educational life. All of these were ideological decisions. (Int#17)

This narrative is particularly significant because it illustrates how the participants frame their everyday struggles as students. The arbitrary removal of the bus lines by the municipality is not read as lack of transportation as a mere administrative failure or a technical inefficiency; instead, as an ideological intervention for right of education of students. For the participants, the political domain was not distant or abstract, it was a force that determined whether they could arrive at an exam on time, embedded in daily activities.

In the larger schema, early 2010s period has been told these key words: “dynamism”, “transitory period”, “cracks”, “not this hegemonic yet”. As the analysis of the narratives reveals that this domain is characterized by a fundamental coexisting of both political action and pressure. That could be think of as a “twilight period” or “a historical interregnum” in which the fading of the old regime and the rising, yet not fully consolidated, hegemony of the new. The tension and political struggle between these two sides created a unique field of politics for student movements where the boundaries of authority were porous, creating both anxiety and unexpected opportunities and spaces for political action.

> There was a massive conflict between the AKP and what we might call the “old guardians” of the system. Those Kemalist or quasi-Kemalist power structures. This conflict was creating cracks for social opposition, and opposition movements were able to find space for themselves within those cracks. I definitely think it was an easier time to be a leftist, we had more of a chance back then, under a power structure that was not yet fully hegemonic. On the other hand, there was an ongoing peace process—I remember that and it seemed to be democratizing society. I could say there was a liberal atmosphere. At least at METU back then, in terms of freedom of expression, we could easily discuss whatever we think. There was not really any harsh censorship. There was a rising authoritarianism from AKP side. And it was slowly beginning to manifest itself, but it was not all-encompassing or hegemonic like it is now. And there were various social groups willing to resist it. Honestly, looking back, that is how I remember that period. (Int#3)

The narrative conceptualizes the political domain of the early 2010s as a structural transitory period, where the friction between the two parties generated unintentional “cracks” for social opposition as well as student movements. Rather than operating under monolithic authoritarianism, the generation navigated a fragile “opportunity

structure" that allowed dissent to have a voice. "Liberal atmosphere" is not reconstructed as a permanent democratic feature, but as a specific temporal characteristic of an era where the ruling power was started to be dominant but not yet fully all-encompassing.

Another interviewee makes a definition of the period as:

> As had told us, the 90s was a dark age. The 2000s were a period where there was an attempt to erase the effects of this era, or to dismantle that perception. But it turned out to be a transition into a completely different darkness, a period where we passed from one darkness to another. (Int#25)

This account plots a continuity line between "90s dark age" and the present by defining the 2000s a transitory period in which a deceptive bridge between two authoritarian regimes. In this framing, the fragility of the era points out the generation's formative years are remembered not as a break from the past, but as a resurrection of repression with a different form.

Also:

> Actually, there was no parallel. There was a contrast. But the political climate of that period fits this description very well. Before the Gezi period, there had been a political process; a process where political Islamists organized systematic attacks against Kemalists, the Ergenekon trials, and so on. That process had reflections. Because when we looked at it, there were two sides attacking each other. But there is a window where these two sides had a consensus on: the female body. As a young woman, I was in the middle of the target board also. I did not have a side I supported, but people were being divided in two, forced to take sides. However, neither of the sides were representing me anyway. I actually think the two were exactly the same thing. At some point, over the female body. (Int#17)

This narrative frames the political polarization in this era as a patriarchal consensus which indeed bridges the seemingly opposing sides. While the "old" establishment and the rising "new" power were similar in terms of the regulations on the female body. The era also has been defined humorously as "secular attack period" and period of "Republic Protests" by an interviewee (Int#15). In that vein the attacks on the founding figures of the country have been discussed:

> I remember a moment very vividly. You know, you remember something second by second, as if it were recorded on video in your head… It was semester break, maybe January or February... still a long way from June 2013. I was sitting in the canteen. The canteen was full, of course, because of finals... I do not remember the exact month. But Erdoğan used the expression "two drunks", referring to the founders of the Republic. You know those famous lines? Like "take your mother and go" or "is she a woman or a girl I do not know" The kind of things where you ask, 'How a politician could possibly say this?' He specifically used that "two drunks" expression. Now, I am not particularly an Atatürkist person. I am not someone who is particularly obsessed with the figure of Atatürk. But, what does "two drunks" mean?(Int#9)

The period is remembered kinds of striking moments and phrases like the one expressed in this excerpt. This narrative highlights how these phares were remembered vividly as a critical moments which actually triggered a vivid "flash memory". It was framed as a striking since although the interviewee is not explicitly positioning himself as supporter of the attacked side.

The same phrase is also mentioned by other interviewees as "attack on lifestyle and living space":

> For the 2010s... These were the years we could express ourselves much. I mean, really in every sense, in terms of love, in terms of romance, and in terms of politics. These were the times when we could fully express ourselves, defend our rights, and feel like the true owners of the country. That is why I define myself generationally as a "2010er" or belonging to the 2010s, even though I was born in 1997. (Int#5)

Also the interviewee adds that:

> Because really, after the AKP government took the state, structural attacks began on people's lifestyles. Whether to support those figures or not is a separate issue, but for instance, he was calling the founding figures of the country "drunks". The discourses of the powerful was segregating people based on alcohol consumption or was segregating people based on their dressing style. They were trying to portray ordinary citizens as, how should I put it "different" by othering them. There was an intentionally built propaganda based upon this. And I think that the issue of intervention in lifestyle is very important for our generation. Because this was a generation fond of its freedom. (Int#5)

This interviewee is one of the two high schoolers in the sample. Remarkably, as can be read from the first part of the excerpt, he particularly defines himself inside the

Gezi generation despite the fact that he thinks his cohort could be the out of the birth period of this generation. It could be said that the interviewee challenges birth cohort definitions by bringing the discussion of political conjuncture of 2010s as having the intention with more opportunities to express and sense of belonging to the society. The political domain of early 2010s is remembered as a time of high agency when the youth felt like the "true owners of the country" and could "fully express themselves". This suggests that the generational belonging is associated with in a sense of political capability and a feeling of empowerment.

In the second part, the interviewee reconstructs the hegemonic approach of the era as a systematic assault on the particular way of life, where the ruling power explicitly aspired to become the primary determining power for lifestyle in the society. According to this view, the political discourse of the early 2010s was not a random polemic, but an intentionally built propaganda designed to segregate and "other" certain segments of society. Consequently, this hegemonic pressure transformed the generation's "fondness for freedom" into a structural defense of the living space, as they felt their very existence was under attack.

Being "fond of freedom" as the generation's characteristics is framed also by another interviewee as:

> The previous period let's say our high school era, as the generation, we were in a freer environment. By the 2010s, we realized that we were gradually being subjected to systematic restrictions. I mean, it is hard to give a very pinpoint example right now, but... It was about our living space. Let me put it this way: I do not consume alcohol but at a certain period, things started with alcohol bans. It is like "you cannot drink here, you cannot drink in there, you cannot drink in park, you cannot drink in public places" etc. It started with alcohol first and people were ok with that at that time. Then, after a while, attacks to the women wearing shorts on buses and scandalous occasions like this has begun. (Int#11)

As numerous other participants, this account identifies "intervention to the lifestyle" not as a secondary cultural issue, but as the primary mechanism of the political conflict of the 2010s. The state's strategy framed as segregating the society and othering ordinary citizens through symbolic markers like alcohol consumption and dressing style, as framed also in Int#5.

Similar to the expressing in Int#9 as "I am not particularly Atatürkist person but…", this participant opposes alcohol bans despite being a non-drinker. The accounts generally reveal the ethical dimension: The generational reaction did not consist of taking sides but defense of plurality in principle. The responses states that the oppositions were against the act of restriction itself, perceived as an attack on the collective "living space".

Another interviewee also stated that:

> I remember a raising fire or a spark as a result of the interventions in one way or another. There were abortion debates, there was the issue of male and female students not living together in student houses. There was an effort by the ruling power to intervene in every single area of everyday life. Therefore, I can say that the process leading to Gezi actually began with these seeds. That is how I remember it. It was the same in universities as well. There was the profiling of students, there were pressures in departmental congresses, panels, and platforms. Gradual intervention in universities too... Not a process like the "*kayyum* period" of the last fiveyears, but it was a period that they were controlling the universities. (Int#22)

Both Int#11 and Int#22 describe the loss of freedom not as a sudden event, but as an era of raising authoritarianism. The pressure is recalled as a "gradual" process that began with interventions to life styles such as specific alcohol bans, expanded to the restrictions regarding dressing, and spread on the private sphere such as student houses or debates on abortion. Int#22 adds a vital analytical distinction, characterizing this era as a time of "controlling" of the universities, distinct from the total institutional control of later, defined as "*kayyum* period".

The "multivocal" atmosphere in the campuses has been described as:

> There was an intensity of student mobilization that was not comparable to that of today. For instance, since I studied at the Cebeci campus, I can speak about that place more comfortably. The campus had a tremendously multivocal public sphere. We were living in a political space where forty different colors co-existed and not only classical leftist organizations, but feminist movements, LGBTi+ movements, and so on. And in a way, consensuses and dis-consensuses were experienced together directly. Therefore, of course, it was mobilized, dynamic, and at the same time political to a degree that cannot be compared to today. Consequently, there

> was, of course, a political mobility that gave its color to public life there. (Int#4)

The participant conceptually reconstructs the campus (specifically Cebeci campus) not only as a site for education, but as a "tremendously multivocal public sphere". Crucially, the text highlights the colorful coalition that included a high amount of different political movements. The explicit mention of "consensuses and dis-consensuses" were co-existing and views the campus as commons space where the different political positionings encounter, debate, agree and disagree but recognize each other and co-exist. Thus, the political atmosphere of the era for student mobilizations in the campuses is remembered not as a monolithic block, but as a vibrant, multi-colored, multi-vocal environment, which was stated as not existing anymore.

The campus life in the period was "full of continuous political action and dynamism" (Int#9) but at the same time it was remembered as "time of difficulties":

> The 2010s was also a quite interesting process in our personal lives. Because we even joke about it a lot, saying things like "I wish I were born in '87". The '87 generation sees big protests, demonstrations after they are born. Big university festivals, vivid campus life... I mean, much more... I do not know, they went to Rock'n Coke, you know? We do not have things like that. I mean, for us, it is always... Difficulty, difficulty, difficulty... It started with us. (Int#15)

This narrative vividly illustrates the generation's self-perception through a framework of "deprivation". By contrasting their own experience of "difficulty" as opposed to "golden age" that was said to be experienced by the other generations such as the 1987 generation, marked by cultural events like "Rock'n Coke", the participant expresses a sense frustration. The interviewee frames the era as the atmosphere for young people was getting more challenging.

The same framing has also been narrated by another interviewee as:

> Throughout that whole university period like 2010, 2011, 2012, and the first six months of 2013we never saying that "Universities are passing through a

> very dynamic period of mobilization". Since the current situation is so undynamic, everyone has become so apolitical, and everything has been so hollowed out that, yes, this period back then seems very good in comparison. But while we were in our undergraduate years, we viewed it as: "The period we are currently in is very difficult and there is no one around; actually, the 90s were good. The 90s were very active. The miners, workers were all resisting starting from Zonguldak, then reflecting on students" etc. We looked at it as if "actually '89 and '99 was very good" and hesitating since we could not benefit from the legacy. That was the conversation revolving back then. (Int#10)

By recognizing the early 2010s as with its high dynamism on the one hand, the last two excerpts reveal that the participants do not view their own mobilization as very dynamic at the time when the events were occurring. Instead, the name came later shaped by the conditions of today. During the 2010s, it is stated that they looked back at the 1990s, referencing the Zonguldak Miner's March and '89/99 vast student mobilization with an expression of envy. This suggests that the generation views itself not as the builders of a new age initially, but as latecomers who had missed the "real" struggle (often associated with traditional class politics), until the retrospective look reconstructed their own era as the era of dynamism in student movements.

As the demonstrations mentioned specific to METU campus, multiple accounts have stated that:

> I generally remember the "ODTÜ Ayakta" protests; I remember that we were with goosebumps back then when looking at the crowd. It was probably the largest-scale protest in METU. It felt like the most effective event in my history there. Other protests did not feel only certain organized groups would attend. But "ODTÜ Ayakta" was different, you saw everyone there. We were saying, "Oh, finally we are becoming socialized" and thinking, "Maybe all these efforts are working now.'. We saw friends from engineering departments who were completely irrelevant to politics, or people from business administration whom I thought would never come. It felt like a small societal rupture. Of course, Gezi was much bigger, but at that time, we wondered, "Will we ever see something like this again in our lives?". We were even quoting Gramsci, saying these things happen only once in a lifetime. (Int#10)

Also:

> "I felt that 'I belong to this school; I belong to this community' after sitting on the Devrim Stadium feeling that we were in the safe zones of the campus.

> Back then, the interior of the school was a sheltered area; police could not enter. The rector did not allow it. But there was an incident that Erdoğan came to the school... All classes and exams were cancelled. Protests began. I remember this very clearly. It was the period when the pressure first started to feel very tight. (Int#6)

These narratives illustrate the university campus not merely as a physical location, but as a "safe place" for political autonomy. The "ODTÜ Ayakta" protests serve as a critical memory for the participants, remembered with a bodily reference (the goosebumps). Crucially, this event is framed as a dynamism existing before Gezi. The police intervention during the Prime Minister's visit is marked as a rupture, in which the safety of the campus has broken and signaling the changing politics.

Specifically mentioned by numerous participants as the graduates (Int #2, #10, #19, #20, #3, #6, #7) of METU, the forum culture has been addressed:

> The forum culture is actually a tradition from the 1970s... Something we resurrected in the early 2000s based on the experience of the past. It started with the cafeteria boycotts... We thought we needed a change in style. The Left was strong, but it was disconnected from the general student body. The forum became the "fundamentals of being a citizen". It taught a profile of a citizen who learns to object, to seek rights, to read a flyer on the street, and not to be indifferent. I thought, "You do not even need to be a leftist for this.". Since these direct democracy practices were applied by students, the university administration had to take it seriously. We even faced the Rector of that time, Ahmet Acar. He was a unique figure with academic ethics who said. Back then he made a call for a forum himself by inviting the students. Imagine, a Rector holding a forum in the Cultural Convention Center with hundreds of students! He took notes on everyone's suggestions for hours. It was a period when direct democracy found acceptance even in the academic administrative field. (Int#19)

This participant also defines her generation as "forum generation" by referring to the practices of direct democracy in campuses. In this account, the student movements and the campuses viewed process, in which being a citizen is learnt. Revival of the "forum culture" represents a shift from hierarchical organizational structures to horizontal, direct democracy. The atmosphere of the university transformed into a space where even the Rector was compelled to engage in the forum format.

4.2.3.1. Political Aspect of Generational Location

The narratives reconstruct the political domain of the 2010s not as a linear progression into today's conditions, but as a "Twilight Zone", a liminal period characterized by the simultaneous existence of raising authoritarianism and opponent political dynamism, both existing within the same era. As an "in-between period", where the old establishment was fading and the new hegemony was not settled yet, this era created structural "cracks" in which the youth movements utilized to expand their sphere of agency.

The political location of this cohort was defined by the instability of power. As noted by several participants the transition from the "old" to "new" hegemony created political paths. Through the conflict between these two parties, in multivocal atmospheres of campuses, the students found a rare window to raise their autonomous voice as political agents. Unlike the monolithic authoritarianism of later years, this social location for the generation was still allowing for a fragmented but multi-colored public sphere in the campuses. The political aspect of the generational location of the Gezi generation was not narrated as if it was emerging in a vacuum of an old liberal atmosphere, but from the cracks and friction between two opposing powers of the time.

A defining feature of this conjuncture was the radical shift in the scale of politics, where the ruling power's attempt to establish a new moral guardianship moved the conflict into the private sphere. The structural attacks on "lifestyles", narrated as alcohol regulations, dress codes, and the "two drunks" discourse, changed daily habits into markers of political identities. Consequently, the generation was structurally located in a position where daily life itself has become a political issue. Whether they were ideologically active or not, the political domain of the conjuncture grounded their most basic "living spaces" (student houses, campuses, transportation lines) to become the primary spheres of political contestation. This was not a choice but a structural imposition of the era.

The structural organization of university campuses during this period provided spatial-political protection. The narratives point to a paradox where despite

increasing national pressure, the internal governance of these institutions (such as METU) still maintained a level of academic and democratic ethics. This provided the generation with a "school" for learning the basics citizenship, where practices of horizontal democracy (forum culture) and collective objection were not just tolerated but institutionalized. The campus, therefore, acted as a protected incubator, allowing for a degree of political socialization that the "outside" city could no longer offer.

The hegemonic approach of the era functioned through an intentional strategy of marking the "other", which structurally categorized the youth based on symbolic markers. This was a governance strategy aimed at re-defining the "ideal citizen" by narrowing down. The generation found itself in a structural position where "fondness for freedom" structured by the previous era, was directly targeted. This conjuncture converted individual dissatisfaction into a collective moral indignation, as the structural boundaries of the state were redrawn to exclude their very existence and identity.

In conclusion, the political domain suggests that the generational location was an in-between stage. It was an era of "gradual controlling" that had not yet reached total capture. This specific "in-betweenness", living in a multivocal campus while watching the slow rise of a new hegemony, provided the generation to construct its political identification.

4.2.4. Digital Domain of Being a Student in Early 2010s

Generational scholarship categorized generations in a binary manner through technology uses as "digital natives" who were born into a fully digitized world, or as "digital immigrants" who had to adapt to it later in life (Prensky, 2001). This binary framework has been widely criticized for homogenizing complex generational experiences and ignoring intra-generational differences. As in the criticism of generationalism discourse as obscuring the diverse realities of young people, the label of "digital native" and "digital immigrants" assume a uniform technological competence based on birth year. Contrary to this deterministic view, critical scholarship argued that breadth of use, experience, gender and educational level are

often more decisive than birth year in defining young people's relationship with the digital sphere (Helsper & Eynon, 2010; Smith et al., 2013).

Building upon this critical scholarship, for this generation too, especially for the political agency, digital domain of 2010s' conjuncture goes beyond an innate trait but a socially and politically constructed capacity. The digital domain is an important part of the generation's location since in the conjunctural context of the early 2010s as increasing monopolization of mainstream media; the digital sphere transformed into a vital public sphere where it used widely for political action and new forms of engagement such as "citizen journalism", to short-circuit the mainstream media channel.

4.2.4.1. Analysis of Interview Data

It has been stated by the participants that for political action, the physical public space was prominent rather than digital one. In that vein, the digital domain was meaningful and useful only insofar as the political action "really" existed "outside". Therefore, the digital domain was not a substitute for the square or main environment of the political action, rather it was an instrument or at maximum a distorted mirror that takes its potential value only from its connection to the "outside".

> For our generation, we did not have any intention of publicizing what happened. But today, the first thing someone does when they go to a protest site is to tell their own story. In our case, our story was already being told. We watched the media coverage from a distance almost as outsiders, saying things like, "Wow, that was really bad" or "Wow, does it look like this from the outside?" or "Well done" and so on. That was the extent of our relationship with social media at the time. During urgent moments, we used to post messages in groups and make calls for action. But there was nothing particularly individualized. I still think that there is no tool stronger than people physically meeting with one another. I still believe that nothing could be replaced with the leaflet or the poster. Because today, there are open calls announced on social media. It is not clear that under whose authorship or whose ownership, and that no one truly takes responsibility for them. (Int#19)

For this generation, the event came first in such a way that its digital narrative could only come later. The similar situation about the relationship between public protest and its digital coverage has been mentioned by other interviewees as well:

> There may be a difference like this today: we use social media much more actively, and when we raise our voices on social media, we feel as if we have truly raised our voices. Our conscience is eased, and we stop there. At that time, social media was more like a tool for coming together. The actual action was in the streets, and it could only be reflected on social media. (Int#6)

Similarly:

> As technology developed, people's forms of action have changed a great deal. It is no longer necessary to go out into the streets. Yes, you can post something and feel that you have done something that changes everything. Sharing a photograph on Instagram becomes an act in itself. You do not physically have to go anywhere. I think this has made communication and organization much easier for people. But at the same time, being identified is much easier. (Int#7)

Together, the narratives point out a shift in how the generation defines activism and political action. In contrast to today's social media turned into a substitution of the action itself, it was a tool for public gathering. Int#6 points out the illusion of action created by posting in digital platforms. In other words, today, sharing a post seem to be substituting the street protests while Int#7 pointing out the situation that while digital tools may make the announcements easier it also increased the use of surveillance mechanisms.

Marking the similar change through a "generational" perspective another interviewee stated that:

> I think I cannot really communicate very well with GenZ. They do not express themselves much in the way we do. This is because they have a different language. It is a language heavily based on emojis. It is a language that relies strongly on visuals. Words have slowly begun to fade away. (Int#2)

This narrates reveals an insight into the transformation in the digital sphere marking a shift in the mode of communication from words to emojis. The participant's observation that "words slowly faded away" names the transition from the text-based digital culture of the early 2010s through Facebook and Twitter, which were characterized by long articles, micro-blogging, and written posts in the platforms in contrast to highly visual characteristics in 2020s (such as Instagram or TikTok).

In the early 2010s, smartphones were indeed a class marker due to their priciness. Also, it was before Gezi protests and the citizen journalism meaning that the digital domain was not yet a discovered and normalized environment for political action. In the formative years of GenZ, smart phones were spread and they became affordable. The communicative gap with GenZ stems from this shift: while the Gezi generation in 2010s used limited digital tools to organize, GenZ is born into an easy access where the tool is no longer a privilege but nearly a necessity.

In 2010s, social media started to become widespread. Facebook and Twitter were the ones most frequently mentioned during the interviews, as the two main social media platforms through which students were widely used in their daily lives back then. However, as one interviewee notes, not the technology itself but the specific usage for political actions is able to define his generation:

> Social media was used as a tool, an active way, as the main form of organization... Before Gezi, social media was just for entertainment. Expressing thoughts, posting photos, etc. But for social media to become completely political... or to be used so widely by the public for something like this, that was the first time. In that sense, it defines a generation. I think our generation was the first to use it this way. (Int#9)

The early 2010s marked not only the widespread uses of social media platforms but also a radical transformation in their function. As the political atmosphere became more dynamic in Turkey, the use of these platforms has shifted from entertainment to purposes of counter political action and resistance. This interviewee articulates this shift illustratively, noting that it was not the technology itself, but its specific political mobilization that defined their generation. The interviewee very well describes the political shift in the digital domain but also with a very important annotation:

> If Twitter or Facebook had existed in the nineteen nineties, perhaps our parents would have used them as well. Or miners from Zonguldak would have used them. They would have deserved to use them too. But this technology simply did not exist at that time. It emerged around 2004-2008 and became more widespread around 2010. That is why its use during 2013 uprising was completely natural. I think there is a difference between those who were before us, us, and those who were after us. The world is changing very rapidly. (Int #9)

He very importantly addresses the contingency of the generational witnessing here through the expressed self-reflexivity over his generation. Rather than claiming an innate generational superiority or a unique "digital genius" thought and expressed specific to his generation, historical contingency is acknowledged. This narrative demonstrates a mature understanding that the availability of these tools was merely a matter of timing as well as specific conjuncture they generations "thrown into". In this way, it unveils the myth of "digital natives".

Students not only consume the agenda in the social media platforms, but they also used it to express themselves and their political statements. An interviewee from Cinema Club states about the digital potentiality about this:

> We tried to produce things through videos on our own terms. At a certain point, for example, as a collective working around cinema, we had partially figured out the early social media algorithms of that period. Because of this, we were able to ensure that our videos circulated widely. At that time, for instance, on Facebook, if ten friends of a person shared the same video, that video would appear at the very top of that person's timeline, with a note saying that these specific people had shared it. When that person then shared the video as well, it would simultaneously appear at the top of many other people's timelines. In this way, videos that were shared at the same time could spread very quickly and widely. It was relatively easy to reach view counts such as two hundred thousand, forty thousand, or fifty thousand. When we were making those videos, the main intention was precisely to enable the output of those videos to reach people. Later on, these algorithms changed significantly. On Facebook in particular, once it was understood by the platform that this kind of dissemination was being deliberately pursued, and if advertising or similar promotion was not paid for, the visibility of those videos would be restricted. (Int#20)

In early 2010s, the digital domain was not totally commodified or surveilled by algorithms. Unique digital domain of the conjuncture was allowing more space for the public, people with no names, students, civic organization etc. In that vein, it was more democratic and open.

> I think Gezi is what made Twitter explode. Because I remember it was just starting to become a thing back then, and we used it as a perfect, practical tool. For example, a call for demonstration. 'We are meeting at three, walking to Kızılay.' There is a difference between seeing a poster for this versus seeing the announcement in a Facebook group... It is much more accessible, much more practical. (Int#1)

Unlike GenZ, whose formative years coincide with a state in which a part of physical reality comes from the digital realm, this generation in their formative years used the digital domain differently primarily as a tool for struggle. This distinction implies a shift in digital domain of the conjuncture rather than a comparison between generations. For GenZ, their formative years corresponded to a fully socio-digital reality in which the boundaries between online and offline started to be blurred. On the other hand, for the students of 2010s, the digital domain was not an integral environment but a pragmatic tool. The in-betweenness characteristics show itself in this digital domain too: There exists social media at that time too, however still had the opportunities for counter speech and struggle.

4.2.4.2. Digital Aspect of Generational Location

The digital domain of the early 2010s reveals that the generation occupied a unique technological location that provided them with a specific form of organization. Based on the narratives, this digital location can be synthesized through the following points below.

A defining feature of the digital aspect of generational location is the instrumental relationship with technology. The participants narrated this by comparing and contrasting with the digital domain of present conjuncture over the GenZ. Unlike the "fully digitized reality" of GenZ, in 2010s, the digital sphere was a pragmatic tool for political action, rather than a substitution for the action "outside". This location allowed the generation to maintain a clear boundary between the virtual and the physical, where the screen served occasionally a "distorted" mirror of the street. Their digital capacity was constructed not as an innate trait, but as a socially mobilized skill used to short-circuit mainstream media and organize collective action in real time.

The digital location of the early 2010s was characterized by rather a text-based culture (Facebook, Twitter, Blog posts) which prioritized "words" over "visuals". Structurally, the participants inhabited a digital domain of 2010s conjuncture where algorithms were not yet fully commodified and restrictive. This provided a

democratic opening for “people with no names” to circulate counter-narratives and reach massive audiences without financial investment. This specific “algorithmic loophole” provided the generation with the way to challenge mainstream media, creating a shared reality that was independent of official censorship.

The early 2010s was a “sweet spot” in terms of digital surveillance. As noted by the participants, while digital tools made organization “easier and more practical”, the level of institutional control and digital policing had not yet reached the “total gaze” of the present day. This gave the generation a false yet functional sense of digital security, allowing them to utilize social media as a “liberated sphere”.

4.2.5. Recap: Generation as Location for the Gezi generation

This section revealed the structural conditions of generational location depending on the four relatively autonomous but articulated domains of 2010’s conjuncture by analyzing how the participants recollect their experience as university students back in 2010s. By mapping out the spatial, economic, political, and digital coordinates of the era, the section has demonstrated the characteristics of the domains as follows.

- Spatial Domain: The university campus provided a sphere for critical thinking rather merely being a place for validating occupational certification.
- Economic Domain: The relative prosperity conditions gave students necessary leisure time to prioritize political and cultural expression over immediate survival.
- Political Domain: The “structural crack” of the era allowed student movements to flourish and the “politicization of the mundane” forced private lifestyles into the heart of political contestation.
- Digital Domain: Relative digital autonomy provided by early social media forms allowed them to bypass mainstream media propaganda and allow them to use as an instrument for political action.

All in all, this section showed generational location as being a university student in 2010s. Reminding what Mannheim states for generational location as: “Thus, the young peasants we mentioned above only share the same generation location,

without, however, being members of the same generation as an actuality, with the youth of the town." (Mannheim, 1928/2017, p. 378), it is accurate to say that this theory is nuanced enough not to remain blind to class, gender, race and ethnicity - based difference in between a whole generation in a country. However, in this study, the actuality of this generation is associated with political dynamism in 2010s' student movements in universities. Accordingly, the analytical focus is placed on urban and university settings, as the primary social sites in which the generational actuality of "the Gezi generation" was crystallized. This does not imply that rural youth were absent from the same historical period, in other words, they share the common generational location with university students in cities. However, since the unavoidable context of the selected case is grounded in urban conditions, the university students in a city seem suitable for the analysis. Therefore, the focus here is quite narrow per research design to target the participants who were university students back then. One consequence of this is to talk with rather a homogeneous sample in terms of class positions. They are educated young adults and white-collar professionals. It is a choice but not a choice done by prioritizing one class position. It is rather an inevitable consequence of targeting the university students back then.

The generational location for this generation has two "location": First is temporal location, that is formative years coinciding with early 2010s and the multi-domain characteristics of this conjuncture and second is the social position as being university students who showed a success in the central examination and had the right to take the education in a university in Ankara. In this section the reader traced the details of this "generational potential" of this narrow group as they occupied a unique but stratified location in history.

4.3. Generation As Actuality: Commonalities, Differentiations and Crystallizations

After the discussion of generation's location as "potentiality", in this section, through different elements of "mnemonic commons" of the generation, namely through commonalities, differentiations and crystallizations, i.e. how the members see and make sense of their own generationality and generational identity are discussed.

4.3.1. Introduction: Mnemonic Commons as the Framework for Reading Generational Actuality

As stated in theoretical framework, numerous scholars approaching the generational phenomenon from different perspectives have emphasized necessity of shared ways of looking and narrating the past for the formation of generations. The nuances distinguishing the approaches are on the basis of the following: who is the subject of remembering, which social actors mediate the remembering action, how the memory emerges, and the nature of its relationship to other social phenomena. When thought through Tönnies' differentiation between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the operationalized generation in this study constitutes the latter, i.e. a "society" with more complex, secondary and impersonal bonds, rather than a community necessarily with direct and primary bonds. Consequently, as stated before, the research was not designed in such a way to reveal how an organic community with primary bonds remembers. This is because, in this research, generation is not considered as a group of people with organic primary social bonds who come together for a common purpose and form a community, but rather as a group formed by the shared experiences of individuals who were exposed to similar historical and social conditions and therefore not necessarily personally knowing each other.

Accordingly, the mnemonic ground of the generation is not internal or disconnected; on the contrary, it is socially grounded and constitutes the basis for the generation's collective consciousness at the present. On the other hand, subject of memory in this study is people and they are capable of compiling recollections from the past and acting as agents of this self-compilation. At the same time, as explained previously, because these people are located in the generational dimension on an experiential basis, their memories are the traces but have the experiential and bodily ground and therefore operate on a material level.

Furthermore, memory cannot be possessed in a predefined way or as a given quality. On the contrary, it is constructed by the act of narrating in negotiation and exchange during the interviews, as the interview experience is a reminder in itself. Therefore, the act of remembering is central here. Thus, these personally transmitted memory

narratives are not consolidated, situated at the level of discourse, or institutionalized. Rather, they are communicatively memorizing schemes that engage in a personal comparison with the present.

When all these particularities of this research are considered together, the term "mnemonic commons" seems appropriate to frame for the discussion regarding "generation as actuality", as it denotes a common place shared by members, who are not necessarily in need for mutual recognition or personal contact among its members. It is constructed through narrative and expanding as spoken since no pre-given boundaries exist. It represents a space where shared meanings and themes are socially constructed through the act of remembering. It is like a public resource that belongs to nobody and simultaneously to everyone. Here, the shared aspect of memory, indeed, is not the content, or sometimes even the themes themselves. Rather, it is the frameworks and schemes of meaning. Another feature derived from the field design demonstrates that people from different segments of society and with different frameworks of interpreting life possess similar ways of recalling. They share commonalities in this context. Similar mechanisms of remembering constitutes the social dimension of commonality.

The concept of mnemonic commons proposed in this study is a result of the theoretical debate between agonistic memory (Bull & Hansen, 2016) and multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2009) discussed in the theoretical framework. The agonistic mode of remembering effectively credits the mutual recognition, it remains restricted to address the shared symbolic spaces of memory which is a dimension central for the generational analysis here. This leads the discussion to the fundamental question: What constitutes a generation? A generation is defined by a shared repertoire, a common point of connection, and a collective pool of references. It is a mutual interest in a shared and synchronized agenda (though there exits disconsensuses as well as consensuses), which have capacity to leave a distinct "imprint" allowing one generation to be distinguished from another. What sociology seeks to explain through the concept of generation is not merely a competition of incompatible units in political arena. In fact, despite their internal differences, generation units co-constitute their generational reality in relation because of the

very reason that the generational actuality refers to the web of relations between generation units as a whole, even though the units are distinct. Consequently, while agonism is illustrative for explaining the internal politics between generation units, it remains insufficient in capturing the underlying connections that weave these units into generational actuality.

This study posits that a generation is not merely a site of competition between distinct units; rather, it constitutes a total reality emerging from shared exposure to specific socio-historical conditions. While generational units may interpret events through divergent ideological lenses, they inevitably draw from the same shared repertoire and pool of references. This collective "imprint" is precisely what characterizes the generation as a distinct formation. Therefore, the concept of mnemonic commons explored here is not a call for homogenization, but an acknowledgment of a foundational connectivity that allows these distinct parts to form a coherent whole, even amidst their most radical conflicts.

Furthermore, it is essential to distinguish between conflicting memories and inherent material conflicts. While generational units may possess divergent recollections, this does not imply an automatic structural or material antagonism between their members. Mnemonic commons, therefore, designates a shared symbolic space where identities are recognized but not stabilized; instead, they are constantly negotiated and co-constructed within a generational commonality. Consequently, the term "mnemonic commons" constitutes a sphere of shared meaning that is constantly renegotiated and crystallizes in collective memory as a space that belongs to no single group's monopoly.

Crucially, within the scope of "mnemonic commons", the participants who are included to the cohort by same historical exposure but do not explicitly identify themselves with the generational label were also discussed in this study. The discursive and symbolic space of "mnemonic commons" functions as an available repository of meanings rather than given or compulsory. The participants who are not explicitly identifies themselves with this space are aware and informed by the content and agenda of "mnemonic commons" but they may not choose (not

individually or subjectively as a political community) to define themselves with these. Thus, access to it is strictly a matter of choice, not obligation. Individuals retain the capacity to either engage with these shared symbols or deliberately abstain from them, choosing instead to navigate the past through alternative frameworks. Therefore, a participant's decision not to "go" the commons do not negate the existence of the commons, rather, it confirms that the generation is constituted not just by active affirmation, but also by the selective engagement.

According to Mannheimian frame, generations are formed through three factors. Biographical threshold of youth combined with intragenerationally shared but intergenerationally contingent historical exposure of a specific period, conceptualized as "fresh contact", a social location due to this historical exposure consisted of formative events/series of events, conceptualized as "generational location" and a common referential area to address the imprint of a generation, often discussed as "shared awareness" in other contexts, conceptualized as "generation as actuality". In this study, as stated before, actuality of "the Gezi generation" is taken as a social formation, a self-making and self-defining process for the generation, understood through mnemonic commonalities on an experiential ground, rather than a pre-given, homogeneous social category. Therefore, this study takes generational actuality of "the Gezi generation" as a relation between two conceptual poles as structurally given conditions and the reflexive agency of the generation itself by narrating itself. Therefore, in this study the label "the Gezi generation" has been asked to comment on this experiential basis to analyze the actuality.

In this frame, generation as actuality occurs through the following process: (a) the socio-historical conjuncture creates similar influences for the members; (b) members recall these influences through their own life and experiences; (c) when transformed into narratives of remembering, overlapping themes emerge; (d) these overlaps, when associated with social practices, are constituted as mnemonic commons; (e) mnemonic commons provide the discursive and practical basis for generational identity.

In the following sections, generation as actuality is discussed with its commonalities, differentiations and crystallizations for the studied generation.

4.3.2. Commonalities

One of the most persistent myths regarding the youth after 1980 by the older generations was the label of being “apolitical”, “consumerist”, “individualistic” or “anti-organizing”. However, the narratives collected in this study challenged this categorization. The participants argue that their distance from conventional political parties was not a sign of depoliticization, but rather a manifestation of “anti-realpolitics” since a distrust towards the institutionalized forms of politics has raised.

In Int#12, it was stated that the youth movements in 2010s does not emerge “out of blue”:

> They were calling us apolitical because we were not becoming members of their political parties. But in the canteen, in the dormitory, we were constantly talking about the country. We just were not speaking with their words. Our politics was inside life, it was in what we ate, what we watched. When Gezi exploded, they asked, “Where did these people come from?”. In fact, we were always there. (Int#12)

This narrative highlights a critical distinction: The generation did not reject “the political”, they rejected “Politics” with an uppercase “P” (the pre-established, rigid, bureaucratic, and often reduced to party structures).

Similarly, Int#4 describes the era not as a period of disengagement, but as a period where his individual life was inevitably intertwined with the macro-political context:

> Due to the school, I graduated from and the political tradition I came from, it was a period where political life and private life, if there was any private life apart from society, were intertwined. When you say 2010-2015, the first things that come to my mind are the Peace Process, the Constitution, the Referendum, the Syrian Civil War, the Middle East, etc. I mean, nothing from my private life comes to mind. It is the Gezi Resistance, that mobilization... A story that closes with the June elections. (Int#4)

The student movements of the era were representing a shift from “orthodox” organizational politics to rather more “autonomous” and horizontal forms of organizing in student clubs. This transition is vividly captured in Int#3 as

> Looking back now, I see that period as a time when I was involved in Orthodox political practices. But there was a difference: the party I became member seemed to behave differently in the center and the periphery. While the practices that were more decentralized and less top-down were in the periphery, when I came to Ankara, I realized that this structure did not exist there... There was a bureaucratized and centralized form of politics in front of me. (Int#3)

The interviewee continues as:

> I was influenced by anarchist theory... I came to a point where I rejected top-down, centralist organizations. This was before Gezi, but it felt like we had experienced the seeds of Gezi, the ideas that made Gezi what it was, in the internal discussions I consumed... It was a search for a way of doing politics together as equals, definitely not top-down, but quite democratic. I think this style would manifest itself later in Gezi. (Int#3)

Int#3's narrative illustrates generation's broader political evolution through a rupture point orthodox forms of organization when moved from province to the capital. Initially organized in a socialist party in a province with more horizontal organizational ties, he encountered more "bureaucratic" with a feeling of alienation in the same organization but in Ankara. This situation led to searching for alternative forms of political engagement. This account shows that the horizontal characteristics of mobilizations in the era were not arbitrary but also found in the student movements and cultures in the campus in the early 2010s, where the youth were already in search of alternative ways outside of the rigid hierarchies of the traditional left, which could be marked as an element of generational imprint.

Another commonality is in generation's reflexive relationship with its own identity. When the question "do you think you belong to any generation?" was asked, the participants put a "teasing" distance by defining market-driven labels of Gen X, Gen Y, Gen Z as "horoscope-like" or "media-invented". It could be said that the ones who said that they feel a belonging associated their belonging through social, cultural and political terms.

To exemplify, In Int#10, the skepticism towards generational labels strikes the attention. These were viewed as "horoscope-like" but at the same time admitting the shared historical exposure:

> I cannot say that "I am a Millennial, we are exactly the same". It feels a bit like horoscope. But in a sense... there is also a convenience to it. It is very reasonable to talk through generations... Even if I do not see a unitary Y generation with same experiences, I might also say "I am a Y generation", pragmatically. (Int#10)

Also Int#16, a sociologist by profession, offers a more structural definition, accepting the "Y Generation" label only when contextualized within the frame of neoliberal transformations:

> If you ask "which generation are you from?", I would say Y. But I would add the political context. I would say I am from the generation that studied 7 years in Anatolian High Schools, raised by the country to adapt to neoliberal policies, raised to be white-collar workers or bureaucrats. (Int#16)

He states that he is "from GenY" but defines it by "adding a political context". The elements of this socio-political context are related with the economic conditions as well as educational and occupational policies for young people.

However, the most potent identifier remains the political event itself. As Int#15 asserts, the only label that truly resonates is "the Gezi Generation":

> I think we can call ourselves the Gezi Generation... I am not sure about X, Y, Z, but whatever generation it is, we can call it the Gezi Generation. We are the people who coincided with Gezi... I feel like a part of the Gezi generation because I coincided with the resistance, clashed there, and was present inside it. (Int#15)

Finally, Int#16 adds a cultural dimension to this identity, mentioning shared childhood artifacts as a "supra-political" that are bonding the different generational units:

> Just this morning, in our WhatsApp group with my friends, someone posted something. Do you remember that the newspapers used to give out things? You would make games out of cardboard. Not exactly games, but models. Yes, models. You would build houses. Or I used to make clothes for paper dolls. I mean, there was something related to handcrafts. But newspapers gave supplements to design a model, like a cowboy house. I used to buy the newspaper for that as a child. I think this is quite "supra-political" to put it in quotes. I think it touched everyone roughly born between 90, 91, 92, 93, up to

> 95. Or everyone who was a child in those years... everyone born during the 80s. Because the newspaper was a mass communication tool, it went to the villages as well. If we are talking about establishing common ground, there are many things. Even if I am different politically, I can establish common ground through certain aspects of culture. For instance, this could be football fandom. I can get along with a Galatasaray fan if they are in the same age group. If they remember... If they are a child who thinks they became a Galatasaray fan because of the team's European success in the 88-89 season, I was like that in those years. I can establish a commonality and talk to any member of the generation. So yes, I think we have the commonalities as generation. (Int#16)

Here in this account, although there is acknowledgement of the generation units, as the different political approaches and stances, there is also recognition of the commonalities of the generational ground through the societal elements spreading even to rural areas like mass media tools.

Also another interviewee stated the similar point:

> I think we are from the same generation... I was the same age as the person I was most disliked. We were in the same team at work. Interestingly, we could talk about common childhood things, like "Grafi2000" or other animations... But as a political identity, I think we were very different. He had a mentality that could be called "toxic" but outside of that, I could establish contact. (Int#8)

A similar situation has been pointed out in other interviews too as "yes, I think we share the same generation but our view of the world is different" (Int#2) or "you ask delicate question! But I think we are in the same generation but how we interpret the world is different obviously." (Int#15). These narratives point out the dual characteristic of the generational experience. The participants explicitly distinguish between a "common historical expose" and a "shared mentality". As Int#8 illustrates through the reference to "Grafi2000" (a popular YouTube comics of that era), there exists a cultural proximately derived from consuming the same mass media artifacts during childhood. This shared cultural repertoire allows for surface-level communication and even a sense of kinship. However, this commonality ends when it comes to the shared values that are associated with the politics. The recurring emphasis on "how we interpret the world" (Int#15) and "view of the world" (Int#2)

aligns with Mannheim's generation unit conceptualization. While these members acknowledge the same historical location, their interpretative frameworks are so divergent that political dialogue becomes nearly impossible.

Also, another acknowledgement of the same generational location:

> We are in the same generation... But social environments and growing styles are very different. For example, I did not grow up in a conservative family... My environment was Batıkent, then Çankaya. I grew up in family that I could describe as "educated and leftist". Maybe if I had not grown up there, I would be different. The generation is the same, only the environment and family structure are different. (Int#21)

By naming specific neighborhoods (Batıkent, Çankaya), that are associated with the secular, republican middle class in Ankara, the participant acknowledges that their worldview is not a universal generational stance, but a product of a specific "educated and leftist" growing style. While the border between the generation units is plotted by the category of education and ideological stance, it was also acknowledged that the origin of the social position is arbitrary, i.e. the generational unit that she belongs to depends on which family she was born into by chance.

The narratives presented above demonstrate that generational actuality for the Gezi generation is not a monolithic or spontaneous phenomenon, but a complex construction mediated through shared cultural repositories and political ruptures.

The data also reveals the framing their generational belonging against mainstream labeling. While they reject the market categories of Generation X, Y, Z based on biological birth cohorts, they simultaneously acknowledge a common ground by the same historical exposure as well as the existence of distinct "generation units" manifested themselves in the political stances within the generation.

The narrative of Int#16 provides the most concrete evidence of this dual stance. While skeptical of the political label, the participant identifies a "supra-political" common ground rooted in the cultural environment of the childhood. The shared memory of "making cardboard models from newspaper supplements" or the

collective recollection of football matches are the cultural basis grounding the generationality dimension.

Thus, the generation defines itself not by which year they were born, but by what they were historically together as Mannheim states “common destiny”. The sample embraced the label “the Gezi Generation” and attached several qualities to it (like “the Forum Generation”) by addressing its shared values and collective action whereas clearly rejected definitions from birth cohort. This suggests that the mnemonic commons are built primarily by political and cultural grounds of the experienced historical exposure.

The discursive actuality of the Gezi generation is characterized by a shared but textured body of commonalities. While the participants confirmed that they remain at the same generational location with the other units, they plotted clear boundaries between the other generation units with the one that they said belonged. It could be said that the common contingent exposure is acknowledged, and the different generation units have recognized each other, they were also clear about the intragenerational boundaries of generation units differentiated by worldviews and political stances.

4.3.3. Differentiations

While the participants acknowledge the common ground by shared historical exposure, they also challenged the idea of a homogenous generational ground. As Manheim states that the generation has internal heterogeneities conceptualized as “generation units”, a generation is never a monolithic social group even existed in the same geography or society. These units witnessed and went through the same historical events but interpreted them through different lenses based on social categories like class, gender, regional disparities etc.

The first major differentiation is based on the boundaries between generation units in a political ground. Participants describe a paradoxical relationship with their peers from conflicting ideologies. While they acknowledge they share the same historical

exposure by the structural socio-economic conditions, they think they do not share the same "generation" with those conflicting and opposing groups.

> I do not feel like I am in the same generation politically, but actually, the things we experience are the same, unemployment problems, economic problems… When I look at our daily problems, it feels like we are in the same generation. We can meet at a common point. Even a nationalist can say, "Yes, markets were very expensive" or "We cannot express our ideas enough". But it changes according to the context. (Int#6)

While the participant rejects a shared political identity with another conflicting generation unit, she acknowledges a "common point" grounded in the objective realities of the conjuncture exemplified as economic precarity and the crisis of freedom of speech. The generational bond between the distinct generation units is not always formed through shared values, but through a shared generational location rather than homogeneous political agency or worldviews. Again, it reveals that the Mannhemian model, stating that the generational actuality is constructed through the relations between distinct generational units. In this schema, generational actuality remains as a textured construction, not a homogeneous one.

On the contrary to the "context-based" approach above, there are also participants strictly think that they cannot be in the same generation with the groups in conflict:

> Absolutely not. If there is a value you share, it is that we share the exact opposite of it. For instance, if a nationalist says "A", I say "minus A" or "one over A". We are mathematically the opposite. (Int#9)

Differently from recognition of different generation units in the same generational actuality in the previous participant from #Int16, this account occupies rather a more radical position. He states that he states that they are "absolutely not" in the same generation with the conflicting generation unit. He rejects a shared generationality with the nationalist generation unit by describing them "mathematically opposite". This boldly plotted boundary is not between the generation units this time, but it is a set to generational actuality, which indicates that differentiation is so deep to undermine the sense of generational identity.

Also another interviewee states that:

> I do not even think that we live in the same world with those people, although they claim that we do. There is this thing... I had a professor at university whom I respected very much; we worked together for a long time. She had told me... She even had an article regarding looking from that world, from the opposite sidewalk, titled "Sidewalk Women". If a comment is to be made regarding veiled women and unveiled women, there is a part that says: "experience and see it as a woman walking on that opposite sidewalk." (Int#25)

Similarly, the participant here rejects the notion of a shared generational dimension by boldly stating that "I do not even think that we live in the same world". She further states that the secular and conservative segments of the generation are living "parallel lives" that are not even touching each other rather than a shared reality. This kind of boundary plotting is unique since the difference is described as not opposing but "parallel" to indicate that the generational ties and connection point does not exist. The "opposite sidewalk" represents a space that is physically side by side but distant; a place that one can see but cannot truly understand without crossing a mental threshold to "the other side". Thus, the generational experience is defined not by unity, but by these borders.

A similarly sharp boundary has been plotted as:

> Maybe we watched the same cartoons... but our understanding of life, our values, our conscience can never be the same. Historically, yes, we lived through the same dates, but... Our perception styles are on very different planes. They are not coinciding… I do not think we interpret and make sense of things in the same way at all. (Int#13)

Another intragenerational boundary plotted by the interviewees is the class boundaries. This issue was highlighted by the warning of the participant in Int#10 as: "Belonging to a certain generation should not be confused with the class.". This is a remarkable warning that demonstrating, in fact, the sample in this study did not "buy" the popular framings based on the birth cohorts.

Int#16 talks draw a boundary in terms of class through cultural capital. Also, it is argued that the label GenY is often refers specifically to the specific, Westernized, middle-upper class:

> I think myself differently by the music I listened in high school... I decided this was my own distinctiveness. Because while "Dream TV" or "Kral TV" was on in other people's homes, "TRT" was always on in ours. That is why I was playing *bağlama*. I could not establish a commonality... Even when flirting, I have difficulty with this. When we define "GenY", we are talking about the "cream of the crop" in society. For the majority, this definition might not be valid. (Int#16)

In addition to his reference to shared cultural products, the participant in Int#16 also stated class-based differences through cultural consumptions. His distinction between households watching "Dream TV" as a symbol of Western pop-culture consumption and "TRT" as a channel reflecting local culture, he highlights the cultural differentiation and boundary between the generation units. In line with the generationalism critique, he criticizes popular labels of X, Y, Z as being class-biased construction privileging the "white-collar", thereby rendering the working-class segments invisible within the generational framing.

The final axis of differentiation is ethnicity and region based. The participants highlighted a non-synchronization with the other groups in society. This "time difference within" grounded in cultural terms was addressing the inequalities between the regions and spatial settings. The participant in Int#22 stated that they were experiencing the 2010s not simultaneously with the other regions but as a delayed version of the Western part of the country in 1990s.

> The period she described as 2000s was actually my 90s. It is just the opposite. I mean, in Bingöl, I was coming 10 or 20 years from behind. A situation like living in the 2000s what was experienced in İstanbul in the 90s... Therefore, there is already a generational gap between me and the youth in Ankara or in İzmir. What he played on the street in the 90s, my older brothers played in the 80s. I have learned what "Ekşi Sözlük" was in 2010... We were a crowd trying to catch up with the people going ahead us. (Int#22)

This account challenges the cohort definition of a generation from a different standpoint than the other participants. By revealing that the same chronological time experienced differently by different parts of the society, he radically challenges the idea of "shared historical exposure". In this view, the historical exposure which gives a generation to its specific temporal location is indeed not shared due to structurally produced inequalities between regions. By stating the feeling that "I was coming

from behind", the participant states that the youth in the periphery, the access to the cultural markers of "GenY" (like concerts, cinema, or internet) was delayed by a decade due to ethnicity-based conflict and as well as structural disparities between the regions.

A similar statement has been made by another interviewee as:

> How can I be the same generation with the people in here? The personal experiences, the class composition, life reality, belonging to the "sovereign nation"... I have the exact opposite of all these. How can I be in the same generation with those people? Sorry, I can not accept that… Having close birth dates cannot make me the same generation with them. (Int#4)

Another differentiating stance, rejecting the generational category altogether based on categories based on structural inequalities like belonging to class, "sovereignty relations between nations", regionally based experiences. This narrative points out the "regional and sociological reality" creating an unbridgeable gap that being in the same birth cohort cannot close.

The same participant later repositioned the meaning of generation with the kinship-descent meaning within the same ideological group as "If there is a generation, it could only exist within the society all together but within the older and younger generation in the same people coming from the 'same sociology'. Otherwise, I cannot except that.". This is also an illustrative example of discursive and negotiation-based characteristics of generational belonging. The participant here is not rejecting the generational category all together (though rejecting cohort-based horizontal meaning) but replaces it in the form of its kinship-descent meaning so as to address the ideological proximity of the same political movements.

Thus, when the axes for differences together with the commonalities, it could be said that the generational actuality is a textured and fractured formation buried in the deep inequalities and differentiations. While the commonalities are mostly grounded by the shared historical exposure, differentiations are plotted through the boundaries between the generation units as well as rejecting the "sharedness" of the historical exposure.

4.3.4. Crystallizations

Throughout the fieldwork, most frequently addressed self-descriptions has been “the generation in-between” among the other like “ruined generation”, “dispossessed generation”, “defeated generation”, “lost generation”, “awkward generation”. Even though the participants who sharply stated that generation in its historical cohort meaning cannot exist due to absence of a shared historical exposure defined the generation with a condition of “in-betweenness”.

As the most prominent description of generation as actuality, this “in-betweenness” stage is in accordance with the recollections in generation as location section. In this part, participants described a “twilight zone” in the several domains of the remembered conjuncture. In between the autonomous environments of the campuses and bureaucratic organization of the capital city, in between dissolving safety nets for economic conditions and rising neoliberal re-constructing, in between the last moments of “old” regime and rising “new” rule, in between the physical reality of the streets and new digital reality reconstructing the streets, this generation’s formative years has coincided with an “in-betweenness”. In this twilight conjuncture, where the old societal codes were dissolving, but the new hegemony was not yet fully consolidated, the participants of this study were the subjects of this very transition in several domains. They hold the keys to a societal organization that no longer exists, yet they cannot (and will not) fit into the locks of the new one. Their tone of frustration and defeat stems from this structural displacement rather than remaining “misfits” to a transformation against to which they resisted, but was not able to not stop.

Regardless of differentiations, a unifying narrative tone emerged when participants reflect on the end of the era. It should be noted that the feeling of loss is not merely a subjective psychological state. Rather, it originated from the structural shift in the political arena. Int#3 summarizes his sentiment with a striking phrase:

> I can summarize it in two words: absolute defeat. After that, it felt like social opposition entered a period of collapse... I thought the Left would flourish,

> but all layers of social opposition entered a depression. It is hard to make sense of why it happened like this... (Int#3)

As Int#6 states, the struggle itself provided a value accompanied her throughout life transcending political victory or defeat:

> Even now, I feel the absence of this in my life. Feeling that you belong to an idea is actually something very precious. It is something that truly makes a person feel alive. That sense of struggle, that need to act, and that hope of changing something are things I gained during university. (Int#6)

The 2010s for this generation was a transitory period. As young people of that time, they were among the groups that had to witness and metabolize country's structural historical transformation in several spheres of life. While the era ended with a feeling of loss, the act of resistance has shown them the possibility of living an alternative life in the country as per witnesses of a different possibility, positioned the cracks in-between.

The final stage of generational actuality is the crystallization of particular mode and feeling through this described and defined through this "in-betweenness". In the case of the Gezi generation, this crystallization is accompanied by a sense of loss. As stated, this affective imprint is the result of the structural changes in the early 2010s.

As the relative economic prosperity and the "structural cracks" allowing the political action for student movements in the early 2010s vanished, the generation was thrust into a period of intense precarity and authoritarian consolidation. This transition from "potential" to "loss" has crystallized into what can be termed as generational wound. It is not a passive sadness, but a structural response to the closing of the historical window that once promised a different future.

Moreover, this study demonstrated that this "wound" described through the "in-betweenness" remains as generational actuality by being a constructing reference point for the generation. Ultimately, the crystallization of the Gezi generation reveals that a generation is formed as much by its mourning. The transition from location to actuality has left a permanent "imprint", that is both a repository of horizontal solidarity and co-existence and a site of shared mourning.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the mnemonic landscape of a generation who witnessed one of the most turbulent structural transformations in recent history of Turkey. By analyzing the memory narratives of the youth of the 2010s, this dissertation not merely aimed at documenting a chronological sequence of events, but to understand how a specific framing of the members has plotted.

The findings states that the generation shares historical "actuality", depending on the self-definitions by the generation itself, exceeding the biological deterministic categories of market research such as Gen Y or Gen Z.

This study argues that the generational formation of university students in 2010s Turkey cannot be fully understood through birth cohort labels or by reducing their experience to a single political event. Instead, based on the analysis of memory narratives, this thesis proposes that generational identity is constructed through a remembered conjuncture and crystallized through a retrospective look found in narrations. In this framework, the study advances five interrelated arguments regarding generational location, actuality and memory.

First, this study argues that generational location is constituted through a remembered conjuncture of a historical period. The 2010s appear in the participants' memories as a multidimensional intersection of economic precarity, the transformation of public and digital spaces, and specific affective atmospheres. Therefore, this thesis contributes to Mannheim's concept of generational location empirically and asserts that it is the transnationally bounded local experience of the era grounds the generationality dimension.

Second, the research demonstrates that these remembered experiences are treated not as neutral recollections but as inherently evaluative and affective narratives. The data shows that when participants reconstruct the past, they do not simply describe "what happened", rather, they simultaneously articulate how it was felt, judged, and valued. Meaning and affect are not supplementary to the memory but are intrinsic parts of the act of remembering. Consequently, the study challenges the notion of a neutral past, arguing that the shared values of the generation are embedded within the tone of the narratives.

Third, the thesis posits that generational actuality emerges through retrospective reflections on shared experiences rather than merely by experiences themselves. A central finding of this study is that the "generation" is not a fixed entity that existed fully formed in 2010s rather, it is a social reality that is being constructed today. Generational consciousness is central in this dimension manifests itself only when the potential members look back and declare the generationality. Thus, generational actuality is defined here as a reflexive practice, i.e. a product of the present looking at the past, rather than an automatic result of common historical exposure.

Fourth, as per the retrospective characteristics of generational actuality, this study argues that generational commonality is constituted through shared modes of remembering rather than shared experiences alone. The study states that participants who occupied different positions during the 2010s often attached identical metaphors, emotional tones, and narrative structures when describing the era. This suggests that the "generational bond" is not produced by the physical sameness of the lived event, but by the convergence of memory. Even where lived experiences diverge, the forms of remembrance may converge, proving that the generation is, above all, a "community" of memory.

Finally, this study asserts that labels such as "the Gezi generation" function not as definitive categories but as narrative devices for negotiation. Participants do not passively accept generational labels, they embrace, challenge, reject, ironize, negotiate or distance themselves from them. This variation reveals that "being a generation" is not a monolithic state but a negotiated narrative. By analyzing these

discursive strategies, the thesis exposes the internal differentiation as generation units within the generation, showing how “the Gezi generation” label serves as a context for referring broader existential and political identities.

All in all, in this study, I provided a photograph for generational formation of a specific generation, deliberately staying out of the dichotomy of whether or not “the Gezi generation” exists. And in this respect, generational actuality could not be taken “completed” and will remain open to the discussion as time passes and subjected to historical analysis.

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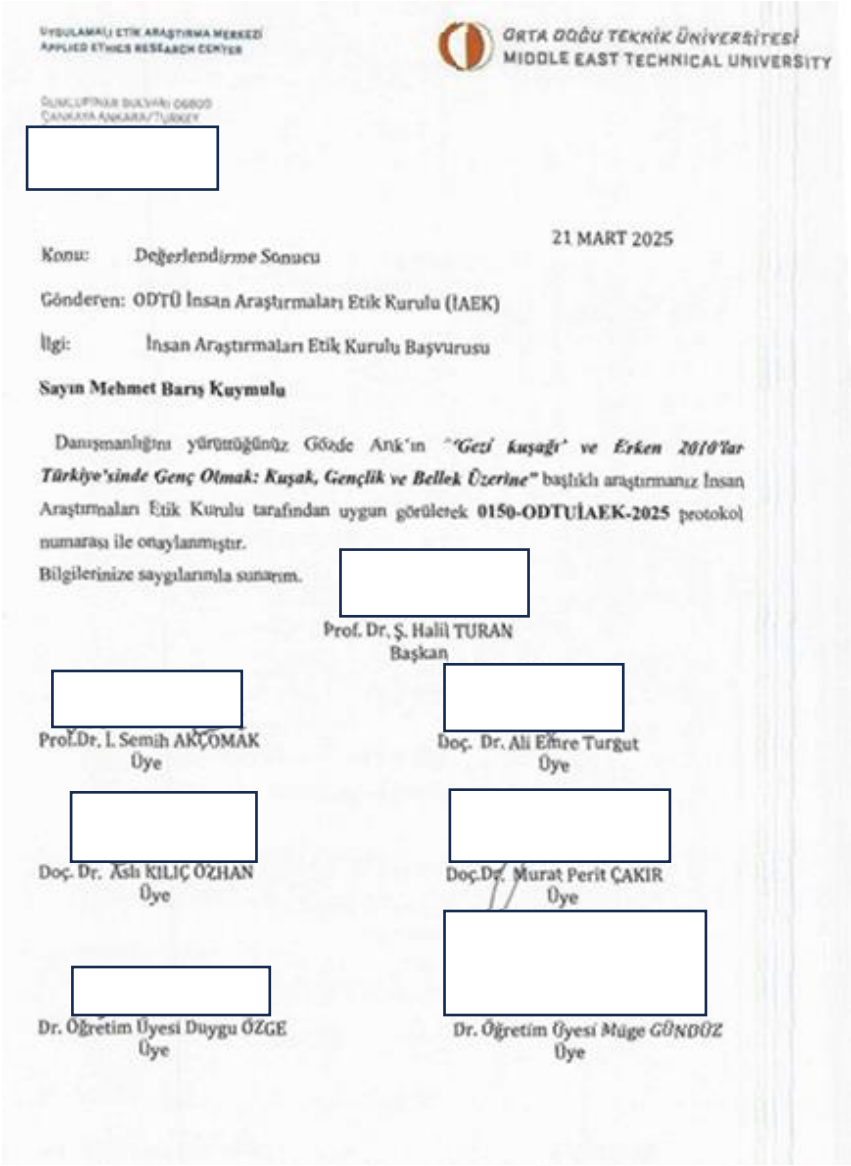
APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE



UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

[redacted]

21 MART 2025

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Mehmet Barış Kuymulu

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Gözde Arık'ın *"'Gezi kuşağı' ve Erken 2010'lar Türkiye'sinde Genç Olmak: Kuşak, Gençlik ve Bellek Üzerine"* başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek **0150-ODTÜİAEK-2025** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

[redacted]
Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

[redacted]
Prof.Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

[redacted]
Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

[redacted]
Doç. Dr. Aslı KILIÇ ÖZHAN
Üye

[redacted]
Doç.Dr. Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

[redacted]
Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Duygu ÖZGE
Üye

[redacted]
Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Gözde Arık

Education

2020-2026 PhD, Sociology Department, METU. Ankara, Turkey
Thesis title: "The *Gezi* Generation": Analyzing social formation of a generation through its collective memories
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Barış Kuymulu
CGPA: 3.94/4.00

2018-2023 BA, Department of Sociology, Anadolu University.
CGPA: 3.50/4.00

2017 Visiting Student Erasmus+ (One semester), Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology University of Vienna. Vienna, Austria.

2014-2019 MSc, Social Anthropology Department, METU. Ankara, Turkey. (Including one semester of scientific preparation)
Thesis title: Şentepe in memories: A field research on *gecekondu*, memory and nostalgia
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Besim Can Zırh
CGPA: 4.00/4.00

2008-2014 BA, Department of Chemical Engineering, METU.

Work Experience

2018-2022. Research Manager at İKADA Consulting Ltd., Ankara

Symposium and Conference Presentations

2023 Zaman Sempozyumu (Time Symposium) by UCTEA Samsun Chamber of Architects presented the paper “Discussion of time and the social in memory theories: On sociology of memory and its theoretical potentialities”, Samsun.

2020 16th METU Sociology Days presented the paper “New workplace of the white collar ‘being online’ and changing frame of workplace” with Senem Ertürk, Ankara.

2019 Mekan Sempozyumu (Place Symposium) by UCTEA (Union Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) Samsun Chamber of Architects presented the paper “Place, social identities and borders: Two ‘different’ neighborhoods in Ankara”, Samsun.

2012 World Food Day UCTEA (Union Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) presented the paper “Extensive production and fair distribution against hunger”, Ankara.

Awards and Scholarships

May 2024 Erasmus+ KA131 Short term PhD traineeship mobility grant for the year 2022, completed as 14 days of traineeship at University of Rijeka in EU funded project REVENANT, Croatia.

2021-2025 TÜBİTAK 2211-B National PhD Scholarship Program for Transition to Social Sciences, Ankara.

March-June 2017 Erasmus+ Exchange Students Scholarship, Austria.

Internship:

2012 Engineer Cadet ASAŞ Packaging, one month, Ankara.

2010 Engineer Cadet BAŞTAŞ Cement, one month, Ankara.

C. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Görüşme Soruları

Tema: Demografik Ögeler

1. Yaşınız ve doğum tarihiniz?
2. Cinsiyetinizi nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz?
3. Eğitim durumunuz nedir?
4. Hangi meslek grubunda çalışıyorsunuz?
5. Doğum yeriniz ve şu an ikamet ettiğiniz yer neresi?

Tema: Genç ve Üniversite Öğrencisi Olmak

1. Üniversite yıllarınızdan birkaç cümleyle anlatabilir misiniz?
2. O dönemin Türkiye'sinde üniversitede öğrencisi olmak sizin için ne ifade ediyordu? Zorlukları ve avantajları nelerdi?
3. Gençlik yıllarınızı şekillendiren en önemli toplumsal olaylar nelerdi?
4. O zamanlar gençliğin sorunlarını nasıl değerlendiriyordunuz?
5. O dönemin üniversite ortamı size nasıl bir toplumsal farkındalık sağladı?
6. Üniversitedeki sosyal ilişkileriniz ve onların size etkileri nasıldı?
7. Gençlik yıllarınızda size en çok ilham veren ya da sizi en çok zorlayan unsurlar nelerdi?
8. Kendi deneyiminizi birkaç kelimeyle özetleyecek olsanız, hangi kelimeleri seçerdiniz?
9. Genç bir birey olarak, o dönemin toplumsal sorunlarıyla ne kadar ilişki kuruyordunuz?/O zamanlar gençlerin/ülkenin sorunları nelerdi? Nasıl bağ kuruyordunuz?
10. Üniversite ortamı size ne tür fırsatlar sundu? Bu ortamı toplumsal farkındalık açısından nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

Tema: Kuşak Belleği

Aidiyet

1. Kendinizi hangi kuşağın bir parçası olarak tanımlıyorsunuz?
2. Bu kuşağı tanımlayan temel özellikler sizce nelerdi?
3. Kuşağınızın toplumsal olaylara bakış açısını hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
4. Sizin kuşağınızın toplumsal bellekte nasıl hatırlanmasını isterdiniz?

Diğer kuşaklarla ilişkiler (farklar-miraslar/aktarımlar)

Farklar/çatışmalar:

5. Sizin kuşağınızı önceki kuşaklardan ayıran temel farklar nelerdir? Bu farklar politik pratiklere nasıl yansıdı?
6. Kuşağınızın, ailelerinizin kuşağıyla yaşadığı en büyük çatışma neydi? Bu çatışmaları nasıl deneyimlediniz?

7. Üniversite hayatınızda, diğer kuşaklardan bireylerle (örneğin, hocalarınız ya da aile büyükleriniz) yaşadığınız en belirgin kuşak çatışması neydi?
8. Sizce kuşaklar arası farklılıklar, toplumsal dinamikleri nasıl bir etkiliyor?
9. Kuşağınızın sahip olduğu değerlerin ve ideallerin, diğer kuşaklar (önceki ve sonraki) tarafından yanlış anlaşıldığını düşündüğünüz noktalar var mı?

Miraslar/aktarımlar:

1. Bugünden baktığınızda, kuşağınızın önceki ve sonraki kuşaklara nasıl bir miras bıraktığını düşünüyorsunuz?
2. Kuşağınızın, sizden sonraki kuşaklarla (örneğin, Z kuşağı ile) ilişkisini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
3. Kuşağınızı başka bir kuşağa anlatmak zorunda olsaydınız, hangi kelimeleri ya da hikayeleri kullanırdınız?
4. Önceki kuşakların size aktardığı bir değer ya da düşünce, sizin için nasıl bir anlam taşıyor?

Politik Deneyim

1. Kuşağınızın politik duruşunu nasıl tanımlarsınız? Sizce bu duruşun arkasında ne gibi toplumsal olaylar ya da dinamikler vardı?
2. Kendi politik pratiğiniz (protesto, aktivizm, grup katılımı vb.) ile ilgili en unutulmaz deneyiminiz nedir?
3. O dönem sizi politik olarak harekete geçiren temel meseleler nelerdi?
4. 2010'lar kuşağının, toplumsal ve politik olaylara karşı duyarlılığını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
5. Kuşağınızın politik duruşu, kişisel görüşlerinizi ya da yaşam tarzınızı nasıl etkiledi?
6. Sizce kuşağınızın politik anlamda en güçlü olduğu alanlar nelerdi? En zayıf olduğu alanlar nelerdi?
7. Politik farkındalığınızda sosyal medyanın ve diğer iletişim araçlarının rolü neydi?
8. Dönemin simge toplumsal olaylarını nasıl hatırlıyorsunuz?
9. 2010'ların politik ve toplumsal atmosferini birkaç kelimeyle tanımlayacak olsanız, bu kelimeler neler olurdu?
10. O dönemde kendinizi bir birey olarak toplumsal yapının neresinde konumlandırıyordunuz?
11. Sizce 2010'lar Türkiye'sinin politik ortamı, genç bireyleri hareketlendiren ne tür bir "ruh hali" yaratıyordu?
12. O dönemde sizi politik olarak harekete geçiren temel meseleler nelerdi? Bu meseleler bugün size hâlâ anlamlı geliyor mu?
13. Kendinizi o dönemin politik pratikleri içinde hangi rolde görüyorsunuz, aktif bir katılımcı, gözlemci ya da başka bir rol?
14. Kendinizi politik bir grubun veya hareketin parçası olarak görüyor muydunuz? Eğer öyleyse, bu grup size hangi anlamları kattı?
15. O dönemin politik atmosferinde bireysel olarak hareket etmekle bir gruba katılmak arasında bir fark hissettiniz mi?

16. Politik pratiklerinize sahne olan mekânları nasıl hatırlıyorsunuz? Üniversite kampüsü, sokaklar, parklar gibi alanların sizin için anlamı neydi?
17. O dönemde sosyal medya veya diğer iletişim araçları sizin için ne kadar etkiliydi? Politik farkındalığınızı nasıl şekillendirdi?
18. Politik olaylar hakkında bilgiye nereden erişiyordunuz (medya, arkadaşlar, aile, sokaklar, üniversiteler vb.)? Bu kaynaklar hatırlama şeklinizi nasıl etkiliyor?

Kuşak ve Zaman

19. Kuşağınıza dair ortak bir bellek yarattığını düşündüğünüz ve unutamadığınız bir olay var mı? Bu olayı nasıl hatırlıyorsunuz?
20. Kuşağınızın toplumsal belleğinde yer eden bir figür ya da lider varsa, bu kişi sizin için ne ifade ediyor?
21. Kuşağınızın önemli bir dönüm noktası olduğunu düşündüğünüz bir an ya da olay var mı? Bu olayın etkileri sizin hayatınıza nasıl yansıdı?

Kuşak ve Kültür

22. O dönemin kültürel üretimlerini (müzik, sinema, edebiyat vb.) düşündüğünüzde, kuşağınızın ruhunu yansıtan örnekler nelerdi? Sizce bunlar bir politik duruş teşkil ediyor muydu?

Kuşak ve Bugün

23. Bugün, kuşağınızın temsil ettiği değerlerin toplumda nasıl algılandığını düşünüyorsunuz?
24. Kuşağınızın bugün karşı karşıya olduğu en büyük sorunlar neler?
25. Kuşağınızın, 2010'larda yaşanan olaylardan bugüne kadar süregelen toplumsal değişimlere katkısını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
26. Günümüzdeki gençlik hareketlerini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

D. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Sayın katılımcı,
Ben, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sosyoloji Bölümü doktora programı öğrencisi olarak, danışmanım Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Mehmet Barış Kuymulu ile birlikte bir doktora tez çalışması yürütmekteyim. Araştırmam, 1980 sonrası kuşağın üyelerinin üniversite öğrencisi oldukları erken 2010'lar Türkiye'sini ve bu dönemin politik pratiklerini nasıl hatırladıklarına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında elde edilen veriler, doktora tezim için kullanılacaktır. Bu çalışma için ODTÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan gerekli onay alınmıştır.
Araştırma kapsamında sizinle yaklaşık bir saat sürecek bir görüşme gerçekleştirmeyi planlıyorum. Bu görüşme sırasında, üniversite yıllarınızdaki deneyimleriniz, o dönemin gençlik ve politik atmosferine dair algılarınız ve kişisel ifadeleriniz hakkında sorular sorulacaktır. Katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır ve görüşme sırasında herhangi bir soruyu yanıtlamamayı tercih edebilirsiniz. Ayrıca, araştırmadan dilediğiniz zaman çekilme hakkına sahipsiniz. Bu durum size hiçbir yükümlülük getirmeyecektir.
Araştırma sonuçları yalnızca bilimsel amaçlar için kullanılacaktır. Kimliğiniz gizli tutulacak ve tezde gerçek isminiz kullanılmayacaktır.
Görüşme sırasında konuşulanların daha sonra yazıya dökülebilmesi amacıyla, izin verdiğiniz takdirde ses kayıt cihazı kullanılacaktır. Görüşme tamamlandıktan sonra kayıtlar yazılı bir forma dönüştürülecek ve inceleyip onaylamanız için size sunulacaktır.
Bu gönüllü katılım formunu imzalamadan önce veya daha sonra aklınıza takılan herhangi bir soruyu sormaktan çekinmeyiniz. İletişim bilgilerim bu formda yer almaktadır. Araştırma tamamlandıktan sonra da bana ulaşabilir ve çalışmayla ilgili sorular sorabilirsiniz.
Eğer bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen aşağıdaki bölümü doldurup imzalayınız. İmzalı formun bir kopyası size verilecektir.

Katılımcının Adı Soyadı:
İmzası:
Tarih:

E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

GİRİŞ

Türkiye'de "Gezi Kuşağı" kavramı üzerine inşa edilen kamusal ve akademik söylem, genellikle derin bir müphemlik (ambivalence) barındırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, söz konusu müphemliği dört temel karakteristik üzerinden sorunsallaştırmaktadır: yansıtma (projection), çelişki (contradiction), araçsallaştırma (instrumentalization) ve homojenleştirme (homogenization). Mevcut literatürde yaşça büyük kuşaklar, kendi normatif beklentilerini, politik özlemlerini veya hayal kırıklıklarını genç kuşak üzerine yansıtmakta; onları ya "büyük bir anlatının" taşıyıcısı ya da siyasetten tamamen kopuk bir kitle olarak kurgulamaktadır. Bu durum, Gezi Kuşağı'nın ampirik temelli sosyolojik bir kategoriden ziyade, üzerine politik tahayyüllerin yansıtıldığı söylemsel bir yüzey olarak kalmasına neden olmuştur.

Bu çalışma, kuşağı sadece protestoların anısına indirgeyen indirgemeci yaklaşımları reddederek, "anımsama müşterekleri" (mnemonic commons) kavramını merkeze almaktadır. Bu bağlamda Gezi Kuşağı'nın oluşumunu '68 veya '78 kuşaklarından ayıran temel fark, bu kuşağın homojen ve yekpare bir "politik eylem birliği"nden ziyade, bir "deneyim birliği" (unity of experience) temelinde şekillenmesidir. 1980 sonrası kuşakların temel karakteristiği olan bu yapı, monolitik ve merkezi bir örgütlenme şablonuna sahip olmasa da farklılıklarla bir arada var olabilme ve bir çeşit "senkronizasyon" içerisinde hareket edebilme kapasitesiyle özgün bir politik kuvvet sergilemektedir. Bu bağlamda araştırma, kuşağı öncül etiketler üzerinden değil, bizzat 2010'lu yılların başında üniversite öğrencisi olan ve "taze temas" (fresh contact) yaşayan öznelerin anlatıları üzerinden yeniden inşa etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, "Gezi Kuşağı" olarak adlandırılan toplumsal oluşumu; kamusal söylemdeki mitler, yansıtmalar veya damgalamalar üzerinden değil, 2010'lu

yılların gençlerinin yaşanmış, hatırlanan ve anlatılan deneyimleri üzerinden yeniden kurgulamaktır. Çalışma, kuşak oluşumunu iki ilişkisel boyutta incelemektedir: yapısal "konum" (location) ve anımsatıcı "gerçeklik" (actuality). Paylaşılan bir "anımsama gerçekliğinin" parçalı ve çok katmanlı kişisel deneyimler aracılığıyla nasıl inşa edildiği, çalışmanın odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

Araştırmanın sınırları metodolojik ve teorik olarak dört ana çerçevede çizilmiştir:

1. **Nitel Yaklaşım ve Amaçlı Örneklem:** Çalışma, istatistiksel temsil kaygısından ziyade analitik derinliğe odaklanmakta; bu nedenle toplumsal cinsiyet ve sosyo-ekonomik çeşitliliği gözeten "amaçlı örneklem" (purposeful sampling) stratejisini benimsemektedir.
2. **Tarihsel-Olay Kohortu:** Araştırma, "taze temas" yıllarını 2010-2015 arası olarak tanımlamakta ve bu dönemde gelişimsel (formative) yıllarını yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerine odaklanmaktadır.
3. **Mekânsal Sınır (Ankara):** Ankara, sahip olduğu yoğun ve politik olarak çeşitlilik arz eden öğrenci nüfusu nedeniyle temel araştırma lokasyonu olarak seçilmiştir. Tek bir şehre odaklanmak, bağlamsal dinamiklerin tutarlı analiz edilmesine olanak sağlamıştır.
4. **Kuşak-İçi Dinamikler:** Çalışma, kuşaklar arası karşılaştırmadan ziyade kuşak içi heterojenliğe odaklanmaktadır. Farklı politik angajmanlara sahip kuşak üyelerinin nasıl ortak bir yorumlayıcı repertuvar ve anımsama anlatısı paylaştığı incelenmektedir.

Araştırma Sorusu

Çalışmanın temel araştırma sorusu şu şekilde formüle edilmiştir: "Gezi Kuşağı, üniversite öğrencisi oldukları 2010'lu yılların başındaki politik pratikleri ve mobilizasyonları ne şekilde (in what ways) hatırlamaktadır?"

Bu soru, mevcut akademik ve entelektüel söylemlerde "Bir Gezi kuşağı var mıdır?" gibi ontolojik bir test şeklindeki formulize edilmiş soruların ötesine geçerek, kuşağın kendi ortak müştereklerini "nasıl" hatırlandığına ve bu şekilde inşa edildiğine odaklanmaktadır. Mannheimcı bir çerçevede ele alınan bu soru; yaşanmış

deneyimler, toplumsal konumlanma ve tarihsel maruziyet arasındaki ilişkisel alanı analiz etmeyi mümkün kılmaktadır.

Sosyolojik Bir Problem Olarak "Kuşaksal Oluşum"

Bu çalışma, Gezi Kuşağı'nı analiz ederken kuşağı statik bir veri (given data) olarak değil, sürekli bir "oluş hali" (state of becoming) olarak ele almaktadır. Literatürdeki mevcut boşluk, söz konusu kuşağın genellikle ya "politik ilgisizlik" ya da "anlık patlamalar" üzerinden okunmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Oysa bu araştırma, kuşak oluşumunun temeline Thompsoncı sınıf "inşasını" (making) kuşak perspektifine entegre ederej, 2010'lu yılların başındaki tarihsel konjonktürün genç özneler tarafından nasıl içselleştirildiğini sorgulamaktadır.

Araştırmanın yapısal sütununu oluşturan "taze temas" (fresh contact) kavramı, genç bireylerin toplumsal dünyayla kurdukları ilk entelektüel ve politik etkileşimi simgeler. 2010-2015 arası dönem, Türkiye'nin toplumsal yapısında derin bir kutuplaşmanın ve yeni politik dillerin filizlendiği bir döneme tekabül etmektedir. Bu dönemde üniversite öğrencisi olan özneler, sadece bir protesto dalgasının parçası olmamış; aynı zamanda kendi kimliklerini bu tarihsel maruziyetin yarattığı "kuşak konumu" (generation location) içerisinde tanımlamışlardır. Bu bağlamda araştırma, söz konusu kuşağın maruz kaldığı bu özgün tarihsel deneyimin, zaman içerisinde müşterekler ve farklıkların etkileşimli bir diyaloğuyla nasıl kristalleşerek bir "kuşak gerçekliğine" (generation actuality) dönüştüğünü metodolojik bir titizlikle incelemektedir. Çalışmanın bir diğer özgün savı ise, bu kuşağın kendisinden önceki kuşakların (özellikle '68 ve '78 kuşaklarının) miras bıraktığı politik şablonları reddederken, onların deneyimleriyle nasıl bir bellek mücadelesine girdiğidir. Bu durum, Gezi Kuşağı'nı sadece kendi anılarıyla değil, aynı zamanda toplumun onlara dayattığı "mitler" ve "etiketler" ile olan hesaplaşması üzerinden de tanımlamayı zorunlu kılmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Kavramsal ve Kuramsal Sınırları

Bu noktada, tezin başlığından yola çıkarak oluşabilecek muhtemel bir beklentinin netleştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Okuyucu, bu çalışmanın yalnızca Gezi protestolarına

ve belirli bir yaş grubunun bu protestoları nasıl hatırladığına odaklanan bir "olay incelemesi" olduğu yanılgısına düşebilir. Ancak bu çalışma; "parktaki gençler" veya "oy bloğu" gibi indirgemeci ve araçsallaştırılmış tanımların ötesine geçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bir kuşağı tek bir olay incelemesine indirgemek, Mannheimcı çerçevenin sunduğu "benzer şekilde tabakalaşmış" sosyo-tarihsel deneyimlerin derinliğini göz ardı etmek anlamına gelecektir. Saha verileri, katılımcıların politik angajmanlarının Gezi öncesi ve sonrasını kapsayan bir süreklilik sergilediğini açıkça ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu çalışma, bir grubu yalnızca Gezi anlatıları üzerinden tanımlamak yerine, kuşağı protesto belleğini de kapsayan ancak onu aşan bir "anımsama müşterekleri" (mnemonic commons) kavramı üzerinden analiz etmektedir. Gezi Kuşağı'nı Türkiye'deki '68 veya '78 kuşaklarından ayıran en temel fark; bu kuşağın merkezi, monolitik ve hiyerarşik bir "politik eylem birliği" (unity of political action) yerine, parçalı ama senkronize bir "deneyim birliği" (unity of experience) oluşturmasıdır. 1980 sonrası kuşakların temel karakteristiği olan bu yapı; doğrudan bir eylem birliği sunmasa da paylaşılan kültürel repertuvar ve bellek üzerinden şekillenmektedir.

Bu durum bir "eksiklik" değil, aksine kuşağın oluşumunu ve etkileşim biçimini tanımlayan diyalektik bir özelliktir. "Anımsama müşterekleri" kavramı, kuşağın politik özgünlüğünü ve gücünü şu noktada sergiler: Kendi sesinden taviz vermeden farklılıklarla bir arada var olabilme ve merkezi bir komuta zinciri olmaksızın "senkronize" hareket edebilme kapasitesi. Lüküslü'nün (2009) "Türkiye'de gençlik miti" çalışmasında belirttiği üzere, 80 sonrası kuşakları tanımlamak için 80 öncesi kuşaklardan miras kalan *a priori* (önsel) şablonlardan bağımsız, alternatif bir mercek gereklidir.

Araştırma, bu kuşağın "anımsama gerçekliğinin" (mnemonic actuality) kolektif bir "kayıp" duygusu ve "arada kalmışlık" üzerinden tezahür ettiğini savunmaktadır. Ortak bir politik manifesto aramak yerine bu araştırma, ortak "kuşaksal yaraların" (generational wounds) bir kuşağın oluşumunda nasıl bir köşe taşı işlevi gördüğünü anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Nihayetinde geçmişi hatırlama eylemi; bu kuşak için kendi gerçekliğini, kimliğini ve sınırlarını, kamusal söylem tarafından dayatılan etiketlere karşı savunma ve tanımlama aracı olarak hizmet etmektedir.

Çalışmanın literatüre katkıları üç boyutta ele alınabilir:

- **Teorik Katkı:** Mannheimcı geleneğe, kuşağı statik bir ürün değil, sürekli bir "oluşum" (making) olarak gören Thompsoncı bir perspektif entegre edilmiştir. "Kuşak birimleri" kavramı üzerinden, kuşak içi parçalanmışlığın paylaşılan bir kuşak gerçekliğiyle nasıl bir arada var olabildiği ortaya konmuştur.
- **Metodolojik Katkı:** Bellek çalışmalarının sosyolojik bir araç olarak kullanılmasıyla özgün bir entegre çerçeve sunulmuştur. Bu doğrultuda, "hatırlanan konjonktür" ve "anımsama müşterekleri" kavramları, gelecekteki nitel kuşak çalışmaları için yeniden üretilebilir analitik araçlar olarak literatüre kazandırılmıştır.
- **Pratik ve Toplumsal Katkı:** Gençliğe yönelik romantize edilmiş mitler veya indirgemeci damgalamalar yerine; politik failliği, bellek mücadelelerini ve içsel karmaşıklığı gören nüanslı bir sosyolojik tablo sunulmaktadır.

TEORİK ÇERÇEVE

Kuşak kavramı, insanlık tarihi kadar eski bir geçmişe sahip olsa da sosyolojik bir analiz birimi olarak tanımlanması oldukça karmaşık bir süreci ifade eder. Literatürde kuşak kavramı sıklıkla kohort (doğum grubu), yaş, yaşam evresi veya sınıf kavramlarıyla karıştırılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, kuşak olgusunu Mannheimcı bir perspektifle ele alarak; onu biyolojik bir zorunluluktan ziyade, toplumsal değişimin ve tarihsel kırılmaların öznesi olan sosyolojik bir kategori olarak konumlandırır.

Mannheim Öncesi ve Sonrası: Paradigma Değişimi

Karl Mannheim'ın 1928 tarihli "The Problem of Generations" makalesi, literatürde bir dönüm noktasıdır. Mannheim öncesi dönemde iki hâkim okul mevcuttur:

1. **Pozitivist Okul:** Kuşağı, 30 yıllık periyotlarla birbirini izleyen biyolojik bir süreklilik ve istatistiksel bir ölçüm birimi olarak görür. Bu yaklaşım, toplumsal ilerlemeyi biyolojik bir ritme (pulse-rate hypothesis) indirger.
2. **Tarihsel-Romantik Okul:** Zamanı nesnel bir ölçü birimi değil, öznel bir "içsel zaman" (interior time) olarak ele alır. Bu okul, aynı tarihsel döneme

tanıklık edenlerin, bu dönemi aynı şekilde deneyimlemediğini savunarak niteliksel bir kapı açmıştır.

Mannheim, bu iki okulun da determinist yanlarını eleştirerek kendi sosyolojik sentezini oluşturmuştur. Mannheim'a göre kuşak ne sadece biyolojik bir veridir ne de tamamen öznel bir deneyimdir. Kuşak, bireyin toplum içindeki yapısal konumu ile tarihsel olayların bu konum üzerindeki etkisi arasındaki diyalektik bir ilişkidir

Kuşak kavramı literatürde iki temel eksende tartışılmaktadır. Birincisi, aile içindeki dikey hiyerarşiyi ifade eden "soykütüğü/akrabalık" (kinship-descent) anlamıdır. İkincisi ise bu tezin merkezine aldığı, tarihsel zaman içindeki yatay konumlanmayı ifade eden "kohort" (cohort) anlamıdır.

Akrabalık soyundan farklı olarak kohort anlamıyla kuşak, aynı sosyo-politik ve kültürel koşullara ("common destiny") maruz kalan bireyleri tanımlar. Bu bağlamda araştırma; kuşağı sadece bir "doğum grubu" (birth cohort) olarak değil, belirli bir tarihsel dönemin (2010'lu yıllar) ve bu dönemi karakterize eden olayların (Gezi süreci) şekillendirdiği bir "tarihsel-olay kohortu" olarak operasyonelleştirmektedir.

Kuşak analizinde bir diğer kritik ayrım, aynı dönemde yaşamak (çağdaşlık) ile o dönemi benzer yaşam evrelerinde deneyimlemek (akranlık) arasındadır. Mannheim'ın "çağdaşların çağdaş olmaması" (non-contemporaneity of contemporaries) ifadesi, farklı kuşakların aynı takvim yılında yaşasalar bile, farklı öznel zamanlarda ve deneyim havuzlarında bulunduklarını vurgular. Bu çalışma, 2010'lu yılları üniversite öğrenciliği gibi gelişimsel bir yaşam evresinde deneyimleyen "akranların" paylaştığı ortak sosyo-tarihsel imgelemi merkeze almaktadır.

Teorik çerçevenin yapısal bağlamda nihai halkasını Mannheim'ın "taze temas" kavramı oluşturur. Bu kavram, tarihsel bir momentin hangi yaşam evresinde "kuşak oluşturucu" bir etkiye sahip olduğunu açıklar. Gençlik, toplumsal dünyayla kurulan ilk entelektüel ve politik etkileşimin gerçekleştiği bir eşiktir. Ancak bu süreç otomatik bir biyolojik sonuç değildir; aksine tarihsel bir kırılmanın bu özgün

biyolojik eşikle çakıştığı noktada bir kuşak bilinci kristalleşir. Dolayısıyla çalışma, 2010-2015 arası dönemi bu kuşağın "taze temas" yılları olarak tanımlayarak, bu dönemin anılarının nasıl bir kuşak gerçekliğine dönüştüğünü incelemektedir.

Kuşak olgusunu sosyolojik olarak operasyonelleştirmek, literatürdeki kavramsal yığılma nedeniyle oldukça güçtür. Bu noktada, Norman B. Ryder'ın (1965) öncü çalışması, kuşağı yalnızca "soykütüğü/akrabalık" (kinship-descent) alanına indirgeyerek analitik bir netlik sağlama amacı gütmüştür. Ryder'a göre kuşak kavramı aile içi mirasla sınırlı tutulmalı; toplumsal değişimin özneleri için ise münhasıran "kohort" kavramı kullanılmalıdır. Literatürde Kertzer (1983) gibi isimler tarafından "ironik" olarak nitelendirilen bu katı ayrım, Mannheimcı geleneği takip eden araştırmacılar için hem bir uyarı hem de bir sınır teşkil eder.

Bu çalışma, Ryder'ın demografik saflığını veya Kertzer'in genellenebilirlik kaygılarını olduğu gibi benimsememekle birlikte, bu uyarıları kuşak oluşumunu konumlandırmak için değerli bulmaktadır. Demografik çalışmalarda kullanılan "Yaş-Dönem-Kohort" (APC) modeli, her bir değişkenin etkisini istatistiksel olarak birbirinden ayırmayı amaçlar. Ancak Mannheimcı perspektifte bu değişkenler birbirinden ayrılamaz; aksine "tarihsel dönem" (period), bir kuşağın yapısal "konumu" için başlangıç noktasıdır.

Schuman ve Scott'ın (1989) "hibrit modeli" ise, kuşağı sadece demografik bir yığın olmaktan çıkarıp, kolektif bellek (collective memory) üzerinden tanımlanan niteliksel bir birime dönüştürür. Bu model, Ryder'ın kohort tanımını operasyonel bir araç olarak kullanırken, analitik odağı Mannheimcı bir yaklaşımla "anımsama izlerine" kaydırır. Bu çalışma da benzer bir yaklaşımla; kuşağı demografik bir ölçüm birimi olarak değil, paylaşılan anlam dünyaları ve stratejiler üzerinden şekillenen bir "kuşaksal oluşum" olarak ele almaktadır. Sonuç olarak "kohort" kavramı bu araştırmada demografik bir "etki" ölçümü için değil, Mannheimcı kuramı sahada görünür kılacak bir operasyonelleştirme aracı olarak işlev görmektedir.

Sosyal bilimlerde kuşaksallık (generationality) boyutu, Bristow'un (2024) ifadesiyle "güçlü fakat tartışmalı" yapısı nedeniyle büyük ilgi görmektedir. Bu çalışma,

kuşakları yalnızca söylemsel bir inşa olarak ele almasa da bu konudaki epistemolojik tartışmaları akademik bir gereklilik olarak görür. Bu bağlamda, sosyolojik bir analiz birimi olan "kuşaksallık" ile sosyoloji için riskli bir söylem olan "kuşakçılık" (generationalism) arasında net bir ayrım yapmak elzemdir.

Özellikle 2020-2025 arası güncel literatürde, özellikle İngilizce konuşan akademik dünyada, "kuşakçılık" kavramına yönelik ciddi eleştiriler yükselmektedir. Kuşakçılık; sınıf, toplumsal cinsiyet, etnisite veya coğrafi konum gibi yapısal eşitsizliklerin üzerini örten, karmaşık sosyal sorunları basitçe "kuşaklar arası çatışma" (intergenerational conflict) olarak sunan indirgemeci bir metanarratif olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Örneğin, neoliberal politikaların yarattığı ekonomik krizlerin faturasının sadece "boomer" kuşağına kesilmesi veya gençliğin sadece "Z Kuşağı" gibi homojen ve karikatürize edilmiş etiketlerle temsil edilmesi, toplumsal gerçekliğin basitleştirilmesine yol açmaktadır.

Bu eleştiriler, kuşak analizinin değersiz olduğu anlamına gelmez. Aksine; Purhonen (2016) ve Bristow (2024) gibi araştırmacıların vurguladığı üzere, bu eleştiriler kuşak analizinin hangi teorik koşullar altında anlamlı olabileceğini belirler. Kuşakçılık söyleminin yarattığı en büyük tehlike, kuşak içi heterojenliği (intragenerational heterogeneity) yok saymasıdır. Oysa Mannheim'ın "kuşak birimleri" (generation units) kavramı, tam da bu noktada devreye girerek; kuşağın statik ve homojen bir grup değil, ortak referans noktaları etrafında şekillenen ama içinde çatışan eğilimleri barındıran dinamik bir alan olduğunu gösterir.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma; Gezi Kuşağı'nı popüler medyanın sunduğu homojen bir "oy bloğu" veya "tüketici grubu" olarak değil; hem yaşanmış (deneyimsel) hem de müzakere edilen (söylemsel) temelleri olan, yapısal eşitsizliklerle bölünmüş ama ortak bir tarihsel momentte senkronize olmuş bir "sosyolojik oluşum" olarak analiz etmektedir. Bu yaklaşım, kuşak analizini bir "etiketleme" aracından çıkarıp, toplumsal failliği ve tarihsel değişimi anlamaya yarayan derinlikli bir yöntemsel çerçeveye dönüştürmektedir.

Mannheim'ın kuşak kuramı, biyolojik zaman, toplumsal konum ve tarihsel deneyimin birbirinden ayrılamaz olduğunu savunan sosyolojik bir zemin sunar. Bu

çalışma için Mannheim'ın önemi, kuşağı ne mekanik bir ritimle üretilen biyolojik bir ürün ne de sadece öznel bir deneyim olarak görmesidir. Onun ifadesiyle, "her türlü biyolojik ritim, toplumsal olaylar aracılığıyla işlemek zorundadır."

Kuramın en özgün kavramlarından biri olan "taze temas", tarihsel olayların hangi yaşam evresinde bir kuşak bilinci oluşturabileceğini açıklar. Bu, gençliğin psikolojik bir özelliği değil, tarihsel dünyanın verili malzemesiyle ilk kez ve doğrudan karşılaşıldığı yapısal bir eşiktir. Gençlik dönemi, mevcut kültürel envanterin yeniden değerlendirildiği, "taze bir seçimin" yapıldığı ve toplumsal bilincin kristalleştiği bir dönemdir. Schuman ve Scott'ın (1989) ampirik olarak doğruladığı üzere, bireylerin kolektif belleklerinde en kalıcı iz bırakan olaylar, bu gelişimsel/biçimlendirici yıllarda (formative years) yaşananlardır. Gezi Kuşağı için bu süreç, 2010'lu yılların başında üniversite öğrencisi olarak bu tarihsel konjonktüre maruz kalmalarıyla tanımlanır.

Mannheim'a göre kuşak, her şeyden önce sosyo-biyolojik bir konumdur. Bu kavram, bireylerin gönüllü olarak katıldığı bir "somut grup" (aile, kabile gibi) değil; tıpkı "sınıf konumu" gibi, kişinin iradesinden bağımsız olarak içine doğduğu yapısal bir olasılıklar kümesidir. "Kuşak konumu", benzer yaş gruplarının toplumsal-tarihsel süreç içinde benzer yerlerde (spacetime) bulunmasını ifade eder. Bu konum, üyelerin mutlaka birbirini tanımasını gerektirmez; ancak ortak bir tarihsel sürece, benzer bir biyolojik evrede maruz kalmaları, onlara ortak bir kader ve potansiyel bir deneyim alanı sunar.

Yapısal bir potansiyel olan kuşak konumu, her zaman bir kuşağa dönüşmez. Bunun için, paylaşılan tarihsel olayların kolektif bir bilince ve anlam çerçevesine tahvil edilmesi gerekir. "Kuşak gerçekliği", bu potansiyelin realize olmuş halidir. Bu çalışma, Gezi Kuşağı'nı ontolojik bir veri olarak değil, geçmişin kolektif olarak nasıl hatırlandığı ve çerçevelendiği üzerinden inşa edilen bir "gerçeklik" olarak analiz etmektedir.

Mannheim'ın kuramındaki en dinamik unsur "kuşak birimleri"dir. Bir kuşak, gerçeklik kazandığında bile homojen bir yapı sergilemez. Aksine, aynı kuşak

konumu içinde yer alan bireyler, tarihsel deneyimi farklı ideolojik ve kültürel çerçevelerle yorumlayabilirler. Kuşak birimleri, bu içsel heterojenliğin karşılığıdır. Farklı politik yönelimlere sahip olsalar da bu birimler, ortak bir tarihsel referans noktasına verdikleri "cevapların özdeşliği" üzerinden birbirlerine eklemlenirler. Bir kuşağın gerçekliği, bu birimlerin birbirleriyle olan etkileşimi, rekabeti ve hatta çatışması üzerinden şekillenir. Dolayısıyla, Gezi Kuşağı'nın "senkronize" hareket edebilme kapasitesi, bu farklı birimlerin ortak bir anımsama müşterekleri alanında (mnemonic commons) buluşmasıyla mümkün olmaktadır.

Türkiye'deki kuşak çalışmaları, özellikle '68 ve '78 kuşakları üzerine yapılan analizlerde (Lüküslü, 2015; Durmaz, 2019), belirli politik kimliklerin ideolojik söylemler ve örgütsel bağlar aracılığıyla nasıl inşa edildiğini başarıyla ortaya koymuştur. Ancak bu çalışmaların odağındaki dönemler, üzerinden elli yılı aşkın zaman geçmiş, akademik uzlaşıya varılmış ve "kapanmış" tarihsel parantezlerdir. Buna karşın "Gezi Kuşağı" üzerine yapılacak bir analiz, erken 2010'dan bu yana henüz on yılı yeni devirmiş ve akademik/toplumsal uzlaşısı hâlâ müzakere edilen "açık" bir dönemle karşı karşıyadır.

Mevcut literatür, genellikle bir kuşak birimini (örneğin sosyalist birimleri) tüm kuşağın özüymüş gibi sunma eğilimindedir. Oysa Mannheim'ın vurguladığı üzere bir kuşak; homojen bir eylem birliği değil, içinde zıt dünya görüşlerini barındıran heterojen bir yapıdır. Bu çalışma, Gezi Kuşağı'nı arşivlerdeki dondurulmuş belgeler üzerinden değil, bizzat aktörlerin kendi anlatıları ve kolektif bellekleri üzerinden inşa edilen "ilişkisel bir süreç" olarak ele almaktadır. Bu noktada metodolojik odak, statik bir tarihsel yeniden inşadan, dinamik bir "yaşanmış deneyim" analizine kaymaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın en temel teorik müdahalesi, E.P. Thompson'ın (1964) "İngiliz İşçi Sınıfının Oluşumu" (The Making of the English Working Class) perspektifini kuşak analizine eklemlendirmesidir. Thompson'a göre sınıf, dışarıdan dayatılan mekanik bir kategori değil, aktörlerin kendi deneyimleri ve anlatılarıyla katıldıkları aktif bir "oluşum" (making) sürecidir. Thompson'ın meşhur "Sınıf, kendi oluşumunda hazır bulundu" ifadesinden yola çıkarak; Gezi Kuşağı'nın da verili bir kategori değil, kolektif bellek ve anlatılar aracılığıyla kendi kimliğini, sınırlarını ve gerçekliğini bizzat inşa eden bir oluşum olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Thompsoncı “oluşum” perspektifi ile Mannheimcı “kuşak gerçekliği” arasındaki köprü deneyim kavramıdır. Deneyim, yapısal olarak belirlenmiş koşullar (kuşaksal konum) ile bilinç düzeyindeki bellek anlatılarının çerçevelerini birbirine bağlar. Gezi Kuşağı’nın gerçekliği; bitmiş, tamamlanmış bir analiz nesnesi değil, bugünün içinden geçmişin nasıl hatırlandığına dair süregiden bir müzakere alanıdır. Bu bağlamda araştırma; katılımcılara doğrudan “Gezi Kuşağı” etiketini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını sorarak, kuşağın kendi gerçekliğini nasıl “müzakere ettiğini” ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma; kuşak oluşumunu nesnel bir çıktı olarak değil, yapısal koşulların dayatması ile aktörlerin bu koşullara verdiği cevaplar arasındaki dinamik bir ilişki olarak tanımlar. Gezi Kuşağı, anıların ve etiketlerin sürekli yeniden tartışıldığı bu alanda, “kendi oluşumunda var olmayı sürdüren” canlı bir sosyolojik gerçekliktir.

Bu çalışma, zamanın soyut ve uçucu doğasını sosyolojik bir zemine oturtmak amacıyla, bellek kavramının temel bir analitik mercek olarak kullanmaktadır. Ancak burada bellek, başlı başına bir kuramsal amaç değil; “kuşak oluşumu”nu (generational formation) anlamlandırmak için stratejik olarak seçilmiş bir araçtır. Bu doğrultuda tez, kuşak kavramını merkezin odağına, bellek kavramını ise bu odağa hizmet eden kurucu bir sütun olarak hiyerarşik bir kavramsal mimariye yerleştirmektedir. Bellek çalışmaları literatürünün uçsuz bucaksız hacmi içerisinde, araştırma disipliner bir sınır çizerek yalnızca kuşak analizine doğrudan hizmet eden tartışmalara odaklanmıştır. Bu seçici strateji uyarınca bellek; hem kuşağın yapısal konumunun (“hatırlanan konjonktür”) aracılığıyla hem de dinamik gerçekliğinin deşifre edilmesini sağlayan hem teorik hem de metodolojik bir anahtar olarak işlev görmektedir. Dolayısıyla Gezi Kuşağı’nın “oluşumu”, arşivlerin statik verilerinde değil, bugünün anlam çerçeveleriyle yeniden inşa edilen kolektif belleğin bu hiyerarşik mimarisinde aranmaktadır.

Bellek, bu çalışmada kuşak analizini mümkün kılan stratejik bir araç olarak operasyonelleştirilmiştir. Bellek çalışmalarının tarihsel gelişimi; yapısal vurgulardan öznelliğe ve refleksif inşalara uzanan üç temel dönemde incelenebilir:

1. **Bellek Krizi ve Modernite (19. Yüzyıl):** Modernite ile birlikte geçmiş ve şimdi arasındaki bağın kopması, bir "bellek krizi"ne (Terdiman, 1993) yol açmıştır. Nora'nın (2009) ifadesiyle, geçmişin "her an mevcut" olma hali sona ermiş; geleneksel bellek ortamlarının (milieux de mémoire) yerini paketlenmiş bellek mekânları (lieux de mémoire) almıştır. Bu dönemde bellek, tarihten koparak yalnızca "şimdi" içinde var olan bir anlam çerçevesine dönüşmüştür.
2. **Sosyal Çerçeveler ve Maurice Halbwachs (20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısı):** Maurice Halbwachs (1980), belleği bireysel psikolojinin dar sınırlarından çıkarıp sosyolojik bir zemine taşıyarak bir kırılma yaratmıştır. Halbwachs'a göre hatırlama, "sosyal çerçeveler" (cadres sociaux) tarafından dolayımlanan kolektif bir süreçtir. Bireysel anılar, ancak toplumsal grupların sunduğu anlam ağları içinde inşa edilebilir. Bu dönem, belleğin metodolojik bireycilikten kurtulup bir sosyal bilim nesnesine dönüştüğü evredir.
3. **Bellek Patlaması ve Çeşitlenme (1980 Sonrası):** Kimlik politikalarının yükselişiyle birlikte bellek, monolitik tarih anlatılarına karşı alternatif bir meşruiyet alanı olarak "patlama" (memory boom) yaşamıştır (Huyssen, 1995). Bu evrede bellek, sadece neyin hatırlandığına değil, hatırlama eyleminin toplumsal kimlikleri inşa etmek için nasıl mobilize edildiğine odaklanır. Nora'nın (2011) "tarihin demokratikleşmesi" olarak tanımladığı bu süreçte; travma belleği, kültürel bellek (Assmann, 2011) ve post-bellek (Hirsch, 1997) gibi kavramlar literatüre girmiştir.

2010'lu yıllardan itibaren ise bellek çalışmaları; küresel ağlar, dijitalleşme ve ekolojik krizlerle birlikte "küresel/gezegensel" bir dönemece girmiştir.

Bu çalışmada bellek, kuşağı analiz etmek için stratejik bir araç olarak konumlandırılırken; Maurice Halbwachs'ın (1980) iki temel tezi, sosyolojik analiz içim çıkış noktası olarak alınmıştır:

1. Hatırlama eylemi bireysel olsa da içeriği ve anlamı mutlaka "sosyal çerçeveler" (cadres sociaux) tarafından dolayımlanır.
2. Geçmiş, bugünün ihtiyaçları ve anlam çerçeveleri ışığında "şimdi" içerisinde yeniden inşa edilir.

Halbwachs, bu teoriyi kurarken Henri Bergson'un nesnel zamana karşı çıkan "süre" (durée) kavramı ile Durkheim'ın toplumsal olgu vurgusunu sentezlemiştir. Bergson'dan, hatırlamanın geçmişi olduğu gibi saklayan bir "kutu" değil, şimdiden kurulan aktif bir bağ olduğu fikrini; Durkheim'dan ise en bireysel görünen hatıraların bile toplumsal gruplar (aile, din, kuşak) içinde yapılandığı düşüncesini almıştır. Bu yaklaşım, Gezi Kuşağı'nın anılarını statik bir veri deposu olarak değil, bugünün içinden sürekli yeniden okunan ve "şimdiye ait" olan bir inşa süreci olarak görmemizi sağlar.

Bellek çalışmalarındaki temel tartışmalardan biri olan "kim hatırlar?" sorusunda bu çalışma, Jeffrey Olick'in (1999) ayrımını takip ederek; belleği anıtlar veya arşivler gibi dışsal nesnelerden ziyade, canlı aktörlerin hatırlama eylemi olarak tanımlar.

Susan Sontag'ın (2003) "kolektif bellek yoktur, kolektif talimat vardır" yönündeki metodolojik uyarısı dikkate alınsa da; bu çalışmada "kolektiflik", bireyleri aşan ama onları homojenleştirmeyen bir "anlatı köprüsü" olarak ele alınır.

Bu tezin özgün katkılarından biri, Bull ve Hansen'in (2016) "agonistik bellek" (çatışmacı ama meşru) kavramını bir adım öteye taşıyarak "anımsama müşterekleri" kavramını önermesidir. Bir kuşağı oluşturan birimler (generation units) geçmişi farklı ideolojik merceklerle hatırlasalar da, hepsi aynı "sembolik havuzdan" ve "referans noktasından" beslenirler. Bu durum bir rekabetten ziyade, Michael Rothberg'in (2009) "çok yönlü bellek" (multidirectional memory) kavramıyla paralel olarak, farklı anlatıların birbirini yok etmeden aynı kuşaksal gerçekliği zenginleştirdiği ortak bir kaynak alanını ifade eder.

Son olarak bellek, doğası gereği seçici bir süreçtir. Renan'ın "ortak unutma" (shared forgetting) ve Misztal'ın "işlevsel unutma" kavramlarında vurgulandığı gibi; neyin hatırlanmadığı veya sessizlikle geçiştirildiği, en az hatırlananlar kadar kuşak kimliğini inşa edici bir unsurdur. Gezi Kuşağı'nın anlatıları, bu seçici inşa süreci içerisinde hem "taze temas" anlarını parlatmakta hem de bugünün gerçekliğiyle uyumsuz parçaları eleyerek bir kuşak bilinci oluşturmaktadır.

METODOLOJİ

Kuşak çalışmalarının ontolojik statüsü ve zamansal mantığına göre literatür şu üç grupta toplanabilir:

1. **Edimsel-Söylemsel İnşa Yaklaşımı (Foucaultcu):** Kuşakları verili kategoriler değil, söylemsel olarak inşa edilmiş nesneler olarak görür. "Z Kuşağı" gibi etiketlerin sosyal gerçekliği tanımlamaktan ziyade, bu gerçekliği aktif olarak ürettiğini savunur. Odak noktası, bu etiketlerin medya ve kamuoyundaki dolaşımı ve iktidar ilişkileridir.
2. **Zayıf Ontoloji ve Analitik Araç Yaklaşımı (Bourdieucu):** Kuşağı sınıf analizinin ikincil bir kesiti olarak ele alır. Bourdieu'nün "habitus" kavramı üzerinden kuşak, değişen tarihsel koşulların bedenleşmiş izleri olarak okunur. Burada kuşak kendi başına bir fenomen değil, sınıfsal konumların zamansal bir göstergesidir.
3. **Kuşaksal Sosyal Oluşumun Retrospektif Analizi (Mannheimcı):** Bu çalışmanın benimsediği yaklaşımdır. Kuşağı, "kuşak konumu" ve "kuşak gerçekliği" üzerinden bir sosyo-tarihsel süreç olarak analiz eder. Pozitivistlerin aksine, kuşağın varlığını otomatik olarak varsaymaz; bunun yerine ortak bellek ve kültürel anlamların olasılığını metodolojik bir başlangıç noktası olarak alır.

Bu çalışmada ele alının kuşağın oluşumunu analiz etmek için Mannheimcı çerçevenin seçilmesinin temel nedeni, bu yaklaşımın "süreç odaklı" yapısıdır. Literatürde '68 ve '78 kuşakları üzerine çok sayıda ampirik çalışma bulunmasına rağmen, Gezi örneğinde kolektif bellek üzerinden yürütülen sistematik ve ampirik bir analiz boşluğu mevcuttur.

Lüküslü'nün (2015) '68 kuşağı analizinde kullandığı süreç odaklı yaklaşım, bu çalışma için bir referans noktasıdır. Ancak Gezi örneği, '68 gibi "kapanmış ve mühürlenmiş" bir dönem değildir. Zamansal yakınlık, Gezi Kuşağı'nın "oluşumunu" (making) hâlâ canlı, akışkan ve müzakere edilebilir kılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla Mannheimcı çerçeve, bu kuşağın paylaşılan deneyimlerini ve kolektif anılarını,

kristalleşmeye devam eden bir "sosyal oluşum" olarak incelemek için en uygun araç setini sunmaktadır. Fırat vd. (2017) belirttiği gibi, Gezi'ye katılan gençlerin bir kuşak haline gelmesi, sadece o anı yaşamalarıyla değil, bu deneyimi bellekleri ve bilinçleri üzerinden bir adlandırmaya dönüştürmeleriyle mümkündür.

Bellek, bu çalışmada geçmişi kaydeden bir "video kayıt cihazı" değil, şimdiden kurulan yaratıcı bir inşa süreci (Halbwachs'ın birinci tezi) olarak ele alınmaktadır. Keightley ve Pickering'in (2012) vurguladığı gibi, hatırlama ve hayal gücü birbirinden ayrılamaz; her hatırlama eylemi geçmişin "yeniden kazanılması" (repossession) için bir hikâyeleştirme (narrative) içerir.

Bu noktada benimsenen Yorumlayıcı (Interpretivist) Yaklaşım, Max Weber'in *Verstehen* (anlama) kavramına dayanır. Analizin hedefi geçmişin kronolojik gerçekliği değil, aktörlerin o geçmişe bugünden atfettiği "sosyal anlam"dır. Belleğin "metinlerarasılığı" (intersubjectivity), katılımcıların anlattıklarının izole bireysel hikâyeler değil, paylaşılan bir "beklenti ufku" tarafından şekillenen kolektif anlatılar olduğunu gösterir. Sonuç olarak bellek anlatıları, Gezi Kuşağı'nın yapısal konumunun ve özgün gerçekliğinin görünür kılındığı temel analitik mecradır.

Bu çalışmanın araştırma tasarımı, Mannheimcı kuşak kuramını ampirik bir sorgulamaya dönüştürmek amacıyla üçlü bir analitik yapı üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Araştırmanın temel birimi, sadece yaş kriterine dayalı bir grup değil; 2010-2015 yılları arasında Türkiye'de "taze temas" (fresh contact) eşiğinde bulunan bir "tarihsel-olay kohortu"dur.

Araştırmada katılımcıların sosyal konumu (social location), stratejik bir tercihle üniversite öğrencisi olmakla sınırlandırılmıştır. Bu seçimin temel gerekçesi, 2010-2015 Türkiye konjonktüründe üniversitelerin; gençlerin toplumsal ve politik meselelerle ilk kez doğrudan ve sistemli bir etkileşime girdiği, eleştirel düşüncenin ve siyasal katılımın ana mekânı olmasıdır.

Mekânsal odak olarak Ankara'nın seçilmesi ise şehrin toplumsal hareketler açısından zengin bir çevre olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ankara, Türkiye'nin dört bir

yanından gelen, politik olarak aktif ve heterojen bir öğrenci nüfusuna ev sahipliği yapması nedeniyle, kuşağın içsel çeşitliliğini (kuşak birimlerini) yakalamak adına "kritik vaka" (critical case) niteliği taşımaktadır. Örneklem, bu çekirdek grubun yanı sıra, kuşağın sınırlarını ve siyaset dışı yansımalarını görmek adına o dönem lise öğrencisi olan ve herhangi bir politik aidiyeti olmayan katılımcılar da dahil edilerek çeşitlendirilmiştir.

Araştırmada Patton'ın (2014) tanımladığı "Amaçlı Örnekleme" (purposeful sampling) yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Nitel araştırmanın doğası gereği, istatistiksel genelleme yerine "bilgi açısından zengin vaka" (information-rich cases) derinliği hedeflenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, belirlenen teorik kriterleri (2010-2015 arası Ankara'da üniversite öğrencisi olma) karşılayan kişiler seçilmiştir. Katılımcılara ulaşmada ise, farklı "kuşak birimleri" arasındaki ağlara sızabilmek ve güven ilişkisi kurabilmek adına "Kartopu Örnekleme" (snowball sampling) tekniğiyle çekirdek bir katılımcı grubunun genişletilmesi şeklinde ilerletilmiştir.

Veri toplama süreci, bire bir yürütülen yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar üzerinden tasarlanmıştır. Bellek araştırmaları için bire bir görüşme tercihi hayati önem taşır; zira bu yöntem, katılımcının anlatısının bir grup dinamiği içinde "hizalanmasını" önleyerek, kişisel belleklerdeki "sosyal olanın" parçalı ve özgün izlerini sürmeye olanak tanır.

Mülakat soruları üç tematik kümede toplanmıştır:

1. Demografik Profil: Katılımcıların sosyo-ekonomik arka planı.
2. Kuşak Konumu (Location): "2010'lar bir üniversite öğrencisi için nasıldı?" sorusu etrafında, o dönemin yapısal koşullarının nasıl hatırlandığı.
3. Kuşak Gerçekliği (Actuality): Aidiyet, paylaşılan değerler ve "Gezi Kuşağı" etiketine yönelik yaklaşımlar.

Araştırmada kullanılan "Aktif Mülakat" (active interview) yaklaşımı (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), katılımcıyı pasif bir cevap kaynağı olarak değil, anlamın mülakat sırasında araştırmacıyla birlikte inşa edildiği aktif bir özne olarak görür. Katılımcıların "Gezi Kuşağı" etiketini kabul, reddediş veya müphemlikle

karşılaması, tezin süreci dondurmayan "akışkan kuşak oluşumu" iddiasını ampirik olarak test etmesini sağlamıştır. Bu yöntemle bellek, sadece geçmişi geri getiren bir araç değil, kuşaksal gerçekliğin mülakat anında yeniden "müzakere edildiği" yaratıcı bir saha haline gelmiştir.

Bu çalışma kapsamında, Ankara'da üniversite eğitimi almış katılımcılarla toplamda 25 derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma başlamadan önce Etik Kurul onayı alınmış ve katılımcılara gönüllülük esasına dayalı "Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu" sunulmuştur.

Örneklem, 2010'lu yıllarda Ankara'daki çeşitli öğrenci hareketlerine eklemlenmiş, yüksek entelektüel kapasiteye sahip kişilerden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu sosyal ve siyasal bilimler mezunu beyaz yakalı uzmanlardır. Bu profil, mülakatların üçüncü bölümünde yer alan soyut "kuşaksallık" sorularının derinlemesine tartışılmasını kolaylaştırmıştır. Katılımcıların eğitim düzeyi, "sosyal beğenirlik önyargısını" kırmış ve kavramsal jargondan çekinmeden; aidiyet, reddediş veya müzakere gibi kuşaksal gerçekliğe dair samimi ve zengin veriler sunmalarına olanak tanımıştır.

Araştırmacı olarak ben, katılımcılarla aynı kuşaksal konumu paylaşmaktayım; yani kendi "taze temas" (fresh contact) sürecimi 2010-2015 yılları arasında Ankara'da üniversite öğrencisi olarak deneyimledim. Bu durum, araştırmacı ile katılımcı arasında hiyerarşik olmayan, yatay bir ilişkinin kurulmasını sağlamıştır. "İçeriden" (insider) bir araştırmacı olmak, ortak bir kültürel kod ve dil üzerinden güven ilişkisinin (rapport) hızla kurulmasını kolaylaştırmıştır.

Ancak bu yakınlık, beraberinde deneyimleri "verili" kabul etme riskini de getirdiğinden, süreç boyunca sürekli bir öz-refleksiflik (self-reflexivity) ve analitik mesafe korunmuştur. Paylaşılan tarihsel arka plan, bilinen olayları sormak yerine, bir dış gözün fark edemeyeceği nüanslı sorular sormak için bir avantaj olarak kullanılmıştır. Böylece mülakatlar, bilginin araştırmacı ve katılımcı tarafından birlikte inşa edildiği (co-construction) duygusal ve entelektüel karşılaşmalara dönüşmüştür.

Saha çalışması, literatürde “doygunluk noktası” (saturation point) olarak tanımlanan aşamada sonlandırılmıştır. Yaklaşık 23. mülakattan sonra anlatıların birbirini tekrar etmeye başladığı, benzer metafor ve temaların (kampüs anıları, politik umutlar ve hayal kırıklıkları gibi) yankılandığı gözlemlenmiştir. Yeni verilerin teorik olarak ek bir katkı sağlamadığı bu doygunluk aşamasında, 25 mülakat ile saha çalışması tamamlanmıştır.

Analizin ilk aşamasında, katılımcıların 2010’lu yılların başında Ankara’da üniversite öğrencisi olma deneyimleri “konjonktürel alanlar” (conjunctural domains) üzerinden incelenmiştir. Burada Stuart Hall’un konjonktürel analiz ilkeleri takip edilerek; statik bir “zamanın ruhu” (Zeitgeist) tasviri yerine, mülakatlardan süzülen temalar üzerinden bir “kuşaksal konjonktür” panoraması oluşturulmuştur.

İkinci aşamada ise kuşak gerçekliği; “ortaklıklar”, “farklılaşmalar” (kuşak birimleri arası sınırlar) ve “kristalleşmeler” (ortak değer ve duygulanımlar) olmak üzere üç ana kategori üzerinden tematikleştirilmiştir. Mikro analiz düzeyinde ise C. Wright Mills’in “sosyolojik tahayyül” (sociological imagination) yaklaşımından esinlenilmiştir. Analiz mantığı; 2010’ların sosyo-tarihsel koşulu, katılımcının bu koşula dair bellek anlatısı ve bugünün koşullarıyla yapılan karşılaştırma arasındaki etkileşimi deşifre etmek üzerine kurulmuştur.

Bu çalışma, kuram ile ampirik veri arasında sürekli bir diyalog kuran “abductive” araştırma stratejisini (Blaikie, 2000) benimsemiştir. Bu strateji, analizi iki temel adımda yürütmektedir:

1. İçeridekinin Bakış Açısını Anlamak: Katılımcıların kendi gerçekliklerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını ve 2010’lu yılları nasıl hikâyeleştirdiklerini ortaya koymak.
2. Sosyolojik Yeniden Tanımlama: Katılımcıların anlatılarını sosyoloji disiplininin kavramsal diline (Mannheimcı kuşak kuramına) tercüme etmek.

Bu strateji, kuramın sahaya mekanik bir şekilde dayatılmasını engellemiş; aksine ampirik verinin kuramı yeniden şekillendirmesine olanak tanımıştır. Örneğin, Mannheim’ın klasik “entelechy” ve “Zeitgeist” gibi kavramlarının saha verilerini

tam olarak karşılamadığı noktalarda, bu kavramlar araştırmanın ihtiyaçlarına göre revize edilerek "konjonktürel analiz" gibi önerilerle geliştirilmiştir. Böylece kuram, veriyi kısıtlayan katı bir kural değil, toplumsal gerçekliği anlamaya yardımcı kavramsal bir araç olarak işlev görmüştür.

ANALİZ

Bu bölüm, araştırmanın ampirik çekirdeğini teşkil eden bulguların ve analizin teorik çerçeveyle nasıl eklemlendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Mannheimcı "kuşak konumu" (location) ve "kuşak gerçekliği" (actuality) katmanları üzerinden yürütülen analizde; katılımcıların yapısal koşulları nasıl deneyimlediklerinden ziyade, bu deneyimleri birer "hatırlanan konjonktür" olarak nasıl hikâyeleştirdikleri (storification) merkeze alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda "kuşak konumu" bölümü, 2010'lu yılların başında Ankara'da üniversite öğrencisi olmanın yapısal zeminini katılımcı anlatıları üzerinden kurarken; "kuşak gerçekliği" bölümü bu anlatılardan süzülen ortaklıklar, farklılıklar ve kristalleşmeler aracılığıyla kuşağın refleksif gerçekliğini bir "anımsama müşterekleri" (mnemonic commons) alanı olarak inşa etmektedir. Çalışmanın benimsediği "abductive" araştırma stratejisi uyarınca bu bölümde sunulan "ulusötesi sınırlı yerel oluşum", "hatırlanan konjonktür" ve "anımsama müşterekleri" gibi kavramlar, literatürden hazır alınmış şablonlar değil; ampirik verinin teoriyi bizzat şekillendirdiği, kuram ile sahanın refleksif diyaloğundan doğan özgün analitik kategorilerdir.

Mannheimcı kuşak kuramı, kuşağı doğum tarihinden ziyade tarihsel maruziyet üzerinden tartışır. Bu çerçevede "kuşak konumu" (location), üyelerin "taze temas" yaşadıkları dönemin tarihsel koşullarına, resmi tarihin kronolojisinden ziyade, bu koşulları nasıl anlamlandırdıkları üzerinden referans verir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu konumu mekânsal ve zamansal iki temel boyut üzerinden kavramsallaştırmaktadır:

Uluslarötesi sınırlandırılmış yerel konjonktür olarak kuşak

Katılımcıların anlatıları, yerelde yaşanan deneyimlerin aslında küresel ve ulusötesi bir konjonktürün parçası olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak bu ulusötesi etkiler,

mülakatlarda soyut küresel teoriler olarak değil, doğrudan "yerel ve maddi" yansımalar üzerinden hatırlanmaktadır.

Örneğin, mülakatlarda dile getirilen 2010'lu yılların başındaki ekonomik daralma veya aile işletmelerinin iflası gibi kişisel krizler; Çin'in küresel tekstil sektöründeki yükselişi gibi ulusötesi bir konjonktürün yereldeki somut tezahürüdür. Katılımcılar, makro düzeydeki bu yapısal değişimleri ailelerinin geçim kaynakları ve kendi öğrencilik hayatlarının maddi imkânları üzerinden anlamlandırmaktadır. Benzer şekilde, 2010'lu yıllardaki küresel politik mobilizasyon dalgası (taban hareketleri, Avrupa ve Amerika'daki protestolar), Ankara gibi bir metropolde üniversite öğrencisi olmanın getirdiği maddi ve entelektüel imkânlar dahilinde yerelleşmiştir. Bu bağlamda Gezi Kuşağı, küresel akımlarla temas halinde olan ancak yerel maddi koşullar tarafından sınırlandırılmış bir "ulusötesi sınırlı yerel oluşum" olarak ele alınmıştır.

Hatırlanan Konjonktür olarak Kuşak Konumu

Bellek, geçmişin olduğu gibi yansıtıldığı bir ayna değil; geçmiş deneyimlerin bugünün merceğinden geçirilerek yeniden üretilmesidir. Araştırmada kullanılan "hatırlanan konjonktür" (remembered conjuncture) kavramı, bu ikili sürece işaret eder: Biçimsel olarak anlatı düzeyinde (söylemsel), köken olarak ise maddi/deneyimsel bir zemindedir.

Nitel bir araştırmacı için katılımcının bizzat yaşadığı deneyime doğrudan ulaşmak mümkün değildir; ancak bu deneyimin anlatılar (narration) aracılığıyla kurulan "arayüzüne" ulaşılabilir. Katılımcıların 2010'lu yıllara dair anlatıları, serbest birer kurgu değil; aksine o dönemin tarihsel-maddi koşullarına kök salmış ifadelerdir. Dolayısıyla, "hatırlanan konjonktür", geçmişin nesnel tarihinden ziyade, o geçmişin bugün nasıl bir anlamlandırma pratiğiyle (örneğin bugünün kayıplarıyla karşılaştırılarak) yeniden inşa edildiğini temsil eder.

Bu analiz mantığı, kuşağı statik bir tarihsel tasvirden çıkarıp; yapısal koşulların (konum) bireysel biyografilerde nasıl metabolize edildiğini ve bu metabolizmanın bir kuşak bilincine (gerçeklik) nasıl dönüştüğünü görünür kılmaktadır.

Hatırlanan Konjonktürün Kendi İçinde Görece Otonom ve Birbirine Eklemlenmiş Boyutu

Bu tez, Mannheimcı "kuşak konumu" (generation as location) kavramını, 2010'lu yılların başında Ankara'da üniversite öğrencisi olmanın getirdiği özgün sosyo-tarihsel koşullar üzerinden ampirik olarak analiz etmektedir. Katılımcıların bu yapısal konumda maruz kaldıkları deneyimleri nasıl hikâyeleştirdiklerini inceleyen analiz; zamansal ve mekânsal koordinatların kesişiminden doğan bu konumu mekânsal (1), ekonomik (2), politik (3) ve dijital (4) olmak üzere dört ana alanda (domain) sınıflandırmaktadır. Görece özerk fakat birbirine eklemlenmiş bu dört alan, erken 2010'lar konjonktürünün öğrenciler tarafından nasıl anlamlandırıldığını ve bu maruziyetin kuşağın "biçimlendirici yılları" (formative years) üzerindeki etkisini çok katmanlı bir doku olarak ortaya koymaktadır.

Analiz bölümünde, Mannheim'ın "kuşak konumu" kavramı; katılımcıların 2010'lu yılların başındaki öğrencilik yıllarını mekânsal, ekonomik, politik ve dijital boyutlar üzerinden nasıl hikâyeleştirdikleri üzerinden analiz edilmektedir. Bu dört alan, birbirine eklemlenmiş bir konjonktür oluşturarak kuşağın "taze temas" yıllarındaki yapısal zeminini tarif eder.

Mekânsal Boyut

Mülakatlarda üniversite kampüsleri, şehrin geri kalanından yalıtılmış birer "küçük köy" olarak hatırlanmaktadır. Bu mekânsal yalıtılmışlık, gençlerin aile denetiminden uzak, akranlarıyla yoğun bir etkileşim içinde olduğu ve kampüs içi gündemlerin dış dünyadan daha hızlı aktığı bir mikro-evren yaratmıştır. Kampüslerin fiziksel sınırları, öğrencilerin toplumsal meselelerle ilk "taze temaslarını" kurdukları, eleştirel düşüncenin kurumsallaştığı ve dayanışma pratiklerinin öğrenildiği bir kuluçka merkezi işlevi görmüştür.

Ayrıca, taşradan Ankara'ya gelen katılımcıların yaşadığı "ölçek şoku", onların yerel/ailesel kimliklerinden koparak bağımsız birer kentsel-politik özneye dönüşme süreçlerini tetiklemiştir. Ankara'nın bir metropol ve politik güç merkezi olarak

sunduğu olanaklar, kampüs dışındaki küresel akımlarla dijital bağlar üzerinden kurulan etkileşimle birleşerek; kuşağın yerel gerçekliklere demirli ama küresel demokratik standartlara talip olan özgün karakterini şekillendirmiştir.

Ekonomik Boyut

2010'lu yılların başındaki ekonomik konum, bugünün koşullarıyla karşılaştırıldığında bir "mütevazı yeterlilik" ve geçici bir denge dönemi olarak hatırlanmaktadır. Bu dönemin en belirgin bulgusu, öğrencilerin sahip olduğu "zaman sermayesi"dir. O dönemdeki bursların ve aile desteğinin satın alma gücünün görece yüksek olması, öğrencileri bugünkü kuşaklar gibi "hayatta kalma moduna" veya tam zamanlı çalışmaya zorlamamıştır. Bu "satın alınmış zaman", kuşağın enerjisini akademik gelişimden ziyade kampüs siyasetine, kültür-sanat faaliyetlerine ve entelektüel arayışlara yatırmasına imkan tanımıştır. Ancak bu görece refahın yanında, "apartman üniversitelerin" artışı ve diplomanın değersizleşmesiyle ortaya çıkan hayal kırıklığı, geleceğe dair bir güvencesizlik duygusunu da beraberinde getirmiştir.

Politik Boyut

Katılımcılar, 2010'lu yılları ne tam bir özgürlük ne de tam bir baskı dönemi olarak; her iki dinamiğin eşzamanlı var olduğu bir "alacakaranlık kuşağı" (twilight zone) olarak tarif etmektedir. Eski hegemonyanın sarsıldığı ancak yeni hegemonyanın henüz tam anlamıyla yerleşmediği bu "ara dönem", öğrenci hareketleri için yapısal çatlaklar ve faillik alanları yaratmıştır.

Dönemin en belirgin özelliği, siyasal otoritenin özel alana ve yaşam tarzlarına yönelik müdahaleleridir. Bu durum, gündelik hayatın kendisini (öğrenci evleri, kampüsler, ulaşım hatları) birer politik mücadele alanına dönüştürmüştür. Kuşak, ideolojik tercihlerinden bağımsız olarak, yaşam alanlarını savunma zorunluluğu üzerinden yapısal olarak siyasallaşmıştır. Kampüsler, bu süreçte yatay demokrasi pratiklerinin (forum kültürü gibi) öğrenildiği ve kurumsallaştığı korunaklı birer sığınak işlevi görmüştür.

Dijital Boyut

Gezi Kuşağı, dijital dünyada "araçsal" bir ilişki kuran özgün bir konuma sahiptir. Katılımcılar, bugünkü kuşakların (Z Kuşağı) tam dijitalleşmiş gerçekliğinin aksine, sosyal medyayı sokağın ve eylemin bir ikamesi değil, onu organize eden ve ana akım medyanın sansürünü aşan pragmatik bir araç olarak kullanmışlardır. O dönemin algoritmik yapısının henüz bugünkü kadar ticari ve kısıtlayıcı olmaması, "ismi olmayan insanların" karşı-anlatılar oluşturmasına ve geniş kitlelere ulaşmasına imkan tanıyan bir "algoritmik boşluk" yaratmıştır. Dijital gözetimin henüz "topyekûn" bir boyuta ulaşmadığı bu dönem, kuşağa dijital alanı özgürleşmiş bir kamusal alan olarak kullanma güvenini vermiştir.

Sonuç olarak, Gezi Kuşağı'nın "kuşak konumu"; erken 2010'lar konjonktürünün zamansal maruziyeti ile Ankara'da üniversite öğrencisi olmanın getirdiği sosyal pozisyonun kesişimidir. Bu konum; eleştirel düşünceye alan açan kampüsleri, politik katılım için gerekli olan boş zamanı, yaşam tarzı müdahalelerine karşı gelişen itiraz kültürünü ve ana akım medyayı baypas eden dijital özerkliği bir araya getirmiştir. Bu analiz, kuşağı homojen bir kitle olarak değil; belirli yapısal koşullar içinde (sınıfsal, mekânsal ve zamansal olarak) konumlanmış ve bu koşullardan bir "kuşak potansiyeli" devşirmiş bir oluşum olarak ortaya koymaktadır.

Kuşak Gerçekliği

Mannheim'ın "kuşak gerçekliği" kavramı; kuşağın sadece ortak bir konumda bulunmasının ötesinde, bu konumu nasıl anlamlandırdığı ve kendi kimliğini nasıl inşa ettiği üzerinden tartışılmaktadır. Çalışma, bu süreci kavramsallaştırmak için "anımsama müşterekleri" (mnemonic commons) terimini önermektedir. Bu terim; üyelerin birbirini tanımasına gerek kalmadan paylaştıkları ortak bir sembolik havuzu, referans noktalarını ve geçmişe dair benzer anlatı şemalarını ifade eder.

Ortaklıklar

Katılımcıların anlatıları, 1980 sonrası gençliğe atfedilen "apolitik" veya "bireyselci" etiketlerini radikal bir biçimde reddetmektedir. Katılımcılar, geleneksel siyasi

partilere olan mesafelerini bir duyarsızlık olarak değil, hiyerarşik ve bürokratik siyasete karşı geliştirilen bir "anti-realpolitik" tavır olarak tanımlamaktadır. Onlar için siyaset; kantinde, yurtta ve gündelik hayatın içinde kurulan yatay, demokratik ve özerk bir eylem biçimidir.

Mülakatlarda "Y Kuşağı" gibi piyasa odaklı etiketlere mesafeli durulurken, katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu kendilerini "Gezi Kuşağı" veya "Forum Kuşağı" olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu ortaklık sadece siyasal eylemle sınırlı değildir; çocukluk döneminde tüketilen gazete ekleri, karton maketler veya televizyon animasyonları gibi "siyaset-üstü" kültürel ürünler de kuşağın duygusal zeminini (supra-political common ground) besleyen anımsama müştereklerini oluşturmaktadır.

Farklılaşmalar

Mannheim'ın vurguladığı üzere, kuşak gerçekliği homojen bir yapı değildir; aksine "kuşak birimleri" (generation units) arasındaki ilişkiler ve çatışmalar üzerinden şekillenir. Katılımcılar, aynı tarihsel konjonktürü paylaştıkları zıt ideolojik gruplarla (örneğin milliyetçi veya muhafazakâr akranlarıyla) olan sınırlarını keskin bir biçimde çizmektedir. Bazı katılımcılar bu farkı "matematiksel bir zıtlık" veya "paralel dünyalar" (karşı kaldırımda yürümek) olarak tarif ederek, ortak bir kuşak kimliğini tamamen reddetmektedir.

Buna ek olarak, sınıfsal farklılıklar ve bölgesel eşitsizlikler de kuşağın içsel bölünmelerini belirlemektedir. Özellikle taşradan gelen veya Kürt kimliğine sahip katılımcılar, Batı'daki akranlarının deneyimlediği konjonktürü "geriden takip etme" veya "farklı zamanlarda yaşama" duygusuyla anlatmaktadır. Bu durum, kuşağın tarihsel maruziyetinin her birim için aynı hıza veya içeriğe sahip olmadığını; aksine kuşağın derin eşitsizlikler ve sınırlarla bölünmüş bir "ilişkisel ağ" olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır.

Kristalleşmeler

Analizin en belirgin bulgusu, katılımcıların kuşağı tanımlarken kullandığı "arafta kalmışlık" (in-betweenness) hissidir. Bu kuşak; kampüslerin özerkliği ile Ankara'nın

bürokratik sertliği, eski rejimin çözülüşü ile yenisinin kurumsallaşması, fiziksel sokak ile dijital gerçeklik arasında bir "alacakaranlık kuşağı"nda şekillenmiştir.

Bu eşikte bulunma hali, bir "kuşaksal yara", "kayıp" ve "mağlubiyet" hissiyle kristalleşmiştir. Ancak bu kayıp duygusu sadece pasif bir üzüntü değil; kuşağı bir arada tutan, kolektif yas ve dayanışmanın kaynağı olan bir referans noktasıdır. Katılımcılar, 2010'lu yılların başında deneyimledikleri o "başka bir dünya mümkün" ihtimalini, bugün bir kayıp hikâyesi olarak anlatırken bile, bu ihtimalin kendisini kuşak kimliğinin kalıcı bir parçası (imprint) haline getirmektedir.

Kendi Oluşumuna Tanık Bir Kuşak

Sonuç olarak Gezi Kuşağı'nın gerçekliği; verili ve homojen bir kategori değil, ortak bir anımsama alanında sürekli müzakere edilen bir "oluşum" sürecidir. Bu süreçte kuşak; yapısal koşulların yarattığı benzer etkileri kendi yaşam deneyimlerinden geçirerek anlatılara dönüştürmüş ve bu anlatılar aracılığıyla kendi kimliğini inşa etmiştir. Kuşak gerçekliği; hem yatay dayanışmanın hem de paylaşılan yasın birleştiği, hiçbir grubun tekelinde olmayan ama herkesin anlatısıyla genişleyen bir "anımsama müşterekleri" alanı olarak tezahür etmektedir.

SONUÇ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin yakın tarihindeki en çalkantılı yapısal dönüşümlerden birine tanıklık eden bir kuşağın bellek peyzajını ortaya koymuştur. 2010'lu yılların gençliğinin bellek anlatılarını analiz eden bu tez; olayların kronolojik bir dökümünü yapmanın ötesinde, bu kuşağın kendini nasıl konumlandırdığını ve tanımladığını anlamayı amaçlamıştır. Çalışmanın temel bulgusu, bu kuşağın biyolojik determinizme ve tüketim örüntülerine dayalı kategorilerinin (Y veya Z Kuşağı gibi) ötesinde, kendi öz-tanımlarına dayanan sosyo-tarihsel bir "gerçekliği" paylaştığıdır. Bu doğrultuda tez; kuşak kimliğinin "hatırlanan bir konjonktür" üzerinden inşa edildiğini ve bugünden geçmişe bakılarak anlatılarda kristalleştiğini savunarak beş temel argüman sunmaktadır: İlk olarak, kuşak konumu ulusötesi bağları olan yerel bir tecrübedir. İkinci olarak, hatıralar tarafsız bilgiler değil, değer ve duygu yüklü

anlatılardır. Üçüncü olarak, kuşak gerçekliği geçmişte olup bitmiş statik bir veri değil, bugünden geçmişe bakılarak kurulan refleksif bir pratiktir. Dördüncü olarak, kuşaksal bağ sadece ortak deneyimle değil, bu deneyimin ortak anımsama biçimlerine ve metaforlarına dönüşmesiyle kurulur. Son olarak, "Gezi Kuşağı" gibi etiketler, üyelerin üzerinde aktif olarak müzakere ettiği söylemsel araçlar işlevi görür.

Sonuç olarak bu tez, "Gezi Kuşağı var mıdır, yok mudur?" şeklindeki indirgemeci ikiliğin dışında kalarak, belirli bir kuşağın oluşum sürecine dair derinlemesine bir fotoğraf sunmuştur. Bu perspektiften bakıldığında, Gezi Kuşağı'nın gerçekliği "tamamlanmış ve kapanmış" bir dosya değil; zaman geçtikçe yeni tarihsel analizlere, hatırlama biçimlerine ve tartışmalara açık kalacak dinamik bir süreçtir. Tezin sunduğu bu kavramsal çerçeve, kuşak olgusunu demografik bir sayı olmaktan çıkarıp, kolektif bellek ve toplumsal failliğin kesiştiği canlı bir sosyolojik tartışma alanına taşımaktadır.

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