

The Turkish Youth and Political Participation: 1999-2003

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In 1999, STRATEJİ|MORI, IRI (International Republican Institute) and ARI movement conducted a project aiming “to determine participation level of the Turkish youth, obstacles upon participation and possible strategies to eliminate these obstacles”. Under the title of this project, a survey with a sample representing the Turkish youth was conducted, this survey has been followed by focus groups and public participation meetings in which findings were discussed. A book is published in May of 1999, with a title of “The Turkish youth and Participation” and several authors evaluated and discussed in details both findings of this survey and following meetings. The major aim of the book which you are reading now is defined as to “present and exemplify change in participation of the Turkish youth”. Within this broad perspective, my major motivation in writing this short essay is to evaluate possible changes in sophisticated relationship called “the Turkish youth and political participation”.

First part of this essay will make a summary of findings of previous research, based on above stated book, “**The Turkish Youth and Participation**”. The second part will present a comparison of several empirical findings between 1999 and 2003. In the final part, determinants of political participation will be discussed through some statistical models.

The Turkish Youth and Political Participation: Four Years Ago

First of all, conclusions of both my previous and Ali Çarkoğlu's works which emphasized on quantitative findings of survey; Selim Oktar's essay discussing findings of qualitative stage of the project are almost same: "the Turkish youth is far from participating". Except voting, traditional way of political participation; the Turkish youth presents very low levels of participation in all types of conventional and unconventional political participation. These findings will be discussed below. On the other hand, inertia of the Turkish youth is not something independent from its ancestors: Several studies show that Turkish society and the Turkish youth present similar patterns in every dimension of political participation. Hence, it is possible to argue that the problematic of participation of the Turkish youth is determined by and inherited from characteristics of the society.

Some sociological, economic and demographic factors are accepted as major determinants of this problematic. My work showed that education, working status and gender are determinants of first values, then political participation. First, women, low educated and not working – housewife or unemployed ones- segments of the Turkish youth don't express any presence in any dimension of political participation. Secondly, education and working status also determine variation between conventional and unconventional types of political participation. University students or highly educated working male segments of this populace prefer unconventional political participation while other ones are statistically more concentrated on conventional ways. Findings are not in conflict with other comparative works.

In his work, Çarkoğlu also included some additional variables presenting values and attitudes of the Turkish youth. In addition to their socioeconomic status, age, rural or urban status; their geographical locations also affect significantly their level of political participation. Moreover, the secular pole of secular-religious dimension shows a tendency towards participation through NGOs, while the other pole emphasizes the campaign type political participation. Similarly, increasing nationalist attitudes also increase this second type of political participation. Finally, changing level of trust towards different institutions has a significant effect on political participation.

Oktar's essay aims to discuss findings of qualitative groups and incorporate quantitatively not measured variables. According to him, it is possible to describe obstacles upon participation of the Turkish youth with analogy of the "Iron Triangle". This triangle is composed of obstacles forwarded by the Turkish traditional family structure which prevents self-expression of young people; education system which only targets preparing students to critical general

examinations and the state bureaucracy which never motivates political participation. When these factors are considered; low levels of political participation among the Turkish youth is far from surprising.

The Turkish Youth and Political Participation: 1999-2003

In order to observe the change might be occurred in political participation pattern of the Turkish youth, a survey study is conducted in April 2003. This survey targeting representing 16-28 age population of Turkey has same sampling framework with the previous research. The fieldwork of the study is delegated to STRATEJİ|GfK.

To compare findings of these two subsequent studies, some types of political participation are listed and asked respondents whether they ever participated or not. Findings are presented below.

Table 1 Political Participation Patterns: 1999-2003

| | 1999 | | | 2003 | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | Yes | No, I did not have a chance | I Preferred not to | Yes | No, I did not have a chance | I Preferred not to |
| | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % |
| Voting | 61,9 | 33,8 | 4,3 | 52,6 | 39,2 | 8,2 |
| Being a member of youth organization of a political party | 10,0 | 24,2 | 65,8 | 8,3 | 30,7 | 61,0 |
| Being a member of a political party, other than youth organization | 6,0 | 22,9 | 71,1 | 3,5 | 29,9 | 66,6 |
| Doing door to door propaganda for an electoral campaign of a candidate or political party | 6,7 | 17,8 | 75,5 | 4,1 | 24,7 | 71,2 |
| Distributing handouts for an electoral campaign of a candidate or political party | 8,2 | 16,4 | 75,4 | 5,3 | 24,0 | 70,7 |
| Signing a petition to municipal or local authorities about problem which you faced in your city or neighborhood | 18,0 | 39,6 | 42,4 | 9,4 | 40,9 | 49,7 |
| Signing a petition to municipal or local authorities about your personal problem | 20,7 | 38,3 | 41,0 | 10,2 | 44,2 | 45,5 |
| Participating in a political demonstration | 12,8 | 15,1 | 72,1 | 9,4 | 26,6 | 64,0 |
| Participating in a boycott | 7,9 | 15,3 | 76,7 | 6,4 | 26,9 | 66,7 |
| Participating in a protest activity conducted over Internet | 3,2 | 23,4 | 73,4 | 4,3 | 30,6 | 65,1 |
| Participating in the "lights off" action realized after "Susurluk Scandal" some years ago | 24,8 | 14,6 | 60,6 | 18,8 | 25,4 | 55,8 |
| Being a member of a political non governmental organization other than political parties | 4,3 | 21,5 | 74,2 | 2,9 | 28,0 | 69,1 |

First significant finding of the table is that all types of political participation declined from 1999 to 2003. Participation to “signing a petition about personal problems” declined by 10 points; while this ratio became 9 percent for voting. Similarly, percentage of participants to “signing a petition about a problem with their neighborhood or city” declined by 9 points. In the remaining items of the list, observed decrease in participation by 3 or 4 points may be

attributed to sampling error. Significant decline in participating in the "lights off" action realized after "Susurluk Scandal" may be explained by the fact that majority of respondents were about 9 to 15 ages during this action. To summarize, we can argue that participation problem of the Turkish youth endures without a significant change.

Another enduring phenomenon is the participation pattern of the Turkish youth. Percentage of participation voting declined to 51 percent in 2003, from 62 percent in 1999. When respondent who were eligible to vote during last elections are filtered; we observe that 30 percent of respondents state they did not vote. It is well known that recent general elections are characterized with significantly low levels of turnout, however turnout of the Turkish youth is significantly lower than their parents. This variation may be explained by the fact that non-voting is the cheapest of all kinds of political protest. Despite above discussed decline in the number of participants, petition and "lights-off" action are among most popular items of political participation. Another finding is that participation to activities following above stated three popular items is less than 10 percents; underlining how political participation problem of the Turkish youth became chronic. Hierarchy of remaining participation activities did not change since 1999, with the exception of participation to a protest movement over the Internet. However, 1.5 point increase is not statistically significant.

Above table presents other interesting findings: In 2003 survey, respondents are more tended to give "I did not have a chance" answers rather than "I preferred not to" option. "I did not have chance" answers significantly increased in almost all categories with above stated exceptions of voting and two types of signing a petition. From the perspective of questionnaire design, major difference between these two alternatives is that first answers presents towards a tendency to participate; while the second one is total rejection of action. In the case of voting, 9 percent of respondents argue that they preferred not to vote even they had an opportunity. From this perspective, activities associated with political parties are among the most rejected ways of political participation. Making a door to door campaign (71 percent), distributing handouts (70 percent), being a member of a party (66 percent) or youth organization of a party (62 percent) are political participation types rejected consensually by respondents. This situation may be related to the lack of confidence towards political parties and this kind of political activity, which is valid for almost every member of the Turkish society. Another critical point here is that 70 percent of the Turkish youth rejects being a member of political NGOs (this ratio was 74 percent in 1999). It is a clear indicator how legitimacy crisis of the party system is not limited with the political sphere. Items classified

under the title of “unconventional political participation” are negatively considered by 60 percent of respondents. Key point here is that these ratios declined from 1999.

If we assume that “I didn’t have a chance” answers present a tendency towards a given action, it is possible to argue that despite lack of increase in political participation level of the Turkish youth; tendency towards participation increased. The most significant increases are observed in participation to “political demonstration” and “boycott” (about 10 percent). Tendency towards all participatory activities, excluding the “lights-off” movement increased by 7 points. Increase in tendency towards participation to NGOs, has to be considered a significant step.

Findings of a new study which aims comparing political participation behavior of the Turkish youth with the society in general will be available in May 2003. However, it is possible to make a comparison by using findings of different surveys. A survey of ours, conducted just before the general elections of November 2003 aiming to understand what kind of role Turkish citizens played a role during election campaigns shows that 11 percent of the electorate is a member of a political party, 12 percent participated to a meeting of a party, 7 percent participated to house meeting and 9 percent tried to influence decision of another voter. When activities associated with political parties are asked; percentage of voters who participated to door to door campaigns, distribution of hand-outs is about 3 percent. Such a low level participation to electoral activities of political parties shows that Turkish political parties also suffer from mobilizing masses for their campaign activities, which is accepted as one of major functions of political parties.

A study conducted by TÜSİAD in 2001 about “Electoral System and Political Parties” gives detailed information about participation level of Turkish voter. First of all, similar to our findings, the most widely accepted way of participation is voting (percentage of respondents argued “always” is 88 percent). Getting information through media (51 percent) is the second general activity. Percentage of respondent who signed a petition is 6.3 percent (after including “sometimes” answers, 16.8), percentage of participants to meetings and demonstrations is 5.7 percent (13.4 percent), percentage of participants to NGOs activities is 3.1 percent (9 percent) and percentage of active members of political parties is 3.9 percent (8.3 percent). According to these findings, it is possible to argue that the Turkish electorate is also suffering from not participating to politics, even that general participation level is lower than participation of young members of the society.

Determinants of Political Participation of the Turkish Youth

In the previous publication, both my essay and Çarkoğlu's work presented some quantitative findings in order to explore determinants of political participation in every dimension. As it is so far argued; my findings put forward that gender, education and working status are the most important variables affecting political participation; while Çarkoğlu underlined socioeconomic status, gender, age, regional differences, secular-religious and nationalism axes as determinants. Findings of above stated survey of TÜSİAD does not include any information about our target population. However, they argue that gender and rural-urban differences are most important variables and socioeconomic status and regional differences are also critical.

In my previous essay, I argued that political participation has two significant dimensions and individuals may behave differently in these dimensions. First of these dimensions, called as "conventional political participation" is composed of voting, being a rank and file member of political parties or participating to campaigns of political parties which are dated to the earliest days of modern democracy. These activities always became mainstream ways of political self expression since first days of enfranchisement and ever ruled under the guidance of societal elites.

Second type of political participation is called as "unconventional political participation". This type is defined as "elite challenging" and composed of illegal strikes, boycotts, occupations, protest activities and every kind of action which is excluded by traditional definition of politics. In early 1980s, Western democracies witnessed sudden rise of unconventional activities parallel to decrease in voting turnout. Today, unconventional political participation became a part of daily political activities in Western democracies and transitional countries.

By using data of the 1999 survey, I tested whether such kind differentiation of political participation is valid in our context and exposed my findings in my previous essay. I repeated same analysis by using recently collected data and tried to explore whether this differentiation is still valid or not.

Below table shows comparison of factor analyses composed of different political participation activities. . It is appropriate to use factor analysis in cases where there are a number of variables and by taking the common points (correlation) among these variables; the variables are reduced to factors. The coefficients in the above table display the relation of the variables with the factors, more technically called factor loading. Factor loading is a coefficient which

varies between -1 and 1 , shows the direction of the relation (as positive or negative) and its strength increases as it gets closer to the absolute value of 1 .

Table 2 Dimension of Political Participation

| | 1999 | | 2003 | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| | Conventional Political Participation | Unconventional Political Participation | Conventional Political Participation | Unconventional Political Participation | Petition |
| Being a member of youth organization of a political party | 0,69 | | 0,72 | | |
| Being a member of a political party, other than youth organization | 0,68 | | 0,71 | | |
| Doing door to door propaganda for an electoral campaign of a candidate or political party | 0,85 | | 0,78 | | |
| Distributing handouts for an electoral campaign of a candidate or political party | 0,85 | | 0,78 | | |
| Signing a petition to municipal or local authorities about problem which you faced in your city or neighborhood | | 0,66 | | | 0,83 |
| Signing a petition to municipal or local authorities about your personal problem | | 0,64 | | | 0,85 |
| Participating in a political demonstration | 0,31 | 0,63 | | 0,70 | |
| Participating in a boycott | | 0,66 | | 0,76 | |
| Participating in a protest activity conducted over Internet | | 0,49 | | 0,56 | |
| Participating in the "lights off" action realized after "Susurluk Scandal" some years ago | | 0,55 | | 0,47 | |
| Being a member of a political non governmental organization other than political parties | 0,33 | 0,44 | | 0,54 | |
| Being a member of a student association or a club related with politics at high school or university | | 0,47 | | 0,56 | |
| Total variance explained | 30,8% | 14,1% | 32,0% | 12,3% | 9,7% |

Above table shows us that it is not observed a significant structural change in dimensions of political participation between 1999 and 2003. Variables representing two different dimensions of political participation have similar loadings in both studies. 0.1 point variations in factor loadings are not statistically significant. Consequently, it is possible to argue that two dimensions of political participation still exist in the Turkish context.

Major difference between findings of two studies is that petition type political activities which were previously classified under the title of unconventional political participation compose a new third dimension explaining 10 percent of total variance. It is so far argued that percentage of respondents who rejected two types of petition signing increased, contrary to increased general tendency towards political participation. Consequently, petition as a diverse political participation requires further attention, beyond limits of this essay.

As I stated in my essay of 2001 and the above table presents, political participation problematic in the Turkish context is something comparable with other countries' experiences and "uniqueness of Turkey" approach is falsified.

Findings of our incoming research about political participation behavior of Turkish adult population will provide valuable information. However, this problematic need to be discussed through an ad-hoc study detailed as TÜSIAD study.

In my previous essay, respondents showing similar patterns of political behavior were grouped through cluster analysis and common characteristics of these groups such as demographics, socioeconomic status and behaviors and values are discussed comparatively. In this essay, I will try to analyze determinants of political participation of the Turkish youth, based on above stated factor scores.

Below table presents independent variables employed in following models.

Table 3 Independent Variables

| Variable | Definition |
|------------------|--|
| Education | Level of education of respondent |
| Age | Age of respondent |
| Dummy Gender | 1=male, 0=female dummy variable |
| Dummy Urban | 1=urban, 0=rural dummy variable |
| Ownership | Ownership index composed of ownership of personal room, personal phone, cellular phone, credit cart, personal computer |
| Luxury ownersh,p | Luxury ownership index composed of motorcycle and automobile |
| Dummy Housewife | 1=housewife, 0=other; dummy variable |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Dummy student | 1=student, 0=other, dummy variable |
| Dummy Kurdish | 1=speaks kurdish, 0=other, dummy variable |
| Dummy authoritarian | 1=authoritarian, 0=other, dummy variable |
| Religiosity | Religiosity score composed of daily prayer and "oruç" |
| Postmaterialism | Postmaterializm |
| Interest on politics | Level of interest on politics |
| Left-right scale | 0= left and 10=right |
| Trust in state institutions | Trust in state institutions |
| Trust in private institutions | Trust in private institutions |
| Trust in secular institutions | Trust in secular institutions composed of the Army, President, NSC, SSC, TRT, courts and policeforce |
| Trust in political institutions | Trust in political institutions composed of political parties, government, parliament, youth organization of political parties, municipalities and ministries |
| Trust in media | Trust in media composed of newspapers, television and radio |

Among above listed variables, ownership and luxury ownership, religiosity, trust in state, public, political, secular institutions and media are index produced through several factor analyses. Trust dimensions explain 60 percent of total variance, while this ratio is 41 percent for two ownership factors and 75 percent for religiosity.

Results of regression analyses in which above listed independent variables are included. Main aim of regression analysis is to explore effect of independent variables (x's) on dependent variable (y). In following tables **constant** shows mean score, **b's** show marginal increase of dependent variable when one of independent variables increased by 1 and **beta's** show relative power of every independent variable. The most right column presents significance level of relationship between that independent variable and dependent variable (if this score is greater than 0.1 relation is not significant) and R-square shows percentage of total variance explained by this function.

Results of regression analysis in which dependent variable is conventional political participation is below. According to this table, interest in politics is the most effective among all independent variables. When respondent' level of interest in politics increases, level of conventional political participation also increases. Average scores of male respondents is higher than participation level of female ones. Respondent's rightist ideological position and religiosity score also have positive effects on conventional political participation. There is a significant and positive relationship between trust in political institutions and this type of political participation while this ratio is low among students and housewives. Other variables

negatively affect dependent variable are Kurdish dummy variable and trust in secular institutions. Independent variables that don't have any statistically significant effect are education, age, urban status, both types of ownership, authoritarianism, trust in state, private institutions and media.

Results of this analysis shows that conventional political participation generally belongs to traditional segments of the Turkish youth. Politically conservative, more interested in politics males who have more trust in political institutions shows significantly higher level of conventional political participation. On the other hand, the fact that conventional political participation does not attract "minorities" of the society is visible: Women, students, Kurdish speaking people show lower levels of participation in these activities. Parallel to other countries' experiences, conventional political participation includes some segments of the society while systematically excluding some other ones.

Table 4 Determinants of Conventional Political Participation

| R-square: | 0,18 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| F | 10,7 | | |
| Coefficients | B | Beta | Sig. |
| Constant | 0,49 | | 0,14 |
| Education | 0,02 | 0,02 | 0,63 |
| Age | 0,00 | 0,01 | 0,89 |
| Dummy Gender | 0,24 | 0,11 | 0,01 |
| Dummy Urban | -0,04 | -0,02 | 0,57 |
| Ownership | 0,03 | 0,03 | 0,47 |
| Luxury ownership | 0,00 | 0,00 | 1,00 |
| Dummy Housewife | -0,18 | -0,07 | 0,13 |
| Dummy student | -0,35 | -0,15 | 0,00 |
| Dummy Kurdish | -0,20 | -0,06 | 0,07 |
| Dummy authoritarian | 0,01 | 0,01 | 0,71 |
| Religiosity | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,06 |
| Postmaterialism | -0,03 | -0,01 | 0,68 |
| Interest on politics | 0,29 | 0,27 | 0,00 |
| Left-right scale | 0,06 | 0,15 | 0,00 |
| Trust in state institutions | -0,03 | -0,03 | 0,38 |
| Trust in private institutions | -0,03 | -0,03 | 0,36 |
| Trust in secular institutions | -0,12 | -0,11 | 0,00 |
| Trust in political institutions | 0,09 | 0,08 | 0,01 |
| Trust in media | -0,04 | -0,03 | 0,29 |
| Dependent variable: Conventional political participation | | | |

Below table shows findings of regression analysis in which unconventional political participation is dependent variable. When we analyze these findings, we observe that the most significant determinant is level of interest in politics. This situation points out a common characteristic of two different dimensions of political behavior, while it is not generally observable in the context of Western democracies. In these countries, interest in politics is something associated with conventional political participation. This characteristic of the Turkish youth needs detailed emphasis and further research. Other determinants of this type of political participation are education and Kurdish dummy variable. Education always affects participation in conventional political participation and our case doesn't falsify this situation. On the other hand tendency of the Kurdish speaking young people towards unconventional political participation, is a clear example of how the Turkish political system failed to absorb these segments of the society and how this exclusion expanded to young generations. Failure of the system to open conventional political participation roads to ethnic groups, for example the lack of an institutionalized Kurdish political party is among main reasons of this

exclusion. While consumption score is related positively, luxury consumption has a negative effect on unconventional political participation; indicating that wealthier segments of the youth are de-politicized significantly. When religiosity or trust in state institutions increases, unconventional political participation decreases; and trust in media has a positive effect.

Some of variables included to the model have not statistically significant relationships with unconventional political participation. These are age, gender, urban status, housewife and student dummies, authoritarianism, postmaterialism, position in the left-right scale, trust in private, secular and political institutions. Among these variables, the most striking one is postmaterialism scale which is generally correlated with this type of participation. Two facts may explain this situation. First, measuring postmaterialism is very disputable. For example in the World Values Survey of 1997, Turkey's postmaterialism score is higher than Austria. Then, measuring postmaterialism in Turkey through the classical question battery may not be valid. Secondly, variance of postmaterialism score may be small in our target population. As a result of calculation of regression coefficients, lower variance may result on insignificant coefficients. Consequently, our finding need to be carefully tested through more detailed studies.

Table 5 DEterminants of Unconventional Political Participation

| R-square: | 13,4 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| F | 8,0 | | |
| Coefficients | B | Beta | Sig. |
| Constant | -0,17 | | 0,60 |
| Education | 0,11 | 0,12 | 0,00 |
| Age | 0,01 | 0,02 | 0,61 |
| Dummy Gender | 0,09 | 0,04 | 0,31 |
| Dummy Urban | 0,07 | 0,03 | 0,36 |
| Ownership | 0,09 | 0,09 | 0,02 |
| Luxury ownership | -0,06 | -0,06 | 0,07 |
| Dummy Housewife | 0,15 | 0,07 | 0,17 |
| Dummy student | 0,08 | 0,03 | 0,39 |
| Dummy Kurdish | 0,31 | 0,11 | 0,00 |
| Dummy authoritarian | -0,02 | -0,02 | 0,61 |
| Religiosity | -0,06 | -0,06 | 0,11 |
| Postmaterialism | -0,02 | -0,01 | 0,79 |
| Interest on politics | 0,20 | 0,19 | 0,00 |
| Left-right scale | 0,00 | -0,01 | 0,75 |
| Trust in state institutions | -0,08 | -0,08 | 0,02 |
| Trust in private institutions | 0,02 | 0,02 | 0,52 |
| Trust in secular institutions | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,95 |
| Trust in political institutions | -0,04 | -0,04 | 0,23 |
| Trust in media | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,03 |
| Dependent variable: Unconventional political participation | | | |

General analysis of determinants of unconventional political participation shows that interest in politics is the most important determinant of both type of political participation. Education and Kurdish speaking dummy are two other important variables affecting unconventional political participation. Ownership, trust in media have positive effects while religiosity, trust in state institutions and luxury ownership have negative and statistically significant regression coefficients.

Çarkoğlu, in his work of 2001 stated that regional differences have significant effects on dimensions of political participations. According to him Mediterranean region is much more active in every dimension of political participation, as Black Sea, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions have higher average scores in conventional political participation. Developed regions of the country, Marmara, Ege and Central Anatolia show lesser tendency towards political participation. In order to compare these findings with our data set, I included dummy variables representing regions into models. To summarize, parallel to previous works, conventional political participation scores are higher in Black Sea and Eastern Regions.

Moreover, İzmir which is included to the sampling framework as a self-representing unit has a positive score higher than the average. Contrary to findings of Çarkoğlu, Southeastern Anatolia region does not present a different score of conventional political participation. When unconventional political participation is considered, only the capital city, Ankara (SRU) has a different score. Existence of regional differences is not validated by our new data.

In order to test whether supporters of political parties present different patterns of political participation, dummy variables for AKP, CHP and Genç Parti are included to the model. In the first model for conventional political participation, there is no difference between supporters of these three parties. However, when unconventional political participation is taken as dependent variable, AKP supporters have statistically smaller scores. Furthermore, most probably as a result of strong relationship between religiosity and being an AKP supporter, negative and significant effect of religiosity on unconventional political participation became insignificant after including AKP dummy.

Participation Tendency of Turkish Youth

Both surveys included a question about non-political participation of the Turkish youth. A series of non political participation activities is listed and respondents answered whether they participated or not.

Table 6 Dimensions of Civil Participation: 1999-2003

| | 1999 | | | 2003 | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| | Yes | No, I did not have a chance | Yes | No, I did not have a chance | Yes | No, I did not have a chance |
| | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % |
| Being a member of a student club related with several areas of interests at high school or university | 14,6 | 37,0 | 48,3 | 11,4 | 48,4 | 40,2 |
| Being a member of a nongovernmental organization related with social matters | 7,7 | 41,5 | 50,8 | 3,6 | 44,4 | 52,0 |
| Participating in the voluntary activities | 23,5 | 59,6 | 16,9 | 15,4 | 53,9 | 30,7 |
| Donating money to social help associations or foundations | 30,6 | 48,6 | 20,8 | 14,3 | 52,2 | 33,5 |
| Participating in a protest related with environment | 10,8 | 44,2 | 45,0 | 5,7 | 46,9 | 47,4 |

Similar to political participation activities, civil participation of the Turkish youth presented a decline since 1999. Percentage of respondents who stated that they make donations to social help associations or foundation declined by 15 points and became 15 percent in 2003. Secondly, participating in the voluntary activities also decreased by 8 points. All of remaining activities, percentage of participants declined by 4 points (may be attributed to sampling error). When “reject” option of young people is analyzed, a striking finding is that this tendency of rejection increased significantly for two types of participation which presented highest ratios of decline. Most probably, as a result of ongoing economic crisis climate, young people prefer not to involve to this kind of “voluntary” activities.

Results of regression analysis in which I tried to estimate determinants of civil participation by using above models after including conventional and nonconventional political participation scores, are presented below. In order to create a civil participation index, I ran a factor analysis and I obtained a civil participation dimension which explains 43 percent of total variation. All of above activities have factor loadings about 60-70 percent.

Table 7 Determinants of Civil Participation

| R-square: | 30,1 | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| F | 18,9 | | |
| Coefficients | B | Beta | Sig. |
| Constant | 0,12 | | 0,68 |
| Education | 0,10 | 0,11 | 0,00 |
| Age | 0,00 | -0,01 | 0,72 |
| Dummy Gender | 0,09 | 0,04 | 0,26 |
| Dummy Urban | 0,04 | 0,02 | 0,50 |
| Ownership | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,05 |
| Luxury ownership | 0,01 | 0,02 | 0,61 |
| Dummy Housewife | -0,02 | -0,01 | 0,87 |
| Dummy student | 0,14 | 0,06 | 0,08 |
| Dummy Kurdish | -0,16 | -0,05 | 0,09 |
| Dummy authoritarian | 0,02 | 0,02 | 0,52 |
| Religiosity | 0,03 | 0,03 | 0,31 |
| Postmaterialism | -0,04 | -0,02 | 0,43 |
| Interest on politics | 0,16 | 0,16 | 0,00 |
| Left-right scale | -0,01 | -0,02 | 0,57 |
| Trust in state institutions | -0,03 | -0,03 | 0,27 |
| Trust in private institutions | 0,06 | 0,06 | 0,05 |
| Trust in secular institutions | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,02 |
| Trust in political institutions | -0,06 | -0,06 | 0,04 |
| Trust in media | 0,02 | 0,02 | 0,49 |
| Conventional Political Participation | 0,16 | 0,17 | 0,00 |
| Unconventional Political Participation | 0,32 | 0,32 | 0,00 |
| Dependent variable: Civil Participation | | | |

When we analyze determinants of civil participation, we observe that unconventional political participation is the most important determinant, while conventional political participation is the second one. Similar to other dimensions interest in politics is also important determinant of civil participation. Education and ownership have positive effect on this dimension. Students present higher participation level as Kurdish speaking young people have a lesser tendency to participate. The fact that trust in private and secular institutions have positive effects, while trust in political institutions has a negative regression coefficient validates general assumption that civil participation is not within the sphere of traditional type of politics. Moreover, positive relationship with unconventional political participation may provide additional evidence for that argument. On the contrary, a critical point here is that both interest in politics and conventional political participation have positive and statistically significant regression coefficients, meaning that civil participation is not totally independent from traditional political participation. In other words, we cannot provide empirical support for neoliberal dichotomy of civil society vs. politics.

Table 8 Political Career Tendency: 1999-2003

| | 1999 | | | | 2003 | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | I am not planning at all | I am not planning | I am planning | I am definitely planning | I am not planning at all | I am not planning | I am planning | I am definitely planning |
| To work at a provincial board of a political party | 51,3 | 15,8 | 25,0 | 7,9 | 47,4 | 24,9 | 20,1 | 7,7 |
| To work at the central board of a political party | 50,7 | 14,8 | 26,0 | 8,5 | 46,6 | 26,0 | 19,8 | 7,5 |
| To be candidate for Muhtar elections | 64,1 | 14,5 | 15,6 | 5,8 | 58,1 | 25,4 | 10,1 | 6,4 |
| To be candidate for local parliament member at local elections | 56,6 | 14,3 | 22,7 | 6,4 | 51,1 | 25,3 | 17,6 | 6,0 |
| To be candidate for mayor at local elections | 52,0 | 13,1 | 24,8 | 10,1 | 50,1 | 23,8 | 18,4 | 7,8 |
| To be candidate for national parliament member at general elections | 52,0 | 11,9 | 23,0 | 13,1 | 49,2 | 20,6 | 20,2 | 10,0 |
| To be a minister | 52,3 | 12,5 | 21,5 | 13,7 | 49,8 | 20,8 | 17,8 | 11,6 |

Similarly, in both surveys respondents' tendency towards a series of political activities are asked. Above table presents that tendency towards almost every political career plan declined per 5-10 points. The highest decrease is observed in percentage of young people planning to be a candidate for mayor at local elections by 9 points. Moreover, percentage of respondents planning to work at the central board of a political party declined by 7 points. These findings are not surprising given that confidence in political institutions eroded significantly and politics has a negative meaning.

Our above explained statistical model is also employed to understand determinants of political career tendency of the Turkish youth. Independent variable is a factor score composed of political career variables and explaining 75 percent of total variance. Below table presents results of this regression analysis

Table 9 Determinants of Political Career

| R-square: | 13,4 | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| F | 7,2 | | |
| Coefficients | B | Beta | Sig. |
| Constant | 1,13 | | 0,00 |
| Education | -0,03 | -0,04 | 0,32 |
| Age | -0,01 | -0,05 | 0,19 |
| Dummy Gender | 0,36 | 0,18 | 0,00 |
| Dummy Urban | -0,12 | -0,06 | 0,12 |
| Ownership | 0,01 | 0,01 | 0,84 |
| Luxury ownership | -0,08 | -0,08 | 0,02 |
| Dummy Housewife | -0,04 | -0,02 | 0,70 |
| Dummy student | 0,01 | 0,00 | 0,92 |
| Dummy Kurdish | 0,29 | 0,10 | 0,01 |
| Dummy authoritarian | 0,01 | 0,01 | 0,80 |
| Religiosity | -0,02 | -0,02 | 0,56 |
| Postmaterialism | 0,09 | 0,05 | 0,13 |
| Interest on politics | 0,23 | 0,22 | 0,00 |
| Left-right scale | -0,01 | -0,03 | 0,38 |
| Trust in state institutions | 0,05 | 0,05 | 0,15 |
| Trust in private institutions | -0,02 | -0,02 | 0,57 |
| Trust in secular institutions | 0,00 | 0,00 | 0,90 |
| Trust in political institutions | 0,06 | 0,06 | 0,09 |
| Trust in media | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,03 |
| Conventional Political Participation | 0,06 | 0,07 | 0,06 |
| Unconventional Political Participation | 0,03 | 0,03 | 0,34 |
| Dependent variable: Political Career Tendency | | | |

Not surprisingly, above table shows that the most important determinant of political career tendency is interest in politics. Male and Kurdish speaking people have more tendency for making a political career. Positive effect of trust in political institutions and media and conventional political participation shows that political career is an opportunity space for middle income male who have confidence in the political system.

Concluding Remarks

I so far argued that my major motivation is to make a quantitative illustration of dilemmatic relationship between the Turkish youth and political participation and discussing whether a significant change occurred or not between 1999 and 2003. A portion of detailed study conducted by STRATEJİ|MORI, IRI and ARI Movement in 1999, is replicated by STRATEJİ|GfK and ARI Movement in 2003. This new study provided data for comparing 1999 and 2003 surveys and discussing the scope and nature of the change.

This comparison first showed that all types of political participation activities declined over time; especially in voting and socially and personally motivated petition signing activities. Despite this general decrease in participation, hierarchy of political participation activities did not change over time, and voting still remained as the most popular activity. Only exception is the internet based protest activities which presented an statistically insignificant increase.

Though this general decline in political participation; tendency towards participation increased overtime. Almost 70 percent of the Turkish youth rejected all kind of activities related with political parties, while this ratio is smaller for other types of participation. Our survey designed to compare political participation patterns of the Turkish society and the Turkish youth will be completed within May 2003, nevertheless TÜSIAD's study of 2001 shows that young generations are more active in political participation.

Results of factor analysis based on data of 2003 showed that "conventional-unconventional" distinction of comparative politics is still valid in the Turkish case. Although historical conditions always enforce "the uniqueness of Turkey" approach, our findings falsify this argument at least in the context of political participation of young people. Comparison of factor analyses of two subsequent surveys presented that political participation of the Turkish youth did not change structurally between 1999 and 2003. Only exception is that emergence of petition based activities with a new dimension of political participation which needs to be discussed in details.

Results of series of regression analyses to explore determinants of political participation of the Turkish youth in both dimensions show that interest in politics is the most important determinant of these two dimensions. In the context of conventional political participation, important variables affecting participation of young people are gender (males), religiosity, rightist political positioning, trust in political institutions. Housewives, students, Kurdish speaking people are relatively less participating while trusts in secular institutions such as

president, the army, the NSC, the SSC have negative effects. Apart from interest in politics, the most important determinant of unconventional political participation is level of education of respondents. Similar to other comparative works, education has a positive effect on unconventional political participation. Kurdish speaking segment of the Turkish youth also presents higher participation as trust in media and ownership also have positive regression coefficients. Religiosity, trust in state institutions and luxury ownership are factors with negative effects. Despite comparative findings, there is no relation between postmaterialism and unconventional political participation.

The analysis of respondents' participation on civil society activities showed that these activities also eroded between 1999 and 2003. Possibly as a result of enduring economic difficulties respondents don't prefer in participating voluntary organizations or making donations. The most important determinants of civil participation are both conventional and unconventional dimensions of political participation, meaning that these three dimensions are somewhat interrelated and not separate entities.

Comparison of political career tendencies of the Turkish youth shows that percentage of respondents planning such a career declined by 8 points. It is so far argued that such a climate of legitimacy crisis this finding is not surprising. Tendency for political career seems belonging to middle class man with higher confidence in the political system. Women still are excluded while Kurdish speaking respondents have such a career plan.

From this broad perspective, it is possible to argue that relationship between the Turkish youth and political participation did not improve during last four years. The erosion of the political system emerges as a factor discouraging young people from first political then civil participation. The most important determinant of variation between young people's participation is their position vis-à-vis the political system. When the support for the system increases, conventional political participation and political career planning increase; while anti-system positioning leads to unconventional political participation. Nevertheless, both dimensions of participation only attract 10 percent of the Turkish youth.

Despite history of studies emphasized on political participation in Turkey dates back to 1960s, activities focused on this issue are somewhat new. Efforts spent in this perspective during last four years are discussed in the remaining parts of this book. Observing gains obtained through these micro level efforts at the macro level requires increased efforts of higher numbers. Let's finish by repeating one well know motto: "Every great journey starts with a first step".