Emerging Adulthood in Turkey: Does it (yet) Exist?

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Abstract
Over the last three decades, social scientists have shown a mounting interest in transition to adulthood. The timing of transition seems to vary considerably between rural and urban areas and for those in different social settings. This manuscript aims to explore conceptions of adulthood by young people in Turkey from three different social settings, presenting separate studies undertaken with three different groups; educated urban young people, rural young people with limited education and young rural immigrants to big cities. Participants were asked to explain their own conceptions of transition to adulthood. A total of 41 participants between the ages of 20 and 31 were interviewed. A semi-structured interview form with open-ended questions was utilized to obtain the individual conceptions of each participant. We found a variety of differences and similarities in their notions regarding transition to adulthood. These features were discussed in the cultural context and the different conceptions of the three groups are explained by three different processes as developmental, default, and deserved.

Keywords: Transition to adulthood, emerging adulthood, conception of adulthood

Throughout the past decade, researchers have been interested in studying transition to adulthood (Cote and Bynner, 2008). Typically, most of the contemporary studies on transition to adulthood have concentrated on western cultures (Bynner, 2005; Bynner and Parsons, 2002). In contrast, societies that are more traditional or communal may place more importance on the role of transitions and responsibility, norm-abiding behaviour, and a focus that may reflect the more central place of societal structure in defining adult status in these societies. It is possible to study other cultures as well by focusing on variations in transition (Salmela-Aro and Helve, 2006).

The changing trends in the transition to adulthood especially in developed countries led to new conceptual notions as well. Some studies (Arnett, 1994; 1997; Atak and Çok, 2007; Shanahan, et al., 2002; Facio and Micocci, 2003; Mayseless and Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003) addressing conceptions of adulthood have identified a clear set of markers for adulthood. In these studies, how markers of adulthood are obtained was investigated. For instance, how do young people progress from adolescence to adulthood and develop the internal psychological attributes that reflect an adult status? To exemplify, Galambos and Tilton-Weaver (2000) suggested three distinct profiles of adolescents: mature, immature, and pseudo mature (adultoids). Similarly, Shulman, Feldman, and Maurer (2001) identified three distinct types of emerging adults; low integrated, authentic and competent, and acting competent/low emotional connectedness. Cote (2002) suggested "youthhood" as a new phase of life during which "psychological adulthood" is hopefully attained through personal occupation. The most influential one is probably "emerging adulthood" which is characterized by young peoples' exploration of various possibilities in love, work, and identity proposed by Arnett (2000). Emerging adulthood, between the ages of 18 and 25, is seen as a distinct developmental stage extending from adolescence to young adulthood, and it may not be a universal period; thus, it may vary across cultural groups. According to Arnett (2000; 2006), emerging adulthood exists only in cultures that postpone entry into adult roles such as marriage and parenthood and adult responsibilities until the late twenties. According to Mayseless and Scharf (2003), these avenues are a good starting point to highlight the normative progression during this period and explore individual differences in this regard.

In emerging adulthood literature, many researches tend to provide evidence for the existence of the proposed life period. For example, in Argentina emerging adulthood was reported to occur on average between ages 25–27 (Facio and Micocci, 2003; Facio, Resett, Micocci and Mistrorigo, 2007), in Israel 20–24 (Mayseless and Scharf 2003), among the

Mormon minority in the USA 18–20 (Nelson 2003). Arnett (2000; 2004) reported that in the USA emerging adulthood age limits are 18-29. In addition, studies conducted in more collectivistic cultures revealed that in China (Nelson and Chen, 2007), in Japan (Rosenberger, 2007), and in Latin America (Galambos and Martinez, 2007) emerging adulthood is experienced as a distinct period of life. In Turkey, this period seems to exist between ages 19-26 (Atak and Çok, 2007; Doğan-Ateş, Cebioğlu, Erdoğan and Tekin, 2007). In Turkey "taking responsibility for oneself" and "making decisions independently" have been found as the most important criteria for reaching adulthood (Atak and Çok 2007). In addition, a series of studies have attempted to identify specific characters of the emerging adulthood period (Arnett, 2000; Salmelo-Aro, and Helve, 2006; Gottlieb, Still, Newby-Clark, 2007 etc.). Emerging adulthood has been studied in relation to gender (Rosenberg, 2007; Barker and Galambos, 2005), career development (Messersmith, Garrett, Davis-Kean, Malanchuk, and Eccles, 2008) family relationships (Kenny and Şirin, 2006) and fulfilment of family roles (Seiter and Nelson, 2011).

There are however, certain life span development researchers who have a quite different perspective to the conceptualization of emerging adulthood. For instance, Bynner (2001, 2005) and Hendry and Kloep (2007a; 2007b) point out that there are huge individual variations characterising the transitions to adulthood. Some young people are forced to grow up quickly, due to demands such as having to care for a child or a sick relative, or having to supplement the family's income from a very young age. Others are forced to postpone their transition to adulthood due to a lack of gainful employment, which deprives them of the economic means to start an independent life. They suggest that Arnett's description of emerging adulthood (2000) as a time of choice and prolonged identity exploration applies to only a certain percentage of the age cohort, namely, wealthy middle class young people (see also Bynner, 2005; Cote and Bynner, 2008; 2009). Even among those who have reached adulthood according to several definitions, there may be some who are forced to regress in the face of particular circumstances: Thus, transitions are reversible and domain specific (Bynner, 2001; Hendry and Kloep 2007a; 2007b; Shanahan, et al., 2002). Therefore, Hendry and Kloep (2007a; 2007b) suggest that if there have to be stages to describe the human life course, the idea of the "emerging" phases should be applied to the whole life course. Recently a debate has grown as to whether emerging adulthood is a stage or a process based on theories and empirical data (Arnett, Kloep, Hendry and Tanner, 2011). While the process of emerging adulthood may not apply evenly to all young people during the period of their late teens to

twenties, when it is typically seen amongst young middle class people, it remains relevant to see other groups from different backgrounds. Based on their broader consideration of human development, Hendry and Kloep (2011) clearly stated the importance of different developmental pathways in different cultures and sub-cultures.

In order to understand transitions to adulthood in a comprehensive way, a cultural focus would be useful and new conceptualizations are quite valuable (Arnett, 1997; Nelson, Badger and Wu, 2004). In this context, providing information about different pathways to adulthood and the experiences in these transitions within various cultures may be interesting. The present study in Turkey initially sought to identify local factors that effect the transition to adulthood differently for different groups. The effects of unemployment, gender related issues, increasing years of education, compulsory military service for men, marriage and family issues seem to vary across the country, with different effects on different groups. These effects are discussed again in the qualitative study based on interviews. Finally we attempt to combine the results of the stud groups in terms of pre-existing social factors, and explanations provided by Cote (2000), for integrating different transition patterns to adulthood. Clearly, human development in Turkey has culture-specific aspects that might influence the nature of transitions to adulthood in ways different to other societies. There are some similarities to the experience of the western transition such as prolonged formal education and late marriage in Turkey, but there are differences, too.

Social Factors in Turkish Culture

Turkey has undergone rapid social, political and economic change in the last few decades. As a developing country, it is seen as both Muslim and secular and is traditionally known as an eastern and basically rural culture. While such traditional, collectivist values predominate, some segments have been seen to adopt aspects of other, more western life styles. This segmentation was promoted and became a significant characteristic of the population following the founding of the republic in 1923. The following social factors might also be important to our understanding of transition to adulthood:

Gender socialization

Child-rearing approaches, parenting, and socialization for girls and boys are different from each other (Kagıtcıbası, 1996; 2003). Compared to boys, girls typically spend more time in and take more responsibility at home, are expected to be obedient to the traditional roles,

are encouraged be more emotional, to become more dependent, and parents usually treat them over protectively. On the other hand, boys are encouraged to be more independent and more assertive and to spend more time outside the home (Kagıtçıbası, 1996). So it is expected that there are quite different patterns between settings in transition to adulthood, which also have different forms in traditional and non-traditional or less traditional settings.

Increasing unemployment

Due to a high rate of youth unemployment (11,3 %, 2010) young people are often restricted to temporary, low paid employment, which requires them to delay their life plans (TUIK, 2010). Even while overall unemployment rates have tended to decrease over time, youth, urban and female unemployment rates remain considerably high. Young people tend to suffer disproportionately from unemployment and consequently experience a variety of different living conditions. It is known that many young people in Turkey reside in temporary accommodation such as dormitories, houses for singles or their parents' home due to the high unemployment problem (Koç, 2007).

Increasing years of education

About 15 years ago, compulsory elementary education was legally extended from five to eight years. According to TDHS-2008 (2009), the median number of years of schooling is 9 years for males who are currently aged between 20-24 years and this period is expected to lengthen in the following cohorts. Gender difference is much higher between boys' and girls' schooling rates in urban areas. On the other hand, average time spent acquiring higher education has also been prolonged by disruption caused by the demand for places mostly exceeding what is available. The university entrance system also employs a very selective and competitive scoring system, effectively requiring many young people to wait one or more years to be admitted to a university course (TUIK, 2010; Koç, 2007). Despite these difficulties, the number of graduate students has tended to increase every year for the last few decades. The introduction of English preparatory years at high school and university level have also extended the time young people spend attending various forms of education provision.

Compulsory military service for men

In Turkey, male citizens of twenty years of age are subject to compulsory military service; however the duration of conscription varies with respect to people's level of

education so that young men with lower educational attainment tend to serve longer. Compulsory military service is seen to create difficulty and uncertainty for most young men and their spouses. In rural areas military service is usually seen as critical in terms of transition to adulthood, and stable life. The completion of military service is perceived to be a pre-condition for realizing life plans such as marriage and employment (TUIK, 2010). The attitude towards military service differs in urban areas, where most young professionals and university graduates consider it as a disruption to their career plans (Koç, 2008).

Marriage, dowry and family

In Turkey, marriage is very important from a demographic perspective. The TDHS-2008 study (2009) showed that there is an increase in the median age at first marriage across two age cohorts, 19.2 years for the 45-49 age group and 21 years for those aged between 25-29. Differences in age at first marriage also differ according to the educational level of women (TDHS-2008, 2009). The mean age of marriage is 24 for men and 21 for women in the general population, but amongst the educated group it is a bit later; 27 for men and 23 for women (TUIK, 2010). The average age of becoming a parent is also increasing, however for women this age was as low as 21.8 years (TDHS-2003, 2004) and indicates that in the last decade many young women were becoming parents in their teens (Koç and Ergöçmen, 2001). While many young people are seen to continue the tradition of residing with the parents of the groom after their marriage, cohabitation tends to be increasing among young urban couples as well (Civelek and Koç, 2007). Due to cultural expectations and values, marriage presents a complex picture in Turkey (Koç, 2007). There are girls in rural areas that marry at a very young age, sometimes in marriages arranged by their parents (TUIK, 2010; TDHS-2008, 2009). On the other hand, others undertake a prolonged period of dating with the intention of marriage. Some young people wait to marry until they own the necessary means to set up a home (usually with the substantial aid of their parents) and to afford a wedding party to impress others. Preparing a dowry in Turkey is a special tradition. However in the urban setting and among educated young people, the meaning and process of the preparation of a dowry may vary dramatically. Couples either themselves or encouraged by their parents are motivated to acquire furnished houses before they marry, in a kind of extension of the traditional understanding of dowry.

In summary, there are variations of life styles and socio-cultural backgrounds in present day Turkey that might differently affect transitions to adulthood. Mindful of this, we

have focussed on three main groups of young people in Turkey; Urban and educated, rural and traditional, and those with a rural background residing in big cities.

Individuals in the educated and urban group can be defined as people who have been provided with many choices, have received higher education and seek graduate education opportunities. In a break with traditional culture, some in this group reside independently of their parents (TUIK, 2010). This group is seen to display many similarities with their counterparts in western societies (TDHS-2008, 2009). Tertiary education is common, the average educational achievement is a university degree, and average age of marriage is mid to late 20s (TDHS-2008, 2009). They have also been seen to demonstrate individualistic character traits (Kagıtcıbası, 2003). In contrast, rural youth have more traditional values and tend to follow parental and social expectations, average educational attainment is primary, average age of marriage is late teens to early 20s, and occupationally they generally work in agriculture (TDHS-2008, 2009). In urban youth of a rural background a synthesis of individualistic and communal life styles has been seen (Kagıtcıbası, 2003). In Turkey, the great majority of families of such young people migrated to the cities for economic reasons and sought to preserve their customs and traditions. Some of these young people had to migrate to the cities by themselves as a result of financial problems. Their average educational level is secondary but some continue to the tertiary level (TDHS-2008, 2009). They generally have low incomes and work in temporary employment. Many reside with their parents after marriage or continue to depend on them for financial support (TDHS-2008, 2009; TUIK, 2010). Among these three groups, there are some social and demographic variations. Although there is no statistical information about their ratio in society, it is possible to estimate that the urban with rural background group is larger than the others (TUIK, 2010).

Essentially, this study aims to answer the question whether young people from three different areas in Turkey differ in their self-definitions of being adults and in their conceptions of adulthood in general. In this context, the following research questions were directed;

1. What are the individual descriptions of transition to adulthood among urban, suburban, and rural people in Turkey?

2. What are the criteria for adulthood of urban, suburban, and rural people in Turkey?

3. How do urban, suburban, and rural people behave in terms of giving major decisions in life as an important predictor of adulthood in Turkey?

Method

This study was carried out as a qualitative research undertaking. An interview form was used with open-ended questions where personal information such as age, gender and marital status were also recorded. Individual interviews were conducted with a view to recording participants' perceived adulthood, adulthood criteria, and major life decisions. Thus the study sought to elaborate on both perceived adulthood and adulthood criteria. As in similar studies reported in the literature (Arnett, 1994; 1997; Shanahan, et al., 2002; Facio and Micocci, 2003; Mayseless and Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003) and in Turkey, this study found that "taking responsibility for oneself" and "making decisions independently" (Atak and Çok 2007) are important aspects of transition to adulthood. Our research therefore sought to identify young peoples' personal experience in terms of making major decisions in their own lives. Perceived adulthood was taken from the question "Do you think that you have reached adulthood?". For adulthood criteria we asked their ideas about what constitutes being an adult and for major decisions we asked about important decisions they had taken so far in their lives.

Participants

41 individuals between the ages of 20 and 31 from three different social settings were interviewed: The first group comes from rural areas. The second group lives in urban settings and is continuing their college education, and the third group is living in an urban setting but has originated from rural areas and had discontinued their education (primary or lycee education). We tried to avoid studying only an educated and urbanised elite and sought to look for variations. Rural young people have usually been nearly ignored in research and in the urban setting there are many young people who have a strong rural background, yet have created their own lifestyles, albeit from relatively poorer backgrounds in the big cities of Turkey. We therefore determined this to be a worthy study group and focused on obtaining their participation.

The age range of participants was 20–31 years, with a mean of 24.1 and a median of 26 years. The reason for determining a wide age range (20–31 years) was for us to be able to see the variations in the transition. The majority ,29 participants, were married, 10 were single, 2 were engaged. 13 participants live in rural areas, 13 participants were urban young people with a rural background, and 15 participants live in formal settlements in urban areas as typical city people. The majority 32, do not have children, 9 were parents. 18 participants did not work, 16 participants reported that they work full time, and 7 participants have part time

employment. 8 male participants had completed their military service, and 12 male participants had not. The participants represent three relevant social groups along with variations in marital, parental and employment status and completion of military service. A summary description of the study cohort is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of the Three Groups

		Group			
		Rural (N)	Urban (N)	Urban Young People with Rural Background (N)	Total (N)
Gender	Male	6	7	7	20
	Female	7	6	8	21
Marital Status	Single	2	6	4	12
	Married	11	7	11	29
Parental Status	Yes	5	2	2	9
	No	8	11	13	32
Employment Status	No	12	2	4	18
	Full Time	1	9	6	16
	Part Time	0	2	5	7
Military Service Status	Yes	4	0	4	8
	No	2	7	3	12

Design

An appointment for each participant to take part in an individual interview was made in advance. The nature of the study was explained to the participants and they were informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous, that the interviews and any other data would be treated confidentially, and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. The interviews took place in participants' place of residence. Interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes and were voice recorded with participants' consent. Later, these recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Interview Guide

Data collection was obtained using an interview form developed for the purpose of the study. The interview form includes demographic features such as gender, age, marital status, working status, military service status, parenthood status, and educational status. It also includes questions related to self-definition about adulthood criteria, perceived adulthood and major decisions. The interviewers began each interview by firstly introducing themselves and described the aim of the research. They then asked the interviewees to introduce themselves and to answer specific questions such as their age, marital status, parental status, work status, educational level, and completion of military service (for male participants). The following questions were then applied;

1. Do you think that have you reached adulthood? Do you consider yourself as an adult why, why not?

2. In your opinion, what criteria are most important in determining adult status?

3. Have you made most of the major decisions for your life already? Are there still options out there for you?

The interview is semi-structured with open-ended questions to extract young people's own experiences on transitions into adulthood. Peer research was applied as one of the participatory research methods emphasizing the empowerment and participation of the target research group. In peer research, members of the target research group adopt the role of active researchers, by interviewing or surveying their peer group to gather information about their experiences. Peer research adopts a 'bottom up' approach where those individuals who are going to be directly affected by the research play an active role in the process. The method adopts the view that peers are effectively experts within their field of experience. Experience is important in peer research, as using researchers with similar experiences or backgrounds to those you are interviewing can have a number of benefits such as improving the congruence between interviewer and interviewee, and placing the participant in a trusting relationship. Supportive and relaxed interview situations can increase the quality of the interview and thus the data (Charmaz, 1995). Interviews were conducted by peers, a group of undergraduate students of one of the central universities in Turkey, who have been trained for this purpose in the framework of a "Youth Research" course which is an elective course, offered for counselling students at 4th grade. Thus, the interviews allowed participants to give detailed information about their lives and to reflect on their transition to adulthood.

Analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted in this study, whereby individual narratives were used to illustrate the key issues. Transcripts of the interviews were read several times by the researchers, in order to become familiar with these narratives. Then, the first six transcripts were subjected to a detailed microanalysis. This involved a line-by-line coding of each interview. The other interviews were then analysed, looking for recurrent themes derived from the microanalysis, together with any new themes emerging from the ongoing analysis. Eventually, some of the extracted categories were reduced, while others were divided into subcategories. As suggested by Braun and Clark (2006) all quotes relevant to each category or theme were then grouped.

The readings by the second author, utilizing the same method of analysis, represent independent interpretations of the data. These separately extracted themes were then compared with the first author's analysis. A high concurrence (.87) was achieved in the themes extracted from both analyses. It can be said that this value is sufficient for the reliability of the scoring. In parts, there were differences of interpretation of themes and subthemes, these were carefully discussed and adjusted by joint agreement. We consider these comparisons represent a cross-validation of our themes and thereby enhance the reliability of the findings. During the analysis, each question was coded separately one by one in the order of the interview form.

Results

From the interviews, an array of interlinked general themes emerged in relation to transition to adulthood. These themes were then studied in three different groups of participants. Results are presented in the order of questions from the interview form depending on narratives. The findings are presented by frequency analysis stating from the most frequent.

Perceived adulthood

The following question was administered to the participants. "Do you think that you have reached adulthood? Do you consider yourself as an adult – why, why not?". For this question, responses were grouped as "Yes", "No", and "In some ways yes, some ways no". Most participants from rural areas consider themselves as an adult (69,2 %). 15,4 % of the participants think that they haven't reached adulthood, and 15,4 % of the participants think that they feel they are in some ways adult, in some ways not adult. In general, most of the rural young people consider themselves as adults. Narrative examples include;

Yes, I see myself as an adult. (25, m, Rural)

I feel myself as an adult for all life areas. I am definitely an adult. (26, f, Rural).

Yes, I feel adult because I fulfil my tasks, take care, look after my house, I respect my elders, and they treat me as an adult. (23, f, Rural)

For educated participants from urban areas, the question "Do you think that you have reached adulthood?", elicited a 43,8 % "yes" answer; 12,5 % answered "no", and 43,8 % answered "in some ways yes, in some ways no." In general, urban young people don't consider themselves adults. As examples;

Yes, I think that I reached adulthood because I am a mature person. In addition, I can take responsibilities; I can focus other people's wishes. One of the areas that I reached adulthood is my job and my efficiency in the job. Secondly, being accepted by older people is one of the areas that I feel I reached adulthood. In the society, I can communicate, interact, and do something with older people. This means "social adulthood" in my understanding (29, m, urban).

In some respect yes in some respect no. For example, when I visit my parent I feel that "I am still a child". But when I am working, I feel I am adult. Although sometimes I am childish, but because of my responsibilities I am more like an adult. (24, f, Urban)

No, I don't feel myself adult. I am 25 years old but still a student and live together my parents. I am not employed, I am not paid, no salary. I am dependent on my family. (25, m, Urban)

To the same question, participants from urban areas with a rural background, 61,5 % answered "yes", 23,1 % replied "no", and 15,4 % answered "in some ways yes, in some ways no." In general, urban with rural background young people consider themselves as adults. As an example;

Yes, I think I am an adult because I decide myself. I make money, and I take responsibilities. (20, f, Urban with rural background)

No, I don't feel an adult I have not married yet, and I am still with my parents. My parents decide everything. (24, f, Urban with rural background)

Some of the participants reported that they don't feel themselves as "adults". The main reasons for this were mentioned as unemployment, dependency on parents or parents in law and not being able to make their own decisions. In this answer "cultural characteristics such as being dependent on parents, dominance of elders in their lives, being not independent", were noted. For instance;

Firstly, I did not feel myself as an adult because I couldn't find any job. There are too many things that I have to learn, and I have so many deficits. For example, when I have a problem in my family, I cannot solve it by myself. Sometimes, I am fearless; I can talk to my friends or my family something, which I don't want to say indeed. I think an adult doesn't do that (29, f, urban with rural background).

Yes, I don't feel as an adult, because I depend on my husband's family. About going out, shopping, about how I wear, talking style, child rearing. Everything must be as they want. (23, f, Urban with rural background)

About criteria for reaching adulthood; in the rural group, participants' mostly emphasized military service and demographic markers such as being married, becoming parents, and becoming capable of raising children. On the other hand, in the urban group, most of participants emphasized "biological/age related issues (e.g., reaching age 18), accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions, and economic independence". In addition, most of the participants from an urban setting did not feel themselves as an adult for things like "getting permission from parents for going out at night". This finding suggests that parents of this group still extend power over their grown children. In the urban with rural background group, most of the participants felt themselves as an adult for things such as "getting engaged, being married, becoming a parent, and having an independent residence; being employed full time; and being capable of problem solving, and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. As examples;

I feel myself as an adult for all life areas. I am definitely an adult. (31, m, Rural)

One of the areas that I reached adulthood is my job and my efficiency in the job. Secondly, being accepted by older people is one of the areas that I feel I reached adulthood. In the society, I can communicate, interact, and do something with older people. This means "social adulthood" in my understanding (29, m, urban).

Firstly, I did not feel myself as an adult because I couldn't have any job. There are too many things that I have to learn, and I have so many deficiencies. For example, when I have a problem in my family, I cannot solve it by myself. Sometimes, I am fearless; I can talk to my friends or my family something, which I don't want to say indeed. I think an adult doesn't do that (20, f, urban with rural background).

In general, the answers indicate that urban young people don't yet consider themselves as adults, while most of the rural and urban with rural background young people consider themselves to be.

Adulthood criteria

In pursuit of these criteria, the following question was administered to participants; "In your opinion, what criteria are most important in determining adult status? In total, five criteria were subsequently identified from the interviews; biological and chronologic (age-related) attributes; role transitions such as marriage (titled as a spouse), work and parenthood; to be able to run a home/household issues, manage family (being able to really do whatever is needed in the home); behavioural maturity (such as not speaking on the phone while driving) and military service.

In rural areas, most of the participants emphasized that "completion of military service" is important for being an adult. Then, social responsibilities (to show respect to elderly), self-confidence, and managing one's own life were respectively stated. Marriage, becoming a parent, and managing a household were a little bit more emphasized. Participants from rural areas mostly did not emphasize age related and biological criteria. In addition, these participants did not emphasize full time employment, and economic independence. As an example;

Completing military service is very important. Then, self-confidence, being sensitive, being respectful to older people, and choosing good friends will come which are important factors to be an adult. (26, m, Rural)

Showing respect to elders, getting married, and joining army. They do not let their daughters to get marry if you have not completed military service. When you show respect to elders and if you are married, you are consider as a "human". (23, m, Rural)

Getting married. Taking care of children… Only if you are so, you are an adult. (24, f, Rural)

In the urban group, the most emphasized criteria for determining adult status are economic independence, independent residence, the capacity to make independent decisions, and to care for oneself. It is notable that for being independent, urban young people see economic independence as a necessary condition of some importance. They also chose to emphasize the role of military service less than the other groups. In addition, it is also worth mentioning that role transitions such as marriage, engagement, and completing education were not emphasized too much. This emphasis on economic independence in urban areas can be attributed to prevalence of more individualistic values, the irregular economy of the country and necessity of income in urban life. As an example;

Money is important. I mean, one has to earn own his money, and one should be independent economically. One definitely has to have a job. (28, m, Urban)

I think economical independence is important. Well if one makes his own money he can do anything. He can be his own, decides he. If he does not earn money he is not an adult yet, and he is not autonomous yet. (24, m, Urban)

Well, if one behaves independently I think he/she is an adult in my opinion. I mean, if he/she can do whatever he/she wants. For instance, if one becomes a mother, her roles chance, and she takes responsibilities. Then, she is an adult. (26, f, Urban)

The most emphasized criteria in the urban with rural background group are to make one's own decisions, self-expression, self-sufficiency, and social acceptance. Then, the participants emphasized less independent residence, full time work or economic independence as well. Demographic criteria, such as being a parent, married, or having completed

education, were not mentioned by this group. It seems both reflections of rural values such as being accepted by elders, elders' approval, and also more individualistic urban values such as need for an income and economic independence came out in the interviews with this group. As examples;

In the society, one can express himself/herself. One must act ideally as an adult and one has to be accepted the older people. In addition, if one can solve his/her problems, he/she can be considered an adult. (21, f, urban with rural background)

Being able to express one is important. To get elder's approval as well. Both elder's approval and deciding independently are important. If so, the person is an adult. (25, m, Urban with rural background)

Living in own house is important but for this, money is needed. If you have money, you are considered, and you get everything. You can live and behave freely. (26, m, Urban with rural background)

The major decisions for life

Following question was administered to participants; "Have you made most of the major decisions for your life already? Are there still options out there for you?". Interview transcriptions revealed four categories; economical, demographic, psychological, and social. Out of total 41 participants 36 of them (88%) stated that they had made major decisions in their lives and only 5 of them stated they had not.

In the rural group, most of the participants (11 of total 13; 86%) stated that they made some important decisions such as completing education, continuing or quitting school, marriage, engagement, and residence status. Responses to "whether options are there or not" are similar to the major decisions taken by participants. Only two of participants from rural areas stated that they did not make any important decisions. As an example;

Yes, I did. For instance, last year, I tried to enter university, but I couldn't. In addition, it was not my preference to try to be a university student but some people affected. My father had gone into dept, so I decide to work; now I am working, and make some money. My decisions may change. (21, f, rural)

Yes I made an important decision. I was in love, and want to marry him, and this will never change (22, f, Rural)

Yes, I only left the school. I didn't attend high school. I am at home all the time and I do nothing (20, f, Rural)

In the urban group, most of the participants (13 out of total 15 participants, 87%) stated that they made some important decisions on issues such as completing education, continuing or quitting school, marriage, engagement, and residence status. Their views on "whether options are there or not" are similar to rural areas. For this group, all of the

participants stressed that they made important decisions, and they think that there are still options for them. As an example;

There have been some radical decisions in my life, especially in my work life. I also take some important decisions in my personal life. (26, m, Urban)

Well, I made important decisions. I left the school, and started to work. I should have done that because of my conditions. But I may change my mind. I may start school in the future again. (24, m, Urban)

Yes, of course. Completing school for instance and I have engaged, and I am happy now. (24, f, Urban)

In the urban with rural background group the majority (12 out of 13; 92%) stated they made important decisions, with the most emphasized being demographic decisions such as engagement, marriage, and being a parent. In terms of "whether options are there or not", most of the participants stated that there are still options; and they expect a better life for themselves, improved living conditions and housing, and better employment in the future. As an example;

Yes, I did. I suddenly decided to marry. Then, I decided to break up with my fiancée. There are some decisions made in my mind but couldn't realize in my life. I decided the name of my child, but my parents interfered. The decision about brooking up was the most important decision for me. Because, I broke up with a person that I loved. My decisions may change. (24, f, Urban with rural background)

Yes I made. I decided to marry. I was in love with my husband. We completed the expected social ceremonies, and we got married. Later, I want to have a child, and I feel very happy now. (24, f, Urban with rural background)

Yes, I changed my job. It has been very good. I am better now. My wife and I were living in my parents' house. Later I decided to have a separate house, now it is better. But I am in economical difficulty but I feel better. I won't change my mind. (26, m, Urban with rural background)

The answers to these questions clearly illustrate that urban, rural and urban with rural background young people felt that they had made some important decisions of a demographic nature such as whether to complete their education, to continuing or quit school, to get engaged, to marry, and where to live and under what conditions.

When looking at the results in terms of transition to adulthood, there appear to be similarities and differences among three groups' themes and sub-themes. For perceived adulthood, the following question was administered to the participants. "Do you think that you have reached adulthood? Do you consider yourself as an adult?". For this question, responses were grouped "Yes", "No", and "In some ways yes, some ways no" as Arnett proposed in earlier research (1997; 2000; 2004). In relation to criteria for adulthood, five

themes were found; biological and chronologic (age-related) attributes; role transitions such as marriage (titled as a spouse), work and parenthood; to be able to run a house/household stuff, manage family (being able to really do whatever is needed in the house); behavioural maturity (such as not speaking on the phone while driving) and military service. About major decisions for life, interview transcriptions revealed basically two themes; economical and demographic/role transitions.

<div align="center">Discussion and Conclusions</div>

In this paper, transition to adulthood in three different demographic groups was discussed based on qualitative interview data. The results of our qualitative study and identification of relevant social factors show differences and some similarities among the three different groups in terms of their conceptions of transition to adulthood.

Considering the findings

The results of this study were evaluated from a cultural perspective. However, it should be noted that almost no other research has been conducted in Turkey from which we could compare the results of the current study. Our findings in general revealed more similarities than differences in the conceptions of adulthood (such as for reaching adulthood in their personal life, adulthood criteria, major decisions for life) between the rural group and the urban group with rural background. For instance, in response to the question "have you reached adulthood?" both rural and urban participants with a rural background mostly stated they had already reached adulthood, while only about 44% of the urban group mentioned so. Furthermore, those who described themselves both as "adult" and also "not adult" are the highest in the urban group. Emerging adulthood literature shows that a considerable segment of this age group (60-80 %) described themselves as in transition from adolescence to adulthood. Various researchers in Turkey (Doğan-Ateş et al. 2007), in Argentina (Facio et al., 2007) and in Czech Republic (Macek, Bejcek, and Vanickova, 2007) found similarly in their studies of mostly educated and urban young people.

Regarding adulthood criteria and major decision questions in the interviews, urban, rural and urban with rural background young people especially emphasized that they made some "important decisions" such as completing education, continuing or quitting school, marriage, engagement, and residence status. The important decisions mentioned by all participants were in the form of directing their future in three groups. In respect of adulthood criteria, urban young people mostly emphasized "economic independence" as criteria for determining adult status and most of the rural participants emphasized that "military service" is important for being an adult. The most emphasized criteria in the urban with rural

background group are to make one's own decisions. According to some researchers (Arnett, 1997; Shanahan, et al., 2002), role transitions are very important for being an adult in traditional cultures. However, the findings of this study seem to show different criteria for this group. The reason for this might be the similarity of the educated urban group to their western counterparts. Although Turkey has been generally regarded as a collectivistic culture in general, individualistic attributes and life styles are gaining importance among young urban "well educated" Turkish people (Göregenli, 1997; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996). As a consequence, in our culture among young people, emerging adulthood seems to exist due to opportunities available to this group and more so than those who live in rural settings (Arnett, 2001). In cities, people tend to marry and become parents later than their rural counterparts (TDHS 2008, 2009). In the TTA literature, the most important criteria attributed by young people is "taking responsibility of one's own behaviour, achieving economical independence, making one's own decisions" (Arnett, 1994; 1997; Atak and Çok, 2007; Shanahan, et al., 2002; Facio and Micocci, 2003; Mayseless and Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003). Another study (Arnett, 2003) found the importance of different adulthood criteria among four ethnic groups and for ethnic minorities traditional adulthood criteria were found to be much more important than individualistic western criteria. Similar to our findings, in a study in China (Nelson et al., 2004) educated young peoples' values such as taking responsibility for oneself, controlling emotions, and being economically independent from the family were stated as most the pertinent criteria.

Considering social facts

In addition to the findings, social factors in the context of Turkish culture also need to be considered as they account for significant differences between the social groups that we considered in this study as separate groups. For instance, an analysis of child-rearing practices or styles of parenting (Kağıtcıbası, 1996; Tunç ve Tezer, 2006; Şirvanlı-Özen, 2005), indicates that we perceive differences between genders of children, and differences among different cultural and residential/regional settings, which in turn have significant affects on transition to adulthood in three different groups. In rural and urban with rural origin groups more authoritarian child-rearing approaches were commonly seen. Similarly, unemployment is a common problem through the country, it seems young people from urban with rural background suffer most. Marriage and career prospects depend on employment as well. In Turkey, in most families' a newly married couple - in the rural and urban with rural background groups - tends to live with the groom's family, which accounts for the prevalence of extended families in these groups. In the average urban family on the other hand, a newly

married couple typically creates their own home (Atalay, 1979; Tezcan, 1997; Erder, 1995; Erman, 2003; 2004). Education is another important issue marking the differential transitional patterns of these three groups. While years spent in formal education have tended to increase lately and compulsory education is 8 years, in a rural setting, most people did not continue to high school and especially university, particularly in the east (TDHS, 2009; TUIK, 2010). Overall, education levels in Turkey tend to decline in the rural and in urban with rural settings. On the other hand every year many more young people in the urban setting attend graduate education and interest in attending school for longer periods is especially high for the urban group. Education is therefore an important, yet variable agent in transition to adulthood among different groups. Increasing years of education is seen as one of the contributors to presence of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004) and is considered mainly for the urban educated group (Atak and Çok, 2010).

Compulsory military service is another factor affecting various groups differently in the transition to adulthood in Turkey (Akyürek, 2010) as well as in some other countries (Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal, 2010; Lieblich, 1989; Jekielek and Brown, 2005; Mayseless and Hai, 1998; Shanahan, 2000; Furstenberg, Rumbaut, and Settersten, 2004). In Turkey the urban educated group tends to undergo military service at later ages and under better conditions and for shorter durations. On the other hand, rural young men and most of the urban young men with rural backgrounds, who tend to enjoy less formal education, are conscripted at a younger age, between 18 and 20 years old (Akyürek, 2010; Kantarcı, 2003). Undertaking military service at a later age allows for the urban group to contribute to transition for a longer period, whiles the experience provides a very sudden shift for the rural and urban with rural background group. Other factors effecting transition to adulthood to varying degrees are family related issues i.e., marriage, parenting and the preparation of a dowry. Dowry is an interesting cultural practice, which has currently different forms in different parts in Turkey. Although it is a tradition characterized by the making of handmade clothes for the future bride by the bride and her mother and other close women, the meaning of dowry tend to change especially for the urban group. Apart from clothing, dowry practices have been extended to the preparation of the couple's future urban home (Ecevit, 2007; Gönüllü and Içli, 2001). In the rural setting the idea of dowry tends to persist traditionally, however the practice of dowry in the preparation of marriage in modern Turkey is changing dramatically along with rapid urbanisation (Koç, 2009; Ecevit, 2007). This change seems to make transition to adulthood longer because the preparation of the home may take several years. On the other hand the differences in the age of marriage among different segments of society contribute different

patterns in the transition to adulthood. The mean age of marriage is higher for both genders in the urban educated group and it is relatively lower among the urban group with rural origin and lowest among the rural group (TDHS, 2009; TUIK, 2010). The age of becoming a parent is different as well for the three groups.

Thus certain social factors mentioned in this paper are related with transition to adulthood in Turkey and also create different patterns of transition. The effects of these factors on the three groups differ considerably.

Emerging concepts?

In this context, we attempt to propose different transitional pathways to adulthood in the cultural context, mainly considering Cote's (2000) concepts of individualization (default and developmental) called; *"default transition"* for people with a rural background and *"developmental transition"* for urban people. In our cultural perspective, "developmental transition" seems to be parallel to *"emerging adulthood"* as conceptualized in the findings obtained from the urban group studied. We also chose to name the transition of rural young people into adulthood as *"deserved adulthood"*. The idea of these conceptualizations depends partly on the findings we obtained from this study based on interviews and partly on social factors we identified to be present in Turkey. We explain these three different conceptualizations as follows:

Deserved Adulthood. According to the results and social factors, we find that family and society have very powerful influence on the process of transition to adulthood in rural areas of Turkey. When the findings presented above and social characteristics of the rural area (Erman, 2004) are taken into consideration, it is clear that in rural areas of Turkey, society confers many of the features or markers of adulthood whereby certain adult features are then thought important by young people such as "being in the same room with elders to chat and socialize". Earlier studies (see also Erman, 2004; Doğan-Ateş, Cebioğlu, Erdoğan and Tekin, 2007, Atak and Çok, 2007, Kağıtcıbaşı, 1996) showed similar results about the powerful influence of family and social expectations in the process of transition to adulthood. Thus, the transition to adulthood process in rural area of the country may be called as "deserved adulthood" because both the individuals themselves and their local society determine the process of transition to adulthood.

Developmental Transition to Adulthood. When we look at the urban group, the transition to adulthood process seems to vary. In this group more individualistic life experiences are apparent from the interviews. Although families are still important for these

young people they mostly make their own decisions and seem to be more independent. The results clearly show that there are more individualistic values amongst the urban group.

Among educated urban people of Turkey there is a very common picture of young people who are increasingly expected to "individualize" their life course, by taking the initiative to shape their working and personal relationships, to finish schooling and employment experiences, and to plan for the future (Bolak, 1997; Erman, 2004; Atak and Çok, 2010). In this context, when social characteristics of the urban youth and the findings of this study are taken in the consideration, the transition to adulthood process in urban area may be called as "*developmental transition to adulthood or developmental adulthood*", because young people seem to explore options and use their agentic capabilities to develop adulthood. For instance, for many young people, in some cases despite the pressures from their family, they postpone marriage to later ages; and they may decide to quit their education despite their families' expectations; they may also spend more time with their friends and on their own. In addition, among educated urban young people individualistic criteria, such as a sense of autonomy and interdependence, the achievement of intimacy in a close and enduring relationship, are more prevalent than in the other groups.

Limited research in Turkey on emerging adulthood (Doğan-Ateş et al., 2007; Atak and Çok, 2007; 2010) indicates that emerging adulthood is commonly experienced within the educated urban group between the ages of 19-26. In addition to the criteria for adulthood of taking responsibility for oneself, making decisions independently, economic independence, and taking care of the family were found to be more important by these young people. Demographic variables such as age and marriage are not found as critical as the criteria of adulthood. Although the present research did not attempt to investigate if the term emerging adulthood does exist in this cultural context, it seems it is mostly not applicable to the rural group and the urban group with a rural background. Only the urban group who continue education seem appropriate to be considered emerging adults, as they experience more individualistic life experiences.

Default Transition to Adulthood. In Turkey migrants from rural areas to big cities that we referred to as "urban group with rural background" created their own way of life and even specific locations in the cities. They seek to maintain their traditional values and expectations and sustain rural values despite living in urban rather than rural settings. This group has mostly settled in emerging suburban neighbourhoods that proffer specific life styles and experiences. Residents of these areas tend to be employed in low paid, part time capacities in the service sector and while there are variations among this group, they tend to experience a

common socialization. Family control and pressure are very obvious on the young people of this group (Erder, 1993; Erman, 1997; 2003; 2004; Tekeli, 1998; Neyzi, 1999; 2001a; 2001b; 2002; 2010). The young people in these settings have more alternatives than their rural peers but parents and traditional values still largely influence their personal decisions. The alternatives presented seem to be "default" for these young people. This group fits well with the description by Hendry and Kloep (2011, pp 77). They claim that there are stressful issues in early adulthood not by choice but because they lack choices. They may be restricted by their lack of social relational, educational opportunities and skills.

In Turkey, especially people in the big cities from an urban with rural background live in suburbs usually under poorer living conditions and subject to rural values as mentioned above. However one can identify common trends about transition to adulthood in this group. In this context, when their social characteristics (Erman, 2003; 2004) are taken in the consideration, their transition to adulthood process may be called in our opinion as "default transition to adulthood or default adulthood" as already proposed by Cote (2000). This group is liable to default options, which are limited in nature, such as inadequate employment opportunities and a lack of vocational education. This group seems to suffer unemployment difficulties more than other groups as mentioned earlier. On the other hand, social pressure on young people due to the persistence of rural values, are higher in this group and persist into adulthood. For young people from an urban with rural background, interdependence, and conformist behaviour are exhibited early in life and continue into adolescence and adulthood. In addition, these skills peak in marriage, which, coupled with the abilities "to provide, protect, and procreate," are regarded as indicating adulthood. In this context, it can be said that the transition to adulthood in this group is sudden not gradual, and characterized mostly by role change.

In conclusion, we have developed some ideas on differences in the transition to adulthood in Turkey. The results of the qualitative study suggest that the process is experienced differently in rural, urban, and urban with rural background groups. Our findings seem to support the idea of transition to adulthood being subject to prevalent cultural and social conditions (Arnett, 1997; 2000; 2004; Cote, 2000; 2002; Facio, and Micocci, 2003; Shifren, Furnham and Bauserman, 2003; Shanahan et al., 2002; Hendry and Kloep, 2007a; Mayseless and Scharf, 2003; Nelson, et al., 2004; Nelson and Chen, 2007; Salmela-Aro and Helve, 2006; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, and Willinger, 2009). Additionally, and while this study presents an example of one society, transition to adulthood may be seen with different forms for different settings and groups (Arnett, 2000; Mayseless and Scharf, 2003; Nelson, 2003;

Nelson, Badger and Wu, 2004; Rosenberg, 2007; Salmela-Aro and Helve, 2006). Finally, this study contributes a number of social factors, which are reflective of the qualitative findings in the process of transition to adulthood. The study is limited by its reliance on qualitative data and the small size of the sample.

Variations within groups across cultures need to be known in a better and a deeper way. Future research is necessary to extend our understanding of the impact of social factors on transition to adulthood, both qualitatively and quantitatively, with a cultural perspective to see variations in different groups.

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