DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

"Kardeş gibiyiz":

Anthropological perspectives on being young and having friends in a provincial town in Turkey

Verfasserin

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Contents

List of figures[1]

Abbreviations

ÇATOM	=	Multi-Purpose Community Centre *(Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri)*
GAP	=	South Eastern Anatolia Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*)
GKE	=	Youth centre (*Gençlik ve Kültür Evi*)
METU	=	Middle Eastern Technical University *(Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi)*

Remarks on the pronunciation of Turkish and Kurdish wordings[2]

â	Kurdish, like the 'a' in 'car'
c	Turkish, like the 'j' in 'jungle'
ç	Turkish, like 'ch' in 'child'
é	Kurdish, like the 'e' in 'yes'
ğ	Turkish, never at the beginning of words, not pronounced
ı	Turkish, dull sound (in Kurdish the 'i' is pronounced like this)
î	Kurdish, like the 'e' in 'me'
q	Kurdish, pronounced as 'k-e'
ş	like 'sh' in 'shark'
û	Kurdish, like the 'ou' in 'you'
v	like the English 'v' (e.g. 'van')
w	Kurdish, pronounced as 'h-r-e'
x	Kurdish, pronounced as 'w-e'
y	like the English 'y' (e.g. 'yellow')

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[1] I made an effort to obtain the consent from the owners of the illustration rights for using their illustrations in this work. If a violation of any copyright still occurs please contact me.
[2] See a. o. Strohmeier & Yalçın-Heckmann 2010: 9f.

1. Introduction

The two central intertwined puzzles, with which this thesis tries to deal with, include in a broader sense the question of youth in the south-eastern region of Turkey and more narrowly the question of young people's personal relations within and outside the context of a local youth centre. Beside scientific literature recherche, I carried out fieldwork in the provincial town of Mardin. To get started I want to explain first of all which circumstances aroused and fostered my interest in the issues of this thesis.

1.1. Personal motivations

In a small group of students I once undertook a field research for a seminar about certain aspects of 'Kurdish Diaspora in Vienna'. By looking more closely at differing identity constructions with specific cultural references right in front of me, I started to get curious from which places (referred to as 'their roots') they stem from. Subsequently my interest in the Middle Eastern region in general grew continuously. I started to learn Turkish and Farsi whereby I skipped the latter one due to sever time limits. My broad curiousness finally became focused on the national territory of Turkey as I spent one term as an exchange student at the Middle Eastern Technical University (METU) in Ankara, the capital city. In the course of travelling within Turkey as well as to neighbouring countries, one place that fascinated me most was the provincial town of Mardin. By working as a volunteer in a summer camp in the local youth centre I got acquainted with the social and cultural lifeworlds of this place more closely. My first stay in Turkey lasted seven month in total, whereby I spent three weeks in Mardin. Seven month later I carried out a planned fieldwork of two month in the latter place. Beside general literature recherche, my first stay, particularly in Mardin, was crucial for exploring and defining 'the things' which became the central concerns of this thesis. During that time I was part of a small group of international volunteers offering various courses (such as teaching foreign languages, arts, photography, dancing etc.) to the young people of Mardin. Within such a situational frame I got acquainted with the youth centre as well as the provincial town and its people. Moreover I already carried out explorative participant observations which provided me with ideas and shaped my research questions. The functioning of the youth centre and the interactions of people there were puzzling me repeatedly. On the other hand their thinking as well as acting and especially the ways of socialising caused fascination. Consequently the idea of undertaking an anthropological research in that place was born and put into concrete plans when I was back in Austria. Due to my established contacts to the staff of the youth centre I had no problems of getting their

1

permission for my research intentions. Finally I came back to Mardin the following spring and stayed for two month. While doing a voluntary internship at the local youth centre, I got the opportunity to collect material for this thesis. During that time also a youth festival was taking place in a neighbouring town as well as the festivities on the national day of youth and sports. Therefore I had the chance to carry out participant observations on these occasions too.

Before and after carrying out the fieldwork in Mardin I also spent again time at the METU in Ankara. Besides researching for suitable literature in the main library of this university I took the opportunity to talk to different professors of the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department about my thesis. Several professors, assistants and students provided me also with contacts to further local people of Mardin.

Moreover, the fact that I chose to work mainly with young people who provided me the main information, is probably partly connected with my occupations as kindergarten teacher and care taker of young people in various holiday camps in Austria and Italy.

1.2. The central concerns

After the early observations in the youth centre, my choice of 'friendship' as central concern got stimulated mainly by sociological perspectives first. The current topicality of friendship in Western sociological discourses refers to the high value given to it by members of these societies. Globally friendship is something disguised in common sense. Everybody thinks and speaks about it but many times we do not mean the same when doing so. Beside individual interpretations there can be ambivalences detected in idealised imaginations about friendship on the one hand and actual social contacts in daily life on the other hand. Friendship as social phenomenon can have not only ideological but also psychological, cultural, pragmatical and further dimensions. It is something of our very personal concern and at the same time something shared with others as it cannot be realised without 'the other'.

The basic assumption behind this research is that informal personal relations such as friendships cannot be explained by individuality alone as such relations are not free of societal constraints. Consequently a mutual, multidirectional linkage to broader social structure and organisation should be recognised.

Out of these considerations the broad research question of this thesis focuses on what 'being young' and 'having friends' means for young people who are attending the youth centre of Mardin. First and foremost it is of interest how 'youth' and 'friendship' relations are perceived and experienced by the young people. Furthermore the thesis asks for the role(s) of the youth centre in terms of space and institutionalisation of both issues. Overall it will be

investigated how the socio-cultural (re-)production of concepts of youth and friendship happens in terms of thinking, speaking and behaving. Therefore the following dimensions are central for this research project:

a) How and according to which criteria do informants categorise their relationships?
b) Which meaning does the term youth/friendship evoke among the informants?
c) How is youth and friendship expressed and lived?
d) In which ways are such relations relevant for constructing social identities?

In the course of the research these questions were approached primarily in an anthropological manner, especially when it came to ways of gaining and interpreting data. Additionally sociological theoretical perspectives provided fruitful and necessary compensations.

1.3. State of the art

Issues of youth and friendship have remained marginal in social- and cultural anthropology up to the present. The interest payed to the field of youth and informal interpersonal relations in social science in general has ever since been selective. Although such investigations started to become more popular in the second half of the 20th century, the body of knowledge produced so far is limited (mainly to psychological explanations). Sociological debates can be seen as forerunners to anthropological ones. Due to the bias on kinship relations in social and cultural anthropology, friendship relations have been investigated more intensely only during the last two decades. Secondly an adult bias hindered asking younger people for information.

Several anthropological scholars have been recently dealing with the lives of young Turkish and/or Kurdish people living in Europe. Such undertakings have most of the time focused on questions of identity and integration.

On the other hand there is a lack of research on young people and friendships in Middle Eastern regions. The social relations among people in the Kurdish-Turkish region around Mardin have been so far primarily investigated through the glasses of kinship (e.g. Barth 1953/1979; Yalçın-Heckmann 1991). Beside trying to explain tribal structures, the south-eastern region of Turkey is mainly known in social science as well as in popular media in terms of terrorism and violence.

Only two years ago a master thesis about the youth centre of Mardin as a "model for sustainable development" was written in the Sociology Department of the Middle Eastern Technical University in Ankara (Şahin 2008). In this work the author was mainly trying to analyse this institution from a macro-perspective, focusing on the broader context of developmental programs which have been implemented in the south-eastern region of Turkey.

Due to the described theoretical insufficiencies this thesis tries to fill thematic gaps alongside opening new perspectives to old debates within and outside the discipline.

1.4. The approach

This thesis consists of three central themes. The primary one, including also the other two, is concerned with the overall lifeworlds of young people in a certain place and at a certain time. When approaching such a kind of question, theories on youth and on life in that geographical region with its specific history are central in general. A second theme focuses in particular on young people's friendships and to a lesser degree on other personal relations. In this regard it is worth looking at personal relation and friendship studies. Finally a third theme ranks around the key field site of the youth centre and its association. For these interests organisational theories are most vital in terms of analysing structures of social movements. All the mentioned fields are in reality not exclusive, but are strongly interwoven with each other as well as with further fields.

Overall the work can be placed in the strand of post-structuralist and social constructionist paradigms. A basic assumption behind all the presented theorising is that "all knowledge is contingent, that is, located within the communication shared by people" (Fraser & Robinson 2004: 74), meaning that it is socially and culturally constructed. Furthermore social identities and subjectivities are understood as multiple, fluid and shifting (see a. o. Hall 1997; Trinh 1997; Klinger & Knapp 2007). Consequently, also when concepts of 'youth' and 'friendship' are unveiled, mechanisms of how power is exercised can become recognisable (see Fraser & Robinson 2004: 75).

The puzzling phenomena are not seen as isolated, but rather as being part of broader socio-cultural contexts. A possibility to take the latter into consideration too is offered by the approach(es) of 'lifeworld'. This term ("*Lebenswelt*") has its origins in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and was picked up among others by Alfred Schütz in the 1950ies. In this work lifeworlds are understood as historical worlds, which means that they are ever changing (see Madsen & Plunz 2002: 11). In this sense they unite past, present and future. Moreover they are characterised by structural elements on the one hand and particularities on the other. However, both aspects have to be seen as inherently intertwined with each other. For this reason such a concept approaches the very core of human social and cultural existence. Consequently it places the embedded individual person in the centre of attention. My concern here is exactly such subjectivity of young people. In this sense their agency within structured contexts shall be portrayed. Lifeworlds can be understood in terms of everyday life, daily

routines, social networks, relationships and so on, whereby several of them may overlap. As a specific socio-cultural environment (such as that of the family or the youth centre) it is concerning very pragmatical experiences of human life. The concept of lifeworlds is a genuinely broad one with hardly any defined limitations. However, this openness allows covering varying aspects of a certain part of the social life of people in a sort of more holistic manner. It enables to take into consideration physical and material aspects alongside with mental, communicative and interactive ones. In this sense this research aimed at investigating a particular social space as a site of fostering social ties and identity formations.

This research can be labelled as young person-centered because my key respondents and in general the majority of people visiting the youth centre were between 15 and 30 years old. By gaining most of the information from this group it was attempted "to negotiate an understanding of research aims in a situation and in terms that 'make sense' to the children and young people concerned" (Fraser 2004: 23). Such a view does not expect an outcome of exactly identical understandings about central elements of the investigation among researcher and those being researched, but rather stresses and calls for exposing and opening them to communications. In this sense it is not the aim for those concerned to have the same conceptions and experiences but rather to share the differences between them.

When taking a critical stance on age hierarchies which become evident in ordinary life as well as academic research, it has to be considered that power "is not just about force but the creation of knowledge" (Robinson & Kellett 2004: 81). Against remaining common views and stereotypes on children and young people as not being 'mature' enough to take their opinions seriously, in this research project young people were seen as experts on their own lives. Consequently the used methods and techniques were 'participant-friendly' rather than 'young person-friendly' (see Fraser 2004: 25). This consideration implies that 'normal' methods used in social science such as interviews or focus groups or others were regarded as suitable to be applied also in the context of research on and to a certain degree with young people as they were seen as fully capable social actors. However, like in any situation of gaining first-hand data adaptations of concrete actions were made according to the requirements of the specific contexts.

The thesis consists of a combination of empirical and theoretical research being qualitative in the ways of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. Processes of collecting and analysing theoretical as well empirical materials took place in a parallel way and not as separate and isolated procedures. The most difficult task was to bring the great variety of often unsystematically collected material into an order for analysis. The following

central characteristics of qualitative thinking defined by Mayring (2002: 19ff) served as corner stones for orientation during the whole research process: a strong focus on the subject, an investigation in its natural surrounding(s), considering its wholeness and historicity, its descriptions and interpretations in an open and at the same time controlled manner next to a careful argumentation of generalisations. On the one hand I collected first-hand data and gained own experience during a fieldwork period. On the other hand the collection and interpretation of this data was constantly influenced by the knowledge about established theories and research traditions of social science in general and social and cultural anthropology in particular. Overall I tried my best "to be consistently systematic, sceptical and ethical about the observations" (Fraser 2004: 20) in whatever situation or state of the research process I found myself.

1.5. Limitations

The research aims to illustrate what is thought and how it is talked about concepts of youth and friendship among certain people. The outcomes are not universal definitions; rather the vulnerability and inconsistency of such terms with all its ambivalences and contradictions ought to be highlighted. In this sense the relativity in time and space of such concepts is portrayed.

This thesis is not dealing with socio-political concerns on a macro-scale. Several broader issues of so-called hidden societal frontiers in ethnical, religious or other ways have been left out because (although being aware of and at times touching on them) my research questions dig into other directions. On the contrary popular media discourses my priority was to portray the lives of certain people from a less known, daily micro perspective.

Like it is the case with basically all scientific inquiries also this one remains subject to several limitations. First of all, time appears to be a limiting factor. What happened before and after the two months of the fieldwork in the field site remains subject to secondary sources. The period of two month was mainly chosen due to pragmatical reasons of financial and visa issues. Furthermore even during this time of staying in the field site some occurrences remained unobserved. As a researcher is an 'ordinary' human being he or she is not able to keep an eye on all the different specific places and/or interactions in detail at the same time. Moreover at times my own presumptions and personality were keeping me certainly from realising vital insights and/or from following alternative tracks.

The fact that I am a woman influenced the way different people interacted with me, who interacted with me and where it was 'appropriate' for me to go and not to go as well as

what was 'appropriate' for me to do and not do. As I tried to respect the local cultural norms and values my behaviour and actions remained to certain extents restrained by these factors.

By defining the field site in general, the investigations remained limited in terms of place and space too. On the other hand such limitations were necessary in order to stay focused. Furthermore, by choosing the youth centre as the key site for my investigations all the voices of young people who were not present in that place at my time of stay or who did not attend it at all remained widely unheard. For example this is the case for young girls (*ev kadınları*) who are 'traditionally staying at home' with their families until they are married. Finally I could definitely not speak to 'everybody' (even not when it comes to the ones who were present in the youth centre) and I am sure that those to whom I spoke to, indeed did not tell me 'everything' or maybe sometimes misunderstood me or the other way round.

In terms of language my incomplete knowledge of Turkish hindered me at times to understand and express myself in a clear way. As I knew neither Kurdish nor Arabic I could not understand when the people around me were using these languages. However, para-verbal elements gave me a clue in such situations. Furthermore I was dependent on the help of dictionaries and native speakers when transcribing and translating the interviews. Due to my missing Kurdish language skill most of the native terms referred to in thesis are Turkish ones.

1.6. The chapters ahead

After this introductory chapter, selected aspects of the development of youth studies in social science in general and in social and cultural anthropology in particular will be portrayed. The following chapter looks at several selected aspects and discourses of notions of youth in Turkey. Besides taking socio-cultural norms, values and stratification systems into account, the chapter also examines the role of the state and the relation of young people and politics. The next section is concerned about various methodological aspects of this research project. First the fieldwork situation and the specific ways of gaining and analysing data are introduced in detail. Thereafter the locality and its general central characteristics are portrayed. It is referred to the city and province of Mardin as well as to the broader south-eastern region of Turkey. In the following chapter the four main informants and parts of their daily lifeworlds, attitudes, hopes and worries are presented. A focus is laid on their perceptions and experiences of different relationships including friends, family and love. Afterwards the youth centre with its ambitions, attendants, facilities and regulations is portrayed. Furthermore the case of a youth festival with its socio-political implications is discussed. In the next chapter an overview of approaching the topic of friendship by different

selected disciplines is given. The focus remains on central debates in social and cultural anthropology, while linking them to the empirical data. Finally the conclusion provides an overview of main findings and perspectives for research within this field for the future.

2. Youth in Western thinking, speaking and writing

This section is occupied with portraying the various scientific interests alongside non-scientific ones in the phenomenon of youth focussing on the period from the end of the 19th up to the 21st century. Firstly a broad overview of youth studies in social science in general is given, followed by a closer look at it within social and cultural anthropology. Concurrences, continuities and ruptures of various selected themes, paradigms, disciplines and in the end also individual scientists shall be considered in several regards.

It has to be taken into consideration that especially theories about childhood, adolescence and youth have been very much intertwined most of the time. Therefore, although the focus here is on the most important approaches for the theoretical developments of youth studies, close-by or broader social science paradigms will be taken into account to achieve a certain degree of necessary contextualisation.

2.1. The historical emergence of 'youth' in Europe

Today the historical relativity of youth as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon is broadly recognised in social science. A decisive work contributing to such a recognition is the one by Philippe Ariès (1960/1994) portraying the historical development of various views on childhood from the Middle Ages up to Modernity (see Dracklé 1996: 19).

The 'inventions' of childhood can be seen as forerunner to the ones of youth. Tenbruck (1965: 82) dates the first concrete speaking about the latter in Europe back to the mid-18th century. Historically the view of youth as a separate life phase developed according to him and other authors with the emergence of modern civil society. As highlighted by Fuchs in the quotation below, industrialisation, including the differentiation of work, the emergence of civil family forms and the schooling system can be seen as central for enabling distinct societal concerns about youth in Europe.

> "The separation of young people into a recognizable period of adolescence in the industrial nations in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries proceeds from the need for more time for advanced training for the more technologically sophisticated industrial world." (Fuchs 1976: 3)

Furthermore Tenbruck (1965: 74) claims that with the differentiation of society and culture family lost its character as being a "natural space for identifications". As young people spent more and more time outside home and in institutions outside their kinship networks (in schools, youth organisations etc.) the establishment of a new distinct group consciousness was initiated (ibid.: 67).

I would add that especially the changing occupation structures with the fostering of the social care sector during the 20th century and the related new professions like, among others the one of the youth worker, contributed on the one hand to and benefited on the other hand from the distinct discourses about youth. In general it should be considered that all these developments (like industrialisation, disourses about youth etc.) were varying. They were (and are) not homogenous, neither within Europe nor elsewhere.

2.2. Explaining 'youth' in social science

By portraying the history of the research tradition on youth ("*Jugendforschung*") in Austria and Germany between 1890 and 1933 Peter Dudek (1990) highlights the multi- and transdisciplinarity and plurality within this area. From the beginnings up to today the inquiry about youth can be located not only between different established scientific disciplines but also in political and economical debates, in populist media and more generally in all our social interactions of daily life on the micro-level. Especially the latter have most of the time strong educational implications. All these spheres are not isolated spaces. They have to be viewed as influencing each other mutually in complex ways.

2.2.1. The first half of the 20th century: Discovering youth

Investigations of youth were carried out since the turn from the 18th to the 19th century mainly by the disciplines of medicine, psychology and education science. Sociology and anthropology started to get interested in the 20th century. (Dudek 1990: 24f.).

These first attempts of theories on youth can be characterised as conservative as they propagated the adaptation of young people to societies' mainstream rules and norms. In this vein functionalist theories became popular at the beginning of the 20th century. Their perceptions of a smooth functioning of societies were instrumentalised for legitimising institutionalised education as well as the centrality of the unit of the family. (Tyyskä 2005: 4)

The American psychologist and ethnologist Stanley Hall was the first to define the term "adolescence" as age period between 12 and 20 years, stressing the universality of this life stage (Hall 1904 cited in Dracklé 1996: 19f.).

In the domain of psychology moreover Freud's theory of the double development of human sexuality ("*Zweizeitigkeit der sexuellen Entwicklung*") (Freud 1905 cited in Erdheim 1991: 215f.) formed at the beginning of the 20th century the central basis for many later investigations in and outside the discipline. It highlighted the importance of this stage of human life and propagated intellectual occupations about it.

During the 1920ies the Chicago School was established in the field of American cultural anthropology. Their approaches proved to be influential for studying peer groups and socio-cultural environments ("*Milieu*") of young people (Salein 2005: 177).

The works of the American anthropologist Margret Mead (a. o. "From the South Seas" 1948) represents an exceptional early occupation concerned with young people outside Europe and America. It will be discussed in more detail in a following section.

Siegfried Bernfeld can be seen as the initiator of the German scientific research on youth who recognised its distinctiveness (Luig & Seebode 2003: 12; Dudek 1990: 325). His approaches combined psychoanalysis with Marxist views and consequently tried to legitimise revolutionary intentions of young people at the beginning of the 20th century (Dudek 1990: 325). In English speaking countries, like in America, the first empirical investigations happened to be carried out among working class youth in the growing cities (ibid.: 22). It can be observed that at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, following all these initial approaches towards young people a strongly normative discourse focusing on deviant behaviour of youth came to the fore (Dracklé 1996: 20).

2.2.2. The 1960ies: Youth and society

After the Second World War a debate developed about the degree of autonomy of young people (Luig & Seebode 2003: 13). Friedrich H. Tenbruck was a leading figure in the German discourse at that time. He claimed that youth has to be viewed as a social group and a kind of part-culture ("*Teilkultur*") with a relatively high degree of autonomy (Tenbruck 1965: 55). His standpoint was to a certain extent relativistic as he stressed the variations of the appearance of youth groups in time and place (ibid.: 9). Detailed implications of his view of relativity will be discussed in a following subchapter. The big failure of his theories from today's point of view can be detected in his (mis-)understanding of structure and agency. For example he writes: „…, *der in die Offenheit versetzte Jugendliche wäre unfähig, sich aus eigener Kraft und Initiative in die Gesellschaft hineinzufinden.*" (ibid.: 26f.) This statement shows us that a young person is not seen as capable to cope with the demands of societal life on his/her own. Consequently certain institutions are needed in order to help the youngsters

overcome this task of becoming a fully integrated member of society. As these arguments show us, Tenbruck's interests remain primarily educational ones as he sees the aim of studying youth in finding the forces which can form young people in sustainable ways (ibid.: 20). The forces which reach them are perceived to be inherent in society's structure itself as he notes: "*Die Struktur der Gesellschaft zeigt die Art von Kräften, welche die Jugend erreichen.*" (ibid.: 21). Finally Tenbruck presents us a model where society is influencing young people through its structural forces, but where an impact the other way round, meaning young people manipulating society's structures, is not considered as possible.

The psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson (1968/1998) argued for a developmental life cycle model whereby different stages are characterised by certain psychological crises. Central for the adolescent stage which he called "psycho-social moratorium", is according to Erikson the identity crisis. Its experience is realised as a result of physiological growth, spiritual maturation and social responsibility (ibid.: 91). The search for something to believe in becomes central for young people and is according to him accompanied by crises of choice as endless societal possibilities and potential identifications open up at this age (ibid.: 256f.). Ideological searches of who one 'is' can develop followingly and can cause insecurities.

Furthermore Talcott Parson introduced the term "youth culture", meaning an independent lifeworld of young people, in US-sociology in the 1960ies, without referring to similar German discourses (Luig & Seebode 2003: 13). Parson's main concerns about inner group hierarchies found resonance among others in the works of James S. Coleman, who investigated for example status systems among pupils at different American primary and secondary schools (Coleman 1966). Moreover there is a clear connection between the arguments of Parson, Coleman and their European colleague Tenbruck. All three authors stressed the distinctive character of youth as a separate social and cultural group while at the same time calling for attention in terms of its embededness in wider society.

2.2.3. The 1970ies: Youth, culture and cognition

In the 1970ies the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was established in Birmingham. The works of the centre's associates were occupied with analysis of popular culture by applying Gramsci's theory of hegemony to investigations of "ritualised resistance" among young people (Luig & Seebode 2003: 14f.; Dracklé 1996: 32f.). It was recognised that often even the non-conformism of young people contains a ritualised character though (Erikson 1998: 24).

Another important scientist doing research on youth in the 1970ies was Jean Piaget who presented his model of cognitive development among children and youth (Dracklé 1996: 25). His model confirmed the cognitive and moral immaturity of young people and consequently legitimised adult interventions (ibid.). Piaget's model can be seen as a follow up version of Erikson's stages of personality development of the 1960ies described above.

In (ethnological) psychoanalyses the paradigm of adolescence crises was explained by seeing family and culture as contradicting separate entities (see Erdheim 1984; 1991; 1996). The task of young people was supposed to lie in distancing oneself from the family alongside becoming more and more integrated in wider society. One of the theorists named Erdheim argued that adolescence is a cultural phenomenon in two ways: on the one hand it is the product of civilisation processes whereas on the other hand it is a cultural productive force. In the second meaning the polarity between drive and omnipotent fantasies reaches its peak. Symbolising competences (applied to initiate cultural change) can serve to overcome this crisis. Erdheim also explained gender differences in this theory in the way that omnipotence is denied to women and made unconscious. (Erdheim 1996: 202-223)

Overall the research scope on youth has been so far characterised by a male bias. Exceptions like the distinct field called "*Mädchenforschung*" (girl research) which established in Germany were rare (Luig & Seebode 2003: 17).

2.2.4. After 1980: Youth, identity and power

Whereas early theories focused primarily on the biological and social development of young people and the related necessities of its regulations, only recently critical theories gained more voice. They are stressing the fact that also young people among each other do not benefit equally from resources and some of their voices are more muted than others (Tyyskä 2005: 4). In this way they "point to the institutionalized powerlessness of youth" (ibid: 6).

During earlier decades the focus of sociological youth studies was mainly on class contradictions whereas in the 1980ies and 90ies style, identity and gender came to the forefront. Consequently questions of ethnicity, sexuality and representations in general entered the discussions as processes of globalisation and appropriations of foreign cultural elements couldn't be overlooked any more. Subsequently a global research body on youth developed where context, history and social praxis happened to become central areas of concern. (Luig & Seebode 2003: 15f.)

All the accounts so far saw youth primarily in passive roles. The use of a more dynamic and relational concept of culture and the raise of epistemological questions about

knowledge production and representations (Caputo 1995: 20) opened the path to study youth in its own right, an appeal initiated among others by James and Prout (1990 cited in Caputo 1995: 28). Youth sub-cultures started to be understood as "manifestations of youth rebellion and as mirrors of the dominant power relations under capitalism, patriarchy, and racism" (Tyyskä 2005: 8). In such approaches young people were acknowledged as active agents.

During the last decades the young generation has been facing more and more exclusion from access to secure employment (White & Wyn 2004: ix). It is most likely for young people to have several part- and short-time jobs, which are changed frequently. Furthermore it has become a common practice of firms nowadays to hire so called lended workers for example. Due to these insecure employment situations it is understandable that from the 1990ies onwards political economy theory gained importance again, first of all in the context of studies about aging. From a critical viewpoint it recognises the role of social policies, the state, capitalism and the like in terms of age stratification schemes and their intersections with other social stratifying criteria like gender, race and class (Giddens 2006: 185). The link between economic and age inequalities is highlighted while referring to the lack of full access to economic and political rights among young people (Tyyskä 2005: 6f.). In this vein theories suggest that while being "exploited as an underpaid working mass" young people "form a convenient 'target market' for goods" (ibid.: 7). The fruitfulness of this strand of theories has been yet limited within the field of youth research. A significant contribution so far made Sharon Stephens (1995) as editor of *"Children and the Politics of Culture"*. In this volume the arguments of the contributing authors are placed in global political frames. Macro aspects such as concepts about culture, legal systems, modernity and post-modernity appear to be central concerns when talking about young people's lives. Such an approach can be subsumed under the human rights perspective which has recently gained much popularity. In this vein the obligations of states and policy related issues are emphasised (Tyyskä 2005: 10). Critical attention needs to be paid to them as at times such approaches might have certain developmental and imperial implications in terms of trying to teach less industrialised countries 'the right way' for treating young people.

Lewis (2004: 5) states that research with children and young people has been recently shifting more and more from research "on" them to research "with" them. Consequently their status from being simply a research object changed to gaining more subjectivity due to increased critical reflections of the power relations in research processes. As a result children and young people can become involved as researchers themselves at different stages or along the whole research process (see a. o. Delgado 2006; Fraser et al. 2006). This approach has

become especially quite popular when it comes to participatory action research in the (non-Wstern) majority world aiming at strengthening children's and young people's capacity for self-determination (see a. o. Nieuwenhuys 2004). To conclude it can be stated that in the way feminist research is critical of a male bias in science, youth-led research appears to be critical of an adult bias.

2.3. Youth in social and cultural anthropology

While psychologists' interests on youth focused on developmental issues and sociologists' interests on societal integration and social group phenomena, anthropologists' main concern have been more or less socio-cultural issues. As it will become evident, unfortunately this preoccupation of the discipline itself proved to be a serious obstacle for the establishment of anthropological studies on young people in their own right. More fruitful from the beginning has been the comparative approach by paying attention to variations of young people's lives in time and place.

2.3.1. Reconstructing marginalising dynamics

As already pointed out above, social and cultural anthropology can be seen as latecomer in the inquiry about adolescence or more precisely, a latecomer in the establishment of it as a separate central sub-concern. The early works of Margret Mead (a. o. "Coming of Age in Samoa" 1928) can be seen as exceptional. Even at the beginning of the 21st century anthropological studies on youth are still placed on the margins. In the "*Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*" edited by Barnard and Spencer (2002) there is still no separate entry neither for 'youth' nor for 'adolescence', whereas 'childhood' is present.

Traditional ethnological investigations of societies treated adolescents, like children, as an appearance accompanying other phenomena considered more important, such as kinship, reciprocity, cosmology and the like. This marginalisation is basically quite paradox because in the traditionally investigated societies, children and youth have always played a very central role in the lives of the informants because great emic value was attributed to them (Caputo 1995: 27).

2.3.1.1. 'Ritual' as limiting factor

Similar to Tenbruck, Erdheim (see 1984; 1991; 1996) differentiates between periods of transition in "cold" in opposition to "hot cultures". He argues that in the latter the potential of societal change in youth is set free whereas in "cold" cultures it is frozen through initiation

rituals (Erdheim 1991: 202). These rituals appear first and foremost at liminal life stages such as the proceeding from child- to adulthood. They are marked by a cyclical understanding of time and a dramaturgic inscination of death and rebirth into new social roles (ibid. 1984: 284f.). In ritual-rich societies, as a consequence, there did not exist a distinct phase of being an adolescent because of the strong ritualisation of this liminal phase (Dracklé 1996: 18). Ethnologists were traditionally occupied with investigations of non-industrialised societies. However, youth was often simply not perceived in these societies as a distinct life stage. Consequently, as emic conceptualizations have been always most vital in anthropologists' accounts, youth neither (or hardly ever) took the shape of being a research objective.

On the other hand, paradoxically contexts of rituals were the only kind of rare possibilities for young people to be present in early anthropological accounts at all. This aspect again had unfortunately some harmful consequences to studies on youth as up to the second half of the 20th century, a central anthropological interest in young people were initiation rituals. Many naturalised and idealised descriptions of such ceremonies focusing on moments of liminality have probably produced a too simplified picture about the ritual process itself and about the period of being young (Dracklé 1996: 26). Another consequence of anthropologists' preoccupation with rituals is that there are hardly any early ethnological records about young people's lives in societies without strongly established ritual structures (ibid.: 11f.).

2.3.1.2. 'Culture' as limiting factor

Another central issue becoming explicit through questioning the reasons of the marginalisation of youth has to do with definitions of anthropology's core concept of culture. In models of 'personal development', 'socialisation' and through processes of 'othering' young people are pictured as those who do not 'have culture'. As Caputo (1995: 25) highlights, young people "continue to be viewed as reproducers of adult culture". In other words they are viewed as passive recipients of society and culture. In traditional definitions of culture the question of power remained hidden for a long time. In this way the concept of culture served (and is still serving) purposes of inclusion and exclusion. (see Caputo 1995; Dracklé 1996; Amit-Talai 1995)

Furthermore their status as research objects was devalued because they were not directly seen as associated with the political economy (Caputo 1995: 32). This goes along with Amit-Talai's explanation that culture was primarily identified with overall society. However, according to developmental and socialisation theories young people were not full

members of society as they did not yet have the necessary cultural abilities (Amit-Talai 1995: 224).

A further hint related to the general marginalisation of youth research is given by Dudek when pointing to the multi- and trans-disciplinary character of such a research project:

> „Im Schnittfeld von wissenschaftlicher Forschung, politischem Krisenmanagement und voyeuristischer Medienresonanz angesiedelt, bleibt Jugendforschung ein fragiles Unternehmen das sich ihrer theoretischen Identität stets vergewissern und ihre prognostische Solidität überprüfen müsste." (Dudek 1990: 12)

Under such conditions it is very hard to establish a coherent research identity in terms of definitions, theories and research aims. This can be an obstacle in inter- as well as intra-disciplinary fields of youth research.

2.3.2. Pioneering works

Margret Mead and Ruth Benedict can be seen as the first, well known ethnographers who explicitly focused their research on young people's lives already during the first half and midst of the 20th century. Both were scholars of Franz Boas who was the initiating promoter of the paradigm of cultural relativism.

From its starting, in general two main strands were present in social science analysis: The viewpoint of social history on the one hand has always been in opposition to the developmental viewpoint of psychology on the other hand (Dudek 1990: 13). In other words, a basic contradiction between social constructivism and biological determinism becomes evident also when comparing different inquiries about youth. This controversy can be depicted connected to early anthropological concerns with children and youth too. Margaret Mead's works on young people from the Samoan Islands of the 1920ies for example can be interpreted as a necessity of her extreme relativistic position in cultural terms in order to be able to overcome the by then dominant paradigm of socio-biology (Dracklé 1996: 17, 24).

Margret Mead's works were pioneering anthropological investigations about age as well as sex and gender. She showed that generational, as well as male and female personalities are "socially produced" (Mead 1948: 311). Furthermore she dismantled educational purposes as "cultural conditioning" (Mead 1948: xii). These results stem mainly from fieldwork on the Samoan Islands and New Guinea. Her research design was innovative in the way that she did not only ask grown-up adults about children and adolescents, but rather spoke to the concerned individuals themselves.

Mead and Benedict both "recognised adolescence as a biological process" (Freeman 1983: 254). The resulting disruptive potential is treated differently in various societal contexts

and according to Mead (cited in ibid.: 254) in Samoan society "successfully muted". Adolescence in Samoan society is portrayed by Mead (1948: 1-248) as easygoing and occurring without any significant stressful ruptures. The central argument of Mead that culture is overlaying biology in terms of sources for the behaviour of (adolescent) humans is detected as an error by Freeman (1983: 268). By comparing statistical quantitative as well as qualitative data on delinquency he shows that this phenomenon appears to the same extent among youth in England, the United States and Australia (ibid.: 268). However, Freeman's bias on delinquency when talking about adolescents is again limiting in several ways: First of all it cannot be assumed that delinquency is the only indicator of how much social pressure is put on or experienced by young people. Secondly, we cannot assume a strong correlation between biology and adolescent behaviour as put forth by Freeman in order to oppose Mead's cultural perspective. However, finally it can be agreed with Freeman (ibid.: 294) that biological as well as cultural variables join forces in constructing adolescence, and it can be added that many other variables might do so, too.

2.3.3. Growing up in 'different worlds'?

Beside the fact that until recently young people were seen as powerless victims of normative pressures in any society, the myths that have been created to highlight the differences of societal contexts of socialisation are quite interesting. Therefore I want to discuss Tenbruck's theories, as an example of the double implication of the ethnological 'Self vs. Other' discourses for the field of research on youth.

At the beginning of the second half of the 20th century Tenbruck among others stressed the differences of growing up in modern industrialised societies in comparison to non-industrialised ones. In this way he was defining not only the latter ones as 'the Other', but also young people in both types of societies. As a result these discourses have been perpetuating each other. The main difference now, as the author suggests, is that in 'simple societies' young people can orientate themselves very easily and without external ruptures by the norms and values of their social and cultural immediate group (Tenbruck 1965: 22f.). The expectations from this group towards them are very clear and therefore the cultural tradition can pass on from one generation to the other without much change (ibid.: 42). In "complex societies", on the other hand, beside the family environment, additional non-local structures are influencing the ones growing up (ibid.: 23f.). These external competing forces cause disorientation and identity crises among the youth and a failure of socialisation as such (ibid.: 40ff). In a similar manner Fuchs (1976: 5) mourned a decade later for the "loss of psychic

support from the family". A fostering of attachments to peers is considered by both authors as a result of the described developments. Moreover, identity crises are put to the centre of attention. In such romanticised and sentimental arguments the past of the own society as well as societies in other geographical locations serve as spaces for projections of ideal conditions for socialising the young generation.

Up to the present there remain explicit or implicit tendencies to polarise between the lifeworlds of young people growing up in 'Western' and of the ones living in less industrialised countries. Such polarisations should be viewed critically. Instances where such contrasts are highlighted are for example discussions about a prolongation of the time of youth in Western societal contexts in contrast to remaining narratives of a shortening of childhood and youth in non-Western ones (see Tyyskä 2005: 4). The aspects of the young people's lifeworlds that are discussed differ accordingly: On the one hand studies about youth in industrialised societal contexts tend to focus on issues like institutional environments (schools, clubs etc.), becoming independent, parental vs. peer relations, deviant behaviour (criminality, drug abuse, smoking, drinking etc.) and expression of distinct styles (youth cultures, identifications etc.) (ibid.). On the other hand investigations in less industrialised contexts remain focused on health issues, employment (child labour etc.), poverty, analphabetism and the like. Such debates tend to picture youth in Western countries as enjoyable experiential time free of serious responsibilities whereas it tends to be portrayed as a hard and tuff time in non-Western ones. However, in the early 20th century there has also been established a thesis - mainly by anthropologists - that the transition to adulthood appears to be smoother and less conflict ridden in non-industrialised societies. In this vein the period of being young was romanticised and idealised like for example in the works of Margret Mead. Such perceptions were extended by the argument that colonialism destroyed the entire ordered functioning of young people's ritualised transitions (ibid.: 9). Post-colonial theories stress the component of violence which affected and still affects youth and in which they have also been taking part (ibid.).

2.3.4. Youth and cultural change

The sub-discipline of ethno-psychoanalysis and its studies on youth came to constitute a profound basis of knowledge about the interrelations between culture, youth and the unconscious. Among others, Erdheim (1984: 39) claims that it is not childhood but rather adolescence when personal attitudes towards cultural environments are consolidated. This argument is posed in opposition to the widely spread, dominant paradigm of early childhood

determinism. In Erdheim's (1991: 193ff) view, due to a supposed restructuring of personality, youth is like a second chance people get in terms of things that went wrong in their childhood. As the individual distances oneself from its family at that time, it becomes more and more integrated into wider society and its machinery of the production of unconsciousness (ibid.: 217). This occurrence makes family versus culture appear as antagonism, whereas a second strand of scholars tends to describe their relation as continuum (ibid.: 231ff). Any of these strands can be criticised for understanding family as an isolated, static and homogenous block. On the contrary it can be argued that first of all family has to be viewed as linked with other societal institutions per se. Secondly, behind this paradigm lies a wrong assumption of a one-way parent-on-child-determinism. Psychological conversation analysis, among others has shown that such an assumption is more than overdated (see a. o. Grotevant & Cooper 1998: 5).

However, the vital point of Erdheim's theory is the potential for social change which he locates in adolescence crisis.[3] He claims that due to adolescents' Nazism in terms of almighty fantasies their potential for creative and innovative action is accordingly very high (Erdheim 1984: 301ff). In this vein many studies focused on the revolutionary potential among youth and young people's contributions to social change. As an example for an empirical study which dealt with Erdheim's approaches I want to mention the recent anthropological work of Kirsten Salein (2005) titled *"Das Leben ist keine Himbeere: Perspektiven Jugendlicher in Kaliningrad"*. Salein described the situation of students in a post-Soviet context where 'waiting' in sense of staying calm is the informants' main strategy to cope with the differing expectations with which they are confronted on a global scale. The author shows that their actions in all kinds of negotiation processes have severe implications for the broader society.

2.3.5. Recent occupations

Jules Henry (1965 cited in Wulff 1995: 3) can be considered as the initiator of a 'youth anthropology'. Recent anthropological works are influenced by a general theory of practice, which was established by scholars like Giddens (1979), Sahlins (1981) and Bourdieu (1979) (cited in Dracklé 1996: 34). These investigations emphasise the mutual relatedness of actions and structures and show how young people actively socialise and consequently participate in struggles over power.

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[3] It has to be considered that Erdheim himself experienced the revolutions of the 1960ies and 70ies in Western societies led by young adults. Therefore the idea for his theories might partly stem from these upheavals.

Interestingly most investigations on youth are currently carried out in the home countries of the researchers. This is also true for studies on Turkish and Kurdish youth. Currently there exists a much wider array of empirical investigations of young people considered as 'Turkish/Kurdish' (mainly second or third generation migrants) living in Germany, Austria or elsewhere in Europe. This observation has some wider implications. It seems that the initial concern with young people from lower classes transformed into a concern with young immigrants who entered the field as popular research objects. This development might mirror some general social transformations of the last decades and the new questions in terms of social organisation they brought about and their appeal for scientific analysis.

According to these new challenges various authors were first of all occupied with radically deconstructing concepts such as childhood and youth as it was already initiated by Ariès in the 1960ies. One such example in the German ethnological literature is the edited volume *"Jung und wild: Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von Kindheit und Jugend"* by Dorle Dracklé (1996). It dismantles youth as space for romantic and exotic projections. The contributions show a great scope of disciplinary and thematical approaches.

The volume *"Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective"* edited by Amit-Talai and Wulff (1995) is devoted to analysis of varying youth cultural productions. One contribution to this volume highlights that culture is more located in activities rather than in communities (Amit-Talai 1995: 227), so to speak more in 'doing' rather than 'being'. Such new and more dynamic conceptualisations of culture legitimise studying young people's cultural agency without forgetting about the remaining restraints of structural contexts.

A comparable German version to the volume by Amit-Talai and Wulff is the one which was published eight years later by Luig (2003). The contributions of *"Ethnologie der Jugend"* rank around unconventional learning settings, identity issues related to performative practice and the body as a medium of societal criticism. Interestingly even this recent work mirrors a male bias in studies on youth which the editors explain with the argument that young male persons are obviously in the public sphere still more present rather than young females (ibid.: 7).

It can be observed that in the latest anthropological works the voice of criticising established inter- and trans-disciplinary paradigms such as developmental and socialisation theories has become stronger and stronger.[4]

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[4] An example of this kind would be the empirical research "*Jugendliche in Bogotá: eine ethnologische Studie zu Lebenswelt und Zukunftsangst*" by Anna I. Streissler (1999) just to name one among others.

2.4. Youth beyond science

It became obvious that the scientific gaze at youth was from the beginning an ethnological one (Dudek 1990: 24), meaning that it involved processes of 'othering' as defined by Abu-Lughod (1991). In this sense young people have been constructed in relation to the adult researchers' standpoints as the 'other', marked by inferiority due to being portrayed as 'wild', 'incomplete', 'dangerous', 'incapable' and the like (Dracklé 1996: 7-13; Wulff 1995: 2-6). Among others, Erdheim (1991: 229f.) warned about the consequences in terms of severe limitations which a "pathologisation of adolescence" brings along.

When looking at ongoing past and present public and private discussions about youth, worrying sentiments can be identified in almost all cases. The broad offer of popular guidance-literature for parents, teachers, youth workers and the like on primarily issues of 'how to deal with young people' is a further proof for societal serious concerns. The deviant potential of young people has been stressed in scientific as well as non-scientific literature up to the present. Behind these concerns, certain relations of power can be recognised. They refer to the question of how young people can be kept under control. This aspect of knowledge production in terms of power is highlighted by Dudek (1990: 16) for the case of Austria and Germany at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. He shows, with referring to Hornstein (1982 cited in ibid.), how the scientifically produced knowledge is put to political and pedagogical uses. The same aspect is highlighted by Dracklé (1996: 22) while discussing the ethnological interests in education methods of non-Western societies. She furthermore observed that the cultural construction of 'youth' is accompanied by inner societal struggles over power and pressures of social conformity in any place or at any time (ibid.: 22f.). At this point it has to be considered that youth has mainly been treated in terms of problems which were perceived by adults (Wulff 1995: 5). These thoughts lead to the final question if all scientific and non-scientific concerns about youth in the end serve to keep up the established exercise of power of the older over the younger.

2.5. The remaining question of definition

As Tyyskä (2005: 3) stated, worldwide no distinct and unique definition of the category of youth exists. As the demographic structures, cultural ideas and established laws in different places vary so do the official as well as unofficial ideas about youth. There are many terms in use in order to refer to young people including 'children', 'teenagers', 'adolescents', 'young adults' and the like. Some of these labels have stronger and more specific cultural implications than others. For example Thurlow (2005: 4) highlights that the term 'adolescent'

derived primarily from psychological occupations about psychosocial developmental processes in Western societal contexts. At times different categories might overlap each other and they might be flexibly applied to various instances (ibid.). Today the most dominant official definition on a global scale is the one by the United Nations from 1985, where youth was defined as including people aged between 15 and 25 years (ibid.). However, it should be kept in mind that this is only one possible definition among many.

Various debates form at times around arguments on an extension of the period of being young due to prolonged education and on other occasions they are about a shortening of this age period due to requirements of taking on part-time jobs and growing economical insecurities. Moreover it is observable that challenges which were said to be unique to the transitional stage of adolescence can be detected to similar degrees continuously spanning throughout adulthood too (White & Wyn 2004: x). Such challenges might include negotiating identities, flexible adaptions to changing social and cultural environments and the like. However, most of the time a romantic notion that in earlier times young people benefitted from a more stable and secure social environment with more fixed roles remains. Challenges like the ones mentioned above have accompanied humans ever since from birth until death. It is limiting to view them as recent phenomena or as being relevant in only one stage of life such as youth. As Thurlow (2005: 4f.) puts it "the crisis of adolescence" can no longer be hold up as such because identifications are not a particular task reserved only for this age span.

One of the main reasons for the broad absence of youth in anthropology and other disciplines is the extreme inconsistency of its definition. 'A child' or 'a grown up' are much easier to identify rather than 'an adolescent'. Because of the inherent liminality of this life stage it is often played down as something everybody has to go through. Anthropologists seem to prefer to wait with investigations in order to look at the 'final product of the adult'.

Today it is common sense among the scientific community that being young is a relative ascription. A label like this always needs its counterpart(s), whether they are implicitly or explicitly present. The stage of youth gains its meaning only in relation to other stages like childhood, middle or old age or the like. As these categories cannot even be captured and frozen by biological definitions, they are subject to contextual use. This is true for informal conversations as well as for example for published scientific literature. When looking at the latter area, various terms and their uses can be recognised. Just to mention some examples Giddens (2006: 176f.) speaks in an introductory book about sociology of "The Teenager" and "Young Adulthood" whereas Arnett (2004) uses the term "Adolescents" and "Adolescence". There is a tendency that such labels reflect the authors' central theoretical

concerns and at the same time they carry several theoretical implications. It can be observed that in psychological inquiries it is more often referred to 'adolescence' whereas in recent sociological and anthropological ones 'youth' is more common.

Basically all the labels seem to have a common ground, namely the generational aspect. All societies over the world differentiate in one way or another between 'older' and 'younger' people. However, detailed definitions vary. In Western dictionaries adolescence might be defined as the period between childhood and adulthood, starting with puberty, the time when sexual reproduction becomes possible (Roche 1976: 18). However, these occurrences can vary from individual to individual. Even when taking into account the developmental theory with its focus on biological aspects an exact definition is doomed to fail if we ask what exactly it is that is 'growing'. As Roche (1976) showed, several human physical characteristics do not stop growing until old age. Another uncertainty of the age criteria becomes self-evident as the period of adolescence has been subject to extensions in its various applications during the last decades (see a. o. Tenbruck 1965: 53).

According to Luig and Seebode (2003: 11) the factor age and differentiations between life stages cannot be denied entirely. At the same time subjective and collective perspectives of social actors must be considered. Common connotations as a period of orientation, of experimenting with different social roles and the like might apply not in all societal contexts or also to other periods of life.

Tenbruck stressed the relevance of age-roles in a society. By viewing young people as social group their distinctiveness is considered as being attached to certain behavioural expectations, related norms, values and the like within the relationships to other people of the wider society (Tenbruck 1965: 68-70). Consequently ideal role expectations can be taken also as parameters for distinguishing between children, adolescents, adults and other social categories.

Caputo (1995) pointed to some further variables to be considered beside age. The outcomes of several investigations on youth have shown that power, autonomy and consumerism in terms of access to money or also to other resources should be taken more seriously into consideration in defining youth or children (ibid.: 35f.). Recently a trend has been established to define youth not in terms of age but rather as "a social status" regarding the dependence on others for material as well as immaterial kind of support (Marquardt 1998 cited in Teyyskä 2005: 3f.). Such considerations highlight that age is socially and culturally constructed within specific historical contexts (see a. o. White & Wyn 1997).

Finally, different terms have to stay subject to contextual definitions. My preference of using the term 'young people' is due to that it may apply to children, youth, adolescents and young adults. This potential for inclusiveness makes its application in various specific empirical contexts easier as it allows to look at more complex interweavings. However, the overall focus of this thesis is laid on the age span between 15 and 30 because this was the age range of the majority of people who were attending the investigated youth centre.

3. Youth in Turkey

Nowadays about 23% of the whole population are between 15 and 24 years old in Turkey (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a). During the last decades the focus of researches about young people living in Turkey remained in most cases limited to issues of drug abuse, crime, education, family relations and (un-) employment.

Fernea (1995: 470) stated that "puberty no longer marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood" in Muslim Middle Eastern societies. What emerges according to the author is more and more a Western notion of 'adolescence' and 'youth', indicated by a rise in the age of marriage, prolonged education and the like (ibid.). As in all industrialised societies the transformation from childhood to adulthood in Turkish societal contexts is not marked by specific initiation rituals but is rather fluent and hard to define. However, marriage can be seen as the most explicit event causing a change in status and making having become an 'adult' irreversible. Neyzi (2001: 415) points out that nowadays being young in Turkey primarily means not being married yet. Especially for inner city and poorer uneducated class contexts it also means being male because in general certain identifications of youth in the communal public often remain denied to women (Boratav 2005: 213).

3.1. Youth studies in Turkey

Far more scientific (mainly sociological and educational) investigations in Turkey have been occupied with children rather than youth. During the second half of the 20th century the body of undertaken researches expanded continuously, covering mainly areas such as changes in demographic developments, socialisation, education and values of children as perceived by parents and society. From the 1970ies onwards a discourse developed about 'overpopulation' on the one hand and 'children's rights' (according to the UN definition) on the other hand in academic fields (Gürsoy 1995: 199). As highlighted by Gürsoy (ibid.: 200) the Turkish case is quite paradox as there exists a high infant mortality rate alongside a high GNP.

Defining the lives of young people as distinct scientific field was promoted globally alongside the youth movements during the 1960ies. An example for an early study which was even already international in scope is the one carried out by Kağıtçıbaşı (1961), dealing with social norms and authoritarianism among Turkish in comparison to American adolescents. A first explicit national youth study undertaken in Turkey was "*Gecekondu Gençliği*" by Birsen Gökçe in 1976 (cited in Aksungur 2006: 61). In this study Gökçe investigated the situations of young people living in poor squatter housing areas (*gecekondu* means literally 'placed/built overnight') in Ankara taking into account urbanisation processes, socio-economic circumstances as well as family and friend networks.

In 1998 a broad investigation about "Turkish Youth" was published which should serve to adjust policies accordingly. It was found that young people spend most of their free time at home; around 70% are not taking part in any social club or association. Though the majority can be called secularised their moralities are highly influenced by religious and broader traditional values. Accordingly, family relations have priority. It was concluded that in general they find themselves inbetween modernity and tradition, resulting in contradictory identities. The main problems they are facing include unemployment, terror and educational shortcomings. (Aksungur 2006: 65) Several results of the study of 1998 correspond with the material I gained in Mardin. However, modern and traditional values should not be seen as entirely exclusive to each other. Besides, not being able to apply such a distinction thoroughly, I would rather claim that young people possess a high potential to internalise any norms and values they encounter to their own ends in creative ways.

The biggest survey in quantitative terms on youth so far was carried out in 2007 by YADA (*Yaşama Dair Vakıf*). This "State of Youth Survey" provided the basic data for the UN Developmental Report called "Youth in Turkey" which was published in 2008. In this study the opinion of young people about several aspects of their lives was taken seriously as they came to be involved partly as active researches as well. The findings of this report will be discussed separately. In the survey as well as in the report youth is defined as those aged between 15 and 24. The age of 15 marks the lower border from which participation in the work force is defined as legal in Turkey, whereas the age of 24 can be seen as an unofficial cultural marker of possibly having finished education and being about to get married. Of course in reality these societal expectations of founding an own family and participating in the work force are fulfilled often at other ages or not at all.

3.2. Relevant demographic implications

Turkey faced enormous demographic and economic developments from the founding of the republic up to these days. Those ongoing developments included and still include rural exodus alongside drastic urbanisation processes. According to the 2007 population census 70.5 million people are currently living in the national territory of Turkey, whereby about 30% live in rural areas. Those being illiterate compose around 10% of the total population. The average fertility rate is 2.2 (born children per women). (UNHDR 2008: 87f.)

Turkey is in the midst of a demographic transition process. The last decades have been significantly marked by decreasing birth rates, lower child mortality rates and heightened life expectancies. By 2023 Turkey's working age population is assumed to consist of 70% of the total population as the vast amount of young people will have reached their middle age by then. This unique historical constellation of the near future is called "demographic window of opportunity" in academic discourses. It means that while the overall population growth rate and especially the one of young people decline, the group of those at middle age will come to its peak. Therefore youth needs to be treated as the focal issue in all present policy regards. After this peak the elderly will come to form the biggest part of the population and a change in policies can be expected accordingly. The biggest challenge of this demographic trend in the near future consists in creating enough employment opportunities. In the worst case heightened unemployment could become the bitter reality. Moreover, since the 1990ies Turkey has faced new forms of poverty as the big cities are less and less able to provide newly arriving migrants with the basic necessities for livelihood. Decreasing support from kinship networks beside absent support from the state leads to situations of being deprived from a home, job and nutrition. (UNHDR 2008: 87ff)

Another serious demographic issue concerning especially young people is the suicide rate. In Turkey as in many other industrialised countries it is highest among 15 to 24 year old persons (being 25.6% in 2008) (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a). However, assumable significant dark numbers remain hidden as suicide is a cultural and religious taboo (in Islamic belief it is seen as the worst sin). During my own fieldwork period I could gain no proper first hand information about the situation in Mardin. The local people I asked about it said that it is very low and not a 'problem' among young people.

It is claimed in popular discourse that most suicides occur in the south eastern region of Turkey where also honour killings[5] of (young) women remain widespread. Patriarchy and

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[5] Such incidences prevail primarily in rural areas. However, as Güneş (2008) among others showed, such concepts imply much more than 'just simple' physical violence against women. A complex ethos codex underpins such occurrences.

poverty have been identified as the most influential factors (Bağlı & Sev'er 2003). Restrictive social surroundings allowing hardly any agency for own decisions among young people (for example in terms of choosing one's marriage partner) often contrast with alternatives they get to know on TV or elsewhere (ibid.). However, one should deal carefully with such discourses as they tend to reproduce stereotyped prejudice about the south eastern region. It should be kept in mind that suicides as well as honour killings happen all over Turkey and are not entirely restricted to a single region only.

3.3. Insights into socio-cultural norms and values

In order to understand the conceptions of youth in Turkey in general, basic logics of the wider social order have to be considered. When it comes to 'doing youth' several forces intersect with each other, such as academic, demographical, political, economical, religious and cultural ones as well as further more. Due to their heightened significance within social groupings in Turkey, this chapter pays more attention to some of them rather than to others. My intention is not to picture 'the Turkish societal order' as a homogenous single one because it always varies according to the concrete life circumstances among individuals in time and place. Some general tendencies can be recognised, but in the end they have to be viewed as ideal types. Therefore the following characterisations mirror nothing more than as 'tradition[6]' propagated values and norms within various Muslim Kurdish-Turkish socio-cultural contexts. Their application may be more likely in rural and conservative settings than in others.

The following arguments of this chapter which are selected from works based on fieldmaterial from different regions of Turkey are considered as relevant[7] also within the broader urban context of my field site which will be introduced afterwards.

3.3.1. Patriarchal connectedness

The research in Mardin showed that close family members and partly relatives from the wider kin-network are considered as very important by individuals. This scheme of being ideologically tightly related to one's closer kin becomes most relevant in actions set by an individual as their consequences affect not only the individual alone but its associates as well. Therefore decisions are generally made collectively rather than individually. This logic applies not only for closer and wider kin, but also for other entities like a neighbourhood, a village or the like. Stress is always laid on the individual as being part of several broader

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[6] "Tradition" like "history" is not a product of the past but must be rather understood a "response to requirements of the present" (Eriksen 2002: 72).
[7] They might be reflecting (parts of) realities of interactions and/or ideological orientations.

social groupings. According to the specific context a certain group membership can be stressed over others.

Neither idealised Western conceptions of individualism nor individualism/collectivism dichotomies prove to be fruitful when analysing Kurdish and Turkish societal contexts. Approaches of better use are those which take interweavings of being an individual and at the same time being part of various broader entities into account.

For Turkey, among others Möwe (2000: 242ff) showed that autonomy and independence are perceived as relatively worthless whereas dependence and an authoritarian social order are positively correlated. This strong principal of reciprocity which appears at different levels of interactions serves to integrate society. The status of the individual is intrinsically interwoven with the one of the various groups it is part of (ibid.: 267f.). This view recognises the fact that an individual can only exist as such through the recognition and appreciation by others. This is the central principle how an individual can gain and also lose status like honour or prestige.

Based on a research about urban working-class Arab families in Lebanon Joseph (1993) developed a model of patriarchal connectivity. In this model the self appears to be extended and fluid as it is related to others. In this sense other people are seen as extensions of oneself. Joseph argues against the thesis of several (mainly Western) scholars that such relatedness is dysfunctional in a way that it hinders individual maturation. The lived experience of connectivity is seen by her as culturally linked to patriarchy. (ibid.: 461-478)

For Turkey Kandiyoti (1988) defines such a male dominated social order as related to agricultural livelihood and extended family forms. In this way patriarchal values are inherently included in traditional Kurdish tribal structures. Men with their role as providers are supposed to take control of women, who are perceived as the weaker sex (Möwe 2000: 100; Delaney 1991: 8f.). Several authors showed that this kind of gendered ruling system is not only kept working by men alone, but that rather women also contribute accordingly, at times with passive, at other times with active agreement and of course they also express disagreement in various ways (see a. o. Strasser 1994).

Patriarchal relatedness has been explained by many scholars with the "honour and shame complex" which is claimed to be a characteristic of Mediterranean countries in distributing resources where they are rare (a. o. Delaney 1991; Möwe 2000; Baştuğ 2002). 'Honour' can be described as social capital which can be achieved through non-economical ways such as being a morally integrated person, which means acting according to the dominant moral values and norms. It has to be considered that gender identity and gender

roles are tightly related to social prestige (Möwe 2000: 270). In this sense the behaviours of women affect the honour of their associated men and the household significantly. If a husband's wife or daughter does not stick to the rules (for example goes out alone without permission of her husband/father) this brings shame not only on the 'deviant' woman. It moreover decreases the degree of honour of the concerned male person as he is considered as not being able to carry out his task of supervising his female associates properly. Metaphorically tightly linked to perceptions of honour and shame are those of cleanliness and dirtiness (*temizlik ve kirlilik*) in many places ofTurkey (a. o. Strasser 1994). Somebody who is clean and acts to keep up his cleanliness is able to accumulate honour, whereas dirt brings along shame. Standards of measurement for defining how much honour a person possesses can vary according to subjective judgements (Möwe 2000: 269f.). First and foremost the functioning of such an honour and shame complex needs an audience who are observing the individuals' behaviours (ibid.: 273f.). In Turkey this social environment in which an individual is embedded is referred to as *çevre*. Consequently people need to be aware that their behaviour is observed and talked about (local gossip) constantly. They need these observers to gain status, but these observers are also potentially dangerous as their judge can mean a loss in status as well (ibid.: 271).

However, this gender-based model of honour and shame has been criticised by several scholars (a. o. Herzfeld 1987 cited in Mitchell 2002: 280) for being hegemonic due to its tendency to exoticise and marginalise the Mediterranean region and its inhabitants. From a feminist perspective it has been argued that it is only representing an official version of gender ideology while supporting the patriarchal status quo. On the other hand local women might be much more active in the creation of society and morality. Therefore this model should be evaluated especially in present urban contexts as dominant version of gender roles are existing alongside multiple other gender identities and roles. (Mitchell 2001: 280f.)

3.3.2. Relational individuation

First and foremost people within but also outside the kin-network should be treated according to the principles of love and respect (*sevgi ve saygı*). However, these relations are hierarchically patterned primarily along age. Generally speaking, *sevgi* (love) is given from the older to the younger, whereas *saygı* (respect) is shown towards the older. Such hierarchical patterns can be observed in gestures like kissing the hand of an elderly or in addressing them in a formal manner. Both principles are mutually dependent on each other. (Möwe 2000: 247ff)

Such expressions of generational relatedness among individuals also shape ideas about a 'socialisation' of children. Socialisation is not viewed as individual task but rather as a societal one whereby the 'outcomes' should be of use for society (Strasser 1994: 228). Due to an inherent assumption of a one sided process whereby adults influence young people in an absolute way the socialisation term has recently been criticised by many authors (a. o. Streissler 1999).

For describing processes of adolescent identity development as an interplay of individual, relational and contextual forces Grotevant and Cooper (1998) use the term of "individuation". This concept considers family communication patterns and adolescent identity explorations and includes individuality as well as connectedness (ibid.: 10). Therefore the term of individuation shall be used instead of 'socialisation' for describing young peoples' experiences in their socio-cultural environment and negotiations of their societal positions. These are all processes which do not end at any age.

To characterise family contexts and individuation processes in Turkey Kağıtçıbaşı (a. o. 2002) developed the "model of emotional interdependence". It is claimed to be relevant within cultures of relatedness which experience industrialisation and urbanisation processes whereby fertility, utilitarian values of children and son preferences are decreasing. Furthermore, through authoritative parenting as well as a control and autonomy orientation in child rearing an intergenerational/familial emotional interdependence becomes fostered. As a result individuals are perceived as autonomous relational selves. This model can explain how traditional family cultures can resist radical change (in terms of modernisation) but at the same time adapt in new ways to varying circumstances. (ibid.)

Such related individuation processes tend to result finally in strong intergenerational solidarity networks. Among others Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2000) showed that such networks relieve pressure from state welfare institutions. Another point is that often only little space remains for individual self-reliance because the distribution of resources is primarily defined by the authority of the older members (ibid.: 541). In this way kin ties can have supportive and at the same time oppressive effects.

3.3.3. Intersecting age and gender stratifications

As in many societies all over the world, also in Turkish ones, stratification by age alongside gender marks the lives of individuals significantly. Illona Möwe (2000: 13) who carried out fieldwork in the provincial town of Aydın, claimed that gender provides one of the main logics for constructing social space. Many other anthropological investigations carried out in

different regions of Turkey gave proof to this argument (a. o. Delaney 1991; Yalçın-Heckmann 1991; Strasser 1994; White 1994). Moreover the gender logic is intersecting with others such as those of age, ethnicity or the like. According to the specific situation one of them can be more dominant over others. For example women can overcome their inferiority of being female with old age or higher education.

Overall generational differences are recognised and matter in Kurdish and Turkish societal contexts. As highlighted by Neyzi (2001: 412) generational identities being indicated for example in kinship terms have ever since been important. The ideas about these generations, what characterises them, what they are capable and not capable of, how they themselves and others towards them should behave and so forth is to a great degree influenced by religious as part of cultural thought. First and foremost children are perceived as a gift from God (M'Daghri 1995: 31). In the Sharia there exists a separate code about the rights of children. When looking at the outline of this code as discussed by M'Daghri (ibid.: 30-42) it becomes apparent that Islamic scholars always have been primarily concerned with the legality of a child (which appears to be mainly related with the marital status of the parents). Promoted laws try to ensure care for those being born with an 'illegal' status. Through such juridical considerations an identity label of children as distinct was enforced since the beginnings of Islamic scripturalist enterprises. Further implications of Islamic belief for being young will be highlighted beneath after some general considerations.

The main stages in an individual's life according to age appear to be slightly different for males and females in Turkey. According to common sense a woman is first of all a ç*ocuk* (child) until her marriage is forwarded, then she becomes a *gelin* (bride), after marriage a *hanım* (wife) and finally, when her grandchildren are born a *nine* (grandmother). As we see there is not a direct stage of adolescence reserved for a girl. Being a *gelin* could mean being in late adolescence. Accordingly for girls adolescence primarily means getting ready for marriage. The message conveyed to them before this important event includes two main aspects: On the one hand they are believed to be a sexual danger and on the other hand an unknowing, dependent creature as male sexuality is perceived to be more powerful than the female one (Yalçın-Heckmann 1991: 164; Strasser 1994: 229). Consequently such images serve to accustom the girl to her role of submission to the control of male and elderly. Traditionally a girl stays in her parents' household until she gets married. During that time she has to obey her parents' (traditionally mainly her father's) rules and is supervised by them. After marriage her husband is responsible for supervising her. (see ibid.)

In comparison, the broader life stages through which a boy passes include being a *çocuk* (child), being a *delikanlı* (crazy blooded), *genç* (young adult) and finally *ihtiyar* (old man). Between the ages of one to six years a boy's circumcision takes place, which is nowadays only rarely accompanied by formal festivities (Strasser 1994: 132). The stage of *delikanlı* resembles the idea of youth as being a time of craziness, when boys do not carry serious responsibility so that they can collect experiences freely (ibid.: 101). The descriptive term 'crazy blooded' implies with its reference to something material like blood that this stage of life is thought of as a natural one. So it is suggested that during this time it lies in the 'biological nature' of a young boy not to behave according to the rules. His physiological development is seen as causing his behaviour. The habit of inappropriate behaviour is legitimised in a way that biology is socially instrumentalised. This time of 'craziness' ends for males in general with the military service and/or with marriage. The military service can be viewed as a kind of modern initiation ritual for young males (ibid.: 132).

3.3.4. The danger of adolescent sexuality

The image of the human being in Islam is a pragmatic, realistic one, whereby humans have *nefs* (soul/heart/passion) on the one hand and *akıl* (reason/mind) on the other (Möwe 2000: 79ff). Consequently humans are basically able to keep their passion under control. The integration into society fulfils this task in the wider sense. This ability of acting according to reason is only attributed to them after they have passed sexual maturity (ibid.; Strasser 1994: 202). From then onwards they themselves carry societal responsibility. As it will be discussed below this task starts with adolescence. In the Islamic tradition such a personal religious maturation process should lead to inner peace by integrating the norms of religion and culture (Lapidus 1978: 97-112). After having gained the biological conditions for reproduction males and females who are not relatives should not interfere with each other. Consequently they should be socialised according to principles of gender segregation (Strasser 1994: 235ff). In a similar vein Yalçın-Heckmann (1991: 162) argued that male and female children mix in games and the like and are treated in quite the same way by their parents until puberty. Although they still have enough possibilities to meet the other sex during various occasions, the sex roles become much more differenciated afterwards (ibid.: 163).

According to Islamic belief, especially at the time when sexual reproduction becomes possible in a physiological sense, the *nefs* (passion) of those concerned is seen as a particular danger to the integrity of society. Therefore special attention has to be devoted to keeping the sexuality of adolescents under control, in particular traditionally the one of young girls as the

sexual potential of women in terms of being a 'danger' is in general estimated to be higher than the one of men (Yalçın-Heckmann 1991: 164; Möwe 2000: 104).

As already mentioned traditionally the sexual danger which stems from adolescents is tried to be kept under control by fostering segregations between young males and females, though this can of course never be fully realised in reality. Another form of controlling sexuality can be recognised in veiling practices (Möwe 2000: 33). According to certain interpretations of Muslim belief young females are supposed to cover their hair from their first period onwards. Due to these perceptions of sexual danger young people are also tried to be married of as soon as possible as only within the institution of marriage one's sexual desires can be satisfied in a socially and culturally accepted way. However, all these kinds of obsessions with controlling human sexuality paradoxically stress it as 'a problem' and in this way bring it continually to peoples' consciousness (ibid.; Strasser 1994: 240).

3.3.5. Gendered age roles

Yalçın-Heckmann (1991:159ff) who carried out fieldwork in the Kurdish village of Hakkari explained very well how intersecting gender and age rankings are reflected in the division of labour and the production as well as consumption patterns. According to the author such rankings become evident in sitting orders, eating habits (e.g. who eats first and how much) or the possession of prestigious goods for example (ibid.).

In one of her accounts White (1995) described the daily routine of a 16-year old girl living in a migrant family's household in Istanbul in an illustrative way. Being the oldest girl among her siblings and not yet married her day is filled with household tasks like preparing meals, cleaning, washing and so on. Besides she works in her father's knitting workshop without receiving any salary. Her tasks and gained skills reflect the requirements of a girl of this age in order to become 'a good housewife' in the traditional sense. The girl's statement "I work, but I have no value" expresses the experienced gender inequalities in terms of, for a girl, not being able to gain social status before marriage and having children. (ibid.: 257-268)

Cases of girls staying at home, who are neither in education nor working, are widespread in Turkey, especially in more traditional conservative circles. Several female siblings of (primarily male) young people from the youth centre belonged to this group of girls known as '*ev kızları*' (house girls). They are between 18 and 24 years old, single and of different class background. By preserving their virginity and training their household skills they wait to find a spouse or - in most cases – they wait until a 'good' spouse is found for

them. They appear to be a muted group as they are not visible in the public and their voices remain unheard. (Lüküslü & Çelik 2007)

3.4. Youth and the Turkish state

Young people have ever since played a significant role in political developments in Turkey. Most of the times it was the educated youth who was challenging the state. Towards the end of the Ottoman Empire it was a military elite grouping called the 'Young Turks' who brought about the end of this Empire and established the Turkish Republic. The period between 1950 and 1980 was dominated by violent fights of leftist versus rightist youth movements and military putsches. Consequently young people were perceived by the public primarily as rebels and as a threat. After 1980 they took over more and more the role of apolitical consumers. Only recently a transition from being an object to being a subject again is taking place as a process towards increased political participation of young people according to democratic ideas. (Neyzi 2001: 412)

3.4.1. A public holiday as a case of promoting national(-ist) sentiments

The major part of the present Turkish state's citizens is of young age and therefore a national notion of 'Turkish youth' plays a significant role in and on various political spheres as well as levels. In this section some implications on the national level shall be discussed on the basis of the material gained from a participant observation of the Turkish national 'Youth and Sport Holiday' (*Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı*). According to Möwe (2000: 170ff) who included several national holidays in her discussion of a Turkish town, they all have not only a national coding but also a religious and gendered one. While agreeing with Möwe's approach for interpreting such events I would add that we should not overlook age codes.

The annual public holiday '*Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı*' was introduced by the founder of the Turkish Republic M. K. Atatürk. Today it aims at commemorating this important politician and his attitude towards young people. In his political ideology the youth of the Turkish nation has always received special consideration as it was regarded as the future generation to keep up the established republic in a practical and ideological sense. At that time the young Turkish citizens were seen as the main actors and carriers of social change when it came to the 'modernisation' of Turkey which was about to be primarily implemented from above (see UNHDR 2008: 14). Special appreciation was shown towards youth in order to make sure that they would follow 'the right way', meaning carrying on the established modern and nationalist Kemalist ideas (see Neyzi 2001: 412).

Nowadays, on the mentioned special day of the year during spring, festivities celebrating 'the Turkish youth' are taking place all over the country. I had the chance to attend such an official festivity during the time of my fieldwork. The event took place in the biggest sport stadium of Mardin in the morning of May 19th, 2010. The whole place was full of military, police, politicians and last but not least local families. On one side of the tribune there was a special gated central area resevered for the most important politicians and high-ranking officers with their bodyguards. On the opposite side of the tribune a group of young people was constantly busy with holding up coloured tables. They changed the colours and arrangements throughout the program so that at any time a certain 'lively' image, for example flower patterns, the Turkish flag, wordings like '*Mardin*' or '*Anadolu*' (Anatolia), would be visible to the viewers. The parents, children, young people and other visitors had free access to the stadium. In between the seated or standing crowds certain persons were walking around selling little snacks, sweets, drinks and Turkish flags. The official program started with different groups of young people lining up on the central grass. Afterwards a procession of the various groups around the grass was accompanied by the music of a military orchestra marching in the front followed by a group of flag wavers. What followed were different performances accompanied by partly global English and partly traditional Turkish music. A group of Judo and Taekwondo practitioners of mixed sex and age showed some 'stunts', followed by a group of young males performing with flags. Moreover a group of young girls with decorated hoops and several traditional dancing groups gave their best. All the acting groups were accompanied by a few adults who gave directions. Already weeks before all those groups have been training their choreographies in their schools and free time clubs for 'the big day'. Another scenario of the festivity was the awarding of trophies to the best students according to their grades. In between all these show acts the voice of a woman was reciting quotations from M. K. Atatürk.

Overall the atmosphere of this day was filled with excitement, fascination and liveliness. By cheerily impressing the audience their belief in Kemalism and the Turkish nation on the one hand and into the young citizens on the other hand should be fostered. With the exception of the individual school success awarding, the latter were mainly presented in a collective way as the majority of the program consisted of group performances. Creating and exposing such a collectiveness can be understood as a basic building block for propagating national(-ist) sentiments. Möwe (2000: 172) interprets those living formations as a moving body symbolising the nation whereby individual young people are entirely wrapped up in it. Moreover, in this context 'Turkish youth' is constructed as a distinct group of society.

However, it remains represented as a muted group, controlled by adults as the whole show acts of the festivity were orderly planned and supervised by grown-ups. When interpreting the whole event from this point of view the young people appear to be nothing more than marionettes who act according to adult will. The representation of 'the Turkish youth' remained furthermore thematically focused on sport and educational achievements. With such official rewarding of good performances in those fields, others should be motivated to achieve the like. Through participating in education and sport young people remain under the control of grown-ups. Within these arrays beside other implications, their political ideas can be directed and shaped accordingly. As Illona Möwe (ibid.) highlights, when interpreting her field material, national festivities (like the presented example) are most important for the education of young citizens, especially if children and young people appear to be integrated as main actors (on a stage). Therefore it is a lot about persuading the latter.

Behind such special public events the schooling system in Turkey as well as the foundation of youth sport (*Gençlik Spor Vakfı*) can be seen in general as primarily serving national education. Having gained popularisation since early republican periods these institutions (beside others) try to transmit Kemalist values up to the present.

3.4.2. Military service

Young males are obliged to do a military service which many of them do not want to. The military being an institution independent from the government plays a significant role within Turkish societal contexts up to these days. Several positive attributes of youthfulness which are commonly related to the institution of the military can fuel ideological images of power and braveness. However, such a relation is heavily gender biased. Youth in relation to military tends to include young males and exclude young females. In this regard such a linkage can be used as an ideological tool of meeting patriarchal ends. Each of the concepts profiting from the other in the way that the military gains from its association with youth in terms of being fresh and vital, whereas, again in a metaphorical sense, the concept of (male) youth gains from its link with the military in terms of (physical) power.

3.4.3. Youth policies and young people's political attitudes

Interestingly the only state institution which is officially occupied with the issues of young people is the one subsumed under the General Directorate of Youth and Sports. It is claimed that youth policies do not exist to a satisfying extent in Turkey. Efforts towards them come mainly from below rather than from above. Such grassroots movements have received

academic support only recently during the last decade. The content of their proposed programs and policies and their organisational structure itself is heavily oriented on already existing European (EU) examples and visions.

In the latest UN Human Development Report on Turkey it is stated that various areas and aspects of social life need to be improved in Turkey to ensure a sustainable livelihood for the future generations. For such kinds of requirements young people are viewed as the main targets as their potential for realising social change is supposed to be the highest. They are referred to as the "most vibrant section of society" who "constitute the prime driver for change" (UNHDR 2008: 2). Whereas the youth has been highly praised and instrumentalised for nationalist ends during the early years of the Turkish republic under the modernization efforts of Atatürk, the scope and effectiveness of policies on youth decreased seriously during the second part of the 20th century. One of the reasons can be seen in the interruptions to democracy including various military coupes up to the 1980s. From the 1980s onwards young people were affected by several constitutional restrictions and the spreading, popular image of perceiving them as 'dangerous'. In general, if present at all youth policies tend to be problem-based. Only in the ninth developmental plan (2009-2013) youth appears as a separate target group. The age of voting has been lowered to 18 years only during the last decade. Today a specific law devoted to youth as well as a national youth council are still missing in Turkey. (ibid.: 2-18)

On the other hand a lack of political effort by young people themselves can be observed. Only 4,7% of the young people are active in a political party. Overall, political activism remains limited to university students in most cases. The NGO scene is still work in progress, as suggested by its low membership numbers. (ibid.: 79-82)

Therefore the UNHDR calls for changing the perception of youth on the one hand and the youth's perception of politics on the other. The first suggestion is raised because youth is often viewed as "a problem" which needs to be controlled by adults. There exist two sides of the same coin which mutually enforce each other. On the one hand adult politicians do not seem to be trusting youth nor caring about them, whereas on the other hand a general mistrust of young people in politics due to experienced affairs of corruption, in-transparent uses of governmental taxes and the like exists (ibid.: 78f.). Overall significant gaps in welfare provisions are obvious and one group which most of the time does not receive any are young people (ibid.: 14).

More optimistic political attitudes tend to be gained by those young people who already participated in some sort of volunteer work. Such kind of experience can have crucial emancipating effects in increasing young people's self-esteem and tolerance. (ibid.: 80f.)

3.4.4. Youth and human development in Turkey

Although Turkey experienced an enormous economic growth after the financial crisis in 2001, the states performances in most social domains can be qualified as weak. The employment and the education sector suffer most, whereby gender inequalities span across all features of living. For example young women are often excluded and discriminated from public places like internet cafés (UNHDR 2008: 1-15). As already discussed earlier there are double standards when it comes to evaluating young male and female behaviours.

The recommendations given by the UN committee cover five bigger areas. The first one concerns policy making. In this regard it is called for more comprehensive and participatory approaches (ibid.: 4). First and foremost the diversity of young people needs to be recognised. There are many young people who remain 'invisible' in politics and public media especially if they are female, disabled, delinquent, unemployed or employed informally or living on the streets (ibid.: 13). Their voices are so to speak muted. This stems from the dominant national discourse were being young is attributed primarily with being male, educated and from middle class background. Overall 30% of Turkey's youth are in education, another 30% are employed and an astonishing remaining of 40% count to 'neither-nor-cases' who remain literally invisible (ibid.: 4). According to my observations young people of the latter group are most of the time working in the household (in most female cases) or other family enterprises where they lack an official employment status.

The second focus addresses educational opportunities. In present Turkey the average years of schooling is still under five. 56% of the young people attend high schools and only 18% to universities. Access to the latter requires passing a very difficult exam for which most students prepare at least one year by attending private lessons (in a *dershane*). Moreover educational attainments are marked by gender inequalities. The sector of private (learning support) courses increased significantly during the last years, which means that pupils from less well off families tend to be excluded from educational success. Complaints about the bad quality of state institutions are very common. The main suggestions of the report is to improve the life quality for people include giving everybody (especially regardless of one's economic situation) access to education of high quality. The compulsory years of schooling ought to be increased to twelve years. (ibid.: 29-93)

In Turkey 18,5% of the country's labour force stems from the category of youth whereby the youth unemployment rate is between 17 and 18% (according to 2006 census data). The State of Youth Survey found that 37% of the young people do not believe that their education plays an important role in finding a decent job. This can be seen as being related to the fact that the higher the educational attainment the less young people are able to find an accurate job. The biggest disadvantage of the young job seekers is being inexperienced. Especially women face a serious participation problem in the labour market. Considering the emerged knowledge economy, the IT sector is seen as the most promising one in providing employment opportunities. Moreover, due to regional disparities it is called for a redistribution of wealth. (ibid.)

In terms of health the most worrying aspects concerning young people are remaining societal taboos about drug abuse and sexuality. Because of such taboos and restrictions they are left to themselves often ending up in harmful experimentations. Uneducated women are five times more likely to give birth to their first children between the age of 15 and 19 (ibid.: 44). Moreover domestic violence (against women) remains a serious problem. (ibid.: 43-50)

Looking at the presented UNHDR discourse, young people are identified as those with the greatest potential of all age groups for 'bringing development' - primarily in terms of strengthening civil society and realising the human rights agenda. The basic assumption is that achieved benefits in terms of human development will spread from the young people to their families and children and followingly to the wider community and in the end to the whole nation. Several concrete youth projects already mark little steps of success towards these aims. Since 1997 73 youth councils and 35 youth centres have been established under the UN Agenda 21 Program (ibid.: 82f.). Further youth programs promise to develop within the framework of the European Communities Program.

4. Out in the field

The first week of staying in the youth centre turned out to be horrible. I had a bad and unsure feeling, regretted that I came there and questioned myself what I was actually doing there. I felt lonely and not really welcome, like an intruder, sensing the mistrust of the people I approached although I had been already acquainted with some of them. Considering these first impressions it might come as a surprise that in the end of the two months I did not want to leave that place. The explanation for such an extreme change of emotional sentiments lies probably in the fact that I really got fond of the people I was in touch with. To some of them I established very close relations considering the relatively short amount of time we spent together.

On the day of my arrival, when I was sitting in the garden chatting with a group of young people, they gave me a Kurdish name. From then onwards they often called me "*Diya*" which means mother. Furthermore I constantly got to hear expressions like "*Seni Kürt yapacaz!*" ("We will turn you into somebody Kurdish!") or "*Artık Kürt/Mardin'li olmuşsun!*" ("You are already like somebody Kurdish/from Mardin!") from young as well as older people. A female adult friend of mine wished to find an appropriate husband for me from her social environment. Due to such articulations I felt really cared for.

4.1. On 'the stage'

Every research requires ethical justification. When discussing research with children and young people, among others Fraser et al. (2004) demanded to reflect upon the underlying power relations between researchers, who normally appear to be adults, and the young informants being researched very carefully. Following them I tried my best to do so.

According to general ethical research standards I was keen on making my intentions as transparent as possible to reach an "informed consent" (Masson 2004: 50; France 2004: 183f.) among those participating. Therefore I told everybody straight away why I was spending time in Mardin in general and in the youth centre in particular. When I was taking some notes somebody in the youth centre would for example make some fun out of it shouting: "Watch out she is writing down all the bad behaviours of us!" The younger as well as the older people I talked to would ask me questions like what I was doing here, where I was coming from, who I was, why I was doing such a kind of research, what would happen with the information they gave me and so on. Consequently such essential curiosity more or less forced me to reflect on my actions constantly. In the youth centre I posted a letter of general information about my research project on the walls, which was visible to everybody passing by. Furthermore I made

sure to provide the necessary respect and confidentiality in terms of dealing with the gained data. Therefore I am also not using the real names of the informants in this paper.

Overall it can be stated that the young people (in the youth centre as well as in other places of the city), about whose lives I wanted to find out more, were very cooperative and willing to give information by talking to me. They gave me their trust which I was keen to accept with care and responsibility. I had the feeling that when I mentioned about my research intentions some of those young people were kind of proud that somebody is interested in their lives whereas others did not care much about my purposes. In general, I never had the feeling of having an authoritarian status in the position of being a researcher; a fact which I am glad of. Although I felt tempted at times to act as a pedagogue I told myself not to do so (e.g. I did not tell the young people not to smoke although I would have liked to make them stop it). Consequently, even although I gave some German lessons where I took over the role of a teacher, the people (neither younger nor older ones) in the youth centre did not consider me as '*hoca*'[8] which indicates respect. The way how I treated my respondents and how they treated me put me more in roles of being 'a foreigner', 'a visitor' or 'a young person'. Primarily the last label enabled us to identify with each other. I had the feeling that they often forgot about the actual academic reason why I was there.

4.2. Collecting data

To get to the results presented in this thesis, various methods in terms of gaining and analysing data were applied. Beside a recherche of scientific literature about youth, friendship and the region around Mardin, I carried out two months of fieldwork in the latter place. Fieldwork as the classical approach of anthropology implies spending time in a defined field of study. Traditionally such a field most of the time consisted of a village far away from the ethnologist's 'home' but nowadays it can also consist of a socialising platform on the internet, for example. The method of participant observation is most vital when doing fieldwork. Through observing the study subject within its 'natural' surrounding and taking into account this context, it aims at getting a view from 'within' (see a. o. Mayring 2002: 54ff). The field worker should be able to take part in what is happening in the field and at the same time keep a critical distance (ibid.). To find such a balance in between can be very challenging at times, especially when personal relationships are established between researchers and researched. Therefore it is so vital to reflect on them continuously. In this regard my field diary where I

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[8] In the chapter which is introducing the youth center the meaning and status implications of this label will be discussed in more detail.

regularly wrote down my experiences and feelings (beside my field notes) was a big help for me in doing so.

During my fieldwork I was indeed in a traditional sense away from 'home', living in the provincial town of Mardin for two month. The physical core of my field site was the town's local youth centre. However, my interest extended beyond it, for example including family or other city environments, because my overall concern was about the broader socio-cultural lifeworlds of young people and their friendship relations within them in particular. In addition to 'hanging out' in the youth centre I tried to explore the broader city area especially watching out for young people and the spaces and places they 'occupy' as well as their behaviour and actions in general. In particular I got the chance to visit some families and their homes, sport facilities, music associations, the town hall, the local university as well as primary and secondary schools. At times my observations were informed by specific questions I had in mind and at other times they were more explorative.

4.2.1. About being a participant observer

As already mentioned above the local youth centre was the central place of all my investigations, first and foremost in terms of getting and being in touch with various people. As in most places where children and young people are present there were so-called "gatekeepers" (Masson 2004: 45f.) taking care of the youngsters (to varying degrees), also present in this youth centre. Therefore first of all I had to convince the youth centre staff who were in the role of such gatekeepers about the significance of my research project. They immediately showed understanding and their willingness to support me. Therefore this youth centre was a kind of ideal location for my intentions. I spent my time there nearly every day, varying from several hours up to whole days. During these times I especially tried to pay attention to who is present and how people are interacting and with whom. According to this traditional ethnological method I did not sit silently in one corner. I was rather moving around chatting with people, sitting together with a group of young people in the grass or in another place for some time, playing table tennis with some boys, helping to prepare a meal in the kitchen, dancing at a birthday party or the like. Instead of sticking to a prepared schedule of where I would do my observations on which day and to which time I was continuously trying to sense where (for example in which room) 'something interesting' was going on. If such occasions appeared to be outside of the youth centre I would spontaneously follow the track wherever it lead (for example to a football match in a sport hall, to a public holiday celebration or elsewhere). Such a flexibility and spontaneity allowed me to see certain places

at different times. In a parallel way I tried to observe and reflect on what was happening from a critical distance. In order not to loose the observations I took jottings (short notes) in between. Later when I was by myself I turned them into proper field notes which I wrote down in my field diary. Beside gaining insights and understanding, often more specific and new research questions which were then followed with different other methods evolved from such field notes.

4.2.2. Focus group discussions

Beside participant observations I led three group discussions with groups of five to ten young participants in the youth centre. Each lasted about one hour whereby I took over the role of the moderator. The first one was about the notion of 'youth' and what it means to be 'young' for those concerned. The second one focused on their ideas about 'friendship' and in the third one, variations between different categorical labels for friends were discussed. At these occasions I also asked the informants to put down their thoughts and opinions by means of mind maps by writings and/or drawings. Apart from the latter ones my own notes which I wrote down during and after these discussions served as the empirical material which was later analysed. By applying such a method I mainly aimed at accessing collective views and ideologies including their continuities as well as discontinuities.

4.2.3. Semi-structured interviews

Alongside informal talks I recorded eleven semi-structured focused interviews during the fieldwork period which were transcribed afterwards. The consent for recording was asked from the respondents at the beginning of each interview. The interview settings included only me and the respondent except for the case of one girl where another family member was present close to us but not taking part in the talk. I led the interviews in Turkish whereby they lasted between half an hour and one hour. The majority of the interviews was carried out in different rooms of the youth centre (such as in the kitchen, in the library and the like) according to where it was currently most 'quiet and peaceful'. Such a place was at times everything else rather than easy to find. One of the interviews took place in a public park and two of them in the home of one respondent.

I prepared several interview guidelines in advance. They were subject to change from one interview to the other. The questions I had in mind were arranged in clusters and their order was applied in a flexible manner according to the concrete interview situation. The actual wording of the questions also varied from interview to interview. I chose this type of

semi-structured interviews in order to give the respondents more 'freedom' in answering, meaning that they should be able to express themselves however they felt like. This technique should also prevent the interviewer from transferring too much of his or her own pre-assumptions with the questions being asked while allowing ad-hoc questions (see a. o. Mayring 2002: 67ff). Before starting with the interviews I did several pre-tests. First of all I checked with native speakers if the Turkish wordings are correct. Furthermore I presented the questions to several young people and asked them to tell me whether they understand the questions or not and/or which parts not.

In sum I carried out two different types of interviews for which I used different guidelines[9]. Two interviews of the first type were led with the staff of the youth centre asking them about their opinion about the youth centre, their occupation there, what they think about the young people of Mardin and especially about those attending the youth centre and their personal relationships. These interviews were so-called expert interviews in the sense that the concerned persons were interviewed primarily in their role as representers of an organisation whereby their individual biographies were of less interest (see Atteslander 2008: 153ff).

The second type, so-called problem centred interviews (see Mayring 2002: 67ff), I led with five different young people whereby I did two interviews with each of them[10]. These interviews tried to gain access to individual experiences and subjective meanings of certain earlier on defined research objectives (ibid.). The first one was focused on finding out about the interviewees' basic life situations, their family background, their daily routines, their beliefs, worries and ambitions as well as their relation to and opinion about the youth centre. The second one dealt with their conceptions and experiences of personal relationships in general and friendships in particular. At that point I also asked the respondents to draw a simple network portrayal (from an Ego-perspective) of their friendship ties.

4.2.4. Network portrayals

The network approach became integrated in anthropological inquiries mainly through the Manchester school. A social network can be defined as "a set of ties linking members of a social system" (Cotterell 2007: 2).

As already mentioned above, during the second interviews the young respondents were asked to draw a network portrayal with their friendship relations. Afterwards the informants explained these relations and the included persons. From the original drawings which were quite confusing and messy I drew more clear and ordered ones with all the

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[9] All the interview guidelines are presented in the appendix.
[10] With one young person I only led the firt interview but not the second one.

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information provided by the respondents earlier. In a chapter ahead these Ego-centred part-networks will be presented and interpreted. The data for these networks was gained according to a realistic approach (see Gutjahr 2008/09: 41) because the key respondents determined the size and borders of the networks themselves. As the criteria for who should be included in the network and who excluded, served the simple question of who one's closest friends are, which was directed towards the informants at the beginning.

The limit of this analysis lies in the one sided viewpoint as only Ego was asked about these relations. As the opinions of the persons mentioned by Ego have not been questioned, the picture remains incomplete in this regard.

4.3. Analysing the data

The transcriptions of the interviews were carried out by Turkish native speakers according to my directions. All kinds of recognisable verbal and non-verbal expressions including sighing, laughing, breaks and the like were put down. The wording was written down one to one in its spoken form and was not changed to grammatically correct Turkish.

The contents of the various materials were summed up, structured and finally interpreted according to the suggestions of qualitative data analysis by Mayring (2002) and Strauss (1996). Obvious explicit and hidden implicit messages, relations and meanings were tried to be carved out in this way. The focus remained always on the material as developed hypothesis were constantly re-examined on concrete wordings (see Strauss 1996: 89f.).

As a first step the coding of the interview scripts, group discussion and field notes took place whereby labels were assigned to certain longer or shorter passages of the empirical material (ibid.: 43-55). By looking at the material in detail, meaning phrase by phrase, line by line and even word by word the charecteristics and dimensions of the won categories were carved out. In the following these categories were compared and ordered in a system (with groupings and sub-categories). Moreover the conditions, contexts, strategies and consequences of discovered phenomena were tried to be analysed and related to each other. (ibid.: 75-93) The aim was to present and explain the complexities of the investigated human realities to a satisfying degree.

5. Introducing the locality

The province of Mardin is part of the Turkish Republic[11] and at the same time of the so called Kurdish region (as for instance defined by Strohmeier & Yalçın-Heckmann 2010). Heine (1989: 69) stated that ethnological investigations of smaller cities of the Middle East are missing to a great extent. This work cannot offer a complete portray of Mardin from an urban anthropological viewpoint. However, in this section some general characteristics of the place where the field research was undertaken shall be outlined.

The youth centre, which served as the key site for the investigations, is located on the eastern outskirts, close to the old city part of the provincial town of Mardin. Mardin is at the same time the name for the Turkish province and its central provincial town. The province is located in the south-east of Turkey bordering Syria. An overview (which remains incomplete) will be given about the city of Mardin and its surrounding region considering geographical, historical, political and economical aspects.

5.1. The city of Mardin[12]

It is said that Mardin is 'different' compared to other cities in the south-eastern region of Turkey. As for many places this might be claimed in several regards for Mardin too, considering its unique architecture, its atmosphere, its inhabitants and their life styles.

The significant strategic location and commercial richness have been characterising the provincial town from times when it was part of the Silk Road Trade up to these days. It was part of the Roman, the Byzantine, the Persian and finally the Ottoman Empire, as well as many other smaller dynasties and kingdoms. The city has always been known for being very advanced in city planning, irrigation and agriculture. (see Minorsky 1991: 539ff; Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2b) In the following paragraph I briefly want to sum up the town's history according to Minorsky (1991: 540ff).

Muslims occupied the fortress of Mardin already in the 7th century. In the following centuries it was reined by Abbasid and Hamdanid rulers. The latter rebuilt the castle. At the turn of the first millennium it came into the hands of the Seljuk emperors. After the latter lost their power, the area was ruled between the 12th and 13th centuries by the Artukids (of the Artuklu Dynasty). Many significant buildings including the great mosque, a Turkish bath (*hamam*) and several Muslim religious schools (*medrese*) were established by the Artukids. Next to the remainings of these sites, many Arabic inscriptions from that time can still be

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[11] For a map of Turkey see Figure 5 in appendix.
[12] For a city map see Figure 6 in appendix.

found. Before it was conquered by the Persians at the beginning of the 16th century it has been controlled by the Mongols (since the 13th century) and the Akkoyunlu Kingdom (since the 15th century). According to a Venetian merchant (cited in ibid.: 541) who visited the city in 1507 there were more Armenians and Jews rather than Muslims living there at that time. When the Ottoman Turks took power over this region a few decades later, the fortress still remained in the hands of the Persians for some time. During the first half of the 19th century Mardin rebelled against the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II. Subsequently the city was under control of influential Kurdish men (*bey*). At that time Arabic and Kurdish were the predominant languages. Especially during the First World War Christian communities faced severe massacres which led to a drastic shrinking of their numbers. In 1923 the town and its surrounding region became part of the newly established Republic of Turkey. (Minorsky 1991: 540ff)

Today the complete city area is populated by 82.449 people (TÜK 2009: URL 1b). Many families do actually have their roots in near-by villages, which they regularly visit on weekends. The rural exodus and forced migration due to destructions of isolated rural settlements[13] which intensified in this region in the second half of the 20th century(Jongerden 2007: 283) have made the city constantly expand through the last decades up to these days. Outrageous growths in population, accompanied with infrastructural shortcomings are suggested to be some general characteristics of cities in the Middle East (Heine 1989: 57).

Today the city appears to be split into the historical city centre called *Eski Mardin* (Old Mardin) and the new part of the city called *Yeni Şehir* (New Town). The latter started to be added only about a few decades ago on the plain at the western side of the hill on which southern slopes the ancient city part is located. This modern city structure is continuously expanding. Not only the architectural appearances of these two parts differ significantly, moreover the ways of housing and what can be purchased where and how vary, as it will be described below.

The so-called old city part is located at about 1.100 metres above the sea level (Minorsky 1991: 539). Due to its location at this height windy weather provides the city with a refreshing circulation of air. If one imagines the hill to which it sticks as a head, then the skyline of Mardin looks like a crown having been put on this rocky head. On the top of the hill the remainings of the castle of Mardin can be found. Nowadays the access is prohibited as it is a military zone. Its distinct place on the hill, being located in distance to the living

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[13] With such acts the state intended to increase its control over the whole population, especially over those who were ethnically Kurdish and tended to live in relative autonomy according to their tribal organisations.

quarters of 'ordinary' people can be interpreted in terms of past as well as present hierarchical spatial orders between the rulers and the ruled (see Heine 1989: 61).

The historical centre has been turned into as a protected site since 1979 and was declared as UNESCO 'World Heritage'. It still contains characteristics of a typical Islamic Middle Eastern city including a central mosque (*ulu cami*), a religious school (*medrese*), a bath (*hamam*) and a constant covered market place (*pazar*) (see Heine 1989: 58). Furthermore distinct areas for trade and craft, contrary to those for living (ibid.: 61f.) can be also recognised in *Eski Mardin* as the traditional structures are well preserved. The traditional houses in Mardin were made of easily workable limestone, surrounded by 4m-high stone walls with knockers for visitors at their doors. Most houses in the old city part used to be owned by wealthy royal families. The architecture was mainly influenced by Arabic styles. There are many passages called '*abbaras*', where the street goes under one part of a house. Because of the slopes and narrow streets, donkeys and mules are still used for transporting various goods. (see Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2) When wandering around in Mardin one feels like in an open air museum. Severe restorations of the ancient city structure started to be undertaken a few decades ago. They speeded up significantly during the last years and continuously go on in these days. It is prohibited to build modern style multistorey houses in *Eski Mardin*.

The prison is situated on the eastern outskirts of the old city on the road leading down to the village of Ortaköy. There are two main roads connecting the eastern and western ends of the city. The upper one (referred to as '*ana cadde*') is a narrow, partly one-way road through the commercial centre (*çarşı*). Alongside all various kinds of small shops and jewelleries, as well as hotels, banks, bakeries, pastries and restaurants can be found. On the main square (*Meydan*) there is an open air parking space from where steps lead up to a statue of M. K. Atatürk. From there one can furthermore access the city museum (*Mardin Müzesi*) which contains an archaeological and ethnological section with descriptions in Turkish and English language. Further east, next to the old town hall a new museum, the *Sabancı Müzesi* (named after its wealthy donator) was opened only recently in 2009 in a restored historical building. On the upper floor visitors find a display about the history and the cultural and social life of Mardin as a city (*Kent Müzesi*). On the lower floor modern art paintings with topics related to this region are on exhibition (*Sanat Galerisi*). Nearby, opposite the old post office there are the two central tea gardens (*çay bahçeleri*) located on a terrace from which one can enjoy a marvellous view down to the plains towards Syria and up to the remainings of

the castle. The plains of Mesopotamia which are strechting southwards are commonly referred to as '*Mardin denizi*' (sea of Mardin).

The covered bazaar is still one of the liveliest places in the city. Together with the caravanserais dating back to the Silk Road Trade it symbolises its economic significance. Beside various foodstuffs, spices, tobacco and the famous strong coffee called *mırra,* one can bargain for textiles, household supplies, metal works and various other goods. Though traditional sectors like cloth weaving or copper and tinsmith work have nearly disappeared up to the present, the business of jewellery making (*telkari sanatı*) is still a sophisticated one kept alive. Furthermore traditional handicrafts include wood carving, pottery, weaving and various forms of textile embroideries. A workshop which was established only recently represents the techniques of stone cutting. (Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2d) In almost any place of the town one can buy various types of soaps which are alongside their practical usefulness regarded as popular souvenirs. To the latter category also belongs, beside jewellery and tin works (coffee sets, tea pots, plates and other dishes), a piece of cloth which is available in all kinds of colours. It symbolises solidarity with Kurdish ethnic identity and is mainly worn as a scarf around neck and shoulders or on the head.

On the other side of the hill massive blocks of multistorey buildings dominate the skyline of *Yeni Şehir* (New Town). Streets are outlined in an ordered manner, being divided by the main highway which leads up to the old city. Popular chain food, furniture and clothes stores (like *Migros, İstikbal, YKM* and others) selling 'expensive' fixed priced goods, a shop with aquarium and pet bird supplies, as well as the main hospital (*Yeni Hastane*), a child birth and child illness hospital (*Kadın Doğum ve Çocuk Hastalıkları Hastanesi*), a private hospital (*Mardin Park Hastanesi*), the teacher's house (*Öğretmen Evi*), as well as the city and provincial government (*Mardin Belediyesi; Mardin Valiliği*) can be found among others in this part of the town. Furthermore the main building of the university (*Artuklu Üniversitesi*) is situated on the western outskirts. This university with its focus on humanities and Middle-Eastern languages (intended are Kurdish, Persian, Arabic and Syriac) was reopened in its new appearance in 2007. During my stay most departments were not open to students yet as the classes were still about to be prepared.

There are blue minibuses (*mavi dolmuşlar*) which provide transportation services from about 5.30 a.m. up to 11.30 p.m.. With one of the bus lines (called '*Şehir içi*') one can get around in the old city part, another type connects the Old with the New Town. On the eastern fringes of *Eski Mardin* at *Meydanbaşı* there is a bus station (*otogarı*) from where mini buses leave to directions like Diyarbakır, Midyat, Nusaybin, Ortaköy and others. Another mini bus

station is located on the western fringes of the Old Town. From there minibuses leave towards Kızıltepe.

The city is continuously expanding with more and more apartment blocks being built. Living in those is often referred to as being characterized by much more "anonymity". With such statements people realise the fading of a close personal social environment. Consequently the price people often pay for more living comfort is a loss of trustworthy neighbourhood relations (see Heine 1989: 63). This kind of sense for caring about what your neighbours are doing, how they are dressed what they say and much more implies constantly observing them and sharing one's knowledge with others. Such mechanisms of social control are still to a more intense degree in operation in *Eski Mardin* rather than in *Yeni Şehir*. However, in the latter city part it cannot be assumed that they disappear from one day to the other, as the people moving there (e.g. from the Old Town) bring along their 'cultural baggage' of what is appropriate social behaviour.

The described changes in the city structure and spatial orders can be seen, beside others, as an outcome of modernization efforts of the Turkish state. The tendency in uprising cities in the Middle East described by Heine (1989: 63), that the more well-off inhabitants are most likely to move to the new city parts can also be observed in Mardin because renting an apartment in *Yeni Şehir* is more expensive than in *Eski Mardin*.

During the last years the tourism sector has been constantly growing in this province. Especially in the city of Mardin it is of huge economic significance. On the south-western fringes of the Old Town there thrones a multistorey hotel (*Büyük Mardin Oteli*) which was built in line with the traditional architectural style of Mardin. Another hotel project of this scale (of the famous Hilton chain) is just about to be realised nearby. During the time of my fieldwork people stated that the number of tourists has increased significantly in 2010 in comparison to former years. The dominating type of tourism in Mardin is broadly quite an exquisite and high quality one with luxurious accommodations and restaurants on offer. The broad masses of the people living in this town are kept out of them as the prices of the offered services by way outreach their usual expenditures. Considering these developments a struggle over inner city space and certain places could become even more problematic in the following years. Up to the present the so called city natives (*yerli*) still do their shopping in the bazaar district, sit and drink tea in the tea garden and old men gather in tea houses where the access is denied to women. However, political intentions to 'rearrange' the historical city part by making inhabitants move to the New Town for the sake of tourism are obvious.

Within the town's political landscape the Kurdish BDP party (*Barış ve Demokrat Partisi*) and the religiously affiliated AKP party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) are most influential, whereby the latter is currently forming the government of the city. The Kurdish party was closed down several times by the Turkish state and has therefore a history of different names but same 'faces'.

5.2. The province

The province of Mardin covers 8.858 km^2 being inhabited by 737.852 people with a population density of about 84 people per square kilometre. It is divided into the following ten province districts: Dargeçit, Derik, Yeşili, Kızıltepe, Mardin, Mazıdağı, Midyat, Nusaybin, Ömerli and Savur. 75.5% of the population are living in towns and only 24.5% in villages whereby the overall population is declining significantly[14]. (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a & b)

The province bridges the famous regions of Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Archaeological findings at Gırnavaz Tumulus gave proof that this region was continually settled already from about 4500 B.C. on. These early settlements were part of the upper Mesopotamian culture. In the past, like already outlined for the city of Mardin, the region was conquered among others by Byzantines, Syrians, Arabs, Persians and Turks. (Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2b)

Since the past it has been an important site for Christianity with establishments of Syriac Orthodox monasteries and several churches, which are still in active use in the present. Alongside, considering the plenty of Islamic theological schools (*medrese)* and mosques (*cami*), this region played ever since a significant role in Muslim religious regards as well. (see a. o. Minorsky 1991: 542)

The climate of the region which is similar to the Mediterranean one is characterised by dry and very hot summers in opposition to cold and rainy (partly snowy) winters. It differs according to mountain versus plain areas. The landscape consists of a monotonous step with hardly any vegetation. Rocky calcareous mountains and hills with plateaus in between dominate the picture. Only towards the south (towards the Syrian border) wide plains where wheat is grown make a change. There are five main rivers (Çağ Çağ, Buğur Çayı, Zerkan Suyu, Savur Çayı, Gurs Suyu) which are popular destinations for weekend picnics because of their surrounding prosperous green vegetation. (Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2c)

Beside wheat and tobacco a lot of fruits and vegetables are produced in this region, among others grapes, cherries, melons, olives and the like. Furthermore the hoarding of sheep

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[14] The annual growth rate of Mardin's population between 2008 and 2009 was -17.26% (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a). This negative figure is unusual in comparison to the growth rates of the neighbouring provinces.

and goats is widespread. The province's industry includes beside agriculture an iron and steel as well as a textile sector, and furthermore cement, tile and lime factories and others. (Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2d)

The regional cuisine is very rich due to the various influences of different civilizations. Beside the tea culture, *mırra* (bitter coffee) is a peculiar speciality of the south-eastern Anatolian region which is traditionally served after meals.

The population of the province and the city of Mardin is ethnically mixed including Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Assyrians/Syriacs, as well as small Armenian communities. However, it is kind of impossible to find detailed, reliable official figures. Today the narration of different ethnic and religious groups which have been living together peacefully side by side for centuries is commonly proudly presented to visitors. In fact various ethnic and/or religious minorities (like Kurdish, Syriacs, Armenians or others) have been subject to prosecution by central authorities throughout the history (see a. o. Yalçın-Heckmann 2000: 93f.). According to figures gained in 2000 about 28.78% of the population in the province are illiterate, whereby illiteracy is considerable higher among women (about 43%) than among men (about 15%) (Mardin Governorship 2006: URL 2a).

5.3. About Turkey's South-East

The province of Mardin is located in the south-eastern part of Turkey which forms a distinct region in a geographical and political sense. This plateau region is bordered by the Anti-Taurus mountain range and the Arabian Fold Belt in the north and the Arabian Platform in the south, which extends into Syria. The Euphrates river running southwards in the western part and the Tigris river in the eastern part are the main sources of the delta's fruitful earth. The main products grown in this region are first and foremost wheat and barley. Rural areas are beside agriculture marked by semi-nomadic lifestyles and an enduring tribal system[15] (Şahin 2008: 48f.). The most important cities of this area are Gaziantep in the west, Mardin in the east, the central located city of Urfa and the basalt-walled city of Diyarbakır on the northern fringes. (Held 2006: 537ff)

The region contains nearly 10% of the total area and population of Turkey, with a population growth of 2.5% which is considerably higher than the average growth rate of whole Turkey which is 1.8% (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a). Sometimes the south-eastern part of Turkey is called 'Kurdish area(s)'. Jongerden (2007: 29) notes that this term can be

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[15] The term 'tribe' can be defined as "socio-political, territorial and economic unit based on descent and kinship, real or imagined" (Bruinessen 1978 cited in Jongerden 2007: 25). It should be clear that not all Kurdish people have tribal lifestyles though (Jongerden 2007: 25).

misleading because not all of its population is Kurdish as it becomes evident in Mardin, for example. More or less 20% of the region's inhabitants are of Kurdish ethnicity, people who have moved down to the plain from the northern mountain villages. About 1.5 to 2% are ethnically Arabs. Beside the Muslim Sunni majority, around 20% of the region's population are Alevi, who are the largest of four Shii sects in Turkey. Furthermore a minority of Orthodox Christian believers can be found. (Held 2006: 537ff) However, it remains due to political reasons up to today nearly impossible to gain reliable data on exact numbers as they vary greatly according to the sources.

Due to violence, poverty and unemployment a high amount of out-migration to western parts of Turkey or to countries abroad has been taking place especially since the mid-20th century. Only during the last decades the infrastructure of the region has been improved significantly. However, this area suffers from ongoing regional upheavals. The latter evolved out of ethnic conflicts which emerged within a complex interplay of political and economical processes. Its historical roots can be traced back far. Already before the Turkish Republic was established in 1915 Kurds and Armenians were fighting for independence from Turks and Russians in eastern Anatolia (Held 2006: 542). In this region space and place has ever since been subject to material and ideological contestations. Due to the Kurdish insurrection between 1984 and 1999 big parts of the area faced dehabitilization (ibid.: 539). A recently published investigation by Joost Jongerden (2007), who carried out field research in Diyarbakır, shows very well how resettlement has been used as a "tool for the management of populations" (ibid.: 2). Isolated rural settlements have been cruelly destroyed by the Turkish state supported by the idea of modernity as urban and industrial (ibid.: 283). Such forced migration to cities also took place in the province of Mardin, as it was already mentioned above. Another consequence of the violent conflicts in this region was that many Kurds (like other minorities) left the country whereby considerable numbers found refuge in European countries where they established diaspora communities. The violence deepened polarisations among popular public opinions. The negative images of this area and its inhabitants remain to the present as there were too many dead bodies of soldiers and civilians returning from this region (Barkey & Fuller 1998: 116). During the 20th century many restrictions and bans on the Kurdish language were put forward by the Turkish state. Until 2002 the use of the Kurdish language was forbidden in schools, courts, on broadcast and in other public spaces (Held 2006: 542). Although there exist Kurdish newspapers and TV-channels these days, language courses in official institutions like schools still remain banned.

As in many conflicts between different social groupings all over the world the concept of culture appeared and still appears to be instrumentalised to stress the difference between 'us' and 'them' (in this case between 'Kurdish'- versus 'Turkishness') and consequently to legitimise violent actions. A public intellectual discourse about these issues did not emerge until recently within academic circles in Turkey (only after 2000). Today the societal dynamics are tried to be analysed from different angles. A field research carried out by Önder Güneş (2009) for example brought about insights into the dynamics of *töre*[16] (tribal law) as the ethos of Kurdish tribal life styles. What becomes clear in the presence of this phenomenon is the resistance to certain ways of life which persist in this region in contradiction to the experience of modernity (ibid.: 88).

However, nowadays most people living in Mardin would claim that violence is going on in other cities, villages and places of South-Eastern Turkey, but not in 'their' town and its surroundings. As already mentioned above they stick to the conviction and narrate proudly that 'here' people of different ethnical backgrounds and different religious believes have been living peacefully side by side for centuries. I did not experience any violent upheavals during the time I stayed there. Though the military is still very present as there are many checkpoints along the roads and they are patrolling frequently, for example through the city centre of Mardin.

Up to the present the unresolved political conflicts in the eastern regions of Turkey and the ways of dealing with minorities by the Turkish state appear to be thorny issues in the context of human rights requirements when negotiating Turkey's potential EU membership.

5.3.1. Developmental policies

Before the recent implementation of irrigation projects the area faced limited agricultural and economic development. The south-eastern region is claimed to be underdeveloped mainly in terms of industry, education, gender equality and land ownership (Şahin 2008: 48f.). In popular discourses it is referred to as "the most underdeveloped and backward region of Turkey". Modernization theory can be seen as the ideological ground where such attitudes could breed. During the establishment of the Republic, modernization was the primary doctrine which tried to be realised by its founder M. K. Atatürk. Modernization came to equal development in popular discourses. Later, early developmental theories came to be criticised by dependency, world system and postmodernist theories. All of them stress the fact of power

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[16] *Töre* can be defined as the customary law of tribal societies and moreover as the reason of life for them. In Turkey it is primarily associated with Kurdish communities. (Güneş 2009: 4, 156)

relations and specifically the notion of Western imperialism inherent in any developmental programs.

Regional developmental projects aiming to decrease inequalities (first and foremost between the 'developed West' and the 'underdeveloped East') were implemented by the Turkish governments from the 1950ies onwards. Since 1963 a total of nine five-year-developmental plans have been carried out. These included primarily top-down policies which considered only economic growth. A main assumption was that development would spread on its own from more developed regions identified as centres to the less developed peripheral regions. The policies of that time did not take social and regional disparities into account. Industrialisation and economic progress were the main intentions being transmitted through the developmental paradigm. The following decades brought along the failures of such projects. After the latter have been realised developmental policies started to be changed slowly. In the 1980ies policies gained new orientations through the introduction of the concept of sustainability. (a. o. Şahin 2008)

5.3.2. GAP – The South Eastern Anatolia Project

In the described context of developmental aims the master plan for the GAP project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*) was presented in 1989. The provinces of Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak and Kilis are the targets of this project. During the 1970ies it was primarily planned as a technological project in terms of irrigation and hydraulic energy. GAP includes erecting dams and hydroelectric installations, whereby seven projects were planned for the Euphrates river and six of them along the Tigris river. Three dams are already in operation on the Euphrates, namely the Keban, Karakaya and Atatürk dam. The overall goal of all these dam projects is to irrigate 1.7 million ha of land. Furthermore it is expected to serve Turkey's energy requirements as up to 50% of it has to be imported at the present. Through the GAP project the south-eastern region is experiencing significant transformations of landscapes alongside an increasing economic boom. (Held 2006: 545; Şahin 2008: 31ff)

In the 1990ies its visions and objectives changed dramatically. Nowadays the GAP project tries to implement the concept of sustainable development to the south-eastern region of Turkey. This means that social, economical, ecological and cultural factors are taken into consideration as intersecting and development in all of these areas is intended. The aim is to secure natural and human resources not only for the present but also for future generations. A main principle in carrying out the various connected projects is participation. In the whole

GAP project there are beside public institutions also private ones, NGOs, grass-root movements as well as informal groupings and single persons involved. The central philosophy of the GAP project includes cultural diversity, social justice, gender equality and participation.

In regard to social development various projects include for example established multi-purpose community centres especially for women called *ÇATOM*s, a project for the rehabilitation of children working in streets or the 'Social Development for Youth Project' which will be explained in more detail below.

However, at this point it should also be mentioned that the GAP project has received heavy criticism as well. It has been degraded for example for its bias on economic development, an implicit imperialism of the Turkish state or the like. Moreover many individual inhabitants of this region were and still are suspicious of what the government tries to implement and control in 'their' territories as they might perceive certain actions (on which they might not agree) as a threat from 'outside'.

5.3.3. The Youth Project

Within the GAP framework the 'Social Development for Youth Project' was prepared by an international independent student organisation (AIESEC) during 1998 and 1999. The target group includes young people in education on the one hand and those with employment or unemployment on the other. It involved various meetings and discussions with young people, local organizations and participants. It was recognised that the social environment of the local youth including their relationships and meeting places is limited. The main issues reported by young people were the deficiencies of educational, working and free time possibilities as well as the widespread negative image of the south-eastern region of Turkey in general and the related prejudices. (Şahin 2008: 55-70)

As an outcome of this project youth centres like the one in Mardin have been established in the provincial towns which offer foreign language courses, computer skill trainings, art and music workshops, theatre and much more. An evaluation study showed that the majority of the parents have a positive opinion about the youth centres. A social impact evaluation study reported that young people who regularly attend the youth centre are benefitting of gaining self-esteem and various social soft skills (like expressing themselves accordingly). The youth centre was described by nearly all young people as a strong socialisation factor. It is for example a place where both genders can come together and new

contacts to various people can be established in a relaxed atmosphere. The young people feel that it belongs to them. (ibid.: 72ff)

As the following quotation by one of the initiators shows, young people are in these regards often idealised as the carriers of development and as the hope for the future. With other words youth and social change get positively linked in such an idealising view.

> "The development process of the region depends heavily on the youth, because the members of this group are originally the most eager ones to adapt to social progress." (Şahin 2008: 50)

6. Insights into the lifeworlds of young people in Mardin

This section is occupied with presenting primarily the results gained from the interviews and group discussions with the young people. It focuses on the latter's daily lives and various relationships within them. The quotations from the interviews were translated freely by me.

6.1. Introducing the 'protagonists'

I chose my key informants[17] partly according to certain criteria. First of all they were all accustomed with the youth centre and were attending this place more or less regularly. At the time of my investigation two of them visited the youth centre nearly daily, whereas the other two came there very rarely. Those latter ones who I had already got to know one year ago when I had been staying in the youth centre for three weeks during an international work camp. To have a gendered balance two of them were male and the other two female. All of them were around 20 years old with an age range varying from 18 to 22 years. They were all Muslim whereby two of them stated that they are *Şafi* (a sub-group of the *Sunni*-believers with a tendency of stricter rules). Their mother tongue was Kurdish, whereby all knew Turkish as well and some also a little bit of Arabic. The number of their siblings ranged between three and eleven. Their mothers were all housewives with one exception. The latter used to work in the *ÇATOM* last year and was constantly looking for and trying out new short-time jobs. The father of one respondent has already died. Only one of them was born in the city of Mardin, two were born in a village within the province and one in another village in the neighbouring province. Two of the young people's families lived in *Eski Mardin*. One boy stayed there as well with his married older brother and his family. They all lived in different quarters (*mahalle*) of the city. The fourth respondent lived with his parents and siblings in a small village between Mardin and the neighbour town of Kızıltepe. All of the

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[17] The names used for them are fictional ones.

interviewees were living in houses with limited space. For example the majority did not have a separate room just for him- or herself as they used to share rooms with siblings or other relatives. Everybody had completed high school (*lise*) recently. Only one of them was studying at the local university. The others were preparing for the university entrance examinations (*ÖSS, KPS*) whereby two of them were attending classes in private institutions (*dershane)* for that purpose. The respondents did not have regular jobs. The university student used to work during summer holidays for some months in a local dental clinic. The girl who was not attending a *dershane* worked part-time on weekends in a big chain-food store in *Yeni Şehir.* None of them was married yet, nor had they children.

6.1.1. Esra

Now each of my key informants shall be introduced in more detail. I will start with the youngest one, an 18 year old girl named Esra. She was born and has been living in Mardin up to the days of my fieldwork. She knew Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic. Her father was retired and her mother is a housewife. Her parents had five daughters (including herself) and three sons. The family lived in a three-store house which they own, in a district (*mahalle*) in the south of *Eski Mardin*. Esra finished high school (*lise*) only one summer ago. Currently she was basically staying at home alongside working on weekends in a big food-store, filling up and ordering the shelves.

During my first interview with her she answered my questions in a short manner, paying much attention to what she was saying (in order not to say 'too much'). Besides, the atmosphere was not peaceful at all as we were disturbed by several young people requesting something from Esra and entering the room where we were sitting. Such a situation has to be understood in the context of her being a very popular person among many young people in the youth centre. Her outward appearance was quite tough and she was always dressed after the latest fashion with her long hair worn open in a hip style. She was always very expressive, approaching people and gathering them around her. It turned out that she was part of the ones taking special 'care' of me. When I entered the youth centre she would greet me by hugging and kissing me as well as inviting me to any activity 'her group' of young people was up to. One day she fainted in the garden. I was told that this has happened already several times to her. Overall it can be said that she enjoyed being the centre of attraction quite a lot.

In the second interview Esra was more talkative as she had probably gained more trust in me. Furthermore, at that time I paid more attention to make sure that we found ourselves in an undisturbed situation. During my first month of stay she used to come to the youth centre

nearly every day. However, towards the end, she came there only once or twice a week. At that time she also started her job in the food store.

6.1.2. Mustafa

I had met Mustafa in the youth centre of Mardin already the year before I undertook my fieldwork. That summer he took part in English and dancing classes which were organised by the volunteers of the international work camp which I was part of. We became friends and kept in touch through a social platform on the internet during the time I was back in Austria. As we already knew each other he immediately agreed to be interviewed. Since last autumn he studied management (*İşletme yönetiçiliği*) at the local university. He managed to pass the entrance exam without attending private lessons, studying only by himself. He wanted to become a sport teacher in future. His real passion was athletics, he trained every day. Mustafa was a member of a local athletic-sports club and attended the biggest local stadium regularly. Once I watched a football match among a group of university friends of him. They were playing on a frequent basis. During summer holidays Mustafa used to have different short-time jobs.

Overall Mustafa appeared to be a very happy, optimistic and extraordinary kind person. He was always acting in a polite and mature manner. He could speak Kurdish and Turkish and knew a little bit of (mainly written) English from school and university. He was the oldest one among his seven other siblings. His mother was a housewife and his father was working for a security company. Mustafa was the only one who lived outside of the city centre in a village nearby. His family owned a house there. They also kept various animals (like chicken, sheep, goats etc.). To get to the city centre of Mardin he had to take a minibus (*dolmuş*) which was running frequently between about 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

During the period of my fieldwork he did not come often to the youth centre, primarily only when I had arranged a meeting with him. Our first interview took place in a garden in *Yeni Şehir* and the second one in the youth centre. It was also the case with Mustafa that he was telling more in the second interview. However, overall he was the least talkative one among the four of them.

6.1.3. Müge

The 21 year old girl Müge was the one I felt most close to. Like it was the case with Mustafa we had got to know each other already one year before I undertook the fieldwork. Our first

encounters had happened to be in the restaurant area of the *ÇATOM*[18] where she was working with her mother and her younger sister. During those occasions we had not got to know each other that much. Our relationship started to grow closer when I came to Mardin again for the purpose of my fieldwork. I was invited to her home and spent sometimes day and night there. Consequently I got to know other, mainly female, family members quite well too.

Müge was like Mustafa the oldest one among her siblings. She had one younger sister who was attending secondary school (*orta okul*). I also got to know the latter more closely. Furthermore Müge had two brothers, the younger one attending primary school (*ilk okul*) and the older one currently away from home working in the tourism sector in Antalya. Her father was working for the municipality. Her mother was basically a housewife. Additionally she was working from time to time as well, depending on whether she could find a 'clean' (*temiz)* in the sense of 'good/acceptable' job or not. She could neither read nor write, but started to learn it during my time of stay. For that purpose she attended classes in local education programmes for adults (especially for adult women) (*Halk Eğitim*). The family was living on the eastern outskirts of *Eski Mardin* in a *mahalle* which was quiet and peaceful, where neighbours know about and talk to each other frequently. They lived in a rented apartment on the lowest floor of a three-storey building. Their apartment was far from being spacious. There was a living room, a sleeping room for the children, a storage room (which they refurnished as sleeping room for the parents later), a small kitchen, a (Turkish) toilette and a bath room (without shower but a big container filled up with hot water). Next to the entrance they also had a balcony from which one could enjoy a marvellous view over part of *Eski Mardin*. In another part of the court which belonged to the building, their neighbours from the upper floor were keeping a few animals like a horse, a goat and chicken. When I visited them they always served me a lot of food and drinks.

I interviewed Müge in her home environment. The advantage of such an interview situation was definitely that she felt relaxed and comfortable. However, a disadvantage was the potential of being disturbed by other family members which was the case at times. She was the most talkative of all respondents, which might be seen to a big part as a result of our close relationship. Sometimes I helped Müge, her mother and her sister with the household chores. Her younger brother would be outside the house playing with other children in the neighbourhood all day. When the father was at home he usually stayed in the living room watching TV. When he was at their home I hardly got to see him at all, except when he would show me some herbs and 'natural drinks' he had brewed by himself. I used to be forwarded to

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[18] Multi-purpose community centre.

the children's sleeping room where I could have a seat and relax. Cleaning and preparing the meals was the task of the female members of the household, whereby the older a person was the more responsibility she had. In the whole house there was only one table which was situated in the children's room and used for studying. When it was meal time the food was served separately to the father in the living room. The other family members and I would eat in the children's room.[19] A cloth would be spread out on the floor on which the prepared dishes were put. The parents were sleeping in the living room, on mats they prepared for the night. Later they received a double bed from neighbours who changed their furniture. They put it up in the storage room. In the children's room there were only two beds for the two elder children.

Müge could speak Kurdish, Turkish and a little bit of English. Rather than visiting the youth centre she more often visited the *ÇATOM* which was situated in the same building. During my fieldwork she came to the youth centre only on rare occasions, mainly to meet specific friends. She had finished high school two years ago and took private classes to prepare for the university entrance exam which took place only shortly before I left. She had already failed on this exam one year ago after she had been attending lessons in another provincial town. She stayed in that town with the relatives of her mother who grew up there. Müge was planning to find a job if she would again fail on the exam. After thinking about it for nearly one year she took off her headscarf only a few weeks before I left.

6.1.4. Şoreş

Şoreş was with his 22 years the oldest one of my key respondents. He was living in *Eski Mardin* with the family of his brother. His father had died, so his mother who was a housewife and his other siblings were living in a village in a neighbouring province. Şoreş had eleven brothers and sisters, some of them were already married, working, going to school or staying at home. Şoreş came to live with his brother in Mardin because he also attended private courses to prepare for the university entrance exam after having finished high school some years ago. He made the impression of a hard working mature student. Normally he visited the youth centre nearly every day in the late afternoon after his lessons were finished. Most of the time he brought his books with him. Sometimes he sat down in the library to study for a while. He was also actively participating in various projects of the youth association.

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[19] Sometimes the mother also ate with the father in the living room.

Although we did not get to know each other very well there was this kind of sympathy for each other which I guess was a decisive factor making me ask him for an interview. He handled the latter in a sovereign and relaxed manner. He talked very openly and I carried on various discussions with him in informal settings. He appeared to be a happy and calm person.

6.2. Daily routines and general attitudes

I: "Mesela evdeyken sekizde kalkıyorum, hafta içi de hafta sonu da. Saat sekizde kalkıyorum. Anneme yardım diyorum, iş falan temizlik yapıyorum. Temizliği bitirdikten sonra, mezunum ya, arkadaşlar çağırıyor, ara sıra arkadaşlarla toplanıyoruz. Ondan sonra buraya geliyorum. Saat dört/beşe kadar burada kalıyorum. Öyle işte eve gidiyorum.

K: Ve akşamda evinde ne yapıyorsun?

I: Akşamda evimde ya kitap okuyorum, ara sıra ya televizyon seyrediyorum ya misafirliğe gidiyorum. Genelde zaten kendi odamdayım, hep yalnızım yani. Kitap okurum, bir şeyler çizerim. Şiir yazarım, şiir okurum gibisinden." (Esra, 21/05/2010)[20]

I: "For example when I am at home, I get up at eight, during the week and also at weekends. I get up at eight. I help my mother, I do work like cleaning. When the cleaning is finished, I am a (high school) graduate, the friends call, sometimes we gather with friends. Then I come here. I stay here until four/five. Like this, then I go home.

K: What are you doing in the evening at home?

I: In the evening either I read a book at home, sometimes I watch TV or I go out to visit somebody. In general I am alone in my room, I am completely on my own. I read a book, draw something. I write poems, read a poem, like that." (Esra, 21/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

"Her gün düzenli olarak antrenmanlarımı yaparım, okula gidip gelirim. Onun dışında bir köyde yaşıyorum, ben hayvancılık işleriyle uğraşıyorum, evdeki hayvan işleriyle uğraşıyorum, yani genelde böyle oluyor yani, antrenmanlar ve ev işleri." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

"Every day I do my trainings regularly, I go to and come from school. Besides, I live in a village, I deal with keeping animals, dealing with the work of the animals kept at home, well normally like that, trainings and house work." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

The quotations above highlight some characteristics of where, how and with whom the key informants spend their time in daily life. A major part of their time they were spending at home. How much and which tasks they had to fulfil there appeared to depend primarily on their age, whether they were male or female and whether they were living in the city centre or in a village nearby. In general, household duties and responsibilities tended to decrease from the oldest to the youngest child. The two girls living in the city centre told about being

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[20] I = Interviewee, K = Karoline

occupied with household chores like cleaning, washing or cooking, whereas the boy living in the village was taking care of the few animals his family owns and he was working on the fields when required. Müge described these 'must-do' tasks which she did not necessarily like but neither complained about as the following:

> „Ya aslında iş yapmayı pek sevmem ama hani insan mecbur kaldığı için yapmak zorundadır hani. Ben bulaşık yıkamadır, evi temizlemektir bu her gün ki yani günlük işlerdir bunlar. Bunları her gün yaparım yani hani günde bir defa da olsa bulaşık yıkarım muhakkak bir öğün de olsa yıkarım. Ev temizliği de bazen olur hani annem de çalıştığı için eve evin büyüğü de ben olduğum için, eve geldiğimde mecburen iş yapmak bana düşüyor hani. Çok ağır işler yapmasam da hani hafif işler bulaşık yıkarım işte, evi temizlerim ya da toparlarım ama hani çok severek yapmam yani, iş yapmayı pek sevmem." (Müge, 15/05/2010)

> "Well actually I don't like doing work but it is a human duty which must be done. Washing the dishes, cleaning the house, these are daily chores. I am dealing with them every day, I mean if there are dirty dishes I am washing them for sure. Sometimes also the cleaning of the house might come up, because my mother works and I am the oldest one of the house, therefore when I get home the work which has to be done falls on me. Not hard work, light work like washing dishes, cleaning, tidying but I don't like doing it too much, I don't like doing work at all." (Müge, 15/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

All of them spent part of their free time at home with their closer and sometimes wider circle of relatives or with some (individual) relaxing activities like watching TV, reading, drawing or the like. The places they visited outside of the home and their neighbourhood (*mahalle*) included other areas of the city with its shopping opportunities, restaurants and cafés, sport halls, community places like the *GKE* or *ÇATOM* and also various close-by picnic places. This time outside which they used to enjoy very much was spent partly with relatives and partly with friends.

Some of the young people had already travelled to different cities and places within Turkey, like Mustafa in the context of sport championships. Others did not go further than to neighbouring towns and villages. Seeing relatives is most of the time the reason for such travels. Nobody of them had been abroad so far.

The key informants enjoyed especially the times while being with friends or when they were taking part in a special celebration like a birthday or a wedding party. About being with friends they liked the conversations as well as other shared activities. Müge (15/05/2010) mentioned that she especially enjoyed these times because they gave her the opportunity to be crazy to a certain degree, for example while driving around with a car and having the music on high volume. In general they were happy when they felt loved and when their wishes were becoming true. A moment when Mustafa felt especially proud was when he became a sports champion. Müge felt like this when her teacher praised the poem she had written.

What made them feel sad was when they lost or hurt a loved person or when the latter was turning against them as in cases of slander for example. Further situations causing negative feelings mentioned were when somebody understood them in a wrong way or their performance at school or at training was very bad. They were most afraid of losing their family and friends and consequently being alone. One girl also mentioned her anxiety about not passing the university entrance exam and 'managing' to marry.

6.2.1. Religious and political attitudes

Religion was of significance in the lives of the key informants. All of them said that they believe in Islam. They were regularly praying (*namaz kılmak*) and reading the Koran. Going to the mosque and fasting were habits that were mainly practised by the boys of this sample. For them, such a religious belief and practice gave meaning to their lives in the way that it was perceived as a 'higher' truth giving them orientation for questions of what is wrong and what is right. Moreover Mustafa viewed it as a duty in the sense that life is an exam for entering a non-worldly 'sphere'.

> "Benim hani benim dinimde dünya hayatına fazla bir yer yok. Benim hani benim inandığım dine göre dünya hayatı çok önemli değil. Dünya hayatı bir sınavdır. Onun için ve sen dünya hayatında yaptığın şeylere göre ölünce ona göre muamele göreceksin, ceza ve ödül alacaksın. Bunun için hani bu sınavdan iyi alabilmek için bende din yeri çok önemlidir." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

> "In my religion, there is no place for the worldly life. In regard to my believed religion, the worldly life is not very important. The wordly life is an exam. Therefore and according to what you did during your life on earth, you will see the behaviour and penalty when you die. In order to pass this exam positively, religion is very important for me." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

That religious belief and practice can have, beside being perceived as human duty, another, more spiritual dimension for each individual is highlighted in the speech of Müge below. She emphasised the power of religion to convey happiness, belonging and individual spiritual fulfilment for those believing.

> „Elimden geldiğince de yerine getirmeye çalışırım bazı şeyleri yani çoğu şeyleri yani din de bir maneviyattır. Bir insanın içerisinde bir huzur dolu bir şeydir. Mesela sen namaz kıldığın da kendini ALLAH'a yakın hissedersin. Ya da kuran okuduğunda aynı şekilde öyle en azından sana düşen bir görevi, bir vazifeyi yerine getirmiş olursun. Bu da insana bir mutluluk verir. Tabi ALLAH'a karşı bir yakınlaşman o da güzel bir duygudur. Hayatında da olması gereken şeylerden bazılarıdır, yani Müslümanlık görevleri." (Müge, 15/05/2010)

> "I try to take what I can do with my hands to that place, most of the things, religion is spirituality. Something calm and fulfilling inside a human. For example if you pray, you feel close to ALLAH. Or also in the same way when you read the Koran, at least a duty

you think of, it was brought. This gives happiness to the people. Of course getting closer to ALLAH is also a nice feeling. Some duties in life are Muslim duties." (Müge, 15/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

Contrary to religious belief, worldly politics were regarded as a dislike. All of the key informants emphasised that they were not interested in politics because they did not trust politicians. Mustafa (20/05/2010) held the opinion that the politicians were somehow bound to tell lies. However, if there was an election those young people would try to give their vote to the most trustable one. Müge (15/05/2010) also emphasised that her family was not trying to influence her when it comes to which party to support, as she made her own individual decision. I guess this political disinterest of the young people is partly influenced by the attitude of the youth centre staff as it will be described later. A related issue which Şoreş (05/06/2010) explicitly touched on is the one about the constant closing down of Kurdish parties by the Turkish state. This fact led him to doubt the democratic system as in his words "we cannot speak of justice" (see quotation below). Realizing that many people who got involved with politics in the context of supporting Kurdish parties were sent to prison although they might have not committed any crime in the eyes of the local public view, can be understood as another motive for (young) people deciding better to stay away from politics.

"Yani hani şey bir ara bir komedyen çıkmıştı şey diyor: İngiltere'de [he meant Swiss – later correcting himself] deniz yok ama deniz bakanı var. Ona da cevap olarak şey demiş: sizde de adalet yok ama adalet bakanınız var. Böyle bir söylenti var, belki duymuşsundur daha öncesinden. Onun için bizde de sözde gençlerin siyasete özgür bir şekilde girebileceği söylentisi var. Ama işte bilmiyorum, Sırf Kürd'üz diye herhalde her türlü maraza açık bir şekilde girebiliyoruz. Örneğin, Türkiye'de Türk seçmenlerinin katıldığı bir partiye istediğimiz zaman gitsek bizleri başlarının üstüne koyacak şekilde ağırlıyorlar. Ama örneğin, halkımızın temsilcisi olan bir kürt partisine gittiğimiz taktirde yani en ufak bir şekilde içeriye alınıyoruz. Yani hapse atılıyoruz. Işte arkadaşlarımızın bir çoğu işte böyle siyasete girdiğinden dolayı şuanda beş altı aydır hapiste ve mahkemeye bile gidemiyor yani mahkemesi erteleniyor. Onun için adalet var diyemiyoruz." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010)

"Well once a comedian said: In England [he meant Swiss – later correcting himself] there is no sea but a sea ministry. He told as an answer: You [meaning Turkey] don't have justice but a justice ministry. There is a rumour like this maybe you heard about it before. Therefore, there is a similar rumour in our country, which is: Young people can enter politics freely. But I don't know, as we are Kurds we probably can't enter to all kinds of debates. For example, in Turkey if we go to a party taking part in Turkish votings they welcome us. But for example, when we go to a Kurdish party as our people's represener, we are put inside. I mean we are imprisoned. A lot of our friends have been in prison for five, six months because they had entered politics and they can't go to court, their lawsuits are postponed. Therefore we can't say that there is justice." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

65

6.2.2. Priorities and thoughts about the future

For all the key informants the most important thing in their lives was their family and primarily their mother. After the family, friends were named. Mustafa put sport as a personal devotion also on this list. Furthermore (university) education was given in general a priority status. Esra (21/05/2010) expressed it in the way that by studying and achieving a good job she plans to "rescue her life". Except for Mustafa who was already studying, all others were preparing for the Turkish university entrance exams. Some of them did so at home by themselves while others were attending (or also had been doing so earlier on) formal classes in a *dershane* (private school). Studying is currently one main burden of their lives as they aim to enter university. For Şoreş (05/06/2010) the whole Turkish education system is unfair in that it is putting too much stress on the scholars. Accessing university in Turkey is indeed not as 'easy' as in Austria for example. For the subject or the university you wish to study you need to achieve a certain score of points in the exams. Another remaining issue is that girls from stricter traditional family backgrounds are often denied further education by their parents or in many cases they themselves do not want to study. Such circumstances and hardships explain to one part why the respondents felt that much worried about their further education and moreover their jobs.

Boratav (2005: 208ff) investigated the situations of young people in a certain district of Istanbul and found that they preferred a modest (family) life without risks. Education and employment were considered as most important by them. However, quite a lot of young people were neither in education nor working. This group was most pessimistic.

Boratav's results are broadly congruent with the data from Mardin. In general, the majority of the young people I talked to were not entirely enthusiastic but quite optimistic about their future. They saw different alternatives for themselves and the need to be flexible. For example Müge (15/05/2010) felt being in a stage of life where her plan of becoming a teacher still might change according to the circumstances in which she might find herself in the following years. In terms of education they all wanted to achieve a university degree. Şoreş (05/06/2010) also wanted to study abroad. Interestingly all of them aimed for a teaching profession (becoming a sport teacher was a very popular wish among boys). Getting married was something which was not of relevance for them yet, though they perceived it as something kind of natural and unavoidable (e.g. see first sentence in the quotation of Mustafa below). They felt they were not 'ready' for marrying because they first wanted to finish their education. Especially the males, without having an income could not support a whole family

yet. Their families believed in general that they should choose their potential husbands and brides by themselves.

"Her insan gibi ben de evlenmek istiyorum ama hani bunu hemen istemek de bence büyük bir hata olur. Çünkü bir insan evlenmek için önce belli bir seviyeye gelmesi lazım. Kendisini ve ailesini geçindirebilmesi lazım. Ben şu anda buna hazır olduğumu düşünmüyorum, çünkü ben şu anda kendi bir işim yok. İyi bir işim yok diyelim. Ben şu anda bir aile kurmam o aileyi mutsuz eder. Çünkü ben bu aileyi geçindiremem. Bunun için biraz erken. Ama yakın zamanda tabii ki de evlenmeyi düşünüyorum." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

"I want to marry, like all humans but I think wanting it immediately is a big mistake. Because in order to marry, before, the person has to reach a certain level in terms of economy. The person should be able to come up for him-/herself and his/her family. I don't think that I am ready for this now, because I don't have a job right now. Let's say I don't have a good job. If I would found a family now I would make them unhappy because I could not come up for the costs. For this it is a little bit early. But in near time I am of course thinking to marry." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

"Yok şu anda hayır, şu anda tek bir amacım var, o da okumak. Ailem de bunu istiyor, hep oku falan diyor. Evlenmek şimdi yok. O benim elimde. Ailem şey diyor ilk öncelikli okulunu bitir, mesleğini al eline. Sonra kendi hangisi ne yapıyorsan sen bilirsin, o senin elinde diyorlar. Yok ailem öyle değil, sevmiyorlar da onlar şöyle şey zaten." (Esra, 21/05/2010)

"No, not now, now I have just one aim, which is studying. My family also wants this, every time they say study. There is no marrying now. It is in my hand. My family is saying finish your school first, take a job. Later who, whatever you are doing, you want, it is in your hands they say. My family is not like that, they don't like such things [meaning arranged marriages]." (Esra, 21/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

As all of them were more or less quite bound to the place where they were currently living, they did not have ideas about moving somewhere else. However, they would do it if the study or working conditions required it. Basically they would like to stay close to their family place in future. Most of them admitted being afraid of ending up alone somewhere. This strong sense of belonging which is sometimes perceived as an unavoidable duty like by Müge below, can be seen as one reason why they did not want to leave 'their place'.

"Yani ailem burda olduğu için hep burda geçirmek zorundayız hayatımızı." (Müge, 15/05/2010)

"Because my family lives here we have to spend our life always here." (Müge, 15/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

"Yalnızlıktan çok sıkılırım, yalnız kalmaktan. Daima çevremde birilerinin olmasını isterim." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

"I get bored of loneliness. I want to see some people in my social surrounding forever." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

Müge's and Mustafa's words already highlight that the meaning of places derives primarily from those people one feels connected to, which is called *çevre* (immediate social environment). Therefore the personal relationships of the young people under concern are investigated in more detail in the following section.

6.3. Relationships

The following presented material about different relationships of young people including the experiences and perceptions of them stems not only from the interviews with the four key informants, but also from group discussions, informal talks and observations which I carried out in the youth centre.

When asked about the most important persons in their lives, the interviewees distinguished first of all between relatives and friends. The first group was further split into close family and wider kin. The second group included close friends and acquaintances. Another category mentioned was that of heterosexual love. One person also listed the staff of the youth centre. It became evident that relationships were distinguished primarily according to physical places (or virtual spaces) where those people are met, as well as by the degree of emotional closeness such relations allow.

For all relationships to people the principles of *sevgi & saygı* (love & respect) were seen as crucial. Being traditional complementary values especially within family relations they imply that parents should give love to their children whereas the latter should show respect towards the first (see a. o. Möwe 2000: 247-254). This principle, which has been mentioned before, appears to guide the behaviours and feelings towards each other in various other relational contexts too. In the ideal case of a close relation there should be a balance between giving and receiving value. This continued process of valuing each other can be seen as the basement for any affective relationship in a positive sense. At this point it can be concluded that the principles of *sevgi & saygı* as learnt in the family context from early primary socialisation onwards, are then later applied to relations outside the family in adapted forms.

Trust was used by the respondents as an indicator of how close a certain relation is, in the way that to those people whom one trusts more, the relation is more intimate. Primarily in the context of friendships, within which it was a serious issue, trust was defined by the majority of the respondents as being sure that the other person could keep any told secrets. Contrary to family contexts, where trust is already perceived as something given, it needs to be (constantly) proved in some way within friendships and especially when they are about to

be newly established. The following quotation contains an exemplary understanding of trust and security.

> "Ne zaman bir insana güvenebilirim? O insanı iyice çözmem lazım. O insanı güzel tanıdıktan sonra iyi tanıdıktan sonra ben ona güvenirim. Ama eğer ben bir şey söylüyorsam, o gidip başka birine söylüyorsa, ben ona güvenmem. Ve bu arkadaşlık seçiminde de baya iyi mücadele etmem lazım. Ona da zaman gerekiyor. Zamanla arkadaşı tanıyorum." (Esra, 26/05/2010)

> "When can I trust somebody? I must know this person absolutely. After knowing him/her really well I trust him/her. But if I say something and he/she tells somebody else I don't trust him/her. And when it comes to friendship, I also have to be able to make an effort. This also needs time. By the time I get to know the friend." (Esra, 26/05/2010, translated by K. F.)

According to the interviewees, to be able to trust somebody needs time for getting to know each other really well. Closeness and trusting can be seen as evolving mutually interlinked with each other. A point of trust that was stressed was being able to keep secrets (of friends).

6.3.1. Friends

One of the respondents compared friendships to basic physical needs of human beings, like drinking and eating. In this sense they were understood (especially among the older respondents) as a basic human social need.

> "Gerçekten şöyle bir şey: hayat boyunca insan dostluğa gerçekten çok ihtiyaç duyuyor. Mesela muhakkak hayatın boyunca bir dostun olması gerekiyor. Çünkü mesela sen çok zor bir duruma girdin, karmakarışık bir durumdasın. Dostun yanında olduğunda , dostun o seni karmaşıklıktan kurtarır. Seni doğru bir yola koyar. Hani doğru düşünmeni sağlar. Mantıklı düşünmeni sağlar. Çünkü sana yardımcı olur." (Müge, 17/06/2010)

> "It is really like this: Humans feel the need of friendship very much during their lifetime. For example for sure you need to have a friend in lifetime. Because, for example, you get into a bad situation, you are in a complex situation. When your good friend is close to you, you can be rescued from such difficulties. He/she can show you the right way, in other words he/she clears your thoughts. He/she makes your thoughts reasonable and logical. Because he/she helps you." (Müge, 17/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

Müge explained the human need for 'best/real friendships' by the impossibility of managing life and especially the hardships by oneself. The mentioned advantages of a friend including being beside you, helping you, showing you the right way and much more suggest that such relations are perceived to contribute primarily a lot to one's psychological health.

6.3.1.1. Friend is not friend

There were two types of friendships between which the young people in the youth centre distinguished: *arkadaşlık*[21] and *dostluk*[22]. The existence of these two separate linguistic terms in the Turkish language already indicates that differentiating concepts and experiences are addressed. The concept of *dostluk* has in general a deeper and more ideological meaning because the involved individuals are assumed to be closer to each other and more intimate, sharing private issues. Time is another crucial differentiating factor in the way that *dostluk* is perceived as being more stable over time. On the contrary *arkadaşlık* being spoken about in a more pragmatical way implies more notions of what is called 'acquaintances' in English (comparable with the German label of '*Bekanntschaften*'). Another suitable translation would be the term 'mateship' as defined by Allan (1989). According to him such a relation means having a good time when hanging out together but not necessarily being close to each other (ibid.: 24ff). The same is true for *arkadaşlık*. One informant stated that anybody could be his *arkadaş* but only a few people could become his close friends. Others were disagreeing by claiming that they could not be friends with anybody they met on the street. These conflicting positions about idealness and reality bring another concept into play which is vital in the daily lives of people, namely neighbourhood (*komşuluk).* According to Kurdish and Turkish cultural conventions 'good', in the sense of 'friendly' relations to one's neighbours are of primary importance. Daily routines like greeting or having some small talk with them imply the intention of keeping in touch without being necessarily close to each other (meaning not telling them one's personal secrets). In this sense a relationship is so to speak 'kept warm' for any case of emergency in which one might need some help. Providing support to one's neighbours when needed is understood in terms of reciprocity as everybody could find him- or herself in such a situation sooner or later. The concept of *arkadaşlık* implies in this regard the same logic.

In a group discussion different sorts of ('normal') friends (a*rkadaş çeşitleri)* were listed, including friends who accompany you along (part of) your way (*yol arkadaşı)*, friends who are around in or near your home (*ev arkadaşı)*, those who one primarily meets at school (*okul arkadaşı)* and others to who you can tell your secrets (*sır arkadaşı)* (Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010). Such a distinction draws primarily on spatial notions. The last category, which refers more to indicators of trust, does not seem to fit the others. The first one can also be regarded as less spatially bound because 'your way' might lead through different places. However, in reality a friend might fit into more than one category. Nevertheless such a

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[21] The Alter is referred to as *arkadaş.*
[22] The Alter is referred to as *dost.*

distinction refers to the more general practical socio-economy of acquaintances in daily life. An evident example of this kind provided descriptions of high school and dorm friendships. What bound the people together in those cases was the shared daily routine of studying, eating, sleeping and the like.

In different places we can get to know different people, but some of them we might meet again also in further contexts whereas the contact to others remains bound to localities. It follows that certain friendly relations (with a potential of turning into friendships), may remain in a passive state over some time depending on being in touch with each other and further circumstances.

'Normal friendships' (*arkadaşlık)* were perceived as unstable and changing. In spatial terms such relations were described as being more distant (*mesafeli*) and 'easy' (going) (*basit*). Many young people said that they did not trust most of their friends as loyalty is limited. They were aware of the bitter reality in which all the idealisations about friendship cannot be achieved entirely, where disappointment, misunderstandings and instrumentality occur. After 'using' a friend for one's own ends one might easily get rid of him/her and push him/her away. Therefore one respondent did not believe in the existence of friendship, which can be understood in the way that he did not believe that friendship could be realised in its ideal form.

> "Bence arkadaşlık çıkardır. Işi bittiğinde sana hiç düşünmeden tekmeyi basan kişidir. Benim için arkadaşlık yoktur ARKADAŞ!" (Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010)

> "For me friendship is pragmatism. It is this guy who hits you with a footfall, after finishing the work not thinking of you. For me, there is no friendship FRIEND!" (Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

This contradicting last statement that "there is no friendship friend" reminds of the words which already early philosophers like Aristotle and Montaigne used: "*O meine Freunde, Freunde gibt es nicht.*"[23] (Montaigne cited in Derrida 1999: 179) highlights the ambivalence between idealisations and experiences of relationships in reality. The socio-cultural practice of interpretations is linking the two dimensions. This argument will be discussed in more detail below. Derrida (ibid.) used it to explain what he called the politics of friendship ("*Politik der Freundschaft*"). He highlighted the very pragmatical logic of such relationships.

Whereas *arkadaşlık* and *komşuluk* function more inclusively, *dostluk* is a more exclusive principle. The Alter who gains the status of being *dost* has to fulfil much more narrowly defined criteria, such as being trustworthy, reliable and the like. These criteria and

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[23] "My dear friends, friends don not exist." (translated by K. F.)

their achievement constantly need to be proved to the person on the opposite side through behaviour and attitudes. Due to these necessities the number of *dost* of an Ego tends to be lower than that of *arkadaş*. Şoreş (08/06/2010) mentioned that in comparison to a 'normal friendship' *dostluk* is more of emotional relevance for him. The following quotation from one of the group discussions represents central characteristics of an 'ideal *dost*'.

> "Sadece iyi ve mutlu gününde değil; en kısa ve dar gününde yanında olandır. Dost kardeşten ötedir. Sana anne-baban kadar yakın ve sana onlar kadar güven veren, candan öte candır." (Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010)

> "Not only on good and happy days; on the darkest days beside you. A best friend is closer than a sibling. He/she is close to you like mother and father, trusting you like your family, the soul of a soul." (Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

Although these lines tell about what should be, it is grammatically put down like a fact (using the present/*geniş zaman*) which reaffirms it as socio-cultural convention. First of all this description stresses the function of support which should be provided by a *dost* at any time, but especially in problematic situations in which Ego might find him- or herself. Consequently *dostluk* is understood in terms of primarily sharing suffering, followed by sharing fun and happiness.

Moreover it was drawn heavily on the, in this cultural context, powerful language of kinship. Like in the quotation above it was said that *dostluk* was mirroring relations within close family, especially those between siblings but also between parents and their children as both types of relations were seen to be equal and comparable in terms of closeness, trust and security. The involved individuals were imagined to be connected through the soul with each other which can be seen as a kind of biological analogy to 'blood links' of kin relations. There exists another term for *dost* which is '*kanka*'[24]. Its meaning of 'blood-brother/-sister' furthermore stresses the kin analogy. It was said that two *kanka* are from the same germ (*"kanka aynı soğanın cücüğünü"*[25]). Among the young people I observed that they did not use this term as often as *dost*. In general it was primarily used among males.

The interpretations of what is happening among the involved individuals as time goes by are vital for the ways in which a relationship might develop. Such processes guided by social norms and values can make it possible that relations might change their definitions over time. As the empirical examples described below will show, *dostluk* can 'evolve' out of *arkadaşlık* as well as the other way round. Such changes can be understood in terms of actual experiences of relations and the sense which the individual tries to make out of them by

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[24] See also chapter 7.1.4. for further explanations.
[25] Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010

giving them certain labels such as that of *arkadaş* or *dost*. Such definitions offer guidelines for behaviours which are also implied in narrations about how an ideal friend should be. It can be seen as a mutual process of experiences guiding interpretations and at the same time interpretations guiding experiences.

In sum it can be stated that the degree of trust, knowing, sharing and loyalty tends to be stronger among *dostlar* rather than among *arkadaşlar*. In this sense *dostluk* is more beneficial for the individual when it comes to the support gained from it. The following explanations of meanings of friendship expressed by the respondents primarily refer to *dostluk* rather than *arkadaşlık*. They can be true for ideas about and experience of the latter as well, but to a lower degree.

6.3.1.2. Meanings of *dostluk*

Especially during the group discussions it became clear that friendships are first and foremost perceived as 'togetherness' and 'unity' (*beraberlik/birlik*). Wether in a material or immaterial way, sharing (*paylaşmak*), as another aspect strongly referred to, can be interpreted as immediate experience which propagates such perceptions of this strong sense of connectedness. For Şoreş, having friends meant life, contrary to being alone.

> "Ve en kötü anında bile yanında olacak kişiler arkadaşlarındır. Çünkü en hüzünlü olduğun onda açarsın, en ufak bir şey, açarsın telefonu konuşursun mesela içini dökersin olmadı beraber bir yerlere çıkılır ama yalnız bir insan işte o yalnızlığa haps edilmiş bir köle bir şekilde yaşam sürer. Bu da en kötü şeydir yani yaşanmaya değmeyen bir hayat sürer. Onun için arkadaş demek hayat demek." (Şoreş, 08/06/2010)

> "The ones who are beside you in the worst cases are your friends. Because you can tell him/her about the saddest things, about the most simple, you speak on the phone, you cry into it; if it didn't get better you can go somewhere together; but a lonely person, caught in loneliness lives the life of a slave. This is the worst thing in life. Therefore friendship means life." (Şoreş, 08/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

For Mustafa his best friends were like a second family because he was spending nearly as much time with them as with his family. Moreover family meant for him being able to pour out his heart which he could do in a certain circle of friends as well.

> "Arkadaşlık benim için aileden sonra en önemli şeyi ifade ediyor çünkü ailem dışında bütün vaktini arkadaşlarınla geçirirsin ve arkadaşlarınla sohbet edersin, arkadaşlarınla etkinlikte bulunursun. Bir derdin olduğunda arkadaşlarına açarsın. Arkadaşlarım benim için ikinci bir aile gibidir." (Mustafa, 03/06/2010)

> "After the family friendship is the most important thing for me because outside my family you are spending most of the time with your friends, chatting with them, with your friends you can find yourself active. You can tell your friends about distress and

pain. For me my friends are like a second family." (Mustafa, 03/06/2010, translated by K. F.)

As already mentioned above one of the most central meaning seen in *dostluk* was that one's best friend(s) are there for you in the worst situations one might find oneself in. Such negative experiences in terms of sharing of distress were most of the time mentioned firstly. By doing so it was again referred to family relations when Müge (17/06/2010) for example said that a best friend has to give you his/her breast (like a mother) where you can so to speak cry yourself out *("...dost öğüt vermesi lazım")*. Experiences of enjoyment and pleasure played comparatively much less a role in giving 'real meaning' to very close friendships and neither in defining them as such. This is also transmitted in many traditional sayings like "*dost kara günde belli olur*" (a good friend is understood on a black day).

According to the general idealised conceptions about friendships the 'ideal *dost*' was described as being somebody who knows one very well so that they can understand each other without speaking ("*sessizlik - konuşmadan anlaşabilmek*"[26]). Şoreş (08/06/2010) stated that his *dost* should be a "medium" because he/she should know everything about Şoreş, even his thoughts. According to him Ego should be able to entirely trust and rely on Alter and share his deepest feelings and thoughts, happiness as well as distress. Such an ideal best friend should be completely honest and therefore also tell negative things which one might not want to hear (e.g. something he/she does not like about the friend, being of opposite opinion etc.). This is highlighted in the sayings "*dost acı söyler*" (a good friend tells the bitter truth) and "*dostun attığı taş baş yarmaz*" (the stone that a good friend throws won't injure a head) as well.

6.3.1.3. Friendship patterns

With the help of the network portrayals the networks of close(r) friendships of the four key informants will be presented and discussed in this subchapter. It will be started with the smallest network, proceeding to the bigger ones. All the networks contain certain clusters which can also be labelled as cliques (see a. o. Gutjahr 2008/09: 53ff). These are groupings of people within which everybody knows each other. The broken lines indicate from where they know each other which appears to be in most cases also the context where most of their interactions take place. Ego is always part of every single network and therefore has a so-called bridging function as he/she is the connecting link between different groupings (ibid.: 51).

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[26] Focus group discussion 2, 02/06/2010.

Legend for reading the network-portrayals (Figures 1-4):

⊗   ..... Ego

o   ..... Alter: friend (*arkadaş*)

•   ..... Alter: very close/best friend (*dost*)

Contexts of clusters: a)   kinship

                                     b)   neighbourhood (*mahalle, köy*)

                                     c)   school (*ilk ve orta okul, lise*)

                                     d)   university (including also *dershane*)

                                     e)   youth centre (*Gençlik Evi, Çatom*)
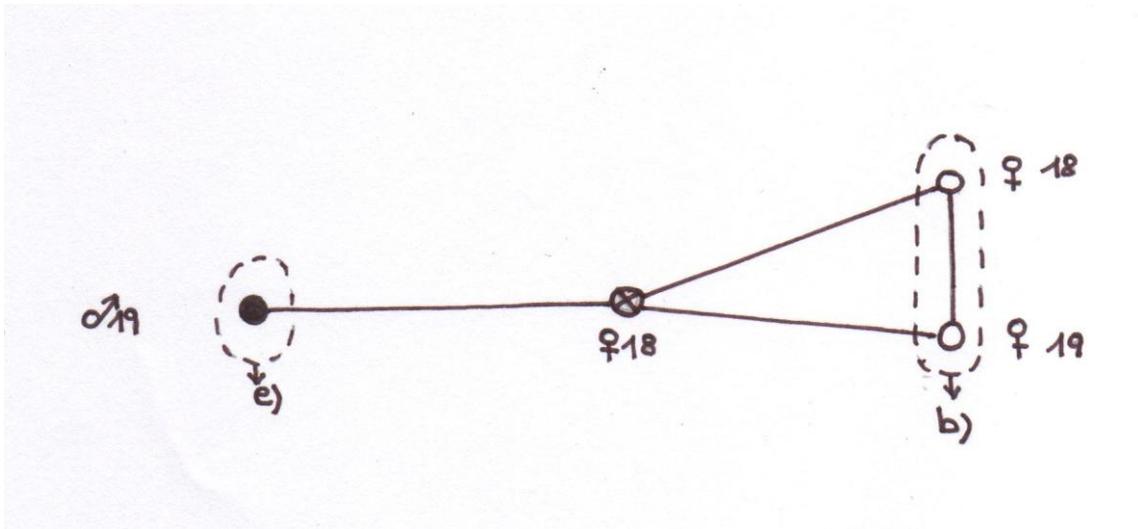
Figure 1: Friendship network of Esra.

The network of Esra (see Figure 1) contained beside herself two girls and one boy. All persons were of the same age and the majority was female. The best friend of Esra was nineteen years old and male. They had got to know each other about four years ago, but only during the last six to seven months they experienced a very close friendship (*dostluk*). This person had been also a close friend of Esra's ex-boyfriend. When she had separated from the latter, this *dost* remained so to say loyal to Esra. They met regularly (sometimes every day or several days in a week) in the youth centre or did some other activities together. Furthermore Esra had two closer female friends who were living in the same *mahalle* (district). With them she spent time mainly in the neighbourhood or inside the homes of them.
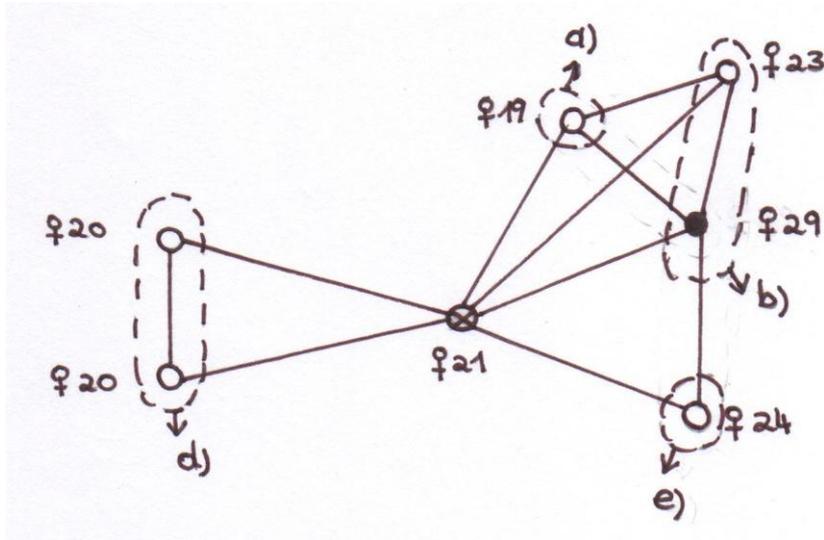
Figure 2: Friendship network of Müge.

When looking at the network of Müge (see Figure 2) it can be said that it was homogenous in terms of sex and gender. The age span among the individuals was about ten years. For six years Müge's closest friend was one of her neighbours across the road who she called 'older sister' (*abla*). They were seeing each other every day by coming over to the others home. From time to time they went together to other places, for example doing shopping or something else. The second closest friend of Müge was another neighbour. After this girl had married some years ago their relationship became more distant. At the time of investigation they were more in touch over speaking on the phone rather than meeting each other. Within this cluster of friends who knew each other, there was also another girl who was at the same time a cousin of Müge. In the *dershane* there were two persons in her class to whom she was speaking most. They often spent time together after their classes in a café or the like. Besides there was another girl she had got to know in the youth centre, with who she was in touch only occasionally.
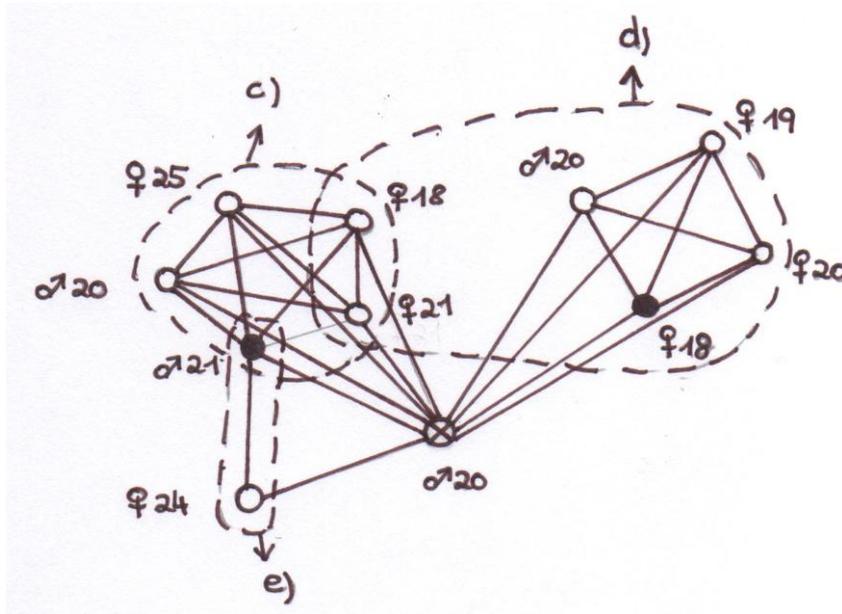
Figure 3: Friendship network of Mustafa.

One of Mustafa's friendship cliques (see Figure 3) established during the time they spent together at primary, secondary and high school. Nowadays they primarily met in their free time for example to do sport in the stadium. With one person of this cluster and another girl Mustafa also met in the youth centre from time to time. Another clique established recently only one year ago within the university context. Two of his older friends were also attending university, but were not in the same class and therefore not part of the new group of friends he had found there. His best friend within the latter group was a girl two years younger than him. They hung out together every weekday during the term whereas during holidays they hardly saw each other. With his other male *dost* Mustafa was connected primarily through sportive activities which they practiced together nearly every day.
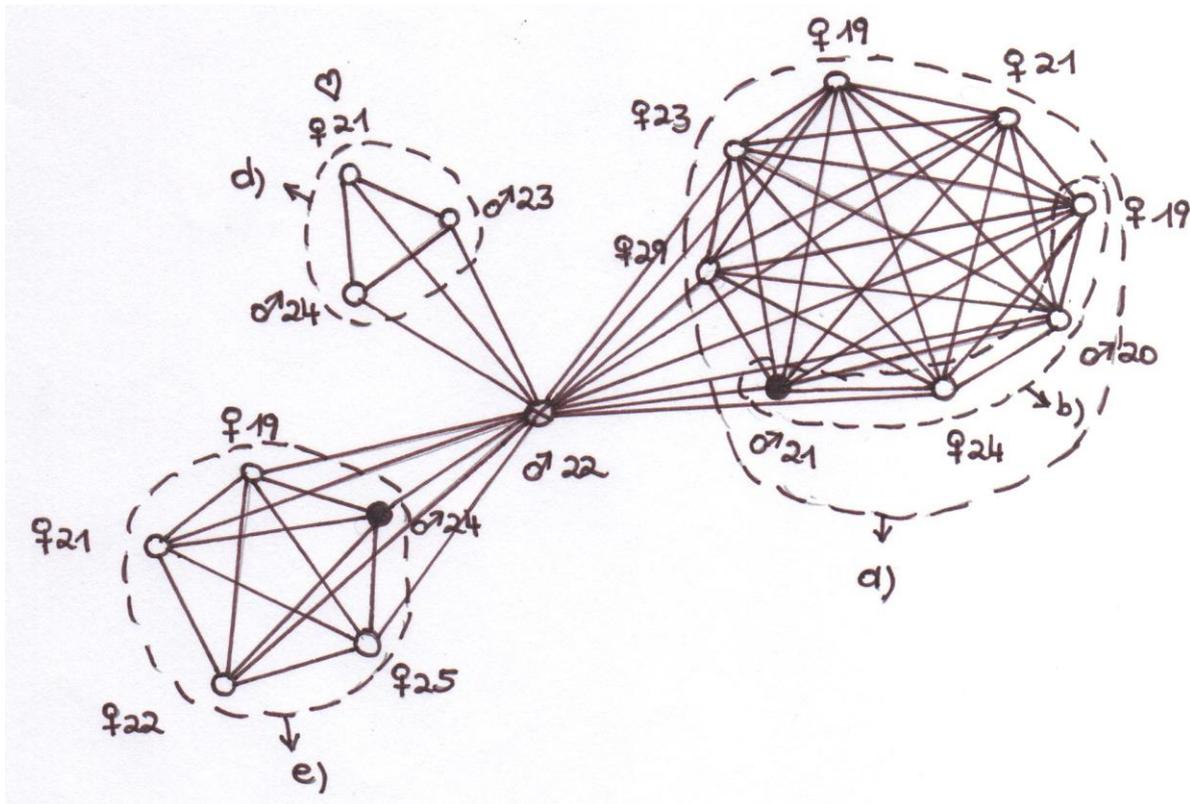
Figure 4: Friendship network of Şoreş.

The friendship network of Şoreş (see Figure 4) was the biggest one in terms of the size. Two thirds of his friends were female. Half of them belonged to his relatives. Four of them were at the same time living in the same village where his family was staying. One cousin and neighbour of the latter group was his best friend. They did not see each other regularly during the term because at these times Şoreş was staying with one of his brothers in the city centre. Another clique in which Şoreş was integrated established in the youth centre. Within this group there was also one male person to whom he felt closer than to the others. The smallest clique contained the friends he got to know in the *dershane*, which is the place where they regularly saw each other. With one of them Şoreş was at the same time in love with. They were planning to study at the same university.

When comparing all four network portrayals to each other it can be recognised that in general the age range among the friends varied from two to ten years. The friends tended to be older than Ego. Except the one of Müge, all the networks were mixed in terms of sex and gender. The networks of the girls were smaller in total size[27] and the amount of the clusters compared to those of the boys. Furthermore girls named only one best friend whereas each of

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[27] The size refers to the total number of named people to whom Ego claimed to be connected.

the boys named two. These observations can lead to the interpretation that in these cases the girls' criteria for labelling somebody as *arkadaş* or *dost* were narrower. On the contrary the boys seemed to understand and apply these terms in a broader way. Another factor might be that the networks of the female respondents appeared to be to a major part more bound to the home and neighbourhood. When comparing the institutional backgrounds of the cliques kinship was of relevance in half of the cases, whereas, although resulting in comparatively small numbers of friends, the youth centre played a role for all four Egos. The neighbourhood context was only absent in Mustafa's case. The same is true for school and/or university backgrounds in Esra's case. Furthermore it can be concluded that institutional and spatial contexts played a crucial role in establishing and keeping up group friendship relations in the form of the described cliques. The latter counted three up to nine persons in the presented cases. The described contexts obviously provided appropriate standardised and ritualised opportunities for regular meetings of the whole group. In the investigated cases those relationships in which idealisations about friendship have been achieved to a higher degree tended to be labelled as *dostluk*.

Contrary to face-to-face friendships virtual ones such as through online platforms like 'Facebook' were not included in the portrayals at all because they were not considered as 'real friendships'. The key informants agreed that they can neither communicate nor become as close as within their face-to-face friendships. Moreover they did not trust their virtual acquaintances as they might not tell the truth about themselves because everybody can present him- or herself in the online world according to his or her wishes.

6.3.1.4. Becoming friends

Bell (1981: 10) emphasised that "friendship is based on private negotiations". Seeing people on a regular basis like at school, university, the youth centre, in the neighbourhood or at kin gatherings (e.g. weddings) were significant conditions for the establishment of friendships in the investigated cases. Such more or less formal settings are giving opportunities to get involved with each other.

As already pointed out above, during the interviews and group discussions, most of the young people agreed that one could be friend with nearly anybody (*arkadaşlık*), but realising a close friendship (*dostluk*) to somebody was much more limited and difficult. This view implies that acquaintances were included in the category of friendship too. However, others who had a more narrow definition of *arkadaşlık* made it clear that they could not become friends with anybody they met in the street. Persons of both opinions would sometimes greet

or have a small talk with other people in the street, whereby they might already know them from somewhere or not.

> "Ben çok çabuk arkadaş edinen bir insanım. Ama işte bütün arkadaşlarımı da aynı seviyede tutamıyorum. Çünkü belli arkadaşlar var ki kardeşim gibi, abim gibi gördüğüm kişiler oluyor. Veya kız arkadaşlarım kız kardeşlerim gibi oluyorlar. O şekil bir şeyim de var ama yani böyle bir şey ki bu derece derece artık ilerliyor. Yani ailem eğitimim yakın arkadaşlarım ve artık sıradan diyebileceğim herkes. İletişime geçtiğim herkes diyebilirim yani." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010)

> "I am a person who finds friends very quickly. But I do not like all of my friends to the same degree. Because there are some who are like my brothers and sisters, I see them like my older brother. Or my female friends like my sisters. In this way there is something, but such a thing which increases step by step. Well, my family, close friends from school and, after a border I can say anybody. Everybody who passes communication with me." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010; translated by K. F.)

As highlighted in the quotation above communication with the person opposite seems to be the key action for founding and fostering a friendship. The main necessities needed for becoming friends mentioned by the informants included time, talking and getting to know each other as well as trust. In some explanations it became evident that place, meaning living at least close to each other in order to meet regularly, is another crucial factor. A ranking of processes which came up during one group discussion suggested that firstly the concerned persons have to pay value to each other; secondly they should share privacy which leads finally to mutual trust and security (Focus group 2, 02/06/2010). One interviewee stressed that friendships could only evolve when both (or more) sides were ready and willing (Müge, 17/06/2010).

Moreover personality, character, interests and behaviour played a role when it came to the question of mutual sympathy. Mustafa (03/06/2010) explained that he now felt more able to choose his friends more consciously rather than during his childhood, as he was now paying more attention to their thinking and behaviour as well as evaluating it. In most cases the founding of friendships seemed to depend on a mix of rational decisions and emotional incentives. According to former experiences, values and imaginations, most of the time we had a certain picture about 'the ideal friend' in our minds which we might recognise at times more clearly than at others. Mustafa (03/06/2010) gave a description of such a picture from his mind: His ideal friend should be a happy person with whom he could have fun and do sport activities. This person should not have bad habits like using drugs. Mustafa would not like if he/she smoked but he would tolerate it.

When looking at already established friendships, similarities and differences between the involved persons can always be detected. There was a broad agreement among the key

informants that character, personality, age and gender were most of the time factors of difference within their relations. On the other hand thinking, attitudes, ideas and understandings tended to be most similar and a uniting factor. When looking at their friendship networks the involved people furthermore did tend to be from the same national, ethnical, religious, mother tongue and class background. Such structural identity factors appeared to be reproduced by friendship networks most of the time.

6.3.1.5. Change

Friendships including its experiences and evaluations (e.g. satisfaction, closeness, form and frequency of contact, involved individuals and so on) change over time. This fact contrasts with the common perception of especially *dostluk* as enduring and stable. According to the respondents, keeping up friendships needed a satisfying degree of communication. What was satisfying depended on the situations and perceptions of those involved.

Reflections on relational experiences alongside labelling them in certain ways could vary from person to person and throughout one's lifetime. For example Müge (17/06/2010) explained that during her time in high school she had many *arkadaş* but she did not have a *dost*. It could have been the case that none of her friends fitted into her perception of *dostluk* at that time. Another possible option would be that her labelling conceptions had changed in a way that she might had perceived one or some of her old friends as *dost* at that time but not now any more.

Often circumstances outside of ones will and reach can influence the development of relationships. Many interviewees mentioned that the intensity of the relation to friends from school decreased during the last year(s) because these persons went away to study in other cities, so that it was not possible for them to meet regularly any more. They stayed in touch mainly through phone calls. Müge (17/06/2010) explained that the relation to one of her friends became more distanced since that person married. Although they did not live far from each other they would currently rather speak on the phone than meeting each other. In such cases former face-to-face relationships gained more and more characteristics of virtual relations.

Occurring conflicts might be solved to positive ends or destroy a relation like the following two cases show. Mustafa (03/06/2010) told about a conflict between his best friend and him which evolved after one lesson at university when they were all in a bad mood. Later he realised that he had hurted his friend with his behaviour in that situation. After saying sorry his friend forgave him. The story of Esra (26/05/2010) did not take such a happy ending. One

of her friends accused her of having done something bad which in her opinion she did not do. As a result they were currently not talking to each other.

To conclude, recognising own mistakes and accepting excuses seemed to be crucial rituals for being able to overcome conflicts. The ending of a friendship which Şoreş (08.06.2010) compared with human dying was in most cases accompanied by a loss of value, understanding and willingness to communicate with the other person.

According to Müge (17/06/2010) who was using the metaphor of a building, the basement on which a friendship was formed determined its stableness and continuity. The hope and wish to keep and strengthen existing friendships was given voice among all interviewees. Having made the experience of loss of his school friends, Mustafa emphasised that he did not want the same to happen to his newly established friendships from university as well. He wanted to try to realise it through staying in touch continuously and getting to know their families, spouses, later on maybe children and the like. Şoreş (08/06/2010) was of the opinion that he and his friends should live in the same place in order to continue their relations. Such considerations show that place is an important variable, alongside being integrated into the wider social network of the person opposite.

Not only your friends can change over time but also you can make them and they can make you change. Processes of influencing each other may be evaluated in positive or negative ways. Şoreş (08/06/2010) described it in the negative sense with the metaphor of a basket full of fruits where one of them is rotten which spreads to the other ones too as time passes. However, he suggested furthermore, if you picked your fruits and friends well you would not have any disadvantage.

> "Arkadaşlığın çeşidi var dedim ya işte o arkadaşlığın içerisinde, hani bir meyve kabında çürük bir elma oldumu diğer elmaları da zamanla çürütür. Arkadaşlarım gerçekten iyi karakterli değilse o çürük elma gibi zamanla seni de işte düştüğü kötü duruma düşürebilir. O yüzden dezavantajları da var. Ama işte kendini bilen insan kendi arkadaşını iyice seçebilmiş kişi için dezavantaj yoktur yani." (Şoreş, 08/06/2010)

> "I said there are different sorts of friends and inside of friendship, well in a basket of fruits the rotten apple is making the other ones rotten as well. If my friends are really not of good character, by time they can bring you in a bad situation like the rotten apple. Therefore there are also disadvantages. But for people who choose their friends well there are no disadvantages." (Şoreş, 08/06/2010; translated by K. F.)

6.3.2. Kin relations

Whereas the young people tended to speak to friends about certain topics and issues, others remained subject to discussions with close family members. As it was mentioned above a

circle of friends might be perceived as 'second family' due to similar functions these relationships can fulfil.

However, friendship and family relations were seen as two entirely distinct dimensions of lived experience. Within the second realm the connecting perception of 'sharing the same blood' (being of same descent) was stressed as an unavoidable fact. On the contrary friendship was described as an individual's free choice. There was broad agreement on the difference in quality when comparing these two kinds of relations. Müge associated family with more value and meaning. Furthermore she claimed that the involved people knew more about and understood each other to a greater extent rather than it was the case among common friendships (*arkadaşlık*).

> "Ya şimdi nasıl diyim akraba biraz daha yakın olması gerekiyor. Çünkü o senin akraban, senin ailenden biri yani sülalenden biri. Hala oğlu olsun işte kuzenler olsun, yiğenlerin olsun akrabanın yeri ayrıdır. Ama arkadaşlık öyle değil. Ben nasıl diyim akrabalarla kim olursa olsun bir insan akrabalarla daha çok bağ olması gerekiyor. Arkadaşlık biraz daha mesafe. Mesela akrabam benim her şeyimi bildiği için ben de onunla ilgili çoğu şeyi bilirim. Biraz daha samimi oluruz. Biraz daha birbirimizi anlarız. Akrabalık daha önemli çünkü aynı soydansın, aynı kandansın. Bu akraba dediğin kişiler senin ya baba tarafıdır ya anne tarafıdır. Bu senin için daha çok önemli. Akrabalık bağı olması gereken bir şey hani. O da tabi iyiyse hani. Her akraba da iyi geçinmeyebilir. Kötü akrabalar da olabilir iyi akrabalar da olabilir. Akraban iyi ise değerini daha çok bilirsin, arkadaşlıktan daha çok hani kıymetini bilirsin. Benim için akraba daha değerli. Daha çok şey ifade eder. Çünkü akrabaların yeri daha ayrı. Akraba nasıl anlatayım akrabaa daha değerli yani benim için." (Müge 17/06/2010)

> "Now, how shall I say, a relative has to be more close because this is your relative, one of your family, one of your wider family. Aunt, son, cousins, the place of relatives is distinct. But friendship is not like that. I, how shall I say, with the relatives whoever it is, it is your relative; with the relatives the connection must be tighter. Friendship is more distanced. For example my relatives know everything about me and I also know most about them. We are a little bit closer. We understand each other a little bit better. Kinship is more important because you share the same last name; you are from the same blood. These relatives are from your father's or from your mother's side. This is more important to you. Kinship is something which includes an obligatory bond. This is of course also good. Not every relative is good. There can be good and bad relatives. In comparison to friendships you give more value to relatives. For me a relative is more valuable. It means more because the place of relatives is more separate. Relatives, how shall I say, are more valuable for me." (Müge 17/06/2010; translated by K. F.)

The feelings described above may stem partly from the daily experience of living together in one household. Besides, as already highlighted above, Mustafa (03/06/2010) stated that his friends are like a second family for him ("*Arkadaşlarım benim için ikinci bir aile gibidir.*"). Such an expression also emphasises the primary importance and unique quality (closeness) of family relations. The young people were especially caring for the members of their close family including their mother, father and siblings. These were the persons who were linking

them to the place where they were born and grew up most strongly. Moreover the mother had a key role in the way that they got to feel endless and condition-less love from her. Mustafa explained that his mother was the only person who understood him entirely and who would never let him down or turn against him.

> "Benim hanı, beni her konuda anlayan tek insan annem. Hani kim sana sırt çevirirse çevirsin, kim karşında olursa olsun benim yanımda olan kişi daima annem olur. Annem hiçbir zaman karşıma çıkmaz. Bunu hiçbir arkadaşım yapamaz mesela çoğu yapabilirim der ama yapmayabilir, ama annem asla bana sırtını dönmez." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

> "My, well my mother is the single person who understands me in any regard. Who gives you the back, who is opposite you, my mother has been always by my side. My mother never turned against me. This can't be done by a friend, for example most are saying yes I can, but my mother would never turn her back against me." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

To relatives farther away the questioned young people generally did not feel that close. They mostly got to see them only on rare occasions. Şoreş (08/06/2010) even said that he did not like his other (wider) relatives. He did not feel an emotional connection to them. In other cases relatives, for example cousins, were often at the same time very close friends. On the symbolical level kin terms of the close family were frequently used to express closeness as already mentioned when discussing *dostluk* because within certain kin relations often characteristics of ideal friendships are indeed experienced like in Mustafa's description of his mother from above.

The presented material should not lead to the conclusion that all the family lives are 'perfect' and all the members are entirely 'happy' only because for the young people their family is of extraordinary importance. The circumstances in reality show another picture. However, problems within families are quite a taboo, especially when talking to outsiders. Therefore I also got to hear first and foremost stories which were praising this institution. It is part of the cultural conviction to talk 'good' about family and hide any problematical negative sentiments in order to keep up the traditional order.

6.3.3. Friends visiting homes

The meeting place for *arkadaşlar* was first and foremost the inner city (semi-)public sphere and only on rare occasions a private home (e.g. for a birthday party). Among *dostlar* (best friends) visiting the home of each other was more common, but not necessarily. Visiting the homes of one's opposite-sex friends was perceived as especially problematic as it might be understood by the family in terms of a heterosexual relation and intentsions of marrying. As explained by Şoreş (08/06/2010) he could not visit most of his female friends at home,

especially when they had no male siblings. If the friends were of the same sex, relatives and/or neighbours the probability of mutual visits increased.

All the respondents explained that their parents knew some of their friends personally and others not. Usually it was the mother who got to talk with them.

> "Ailem tabi kolay kolay kimseye güvenmiyorlar. Ki onlar da güveniyorlar onlara. Çünkü gerçekten onlar güvenilir bir insan. Zaten ailem beni biliyor, kolay kolay arkadaş edinmem. Güvenmesem hiç çekinmem. Ama arkadaş seçimim iyi. Seçmiyorum, seçtiğim zamanda yani düzenli seçiyorum, ailem güveniyor." (Esra, 26/05/2010)

> "Of course my family are not easily trusting people. They [the friends] are also trusting them [her family] because they are really trustable people. My family knows me, I don't make friends easily. If I don't trust I don't make. But I choose my friends well. I don't choose, when choosing well I choose properly, my family trusts." (Esra, 26/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

There was no case of disliking friends by parents. However, in such a case some young people said that they would listen to their parents and quit the friendship. Others would try to convince their parents of the 'goodness' of the person under concern or would find themselves in a cleft stick. The advice of their parents to choose their friends carefully was taken very seriously by the respondents.

Sometimes friends also established close relationships to other family members and became so to speak 'friends of the whole family' and not only of the introducing individual. The case of Müge and her best friend exemplifies such a situation. Müge's *dost* was her female neighbour who was a few years older. She was coming over to their place whenever she was free of duty and without prior arranging of appointments. Due to her older age she was at the same time a very close friend of Müge's mother. Most of the time the three of them were sitting together talking, going out or doing some house chores. They were also looking together for paid work outside the home. In this regard generational transitions of (in this case female) friendships can become evident.

6.3.4. Hetero-sexual relations

In the Turkish language there exist distinct labels for the person one is in love with. One of the most common ones is '*sevgili*' (lover). However, s*evgilim* as well as *aşkım* (both mean 'my love') are not used when introducing this person to others. In Turkish it is the same like in the English language where the term 'boy-/girlfriend' (*erkek/kız arkadaş*) stems from 'friend' (*arkadaş*) and therefore refers to an inherent interlinking of the two concepts (in German even the same term '*FreundIn*' can be used for both situations). The term of *erkek/kız*

arkadaş, meaning boy-/girlfriend, is more widespread among the younger generation. Additionally it is often used when talking about non-sexual friendship relations.

Contrary to the mentioned linguistic specifics, for the majority of the young people I talked to, love and friendship were two distinct concepts and experiences which should be kept separate. Compared to friendships, love relationships were given less priority especially by girls as they argued that the loved person could easily hurt and leave you, whereas a *dost* would be less likely to turn against you. Müge (17/06/2010) described love with the words of "*inişli çıkışlı bir yoldur*" which means it is a slopy way from which you can easily get off.

It was seen as possible that love could evolve out of a friendship relation. However, the other way round was not considered as an option. Keeping friendship after a love relation ended was seen as completely wrong. Esra's ex-boyfriend made a friendship offer like this to her after they got separated but Esra refused to be his 'normal' friend (Esra, 26/05/2010). Şoreş experienced another situation. He was in love with a girl. The relation was a platonic one and it finally ended because it was more or less one-sided. After this period neither the girl nor Şoreş wanted to be friends any more.

These stories show that heterosexual attractions can be found as irritating and disturbing within friendships. However, in reality they fall together many times. An example would be the story of Şoreş (05/06/2010) about his new love who he got to know as a friend while both were attending the same *dershane*. Later on they started planning to study at the same university in order to foster their relation.

7. Spaces and places of young people in Mardin

The median age in the province of Mardin is 19.69 (TÜİK 2009: URL 1a). Consequently young people are a major part of the total population. Nevertheless only a few distinct places are provided for young people in the city area of Mardin.

According to my observations, young people met each other primarily in official institutions such as schools, libraries and universities. When it came to spending their 'free time', next to the local youth centre called '*Gençlik ve Kültür Evi'*, there were several sport halls which were mainly visited by males for the purpose of playing football. More varied activities were provided in the main stadium (including court tennis, table-tennis, athletics and so on). Furthermore there were some music associations, informal bands and a folklore dancing group who presented themselves regularly at various performances.

There were also cafés and restaurants which were visited by (same or mixed-sex) groups of friends or by couples. Most of them were located in the new city part. However, many young people, especially those who did not have an own income yet and were financially dependent on their parents, complained about the expensiveness of such places and consequently visited them only rarely.

Young people furthermore occupied spaces in the city by hanging out in the streets or meeting in parks. Another habit of mainly men of various ages was to visit friends or relatives at their work places like at a shop or restaurant.

When asking (older and younger) people in general about the youth in Mardin they would primarily stress the situation of unemployment alongside the hardships of entering higher education at universities. Moreover it was claimed that young people had hardly any 'social life' because especially girls were very much controlled by their families. Young people were complaining that there were not enough facilities 'for them' (e.g. no cinema, bars, discos) and therefore they were bored of this place, where most of them grew up. At this point modern mass media has to be considered as playing a significant role. Through television and internet young people did know about global cultural trends, as well as about facilities and opportunities that people of the same age have in other parts of the world. One result of such comparisons was that they tended to be unsatisfied after detecting insufficiencies of the situation where they found themselves in. However, the issue was not only one of missing places, but - especially for girls - one of not being allowed to spend too much time being on their own away from home. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in one of the following subchapters. Shaw et al. (1996 cited in Hendry & Kleop 2005: 172) concluded for American youth that it is not simply a matter of too little to do, rather it can be

linked in a more complex way with a young person's relation to the wider community. This argument seems to be relevant to explain partially the reasons for such a 'leisure boredom' among the young people in Mardin. Actually it is exactly this integration of young people in wider society that the local youth centre, which will be portrayed below, tries to promote.

7.1. Introducing the *Gençlik ve Kültür Evi*

In the following descriptive account of the *Gençlik ve Kültür Evi* (*GKE*) (Youth and Culture House) some approaches of Organisational Anthropology will be considered. Guided by the questions which Lofland (1996) suggested when investigating social movement organisations, I want to give an overview about believes, structures, forms, motivations of those participating, strategies, social reactions and effects of the youth organisation under concern. Unfortunately all of these questions cannot be answered in detail, whereby other additional ones are dealt with too. The following statements are the result of research on the website[28] alongside talking to 'insiders' and observing the actual central environment of the youth centre. In addition, I conducted formal expert interviews with two of the staff members who I call Mahmut and Osman in this paper.

The *Gençlik ve Kültür Evi* in Mardin was officially founded in 2001 (informally it was already operating since 1999[29]) within the context of the "Social Development for Youth Project" as being part of the broader developmental program for the south-eastern region of Turkey (GAP) which has been described above. The infrastructure and various projects are financed primarily by this GAP (BKİ) program and the provincial government (*Mardin Valiliği)*. Money for specific projects often additionally comes from various EU youth sponsorships. The membership of boys is significantly higher than those of girls. According to information provided on the website, 60 girls and 146 boys were officially part of the association in August 2010. (URL 4)

There are two terms which should be distinguished from each other, but which will be used as synonyms at times. On the one hand the physical building of the youth centre (*Gençlik ve Kültür Evi)* exists and on the other hand there appears to be a youth association (*Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği)*. My ethnographical investigation focused more on the physical place of the *Gençlik ve Kültür Evi* as a place of interactions between different (primarily young) people. Alongside I also took into consideration the dimension of the association with its symbols, ambitions and further implications. The latter was only established recently in an official manner. During my stay a new office was furnished for the association in a distinct part of the

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[28] http://www.genclikevi.net, 25/08/2010
[29] Mahmut, 16/05/2010

building. However, it is so to say run by the same aims and faces who have been keeping up and organising the youth centre already since several years. Therefore these two institutions have to be seen as inherently connected to each other. Both enable youth exchanges in terms of being a hosting as well as a sending organisation.

Such kinds of establishments for youth can be found in most provincial towns in Turkey nowadays. There exist youth centres also in Mardin's neighbouring provinces like in the towns of Batman, Diyarbakır, Urfa, Gaziantep and Kilis, just to mention the closest ones. They understand themselves as platforms for various regional, national and international projects and youth exchanges. The main aims include supporting young people in all possible ways, meaning taking them and their problems seriously. Overall the living conditions of those immediately concerned and moreover for the whole society shall be improved whereby a main focus is on promoting education and gender equality. The staff member Mahmut (16/05/2010) highlighted that with 1.000 Euro per year a young person in Mardin is able to study, whereas in "Europe"[30] a single person could only survive for one month with that amount of money.

Beside such financial concerns another main mission of the organisation is to realise an adequate and satisfying youth policy in the local context of the province Mardin as well as beyond it. In this regard the youth centre and its related association can be seen as part of a global youth movement claiming political recognition and rights for young people. In the broadest sense such youth movements try to fuel social and cultural change. Their mission and its outcomes are of strong relevance to themselves as they are the future generation hoping to benefit from their achievements in the forthcoming of their lives.

Beside such global ambitions a more local and regional concern of the organisation in Mardin is to overcome the earlier on described negative stereotypes about the south-eastern region of Turkey and its inhabitants. Overall the aim is that the future generations shall get the chance to grow up in a peaceful and supportive environment. In this way the 'successful' young people who are studying and/or working in high positions are often taken as examples to show that such prejudices are not true. The young people of this region are seen as the ones most likely to be able to, so to speak break these negative stereotypes. This was expressed by one staff member as it follows:

"Ha Türkiye genelinde gençler dediğin zaman biraz da ön yargılar çok yani Türkiye genelinin ön yargısı çok. İşte ön yargıları nasıl kıramıyoruz; dil ayrımcılığı. İşte Kürdüdür, Arabıdır, Süryanisidir, Alevisidir, Sünnisidir, Ermenisidir diye düşünceler

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[30] It can be assumed that Mahmut was probably referring to western and nothern Europe.

olduğu için biraz o yargılar var ama en çok şuan bunu kıran bence güneydoğu gençliğidir. Güneydoğu gençliğinde o yargılar kırılmış." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

"In general, Turkey, when talking about youth, there are many prejudices, there are many general prejudices in Turkey. Well how can't we break the prejudice; it is regulated by language. There are Kurdish, Arabic, Syrian, Alevi, Sunni, Armenian called thoughts, and therefore these prejudices exist, but the youth of the south-east is breaking them most currently. These prejudices get broken through the south-eastern youth." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

7.1.1. The location

The *Gençlik ve Kültür Evi* was situated on the eastern fringes of the Old Town at *Meydanbaşı* next to the housings for police staff (*polis evleri*) and opposite of the minibus station (*otogar*)[31]. The two-story building was surrounded by a garden which was bordered by a fence. Next to the youth centre was the home of the local *ÇATOM,* a multi-purpose community place. The latter was also sponsored by the GAP program and included a handcraft workshop where women work on knitting, sawing and other handicrafts and a kitchen with a related restaurant area. On the upper floor, next to a seminar room there were several rooms for guests (*misafirhane*).

In front of the building there was a huge garden with a couple of benches standing around. It was an attractive place where young people gathered in the grass. Being in the garden allowed one to observe what was going on 'outside' on the street and at the same time one could be easily observed by people passing by.

Inside the building there was a room with several computers, a place for playing table-tennis, a theatre hall, a library, a room for drawing and painting, a seminar room, an office, a kitchen and a toilette. Recently a second office for writing projects was furnished in another part of the building. In general the furnishing appeared to be scarce and run down.

7.1.2. Attendancy and activities

The *GKE* was most crowded during school time and least during summer holidays. Young people passed by on their way from their lessons, while others came when they were free of work from home. There were no regular opening hours. During the time of my stay the interior of the youth centre was most of the time accessible between noon and evening (from about 11am up to about 8pm). Who was in charge of the key varied according to who was present and most suitable arrangements. However, the garden could be entered at any time.

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[31] See Figures 6 & 7 in appendix.

It was a place where many 'different' people met each other. They might have been of another age, gender, ethnicity, religiosity, nationality, character and so on. This place was open to everybody. However, in reality the profile of the typical regular visitor appeared to be male, unmarried, in his early twenties, Muslim, Kurdish, currently unemployed and attending *lise* (high school) or preparing for the university entrance exam.

At times different kinds of visitors would approach the youth centre, some of them being potential financial sponsors or representatives from other organisations. Another type of attracted people were visitor groups which had come from other parts of Turkey or from abroad, taking part in an exchange program or in a certain project or course offered at the youth centre. During my whole stay I never saw parents around, except for one mother who was working at the *ÇATOM* in the other part of the building.

The *GKE* was used mainly as a casual meeting place for young people who were hanging out in small fluctuant groupings at various places of the property. At times such groupings used the location for discussing about, planning and writing various projects of national and international scale. Furthermore different courses were regularly offered for free to anybody who wanted to participate. During the time of my stay a schedule with the current courses on offer included an English class, a computer class, a modern dance class and a project class. However, this week-schedule with exact starting and end times of every single class never realised itself. Whenever such classes took place indeed it was more a flexible matter of the situation of that moment, whether the concerned 'teacher' and the 'students' would be there and decided to take such an action. The instructors of these courses worked voluntarily. Partly they were persons working in the youth centre on a regular basis, but also having further occupations where they earn a salary, while others (like international volunteers) came from outside. The modern dance class for example was offered for some weeks by a local primary school sports teacher at weekends. However, he complained that after having plenty of motivated students during the first few lessons most participants lost their interest very quickly and did not attend the class any longer. Finally he gave up giving this class as students did not come regularly anymore and had difficulties to stay focused on the training. This story was not a unique one as I heard similar experiences of lacking interest and staying power from other people too.

7.1.3. Rules and regulations

Within the area of the youth centre the present people followed some established explicit and implicit rules. One of these rules said that smoking was basically forbidden on the whole

property. Despite this official banning people (including the staff) considered it appropriate to smoke in the garden and the atelier. As this was an implicit rule nobody would say anything against it. However, it was only acceptable for men but not for women to do so. Therefore young females were often smoking secretly. Furthermore age and gender hierarchies became evident for example in a tendency to send the younger and male ones to buy food and drinks from nearby shops.

Furthermore it was common to throw garbage to the ground. Often the bin in the garden would be too stuffed anyway so that there would be no space for further rubbish. Basically, once a week a general cleaning of the interior and garden was undertaken by the youngsters. Such actions were most of the time initiated by the staff.

An implicit rule within this territory was to act in a 'cool way' and be relaxed and possibly joking around to provide some amusement for the others watching. When a group of people for example was sitting together somewhere and somebody else approached, then this person would greet every single individual of the group by shaking hands. Between people who knew each other very well it was also common to hug and kiss on the checks (at encounters of same as well as mixed sexes). Besides greeting each other, bodily contact between same and opposite sexes was common when joking around, but any sexually interpreted actions (such as kissing) were not considered as acceptable. This was a point where also the youth centre remained bound to certain societal norms and values. If they would ignore them they would get a bad reputation and the parents would no longer agree to send their children there. Therefore a boy and a girl could meet there as girl- and boyfriend only as long as they did not show any sexual expressions.

Beside such regulating aspects of practical relevance also further ones existed which operated more on a symbolical level and could be hardly recognised at first sight. Such a rule in the latter sense made sure that politics were kept out of the youth centre. By labelling politics as "dirty" (*kirli*), Mahmut (16/05/2010) said that they definitely did not want that people start gathering and promoting their political party within the youth organisation. Taking into account the aggressive violent political upheavals of the close past, this attitude could be seen as the expression of the need to have a kind of break and to calm down. At least this seemed to be a strategy which the youth organisation followed. Their approach appeared to be one that tackled the problems from the other way: Although being active in politics - for example fighting for appropriate youth policies - they were staying a-political when it came to devotion to a party as this latter way was not seen as promising for reaching their (peaceful) aims.

7.1.4. Common expressions in spoken youth slang

The following table gives an overview about common expressions which were used by the young people in the youth centre during their daily routines.

Turkish (Türkçe)	Kurdish (Kırmanci)	English translation	Comments on applications
			Terms for addressing e. o.
hoca	(mamoste)	(religious) teacher	*When addressing somebody of higher status (in most cases older age), e.g. staff in the youth centre; expresses respect*
genç/-ler	xort/xortno	youth (sg./pl.)	*Often used in the plural to address a group of young people*
arkadaş/-lar, arkadaşım	heval	friend/-s, my friend	*Mainly used in the plural to address a group of young people*
dost/-lar, dostum	-	very close/best friend/-s, my close friend	
kanka (kan kardeşi)	chunka	blood-brother	*Very close/best friend; primarily used by males*
kardeş, kardeşiz	bira	brother/sister, we are brothers/sisters	*When stressing equality and/or closeness; also used for non-kin*
abi (ağabey)	kaka	older brother	*When addressing a male slightly older*

			than oneself; implies respect; also used for non-kin
abla	xuşk/xuşkamın	older sister	When addressing a female slightly older than oneself; also used for non-kin
canım	(giyan)	my soul	Mainly used for boy- & girlfriends or very close same-sex friends
yavuklum/sevgilim	evindar/evindaramın	my love	Used for referring to boy- & girlfriends
			Greetings when meeting e. o.
Merhaba! / Selam!	Slav!	Hello!	
Selam un aleyküm! – Aleyküm selam! (Arabic)	Selam un aleyküm! – Aleyküm selam! (Arabic)	Welcome! – Thank you!	Primarily used among males
Hoşgeldin/-iniz! – Hoşbulduk!	(Hun Bı Xér hatın. - Tu sax bı / hun saxbın.)	Welcome! – Thank you!	When entering a house/room etc.
			Initial phrases when meeting each other
Nasılsın/-sınız?	Tu çawayi?	How are you? (sg./pl.)	
Ne haber?	-	What's new?	
Ne yapıyorsun/-sunuz?	Tu Çitki?	What are you doing? (sg./pl.)	
Nereden geldin/-iniz?	Tu jı qu té?	Where are you coming from? (sg./pl.)	Especially used when meeting on the street

Nereye gidiyorsun/-sunuz?	Huné bı qu herin?	Where are you going? (sg./pl.)	*Especially used when meeting on the street*
			Commenting on behaviours of others
Bu nedir yav?	Ev çıyı yaw?	What's that?	*When being astonished about sth.*
saçma	-	nonsense, joking	
şerefsiz	bé rumet	without honour	*When sb. is behaving against moral standards*
akkılsız	bé aqıl	without mind	
hayvan	heywan	animal	*When sb. is behaving wildly*
geri zekalı	aqıl kém	idiot/idiotic	
salak	fıstoki	stupid person	
eşek	ker	donkey	*When sb. is behaving awkward*
Manyak mısın/mısınız?	Ma tu şét ı?	Are you a psychopath?	*When sb. is behaving very crazy*
Deli misin/misiniz?	Ma tu din ı?	Are you crazy?	
Sus!	Hüş!	Be quiet/Shout up!	
Gel/-in!	Wer/werın!	Come (over)!	
Otur/-un!	Run/runın!	Sit down!	
Git/-in!	Her/herın!	Go (away)!	
Niye?	Cıma?	Why?	
Çaktın mı köfteyi?	Te fahm kır?	Did you get it?	
Boş ver.	Desp jé berd	Never mind. / Leave it.	
Bir şey yok.	Tuşt tinne/ Ne tıştık	Never mind. / Nothing (happened).	

7.1.5. Likings, dislikes and wishes for change

During the interviews I got the impression that nobody dared to mention any serious negative critique about the *GKE*. At times, talking to me was taken as an ideal opportunity for promotion of the latter. Therefore such aspects had to be mainly interpreted from a 'reading between the lines'. Like in the following statement, the *GKE* was praised a lot as a place of great usefulness especially because primarily young people felt that there was a shortage of such places in this city and region.

> "Gençlik ve Kültür Evi benim şu anda tanıştığım birçok arkadaşımla Gençlik ve Kültür Evi'nde tanıştım. Sosyal aktiviteleri bakımından ve gençleri tanıştırması bakımından bence çok yararlı bir yer. Ben orda birçok faaliyette bulunuyorum. Siz de örneğin gördünüz Türkiye'nin birçok yerine geziler düzenliyor. Çok faydalı bir yer. Mardin'in ve diğer illerin böyle yerlere ihtiyacı var." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010)

> "Now the youth centre, my, I got to know many of my friends in the youth centre. Regarding the social activities and youth exchange it is a very useful place I think. I find many opportunities there. It makes it clear, like travel, like you saw many places in Turkey. A very useful place. In Mardin and other provinces there is a need for places like this." (Mustafa, 20/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

Besides offering a learning environment the youth centre appeared to be attractive for (young) people in the way that it offered them a social network where they could establish contacts to various kinds of people on local and trans-local levels. What younger as well as older people specifically liked about the youth centre was its atmosphere of openness and tolerance. Although there were also 'rules' and so-called 'boundaries' existing in the youth centre it allowed the individuals quite a wide range of freedom for their actions. The staff member Osman (see quotation below) described the latter as main reason for his involvement from the beginning onwards.

> "Geldim, gördüm, hoşuma gitti. Ortam da hoşuma gitti. Mekan senin mekanın, kendin yapıyorsun, kendin ediyorsun ve o saatten sonra hep böyle sürekli gidip geliyordum." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

> "I came, saw and liked it. I also liked the atmosphere. The place is yours, you can do things by yourself and so later I was coming and going regularly like this." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

When asked what regularly present people do not like about the youth centre, first and foremost the physical appearance was mentioned. They found it disturbing that the building was outside of the centre, old and not well equipped. Consequently they wished that the rooms were bigger and nicer. When it came to outward appearance the garden was the only place which everybody liked a lot because it was big and offered plenty of space for gathering in groups and other activities. A change in this regard was in progress as the whole

organisation intented to move to another building in the old city centre in the near future. This new location was still under restoration and reconstruction by the time of my visit.

Beside such material aspects, disturbing points for younger and older people which were mentioned included the careless behaviour of others. Situations to which some interviewees referred were for example that they did not appreciate when rubbish was left everywhere instead of throwing it into the bins, when others were using dishes and not washing them up afterwards or being disturbed while trying to concentrate on some study work in the library.

A primary wish of the young people was to be able to shape the environment of the youth centre more according to their ideas. In general they were quite content with what was existing so far but they would like to add some further things (like activities, equipment). If there was enough money the staff said they would wish to provide food and drinks to the attendees (Osman, 18/05/2010) or for example, to buy laptops for groups who have some work to do on the computer (as most young people did not have access to computers at home) (Mahmut, 16/05/2010). In the new place where they were planning to move, it was intended that the young people run a café in turns which would allow them to earn some money for themselves.

7.1.6. Present and absent young people

Not on two single days exactly the same persons were present in the youth centre. Those showing up can be distinguished into different categories on an abstract level. Furthermore a slight hierarchical order became recognisable between them. At this point the different types and their social roles shall be described in more detail.

The big group of different young people attending to the services of the youth centre can be split into several categorical sub-groups. First of all there were those participating in *TOG (Toplum Gönülleri)* projects, a civil youth movement which was founded in 2002 and which has been preoccupied with social community volunteering. These young people were most of the time occupied with writing and preparing various projects. They were so to speak the most 'mature' among the youngsters, on the average between 20 to 25 years old, often studying or preparing for the university entrance exam. Some of them were attending to the youth centre more regularly than others.

Furthermore a group of pupils who attended high school (*lise*) could be identified. Their parents sometimes did not know that they stayed in this place, thinking their children

are still at school. Therefore they would only come to the youth centre during school terms, dropping in after their classes.

At times also bunches of younger children from primary and secondary school came by. Moreover there were young people with regular employment or those studying in other cities or abroad who visited the location on rare occasions.

7.1.6.1. Reasons for joining in

"Ben eh daha önce okula gidiyordum. Arkadaşlar hep derlerdi işte gençlik var gençlik evi falan gel sen de katıl folklora falan. Eh Gündüz, o bana tanıttı ve buraya geldim. Onların sayesinde, arkadaşlar söyledi bana. Ve geldim çok da memnun oldum." (Esra, 21/05/2010)

"I was going to school earlier on. Friends always said there is a youth center, like come and join the folklore. Gündüz, introduced it to me and I came here. Thanks to them, friends told me. And I came and I liked it." (Esra, 21/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

The attendance of the youth centre was, generally speaking, the own choice of the individuals. As nobody was forcing them, they went there because they liked this place and felt accepted and respected. The majority started to attend this place because some of their friends (from school or the neighbourhood) introduced it to them or because they heard about a specific activity going on there in which they became interested (e.g. folklore dancing lessons, English lessons). Their main motives for showing up in this place included that they thought of it as useful in terms of help and support they could find there. Beside the courses which were offered for free, the opportunities to participate in regional, national and international youth activities and programs were especially attractive for them. Moreover the possibilities of socialising with others and fostering as well as extending one's social network was mentioned as one of the main reasons to participate. Older attendees and especially those who were more active in writing projects, organising certain things, being temporarily in charge of a key for certain rooms, being a formal member of a program or association or the like, tended to identify with the youth organisation and the staff to a higher degree. This was the case for example concerning one interviewee who was always using the plural ('we') when talking about the youth centre (Şoreş, 05/06/2010).

However, their habits and frequencies of attending the youth centre changed for each individual over time according to other duties and occupations. For example, Esra decreased the regularity of her attendance for some time due to a current problematical situation within her circle of friends. A certain course or other involvement in a certain activity and/or a specific circle of friends who one met there, were the main reasons for a more regular and

frequent presence. For example Şeyhmus (22/05/2010), who had been coming to this place already for three to four years made a break of one year in-between because he was too busy with studying during that time. Another young male (Şoreş, 05/06/2010) explained that he was now spending less time in the youth centre as in the past when he had been basically hanging out there during his whole free time. As he was currently staying primarily for specific purposes he was making use of this less amount of time more efficiently.

7.1.6.2. Reasons for staying away

From the side of the staff it was always stressed that anybody is welcome in this youth centre, no matter of which nationality, ethnicity, religion or the like the person is. Although the primary target group consisted of young people between the ages of 14 up to 30, a certain restriction about the age did not exist. In reality there were always different younger as well as older people present. However, when looking at the facts who actually attended and who not, certain patterns became evident. The first group of people was primarily Muslim, Kurdish and from lower class backgrounds. This reality was explained by the staff in two different ways. On the one hand they referred to some practical reasons like free courses or the location of the youth centre. The latter was located not in the city centre and surrounded by lower class housing areas (*mahalleler*) of Kurdish people for who it was most easy to gain access (Mahmut, 16/05/2010). On the other hand it was very much a symbolical issue. A prejudice of outsiders assumed that it was a place where only Kurdish people gather (ibid.). This made other groups of the population for example Arabic or Christian-Orthodox (*Süryani*) hesitate to join in. They obviously feared that they would not be welcome. In this case reality and prejudice were mutually reaffirming each other like in a vicious circle. Another aspect which should be taken into consideration is that the different religious and ethnic groupings have been living quite segregated and isolated community lives in the city of Mardin in general - in 'peaceful neighbourhood' like it was proudly stressed most of the time when talking to foreigners. Although, when observing practices, the occasions of daily life where different people interacted (on the street, at weddings etc.) were considerable high, there still existed quite a clear picture in the minds of the people that all these groupings should keep up their specific cultural baggage by so to speak 'being for themselves'. Therefore such a prejudice often realised itself in isolated community lives, existing alongside the described shared interactions.

However, to get back to the youth centre, nowadays new media technologies appeared to be helpful sometimes in decreasing such prejudices and in reaching a broader range of

young people. Mahmut (16/05/2010) told me that through their online *Facebook*-group very different young people can learn more details about the youth centre and its ambitions from a 'safe distance'. Through this way various people worldwide got interested and curious about this organisation and the place.

7.1.7. The *hocalar*

Further people who regularly appeared to be in the *GKE* were among others the 'youth workers', referred to as "*hocalar*" (singular: *hoca*) who ran the youth centre as well as the related youth and culture association. It was actually hard to find a suitable label for this group of people, as they neither had a professional training as youth workers nor as teachers or the like. However, I prefer to call them 'staff' meaning they were the ones who carried the main (legal) responsibilities. A few of them were not present on a regular basis due to other occupations they had (such as studying, another job etc.). At times some of them were offering classes while others were mainly occupied with formalities.

These persons shared the characteristics of being male, in their late-twenties, Muslim, Kurdish and not being married yet. Most knew each other since their childhood. One of them stressed this collective element by telling how they, as a group of friends (and partly relatives), started to get involved in this place just at the time it was founded.

> "Buraya geldik. Burada bir şeyler yapabiliriz, gençler bir şeyler öğretebiliriz, havasıyla geldik, o amaçla geldik. Sonra ehm benim lise arkadaşim Yusuf, Rıdvan ve ben burda bir şeyler yapmaya başladık. Kurs verdik kendimiz, üçretsiz, burada hiç bir şey paralı değil zaten. Onu Biliyorsun. Eğitime vermeğe başladık ve burada şu an da buranın sorumlularıyız." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

> "We came here. Here we can do some things, we can teach some things to the young people, we came freely, with that aim. Later ehm my high school friends Yusuf, Rıdvan and me started to do some things. We gave a course by ourselves, free of charge, nothing costs money here. You know that. We started to give education and now we are the ones responsible for that place." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

On the contrary, others who were not part of this central initiation group got involved later. For example Osman was asked to found a traditional dance group and offered regular trainings some years ago. Most of the staff members gave up other occupations or study programs (even opportunities to go abroad like in the case of Mahmut) because they felt that they were needed in that place. They were the ones who have always identified with the youth centre and its ambitions most strongly, from the beginning of their involvement up to the present. At the time when the youth centre was founded, being around 20 years old, they were among the 'younger youth' themselves. I would say that this group of people, among others,

was central for making the youth centre and association to what and how they were in that days. It can be assumed that one main aspect of perceiving such duties lay in their first hand experience of the violence of the extreme upheavals in the early 1990ies during their childhood. This point was never spoken out explicitly in the interviews but was referred to implicitly when arguing for the very bad situation of young people in the south-eastern parts of Turkey because of the political and socio-economic hardships of the past which still show several effects in the present.

> "Şimdi eskiden güneydoğunun gençlerine hiçbir zaman hak verilmedi yani hep ikinci plana bıraktılar ama bizim gençlerimiz gerçekten bilinçli ve temiz insanlar." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

> "Now, in the past the youth of the south-east was not treated fair, they remained left on a second plan but our youth are really knowledgeable and clean [in the sense of good] people." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

> "Hepsinin bir takım sorunları var. Ama şuna iyi şuna kötü dediğin zamanı yanlış olur. Genel olarak bu çocuklara fırsat tanadığın zaman genişebilecek, potensyalleri olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yeterki bunlara fırsat verelim. En güzel fırsat onlara tanıyalım onlar bir şeyleri değiştirir. Ki biz bunu görüyoruz zaten. Onlara bir fırsat tanıyoruz bir şeyler yapıyorlar. Genel olarak onlar hakkında yani umutlu bakıyorum geleceğe. Çok şey yapalar bu gençler. Şimdiye kadar fırsat tanınmadı onları. Bir çok yerde kapılar kapanıyor. Bir çok yerde iş yapamadı bir şeyler yapamadılar." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

> "They all have a bunch of problems. But it is wrong to say that is good and that is bad. In general, if these kids find the opportunities they develop. I think of their potentials. It is enough to give them opportunities. The best opportunity is to get to know them, they change some things. We are already seeing that. We show them an opportunity, they do some things. In general, concerning the future, I am looking to them with hope. They can do many things these young people. Until now they did not meet opportunities. In many places the doors are closed to them. In many places they can't work, they can't do something." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

As expressed by Mahmut the youth of the south-eastern region encountered very bad circumstances so far and was unlucky in the sense that they did not get the right chance in the past to prove them. Both staff members tried to make clear that these young people do have the potential for being 'successful' if they only find themselves in supportive environments. While believing in the young people, the staff felt that through their work they 'can do something' about the unfortunate socio-economic and political situation of the region they were living in. These might be very small and tiny changes they could enhance but which do have the potential to bring along some broader societal changes when adding them up. The institution of the youth centre and association were providing a necessary framework for such agency.

All the main responsible adults of the youth centre had very similar motives for working there. The arguments from above are able to explain why this group of young adults was so eager and completely devoted to their work in this youth organisation. As it was stressed again and again in the interviews they were spending their time and doing this work voluntarily. Although they were not earning anything with it they took it seriously because they perceived it as their duty. They had the feeling that they were needed.

Due to the voluntariness their 'working hours' were everything else than regular. Some days they just spent some hours in the youth centre or did not show up at all, whereas on other days they stayed there from morning until evening and often the whole night. They went and came again and managed some other works in-between or also in the place of the youth centre. The distribution of work among the staff was not strictly ordered. The responsibilities were shared and work that came up was done by those who had the abilities and current resources to carry it out.

Anyhow, for all of those persons the youth centre and association was their all and everything, meaning that it was the centre of their social lives. In this regard notions of privacy tended to be lived out in a (semi-)public surrounding to which the youth centre can be counted. This fact becomes evident insofar that, like the younger attendees, the staff members also frequently appeared to use this place for 'hanging out'. As already mentioned above, most of them knew each other already for a long time and were connected through close friendships. A strong sense of unity among the staff was fostered by similar personal characteristics and attitudes. As Osman expressed it below, their principle opinions and aims were the same.

"Son 2 yıldır burda kalmamım sebebi burda arkadaşların kafa dengi olması. Gerçekten de bizim çalışma stilimiz bir. Yani aynı düşüncedeyiz en önemlisi de buydu zaten yani aynı düşüncede olan insanların paylaşması. Aynı düşüncede olduğu için yapıyoruz yani kafa dengi çalıyoruz." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

"The reason for my staying during the last two years is that here the friends think in the same way. Our working style is really one. Well, we think the same which is most important, to share with people thinking the same. Because we are thinking the same we do things." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

7.1.7.1. Perceptions of youth by the staff

Basically the staff members felt that the young people liked and needed them although they were sometimes perceived as strict and autoritative. The perceptions of the youth among the staff were mixed too. Mahmut (16/05/2010) for example declared that he did not like young people who were quiet, had no self-confidence and remained passive. On the other hand it

made him happy to see young people who appeared to be the other way round or changed their attitudes and behaviours accordingly. He explicitly said that young people had a need to gain more knowledge and to be manipulated.

"Ama burdaki gençlere bir şey öğretmek için burdayım. Onların bilgiye ihtiyaçı olduğunu biliyoruz hepimiz. Yönlendirmeye ihtiyaçı var." (Mahmut, 18/05/2010)

"But I am here to teach some things to the youth. We all know that they have a need for knowledge. There is a need to manipulate." (Mahmut, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

The target group of the youth workers was described to me as being those young people who had smaller or bigger problems, more precisley those who were not studying, not working, not thinking, who might had alcohol or drug problems or showed aggressive behaviour. In summary, all young people who somehow refused to integrate into societal structures like it was expected from them, were more than welcome in the youth centre. The *hocalar* were even explicitly looking for 'problematic' people like that. The legitimation of the existence of this youth organisation was primarily grounded on the assumption that first of all young people were a distinct grouping of society and that a part of them was moreover in this sense dysfunctional, so to speak problematic. In the following statement it becomes clear that the latter group was perceived by the staff as being inexperienced and not-knowing. They appeared to be 'incomplete adults' to whom the staff was trying to teach how to 'develop in an appropriate way'.

"Şimdi bu gençlere bir şey öğretmek de çok zor çünkü düşün hayatında eğlenmeyi bilmeyen, gezmeyi bilmeyen bir insana ilk kez böyle bir şey öğretiyorsun. Ortamda yaşamayan, ortamda kalmayan, bir ortamda nasıl davranacağını bilmeyen bir gence bunu öğretiyorsun." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

"Now it is very hard to teach something to these young people because imagine that you are teaching for the first time things to people who did not got to know amusement in their lives or travelling. You are teaching this to youth who has not been living and staying in a nice environment, they don't know how to behave in such." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

The majority of young people in Turkey in general were seen as staying without knowledge and simply imitating someone else instead of setting some own creative actions due to their laziness. This view is highlighted in the following quotation:

"Cahiler, cahillik. Okumuyor, eh araştırmıyor. Ufku geniş olmadığı için özenti var yani. Kendimi ona benzeteyim saçımı şu sanatcı gibi yapayım. Kızlar şu makyajı onun gibi yapayım. Şu elbise onun gibi... Eh iç değilde dış taraf üzerinde ediyorlar. Bunu doldumuyorlar malesef. Sulaptı dolduyorlar. O Türkiye gençliğinde malesef kötü olan bir şey. Buradaki gençlikte onlarda var." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

"Lazy, laziness. Not reading, eh not researching. Because the small did not get broad there is imitation. Let me look like him/her, let me do my hair like this artist. The girls, let me do my make up like him/her. This dress like him/her... Eh not inside, they are doing it through outside. But this is unfortunately not filling. It is filling the wardrobe. This is something bad about the Turkish youth. Among the local youth there are also ones like this." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

Due to such perceptions of youth, the actions of the youth organisation under concern, while trying to 'help' young people, aimed drastically at changing them towards what was seen as appropriate behaviour and attitudes. Imaginations about 'the ideal youth' in the sense of the symbolic expressions of being 'clean' ("*Temiz olması gerekiyor.*"), dynamic and without fear, were part of many narrations. In this way the 'adults' claimed to know what is good and what is best for young people. They were trying to teach them some basic skills to be better able to cope with their lives accordingly. Young people should become self-confident and active, conscious agents.

Success (of the youth center) as perceived by the staff could be something small on an individual private level or - on the other hand - something more public and formal. An example for the first case would be if they could change the attitude of a young person or if they managed to convince some parents to send their daughter to university (Mahmut, 16/05/2010). On a broader level the number of young people being sent abroad through exchange programs, being able to find financial sponsors to enable less well-off youth to study or the participation at a youth festival with a group of more than 100 persons were exemplified (Osman, 18/05/2010).

"Biz buraya toplumun sorunlu kişileriyle çalışmaya geldik yani. Sorunsuz olan zaten bize lazım değil. O sorunlu değil. Okuyor, düşünüyor, yapıyor, öğretiyor. Sorunsuz. Ama sorun olan okumayan, düşünmeyen, öğretmeyen, çalışmayan, yapmayan, birbirlene destek çıkmayan gençler bizim ham maddemiz , bizim çalıştığımız kişiler. Böyleleri arıyoruz, böyle bakıyoruz. Gel gel! Onlarla çalışıyoruz." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

"We came here to work with problematic persons from society. We are not needed for those without problems. This person is not problematic. Studying, thinking, doing, teaching. Without problems. But those young people who are not studying, not thinking, not working, not doing, not giving value to each other, are ours, the people we work with. We are looking for such people, looking like this. Come, come! We work with them." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

When looking at the above statement which tells that once young people do not have any problems anymore and behave like self-confident, responsible adults the 'work' of the *hocalar* is done, finally still one question remains: Did the youth workers perceived young people broadly as 'incomplete' in one or the other form because they would otherwise lose the

legitimation of their work? To a certain degree I would suggest that this was the case, but for sure there were also other aspects, which have already been portrayed, influencing their attitudes and motivations.

7.1.7.2. Working style

As already mentioned above, the persons in charge of the youth centre shared generally speaking a certain working style. Specific individual actions took place in front of the background of certain principles on which there existed collective (implicit) agreement. First of all, staff members worked very much on a personal level by aiming to get to know the attending young people as close as possible because they believed that only by talking to them they could learn about their problems and support them accordingly. If it became necessary the staff was also visiting the homes of those under concern.

A second principle was that they told everybody directly if they did not like something (e.g. the behaviour of somebody or his/her attitude). Insofar they provided the young people guidelines in terms of norms and values. In this sense they tried to correct what they perceived as 'the mistakes' of young people as it will be discussed in more detail below. A third principle of their working style was that they did not only wait in a passive manner until somebody approached them with a problem. Instead they were actively looking for and approaching people and problems they wanted to tackle.

A fourth point was that the competences and knowledge which a youth worker needed, was tried to be permanently transmitted to the next generations. For example during the time of my stay Mahmut was teaching a group of interested young people how to write and apply for youth projects. Furthermore there was one girl who appeared to be like a personal assistant for the staff. She was around in the office most of the time in order to learn from first-hand experience what the jobs were about and how they could be managed. So in this way a circulation of knowledge and training between people in different positions was promoted.

The last two principles were standing in an ambivalent relation to each other. The first one was about avoiding direct prohibitions and restrictions in the environment of the youth centre, whereas the second one called for control and discipline. That disciplinary measures were regularly applied by the staff was the more likely the bigger the group of young people of concern was. At the youth festival for example the group from our youth centre (who counted more than hundred people) was kept under control by the responsible staff by giving autoritative orders. Osman (18/05/2010) explained that it was at times necessary to be

rigorous with the young people under his responsibility as well as to scream and shout at them if they did not want to do what they were told.

> "Bazen onlara kızıyorum, onlara bağırıyorum ama niçin bağırıyorum? Hata yapmalarını istemiyorum çünkü bir genç insana hata yapmak yakışmıyor. Temiz olması gerekiyor. Yani bugün ben gençsem giyinmesini bilmem gerekiyor, iş yapmasını bilmem gerekiyor, bir insanla konuştuğum zaman ne konuştuğumu bilmem gerekiyor. Bunlar çok önemli şeyler bizim kültürümüzde bunlar çok önemli. Yani bir insana saygı, sevgi vermek gerçekten çok çok önemli. Ondan dolayı bizde bunları yapıyoruz yani, başarıyoruz." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

> "Sometimes I am angry at them, I scream at them - but why do I scream? I don't want them to make mistakes because making mistakes is not suiting a young person. He/she must be clean [in the meaning of good]. If I were young today I should know how to dress, how to work, how to talk to people. These are important things in our culture, they are very important. To show respect and love to a person is really very important. Because of that we are also doing them, we are winning." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

According to the staff such actions were legitimised as long as there was a good intention behind them, meaning only wanting the best for the young people and protecting them from dangers and sanctions they might face if not behaving according to societal expectations.

7.1.7.3. The prestige of being *hoca*

The members of the staff group were kind of on the edge of somehow still belonging to the group of 'young people' and somehow not. They can be counted to this group not only in terms of their age but also due to the more important fact that they were not married yet. In general they can be defined as distinct liminal group as all of the *hocalar* enjoyed a higher status in comparison to the younger attendees. One reason for this fact was that they were the ones carrying the most overall responsibility for this place and representing it to the outside (dealing with the formalities etc.). They can be seen as mediators between youth, families and formal political institutions. Their competence remained most of the time unquestioned by the younger people who were attending the youth centre. The Turkish term '*hoca*' implies a higher status of the person being addressed and expresses respect towards him or her. It is frequently used for all kinds of teachers or for example for customers in a shop or at other 'advice-services'. However, the respect shown to the staff remained limited in several other regards, which could be recognised in certain missing gestures. For instance the young people did not kiss the hands of the staff when greeting them, which is in general a sign of showing respect to elderly and/or prestigious persons.

Different individuals of the staff made different use of their potential authority. For example some would underline it by screaming with the youngsters when they felt irritated by

something, while others would more pretend to be young themselves and so to speak on the same level with them. In general, the differences in status became evident in frequent representations and reassurances in the form of small rituals and gestures. For example the *hocalar* would constantly give orders to younger people to arrange this or that. At occasions like the collective cleaning of the youth centre, most of the *hocalar* would not do any cleaning work themselves. Furthermore certain kids took over the role of kind of personal assistants, making sure they stay near them to be constantly ready for carrying out all kinds of jobs like serving food, cleaning their work place, bringing them a pencil or the like. Such constellations had many characteristics in common with patron-client relations[32]. Another common ritual of expressing the distinct collective identity of the staff during casual hanging out-situations was frequently accompanied by ordering tea from a café across the road. Beside these rounds of drinking tea within the area of the youth centre they would all together sometimes visit a nearby tea garden.

Within this group of staff there appeared to be differences of rank between individuals too. For example one of them appeared to be closer to the youngsters most of the time. He never took part in visiting the tea garden. Moreover he was the most constant one who was present in the youth centre every day from early morning until late evening. It happened often that he became instructions and information from the other staff members which he passed on to the youngsters. In this sense he appeared to be a trustworthy mediating figure between those with the most status and those with the least. Another similar unique figure was the person who ran the serigraphic atelier (*Serigrafi Atölyesi*). He was definitely not part of the group of 'common' youngsters but neither enjoyed such a high status as the other staff. To a certain degree he was independently following his own business, although still kind of 'serving' the other staff members at times. On the contrary to those two positions another person had the role of the 'big boss'. Everybody would respect him and his actions in an unquestioned manner. When he was around, people would not be as relaxed as usually and sometimes they would pretend being seriously bussy with something. Before reaching a certain place those present would already announce his coming, in order to avoid being awkwardly surprised. This person was the one who was approaching and talking to the youngsters only scarcely. By keeping consciously or unconsciously a social distance to most people (including me for example) except to the other *hocalar* who were his friends and loyal followers, he often left the impression of being a kind of 'mystery'.

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[32] A patron can be described as a prestigious and wealthy person. He cares for his clients in exchange for their favours and loyality towards him (see a. o. Eisenstadt & Roninger 1984).

Again at other occasions all the described hierarchical structures would be challenged and ignored, not to say denied. This was the case when for example everybody (*hocalar* and young people) was taking part at a collective meal or when all kinds of people would gather in the office to hang out there. The staff members also regularly joined groupings of young people to discuss with them or joke around or they would take part in table-tennis games.

Moreover it should be considered that for a young attendee a *hoca* tended to become a 'significant other' who can be defined as an adult who is not related to the young person through kinship but who is still significant in his/her life (see Cotterell 2007: 238).

7.1.8. Perceptions of the youth centre by families

Like it was already mentioned during other arguments, beside positive also several negative images of the youth centre were widespread. The second ones tended to be the reason for parents not to want their child to spend time there. In many such cases a lack of knowledge about what was really going on in that place caused this kind of parental worries. Therefore the staff was actively working against such negative images, among others by visiting the families of young people and explaining about the organisation and their ambitions. In the positive way this had the effect that the youth organisation turned from being something abstract to becoming identifiable with certain individuals in the adults' perceptions. Consequently they could build up trust in the latter and could become more willing to send their child there, as they knew now that a responsible person would take good care. According to Osman (see quotation below), the families liked the youth centre because they, as the leading figures, explained to them about it in a good way, in 'the parents' language' so that they understood the advantages of such a place for their children.

> "Şimdi ailelere iyi bir şekilde anlattığın zaman, onların dilinde anlattığın zaman Gençlik Evini beğeniyorlar tamam mı, ama anlatmasını bilmek lazım yani. Çünkü işte yaptığın işi anlatmak, bildirmek lazım eğer yaptığın işi eğer anlatamasan bildirmesini bilmiyorsan tabi kimse sizi sevmez. Şu an öyle bir özellik var yani biz iyi anlattığımız için gençlik evinde herkes seviyor, tüm aileler." (Osman, 18/05/2010)

> "Now if you tell the families in a good way, in their language, they like the youth centre ok, but there is a need to tell and know, because you need to tell about your work. Knowledge is needed if the work you did, if you don't tell, if they don't know nobody will like you. There is a truth like this, since we are telling well, everybody likes us, all the families." (Osman, 18/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

As Osman explained further, several young people were only allowed to participate at the festival because their parents trusted the staff that they would take their responsibility seriously. At this point it becomes clear that the status of the *hocalar* was not only recognised

within the *GKE* but also by people from outside (like the parents). In this way the youth organisation under concern understood itself metaphorically speaking as a bridge between the young people and their parents. As highlighted by Mahmut below, this dialog should be strengthened in a positive way so that finally the parents gain more trust in their children and the youth centre as mediating institution is not needed anymore.

"Kişinin ilişkilerini geliştirmesini sağlıyoruz. Biz şu anda neredeyiz, biliyor musun? Aile birey ve ortada biz varız, yani kişinin ortasında biz varız. Aile bize güveniyor [sb knocking and opening the door] diğeri istediğin gibi buraya gönderiyor. İstediğin gibi etkinliklere katılmasın sağlıyor, istediğin gibi. Mesela şu geçen kız. Onlar aileleri diyorki evet ah Serdal hocanın yanına gidiyor, İlyas hocanın yanına gidiyor. Bize güveniyorlar çünkü. Mesela öbur aile aynı şekilde. Batman'a dört gün geldi. Normalde bu aile göndermez. Niye? Diyor Serdal hoca gidiyor ya, sıkıntı olmaz. Bu bizim ilk başta kurduğumuz köprü. Yapmaya çalıştığımız şey ney? Bu köprüden çıkmak. Bu köprü içinden çıktığı zamen aile kızına, aile oğluna güvendiği zaman bizim işimiz bitiyor. O zaman o genç ailesiyle ilişkisi en iyi durumda ve aile şunu düşünececk: benim kızım yada oğlum ne yapacağini biliyor. Güvenecek çünkü. O ne yapsa en doğrusunu yapıyor. Biz bunu başardığımız zaman bizim işimiz bitiyor." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

"We support the development of the relations between people. Do you know where we are now? The family there and we are in the middle, well we are in-between people. The family is trusting us, they send him/her to this place. They support whichever activities he/she wants to take part of, what he/she wants. For example this passing girl: Her family is saying ah she is going to Mahmut, to Osman. Because they are trusting us. For example, the other family the same. She came four days to Batman. Normally this family would not send. Why? They say Mahmut is going, so there will be no problem. This is the first beginning of the bridge we build. What is the thing we do? To get over this bridge. Getting over this bridge from inside, when the family is trusting their daughter, their son, our work is finished. Then this young person's relation to his/her family is in a good state and the family will think like this: My daughter or my son knows what she/he is doing. Because they are trusting. Whatever he/she is doing, they are doing the most right. When we reached that, our work is finished." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

7.1.9. The significance of personal relations

In this subchapter I want to discuss some aspects of the role of the youth centre for establishing personal relationships among the attendees. First of all it should be taken into consideration that friends are highly significant for getting to know about this youth organisation and during first steps of exploring this environment. Most interviewees explained that a friend told them initially about this place and the first time they went there they came not alone.

Secondly, as already indicated above and as it was stressed over and over again in many interviews, the youth centre was perceived as containing a stimulating "friendship atmosphere" (*arkadaşlık ortamı*). Like others, Müge (15/05/2010) told that she made a lot of

new friends there (*„Orda tabi diğer arkadaşlar da var, çok hani arkadaşlarım oldu, orda çok arkadaş edindim."*). These perceptions imply that the institution as such provided a convenient and casual environment to socialise and get to know each other free of a pressure of consuming (like in a cafe) or accomplishing something (like in school or in a sports club). Furthermore it was a place where the level of control which was exercised on the individual was relatively low (in comparison to home or school). Beside the offered courses and having fun, participation in social groupings was listed as one of the main motives to visit the youth centre. Anyhow these three components were inherently intertwined with each other in the way that they mostly appeared simultaneously.

The staff saw personal relations as being most important for young people when they were about to establish more independence. According to Osman (18/05/2010) the most positive effects of especially friendships among young people were the material and emotional support as well as the values friends can provide for each other, including that your friend can warn you when you are on the wrong way.

The attendees of the youth centre would always gather in small groupings, sitting in the grass, on a bench, in the office, kitchen or elsewhere. The situation of one person sitting somewhere alone - on his or her own - was hardly ever the case and if so then only for a short time or if actually nobody else was present. Personally speaking, I felt integrated in this local social network very quickly. Often I met people who I got to know in the youth centre on the street somewhere in the city and we would greet each other and most of the times have some short small talk.

Joking was among others an important factor in the relationships among these young people. Understanding the jokes of the other person and being able to laugh about it need most of the time a common base of experience or knowledge. Therefore joking occasions had inclusive and exclusive effects in terms of fostering collective identities.

Besides approaching each other by a direct intended conversation, people also got into touch through activities. I experienced this for myself. There was one boy who was more introverted and often showed some 'funny' behaviour (as it was evaluated by others). Without having talked to him before I started to play table tennis with him one day. As we both enjoyed the game we were more eager to get to know each other. Consequently the table tennis game built some basic connection between us on which further conversations could be established.

Especially for friendships between girls and boys the youth centre was one of the rare places where they could spent their free time together while not being too much exposed to negative judgements of common cultural convictions as explained by Mahmut (see below).

> "Mesela bizim toplumuzda burada kız erkek ilişkisinin evlilik öncesi yaşaması yasak gibi bir şey. Kabul edilmez onlar için, mesela şey bir kızın evlenmeden bir erkekle ilişki yaşaması yasak." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

> "For example in our society it is forbidden to live any relationship between a girl and a boy before marriage. They don't accept this, for example it is forbidden if a girl has a [sexual] relation to a boy before she marries." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

Friendship relations between unmarried adolescent males and females appeared to be very problematic in the investigated socio-cultural environment and were therefore better to be avoided. Such convictions stemmed from the viewpoint of the traditional societal norms and values in which any relation between a woman and a man who are neither relatives nor married is dangerous in terms of a potential sexual attraction, like it was already explained in an earlier chapter.

I could observe that the gatherings among the young people followed to a significant extent certain patterns. Although groupings mixed and changed, at times certain people would tend to gather in the same place in a more closed way. For example there was a girl and several boys who would stay isolated in the fence area while chatting and eating crisps and/or drinking coke or the like. Furthermore a group of two to three boys came regularly towards the evening to play table tennis. They would not speak to anybody else but just play their game and then leave again in a straight manner.

Overall it can be stated that what was primarily lived and experienced in the youth centre environment was 'arkadaşlık' rather than 'dostluk'[33]. Like already mentioned, Allan (1989: 24ff) labelled such relationships where you 'just' have a good time together without being necessarily very close to each other as 'mateship'. Concerning mateship social contexts are of significance as the interaction mainly remains limited to a certain one. According to Allan (ibid.) such relations are more fragile, mates meet primarily as groups whereby individual ties become replaceable and it enables structural disparities. These arguments resemble the interactions within the youth centre.

Of course not all the people who visited the youth centre regularly or just from time to time talked with each other, neither they could be labelled (and would not do so by themselves) as friends. As expressed by Şoreş (05/06/2010) something that he found at times

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[33] For a detailed explanation of these concepts see chapter 6.3.1.1.

disturbing was that there might have been also 'bad people' present because the youth centre was welcoming anybody. In his view these people "made the name of this place dirty", meaning that because such people were behaving inappropriately the image of the youth centre became worse.

> "Şimdi buraya değişik amaçlarla gelen insanlar da var. Onların değişik amaçları buranın adını kirletiyor. Yani kirletiyor derken, adını kötüye çıkarıyor. O yüzden halk nazarında burası kötü bir yermiş gibi gözüküyor. Ve çoğu kişi sırf bu şekilde tek yönlü baktıkları için de çoğu kişi çocuklarını göndermiyor buraya. Bu bizim bir kaybımızdır. Bunun için ben bunu diyorum yani. Ama bunu yetkililere de söyledim. Şey dediler işte burası herkese açık bir kapıdır ve biz özellikle o tür gençleri çekip onları iyileştirmek için burada çalışıyoruz diyorlar. Ben de saygı duydum yani." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010)

> "Now also people with different aims come here. Their different aims are making the name of this place dirty. Saying making it dirty means that the name gets associated in a bad way. Therefore from the view of the people it looks like a bad place. And since most people are only looking from this perspective, they don't send their children here. This is something we are losing. I am saying this because of that. They said this place is opened to anybody, that they work here to make these kinds of people better. I also felt respect." (Şoreş, 05/06/2010; translated by K. F.)

In the social life of humankind we will never be able to like every single individual around us. The attendees of the youth centre also came about to realise exactly this fact. Müge (15/05/2010) said *Bazen gıcık tipler olur o ayrı bir şey ama yani sevmediğim şey yoktur."* which means that there were sometimes (in her opinion) annoying people around, but it did not decrease her liking for the youth centre. In this sense the environment of the youth centre became beneficial to learn also how to deal with individuals towards one might not feel entire sympathy but who were nevertheless present. At one point maybe one had to speak and cooperate with them (e.g. when doing some group work).

> "İşte beraber grup oluşturup gezmesi ya da işte kültürlerin kaynaşması. Mesela yabancı ülkelerden bu gelen öğrenciler olsun ya da Türkiye içindeki üniversite olsun, diğer yörelerden olsun; gelen insanların kaynaşması güzel bir şey. Öyle bir şeyin olması da güzel oluyor hani farklı insanlar tanımak, farklı gruplara girmek, onlarla farklı şekilde hani bir defa hani farklı insanları tanımak güzel bir şeydir. Farklı kültürleri bilmek, öğrenmek bu güzel bir şeydir." (Müge, 15/05/2010)

> "Like gathering as a group and travel or also like a union of different cultures. For example the students who come from foreign countries or also from other universities inside Turkey, from other regions; a union of all these people is something beautiful. Such a thing is nice when it happens, to get to know different people, to enter different groups, with them in another form, to meet different people one time is something nice. To know about different cultures and to learn is a nice thing." (Müge, 15/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

The quotation shows that Müge liked that the youth centre was an open place where people with different characters, cultural, religious and national backgrounds and the like can got to

know and learn from each other. By understanding more about 'the other' they could 'unite' in several ways in her view, meaning that shared identifications might develop.

Cotterell (2007: 84f.) noticed three main actions among friendship groupings in public places including unconventional behaviour, laughter and touching. All these actions could be observed in the youth centre as well and can therefore be interpreted in terms of bonding cliques and distinguishing them from others. Being integrated in the social network of the youth centre can bring along stronger or lighter identifications. Talking in the form of 'we' (instead of using 'I') in formal as well as informal discourses can give a hint about such notions of a collective identity. In the case of the festival it became even more explicit when people were speaking of 'our Mardin-group' and comparing it against 'the others'.

Like already mentioned above, according to a common prejudice (against which those devoted to the organisation are struggling) about the place of the youth centre, the young people were so to speak 'just' hanging out there and 'doing nothing' (Mahmut, 16/05/2010). On the contrary to this negative image I would rather argue (without wanting to take a defending position) that these young people 'did' actually a lot. 'Simply' by being together with other people and maybe having unconventional talks they acquired and developed their social and communicative competences. In my opinion the young people there were very 'social' because, for example, they knew how to approach a stranger, how to make the appropriate amount of small talk according to whom they were speaking to, when and how to behave polite, empathetic and tolerant. The same observation was expressed by Mahmut through the example of comparing university students with the attendees of the youth centre when trying to organise a picnic. According to him university students failed to organise such an event most of the time whereas the other grouping was more likely to succeed because they knew each other and communicated in a better way.

> "Piknik mesela bizim haberimiz yok. Çocuklar toplandılar, piknik yaptılar. Normalde bir üniversite, ben üniversitede bunu biliyorum yani. Gençler arkadaşların bir piknik organise edinceye kadar haftalar geçiyordu. [his mobile rings] Pikniğe gidelim işte, piknik için kim gelecek, kim gelmeyecek. Hafta tut o zaten tam dönem bitiyordu. [sb opens the door but does not enter] Organise olamamaktan X. Organize olursa şey az önce dediğim gibi, burdaki gençler en sevdiğin şey bu organise olmalar. Birbirlerini tanımaları." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010)

> "For example we did not know about the picnic. The kids gathered and made a picnic. Normally university, being at university I know. Until the young friends organise a picnic weeks pass by. Let's make a picnic, who will come, who won't come. Holding a week the whole semester ended. Organisation is not possible. If organisation happens like I said before, organisation is the most loved thing of the local youth. They know each other." (Mahmut, 16/05/2010; translated by K. F.)

Such a simple distinction being claimed here cannot be true for every single individual of the one or other grouping of course. However, we can speak of a general tendency that the youth centre offered a promising environment for developing ones social 'soft' skills.

7.1.10. Further implications

According to Hendry and Kloep (2005: 166), if communication is seen as a leisure activity, both (communication and leisure activities) are significant for young people in terms of learning relational skills and it can be moreover used to communicate identity and style. Harrison and Morgan (2005: 98) found that participating simultaneously in "informal conversations, teasing, and play-fighting [...] constitute the core of hanging out" among young people in their free time outside home in public places. Consequently communication in any form should be recognised as identificatory and relational resource of also young people's social capital (see Williams & Thurlow 2005: 6f.).

What the authors from above described and claimed for teenagers in an urban American environment was also true for the youth centre in Mardin. Due to a very low degree of supervision the youth centre seemed to be a place where people can live out their youth and associated craziness according to suggestions of common stereotypes. At home, in the realm of the family due to serious responsibilities and expectations there might often not be much space left for doing so. The *Gençlik Evi* was a place distinct from the home with its tight kinship connections on the one hand and school with its enormous disciplinary character on the other hand. As already mentioned above, compared with these other two institutions which are part of the daily lives of many young people the youth centre tended to be less scheduled and less full of achievement expectations, but rather provided more freedom for expression and creativity. The roles young people could take over were not prescribed to them right away; they were rather open and fluid. It offered a space to become active by them, to investigate and experiment. Still it constituted a safe environment where mistakes did not carry that much weight. So actually a lot of the work in the youth centre was about empowerment of young people. By seemingly 'doing nothing' young people 'did' actually a big deal. By simply hanging out, sitting in the grass and chatting with each other they socialised, formed communities and tried to make sense out of their lives. They shared formal as well as informal knowledge. Unfortunately their activism and participation (in various initiatives) remained often not recognised or misinterpreted by adults.

7.2. Meanings of being young

According to everyday speech, informal talks and a formal group discussion which I initiated in the *Gençlik Evi,* I want to present some understandings expressed by several young people of Mardin what being young was meaning to them.

To begin with, everybody of the gender-mixed group of about ten people discussing recognised youth as a distinct period of a person's life which is of great importance. The unification of young people was expressed first and foremost through the term of brother- and sisterhood. A boy expressed such an identity by saying "we are all like brothers and sisters", when he was talking about 'the young people of Mardin' (Şeyhmus, 22/05/2010). Furthermore the experience of personal relationships outside the family (friendships, love etc.) was associated immediately with youthfulness by the respondents.

However, this age period can bring along individually and/or collectively perceived advantages at some times and disadvantages at others. In the first instance being young was associated with freedom, irresponsibleness, having fun, movement, having a lot of energy and being crazy. These aspects imply that young people suppose they can be careless without facing any serious societal consequences. Being a dreamer and a rebel however also implies risks which they seem to take very often. On the other hand pessimism can dominate. Feelings of powerlessness, not being understood, being fed up as well as loneliness and silence can also come to the forefront. Moments of happiness as well as sadness can occur sometimes at once. These statements point to young people's tendency of an extremeness in the experience of emotions.

By contrasting the smiling face of a child with a sad and angry face of a young person, perceived differences between these two categories were made explicit in some drawings. Behind such a visualisation stood the argument that children can be made happy very easily, for example as soon as they play a game. They do not think about what is going on around them too much. On the contrary, young people while being more independent were supposed to be more reflective in a critical way so that they cannot be distracted by anything that easily.

On the other hand the difference between young persons and adults was seen as lying primarily in different modes of thinking, the one of the first being more spontaneous and emotional, whereas the one of the latter being more rational. Furthermore it was emphasised that a young person was more in an insecure, many times troublesome and less powerful position. On the contrary adults - being seemingly more knowledgeable - were perceived to tend to show the way and exercise discipline and control.

It is evident that the statements above represent to high degrees common global stereotypes about youth. The fruitfulness of such a discussion refers furthermore to the fact that such discourses were of relevance in the daily lives of those being asked. As the latter showed agreement on the majority of the issues under question, there seemed to be quite a strong common sense about them.

7.3. 'Doing youth' at a festival

At the beginning of May a youth festival lasting four days took place in Batman, the capital town of a neighbouring province. Below I first want to start with a general overview of my impressions from my participant observation and then discuss some wider implications of this event. Being sponsored by GAP it was part of a lately established annual series of youth festivals in the south-eastern region of Turkey. The first GAP youth festival was ironically held in Istanbul in 2008, the second one in Mardin in 2009 and now the third one in Batman in 2010.

We went to the *GAP Genç Festivali* to Batman as a group of over 100 young people from Mardin. Anybody who registered in the youth centre could join for free. Already on the way the high spirits in the minibuses were more than crazy with young people joking around, singing, screaming and playing drums. As soon as we arrived to the youth centre of Batman our youth group performed a spontaneous Kurdish dance by forming a big circle whereby everybody could participate. This welcoming ritual was repeated in other contexts several times throughout the festival. In total there were approximately around 2.000 people participating, the majority being between 15 and 30 years old, including youth groups from different parts of Turkey as well as from abroad. The festival was organised by activists from the youth centre in Batman and Mardin. Food was provided to all registered participants for free. We spent the nights in tents on a local sport ground at the outfringes of the town. Before the official opening, a kind of 'youth-procession' accompanied by police escorts took place through parts of the town on roads which were closed for the traffic. By holding up banners of the different delegations as well as advertisements of the festival and collective shoutings of several paroles like "*Mardin*" or "*Bizim dünyada Batman nerede?*" ("Where is Batman on our earth?"), the crowd of festival participants proceeded through the streets. In the front there were some people producing rhythms on traditional drums and jugglers showing artistic acts inbetween. Due to the unusual noise, local people were gathering on sidewalks or curiously watching from the windows and balconies to figure out what was going on. The multifaceted program was accessible for anybody without charge. Local people joined in mainly as curious

observers as they seemed to be confused about what was going on in 'their' town. Beside concerts and dance performances of traditional and modern music at different stages in the city centre and the stadium, various activities like presentations, discussions, panels and creative workshops were on offer in the facilities of the youth centre. Those acting on various stages were younger and older people as well as groups and individuals. On a fair different youth organisations, international exchange programs and art works were represented. Furthermore one could participate in a card game about social policies or also about sexual education (where they also spread out condoms). There was furthermore a distinct small newspaper printed, informing about the ongoing of the festival. Beside taking part in the offered activities our group also helped to carry out various physical tasks like putting up tents at the stadium and the fair or cleaning these areas from rubbish. In the evenings after coming back from the concerts to the sport area, people would gather in front of the tents around fire places and carry on chatting, singing and making music by themselves with their own instruments they brought along until early in the morning. Although the consumption of alcohol was strictly forbidden on the camp site one could from time to time spy some plastic bags of empty beer bottles and cans.

The collective experience of this event was very much a topic under discussion after coming back to Mardin. Narrations were shared with those who did not participate and evaluations were made. The common-sense argument was that the festival one year ago in Mardin was much better organised. Furthermore comparisons of the cities of Batman and Mardin were made. Of course Batman as the fairly unfamiliar environment scored less as it was experienced as a "less beautiful" and "more unsafe" place with "weird" inhabitants, where poverty is more obvious on the streets. In the end despite all positive experiences everybody was glad to be 'back home'.

7.3.1. 'We' and 'the others'

Whereas big-scale concerts, festivals and the like have, so to speak 'ever since' been part of daily life in most other, especially western parts of Turkey, the south-eastern area has been perceived as 'not really suitable' for hosting such events and on the other hand did not show significant efforts to initiate them by themselves. In common local discourse young people, who were active in civic associations or the like, appreciated events like youth festivals very much as they finally got what they have been longing for. According to their expressions they had been suffering from being invisible and muted as nobody cared about doing anything for them. When thinking and talking about young people in this region in popular discourses, the

impact of global media forces creating knowledge and longings in terms of global notions of youth cultures (like 'a concert- or festival-culture') has been underestimated most of the time. The lack of and mis-perceptions of youth in Turkey's south-east goes hand in hand with the general negative stereotypes about this region as 'underdeveloped' which have remained in some form or the other up to the present. From the perspective of GAP, the reason for sponsoring such a youth festival implies 'bringing development' to this region, symbolically as well as in a practical sense. However, the impact of a youth festival of this scale should not be portrayed as simple as common discourses suggest. My aim here is not to define 'development' in such a context (for this a separate investigation would be needed). Beneath, I rather want to point to some more tacit implications such a festival can have in terms of personal relations and constructing youthfulness.

First I want to consider one of the main messages of the opening speech which can be simplified with the slogan: "Though we all differ from each other we can/should be friends!" In that speech various differences among the participants were highlighted. However, it was suggested to recognise and to appreciate them in a positive way. In this appeal the notion of friendship came to play the key role to achieve peace in the context of this festival, in Batman and moreover in Turkey and all over the world. This festival indeed provided space for getting into touch with various 'others' and learning more about them. The participants were male and female, of different age, different religious, ethnical and national backgrounds; they could speak different languages, had different abilities and interests and much more. In this way the festival provided a safe cosmopolitan environment for approaching each other and establishing new acquaintances, friendships and in some cases also romances.

According to traditional regulations of sex and gender segregation males and females were supposed to sleep in different tents. However, it would not be a rule if it could be not broken. So what some young people from our Mardin-group (and probably also others) did was to sneak out and visit other tents, managing not to be seen by patrolling control personal. So it happened that the 'girl-tent' where I had my sleeping place got extremely crowded and consequently noisy one night. Boys and girls from other tents gathered inside to chat and first and foremost to make fun and mess around. Some girls put funny make-up on a boy, some were smoking, one girl drinking a can of beer she brought with her and it seemed they could not stop joking and giggling. Many young people would stay awake all night. Once a *hoca* was quite desperate due to the restlessness of the young people. Consequently he decided to arrange a football-match at 5 a.m. to make them calm down.

7.3.2. Raising the voice

First and foremost, through such a youth festival the young people were given voice to make 'others' aware of their presence. Situations of being explicitly and unordinary noisy like on bus rides or during the procession through the city can be interpreted in this way. This activism operated according to the logic that it was easier and more success promising to reach recognition and moreover to claim rights collectively rather than individually. In this process those demanding attention made use of already existing common stereotypes about youth by behaving accordingly (e.g. being noisy, chaotic, impulsive, energetic, ignoring rules etc.) as it was indicated in the narrations above. Consequently they could be easier identified with an already existing identity label such as that of 'youth'. 'Differences within' had to be pushed aside for that moment. At the same time however, their collective self-representation can be described as unique because its realisation remains subject to a specific context. Specific to their context was what might be labelled as double-muteness against which they were struggling. It included on the one hand being muted because of being young and on the other hand also because of having grown up in a specific assumedly 'less developed' geographic territory.

Young participants from other geographies happened to show solidarity with the local youth and their claims on the basis of the, to a certain degree shared experience of being young and the associated rebellious intentions. In this sense the above mentioned slogan of the opening speech shall be remembered as it incorporates the significant political statement of unification and rebellion of a certain group of less powerful. The inclusive criterion of this group here is being young. In order to achieve a tight connectedness within this group other aspects of identity have to be kept in a passive state. It can be argued that in this way the concept of friendship serves to downplay 'differences within'. To conclude it should have become clear that these young people were fighting against stereotypes with which they were confronted in daily life by picking them up and trying to use them to their own ends.

8. Discussing friendships

Different disciplines are looking at personal relations regarding their definitions and conceptualisations in varying ways. Therefore a general overview of several approaches to investigate friendship in social science and humanities shall be given first. Due to the fact that friendships were primarily seen as a matter of individual emotions this issue remained "psychologised" and has been consequently ignored within social science (Allan 1989: 7). The first and foremost psychological, philosophical and later sociological material on friendship stems mainly from research in American and European societal contexts.

As the developments in anthropology have been related with those in other disciplines several perspectives of sociology and philosophy will be briefly discussed as well. Afterwards a closer look will be taken at investigations of friendship relations during adolescent years. Some of the findings from Mardin will be discussed along the way. However, it should be considered that the selected material remains incomplete.

8.1. Philosophical approaches

In philosophical thinking friendship has ever since been a popular topic. Philosophical discourses focus mainly on its idealisations. The statements of early philosophers like Plato or Aristotle on friendship remain influential up to the present. Some significant aspects of those early discourses shall be first considered after Goodman (1996: 165ff): In the famous "*Nicomachaen Ethics*" of Aristotle friendship was termed "*philia*". Goodman highlighted that Aristotle differentiated the ideal form of "disinterested friendship" from others which are motivated by gaining individual benefits. Furthermore *philia* was understood as the basic sociability of humans. This goes along with Plato's idea that societies are formed due to the need for cooperation as an individual can impossibly survive on its own. However, Aristotle stated that not all people need to be friends in order to form a society. A sort of friendliness or goodwill (*eunoia*) was perceived as sufficient for the establishment of social groupings. Consequently friendship was preserved for certain interactions between individuals and not in the context of collective mass interaction. Friendship was seen as being very much characterised by intimacy and particularity. (ibid.)

Like in several social science disciplines, an increased focus on issues of friendship can be observed in philosophical debates which emerged during the 1990ies. According to Leaman (1996: 1) this renewed concern is related to perceived requirements and intentions of establishing new ethics on the one hand and postmodern identity issues on the other hand. Philosophical debates recognise the social dimensions of friendships to a high degree as it is

understood in terms of "defining us as social agents" (ibid.: 2). However, a shortcoming in most (recent) accounts can be detected in a missing awareness of cultural dimensions (ibid.: 1). Due to the establishment of philosophy as a discipline in Europe, the major body of works within this discipline contains a Western and at the same time a strong male bias. This general trend has become manifest in philosophical discourses on friendship as well. In the most popular mainstream discourses there are hardly neither any female accounts nor such of non-Western thinkers. The volume edited by Oliver Leaman (1996) is an intention to take cultural implications of such concepts explicitly into account and bring together 'Eastern' and 'Western' philosophical discourses on friendship.

Digression: Concepts of friendship in Christianity and Islam

According to Leaman's (ibid.) account religious elements can be influencing factors in creating and keeping up concepts of friendship. For the case of Turkey with the majority of its population being Muslim, it is relevant to gain an overview of major Islamic debates on friendship. In addition, as Christianity has a strong foothold in the region of Mardin up to these days too, it seems fruitful to compare at this point some central lines of debates about friendship within these religious believes based on the arguments of Goodman (1996).

According to the latter author the concept of fellowship was a central one in medieval Biblical as well as Qur'an traditions. In Jewish Biblical discourses Aristotelian ideas of friendship dominated. Biblical fellowship was constructed as a form of love and social virtue, doing something in behalf of one another. As the ultimate demands of friendship were understood socially it was globally promoted in messianic ways. A central message was that people should behave as if they were friends in order to secure societal functioning. (ibid.: 171ff)

By looking at Muslim religious discourses Goodman's (ibid.: 176-188) interpretations of the ideas of the Persian courtier ethicist Miskawayh (936-1030) and of the Muslim theologian al-Ghazāli (1058-1111) shall serve as exemplary insights. The first scholar came up with a sound adaption of Aristotelian thoughts into Islamic ethics. Like in Biblical discourses love was perceived to be the fundament of society, whereby friendship was one possible form of love. Miskawayh discussed friendship in the broader context of discipline, responsibility and culture. Considering these framings he viewed it as a means of overcoming individual deficiencies. Whereas for Miskawayh friendship was a profound key to societal and individual well being, al-Ghazāli viewed it more negatively as a worldly trap. Al-Ghazāli followed the track of Miskawayh's arguments only insofar as he saw friends at least as being

useful in discovering one's own mistakes. The important aspect seen to enable friendship to be realised as durable bond was forgiving each other. This existential essence is reminiscent of kinship bonds, though a higher degree of freedom is stressed when it comes to friendships. However, the scholar of Sufi mysticism al-Ghazāli stressed first and foremost the aspect of instrumentalism in this regard. In his perspective human reciprocity in terms of friendship remained limited, as only God was expecting no return for something given away. As humans were faced with various hardships in their daily lives they needed the others in order to cope with these obstacles. Consequently friendship was perceived to be 'just' a means of daily survival. It follows that al-Ghazāli claimed that the form of disinterested friendship idealised by Aristotle in terms of limitless generosity can never become a reality among interacting humans. The highest and most valuable relationship was considered as the one to God whereas the ones between humans were seen only as milestones on the way leading to the aim of the primer. In this sense religious brotherhoods were promoted as being most effective in reaching this aim. In conclusion the perspective of Miskawayh can be described as humanistic one whereas the one of al-Ghazāli is resembling pietism. (ibid.)

Overall this outline shows that even within one religious strand neither a single definition nor a homogenous standpoint remains. Rather different perspectives on friendship varied and vary according to time and place and finally according to individual scholars. Besides, such religious considerations have to be considered especially in terms of their direct or indirect potential of enforcing societal norms about certain interpersonal relations such as friendships. They might give guidelines for application in micro- as well macro-societal contexts. An example would be warnings which can be found in the Qur'an against establishing any form of cooperation with Jews or Christians (ibid.: 175f.). Such politicising and polarising attempts point furthermore once again to the fact that personal relations are never acted out entirely freely as the acts of individuals are constantly informed by ideologies of their social environment.

8.2. Sociological approaches

Whereas anthropology's viewpoint remains on a micro level most of the time, sociological approaches tend to investigate also the phenomenon of friendship from a broader societal macro perspective. In this way sociology questions for example how various forms of friendship relations are linked to different social and economic structures (Allan 1989: 6). Abrahams (1999: 156) for example highlighted that friendships as well as the other more

institutionalised forms of personal relations provide resources "where the mainstream structures of society fail to satisfy the needs of its members".

The famous early sociologist Simmel (1950 cited in Bell 1981: 14) considered friendship as part of general sociability which he saw as "purest form of interaction between equal individuals". Furthermore Paine (1969 cited in Bell & Coleman 1999: 9) described friendship as "institutionalised non-institution". This state of not being fully institutionalised in Western societies obstructed the sociological concern about it.

A main figure who established and promoted a distinct sociological perspective on friendship relations in the second half of the 20th century was Graham A. Allan. The basic argument which he built up on his data from Great Britain was that friendships like all other social relations are constrained by social structure. Moreover Allan stressed the social utility of such ties in terms of social integration, practical support, emotional support and confirmation of identity (Allan 1996: 107ff). Consequently friendship became a field in social science where the interplay of social agency and structure can be investigated.

Schinkel (2003: 17) claimed that friendship is a social order existing on its own, which means that it did not evolve out of another order. According to him the phenomenon includes the actual experience on the one hand and its interpretation with the meaning given to it on the other hand (ibid.: 16). The second dimension is in most cases expressed as a seemingly tight cultural definition. However, both the experiences and meanings of friendships should be seen as dynamic rather than static (ibid.).

8.3. Anthropological approaches

Ethnographers actually make use of personal relations very much to follow the aims of their research. Which knowledge they are able to gain from their informants depends heavily on the relations they have established to them. It is known that the relations between the anthropologists and their informants can become very close. Therefore self-reflexive ways (like writing a field diary) of thinking about those relationships which might include forms of friendships is vital when carrying out fieldwork.

Despite this practical relevance friendship has been marginalised in anthropology ever since because "the processual, the idiosyncratic, the affective and the non-public aspects of social relations" (Bell & Coleman 1999: 4) were of hardly any interest to most ethnologists. Anthropology traditionally focused more on social institutions and formal relationships. Beside kinship, patron-client relations were many times a focus of anthropological research[34].

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[34] See a. o. Eisenstadt & Roninger 1984.

Such relations imply on the contrary to friendship a hierarchy in status and power. Patron-client principles have been widespread in the Middle East up to today.

During the 1980ies friendship became not completely central, but at least 'a' concern within this discipline. Two aspects should be considered when speaking about a shift in the anthropological perspective during the last decades. Firstly, the traditionally described isolated social entities so to speak 'got lost' as processes of globalisation gained in significance. Furthermore it has been recognised that also in such societies friendship was often so to speak hiding behind or was part of kinship. Secondly, the anthropologists themselves started to get more and more involved in research within modern and complex societal contexts such as urban areas. Overall the discovery of the principle of "emotional economy" was influential in investigating mutual support with the frameworks of kinship and friendship simultaneously. (Bell & Coleman 1999: 1-17; Rexroth & Schmidt 2007: 12f.)

Bell (1981: 10) stated that: "There are certain cultural functions performed by friendship." These functions become evident first and foremost in discourses about ideal friendship in which we are told which people to choose as friends, how to behave, what to think and how to talk about these relations. Like Allan (1989: 99) expressed it "there are cultural scripts about the ways in which friend relationships should be structured". Concluding, cultural functions go hand in hand with these scripts. Such intersections require adequate research approaches.

By "posing fundamental questions about our understandings of agency, emotion, creativity and the self" (Bell & Coleman 1999: 2) anthropological investigations of friendships form an irreplaceable contribution to the overall scientific inquiries. By taking especially cultural notions into account, many (Western) assumptions about for example the voluntarism or intimacy of such concepts, have been challenged with cross-cultural studies. As suggested by Bell & Coleman (ibid.: 15), from a sociological and anthropological perspective, friendship relations in non-Western contexts may have more in common with Western ones. Considering Mardin as 'non-Western' territory this assumption came to be proved with the presented empirical material.

The following subchapters mirror broader, central anthropological debates and link them to friendship issues. It should become clear which role investigations of friendship can take within them, especially how these investigations can benefit from existing theories and approaches but also at the same time how they can contribute to a progressive development of the latter.

8.3.1. (Inter-)Personal relations

Allan (1996: 97) argued that friendship relations imply solidarity on the basis of liking and trust. Also according to Eisenstadt & Roniger (1984: 29) the core issue of interpersonal relations, when seen as the ones which are holding society together (in this sense they can be viewed as the main building blocks of society), is about the institutionalisation of trust. In general interpersonal relations appear to be characterised by trust, intimacy, 'pure' values and solidarity (ibid: 2ff) which became evident through the analysis of my own interview material too. Trust needs 'knowing' and 'not-knowing' because only if you know at least a little bit - and still not all - you can trust (Simmel cited in Schinkel 2003: 24).

The study of interpersonal relations was lately primarily influenced by the interactionist perspective whose most famous representative is Erving Goffman. He has been occupied with "how social ties play out in public" (Morrill & Snow 2005: 7). Encounters of individuals can be viewed as "situated interdependencies" in which various tacit rules have to be dealt with like the ones described for the youth centre (ibid.).

A often referred distinction between 'industrialised' and 'non-industrialised' societies is that in the second ones interpersonal relations tend to be formalised (ritualised) whereas in the first ones ideologies, oppositions and less clearly defined differentiations dominate (see a. o. Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984: 272ff). However, I would rather suggest being careful with such simple categorisations because specific social realities are always more complex.

It can be stated that friendships are based on spontaneous affection. However, not everybody speaks about the latter in terms of 'friendships', meaning that people do not necessarily use these definitions and discourses. As people think and talk about personal relations in different ways one should be careful about calling for example friendship a human universal. (Carrier 1999: 21-34) Moreover an anthropological approach makes it necessary to loosen the definition of friendships when dealing with various different cultural settings (see a. o. Abrahams 1999: 155).

Within anthropology personal relations were mainly investigated in terms of gift-giving and reciprocity. Exchanges in friendship can be seen as "related to wider issues of social organisation" (Allan 1989: 50). What is exchanged can include material as well as non-material goods. However, Allan (ibid.: 104-129) found that in general friendships tend to give short-time rather than long-term support.

As the Turkish saying *"Dost ile ye ve iç alışveriş etme!"* (Eat and drink with a friend but dont make business!) points out, friendships are not a reliable resource in very hard crises, especially not in financial regards. Complementary other commitments are given priority.

Exactly this fact became evident in the presented own results as the young people stated that their family is of greatest importance to them and only after it were the most closest friends listed. Behind such a refusal to help and accept big amounts of help from friends lies according to Allan (1989: 112) the reason and fear that such support can easily disturb the balance of equality.

Finally it shall be considered that the label 'friend' differs from others like that of 'neighbour', 'colleague' or 'cousin', in the way that "it is a relational term which signifies something about the quality and character of the relationship involved" (ibid.: 16). However, the criteria for defining such categories can vary from situation to situation.

8.3.2. Contextualising structures and agency

Allan (1989; 1996) highlighted that friendships are partly patterned and structured by factors outside individual control. This argument becomes clear when the varying spaces for sociability of individuals are recognised. Such spaces can be limited by time-consuming occupations, material circumstances, gender, lifestyles and many other factors. For example it was found that friendships tend to be more utility oriented within social contexts with limited resources (Schlee & Trillmich 2007: 384).

As highlighted by Allan (1996: 100f.) individuals are choosing (their friends) within a structured context. One of the smallest level of such a context is the personal environment of an individual. I tried to take such contexts into account throughout the investigation carried out in Mardin. According to Adams & Allan (1998: 6ff) the other levels of context include the ones of network, community and society.

It is widely recognised that similarity in age is one of the strongest characteristics in friendship patterns (a. o. Bell 1981: 19). Furthermore as the results from Mardin confirmed, friends tend to be of the same sex and social class. Universally there exist less cross-sex and more same-sex friendships. Various investigations confirmed differences in experience and ideas according to social class as well. In this way such variations are among others linked to housing and marriage patterns. (ibid.) In Mardin, like in the case of a rural French community investigated by Reed-Danahay (1999), friends included primarily locals, distant kin and persons of the same or at least similar age.

8.3.3. Private and public

In most scientific accounts so far friendship has been mainly defined as a private relation. However, for example, when looking at public political contexts the rhetoric of friendship was

and is very present as well. That experiences and discourses remain neither restricted to the private nor the public sphere, was also shown with the presented material on the youth centre of Mardin. The latter can be defined as a public place with private notions, meaning privacy is lived there as well.

Especially within the sociological (but also anthropological) body of literature on friendship lies the assumption that it is a 'modern' phenomenon. Its current significance is often explained with the so called privatisation thesis of social life which implies a decline in external social participation alongside an increasing centrality of domestic life (a. o. Allan 1996: 6-21). It is argued that intensified bureaucracy requires more flexibility in the form of informal ties in order to cope with it (Adams & Allan 1998: 11).

> "It [friendship] allows individuals to establish links to mainstream institutions and at times to by-pass them, and it helps to provide access to both material and less tangible, emotional comforts in a world which otherwise appears all too impersonal, intransigent and cold." (Abrahams 1999: 156)

The lack of trust to official institutions which Abrahams (1999) identified in north-eastern European regions, which belonged formerly to the Soviet Union, fostered friendships and friendly relations between individuals. Abrahams' field shows many similarities with the one in Mardin, for example the suspicious attitudes among the young people about politics. The violent political upheavals the people experienced in this region and their narrations give reason for such attitudes. In the form of practical survival strategies in situations of mistrust towards official (state) authorities friendships can become crucial.

However, such a perspective like that of the privatisation thesis is misleading as it ignores dimensions of friendships which are public and private at the same time. Allan (1996: 6-21) argued that distinctions between private and public are not useful for analysing informal relations as in reality such relations contain most of the time both analytical elements.

An alternative for interpreting the investigated friendships in the youth centre offers the theoretical approach about "foci of activity" put forward by Feld and Carter (1998). The described youth centre fits into their definition of a focus of activity being "any social, psychological, legal or physical entity around which joint activities are organized" (ibid.: 136). The effect of the youth centre is in this sense exactly as described by Feld and Carter (ibid.) that it brings together a certain set of limited individuals in repeated interaction. The friendships formed are embedded within a relatively dense network as the majority of the people taking part in this focus of activity know each other. As a consequence these relations are strongly embedded in specific group norms (ibid.: 139). "Foci of activity" can change

with the participating persons staying the same. However, the results of the investigated friendship relations showed that they tend to stick to one such a focus.

Another similar way of defining the relations within the youth centre is offered by Morrill and Snow (2005: 18). The latter speak of "anchored personal relationships" involving "recurring interaction and interdependencies that develop between individuals over time but are tied to a particular public place [in this case the youth centre] and a narrow range of activities that do not, or rarely, spill over into private households and other domiciled settings" (ibid.). This approach was also applied by Harrison and Morgan (2005) when investigating public hanging out among teenagers in an urban American environment. The empirical material from Mardin shows that although peer socialisation plays a role at school and/or the youth centre, classmates or youth centre mates hardly visit each other outside school and therefore only in rare cases at home. This supports the thesis that in the described contexts most friendships are of social(-ising) and not primary of emotional importance.

8.3.4. Identity

Ideas of the self and social relations are inherently connected with each other. Allan (1989: 61) argued that friendships can reflect status and cement social identity. This is true generally for all relationships insofar who you are depends on who you spend time with. Moreover friendships can be seen as "an escape from more formal role positions and at the same time a reaffirmation of their significance" (ibid.: 64). Overall friendships can have a strong impact on the personalities and self-worth of the participating individual (Bell 1981: 15). Friendship can be seen as serving to confirm and keep up the inner centre of one's personality (Schinkel 2003: 402). When talking about collective identities the concept of solidarity becomes relevant as well.

A main paradigm in anthropology is that relational networks result in social identities and not vice versa (Heady 2007: 348). In this vein Carrier (1999: 30) claimed that "identity is discovered or defined through interaction". Like identities friendships are dynamic rather than static. Different experiences result consequently in different constructions and perceptions of selves. In friendship discourses 'othering' is a common practice because a known 'friend' forms the opposite to unknown 'strangers' in ones social environment. Accordingly O'Conner (1998: 117) argued that friendships are so attractive in a postmodern world because they "offer a definition of self which is very much under the control of the individual".

Associated with the Western ideas of friendship is the conception of the autonomous self as 'the only one capable' of such (Carrier 1999: 24). When talking about Melanesia

Carrier (ibid.: 28) stated that "Melanesian selves are activated through social relationships" and not the other way round like in most Western societies where the selves are of primary importance. Sociability in Mardin shares similarities to the relational logic of Melanesian ideas because also there the social group is always stressed more than the individual (who is part of the first). The presented empirical material highlighted for the case of social environments in Mardin how important it is for the individual to be part of a family, a kin network, a neighbourhood and the like. Several young people expressed that they most fear being alone because then they would be in a metaphorical sense 'nothing' (meaning not being part of any social grouping).

8.3.5. Gender

Friendship patterns are gendered. Conceptions of ideal friendship and actual practice are influenced by ideas and norms of sexuality and gender roles. Segregation according to sex, gender roles as well as sex and gender hierarchies can be maintained, fostered, criticised or changed by ways of practicing friendships.

In most societies all over the world friendships include primarily persons of the same sex and/or gender (a. o. Allan 1989: 84; Bell 1981: 20). Cross-sex friendships appear to be an awkward issue in daily life as well as in scientific inquiries. Already Bell (1981: 95) noted that they tend to be overlooked and neglected in the latter field.

For American societies Bell (ibid.) found that cross-sex friendships are more likely to evolve before marriage, within the upper classes, among the more educated and especially among women who are working. For married or engaged persons they tend to be couple-oriented, which means that both partners share the same circle of friends who tend to be couples themselves (Allan 1989: 80).

Most of the time, it seems that male persons have larger friendship networks than females. Furthermore another generalising claim is that friendship relations among men are more instrumental in character whereas those among women are more expressive (a. o. Allan 1989: 67). In the way how the young male and females of Mardin talked about their perceptions of friendships such a division could not be recognised. The presented empirical material rather referred to the fact that such characteristics are associated with different ideal types of friendship, as *dostluk* implies more expressive, intimate and enduring functions whereas *arkadaşlık* implies more instrumental and ad-hoc ones.

Results from research for example of southern Europe showed that as the public sphere is primarily associated with maleness, sociability and friendships are perceived to be

primarily reserved to them as well. Consequently female friendships can be called "hidden" or "veiled" because although they exist, they neither are visible in public places nor talked about (Uhl 1991 & Kennedy 1986 cited in Reed-Danahay 1999: 139). The situation in Mardin was and partly still is the same when looking at traditional gendered notions of social life whereby boys tend to meet each other on the street whereas girls prefer more private places like homes for their gatherings. The fact that the majority of the attendees of the youth centre are male speaks additionally for its own in this regard.

Gendered friendship patterns develop from an early age onwards parallel to processes when young people develop their gender identities (Allan 1996: 92). However, gender is not the only influencing factor as more aspects play together. Therefore one should not overemphasise gender differences (ibid.: 94).

8.3.6. Kinship versus friendship?

Social performances of kinship and friendship relations share many similarities such as a universal significance. Both contain idealisations and reflections on the one side which are often contrasting with actual behaviours and experiences on the other side. In both cases the relations are actively negotiated by individuals or groups.

Schneider (2000: 184ff) outlined that within polarised debates of individualistic versus collectivistic cultures it is often assumed that friendships are less common within collectivist cultures where family and kin-networks are very dense. The argument is that the individual gets all the necessary support from his/her kin-network, so that friends are not needed any longer. However, recent research brought about proves which are contrasting this assumption. It has been shown that the high qualities by which tendentially relationships to kin are characterised in more collectivistic societies tend to be transferred to friendship relations which are not necessarily smaller in their quantity (ibid.).

The most popular arguments of distinguishing between kinship and friendship say that the first type of relation is ascribed and enduring whereas the second one is chosen freely and easily resolvable (Rexroth & Schmidt 2007: 7). Ways of distinguishing between them depends on local knowledge. In anthropology the social construction of the biological is recognised. Consequently neither kinship is purely 'biological' nor friendship should be viewed as purely 'socio-cultural' (Schlee 2007: 13f.). Therefore it can be argued that kinship ties are not to a lesser degree socially and culturally constructed than friendship ties are. On the other hand labels for best friends like 'blood brother' can have biological implications. As the separation of 'social' versus 'biological' 'facts' can vary from one context to another,

kinship and friendship relations are not always as easy to distinguish as it might appear (Schlee & Trillmich 2007: 387).

Especially in face-to-face societal contexts which anthropologists traditionally investigated, friendship has been often veiled behind kinship. If for example two friends (with or without genealogical connection) call each other 'brother' it is not easy for outsiders to recognise such a disguise or the actual correctness. The norms and values of both types of relations can be instrumentalised for specific ends. In Mardin I once experienced a situation of two women leading an intimate talk. The first woman opened her expression of worries about not being able to get pregnant by saying: "We are like sisters right? So I can ask you about anything?" Such a reassurance of trustable intimacy between the two women was necessary to be able to talk about something which was perceived as shameful by them. It was reached by instrumentalising kinship terms as a measurement for trust.

Latest research - like this work - showed that both types of relations are inherently integrated with each other in most cases. As friendship refers primarily to the quality of a relationship whereas kinship is more or less based on external criteria these two terms are not necessarily exclusive to each other (Allan 1979 cited in Guichard 2007: 314). Both can be of significance in societal contexts in a complementary way. However, there is a lack of attempts of investigating both phenomena simultaneously. A rare exception is the recently edited German volume "*Freundschaft und Verwandtschaft*" by Schmidt et al. (2007) with its multi-disciplinary perspective. Reed-Danahay (1999: 152) found that "the tension between family ties and friendship ties is a productive one". In some cases friendships can lower conflicts when present within kinship contexts for example (Rexroth & Schmidt 2007: 8).

In this regard it seems to make more sense to work with an alternative and quite open distinction as presented by Marbach (2007). She argued that kinship is primarily an intergenerational source of material and emotional exchange whereas friendship tends to be an intragenerational medium of accessing one's environment (ibid.: 92). Similarly, when talking about social capital, bonding and bridging capital can be distinguished whereby kinship relations tend to belong to the first sort and friendship relations to the second (Holland et al. 2007). In this sense the comfort zone of family ties is more likely to be limiting and hinders social and geographical mobility. The described connectedness of the young respondents to their 'home place' appears to be supportive of this argument. However, I want to add that not only an intense individual integration in local family- but also that in local friend-networks can prevent mobility.

8.3.7. Friendships during youth

Although the significance of experimenting with identities and friendships during young ages has been broadly recognised, anthropologists in general did not study youth sociability outside institutional contexts (like initiations). Nor did they pay much attention to investigating youth friendships in the context of life course. (Reed-Danahay 1999: 138)

Interestingly there established a whole body of scientific and more informal literature about detecting deficiencies and/or giving advice to children and young people how they can 'learn to make friends'[35]. Such intentions are paired with pedagogical developmental aims. Behind them, views of young people as 'incomplete humans' become again evident. Moreover ideal norms and values of specific local and global concepts of friendships are transmitted by such training attempts.

8.3.7.1. Friendship as a popular topic in research on youth

Whenever friendship has been investigated it generally occurred primarily in age groups of youth and/or the elderly. Like already highlighted above developmental theories and the discipline of psychology dominate the field of investigations about friendships among young people as well. Such theories try to define a progression through different stages of relationships which are linked to the individuals overall cognitive development. It is argued that the perceptions of self and the relations to others change according to ones cognitive development (Kimmel & Weiner 1995: 154f.). According to Kimmel and Weiner (ibid.: 152f.) the concepts adolescents have about friendship differ from those of younger children mainly in the following points:

- Adolescents have a greater understanding of the notion of sharing, which means they do not see friendships just as being instrumental in satisfying their own needs.
- Adolescents have a more abstract concept of friendship which goes beyond experiencing current actions.
- The friendships of adolescents are more enduring over time, also in cases of conflicts.

In complex modern societies it is broadly recognised within and outside of social science that friendships play a significant role during youth. In this regard among others Bell (1981: 44ff) stressed the peer influence which according to her gains importance in opposite to the decreasing role of the family as socialising institution. It is assumed that the older and more autonomous young people get the more consciously they chose their friends for themselves.

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[35] For example a research carried out in Turkey and published as a master thesis in educational science by Duysu Öztürk 2009 is called „The effects of friendship making skills training with board game on friendship making skills of fourth grade elementary school students".

Furthermore the personal qualities of friends become more important than the shared activities. Reflections on these relations and meanings tend to increase. The question of social popularity can put pressure on feelings of happiness. Additionally first experiences and involvements in romantic relationships come about. During adolescent upheavals friendships can supply positive support to self-image and self-esteem. (ibid.)

8.3.7.2. Age and gender

In her works about adolescence in the South Seas Margret Mead (1948) already pictured various personal relationships among young people. In this context she portrayed friendship as mainly occurring in age and gender homogenous groups. In Samoan society friendships within ones neighbourhood came to be relevant from the age of six or seven years onwards (ibid.: 59). They were divided along sex whereby this antagonism was described by Mead (ibid.) as feature of group life itself. Her characterisation of those friendships among adolescents as voluntary (ibid.) seems to resemble (her own) Western idealisations about friendship relations. Besides, her discussion of friendships has a female bias and does not succeed to overcome gendered public/private-dichotomies.

On the other hand, when comparing her material from Samoa with the one from New Guinea, it becomes clear that friendship relations do not occur to the same degrees in varying societal contexts. As described by Mead the situation for adolescent girls in New Guinea was quite different from those on Samoa because they were denied various kinds of relations such as keeping up friendships at this age period and these girls were first and foremost occupied with waiting for getting married (Mead 1948: 175ff.).

Gender role stereotypes can be reflected in different friendship patterns of young males and females, in the way that friendships of males tend to be more likely to have group character whereas that of females are more likely to be dyadic (Erwin 1998: 81f.). The descriptions of the friendship networks of the four key respondents can be seen as supportive of this argument. It has to be recognised that young people negotiate among others also gender identities within their friendships (Robb 2007: 332).

8.3.7.3. Further approaches

An approach of trying to grasp varying patterns of friendship among young people is illustrated by Arnett (2004) through seeing friends as factors of socialisation. Arnett distinguishes between broad and narrow socialisation, whereby in societal contexts within

which broad socialisation dominates young people are more free in choosing their friends on their own, whereas narrow socialisation contexts imply that the choosing of friends is influenced by adults to a much greater degree (ibid.: 105f.). Arnett's perspective has to be viewed critical due to his unsatisfying reflected application of the socialisation paradigm. Though it moreover remains somehow stuck to individualist-versus-collectivist-dichotomies, it offers at least a more flexible scheme which can be applied to various societal and cultural contexts. In this sense it allows a parallel and simultaneous analysis of broad as well as narrow socialising elements within one society which are operating at the same time. Such an approach proved to be fruitful for investigating friendships among youth alongside taking into account the broader societal contexts of the locality.

The assumption that friendships take on a special intensity in adolescence is challenged by other authors such as Amit-Talai (1995). In this vein instead of the peer group focus an alternative framework for looking at relations of young people is offered also by Cotterell (2007). The latter suggested applying a network and a lifespan perspective. In the life course the discontinuity of peer relations as an inevitable result of institutional passages becomes evident. Such disruptions which were also mentioned topics in the interviews might convince "young people that intimacy is a prelude to loss" (ibid.: 163). From such a perspective it becomes understandable why the introduced respondents had difficulties trusting anybody and why they had a somehow pessimistic attitude about friendships in general. They experienced for example that after they left primary school they did not see several of their closest friends again. People with whom they got used to spent most of the time before suddenly were not present any more in their current lives.

The results of the own research at issue go along with the ones of a survey on family and friendship which was carried out in Germany by the DJI (*Deutsches Jugendinstitut*) between 1988 and 2000. As pointed out by Marbach (2007: 74ff), friendships are mainly important for socialising (especially talking) in free time whereas material or emotional exchange tended to imply risks of dissolution. Friends were to a majority similar in age, gender, family status, education level, social status and milieu. Moreover friends were of secondary importance after members of consanguine kin but before affinal kin. (ibid.)

Another interesting anthropological research of the so to speak new vein which is relevant for the own material is the one which was carried out by Deborah Reed-Danahay (1999) in a rural farming community in France. Her main argument was that friendship plays a significant role among youth especially in terms of marriage, staying and continuation of the farming work. It is of interest for the presented material from Mardin as the links between

places, occupations, identities and relations became evident in both cases. Moreover the social structure in the investigated French community is also kin-based. As described by Reed-Danahay (ibid.: 143) the friendships of young people within informal and institutionalised contexts endure into adulthood. In this way they support keeping up local identities as well as staying and taking over occupations in that locality (ibid.: 150f.).

9. Conclusion

This work explored notions of youth and friendship, including possible combinations of both, as socio-cultural products of the thinking, speaking and writing among young people. It was referred to scientific and common knowledge being relevant in general and/or more specific contexts. Several possible intersections of age, gender, social class, ethnicity, religion and nationality in the context of personal relationships and power became evident. It has been tried to reveal global and other forces influencing local expressions of both concepts.

9.1. Main findings

In general, two dominating perspectives on youth taken by adults within, as well as outside of scientific inquiries can be summed up. On the one side being young is romanticised in terms of freedom and irresponsibility whereas on the other side youth is perceived as trouble and threat to the 'world of adults'. Finally it became clear that the expectations which different persons and institutions, like families, friends, the youth centre or the state, put into young people can be very contradictory. Moreover it has been shown that the notion of youth in Turkey is not a simple product of modernity but has its roots also in traditional age and gender hierarchies as well as nationalist ideologies.

The lives of the portrayed young people are characterised by difficulties in achieving higher education and in geographical as well as social mobility. Family relations are most important to them. Many young people, especially those attending the youth centre, find themselves in a liminal situation of having finished compulsory education and so to speak waiting to be allowed to enter higher education and/or looking for temporary or long term jobs. This means that they are not able to support their own lives yet and are in financial terms generally speaking still dependent on their parents. They are in a state in which they cannot be sure about their future in several regards, including education, job, marriage or the like.

Traditional believes and values assign different social roles to men and women which intersect with the roles ascribed to people according to age. Using the example of household

chores lived experiences of gendered age roles will be discussed now. In the interviews household chores were a topic of discussion primarily mentioned by girls. The empirical material pointed out that such chores can be spread out differently among the genders and siblings in urban on the contrary to rural settings.

Within the provincial town of Mardin distinct public places for young people remain limited primarily to schools, sport halls and the youth centre. However, young people are also present in other, so to speak 'adult-mixed' places such as cafes, associations, on the streets and the like. Moreover their homes remain for most of them a central place. The described youth centre takes over the role of an official institution with the aim of gaining contested spaces within the wider society for young people. A specific state-based recognition and support of this age group in general is still absent in Turkey[36]. By actively uniting young people and promoting a distinct identity of youth, the organisation fights for a recognition of this group and their needs and rights by broader society. In this way it appears to be part of global youth movements. Cooperations with international organisations, exchanges of people and ideas are among others indicators of such global concerns. However, the latter take local shapes, which means in the case of the youth centre in Mardin to emphasise on establishing a civil society and education standards. At this point the described socio-political history of the locality with its ethnic and religious suppressions by central authorities and associated violent upheavals becomes central for understanding particular concerns (also) of the young people. In this vein youth is perceived as big hope in being able to change the socio-political environment to a 'better' and more peaceful future.

Taking into account traditional socio-cultural norms and values which are still dominant in the wider local society the youth centre has the role of mediating between generational discrepancies. By respecting traditional establishments they are at the same time trying to initiate change of certain parts alongside supporting others. This betwixt situation comes about because the youth centre obviously does not want to put itself in total opposition to traditional values. If doing so it would not be taken seriously any more by the wider society in general and the families in particular. Consequently it constantly has to find a subtle balance in between while aiming at 'subtle indirect manipulations'. To conclude, the youth centre appears to have two faces, a controlling and directing one as well as a reserved one. It gains much of its legitimacy by viewing young people as 'problematic' and 'incompetent'.

For the young people themselves the youth centre can have various other meanings too. For some it serves to fill up free time, to meet friends or to participate in interesting

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[36] For instance a uniform legal protection for children and young people does not exist in Turkey.

activities, just to name a few. Moreover it can transmit a sense of belonging and (alternative) orientations for them by identifying with certain ideas, people, places and/or actions. It is enabling and motivating them to find their place and participate in wider societal structures. In this sense it aims at integrating young people into various community levels and strengthening their social competences ('soft skills'). Consequently the youth centre offers space for sociability and networking which includes dealing with socio-cultural norms and values. Specific situations of doing so constitute among others, being together with friends. It became clear that hanging out has serious implications in terms of managing relations and identifications. The latter can be expressed individually and/or collectively.

The empirical material showed that friendships are pragmatical realities which include ideal as well as actual practical meanings. Trust turned out to be central for defining relational closeness. Overall it became evident that having friends can provide notions of belonging, identifications, emotional support as well as partners for certain (free-time) activities. The concepts, that the young people under concern had about friendships included differentiations between *dostluk* and *arkadaşlık*. The first being more person-centred tends to fulfil more emotional functions whereas *arkadaşlık* being more activity-centred is more relevant in socialising terms.

Moreover it became clear that institutions such as schools or the youth centre play an important role in providing young people opportunities for establishing close relations to people of their age. In this sense friendship is implied in the notion of youth and provides therefore a norm for interactions within the youth centre. As it was highlighted, certain hierarchies between older and younger people still remain in that place. However, by suggesting such a norm of (friendship-) equality those hierarchies are tried to be covered. In this way *arkadaşlık* serves to foster a collective youth identity as well as vice versa.

This work did not look at friendships as isolated phenomena but rather tried to consider the broader social contexts of time and place of which they are part of. Therefore it also aimed at making sense of the link between friendship, youth and kinship. It has been found that the rhetoric of kinship is commonly used to indicate closeness in friendship and youth relations. A reason why friendships were that often compared with family relations might be that the quality of close family relations are broadly experienced as very high and satisfying for the individual. Consequently core ideas and experiences of close relationships within families are tried to be transferred, adopted and realised especially in *dostluk* (best friend-) relations.

To come to an end I want to connect to the beginning and explain why I chose the phrase "*kardeş gibiyiz*" ("we are like siblings"), which was expressed by several young people, as first part of the title for this thesis. This statement fits at the same time youth identities on the one hand and friendship identities on the other. According to the respondents it is applicable when being a group of young people as well as for being close friends with others. In this sense I hope that the writings have made clear that, like in the investigated cases, kinship can serve as a language for making sense of other personal relations such as those of friendship or youth by defining people in ideal terms as equal and uniting them. Consequently an inter-play of these concepts can enhance solidarity and loyality.

9.2. Research perspectives

This paper tried to argue against the marginalisation of youth and friendship as subjects of interest in social- and cultural anthropology. It should have become clear that investigations in fields like this are very much worth it.

The research remained very limited in its scope. It would make sense to investigate the lives and friendship relations among young people in more detail outside the youth centre. Moreover it would be interesting to gain comparable data from rural settings, bigger cities and other regions in general. Besides, several aspects of youth and friendship could not be dealt with in detail, such as considering life course developments including the transitional character of such relationships with its varying degrees of stability and change. Therefore it would also make sense to do a re-study after several years in the same locality. Furthermore within this paper left out multi-sided perceptions of one and the same friendship including continuities and contradictions could turn out to be of relevance.

As sociability is not limited to friendship, other forms have to be taken into consideration as well in any research project in the future. The borders between them are most of the time everything else rather than clear cut. Moreover the embeddedness of relationships in broader social organisation has to be recognised. Network analysis seems to provide an approach which is aware of these challenges and tries to tackle them. Broader issues which would need more detailed investigations include for example how certain constellations and patterns of kinship and friendship influence each other. Furthermore inquiries of various sorts of relationships have among others the potential to challenge common dichotomies of private versus public assumptions. To conclude, following the outlined track seems to be more than promising.

## App. 1: Maps

Figure 5: Map of Turkey (Held 2006: 533).
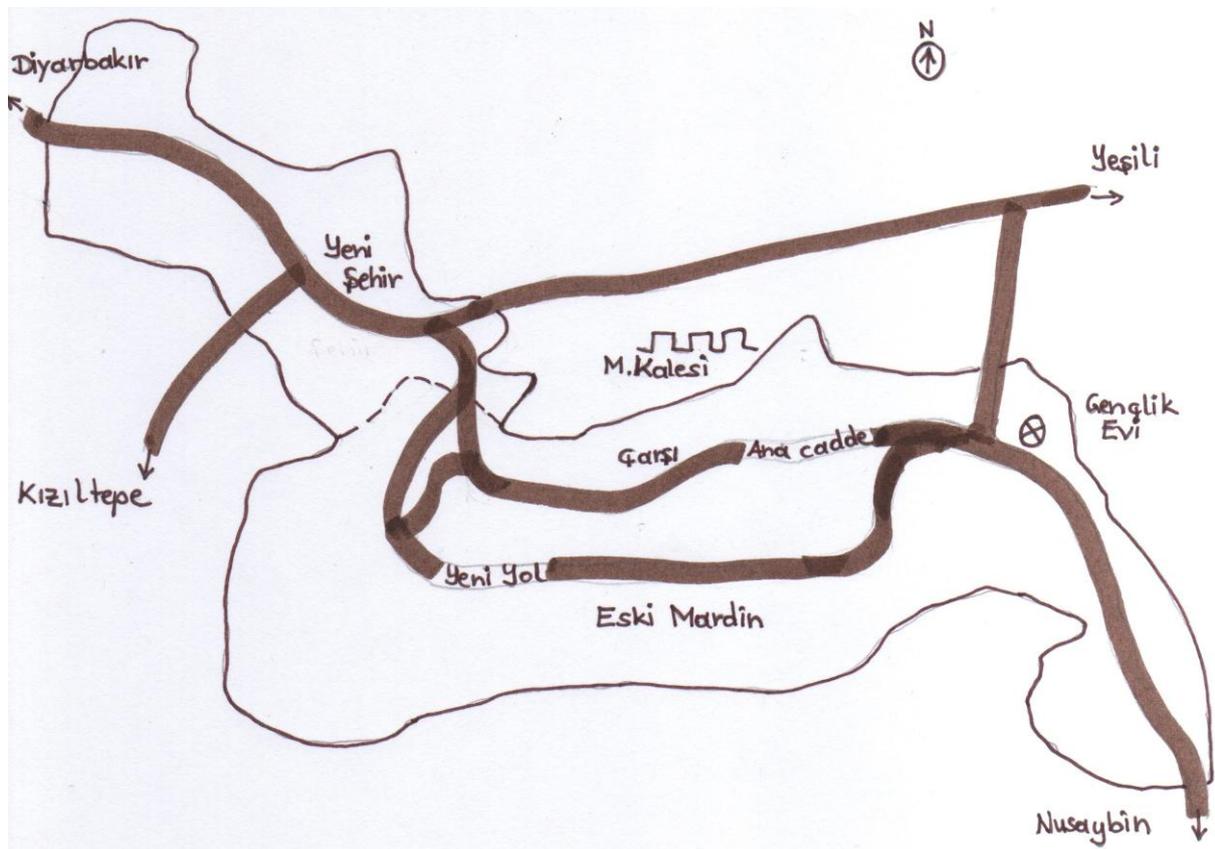
Figure 6: City map of Mardin.
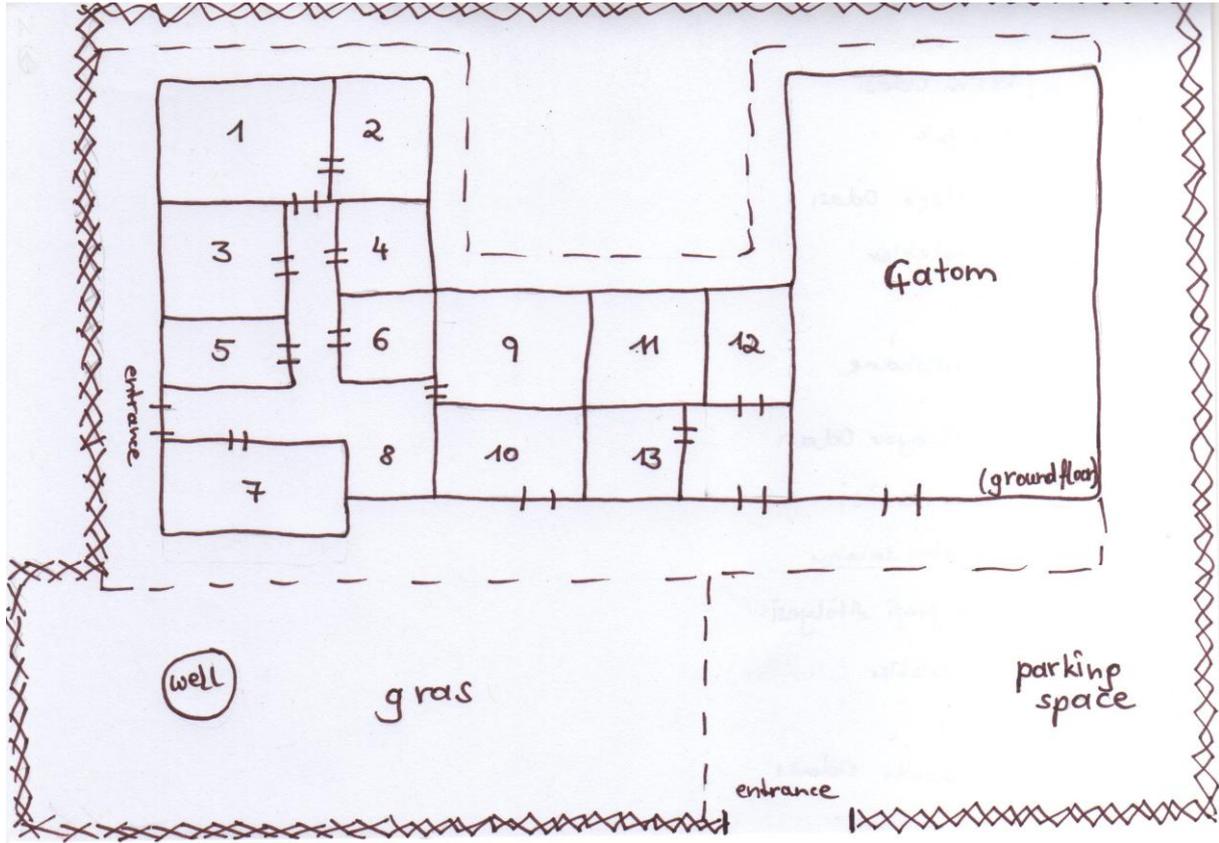
Figure 7: Map of the youth centre building (ground floor) with the surrounding garden.

Legend for Figure 7:

1 – *Resim odası* (drawing/painting room)

2 – *Mutfak* (kitchen)

3 – *İnglişçe odası* (English room)

4 – *Tuvaletler* (toilette)

5 – *Ofis* (office)

6 – *Kütüphane* (library)

7 – *Bilgisayar odası* (computer room)

8 – *Masa tenisi* (table tennis)

9 – *Tiyatro salonu* (theatre hall)

10- *Serigrafi atölyesi* (Serigraphic atelier)

11- *Tuvaletler* (toilette)

12- *Ofis* (office)

13- *Toplantı odası* (meeting room)

App. 2: Interview guidelines

Staff-interview

1) <u>Please introduce yourself</u> (whatever you want to tell about you)!
   - Education
   - Work or other occupations
   - Family: siblings, mothers and fathers occupation
   - Living place

   1) Kendini tanıtır mısın lütfen (kendin hakkında ne anlatmak istersen)!
   - *Okulu*
   - *İşi*
   - *Aile: kardeşler, annesinin ve babasının işleri*
   - *Yaşadığı yer*

2) <u>Time:</u>
   - For how long have you already been working in the youth and culture centre in Mardin?
   - How regularly and much time do you work in the youth centre?
   - Do you have other jobs beside?

   2) Zaman:
   - *Mardin Gençlik ve Kültür Evi`nde ne zamandan beri çalışıyorsun?*
   - *Ne zamanlar çalışıyorsun? Hangi sıklıla (her gün, haftada birkaç gün,…)? Kaç saat?*
   - *Başka işin var mı?*
   - *Burayı nasıl öğrendin? Kimden duydun?*

3) <u>What</u> are your main occupations in the youth centre?

   3) Gençlik Evi'nde ne yapıyorsun?

4) <u>Why</u> are you working here?

   4) Neden orada çalışıyorsun?

5) What do you know about the <u>youth centre</u>?
   - What do you like about the youth centre and why?
   - What do you not like about the youth centre and why?
   - What would you like to change in this environment?

   5) Gençlik Evi hakkında ne biliyorsun?
   - *Neyi beğeniyorsun? Neden?*
   - *Neyi beğenmiyorsun? Neden?*
   - *Neyi değiştirmek istiyorsun?*

6) What do you think about <u>youth</u> in Turkey?
- ....in Mardin?
- ....in the youth centre?

6) Türkiye'deki Gençlik hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
- *Mardin'deki gençler hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?*
- *Gençlik Evi'ndeki gençler hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?*

7) What do you think about <u>friendship</u>?
- What do you think about friendship among young people?
- What do you think of friendships within the youth centre?

7) Arkadaşlık hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
- *Gençlerin arkadaşlığı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?*
- *Gençlik Evi gençler arasındaki arkadaşlık ilişkilerini etkiliyor mu? Evetse, nasıl?*

Youth-interview 1 (topic: basic introduction)

1) <u>Please introduce yourself</u> (whatever you want to tell about you)!
- Education
- Work or other occupations
- Family: siblings, mothers and fathers occupation
- Living place

1) Kendini tanıtır mısın lütfen (kendin hakkında ne anlatmak istersen)!
- *Okulu*
- *İşi*
- *Aile: kardeşler, annesinin ve babasının işleri*
- *Yaşadığı yer*

2) What do you think about the <u>place you are living</u> in?
- To which other places have you been so far?

2) Hayatın boyunca burada mı yaşıyorsun?
- *Hayırsa, daha önce nerede oturuyordun?*

3) Please describe your <u>daily routines</u>!
- What are your favourite/disliked activities?

3) Her gün ne yaparsın?
- *Neyi severek, neyi istemiyerek yaparsın?*

4) <u>What</u> is important in your life?
- What makes you feeling happy right now?

- What makes you feeling worried?
- What are you afraid of?
- What makes you laugh?

4) Hayatında neler önemlidir?
- *Seni ne mutlu eder?*
- *Ne üzer?*
- *Korktuğun birşey var mı?*
- *Senin için neler eğlenceli?*

5) <u>Who</u> is important in your life?
   - Who do you (not) trust?
   - To whom do you speak if you have a problem?

5) Hayatında kimler önemli?
- *Kime güvenirsin?*
- *Eğer bir problem varsa kiminle konuşursun?*
- *Hangi problemde (maddi, duygusal, ...) kiminle?*

6) What were <u>important events</u> in your life up to now?
   - What are you proud of?
   - What are you ashamed of?

6) Hayatında hangi olaylar önemli?
- *Nelerle gururlanırsın? / Gurur duyduğun bir olay var mı?*
- *Keşke olmasaydı dediğin bir olay var mı?*
- *Nelerden utanırsın?*
- *Keşke olmasaydı dediğin bir olay var mı?*

7) Which plans do you have for the <u>future</u>?
   - occupation
   - living place
   - family

7) Gelecek için ne düşünüyorsun?
- *işin hakkında*
- *yaşadığın yer hakkında*
- *ailen hakkında*

8) What do you <u>believe</u> in?
   - What does religion mean to you?
   - What do you think about politics?

8) Neye inan(m)ıyorsun?
- *Din hakkında ne düşünüyorsun? Hayatında önemli mi?*
- *Politika hakkında ne düşünüyorsun? Hayatında önemli mi?*

Youth-interview 2 (topic: friendship)

1) Which people do you meet regularly?
- How often do you meet them?
- Where do you meet them?
- What do you do together?
- Who else is present?
- Do they know each other?

1) Kimlerle düzenli bir şekilde görüşüyorsunuz?
- *Ne kadar sıklıkta?*
- *Nerede?*
- *Onlarla beraber ne yaparsınız?*
- *Yalnız mı görüşürsünüz? Hayırsa, kimlerle?*
- *Onlar birbirini tanıyor mu?*

2) Which people are important in your life (at the moment)?
- In which way are they important?
- Why?
- Has this always been like this?
- How are the different people related to each other?

2) Hangi insanlar hayatında önem taşıyor (şu sıralar)?
- *Hangi bakımdan önemliler?*
- *Neden?*
- *Bu durum hep böyle mi olmuştu? Eskiden de böyle miydi? Nasıl değişti?*
- *Senin için önemli olan bu kişiler birbirini tanıyor mu? Evestse, nasıl?*

3) What does friendship mean to you?
- Of what do you think if you hear this word?
- Which feelings does it evoke for you?
- How should your ideal friend be?
- Which kind of people can be friends and who cannot?
- Are friends different from relatives? If yes why?

3) Arkadaşlık senin için ne ifade ediyor?
- *Bu kelimeyi duyduğun ne düşündürür?*
- *Sende ne gibi duygular uyandırıyor?*
- *Senin ideal arkadaşın nasıl olmalı?*
- *Kimler arkadaşın olabilir ve kimler insanlar olamaz?*
- *Arkadaşın olamayacağı düşündüğün kimseler var mı?*
- *Arkadaşlarında aradığınız özellikler neler?*

4) Who are your friends at the moment?
- Please describe these persons?
- Where do you know them from?
- Since when do you know them?
- Why are they your friends?

144

- Do they know each other?
- When do you spend time with them? How often?
- Where do you spend time with them?
- What do you do together?
- What do you feel towards your friends?
- What do you feel when you are together?
- In which ways are your friends and you similar and in which different?
- What would you like to do with your friends in future?

4) Şu anda arkadaşların nerde?
- *Arkadaşlarını tanıtın lütfen?*
- *Onları nerden tanıyorsun?*
- *Ne zamandır onları tanıyorsun?*
- *Onlar neden sizin arkadaşın?*
- *Onlar birbirini tanıyor mu?*
- *Onlarla ne zaman vakit geçirirsin? Ne kadar sıklıkta?*
- *Nerde zaman geçirirsiniz?*
- *Beraber ne yaparsınız?*
- *Arkadaşların hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?*
- *Birlikteyken ne düşünüyorsun?*
- *Hangi açılardan sen ve arkadaşların benzer ve hangi açılardan farklısın?*
- *Gelecekte arkadaşlarınla neler yapmak istersin?*

5) Who were your friends in the past?
- Please describe these persons!
- Where did you get to know them?
- How much time did you spent together?
- What did you do together?
- Did the friends know each other?
- In which way were you and your friends similar and in which different?
- When did your friendship break up?
- Why did it break up?
- Do you still meet these people today? (When? Where? Why?)

5) Geçmişte arkadaşların kimlerdi?
- *Arkadaşlarını tanıtın lütfen?*
- *Onları nerde tanıdın?*
- *Onlarla ne kadar sure geçirdiniz?*
- *Onlarla nerelere gittiniz?*
- *Arkadaşların birbirini tanıyor muydu?*
- *Hangi açıdan siz ve arkadaşların benzer ve hangi açılardan farklıydın?*
- *Arkadaşlığınız ne zaman bitti?*
- *Neden bitti?*
- *Halen bu kişilerle görüşüyor musunuz? (Ne zaman? Nerede? Niçin?)*

6) Comparison between friends and relatives:
- What does your family (your parents) think about your friends?
- Do they know about them?
- Are they welcome at your home?

- Can you visit their home?
- Are your friends often spending time with you and your family?
- What do your friends think about your family?

6) Arkadaşlarınla ilişkin aile/akrabalarınla ilişkin arasında fark var mı? Evetse, ne gibi?
- *Onları tanıyorlar mı?*
- *Birbirleri hakkında ne düşünüyorlar?*
- *Arkadaşların evine gelirler mi?*
- *Arkadaşların sizinle ve ailenle arada zaman geçiriyor mu?*
- *Ailen arkadaşların hakkında ne düşünüyor?*
- *Hangi arkadaşlarını severler, hangilerini sevmezler?*
- *Onaylamadıkları arkadaşların var mı? Kimler?*
- *Evetse, sen ne yapıyorsun? Yoksa, olsa ne yaparsın?*
- *Arkadaşların ailen hakkında ne düşünüyor?*
- *Onlari seviyor mu?*
- *Onlardan korkuyor mu?*
- *Arkadaşların ailesini ziyaret eder misin?*

App. 3: Selected Turkish sayings on friendship

Dost kara günde belli olur. (A good friend is understood in a black day.)

Dost kara gün içindir. (A good friend is for bad days.)

Dost ile ye ye iç alışveriş etme. (Eat and drink with a good friend but don't make business.)

Dostun attığı taş baş yarmaz. (The stone that a good friend throws is not hurting a head.)

Dost acı söyler. (A good friend tells the bitter truth.)

Kusursuz dost arayan dostsuz kalır. (The one who seeks for a friend without mistakes stays alone.)

Bana arkadaşını sana söyle kim olduğunu söyleyeyim. (Tell me your friends to tell you who you are.)

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Interviews with the staff of the youth centre:
- Mahmut, 16/05/2010, Mardin
- Osman, 18/05/2010, Mardin

Interviews with young people attending the youth centre:
- Müge, 15/05/2010, Mardin
- Mustafa, 20/05/2010, Mardin
- Esra, 21/05/2010, Mardin
- Şeyhmus, 22/05/2010, Mardin
- Esra, 26/05/2010, Mardin
- Mustafa, 03/06/2010, Mardin
- Şoreş, 05/06/2010, Mardin
- Şoreş, 08/06/2010, Mardin
- Müge, 17/06/2010, Mardin

Focus group discussions:
- Focus group discussion 1, 18/05/2010, Mardin; topic: youth
- Focus group discussion 2, 02/06/2010, Mardin; topic: friendship
- Focus group discussion 3, 15/06/2010, Mardin; topic: labels for friends

ABSTRACT

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit gibt Einblicke in Lebenswelten von Jugendlichen in einer Provinzstadt im Südosten der Türkei. Im Speziellen werden die persönlichen Beziehungen der Jugendlichen untersucht, wobei der Fokus auf den Freundschaftsauffassungen und Freundschaftsbeziehungen im Kontext eines lokalen Jugendzentrums liegt. Die Rolle des letzteren in der Verschränkung von Jugend- und Freundschaftskonzepten wird aufgezeigt. Außerdem wird Fragen an Prozessen von Beziehungs- und Identitätskonstruktionen in diesen Bereichen nachgegangen.

Die Untersuchungen beschränkten sich auf qualitative Vorgehensweisen und Methoden, von der Datenerhebung bis zur Auswertung. Die Ergebnisse beruhen neben Literaturrecherchen in Wien und Ankara auf einem zweimonatigen Feldforschungsaufenthalt in Mardin. Über das lokale Jugendzentrum war der Zugang zu den Jugendlichen möglich. Die teilnehmenden Beobachtungen fokussierten größtenteils auf diesen Raum im physischen sowie sozio-kulturellen Sinne. Zur Datenerhebung wurden drei Gruppendiskussionen eingesetzt. Des Weiteren wurden insgesamt neun persönliche, halb-strukturierte Interviews mit Jugendlichen des Jugendzentrums und zwei Experteninterviews mit den hiesigen Verantwortlichen geführt. Die jungen InformatInnen waren zwischen 15 und 30 Jahre alt. Im Anschluss wurde versucht die durch die Feldforschung gewonnen Daten mit breiteren sozialwissenschaftlichen Debatten (in erster Linie mit anthropologischen und soziologischen) zu verlinken, zum Einen den Bereich der Jugendforschung betreffend und zum Anderen mit jenen der Freundschaftsdiskurse. Außerdem wurden die Ergebnisse unter Beachtung sozio-politischer Aspekte der betroffenen geografischen Region kontextualisiert.

Mit dieser Arbeit wird gegen gängige Vorurteile, die Jugendliche als „unvollkommene", „gefährliche", „verantwortungslose" und/oder „unbeschwerte" Menschen abtun, argumentiert. Jugend- und Freundschaftskonzepte werden als raum-zeitlich relative soziale Phänomene und kulturelle Produkte, die von globalen sowie lokalen gesellschaftlichen Wert- und Normvorstellungen beeinflusst werden, dargestellt. Durch das gewonnene Feldforschungsmaterial werden Einsichten in das Denken und Sprechen über Jugend und Freundschaft, sowie in gelebte Erfahrungen in Form von Verhalten und Handlungen gegeben. Im Besonderen werden Identifizierungsprozesse unter Jugendlichen in ihren diskursiven und performativen Dimensionen herausgearbeitet. Im weitesten Sinne wird die Frage behandelt inwiefern persönliche Beziehungen von strukturellen Faktoren bedingt werden bzw. diese selbst (re-)produzieren. Es wird nicht eine einheitliche Definition des Jugend- und

Freundschaftsbegriffes hervorgebracht, sondern es werden vielmehr dessen Bedeutungsvielfalt und inhärente Ambivalenzen, sowie weiterreichende soziale und kulturelle Implikationen aufgezeigt.

Das aufbereitete Material macht deutlich, dass die Kernfamilie und eine stark ausgeprägte lokale Verbundenheit von größter Bedeutung im Leben der Jugendlichen sind. Große Sorgen und Schwierigkeiten bereiten ihnen ihre Ausbildung und ihre Berufsaussichten. Viele der Jugendlichen befinden sich gerade nach dem Abschluss der Pflichtschule in einer ungewissen liminalen Situation.

Die Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen zeigen des Weiteren, dass Freundschaft und Verwandtschaft eng miteinander verbunden und nicht immer klar trennbar sind. Dies ist zum Beispiel in der Verwendung wechselseitiger rhetorischer Verweise, Analogien und Metaphern erkennbar. In den untersuchten Fällen zeichnete sich eine Verwandtschaftsrhetorik als Indikator für soziale und emotionale Nähe in persönlichen Beziehungen ab. Es wurde außerdem deutlich, dass Freundschafts- und Jugendkonzepte gegenseitig und in Kombination miteinander instrumentalisiert werden können, um soziale Identitäten, Solidaritäten und Kollektive zu erzeugen und zu stärken. Im Kontext des Jugendzentrums geschieht dies im Sinne einer Formierung von politischem Aktivismus im Kampf gegen altersbedingte und anderweitige (von den Betroffenen als solche empfundene) gesellschaftliche Ungerechtigkeiten. Im Hinblick auf populäre Diskurse, in denen die südöstliche Region der Türkei als „unterentwickelt" bezeichnet wird, wird besonders viel Hoffnung auf gesellschaftliche Veränderungen in junge Menschen gelegt, indem ihnen große Potentiale als AkteurInnen eines Wandels zugeschrieben werden.

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