Chapter 11

Türkiye – Negotiating More Adulthood in an 'In-between' Country

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Abstract

This contribution focuses on the transition from childhood to teenage years to gain insights into intergenerational relations in Türkiye. At this transition, relations between the age groups – maturing children and responsible adults – are partly renegotiated. Scopes of action, areas of responsibility, the right to have a say are being redefined, or at least contested. What becomes the subject of negotiation? How are the negotiations conducted? What are the successes and failures of negotiations? The answers give insights into the positions and mutual relations of adolescents and adults. Using focus group data with girls and complementing questionnaire material from teenagers in Türkiye, we illuminate some challenges related to the age transition from the adolescents' perspective. The results show that the girls – in accordance with their peers and against the resistance of their parents – try to implement their idea that growing up means to become more equal and independent. From the parents' side, responsibility and maturity – particularly regarding (increasing) household and school obligations – emerged as the most dominant expectations toward the teenagers. Our findings suggest that this strong 'responsibilization' demanded by the parents and the girls' (albeit somewhat grudgingly achieved) ability to meet this expectation ensured girls' subordination within the intergenerational relations – a subordination that is thus upheld beyond childhood. We conclude that the particular contradictions the teenagers are confronted with when coming of age are increased by Türkiye's status as a society between the East and the West that cannot be considered wholly collectivist anymore.

Introduction

This contribution examines adult–child relationships by focusing on the topic of the transition from childhood to teenage years. The aim is to gain insights into the position assigned to adolescents within intergenerational relations: the right to a say, the scope of action, the competence to make decisions and the opportunities to improve that position. The social group under study is middle and lower middle-class families in three densely populated urban provinces in Türkiye. From a sociological perspective, the age passage from childhood to teenage years is not simply a problem of 'raging hormones' – a keyword under which this life phase is often studied (see a critical review in Lesko, 2001). Rather, it is a rung of what we may call the 'social ladder of age' that must be taken. From a sociological point of view, this ladder is nothing more than a particularly challenging and important status dimension – a problem created by social norms that individuals have to deal with, at least in Goffman's view (Goffman, 1961). But what is it that is considered as particularly challenging about age as a status dimension? First, age is a 'master status' (Hughes, 1945; Lindesmith et al., 1999, p. 271), thus, a very important status that defines the individual's position in society as well as the expectations that individuals are addressed with. In terms of a 'social clock', there is a 'right' and a 'wrong' age to do almost anything (Elder, 1975; Neugarten et al., 1965). Second, age is a status dimension on which individuals continuously change and are expected to change their position. Coser refers to a 'transitional status system' (1966, p. 172) on which every change results in new impositions for individuals: often enough, they must still face the expectations that were associated with the position they just left behind, but at the same time must behave as demanded by the new position. Age-related concessions (that were directed to the younger age group to which one now no longer belongs) may now fail to appear. Thus, while age transitions must be accomplished in all societies, they do not simply 'occur' or 'happen' at a particular point of time to those concerned. As there are certain, at times contradictory, expectations that must be dealt with, the individuals who prepare to manage the transitions must work out solutions that their interaction partners will accept and that allow them a satisfactory self-presentation (Goffman, 1961). Thus, to study the elaboration of the age transitions by those involved opens an opportunity to explore what it means to be a child, an adolescent and an adult.

  To the extent that the transition from child to adolescent was studied in such a perspective it has been done in Western societies. For these societies, research shows that privileges or obligations which are assigned to adolescents now can be considered as the subject and result of interactions that take place with peers and adults. It is the peers who are important supporters, pace setters, spectators and jurors in these processes and they are strict with their judgments in regard to all

that may 'no longer' or 'not yet' be done (Kelle, 2001; König, 2008; Waerdahl, 2005). As far as the adults are concerned as parties in these processes, mainly the parents have been examined. Research on parent–child negotiations illuminates how children at the threshold to adolescence face their parents' expectations, deal with their requirements or make claims of their own regarding privacy and autonomy in different parts of their lives (Goh & Kuczynski, 2022; Horgan et al., 2020; Sarre, 2010; Solomon et al., 2002; Türkyilmaz, 2021; Williams & Williams, 2005). We can derive from the findings of these studies that offering a disclosure of information on feelings and activities, taking (new) responsibilities, engaging with household or school duties and sticking to agreements with parents or not getting caught when breaking them play an important role for the teenagers to avoid conflicts and to achieve new freedoms. Thus, gaining and managing the trust of the parents can be considered an essential 'currency' (Sarre, 2010, p. 71) within the negotiations that characterize the transition to adolescence.

In an own previous study, we compared the interactions between teenagers and their parents in three countries – Germany, Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye. The results of this study support the impression that the transition to adolescence is experienced as negotiated and at times rather tensely negotiated – not just in Western families (Bühler-Niederberger & Türkyilmaz, 2022). From the perspective of the teenagers in all three countries, growing up in age made it necessary to repeatedly claim their rights and to refer to limitations caused by the parents. Our comparative analysis indicated further that the scope of action achieved in these negotiations had to be balanced out cautiously. On the one hand, teenagers had to account for the rules of the age hierarchy between children and adults in the local context, i.e. German teenagers – and especially girls – had the biggest and Kyrgyz teenagers had the smallest influence on decisions within the family, while the Turkish group remained in-between. On the other, the teenagers had to cope with negative consequences and conflicts caused by age-related concessions: More than any group, German girls experienced a decrease of parental affection (ibid.). For these girls, their remarkable profit in the negotiations was, therefore, also countered by costs.

In the following, we aim to achieve a more differentiated and comprehensive understanding of Turkish adolescents' interpretations of their (changing) age status and the intergenerational relations they are involved in. We take up the notion of a negotiated transition to adolescence as it is suggested by research on parent–child relations in Western families and apply it on the Turkish sample for a more in-depth analysis of the data from the previous study. By this we expect to gain insights into intergenerational relations in a society that cannot be considered as completely collectivist anymore. What are the challenges that characterize processes of becoming more adult in an 'in-between' society? These challenges will be addressed in the following section on research about adolescents in Türkiye and underlined by the results of our analysis.

Children and Youth in a 'Between' Society

In this section, we attempt to anchor our research on Turkish adolescents presented in this chapter within the achievements and desiderata of the already rich

but rather adult-centered research on growing up in Türkiye. Türkiye is often described to be a 'between' country (Bayirbağ et al., 2018, p. 391) – between the East and the West – geographically, economically and culturally. The country has a free market economy and a high level of institutionalization of capitalism like Western countries but at the same time cultural characteristics closer to the Middle East, which are reflected in demographics, e.g. a high share of children and young people in the population (almost one fourth of the population is under 15 years old; CIA, 2022) and almost 15% of women being married at the age of 18 (as estimated in 2018; CIA, 2022). Additionally, the country is burdened with many internal conflicts, surrounded by external conflicts in which it is not uninvolved and affected by natural disasters, for the consequences of which it is poorly prepared. It can be seen as a consequence of all these problematic situations and of political measures that are generally judged to be unsatisfactory that the problems in processes of growing up pile up (cf. Bayirbağ et al., 2018; Sen & Selin, 2022; UNICEF, 2022; Uyan-Semerci & Erdoğan, 2022a). This was compounded in recent years by high inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic (Erdoğan et al., 2022). As a result, not only did poverty and child poverty increase but education was even worse than it already had been in poor regions and neighborhoods before. Child protection services were no longer effective, court proceedings for domestic violence were delayed and children's subjective well-being has been affected (Erdogan et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2022).

There are many especially vulnerable groups of children – not least because of this 'between' condition and internal and external conflicts – to which research is directed. Refugee children (Kilinc & Karsli-Çalamak, 2022; Sunata & Beyazova, 2022), child laborers (Uyan-Semerci & Erdoğan, 2022a), children of Armenian citizen migrants living in Istanbul (mostly made up of irregular migrants), Roma children (Uyan-Semerci & Erdoğan, 2022b), children in areas of armed conflicts (Kara & Selçuk, 2020) and politically oppositional children – all these groups may have limited access to fundamental rights and health (Uyan-Semerci & Erdoğan, 2022b) and experience political repression (Maksudyan, 2022a, 2022b). Research focusing on these groups is also understood as a basis and demand for political measures and as a criticism of current insufficient implementation of legal regulations (Sen & Selin, 2022). It, therefore, focuses primarily on the extent, causes, consequences and development of such problematic situations, and effects of political programs, etc. Meanwhile, the voices of children and young people are largely ignored (Kilinc & Karsli-Çalamak, 2022, p. 89). The research of Uyan-Semirci and Erdoğan (2022b) responded to this shortcoming and focused on the subjective well-being of the children. They found a very clear negative influence of poverty (which in many cases must be regarded as severe poverty) on the children's self-assessed well-being. The children's assessments of their well-being are also strikingly worse among children of internal migrant families compared to children of Istanbulite families (Uyan-Semerci et al., 2013).

The country is also characterized as 'between' when examining social relations and children's involvement into their families. This addresses the fact that the country is neither at one end nor the other with regard to the dimension of individualism-collectivism, a central dimension to social psychological research on

cultures (Triandis, 2001). Rather, in the course of modernization, a form of social connectedness has emerged that can be described as 'being both related and individuated' (Imamoğlu, 2003, p. 367) or 'psychological-emotional interdependence' (Kağıtcibaşi, 2007, p. 20). Using these terms, research on Turkish family relationships achieved international fame primarily with the person of Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı and her coauthors (e.g. Ataca et al., 2005; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005). This research is based on several large-scale studies; their results can be summarized as follows: a high level of family loyalty continues to apply, but at the same time the importance of material provision by the adult children is declining and more individuation is being conceded. Across the last three generations, the bond has become more of an emotional one, which is accompanied, for example, by a change from the former preference for sons to a preference for daughters and by a decrease in authoritarian parenting (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005). In international projects such a development has been observed not only in Türkiye but also in other urbanizing collectivist societies, yet it applies mainly to better educated and urban families (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; cf. also Gürmen & Kihc, 2022).

Again, however, this line of research on parent–child relations does not capture the perspective of children and adolescents – and that is the first criticism we make of it. It is mostly based on interviewing parents about the values they ascribe to their children and about parenting behavior, and on interviewing young adults, especially college students, about their attitudes toward family, society and individuation. There are several reasons for this methodological approach: On the one hand, these groups are easier to survey, and this allows to obtain considerable sample sizes. On the other hand – and this is the adult-centric theoretical perspective – the children are mainly seen as products of parental efforts. The variables that are empirically captured on the children's side, i.e. children's social or cognitive competencies, are then seen as a consequence of parental efforts (cf. as well Kağıtçıbaşı et al., 2009). The second criticism is that such research gives a somewhat embellished picture of Turkish family realities. It is a problem that always arises when college students serve as respondents in a research area, and it is also a consequence of the fact that primarily values and orientations were captured in this research. If one asks about concrete practices in Turkish families, a rather different picture might emerge. Sofuoğlu et al. (2016) found that the use of harsh punishment by Turkish parents is still common, and that parents consider such educational practices to be quite effective and appropriate. When Sofuoğlu et al. (2016) contrasted the parents' statements with those of the children, they also noted an under-reporting of corporal punishment by parents. If parents were practicing believers, children's submission and obedience were more emphasized, an effect that was consistent across educational strata (Aidoğdu & Yildiz, 2016).

Against this background, the study presented here – although modest in scope – makes an important contribution. It focuses on the children's view of their circumstances, and this has only been done so far in research on Turkish children's well-being, which has not been underway for long (Uyan-Semerci & Erdoğan, 2022b). From the children's point of view, we explore the relationships between parents and children, ask what scope of action in the family is thus open to them, how

they use it and how they seek to expand it, if necessary, what obstacles they encounter and how they deal with them. This is an approach to look at parent–child relations, which have been so often discussed in Türkiye, in a new way and to ask what the children themselves contribute to these relations. Parent–child relations are thus not only seen as products of culture and of social developments but as something that is constantly produced – in a mode of production in which adults and children are involved. Hence, our research is a theoretical and methodological turn from a focus on (culturally dependent) parenting to a focus on 'generationing', as relational and ongoing process between the younger and the elder generation (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Bühler-Niederberger, 2020).

Study Design

Data collection and sample: The findings introduced in the next section are based on the Turkish subsample of an exploratory mixed-method study in which we collected data on children's interpretation of their coming-of-age processes in three countries (Germany, Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan) in the years 2019–2021. We conducted focus-group interviews and questionnaires with children aged 11 to 15 years old in schools and extracurricular learning facilities. The participants lived in urban areas of the three countries. In total, 11 focus groups were conducted; we will focus on the three focus-group interviews we did with Turkish girls (three to four girls per group). These girls lived in middle-class areas of the provinces Istanbul, Aydin and Izmir where the interviews took place in *dershanes*.[1] The focus groups were hosted by one researcher per group and took 45–90 minutes of talk. Beforehand, participants were informed and gave their consent that all data would be recorded, transcribed and analyzed confidentially.[2] With the focus groups, we aimed to approach the collective interpretations the interviewees had regarding changes in the intergenerational relations with significant adults, especially with their parents. At the beginning, respondents were shown a graph with pictures of different age groups (from infants to the elderly) and asked to give their views and reflect on their age status, from their own, but also from the perspective of their parents. After this ice-breaking sequence, interviewers were cautious to maintain autonomous talk between the participants and followed a rather loose interview guideline which centered around claims, desires, rights and obligations that the adolescents considered a part of their changing age status. In the quantitatively oriented part of the study, a questionnaire was applied to an overall sample of teenagers (n = 156) from the three countries. Most of the questions were standardized and concentrated on the subjects and scope of negotiation processes within the family; central results based on these data were

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[1]Extracurricular learning facilities that are visited by many high school students in Türkiye as preparation for the university entrance exams.
[2]The interviews were fully transcribed and translated. Substantial omissions in the quoted statements from the focus groups are indicated with three dots, the change of speaker with a slash.

presented in the cross-country comparison (Bühler-Niederberger & Türkyilmaz, 2022). In this contribution, we refer to the Turkish subsample ($n = 50$) to complement the focus-group results and concentrate on the results of an open answer field that can be considered a 'multiple perspective technique' (Solomon et al., 2002, p. 969). Here, respondents were asked to fill in the likely answer of their parents regarding the sentence: 'My mother/my father says I am...'.

Data analysis: Throughout the analytical process we used strategies that are characteristic for the methodology of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990): frequently moving back and forth between theoretical knowledge, empirical insights and continuous systematization of the data. For the focused analysis of the Turkish data, we can build and add on an already established theoretical framework from the comparative cross-national study: In accordance with the mainly Western research literature on parent–child negotiations and our own empirical material, we took up the perspective that the transition to adolescence, though inevitable in all societies, is defined by ongoing negotiation (Williams & Williams, 2005, p. 318) and that a large amount of these negotiations takes place within the family. Central to our following analysis is the concept of 'trust management', which we assume to be a significant part of these negotiations and with which we aim to emphasize the active role children play in these negotiations in Türkiye further. This raises questions as to what kind of parental boundaries the children can now extend and to which they must adhere still to be seen as 'more adult', but also what can be 'traded' by the children to achieve the desired changes and avoid conflicts with their parents.

Analysis

In this section, first we examine the focus group data to illustrate what the girls desired for or had started to change about their relation to their parents and how they succeeded to do so. Then we approach the parents' expectations toward their teenage children more specifically based on the results of the focus group interviews and the open answer responses of the questionnaire.

The Negotiation of Boundaries, Scopes of Action and Voice Between Teenagers and Parents

In the teenagers' talk about the things they had recently started to negotiate with the parents, three shared topics could be identified among the groups. One of these shared topics referred to family activities in the presence of relatives. Most of the teenagers stated that they had begun to withdraw (partly or all together) from occasions when parents were visited by other adults, some had also stopped to accompany them for visits of relatives as described in the following examples.

> When there are guests at home you go sit with them, everybody looks at you ... there will be critical remarks. ...This is why I go sit with them (parents and parents' guests) for a few minutes only

and then I go back and forth, so they don't talk about that topic.
(group b)

I don't have to go to visit relatives who I don't like anymore... I
tell them (parents), they scold a little, but I convince them. Or I go
out with friends on holidays, so I don't have to visit relatives.
(group b)

Such boundaries between the nuclear family and relatives were created by the
children rather progressively, and while parents showed some resistance, i.e. by
scolding, they still made age-related concessions. Harsher forms of punishment,
disappointment, or resistance from the side of the parents were not mentioned as a
response to the children's withdrawal from situations. This indicates a partial
liberation of the children at the end of childhood from the normative expectation
of 'filial piety' (Bühler-Niederberger, 2021, p. 58f.) – the notion that children
owed their parents gratitude, respect and support. On the children's part, the
freedom to have more time to do things *outside* the family, i.e. meet friends, was
only one reason given for the reduced time spent with parents in the presence of
other adults. In the first place, many of them wanted to retreat from situations in
which the parents would let others *inside* the private sphere of the own family,
where they talked about their children, criticized or praised them – but most
importantly still addressed them as little children. The behavior of the parents in
this extended context caused embarrassment especially as the teenagers did not
find it suitable for their age anymore:

...(my parents) show ugly baby pictures and tell stories that I don't
like, even when my family visits ... Then I'm ashamed. (group a)

What kinds of things we did when we were little (laughs). Little,
little silly things. Our mother talks about them in front of the
others (adult guests) and then we blush. (group c)

On the other hand, the children did not push their own boundaries too far
either: they demonstrated that they respected the expectations of the adults
regarding their own presence in relevant family matters. Visiting elder family
members and kissing hands with their parents at holidays remained important to
them to fulfill their obligations as the younger generation. Noticeably, by
adhering to the demands of the intergenerational relations, the respondents could
not only present their 'good behavior' as children but also their 'maturity' as
becoming adults. This emphasizes the general life-long significance of 'filial piety'
in the children's accounts.

They (parents) decide (on when to visit relatives). But we
appreciate wherever they go with us. ...When I was little, I
wanted to go somewhere else. Now there is no such need,
wherever we go (as a family), that's it. (group c)

The second claim for changes in the intergenerational relations with their parents reflects the teenagers' clear desire to extend their scope of action, particularly regarding their spatial freedom. All girls mentioned early and strictly applied curfews, a very limited radius regarding their mobility and that they were not allowed to stay at friend's places overnight. The teenagers associated these rules with the parents' wish to monitor and protect them from danger but nevertheless found them oppressing. However, the girls were also aware that the parents did not grant their children permission yet to stretch spatial and temporal regulations. While they were upset to be 'treated as a child' in this way by the parents, they generally sticked to the rules to prevent conflicts and punishments – even though thereby they failed to achieve the longed for enlarged scope of action. Among their peers, they discussed that they were indeed capable of making the right choices and avoiding dangerous places for children:

> I would prefer, if they allowed me to go out a little longer/ They say: "You are too little, you should be home before darkness". (group a)

> They scold when I am late. Because something could happen or I could get lost. In this matter they still see me as a child. (group b)

> We are not allowed to go <u>anywhere</u> on our own. ...If we go somewhere, something could happen to us. (group c)

> I have to be home at seven, but if it was 8 or 10, there wouldn't be a problem because I know which places I shouldn't go to, where things could happen to me. (group c)

There was a third aspect that was considered a crucial step to become 'more adult' in the eyes of the teenagers and it was countered by the parents' resistance in a similar way as their claim for more spatial liberties: Repeatedly the teenagers claimed the right to have a say – to be acknowledged as an equal with an individual voice and valuable opinions in conversations with the parents. These attempts mainly failed and were experienced as humiliating, as they did not receive any counter-arguments of the parents but were just reminded of being 'too young' to be seen as an equal conversation partner. This is addressed in the following examples:

> When mom and dad talk at home and I want to talk to them, too, they say: "You're too young to understand." (group a)

> When the older ones talk about something, we're too young/ ... My mother says "Be quiet, you're too young, you don't chime in with adults." (group c)

Parents' Expectations: Teenage Girls as 'Responsible Children'

Negotiations at the transition from child to adolescent clearly concern not only demands on the part of children but also demands on the part of parents and the extent to which the growing children take these over. Participants in the focus groups were aware that parents demanded more of them in terms of generational commitments than mere compliance within family matters and regulations. Due to their growing age, the girls were expected to be autonomous and take new responsibilities, particularly in two central fields: school and household duties. The children coped differently with these tasks; this is evident when comparing the groups. Group 'c' regrets the decrease in parental affection and support regarding their school work:

> I didn't want to go to online-classes. I wanted my mother to support me. ... But she would say: "Do it, you're big already." (group c)

> We would like some understanding from our mothers because it is a lot with the online-classes. But she says I rather sleep than listen. She says: "Go, throw water on your face and then you get up!" (group c)

> It would be nice, if our parents would kiss us on the forehead and give us chocolate after school. (group c)

Conversely, group 'a' explained that they did not need much help anymore in coping with their school obligations to present their capability and responsibility as growing adults.

> When I was little, I needed my parents' help with school work. But now it's easier for me, I don't need their help anymore. (group a)

Similarly, the respondents were increasingly expected to contribute to the household and presented their knowledge about these new obligations in the discussions with their peers. Many of the teenagers stated that they helped with the dishes, the laundry, caring for younger siblings and cleaning. They often cited the view of their parents that they had grown 'old enough' to be trusted with such responsibilities. However, the children's descriptions of the several ways they conducted domestic labor and supported the parents did not only serve as a marker for their maturity and growing competences. They also revealed the additional burdens and contradictions associated with the shift toward the new age status. All focus groups contained many complaints about the ever-increasing workload, the discontent of their parents about the amount and quality of household chores they carried out and the lack of parental appreciation for this help. Again, particularly participants in group 'c' felt disappointed that their dutiful support in the family household – and being the responsible child that was expected by the parents so clearly – did not lead to reciprocal privileges:

> When they work there are chores at home, then we're adults. Then we're 20 years old, then we <u>must</u> do it. When they go to town and want to buy something for themselves and I want to come they say: "You're too little, you have to stay at home." (group c)

In sum, the results of the focus groups on parent–child negotiations indicate that the parents are much more successful in having their expectations met by their children than the girls are when negotiating boundaries, their scope of action or their right to a say. While the girls accept the responsibilities the parents expect them to take now as they grow older, they still cannot trade these responsibilities into more freedom and equality.

'Mature Children'

Nevertheless, meeting the parents' expectations is associated with an upgrading, in the sense that one is praised to be a child who is maturing in the desired way, a good child, a child to be proud of. In the questionnaire data this perception of the children appears very clearly. Fifty Turkish boys and girls were asked to complete the sentence 'My mother/father says I am. . .'. The results of this open answer field are presented in Table 1 and explained in the following:

Most of the responses mirror parents' evaluations regarding their children's accomplishments in school and household matters and children's compliance to parents' regulations. We thus categorized these data as positive, negative, or mixed characterizations in the parents' eyes. The 28 girls who answered this question most frequently filled in one or a combination of the responses 'hard-working', 'good at school', 'helpful', 'diligent', 'clever', 'smart', 'successful' and 'respectful' for both, their mothers' and their father's view, which we categorized as praise or positive evaluations respectively. We counted 17 of such solely positive evaluations from the mothers' and 20 from the fathers' point of view. Girls used terms as 'messy', 'lazy', 'unorganized' to refer to negative evaluations of the

Table 1. Typical Responses in the Open Answer Field 'My Mother Says/My Father Says'.[a]

	Girls	Boys
Negative	2(-) lazy, messy	6(2) too much outside, naughty
Mixed	9(5) messy at home but successful at school	6(5) lazy but good at school
Positive	17(20) clever, hardworking, kind-hearted, mature	9(9) good boy, smart, respectful

[a]First frequencies refer to the mothers' evaluations; references to the father's evaluations are given in parentheses.

parents; these occurred mainly in mixed evaluations (nine mixed evaluations of the mothers and five of the fathers were counted). The 20 boys who completed the sentence presented themselves similarly – most frequently filling in 'good boy' as a typical characterization of both of their parents. However, we counted a proportionally smaller amount of solely positive parental characterizations for the boys (nine from both, the mothers' and the fathers' point of view). They also mentioned more critical judgments by the parents than the girls – i.e. in addition to being seen as 'lazy' and 'messy' like the girls, they were considered as 'naughty' or 'outside too much'. Additionally, there were more solely negative evaluations, particularly from the mothers' side (i.e. six negative characterizations from the mothers, two from the fathers). Nevertheless, parental evaluations in which positive aspects were completely absent did only appear rarely – particularly in the girls' sample in which only two such answers were given regarding the mothers and none regarding the fathers. This underlines the findings from the focus groups that the girls, who engage in household and school obligations dutifully and subdue to parental limitations (i.e. by not being 'naughty' and 'too much outside') have earned the trust of the parents to be seen as mature and responsible, the prerequisites parents seem so clearly to associate with adulthood.

Notably, less stereotypical characterizations – that referred to the individual personality of the children – were the exception. However, some of the answers provide insights into a strong emotional bond within the parent–child relations (i.e. 'my little flower', 'my one and only', 'my joy of life', 'my father thinks I'm perfect'). Again, these answers were given particularly by Turkish girls. These results of the questionnaire data indicate that meeting parental expectations – as the girls apparently do more successfully than the boys – is central to maintain the praise and affection of the parents while moving through the transition.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this contribution, we claimed that it is important to approach children's own perspectives and experiences to receive differentiated insights into generational relations in Türkiye. By focusing on the transition to adolescence and the transformations elicited during this age phase, we aimed to detect the processual and relational character of parent–child relations, as well as children's and parents' ongoing contributions in their (re-)production. The data on teenagers in Türkiye underline what is stated to be characteristic for Western parent–child relations at the end of childhood – an increase in negotiation. While the data basis of our focus groups is narrow and focuses on girls, we still identified repeated claims regarding the aspects that the teenagers wanted to change about their circumstances and their parents' behavior, respectively. With the frequent references to their age-status the girls showed that they did not consider such treatment as appropriate anymore and developed different strategies in dealing with it. However, their success in realizing these claims was limited to drawing clearer boundaries between the family and relatives and the presentation of a responsible self. Their negotiations in order to achieve

more spatial freedom and to have a say on the other hand faced quite explicit resistance of the parents.

Nonetheless, gaining and managing the trust of parents in these processes was relevant, not so much to stretch the boundaries of the parents or to secure more freedom as it is presented in studies on Western parent–child relations (Sarre, 2010; Williams & Williams, 2005), but rather to meet the expectations toward adult maturity and responsibility. The Turkish girls presented trustworthiness by taking account of the new obligations as well as the consisting limitations set by the parents that they could not alter (yet) and their adherence to them. Concretely, they filtered how much absence their parents could abide in extended family matters, did not break the spatial regulations and took on the assigned duties regarding the increasing house and schoolwork. In exchange, they experienced parental praise: Numerous positive evaluations were recited in the questionnaire which clearly show that with these accomplishments the Turkish girls master to satisfy their parents much more than the boys in these matters, who were considered 'naughty' frequently and thus apparently crossed the parents' boundaries too extensively.[3] Based on these positive judgments, we assumed that it is particularly the girls who let the parents hold them responsible for domestic tasks and the fulfillment of their duties. This impression is confirmed by a quantitative study of 12 (mostly Western) countries (Bruckauf & Rees, 2017). In this study, the gender differences regarding housework in Türkiye rapidly increase for 12-year-olds and are the highest among these countries for this group of older children. Such gender-specific differences in negotiating generational relations and individual independence, respectively, should be a focus of further research.

What became very empirically tangible by approaching the Turkish teenage girls' accounts are the challenges and contradictory expectations that individuals are confronted with when transitioning in age (Coser, 1966; Goffman, 1961). In this context, our study reflects some of the results of the adult-centered research on parent–child relations in Türkiye as a society between collectivism and individualization. Our data support the impression that new, mixed forms of social relatedness have emerged between these two societal orientations which are accompanied by inconsistencies: i.e. parents made small concessions toward the individuality of their growing daughters by allowing them to draw clearer boundaries against relatives, but at the same time, keeping up good relations with the extended family remained an implied task while becoming adult. Our study's focus on everyday practices reveals further dilemmas that are caused by the teenagers' narrow scope of action and denial of rights. This modifies the positive picture of family realities suggested by the research on adults' parenting values: First, it seems that the Turkish teenagers must meet particularly diverging age-related expectations caused by the strong *responsibilization* that the parents demand, i.e. they are supposed to take responsibility for an increasing amount of household chores, but at the

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[3]In the cross-country comparison, boys were statistically significantly less content with their scope in decision-making than the girls (Bühler-Niederberger & Türkyilmaz, 2022, p. 194f.).

same time they ought to keep quiet in conversations with the adults and stay close (in the spatial sense). To some extent, it seems that they must move on this new platform of responsibility to keep the love of their parents and do not get as much affection (i.e. the chocolate and the kiss on the forehead – as one girl says) just for free like before. Second, a different horizon of expectation appears regarding the peers who claim the status of an adolescent by an extended scope of action – which is clearly denied by the parents in terms of spatial freedom and the right to have a say. Third, the efforts to claim this adolescent status within the negotiations bears no relation to the benefits: While the losses and the additional burdens of the new age status are quite visible in our data (i.e. less support, less affection, if expectations are not met), the benefits (i.e. new boundaries against relatives) are rare. In other words: the adolescents have to take on the new burdens without being able to trade these in turn for new rights and freedoms. All this leads to the impression that the teenagers follow the idea that becoming adolescent means to become more independent, equal and self-determined. On the contrary, from the parents' view a renegotiation of generational hierarchies toward more equality – as it seems to be a moral guidance for parents in Western families during their children's transition to adolescence (Solomon et al., 2002) – is not intended. At least this is not – or not yet – the case for our group of Turkish girls. Instead, in their parents' view in a sense they remain children – 'mature' and 'responsible' but still docile and subordinated children.

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