



A Study of the Reflections of the World Youth Movements That Emerged in

1968 in Türkiye

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Abstract

The research work aims to ask why and there was a youth movement; it would not only be a question of how the student movement began in the world, so this research impacted the international dimension to reflect Türkiye's arrangement of 68 generations of protection of its independence but also of attempting to provide a vulnerability that was born in 1945 and that fits into the intricate field of political depression, emphasizing the difficulty of life in a modernization way.

Keywords: Independence, Youth Movement, 68 Generations, Ideology, Student Movement

Introduction

It is believed that more than sixty countries participated in World War II, and sixty to seven million people lost their lives. This is not a number to be underestimated. almost

as much as the population of present-day Türkiye. Young people made up a sizable proportion of those killed. The loss of these trained and educated people was also a great loss for the future of the world. In 1968, a person born in 1945 was twenty-three years old. Based on this, we can assume that the people who realized the 68 Youth Movement grew up under conditions of political depression and economic poverty. Student movements began in the 1960s, not only in third-world countries or Europe but almost everywhere at the same time and spreading rapidly. A number of different structures have begun to appear within the classes in society. But the youth were not very happy with this change. It was the section that was most sensitive to the problems on the grounds that their living spaces were narrowing and their rights were restricted (Bozdağ, 2014). So, it would be the younger generation's job to direct the rapidly changing world. Political governments that ignore the aspirations of the youth have always failed to resolve these existing problems. At this time, 68 youth had a will and a desire to change the world (Klimke & Scharloth, 2008). They wanted change. They had a different soul and different hopes. They wanted to establish another world, to be free, and to get rid of poverty. I will mention the reflection of the rebellion in Türkiye since the events of 1968 from around the world and how to get out. These actions were initially innocent and libertarian. It was a socialist movement against imperialism. The search for rights first started in universities. In short, two tendencies are observed to emerge due to the differences of opinion among student leaders. The first trend was to band together with the workers and peasants and take control of their affairs (Bulut, 2011). The second is emerging as a pioneer and

demonstrating weak order to the public with blows to authority (kidnapping, bank robbery). The Youth Revolt of 1968 was transformed into a sibling fight after 1971 by manipulating or provoking opposing students. Just like the process we call the Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia with the slogan "bread and freedom" and spread to the Middle East, At the end of the process that is said to bring peace and freedom, we found Syria, Libya, and Egypt that had been torn apart by the intervention of the imperial powers and a civil war.

Materials and Methods

The purpose of this study is the social constructionist approach which uses 'ideas, norms, cultural values and identities' rather than 'left movement' as the basis for events in geopolitics and internal relations and as the basis for this study, discusses these actions.

Results and Discussion

In general, we can define capitalism as an economic system based on competition with an individual profit motive in production. But in this individualistic economic system, the workers responsible for production cannot benefit because the owners of capital take all the profits. This is one of the main criticisms of the capitalist system. That is, there is injustice in the distribution of money. Thus, capitalism forced many workers to work for low wages. The 16th-century capitalist system continued to exist during the Industrial Revolution in 1750 and 1850. On the other hand, the foundations of socialism, which emerged in opposition to capitalism, date back to the 19th century and continued to assert themselves against it after 1945. The ideology of socialism rejects individualism in

production and argues that it belongs to the public sector. In other words, the public should determine the responsibility for production. It is an understanding that rejects private property.

After the end of World War II in 1945, "capitalism" began to develop rapidly again. However, the current of capitalism, which greatly affected the economic levels of countries and supported the difference between classes, brought problems between labor and capital and brought a counter-current of "socialism." The growing economic and social problems left over from the war years began to resonate, especially among young people. Especially in 1968, political events in many countries led young people to protest; On April 4, 1968, the assassination of Martin Luther King in the United States, French university students criticizing the education system and opposing the De Gaulle government, mass demonstrations against the Social Democratic Party in Germany and the problems between the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in Germans, and the Spiegel Incident, In Italy, students demanded their rights and occupied universities due to the anti-capitalist ideas they defended in the left Gramsci understanding of the Communist Party, and in African countries, anti-imperialist demonstrations and youth movements initiated by university students, especially in countries such as the UK, the USA, the Czech Republic, and Türkiye, took place.

Among the common features of the youth events that emerged in different ways in each country is that they were realized simultaneously by university students in countries around the world and that they started to give way to the right-wing understanding

instead of the left-wing view. They include support for the working class, the search for freedom, rights, and justice, and opposition to war (Katsiaficas, 1987). As a result, the events of 1968 will be remembered throughout the world. The events of the young movement that took place and the way they unfolded continued in the form of a series of rings. Millions of young people flocked to squares around the world during those years. Universities were affected by the occupation and boycott. The world needs a new order, new ideas, new faces, and new managers. It is the young generation that will ensure this (Büyükbaş, 2021).

The Emerge of 68 Events in Türkiye

The youth movements in Türkiye were against the government of the time. The transition to multi-party-political life after the 1950s and the coup against the government on May 27, 1960, were effective. First, the Democrat Party, which won the elections in 1954, came to power. From the moment it came to power, developments occurred in Turkish domestic politics. Especially in the economy, a liberal path was followed and free market economy was introduced. Restrictions on imports were lifted, and the use of credit was encouraged. The Foundation Bank of Türkiye was established. Thus, the Democrat Party leader Adnan Menderes led the development of the domestic economy, and the GDP grew by 10%. However, on May 27, 1960, soldiers from the Turkish Armed Forces took over the government, and Adnan Menderes was executed. After the coup, the coup government called itself the National Unity Committee and ruled Türkiye until the 1961 elections. In the 1961 elections held after the coup, no party received enough votes to

bring itself to power (Karaçelik, 2022). Thus, Türkiye faced a coalition for the first time in its history. As a result, the Justice Party, which had taken over the responsibilities of the Democrat Party, formed a coalition led by Ragıp Gümüşpala, and the Republican People's Party, Türkiye's first political party, formed a coalition led by İsmet İnönü. In 1965, elections were held again. Süleyman Demirel, the president of the Justice Party, began to pursue policies contrary to communist policy. The main reason for Süleyman Demirel's opposition to communist ideology can be shown as the reason the Workers' Party of Türkiye, which was established after the coup d'état in 1960, followed a socialist approach. To gain support from the socialist sector, the Republican People's Party used the phrase "Left of Center is the Way to Moscow," which was said by İsmet İnönü in reference to the Workers' Party of Türkiye. Thus, both the Justice Party and the Republican People's Party expected support from the socialist sector in order to increase their votes in the elections. Along with the political conflicts in the 1960s, economic instability began to occur after the first coup d'état. Export productivity fell. The balances in foreign trade began to deteriorate. In 1961, a loan was taken from the IMF. The Turkish lira started to deflate. Migration from villages to cities started, and thus the problem of unemployment emerged. Both economic instability and political instability drew the reaction of university students in particular, and the first protest organized by students took place at Istanbul University in June 1968 (Öztürk, 2018).

Rebellion- What Happened Türkiye in 1968?

We can count the actions carried out at Istanbul University as the beginning of the youth

movements sweeping the world in Türkiye. Students occupied the university to criticize the government, to protest economic hardships, and to demand that certain rights be granted to them (Önkibar, 2019). The students claimed that their occupation had no right or left political polarization and attempted to legitimize it by claiming that they were only defending the socialist order. Of course, the leadership of this movement was under the leadership of the Federation of Idea Clubs, which was founded in 1965 by the students who defended the socialist approach at Ankara University (Aydemir, 2020). Afterwards, actions started to be carried out at Ankara University and Istanbul Technical Universities. Because, there were incidents against the 6th Fleet at Istanbul Technical University. After learning that the US would land soldiers on Istanbul's Dolmabahce, the 6th Fleet, students protested American imperialism. They tried not to let US soldiers into Istanbul. In fact, when the American soldiers could not enter the city, the soldiers tried to come to Istanbul by air. But this time, along with the university students, the public were attending with students revolting against the USA. On the other hand, the government followed a protectionist policy against the US soldiers who tried to come back to Istanbul. There was turmoil in the student dormitory at Istanbul Technical University. So, students who took action against the 6th Fleet were confronted, and one of them, Vedat Demircioglu, was killed. After this incident, the American centers in Türkiye protested. In the continuation of the events, the protests expanded and mass marches began. But in order for these protests not to grow any more, members of the Idea Club Federation tried to prevent this march. But Deniz Gezmiş, who was accepted as the representative of the student

movements, brought about the continuation of the actions. First of all, he founded the Revolutionary Student Union with his friends Cihan Alptekin, Mustafa Lütü Kıyıcı, Mustafa İlker Gürkan, Cevat Ercişli, Selahattin Okur, Saim Board and Erim Süerkan. Then, a new march from Samsun to Ankara, the capital of Türkiye, was organized under the leadership of Deniz Gezmiş. Ankara University and Middle East Technical University students, who carried out their actions as the Mustafa Kemal March, defined themselves as the 2nd Nationalist. The reason for their name is to restore the spirit of full independence that accompanied the First World War, as well as to protect the country entrusted to him by following Atatürk's orders. The next event was the arrival of Robert Kommer, the then US ambassador to Türkiye, on November 28, 1968. The moment the news of Robert Kommer's appointment as ambassador to Türkiye become public, protests began. The Federation of Intellectual Clubs, whose activity turned into stagnation, decided to get active again after receiving this news. Afterwards, it prepared a joint article with the Faculty of Political Sciences. Then the protests started again in Istanbul and Ankara. The largest of these protests took place in Ankara. When Kemal Kurdaş, the rector of the Middle East Technical University, invited Robert Kommer to the university, students burned Kommer's car. The students responsible for the incident, including Deniz Gezmiş, were sentenced to prison. But afterwards, the students issued a declaration stating that their action was common. After these events, it was decided to temporarily close the university. While the boycotts of the youth continued, in 1971, four American soldiers were kidnapped from Ankara by Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and

Hüseyin İnan. Following these events, MIT Director Murat Doğu sent a memorandum to then-President Cevdet Sunay and initiated a search warrant for the US soldiers. During this search, incidents broke out again at the Middle East Technical University. As the soldiers started to search for METU, clashes broke out. Twenty students were injured in the clashes, and fifty students were arrested. After that, the American soldiers were released by the kidnapers a few days later. As a result, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan were arrested.

How the Youth Movement Ended in Türkiye?

At a time when the government was faced with student protests and problems, it decided to impose martial law in Istanbul and Kocaeli. Due to these problems, on March 12, 1971, General Memduh Tamaç, the Chief of General Staff; Faruk Gürler, the Commander of the Land Forces; Celal Eyiceoğlu, the Commander of the Naval Forces, and Muhsin Batur, the Commander of the Air Force, issued a three-point memorandum and announced that they had seized the government. Thus, Süleyman Demirel, the prime minister of the time, was forced to resign, and the country entered an interim regime. After the memorandum, many students who were involved in disturbances within the country were arrested. Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan were executed for their involvement during this time period. Thus, we can say that the youth movements came to an end, and a period of political instability began in Türkiye. After the March 12, 1971, memorandum was issued, there were eleven changes of government in the nine years that followed.

Conclusion and General Evaluation

They were revolutionaries. At the same time, they also had an understanding that defended the public (Kocadaş, 2011). The events that emerged at Istanbul University and Ankara University progressed with the support of idea clubs. The most important reason for the emergence of a socialist understanding among the students can be seen in the 1961 Constitution that emerged after the 1960 coup. After the Constitution was adopted, articles talking about the errors of social class differences, equality, rights, and justice started to be mentioned and talked about more. Especially in the aftermath of the War of Independence, anti-imperialist ideology started to take hold after 1960. In these cases, it was mostly university students who developed themselves, studied, and started to be supported. Later, when the public started to talk about the social and economic problems they were experiencing, the working class started to participate in this student mobility. Unlike other countries in the world, the 68 movement in Türkiye was more limited. Because what happened in Türkiye was all about changing the education system and the political order as a whole. It was more about power struggles and violence, which ended after the military intervention by the Turkish Armed Forces a second time.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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