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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GENERATIONS

### SİYASAL LİDERLİK VE KUŞAKLAR ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

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**ABSTRACT:** Studies on leadership are not new and various studies on leaders and leadership have been conducted throughout history. In the 21st century, studies on political leaders and leadership types have come to the forefront. However, the concept of leadership is not a whole in itself and can be differentiated. In other words, leadership is a concept that includes different types within itself. In this study, authoritarian, democratic, charismatic and transformational leadership types, which are the most widely accepted leadership types today, are discussed. In addition to leadership, generations are among the topics that have been discussed intensively in social life in recent years. In this study, it is discussed how generations, who were born in different periods and have a common consciousness in the face of similar events, are separated in the literature, and the perspective of these generations on leadership types.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Generations, Politics

**ÖZ:** Liderlik ile ilgili yapılmış çalışmalar yeni olmayıp tarih boyunca lider ve liderliğe ilişkin çeşitli çalışmalar yapılmıştır. 21. yüzyıl da siyasi liderler ve liderlik türlerine ilişkin çalışmalar ön plana çıkmaya başlamıştır. Ancak liderlik kavramı kendi içinde bir bütün olmayıp farklılaşabilmektedir. Bir başka ifadeyle liderlik kendi içinde farklı türleri ihtiva eden bir kavramdır. Bu çalışmada günümüzde en çok kabul gören liderlik türleri olan Otoriter, Demokratik Karizmatik ve Dönüşümcü liderlik türleri ele alınmaya çalışılmıştır. Liderliğin yanı sıra kuşaklar son yıllarda sosyal hayatta üzerinde yoğun bir şekilde tartışılan konular arasında yer almaktadır. Bu çalışmada farklı dönemlerde dünyaya gelen ve benzer olaylar karşısında ortak bir bilinçle sahip kuşakların literatürde nasıl ayrıldığı ve bu kuşakların liderlik türlerine bakışı ele alınmaya çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** Liderlik, Kuşaklar, Siyaset.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amaçlarından ilki liderlik kavramını ele alarak farklı liderlik türlerinin niteliklerini basit bir şekilde açıklamaktır. Çalışmanın amaçlarından ikincisi kuşak kavramı ve farklı kuşakların özelliklerini analiz ederek kuşakların liderliğe ilişkin yaklaşımlarını anlamaya çalışmaktır. Liderlik türleri ve kuşakların temel özelliklerinin yalnız bir şekilde ele alınmasının bu konuda yapılan çalışmalara ışık tutacağı düşünülmektedir.

### Araştırma Soruları

Günlük hayatta kuşak kavramı oldukça popüler bir kavramdır buna rağmen Kuşaklar ile ilgili çalışmalar daha çok kuşakların tüketim alışkanlıkları ve çalışma hayatı üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Kuşakların Siyaset Bilimi ve Siyasal Liderlik açısından ele alan çalışma sayısı oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu açıdan çalışma kuşakların siyasal liderlik türlerine bakış açısını incelemeye odaklanmıştır.

### Literatür Araştırması

Bu çalışmada, öncelikle liderlik türleri ile ilgili literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Bu bağlamda siyasal liderlik türleri arasında yer alan “otoriter liderlik”, “karizmatik liderlik”, “demokratik liderlik” ve “dönüşümcü liderlik” türleri ile ilgili literatür incelenmiştir. Ayrıca kuşak kavramını literatüre kazandıran Karl Mannheim’ın kuşaklara ilişkin görüşleri çerçevesinde literatür ele alınmıştır. Başlıca kuşak türleri olan “Sessiz Kuşak”, “Bebek Patlaması Kuşağı”, “X Kuşağı”, “Y Kuşağı” ve “Z Kuşağı” ile ilgili literatür taraması yapılarak bu kuşakların özellikleri ve liderlik beklentileri incelenmeye çalışılmıştır.

### Yöntem

Bu çalışmada nitel veri toplama yöntemleri kullanılmış olup siyaset bilimi ve sosyoloji gibi alanlardaki temel kaynaklardan yararlanılarak konuya ilişkin bir derleme yapılmaya çalışılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar özetlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

### Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Sonuç olarak, çalışmada iki araştırma sorusu cevaplanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bunlardan ilk soru siyasal liderlik türleri nelerdir? sorusudur. İkinci olarak, kuşak nedir ve kuşakların özellikleri ve liderliğe ilişkin beklentileri nelerdir sorusunun cevabına ulaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu sorular çerçevesinde çalışmada siyasal liderlik türleri açıklanarak kuşakların özellikleri ve liderliğe ilişkin beklentileri ele alınmaya gayret edilerek, bu konuda yapılacak çalışmalar için katkı sağlamak hedeflenmiştir.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Generations are social groups in which similar feelings, thoughts and characteristics can be formed in individuals born in a certain period of time and affected by similar historical, political and economic events. The different events they have experienced in terms of the periods in which they were born and raised may cause generations to show different characteristics from each other. This situation also manifests itself in the field of politics and political attitudes.

In the historical process and from the pre-Republican period to the proclamation of the Republic, Turkish society has been a leader-oriented society. From the first Turkish states to the Ottomans, rulers who had the authority to rule the country were respected and attributed importance by society. Although the names given to them varied during this period, the political leaders of the society were the leaders called khans and sultans. Leadership has always been an important actor in political life.

With the proclamation of the Republic in Turkish political life, political parties have emerged as inseparable and indispensable elements of political life. Although parties, which are an integral part of political life, have different organs for their work, political party leaders have always been at the forefront of these structures due to the fact that they are always in front of the public, their speeches, attitudes and images are more visible than other structures of political parties. Of course, various factors such as the attitude of political party leaders, whether they are charismatic or not, their oratory skills and persuasiveness are among the factors that affect voter preferences. This study does not claim that political party leaders are the only factor affecting voter preferences, but political leaders are important actors in the political preferences of voters and generations.

Although political leadership is an important factor for voters, it is an important issue to be emphasized whether voters' preference for political leadership types changes in the context of generations. How do different age groups, or in other words, generations, view political leaders, who are an undeniable factor in voter preferences and whether the perspective on leadership types between generations is similar or divergent are among the questions that come to mind. Especially in the context of Generation Z, this issue is becoming more popular.

In the present study, it is not possible to see the concept of leadership in a single form, and leadership types may change in accordance with different situations and conditions. In the study, the approach of generations was tried to be addressed within the framework of authoritarian, democratic, charismatic, transformational and general leadership sub-dimensions.

## **2. LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

Politics is a phenomenon that emerged due to the fact that human beings are a social creature and live collectively. Being social creatures, people have to organize and build a political system to continue their lives. As in all organizations formed by people coming together, the concepts of leader

and leadership emerge in political organizations. At this point, it is possible to define the political leader as a person who aims at the goals of society and influences society by directing it in line with these goals (Yolcu, 2019: 94).

Throughout the historical process, human beings have debated these issues, wondering who should or should not govern society; how authority finds or should find a place in society; how some political people can and should be effective in determining the rules of society while others cannot (Edinger, 1976: 3). While these debates continue, in every social structure, some individuals are more active than others. Although not always in a similar way, role differentiation occurs in many cases (Dalay, 2001: 361). After this role differentiation, some of the people in the society continue their existence as members of the organization, while a minority of them become leaders within this structure and thus have some official powers.

Although there are leaders and leadership in many social structures, one of the most important types of leadership is being a leader in the field of politics. The phenomenon of political leadership is handled within the scope of political science research. However, it can also be the subject of research in different branches of science. Especially in Turkey, which attaches importance to leadership, and in today's Turkey, political leadership is identified with political party leadership. The fact that political party presidents have the right to govern the country for a certain period of time by winning the elections and that they have the authority to govern by making decisions on many issues, especially the economy, makes political party leadership an important phenomenon.

The individual qualities of the leaders who lead the parties, which are an integral part of political life, are extremely important in the success and development of political organizations. The leader's charismatic qualities, oratorical power, capacity for harmony and reconciliation, stance towards various events and experience are important indicators (Tuncay, 1996: 184). The fact that leaders are as decisive as parties in political life is a phenomenon that is valid in Turkey as in many other countries. In other words, political leaders are very effective in determining the political process. According to some, political leaders, not political parties, are now seen as the main actors in politics. It is stated that this fact is independent of the political system (Yıldız, 2002: 81).

### **3. Types of Leadership**

Leadership is the power to manage and influence that varies according to attitudes and behaviors without specific rules and forms. It is possible to divide this influencing and dragging power into traditional and modern leadership types. Authoritarian and democratic leadership are considered traditional leadership types in the literature (Akçit et al., 2018: 214). Charismatic and transformational leadership have also been included in the field as modern leadership types.

### **3.1. Authoritarian Leadership**

An authoritarian leader is a leader who holds the decision-making function within a structure and decides what should be set as a goal within the organization and how and what should be done to achieve these goals. He/she is reluctant to share decision-making authority. Since people with authoritarian leadership qualities make and implement decisions to a great extent by themselves, the people under the leaders do not have the opportunity to develop their leadership qualities personally. In this type of leadership, it is seen that the leaders evaluate their subordinates with an individual attitude. Authoritarian leaders do not prefer subordinates to present their ideas on a topic. One of the reasons is the possibility that the ideas presented may contradict their own ideas. This situation causes authoritarian leaders to abstain from exchanging ideas with their subordinates (Ölçüm Çetin, 2004: 31).

In authoritarian leadership, which is generally considered to be contrary to a democratic leadership style, the fact that decisions are made by a single person without mutual consensus and evaluations can be considered positive in some respects in terms of the decision-making process. One of these positive aspects is that making decisions by a single person through non-participatory methods accelerates the decision-making process. Authoritarian leadership is a type of leadership in which decisions are made quickly. The fact that authoritarian leaders can make decisions quickly contributes to the limited loss of time between decisions and implementation. Although at first glance, this type of leadership has a positive aspect of acting quickly in the decision-making process, this type of leadership has significant disadvantages. In this type of leadership, individualism is very prominent. The fact that decisions are made by a single person may lead to a lack of consultation mechanisms, which may negatively affect subordinates' willingness to work by perceiving themselves and their opinions as worthless. The ineffectiveness of subordinates by excluding them from decision-making processes may weaken their innovativeness (Eren, 1993: 310-311).

### **3.2. Democratic Leadership**

Democratic leaders are leaders who largely act differently from authoritarian leaders. They are leaders who take the opinions of their subordinates in determining the goals and policies of the community and decide on the appropriate direction of these ideas. In other words, unlike authoritarian leaders, democratic leaders are those who encourage their subordinates to express their opinions (Ölçüm Çetin, 2004: 31).

Democratic leaders value the opinions of others in the group and give importance to the opinions of group members before making the final decision. This can lead to a prolonged decision-making process. However, in cases where urgent decisions need to be made, using participative methods can cause the decision-making mechanism to work slowly and this may cause some decisions to be delayed and result in failure. In democratic leadership, the leader values his/her subordinates. The colleagues he/she works with are valuable for this type of leader. The leader tries to keep the communication

channels open by treating his/her colleagues in a kind way. He/she often uses the power of rewarding his subordinates (Şimşek, et al., 2014: 153). In democratic leadership, leaders are open-minded about the decisions to be made about who wants to work with whom. They can allow the members of the organization to decide with whom they want to work on which task (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939: 273).

The first of the two most important benefits of democratic leadership is the importance of participation in the decision-making process. The second is that the individuals, who feel that their views are valued, feel loyalty to the leader because their views are taken into account and psychological satisfaction is achieved. The biggest disadvantage of this type of leadership is that it can slow down the decision-making mechanism and cause a loss of time in emergencies. In large-scale organizations, the size of the organization may cause the effectiveness of the decisions to be taken to be lost. In large-scale structures, the democratic leadership style may cause the organization to become unable to make decisions in some cases (Eren, 1993: 311).

### **3.3. Charismatic Leadership**

The introduction of the concept of charismatic leadership into the scientific literature was made possible by the German sociologist Weber's discussion. Weber sees charisma as a set of powers and abilities that distinguish an individual from other individuals and make them perceived as superior to others (Weber, 2014: 92). Charismatic leaders are followed with interest by other people because of some individual qualities they carry. In other words, charismatic people are those who have the ability to drag people and masses after them due to their superior individual qualities.

The factors that play a role in defining and characterizing individuals as charismatic leaders can be either innate or acquired characteristics. It is known that individuals with charismatic leadership characteristics are open to development, and often set goals by trying to see the reality and strive to realize these goals (Özsoy, 2011: 478). Although some people show charismatic leadership in ordinary times, charismatic leaders emerge largely in times of crisis. Societies are in search of a leader who will pull them out of this bottleneck in times of crisis. During this search, charismatic leaders emerge and try to save societies from this process. In a way, they succeed in telling society how to overcome this situation and instill confidence. In this period, society needs trust. Individuals in the community leave the solution to the power of the charismatic leader. It would not be wrong to say that charismatic leaders have a great influence on human beings (Mentor, 2007: 20-21).

Charismatic leaders' relationship with their subordinates and sense of trust in their subordinates differ from authoritarian leaders. Charismatic leaders have an intense power of emotional intelligence. They use this power of intelligence in their relationship with their subordinates and value the opinions of their subordinates, which allows subordinates to respect the leader and even show strict loyalty. The leader has the ability to foresee the future. The subordinates' and followers' trust in the leader ensures

that the goals set by the leader are followed. Followers admire the charismatic leader and in most cases support him/her without any conditions (Güney, 2011: 358).

### **3.4. Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is a new concept compared to other types of leadership. It was first put forward in 1973 with Downton's "Rebellion Leadership", which can be defined as young among leadership types. Five years after Downton's work, Burns developed it with his work titled Leadership (Eraslan, 2006:4). According to Burns, a leader is an individual who creates a great deal of morale, motivation and performance in his/her team. Furthermore, according to him/her, only transformational leaders have the ability to create modern organizations. Transformational leaders are masters of change, designing a better future, making predictions and creating a vision in their followers. By making those around them adopt the vision they have created, they create the will of those around them to realize this vision (Bass, 1997). However, this type of leadership has become more widespread with Bass and Avolio (Erturgut, 2010: 225). Avolio and Bass define transformational leadership as multifaceted. While transformational leadership requires having charisma and using the power of rewarding when conditions arise, according to Avolio and Bass, transformational leadership requires active and passive management in some cases (Avolio and Bass 1999: 445).

The transformational leader type has come to the agenda to adapt to changes. Transformational leaders act with foresight while adapting to changes. One of the most important qualities of this type of leader is the leader's farsightedness. Thanks to their farsightedness, leaders should be persuasive towards their followers and motivate their teammates. With the leader's farsightedness, subordinates tend to adopt the vision put forward by the leader as their own vision as time passes. Even if transformational leaders leave the community they lead or die, the vision they put forward is tried to be maintained by their subordinates and followers (Güney, 2011: 296).

Transformational leaders find themselves as a part of the change and do not separate themselves from it. They strive for continuous learning. They analyze the situation in detail against the risks they will face. Moreover, the leader is sensitive to the expectations of subordinates. The leader's attitude is flexible (Yeşilyurt, 2007: 41). Transformational leaders use their charisma to achieve their goals in line with the vision they set forth. They also direct their subordinates in this process (Tekin, 2011: 21).

## **4. GENERATIONS**

The concept of generation is defined by the Turkish Language Association as a group of people forming age groups of approximately 25-30 years. Furthermore, the Turkish Language Association defines the concept of generation as a group of people who were born in approximately the same years, encountered the events of the same period and shared a similar fate in the face of these events

([www.tdk.gov.tr](http://www.tdk.gov.tr)). The concept of generation is also defined as groups of individuals living in the same periods and having common characteristics.

The fact that human beings are social creatures enables them to interact with each other continuously. People who interact with each other also interact with their environment. In this interaction process, sometimes global and sometimes local events have played an important role in shaping the behavior and attitudes of certain groups in human life (Taş and Kaçar, 2019). Social events in this interaction process; political events or threats, socio-economic change trends, technological transformations, unemployment rates, and thoughts about security or scarcity are among the factors that are effective in shaping behaviors and attitudes (Lamm & Meeks, 2009: 615).

Although many modern commentators are unaware of his legacy, the origins of the basic view of generations can be traced back to Karl Mannheim working in the field of sociology. In the 1950s, the problem of generations was discussed in sociology, particularly in the work of Karl Mannheim. In 1952, Mannheim made a seminal attempt with his work on generations. Mannheim demonstrated the importance of generations for understanding the structure of social and intellectual movements (Parry and Urwin, 2011: 81). Mannheim and his followers believe that the concept of a generation has two basic elements. The first of these elements is sharing a common position within the historical timeline. The second element is the consciousness formed after the events encountered in the shared timeline (Parry and Urwin, 2011: 81). In short, individuals belonging to the same generation live in a certain time period and have a common consciousness by being affected by the events. In this respect, it is normal for the experiences of people living in different time periods to differ. Individuals' attitudes, behaviors and choices are influenced by the events and the experiences they have gained in the face of these events (Parry and Urwin, 2011: 81).

The phenomenon of time shapes people's view of life, influences their perceptions, and determines their priorities, choices and behaviors. The fact that individuals born in close years share a common time period and have some similar characteristics, as well as the fact that each generation can be differentiated from the others by having different qualities contribute to the focus of interest on the concept and the characteristics of generations. As a result of this interest, various scientific studies on generations have been carried out since the 1950s in fields such as economics, demography, political science, clinical psychology and sociology (Alwin and McCammon, 2007: 219). The phenomenon of generations, which emerges due to different characteristics among individuals, is considered important for disciplines such as history, sociology, psychology and management science. Important studies on generations have been put forward in these fields. In studies conducted worldwide, generational distinctions have been defined and classifications have been made according to cultural phenomena. It can be seen in the literature that these groupings and historical intervals differ according to social events and cultural influences.



Generations are groups of people who live in similar periods and have certain common characteristics. Today, generations are classified within themselves. Although there is no definite consensus on the start and end dates and the naming of each generation, in the current century, generations are classified as Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z.

#### **4.1. Silent generation (1925-1945)**

The generation whose first members were born in 1925 and whose last members are believed to have been born in 1945 is called the Silent generation. The members of the generation were characterized as traditionalists due to the pressures based on some important cases experienced during this period. It is thought that individuals belonging to the traditionalist generation are more cautious about situations they are not sure about and are reluctant to take risks (Lehto et al., 2006). It is known that individuals of this generation have structures that adapt to the order and prefer to do the same job throughout their working life. Generation members are known to be disciplined, and pragmatic and attach importance to stability and trust.

Members of the generation experienced the after-effects of the First World War, which started in 1915 and ended in 1918. In 1929, individuals belonging to this generation were also affected by the consequences of the world economic crisis that affected the whole world and was referred to in the literature as the Great Depression. Starting in 1939, this generation witnessed the Second World War and the worldwide economic crisis and problems caused by the war. Individuals belonging to this generation were affected by the poverty and economic depression caused by the war conditions. The silent generation, also called the traditionalists, witnessed the war years closely and tried to hold on to life by facing economic collapses, difficulties and struggles. When observed from the perspective of the Second World War and the events that societies experienced and lived through, it is possible to define this generation with names such as the war generation, the depression generation, the generation of hope, and the generation of great change (Keskin, 2019: 13). In Turkey, these years coincide with the single-party years of the Republican Era. The negative effects of the war years were mainly due to inadequate population, income and education indicators. Considering both the conditions of war and the socio-cultural and economic life, the events, which had a great impact on the period that this generation lived and experienced, shaped the lives of individuals and their political and ideological behaviors (Keskin, 2019: 14). For this generation, which found itself in a destructive environment where war conditions prevailed, the concern for survival and life safety was at the forefront of life.

#### **4.2. Baby Boom (1946-1964)**

It is argued that the individuals who make up the generation described as Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. During the mobilization in a significant part of the countries during the Second World War, a significant part of the young population was in the military, and with the end of

the war, these individuals whose mobilization ended returned to civilian life. As the war ended and the war economy was replaced by a reconstruction process, economies entered a period of rapid recovery after the devastation. Under these conditions, there was a population boom in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The serious transformations seen in the political and economic structures of countries during this period, in which economic welfare gradually increased, also affected the mentality of this generation (Adıgüzel et al., 2014: 172).

This generation was called the "Baby Boom" due to the birth of approximately 1 billion babies worldwide during the Second World War and the high birth rates. During this period, while Human Rights movements were on the rise in the world, Turkey experienced a transition to the multi-party era, and the 1960 coup, which took place at the end of the multi-party life period, left its mark. The Cold War between the US and the Soviets in the global world caused this generation to be called the "Cold War Generation" (Levickaite, 2010: 175). It is known that individuals belonging to this generation have a high sense of loyalty, are contented and at the same time have a characteristic that can work in one place for a long time. It has been stated that this generation has a hardworking, idealistic, harmonious decision-making structure, but also has some negative characteristics such as workaholism and selfishness. Believing in hard work and the importance of working long hours, members of this generation are said to be prone to teamwork (Adıgüzel et al., 2014: 172). This generation, which is called the boom generation in Turkey, is a generation in which growth, prosperity, and a sense of longing for goods and services predominate. Although the economic indicators describing the current structure of the country in this period were not very bright, they were promising (Ayhün, 2013:99).

#### **4.3. Generation X (1965-1979)**

Compared to its predecessors, developments in various fields such as abortion and birth control allowed birth rates to decrease in this period. Due to these developments, Generation X is a smaller group compared to the Baby Boom generation. Although many groundbreaking developments in the field of technology became widespread after the birth of this generation, individuals belonging to this generation are able to use technology in their daily work. Born between 1965 and 1979, this generation is largely referred to as Generation X. In the literature, this generation is referred to as the "Slacker Generation", "Me Generation", "MTV Generation" or "Boomerang Generation" (Çetin and Karalar, 2016: 160).

One of the cases that affected this generation in Turkey was the conflicts between the right and left ideologies. Apart from the conflicts, relatively new technological products such as washing machines with rollers, radios, tape recorders and record players emerged in this period and individuals belonging to this generation were the first generation to be introduced to these products. Individuals belonging to this generation preferred not to have fewer children to lead a more prosperous life and started to adopt the technology due to necessity (Fettahlıoğlu and Sünbül, 2015: 263).

This generation, which was born in the mid-1960s and 70s, has career goals. Members of this generation, who attach importance to education, like to watch movies. They also take care of their personal hygiene, adapt to changes and are success-oriented. In addition to these characteristics, Generation X is the first global generation that has emerged with similar qualities in different parts of the world. It is possible to define them as a socialist, idealist, contented and loyal generation (Tuncer and Tuncer, 2016: 215).

Some of the most prominent profile characteristics of Generation X is that they are disciplined. They have characteristics that can be called classical, such as being task-oriented and exhibiting an attitude based on traditions. It is thought that their communication skills are developed and this is reflected in business life. Communication skills enable them to find a new job and acquire a business environment. Generation X, which has high skills in communication skills, may have difficulty showing the same success in technology, communication technologies and information. They use technology for simple transactions such as e-mail and online. However, they may find it difficult to use technology as advanced as the generations that come after them. Generation X, which has superior skills in areas such as self-confidence, providing solutions and taking on heavy responsibilities, is relatively behind Generation Y and Z in terms of technology use. For instance, while individuals from Generation X are online only because they have a job and then go offline, individuals from Generation Y and Z stay in constant communication with people both online and offline (Kocasavaş, 2010:151-160).

The events of this period affected the members of the generation. Between 1964 and 1979, internal and external turmoil caused Generation X to grow up in a conjuncture dominated by a climate of anxiety and fear. During the growth period of Generation X, leftist movements gained strength with the Generation of 68, and right and left-wing ideological conflicts grew. The transformation of political polarization into severe conflicts and the 1980 military coup in Turkey are among the events that this generation witnessed closely. For this reason, Generation X has a cautious structure against authority. In other words, they have a sensitive but timid structure towards social events due to severe political conditions (Çatalkaya, 2014: 19). Generation X, a generation that has witnessed the economic problems caused by the World Oil Crisis and knows the September 12 coup and right-left conflicts, has been a generation with high social sensitivity, although they are not as loyal to their values and not political as their parents (Taş and Kaçar, 2019: 648).

Generation X, a generation that is as contented, socialist, loyal and idealistic as possible, and to whom the changing world dynamics mercilessly hit them in the face, is seen as a transitional period. The reason why they are seen as a transitional generation or period lies in the fact that the world started to experience significant changes and transformations in those years (Senbir, 2004: 24). The dramatic changes in the fields of education, health and population led to dramatic changes and transformations in Turkey even in the 14-year period from 1965 to 1979. In these years, living standards have improved

significantly, positive developments have been observed in living conditions, and these developments have also had an impact on the behaviors of individuals, and individuals have given importance to elements related to social life other than monetary issues (Ayhün, 2013:99).

#### **4.4. Generation Y (1980-1996)**

The first individuals belonging to this generation were born in 1980, which is considered to be the year when globalization spread intensively around the world. They lived their youth in a conjuncture where neoliberal policies were dominant and globalization movements began to spread. One of the most groundbreaking events for this generation was the serious introduction of the internet during this generation. It is thought that individuals belonging to this generation adopt achievement-based leadership instead of hierarchical leadership and that it is necessary to be positive when communicating with individuals belonging to this generation and that the message to be given should be associated with personal goals (Jackson, 2012:396). Individuals belonging to this generation attach importance to cooperation and realism is also important for this generation.

Like other generations, different nomenclatures are used for this generation. Some of these nomenclatures are millennium generation, internet addict generation, lonely generation, eco boom generation, the future generation, www generation, digital generation, explosion copy, internet generation and indigos (Demirkaya 2015: 189). However, it is observed that the concept of Generation Y is mostly preferred for the generation in the literature. In Göktaş and Çarıkçı's study (2015: 6-34), the characteristics of individuals belonging to this generation were included. Individuals belonging to this generation are impatient, assertive, quick-thinking, result-oriented, fond of freedom, passionate about technology, love to challenge authority and have a questioning structure. Besides, individuals belonging to this generation focus on producing quality work in a short period of time, love, trust and value themselves, exhibit an individual attitude, show high performance, want to do their own work, enjoy taking responsibility, and are open to continuous learning. Individuals belonging to this group are characterized by high adaptability, sensitive to the advice and sharing of their friends, live life by taking advantage of the online environment offered by the internet, follow social media, use online shopping intensively, like to share their lives on social media channels, prefer virtual meetings and differ from previous generations with their flexibility, freedom and individual decision-making tendencies.

Generation members are individuals who have these values and spend personal time on hobbies and socializing. In addition to printed works, they also follow digital media developed with the internet. Their preference for themed magazines instead of newspapers, e-books instead of printed books, and digital databases instead of libraries are behaviors observed in this generation. The availability of multi-channel televisions and the internet in their upbringing has made this generation smart, freedom-loving, technology-obsessed and highly communicative. It is known that generation members spend a considerable amount of their time on media and communication technologies (Ay and Çağlar, 2019:943-

963). Both the spread of individualization movements as a result of liberal policies in this period and the fact that parents grew up under pressure contributed to the upbringing of Generation Y in a freer environment. Parents of generation Y, who themselves were subjected to pressure, emphasized education and freedom while raising them. Therefore, Generation Y was raised as an individual. In addition, since they are not easily told no, this generation is generally against authorities (Kömürçoğlu, 2015: 85).

The fact that Generation Y individuals grow intertwined with technology enables them to use social networks intensively while communicating. Social networks play an important role in shaping economic, social and political preferences and decision-making processes. Individuals belonging to this generation, who have the opportunity to receive relatively better education compared to their predecessors, have high expectations from life. The upbringing style of the individuals in this generation has enabled them to question many things (Özer 2014: 57). Gürbüz stated that Generation Y individuals are a generation with a high level of education, prone to the use of technology and capable of doing many things at the same time (Gürbüz, 2015:9).

The 1980 military coup and the events that took place before and after this coup left deep traces on Turkish society. The events that affected Turkey in terms of social, cultural and political aspects and the 1980 Military Coup also had a serious impact on Generation Y individuals. In 1968, the rising leftist youth movements around the world and the generation of 68 paved the way for the rise of political polarization and left-right divisions among young people. The conflicts between the right and left groups, which turned into political chaos, were tried to be ended with the Military Coup of September 12, 1980. Before the 1980 Coup, the idea that the rising political movements were caused by the excessive freedom environment led to the idea that the youth should be depoliticized.

#### **4.5. Generation Z (1997-2012)**

The generation born in the late 1990s and early 2000s is called Generation Z. In the literature, many different nomenclatures such as crystal generation, internet generation or i-generation, new silent generation, and Google generation are used for this generation (Çetin & Karalar, 2016: 162). Since individuals belonging to this generation are born with the internet and information technologies and can use these technologies intensively from a very young age, they have the chance to access and interpret information very quickly compared to previous generations (Patranabis, 2012: 97). The fact that individuals belonging to this generation were born in technologies such as the internet and cell phones causes individuals belonging to this generation to be unable to imagine a world without the internet. Generation Z, which is called the internet generation or i-generation, is a group of individuals who are compatible with cooperation, creative, goal-oriented, less loyal, and give importance to flexibility (Vogel, 2015:50). Especially the advancing age of the first individuals belonging to the generation has allowed the individuals belonging to this group to form their views on political life. As some of the

members of Generation Z have reached the voting age, they have reached a number that will contribute to the shaping of political life. This situation leads individuals belonging to this generation to be frequently mentioned in public opinion. In the 2018 elections, Generation Z voters had a share of approximately 7%, while in the 2023 elections, where 64 million voters are expected to vote, it is estimated that 13 million voters will consist of people belonging to this generation and correspond to 16% of the general electorate (Ensonhaber website). In addition to other generations, the voting preference of this electorate, some of whom will vote for the first time, is on the agenda as a highly anticipated situation.

Research on this generation has begun to intensify, and the defining profile characteristics of this generation are included in the literature as follows: They have protective parents. They prefer to use social networks and mobile technologies for communication instead of e-mail. Individuals belonging to the generation who want to act individually and independently have high self-confidence. This situation allows them to communicate more comfortably and openly and to be aware of their own wishes and goals. Although individuals belonging to this generation are seen as individuals who behave in an aimless manner by some people in the generations before them, in fact, Generation Z individuals are a generation that lives in line with their goals, believes that everything is possible in life, and is aware of the changes and events happening around them and in the world. In terms of communication, Twenge (2018:22) defines this generation, which prefers to communicate with mobile technologies, as 'the generation that grew up with the internet and does not remember before the internet', 'I-generation' and 'digital natives' (Generation Z) because they were born in the digital age.

When we take a look at the years in which Generation Z is living, it is seen that there has been a dizzying technological transformation, easy access to information has increased, and the welfare level is higher than in previous generations, especially because they can access some opportunities more easily than previous generations. Furthermore, social media and smartphones finding a place in daily life, and global developments entering the country in a very short time are among the examples that can be given at the beginning. During this period, Generation Z members in Turkey witnessed harsh political debates. They also witnessed movements such as the Gezi movement and the coup attempt. The schooling rate accelerated during this period. Moreover, primary and secondary education opportunities have improved and higher education opportunities have become widespread throughout the country with the opening of universities in almost all cities. Along with all these, social media has been the most important agenda of this generation. They do online shopping with the spread of the internet network and its entry into commercial life. All these conveniences and opportunities have affected the personality structure of this generation and caused them to want to lead a more impatient, easier and more effortless life (Taş and Kaçar, 2019: 653).

## **CONCLUSION**

Generations are social groups in which similar feelings, thoughts and characteristics can be formed in individuals born in a certain period of time and affected by similar historical, political and economic events. The different events they have experienced in terms of the periods in which they were born and raised may cause generations to show different characteristics from each other. This situation also manifests itself in the field of politics and political attitudes.

It has been determined that the leadership style of Generation X is based on direct command and control and that the authoritarian leadership style is more adopted by this generation. In terms of leadership style, this generation, which adopts authoritarian leadership, prefers formal and written communication and attaches importance to the chain of command (Öztürk, 2021:340). In terms of communication style, they communicate directly. While their communication skills and knowledge of technology are better than the previous generation, the boom generation, they are weaker than the generations after them, namely Generation Y and Generation Z.

Generation Y members attach importance to face-to-face meetings and communication, but they also communicate via virtual calls, e-mail, voice mail and instant messaging in addition to mobile or face-to-face meetings. Social networks and communication have come to the forefront. In terms of leadership style, this generation prefers leaders who inspire them, are reliable, give clear instructions, and with whom they can act together (Öztürk, 2021:341). Generation Z does not recognize e-mail as a means of communication and instead prefers to communicate with social networks and mobile technologies and use the latest communication tools. Generation Z is more distant from authoritarian leadership because they are fonder of their freedom.

Societies experience a number of economic, political and cultural changes over time. Beyond this, the difference in the conjunctural conditions in which the generations are in has contributed to the growth of individuals in different opportunities over time and the shaping of their attitudes. While studies on these similarities and differences in terms of generations have so far concentrated on areas such as working life and consumption habits of generations, in recent years, especially in Turkey, millions of individuals belonging to Generation Z have reached the voter qualification and have started to be discussed in the field of political science. However, studies are still limited compared to other disciplines.

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