

MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY | DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

WEEK 10 / 14

Sadposts, Doomer Aesthetics & TOKİ Architecture

How economic stagnation becomes an aesthetic with millions of views.

Economics Concept: **The Economics of Melancholy & Stagnation**

ECONOMIC TREND

Stagnation Has a Look

- Youth unemployment, credential inflation, and slowing economic mobility are structural, multi-year conditions.
- A generation cannot express a multi-year structural condition through a single joke format — it needs a mood.
- That mood becomes an aesthetic: nocturnal walks, cigarette smoke, concrete housing blocks, slowed-and-reverbed audio.



AESTHETIC CAPITAL

Melancholy as Cultural Capital

- Content built from stagnation cues performs well precisely because the audience shares the underlying condition.
- Shared economic hardship functions as a distribution advantage: the content requires no explanation to its target audience.
- This is aesthetic capital — value extracted from a shared, unchosen economic position.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

The audience isn't relating to the lighting. They're relating to the balance sheet the lighting represents.



TOKI SILHOUETTE, NIGHT

MECHANISM

Why It Travels So Well

- Low production cost (see Week 6) plus a universally legible mood equals extremely cheap, extremely wide distribution.
- No punchline is required — recognition itself is the payoff for the viewer.
- This is the lowest-cost content category studied in this course, and among the highest-reach.



TAKEAWAY OF THE WEEK

Sadposting Is Cheap Because It's True

A shared economic condition is the most efficient distribution channel this course will study — no translation, no setup, no punchline required.

NEXT WEEK → ASYMMETRIC INFORMATION & THE LOCAL PRESS ARBITRAGE